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VANCOUVER OPERA TO MOVE OPERATIONS TO ALL-INCLUSIVE CENTRE NEAR COMMERCIAL DRIVE

Community access and engagement will be a focus of new facility

Vancouver, BC ~ New synergies and new energy will soon emerge at Vancouver Opera when the company combines all its artistic and administrative operations under one roof, in a building located near Commercial Drive. After the move to fresh premises later this spring, all staging and orchestra rehearsals, costumes and properties construction, set storage, box office and administrative activities will take place in the Vancouver Opera Centre, at 1945 McLean Avenue. Currently Vancouver Opera occupies several spaces: administrative offices in the downtown core, separate costume and properties shops, set storage facilities and, as required, halls for staging and orchestra rehearsals.

The company will continue to present its mainstage seasons in its home venue, the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

VO's General Director, **James W. Wright**, expressed the company's excitement about the impending move. "We have dreamed about an all-inclusive space for many years," said Wright. "We have been keeping our ears to the ground for the right opportunity, and I am thrilled that we finally found a building that really works for us. The benefits will be enormous. By bringing together artists, artisans, production and administrative staff, everyone's creative processes will be mutually inspired. There is another important benefit: by consolidating all our activities we will save a significant amount in overhead expenses."

Bev Park, Chair of Vancouver Opera's Board of Directors, said, "The board is delighted that the company is able to take advantage of this opportunity to bring new synergies to everything it does. The financial benefits are, of course, welcome, but even more important will be the creative stimulation that I know we will all receive by working so closely together. I look forward to engaging with our artists frequently, and to holding board meetings while rehearsals are going on next door."

The building will house an adaptable space big enough to accommodate staging, dance and orchestra rehearsals, practice and meeting rooms, wardrobe facilities, the properties construction shop, warehouse space for set storage, and production and administrative offices.

In order to cover some of the costs of adapting and renovating the building, Vancouver Opera is launching a modest capital campaign that includes possible naming rights for the Vancouver Opera Centre. VO will soon publish a list of many ways in which people can support the campaign. Opportunities will include contributing

to a fund to buy music stands and chairs, providing gifts-in-kind from a "wish list", and underwriting the renovation of particular rooms.

The move marks a milestone in Vancouver Opera's 51-year life. James Wright said, "This is an important step in the organizational growth of Vancouver Opera. In recent years we have significantly increased our investment in the musical and visual qualities of our productions. We have continued to broaden our engagement with the many communities we serve. We have challenged ourselves artistically with new productions and world premieres. Now, creating the opportunity for higher energy and deeper communication, both of which will undoubtedly result from our working more closely together, leads us into a new phase of maturity."

Vancouver Opera looks forward to being an active and supportive neighbour in the vibrant, diverse and culturally rich Clark Drive-Commercial Drive area. After a settling-in period, and after some necessary renovations have been completed, the company will open its doors to the community and make its music library and rehearsal and meeting space available to music, theatre, dance and community groups. "This move makes it possible for Vancouver Opera to offer to the immediate community, and to the broader community, some of the resources and considerable energy we can provide," said Wright. "I look forward to working with many groups and individuals in the future."

Arlene Gladstone, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vancouver Opera Foundation, and a past Chair of the company's Board, added, "It is truly exciting to be making this important move after many years of imagining it. I am personally thrilled by the opportunities this provides to deepen our already strong connections to the communities we serve with our education and community programs."