

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VANCOUVER OPERA ACHIEVES 9TH OPERATING SURPLUS IN 11 YEARS,
IN A SEASON OF EXCITING ARTISTIC CHOICES**

Vancouver, BC ~ Vancouver Opera closed its Golden Anniversary 2009-2010 Season with its ninth operating surplus in eleven years. Audited financial statements presented yesterday at the company's Annual General Meeting reported an operating surplus of \$59,308 for the year ended on June 30, 2010, on a budget of \$9.6 million.

Bold artistic choices, critical acclaim for the season's productions and growing community involvement contributed to VO's increased fiscal stability.

VO's Golden Anniversary Season featured its first production of Bellini's *Norma* in almost 20 years, conducted by the legendary Richard Bonyngue, and the Canadian premiere of Adams's *Nixon in China*, in a new VO production that was a critical and popular success: "The demanding work's very first Canadian production is a brilliantly effective one," praised *The Vancouver Sun*.

The season also included an all-Canadian production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*; and *Madama Butterfly*, designed by Japanese-born artist Jun Kaneko. "Vancouver Opera [closed] its golden-anniversary season in high drama, with a production that's not just a visual feast—a giant, constantly shifting piece of contemporary art—but boasts the kind of vocal star power you'd expect on one of the world's more famous stages," raved the *Georgia Straight* about *Madama Butterfly*, the closing production of VO's Golden Anniversary season.

Board chair **Alex Besharat** said, "Achieving nine operating surpluses in eleven years is a remarkable accomplishment for an arts organization. Vancouver Opera made some bold artistic choices in 2009-2010 but maintained its solid financial position, despite the uncertain economic climate. This strength is a testament to the artistic and administrative leadership of General Director James Wright; to the investment by all levels of government; and to the support of the community."

VO's General Director **James W. Wright** said, "This past season, VO celebrated an illustrious past and looked ahead to an exciting future. To finish our Golden Anniversary Season in a solid financial position is especially gratifying. VO will carry on making strong artistic choices and reaching new

audiences, while continuing to provide the high levels of artistic achievement that our loyal subscribers and patrons expect." Added Wright, "I am grateful for the foresight, collective experience and support of our Board of Directors. The Board's astute leadership is instrumental in allowing Vancouver Opera to remain one of the leading arts organizations in the country."

A great many community engagement events were produced as part of the Canadian premiere of *Nixon in China*, including special events with historian Margaret MacMillan and filmmaker Alexandre Trudeau, forums exploring the history of the Chinese community in Vancouver, and film screenings and explorations of the music of John Adams. VO partnered with several groups to present this major series of events, extending its already far-reaching community involvement.

Vancouver Opera's 2010-2011 season will open with the world premiere of a brand-new opera, commissioned by VO: *Lillian Alling*, by composer John Estacio and librettist John Murrell. As well as productions of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Verdi's *La Traviata*, VO will present the company premiere of Mozart's last opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*. VO's extensive community engagement and innovative online presence will continue, and a new production for young people of Rossini's *Cinderella* will tour schools as part of the company's 38-year-old Vancouver Opera In Schools program.

The 2009-2010 season was supported by Goldcorp, Inc. in the first of a three-season sponsorship, the first multi-season sponsorship in VO's history.

New Board Members

Four esteemed community leaders were elected to the VO Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on September 20, 2010:

Dr. David W. Atkinson is the President and Vice-Chancellor of Kwantlen Polytechnic University and has a lengthy teaching and administrative career involving positions at the University of Lethbridge and the University of Saskatchewan. He was President and Vice-Chancellor at Brock University and Carleton University. Dr. Atkinson has been widely published, is a recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal and is a Paul Harris Fellow. He served as President of the Board of Directors of the Saskatoon Symphony, was a Director of the Niagara Symphony and currently serves on the Board of the Katimavik Foundation.

Mary Jordan (continuing an interim appointment made November 30, 2009)

Ms. Jordan's background is in the airline and transportation industries. She has held senior executive positions at major American and Canadian airlines, at the BC Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver and at Laidlaw International in Illinois. Ms. Jordan is Chair of the Board of YVR (the Vancouver International Airport), a Director of Coast Capital Savings and a member of the Insurance Council of

BC. She is an Executive in Residence at UBC's Sauder School of Business and a recipient of Canada's "Top 40 Under 40" Award.

Julia Kim is Vice-President, Investment Counsellor at RBC Phillips, Hager & North Investment Counsel, where she provides wealth management for private clients and foundations. She joined Phillips, Hager & North Investment Management Ltd. in 1996 and became a partner in 1999. Before joining PH&N, she worked as a private banker for one of the largest Canadian chartered banks. Ms. Kim is past Chair of the Minerva Foundation for BC Women. She was a director on the boards of YWCA Vancouver and of Family Services of Greater Vancouver and volunteered as an Account Executive for the United Way of the Lower Mainland.

Philippe Sarfati is the Chief Risk Officer at Coast Capital Savings. He has 30 years of experience in the financial services industry in the areas of commercial banking, corporate and investment banking, international finance, as well as in enterprise risk management. His career began at the Bank of Montreal where, over a 21-year period, he held various line and executive positions. Following that he was Director, Risk Management at EDS Canada; VP and Head, Global Banking and Trade Solutions at CIBC World Markets; VP and Head, Risk Management at PMI Group; and Director, Risk Management at the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. Mr. Sarfati holds a Baccalaureat en Sciences Economiques (Academie de Caen), a Bachelor of Commerce from McGill University and an MBA from Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales. He is an instructor for the Risk and Insurance Management Society and is a Director of Epilepsy Toronto.

Vancouver Opera Board of Directors, 2010-2011

Bev Park – Chair
Yuri Fulmer – Vice Chair
Mary Jordan – Treasurer
Lis Welch – Secretary
Alex R. Besharat – Immediate Past Chair

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Henning Freybe
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Julia Kim
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Rona Radler
Philippe Sarfati
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Inna Vlashev O'Brian
Elisabeth Dawson – President, Vancouver Opera Guild
Arlene Gladstone – Chair, Vancouver Opera Foundation

Distinguished Honourary Members:

Martha Lou Henley
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