

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE July 19, 2011  
CONTACT Selina Rajani, 604-331-4824  
[srajani@vancouveropera.ca](mailto:srajani@vancouveropera.ca)

VO Receives \$1-Million Gift In Support of New Facility

THE MICHAEL & INNA O'BRIAN CENTRE  
FOR VANCOUVER OPERA

**Vancouver, BC** ~ Vancouver Opera has received a generous gift of \$1-million from Michael and Inna O'Brian to support renovations and adaptations to their new facility near Commercial Drive. The gift will be recognized with the naming of the new premises as **The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera**.

Operations will move to The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera this month. Currently, Vancouver Opera occupies several spaces throughout the city. In the new Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera, administrative offices, costume and properties shops, set storage, and staging and orchestra rehearsals will all take place under one roof. The company will continue to present mainstage productions in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

VO's General Director, **James W. Wright**, expressed the company's excitement, "I am thrilled by this generous gift and by what it means to the arts in Vancouver. Not only will we be bringing together the creativity of our artists and staff into one building, but we will be doing so with tremendous support from the community. This wonderful gift from Michael and Inna reflects how highly the citizens of Metro Vancouver value the arts in their communities.

Wright continued, "Michael and Inna have a history of service with VO. Inna has been on the Board of Directors since 2006. Their support has been instrumental in fostering opera in Vancouver. It will be a privilege and a pleasure to use their gift to continue this work."

"We are so happy to make this gift to an organization we have been part of for so many years, and thrilled to see the impact it has had," said **Inna O'Brian**. "It is an honour to continue to help bring opera to the community in this way."

"It's a spectacular gift," commented **Bev Park**, Chair of VO's Board of Directors. "I'm grateful for the leadership of the O'Brians and what it means for a new chapter in VO's history."

The O'Brians are the third family in Vancouver to make a \$1-million gift to Vancouver Opera or the Vancouver Opera Foundation.

To honour her outstanding service to opera in Vancouver, the family of Yulanda Faris earlier this spring made a \$1-million contribution to the Vancouver Opera Foundation. This gift will support Vancouver Opera's new **Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program**, slated to begin during the 2012-2013 season at The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera.

The program will serve as a bridge between university training and a professional career. National auditions will be held this fall for suitable Canadian singers to take part in the program. Participants will reside in Vancouver during their tenure and will receive advanced training and coaching from VO's music staff, as well as performance opportunities in the community and on the mainstage.

Longtime Vancouver philanthropist and supporter of the arts **Martha Lou Henley** has made two \$1-million dollar gifts to the company, both directed towards operations and the VO Foundation.

VO plans to open the music library, rehearsal facilities and meeting space of The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera to arts groups in the broader area and looks forward to being an active and supportive neighbour in the Clark Drive-Commercial Drive community.