



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 6, 2009

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
DARLENE RONALD
(204)255-0508 dronald84@shaw.ca

**MANITOBA OPERA'S *TRANSIT OF VENUS*
TO BE FEATURED AT OPERA AMERICA CONFERENCE**

Manitoba Opera announced today that *Transit of Venus*, the main-stage opera that was commissioned by the company for its 35th season celebrations and that received its world premiere in November 2007, has been selected to be featured at this year's Opera America Conference in Houston, April 29 to May 2, 2009.

Selections from *Transit of Venus* will be presented to delegates at the New Works Sampler, April 29. They will be performed by students from the University of Houston's Moores School of Music and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

"It's very exciting to see our work selected to be showcased," said Larry Desrochers, Manitoba Opera's General Director & CEO. "I think it's great that American opera producers will get a chance to see what we can do in Manitoba. *Transit's* selection is a tribute to the talents of Victor and Maureen for creating such a beautiful opera. And it's a tribute to all of the donors and supporters who helped bring *Transit of Venus* to life."

The \$1.2 million, three-act opera was composed by Victor Davies with the libretto by Maureen Hunter, who wrote the internationally acclaimed play of the same name. It is a love story inspired by the real-life expeditions of 18th century French astronomer, Guillaume le Gentil de la Galasière and explores the question of where we find God in the universe.

The production was made possible through major contributions from James A. Richardson & Sons, Limited; The Asper Foundation, Gail & Michael Paterson, and Babs Asper; and the Winnipeg Arts Council New Creations Fund.

"I'm delighted that this story, these characters, and Victor's wonderful music will be exposed to a broad spectrum of the American opera community. I hope that those who supported this new opera, financially and in every other way, will feel as proud of this development as we do," commented librettist and playwright, Maureen Hunter.

I am very excited indeed that *Transit of Venus* will be included in Opera America's showcase of new operas in Houston! It is an honour to have been chosen from all the newly created works in North America," said composer, Victor Davies. "Many thanks to Manitoba Opera for its continuing support of *Transit*."

Other works on the program are *Lillian Alling* (Vancouver Opera), *Before Night Falls* (Ft. Worth Opera), *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* (Opera Santa Barbara), and *Review: a Satire, an Opera, a Party* (Long Leaf Opera).

////////////////////////////////////