



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 22, 2012

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
Darlene Ronald 204-255-0508  
[Dronald84@shaw.ca](mailto:Dronald84@shaw.ca)

## **MANITOBA OPERA POSTS SURPLUS FOR 2011/12 SEASON DESPITE SHORTFALLS IN BOX OFFICE AND FUNDRAISING**

Manitoba Opera announced yesterday evening at its Annual General Meeting (AGM), held at the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg, that the company posted a surplus of \$40,852 on an operating budget of \$1,576,247 for the year ending May 31, 2012.

The surplus was possible as the result of cost cutting and a significant bequest that offset a shortfall in ticket and fundraising revenues. This marks the 10th time in the last 12 seasons that Manitoba Opera has ended the season in the black.

“We are very pleased to have posted a small surplus on what was a very challenging season financially. However, we do want to thank all our corporate partners and individual donors for their generous support this season. Our 11/12 season programming, while providing three distinct musical styles with exceptional musical and theatrical experiences, did not resonate with a broad section of the ticket buying public. This combined with some unexpected shortfalls in some of our fundraising campaigns, left us in a very precarious financial position,” said Larry Desrochers, General Director and CEO. “Manitoba Opera, as is the case with opera companies all across North America, is trying to find the balance in programming popular, newer, and traditional offerings that will appeal to audiences on an ongoing basis. We can’t just program three blockbusters every season or we will soon run out of blockbusters.”

Though productions (*Salome*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and *Dido and Aeneas* in Concert) received positive notices in the media and good word of mouth, programming for the 2011/12 season did not appeal as much as had been anticipated, to a broad enough range of the public. Subscriptions declined by 18% from 2010/11 to 2447 - representing the lowest number of subscribers since the 2007/08 season. Casual ticket sales for both *Salome* and *The Daughter of the Regiment* also fell short of budgeted amounts. Paid attendance on the season was 53% - down from 72% in 2010/11 and 81% in 2009/10. As a result, box office revenues of \$460,825 were substantially lower than the budgeted amount of \$600,400.

## 2. Manitoba Opera 2011/12 AGM Media Release

Also, some fundraising targets were not met in 2011/12. Corporate sponsorships were less than expected and larger personal donations decreased due mainly to a number of long-time donors retiring outside the province and the deaths of several key supporters.

“Artistically speaking, we had a wonderful season that was well received by our audiences, as was proven by the comments and findings of our new patron feedback forum, Reverb,” commented Jennifer Snyder, Chair of the Board of Trustees. “However, if our community wants to maintain a vibrant opera company, we as a community must find a way, through a variety of channels – private, public, government, sponsorship, etc. – to generate the financial support required to support this glorious, but expensive, art form.”

The 2012/13 Board of Trustees was also announced at the AGM. The trustees are Jennifer Snyder (Chair), Peter George (Past Chair), Wayne Benson, Dr. Robert Biscontri, Elba Haid, Peter Heavysage, Dr. Anthony Iacopino, Sue Jurkovic (new), Luisa Matheson, Christopher Mainella, Melanie Sifton, Carolin Taubensee, and Robert Vineberg. Retiring from the Board are Remo De Sordi, Ginny Devine, Ian Trump, and Brent Twist.

With the 2011/12 season surplus, the accumulated deficit now stands at \$231,104. The deficit had reached \$654,000 in 2000.

Manitoba Opera launches its 40<sup>th</sup> season in 2012/13 and will be showcasing two Verdi masterpieces - **Rigoletto** and **Aida** - in celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013 of the birth of the famed Italian composer. *Rigoletto*, the richly layered tale of the embittered court jester and his daughter, with its veritable hit parade of arias, duets, and ensembles will open the season November 24, 27, and 30, 2012. The grandest of the grand operas, with spectacular pageantry and emotional intimacy, *Aida* (pronounced Eye E Duh) returns to Manitoba Opera for the first time in over a decade with performances April 13, 16, and 19, 2013.

Subscriptions, starting as low as \$59.50 for the two operas, are on sale now and selling well. The company has already attained 85% of its subscription revenue goal.

Casual tickets for both productions will be available later in September.

To order tickets, call 204-957-7842 or go to [www.manitobaopera.mb.ca](http://www.manitobaopera.mb.ca)