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CONTRACT FOR GENERAL DIRECTOR & CEO, LARRY DESROCHERS, EXTENDED FOR ANOTHER 3 YEARS

Manitoba Opera today announced that the Board of Trustees has extended the contract for Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO, for another three years, expiring June 30, 2012.

Desrochers has held the senior administrative and artistic position with the company since February 2001 when he was hired to lead the organization's rebuilding strategy.

Under Desrochers' leadership, Manitoba Opera has balanced its budget eight consecutive years. The company has also experienced a number of artistic achievements under his direction including the commissioning of Manitoba Opera's first mainstage opera, *Transit of Venus*; the presentation of the North American premiere of *Jason and Hanna* – the first opera featuring child performers in lead roles in Manitoba; as well as attracting internationally acclaimed Canadian opera artists such as Russell Braun, Tracy Dahl, Judith Forst, and Richard Margison to the company.

During this time, the company has also experienced record-breaking attendance levels at a number of shows including *Carmen* (99% in April 2002), *The Marriage of Figaro* (98% in April 2006), and most recently, *Madama Butterfly* (95% in April 2009). Subscriptions have grown to 2849 from 2021 in 2001, and fundraising has increased significantly under Desrochers' guidance with *Transit of Venus* receiving unprecedented financial support including two of the largest single-sum donations (\$250,000 each) ever received by Manitoba Opera.

As a stage director, Desrochers directed the world premiere of *Transit of Venus* (November 2007), as well as *The Magic Flute* (November 2001), and *Otello*, a co-production with Opera Lyra Ottawa (April 2007). In the 2007/08 season, he also directed the world premiere of Rick Chafe's *Shakespeare's Dog*, adapted from Leon Rooke's novel, for MTC and NAC. The production was nominated for a Capital Critics Circle Award in the category of Best Production and Desrochers was nominated in the Best Director category.

2. MB Opera Desrochers Contract Extension

Peter George, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Manitoba Opera, couldn't be happier with the new agreement. "Larry has been critical to the success of the company. He has a unique combination of business skills and artistic leadership that make him a real asset," said George. "More importantly, he is first and foremost a committed Manitoban. The Board is thrilled to have been able to keep him in our community and at our company, and we're looking forward to executing the many great ideas he has for the future."

"I am very happy to extend my leadership of Manitoba Opera for another three seasons," says Desrochers. "It is a tremendous honour to have the support of the Board of Trustees and the community to allow me to helm one of Manitoba's most important cultural institutions. It's a privilege to work with the artists, staff, and volunteers each day to bring this wonderful art form to life."

Larry Desrochers was born in Manitoba and is a graduate of the University of Winnipeg theatre program. His 25-year career spans work in theatre, festivals, film, events, and opera. He founded the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in 1988. He served as the Associate Artistic Director of Manitoba Theatre Centre (MTC) where he directed numerous plays including *Burn This* starring Eric McCormack of *Will and Grace* and the NTC/NAC Canadian premiere of *M. Butterfly*. He also directed the world premiere of *Transit of Venus* at MTC in 1992. He produced and directed the Opening Ceremonies of the 1999 Pan Am Games. In 2003, he was made a Distinguished Alumni of the University of Winnipeg for his contributions to the arts in Manitoba.