

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vancouver Opera receives \$500,000 gift from prominent Vancouver philanthropist in support of new facilities at

The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera

THE MARTHA LOU HENLEY REHEARSAL HALL

Vancouver, BC ~ Prominent Vancouver philanthropist and dedicated supporter of the arts **Martha Lou Henley, CM** has made a gift of \$500,000 to support Vancouver Opera's new facilities at the O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera. This generous gift will be recognized with the naming of The Martha Lou Henley Rehearsal Hall.

All Vancouver Opera staging and orchestra rehearsals (except those in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre) will now take place at The Martha Lou Henley Rehearsal Hall, located in the O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera, near Commercial Drive, eliminating the need for separate rehearsal space away from the rest of VO's operations.

"I am so excited to make this announcement," commented **James W. Wright**, General Director of Vancouver Opera. "Martha Lou Henley's many generous gifts of support and time have made her a true pillar of our community. She is a beloved champion of the arts in this country and I am thrilled to recognize her with the naming of our new rehearsal hall. It perfectly matches her abiding interest in the process of creating opera, and in the artists themselves."

Ms. Henley, recently appointed to the Order of Canada, has been a strong supporter of several arts and culture organizations, including the Vancouver Recital Society, Vancouver's choral community, MusicFest Vancouver, Music in the Morning and Callanish Society.

"I'm pleased to support this new space that will be enjoyed and used by all my friends in the orchestra, on stage and in the office," said Ms. Henley. "My hope is that this gift will allow Vancouver Opera to further its excellence in the work that I have come to enjoy so much."

Ms. Henley has a long history with Vancouver Opera and has been instrumental in the creation of several VO productions, including the world premiere of *Lillian Alling*, VO's Golden Anniversary

Concert & Gala, and the productions of *Norma* and *Nixon in China* during VO's Golden Anniversary Season. Ms. Henley has also made a special gift towards VO's production of *West Side Story* in October 2012. As a volunteer, Ms. Henley also worked to put in place the Amatori dell'Opera planned giving program.

This season, Vancouver Opera will begin to open its rehearsal facilities at The O'Brian Centre to arts and community groups. VO looks forward to being an active and supportive neighbour in the Clark Drive-Commercial Drive community.