



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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BOX OFFICE RECORDS HIGHLIGHT A SENSATIONAL SEASON FOR MANITOBA OPERA

It was announced today at Manitoba Opera's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg that the year ending May 31, 2010, broke box office records for the second consecutive year, enabling the organization to post a surplus of \$13,056 on an operating budget of \$1,648,329. In the last 10 years, the company has balanced the budget nine times. The accumulated deficit which had reached \$630,000 in 2001 prior to the company embarking on an extensive rebuilding strategy, currently stands at \$171,360.

"2009/10 was a phenomenal season on all fronts. The productions were great artistic successes, the audiences loved them, and we balanced the budget," commented Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO. "Our two mainstage productions – Rossini's comedy *The Barber of Seville* and Bizet's tragic *Carmen* – attracted full houses and our patrons thoroughly enjoyed both of these very different opera experiences.

Our expanded audience outreach program included the popular *Tunes for 'Toons* presentation at IMAX Theatre in the fall and our spring Open House enabled 200 people to tour backstage and learn how opera is brought to life. Our presentation of Al Simmons' hilarious take on *The Barber of Seville* played to over 5,000 students in 24 schools last fall. Engaging people in opera is why we exist, and it is very gratifying to have such enthusiastic responses to our work."

Peter George, Chair of the Board of Trustees added, "We are extremely pleased that once again this year Manitoba Opera presented critically acclaimed productions and ended the season with a balanced budget. We are also very pleased to have the continued support of the community through attendance at the shows, as well as through private and corporate donations, grants, sponsorship, and participation at special events. Our achievements are only possible with this support."

Box Office and Development

In 2009/10, box office revenue reached \$657,863, an eight percent increase over the previous season. This is the first time the organization's ticket revenue has broken the \$650,000 mark. With a subscription base of 3,167 and very high casual ticket sales, all six mainstage performances (three each for *The Barber of Seville* and *Carmen*) had capacity audiences including some sold-out shows.

2. Manitoba Opera 09/10 AGM

Attendance for Student Night at the Opera saw an increase of 30% over the 2008/09 season with a total of 3,050 tickets sold to both dress rehearsals for *The Barber of Seville* and *Carmen*.

An increase was also seen in fundraising revenue, with sponsorship, corporate donations, private contributions, and special events reaching almost \$496,000; \$33,000 more than last season.

“Artistically, 2009/10 boasted two excellent casts that combined wonderful internationally acclaimed singers with the talents of a number of local professionals. Both productions’ lead female singers, Winnipeg’s own Nikki Einfeld as Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and Kirstin Chávez as Carmen, were outstanding,” commented Desrochers. “The productions were well staged by David Gately (*The Barber of Seville*) and Rob Herriot (*Carmen*). The chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master, Tadeusz Biernacki, really shone and had two particularly great moments this season with the men in the slow-motion scene in *Barber* and the women in the cigarette factory fight scene in *Carmen*. And of course, the children’s chorus in *Carmen*, under the direction of Carolyn Boyes, was wonderful as well.”

2010/11 Board of Trustees

The 2010/11 Board of Trustees was also announced at the AGM. The trustees are Peter George (Chair), Remo De Sordi, Ginny Devine, Elba Haid, Rod Hanley, Peter Heavysage, Dr. Anthony Iacopino, Chris Mainella, Heather Shon, Jennifer Snyder, Cindy Stevens, Ian Trump, Brent Twist, and Robert Vineberg. Retiring from the Board of Trustees is Leona Herzog. A letter of condolence to the family of Lawrence J. Elkow was read at the AGM. Mr. Elkow began his tenure on the board in August 2008 and passed away this June.

2010/11 SEASON SOMETHING MAGICAL.

For the 2010/11 Season, Manitoba Opera will be presenting two full productions - Puccini’s political thriller, *Tosca* (**November 20, 23, 26**) and Mozart’s comical masterpiece, *The Magic Flute* (**April 9, 12, 15**) - and will be kicking off the season with the **Divas and Divos Gala Concert** on **Saturday, October 16**. All performances will take place at the Centennial Concert Hall.

Divas and Divos Gala Concert

Some of the country’s fastest-rising opera stars will be featured at this fundraising concert to benefit Manitoba Opera. Soprano, **Joni Henson**; mezzo-soprano, **Lauren Segal**; tenor, **David Pomeroy**; and baritone, **Pierre-Étienne Bergeron**, alongside other talented singers, will perform favourite arias, duets, and ensembles from some of the best operas in the world. Tadeusz Biernacki will conduct the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

3. Manitoba Opera 09/10 AGM

Tosca: “She lived for art and died for love”

Canadian soprano **Wendy Nielsen** will make her Manitoba Opera debut in the title role. Metropolitan Opera veteran, **Richard Margison** returns to sing the role of Cavaradossi, the artist and Tosca’s lover. And to portray Scarpia, in the darkly manipulative role of Chief of Police, is **Gaétan Laperrière**. **Peter Strummer** returns as the Sacristan, after last season’s huge success as Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*. **Valerie Kuinka** makes her Manitoba Opera debut directing and **Tyrone Paterson**, Manitoba Opera Music Advisor and Principal Conductor, will conduct.

Sung in Italian with projected English translations.

The Magic Flute: An Enchanting Adventure

A number of Manitobans will be starring in this production. **Phillip Ens** returns to Manitoba Opera to sing the role of Sarastro, after 13 years of appearances in opera houses around the globe. **Andriana Chuchman** will sing her first Pamina. Baritone **Hugh Russell** makes his Manitoba Opera debut as the overly chatty bird catcher looking for love. And **Lara Ciekiewicz** returns as Papagena, the soulmate he finds. **Michael Cavanagh** will be back to direct, and **Tad Biernacki** will lead the WSO through Mozart’s sublime score.

Completing the cast is American-raised, Ukrainian-born coloratura soprano, **Julia Kogan**, as the Queen of the Night and American tenor, **Bruce Sledge**, who comes to Manitoba Opera directly from the Metropolitan Opera to sing Tamino, the young prince searching for truth.

Sung in German with projected English translations.

Purchasing Tickets

Casual tickets to the Divas and Divos Gala Concert go on sale Monday, July 19. Casual tickets to *Tosca* and *The Magic Flute* will go on sale in late September.

Casual tickets can be purchased by calling (204)944-8824, going online to www.manitobaopera.mb.ca-Buy Tickets or visiting the Manitoba Opera Box Office, lower level, Centennial Concert Hall (9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday).

Subscription inquiries can be directed to 957-7842.

Season Brochures

Season brochures are available by contacting Livia Dymond at 944-8929 or email ldymond@manitobaopera.mb.ca. Or go to www.manitobaopera.mb.ca.