

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE October 2, 2015
CONTACT Selina Rajani, 604-331-4824
srajani@vancouveropera.ca

New Directors Join Vancouver Opera Board

World premiere, exciting productions and innovative marketing and fundraising initiatives
mark VO's 2014-2015 season

Vancouver, BC - Four esteemed community leaders were elected to the VO Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on September 19, 2015.

Reema Faris served one term as Trustee on the West Vancouver Board of Education. Ms. Faris holds a BA in history and classical studies and an MBA from the University of Toronto. She served as Vice President, Sales and Marketing, for Cascadia Homes and has held positions with Rogers Cablesystems, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Addison-Wesley Publishers.

Bill Levine was a founding shareholder and is currently Chair of Western Corporate Enterprises Inc., a private business and real estate investment firm. From 1970 to 1986 Mr. Levine was a senior officer and director of BCE Development Corporation, formerly known as Daon Development Corporation. He has been a director of several public corporations and is presently on the board of A&W Food Services Inc. He has previous experience as a non-profit Board member for 6 years, and also served for 3 years as the Chair of the Board of Governors at UBC.

Bill Maclagan is Managing Partner of Blakes and has chaired conferences on general tax and corporate matters. He is a past chair of the Canadian Bar Association Tax Subsection in British Columbia. He is a former bencher of The Law Society of British Columbia, a governor and past chair of the Canadian Tax Foundation, a trustee of the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, the commissioner of the Vancouver Canadian Foundation Baseball Little League, a member of the United Way Campaign Cabinet Vancouver and a member of the Board of Directors of St. Paul's Hospital Foundation.

Lisa Payne is the CFO of Conor Pacific Inc., a private equity firm that acquires and operates companies in the US, Canada and the Caribbean. Previously, she was COO/CFO for Colligo Networks, an enterprise software company; the acting CEO at BCIC; President of Aegis Mobility, a mobile application company; president of TeraSpan Networks, a telecom network builder and manufacturer; and CFO of Wavemakers. In 1999, Ms. Payne co-founded Criterion Service Laboratory Inc., a biotech contract research lab that also conducted research in the early detection of cancer. Since 2012, she has been a Council member for the Auditor General for Local Government. Ms. Payne has authored several industry publications and holds a CPA, CGA designation.

Departing as board members after several years of committed service are **Stephanie Chung, Michael O'Brian, and Bev Park**, who also served as Board Chair from 2010 to 2013.

In audited financial statements presented at the meeting, the company reported a modest surplus of \$6,943 on an operating budget of \$10.7-million. VO now has a manageable accumulated deficit of \$791,929.

The 2014-2015 season in review: exciting marketing and fundraising initiatives and increased community engagement

In its 2014-2015 season, Vancouver Opera continued to bolster its artistic mission with a unique mix of repertoire, social relevance, high artistic standards and exciting marketing initiatives. The season opened with a blockbuster *Carmen* that exceeded revenue goals. That successful opening was followed with a milestone event in the city's cultural history: the world premiere of *Stickboy*, VO's commissioned opera about bullying. The season continued with a delightful version of *Die Fledermaus*, directed by Nancy Hermiston, and closed with an artistically daring *Sweeney Todd*.

Stickboy, with music composed by Neil Weisensel and libretto by renowned poet Shane Koyczan, reached a greater audience than predicted. The touching, visceral piece garnered unprecedented support from individuals, foundations, audiences and media outlets. An expanded suite of community events was programmed, generously supported in part by long-time VO donors Bruce and Lis Welch.

VO partnered with several local organizations and artists to create innovative marketing initiatives in social media and guerrilla art campaigns. The company also engaged in its first-ever crowdfunding campaign, generating microdonations from new and previous donors to support the Vancouver Opera In Schools touring production of *Stickboy*.

A year of transition

In June 2015, Vancouver Opera announced an important step in its evolution. Beginning in 2016-2017, the company will concentrate much of its programming in a three-week festival, to be held in late April and early May each year. Vancouver Opera will remain active and present in the community year-round, through a fall/winter opera production at the Vancouver Playhouse, Vancouver Opera In Schools performances, an expanded Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program, collaboration with the UBC opera program, and other initiatives. Following direct communications with public funders, subscribers and donors, Town Hall meetings were and continue to be held to answer questions and gather thoughts from VO audiences. Programming will continue to be cemented in the coming months, with exciting announcements about repertoire, performers and festive events to come as the festival season approaches.

Vancouver Opera Board of Directors, 2015-2016

Pascal Spothelfer – Chair
Roberta Lando Beiser – Vice Chair
Mary Jordan – Treasurer
Lis Welch – Secretary

Directors

Jill Bodkin
Mo Dhaliwal
Reema Faris
Divyesh Gadhia
Deborah Graystone
Yoshiko Karasawa
Sherry Killam
Julia Kim
Bill Levine
Jessica Yan Macintosh
Marilyn Loewen Mauritz
Paul McEwen
Mary McNeil
Lisa Payne
Blaize Horner Reich
Bill Sirett
Bruce Sprague
Michael Stevenson
Susan Van der Flier
Jeffrey Wilhoit

Susan Mair, President, Vancouver Opera Guild

Distinguished Honorary Members:

Martha Lou Henley
Kenneth W. Mahon