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Vancouver Opera achieves another operating surplus New community leaders join Board of Directors

Vancouver, BC ~ Vancouver Opera continues on its sure-footed path of artistic and organizational growth in robust financial health. Financial statements presented at the Annual General Meeting on September 24, 2007 show that for the year ended June 30, 2007, the company realized an operating surplus of \$37,331 on a budget of \$8.77 million – the seventh operating surplus in the past eight years.

The success in 2006-2007 is attributable to several factors: the enthusiastic response to VO's programming from season subscribers and single-ticket buyers, with overall average mainstage attendance of 88% of capacity and sold-out school touring shows; increased community support for the company through individual donations and corporate sponsorship; and solid public support from all levels of government.

Bruce M. Wright, Chair of VO's board of directors, said, "Seven operating surpluses in eight seasons – a period in which the operating budget has grown by more than 60% – is a remarkable achievement for an arts organization, and particularly for a company that has consistently challenged itself to take calculated artistic risks, reach out to new audiences, and deepen its investment in the quality of all of its programming on the mainstage, in schools, and in the community. I am particularly proud of what the company achieved in 2006-2007. During the season, we reached the culmination of a three-year collaborative process with First Nations Artists by presenting our new production of *The Magic Flute*. The touring version of the opera, *The Magic Flute: Quest for the Box of Shadows* reached more than 40,000 school children in venues across B.C. including the new Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'llnagaay, "Sea Lion Town", near Skidegate." Added Bruce Wright, "With the vision and leadership of General Director James Wright, supported in governance by the board of directors, Vancouver Opera continues to be a vibrant and vital organization at the centre of cultural life in our community."

James W. Wright (no relation), General Director, said, "I am very pleased with what we achieved in 2006-2007. We are all justifiably proud, I think, of having made broader and deeper connections with an increasingly diverse audience, not only for our *Magic Flute* production with First Nations artists but also in remounting, at the Canadian War Museum, in Ottawa, *Naomi's Road*, our very successful commissioned opera based on Joy Kogawa's book for young readers. I am pleased that with the support of the community through a period of growth, we have been able to present work of a consistently high quality and to have taken our place amongst the finest in international opera companies. And I am grateful for the careful stewardship and generous support of the Board of Directors, for the enthusiasm and devotion of our audience, and for the continuing commitment to our work – onstage and in the community – by government."

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New Directors

At the Annual General Meeting, three new community leaders were elected to the Board of Directors, joining 24 existing and re-elected directors (complete list below).

Yuri Fulmer founded FDC Brands in 1997 and has since developed the company into one of Canada's largest privately held food and beverage businesses. Mr. Fulmer also leads Fulmer Holdings, the Company's real estate division. In the community, he has devoted much energy to the United Way of the Lower Mainland and will be General Campaign Chair in 2008. He is the Past President, Surrey Food Bank, and continues to serve on its Board; sits on the Cabinet for Vancouver Community College's Capital Campaign; and serves on the Advisory Board of AIESEC, on Capilano College's Dean's Advisory Board, and on the Board of UPGC, Canada's largest food purchasing co-operative.

Lis Welch is Vice Chair of The Welch Group, a privately held B.C.-based group of companies associated with forestry management and the manufacturing of engineered wood products. In addition to her business engagement, Ms. Welch is deeply involved in the community. Long-time associations include the Vancouver YWCA, Simon Fraser University, and the Minerva Foundation for B.C. Women. She is the recipient of an Influential Women in Business Award and the S.F.U. Chancellor's Distinguished Community Service Award.

Heather Clarke, RN, PhD, joins the board after serving for two years as an *ex officio* member in her capacity as President of the Vancouver Opera Guild. Dr. Clarke is Principal of Health & Nursing Policy, Research & Evaluation. She consults to government, health authorities, First Nations Tribal Councils, and nursing organizations, nationally and internationally. She has served on many boards, including the International Nursing Honors Society Sigma Theta Tau, the BC Council for Families, and the Canadian Nurses' Foundation. She currently is on the board of Shaughnessy Heights United Church.

Vancouver Opera Board of Directors, as of September 24, 2007:

Bruce M. Wright, Chair
Alex R. Besharat, Vice-Chair
J. Michael Gallagher, Treasurer
Inna Vlashev O'Brian, Secretary
Arlene Gladstone, Immediate Past Chair
Philip K.Y. Chan
Heather Clarke
Parviz H. Cordwell
Doris Bradstreet Daughney
Steven G. Dean
Henning Freybe
Yuri Fulmer
Doris H.H. Gandt
Douglas M. Hume

Yoshiko Karasawa
Linda Kaser
Julia Levy
Georgina L. MacDonald
Joseph E. McHugh
John McLernon
Bev Park
Rona Radler
Manjy Sidoo
Pascal Spothelfer
Lis Welch
Yulanda Faris, Chair, Vancouver Opera
Foundation
Lis Dawson, President, Vancouver Opera Guild

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Mainstage Programming for 2007-2008

VO's powerful 2007-2008 season opens November 10 with four performances of a double-bill of shorter operas in the *verismo* style of gritty realism that have not been seen in Vancouver for nearly 30 years: Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*. In late January and early February, 2008, for the first time since 1965, VO presents an irresistibly colourful production of Rossini's madcap comedy *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. In March, 2008, Canadian tenor Richard Margison stars as the political prisoner Florestan in a rare production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* that originated at the National Theatre of Serbia. And in late April and Early May, love and youthful exuberance lead to heartbreak in Puccini's unparalleled masterpiece *La Bohème*.

Community and Education Programming

Vancouver Opera serves as many people outside the Queen Elizabeth Theatre as it does inside. Each year, the ***Vancouver Opera In Schools*** touring program – one of North America's largest – introduces opera to tens of thousands of elementary school students and their families throughout British Columbia. Since the program's inception, in 1972, *VOIS* has reached more than 1.6 million young people. This season, *VOIS* will present *The Barber of Barkerville*, a hilarious rendition of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* set in the Gold Rush era, to students as far away as Mackenzie.

Music! Words! Opera!, a curriculum-based program, free to schools and supported by VO staff, theatre artists, and musicians, focuses on creating opera at the elementary school level.

Opera Speaks @ VPL, the award-winning community-engagement series of free interactive public forums at the Vancouver Public Library, continues to attract eminent experts from throughout the community for in-depth explorations of contemporary themes in VO's productions. Leading up to the production of *Fidelio*, VO will collaborate with other organizations in a broader series of events, called "Behind Bars", which will explore the plight of prisoners of conscience around the world, and the relationship between art and the struggle for social justice.

For the adult learning community, VO collaborates with UBC Continuing Studies, Capilano College and other institutions, to provide many life-long learning opportunities.