



news release
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VANCOUVER OPERA ACHIEVES MAJOR OPERATING SURPLUS IN 2011-2012

VO recovers more than two-thirds of its accumulated deficit, thanks to record-breaking box office and stellar community support

Vancouver, BC ~ Vancouver Opera has recovered more than \$500,000 of its accumulated deficit in a single season, thanks to record-breaking artistic achievement, savings realized through a timely move to a consolidated administrative and production facility, and overwhelming donor and audience support.

Audited financial statements presented at the company's Annual General Meeting on August 23, 2012 reported an operating surplus of \$565,136 for the year ended on June 30, 2012, on a budget of \$10-million. This surplus reduces VO's accumulated deficit by 68% in a single season.

The 2011-2012 season began with a solid base of subscriber support: 86% of 2010-2011 season subscribers (a ten-year record) returned for 2011-2012, joining almost 1,700 new subscribers (an eight-year high).

The season's opening production was the overwhelmingly successful company premiere of *West Side Story*, which broke VO's all-time box office record for most single tickets sold. "The question in my mind beforehand was: How well can an opera company production of *West Side Story* stack up against the movie Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise made of this quintessential Broadway music-theater masterpiece? The answer, I am happy to report, is: Very well indeed. In some respects, this co-production of Vancouver Opera and Colorado's Central City Opera can even be said to outshine the mostly brilliant movie version," raved *Opera Magazine*.

West Side Story was followed by an opulent *Roméo et Juliette*, featuring young Canadian sensation **Simone Osborne** as Juliette. Next was VO's witty and irreverent new production of *The Barber of Seville*, conceived by theatre director Dennis Garnhum, followed by a widely-praised grand-scale production of *Aida*. "[VO's *Barber* is] good-natured, frothy bit of fun... it's just what the barber ordered," praised the *Georgia Straight*. The *Vancouver Sun* called *Aida* "one of the most musically impressive Vancouver productions of Verdi in recent memory".

"We are all very pleased with these results and thankful for the strong support from subscribers and patrons, donors and government, and from the broad community," said **James Wright**, Vancouver Opera's General

Director. "The foresight and collective experience of our Board of Directors was also instrumental in this season's success."

"Changing trends made last season tricky, but quick attention to those trends and VO's agile response to those changes resulted in an extremely successful season," commented **Bev Park**, Chair of the VO Board of Directors. "Support from the community for the season's programming, as well as the quick administrative decisions and focused artistic direction from Jim Wright and his team contributed to a strong turnaround in 2011-2012. We are especially grateful for the hard work of our special event committee, led by David and Manjy Sidoo, who produced an incomparable and very successful 'Overture' event in the spring."

Overture, VO's annual major fundraising event, was elevated to a level not previously attempted by Vancouver Opera, featuring Academy Award- and Grammy Award-winning singer **Jennifer Hudson** and Vancouver spoken-word poet **Shane Koyczan**.

The 2011-2012 season was the first to be rehearsed in VO's new home, the **Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera**, after the company took swift advantage, near the end of the previous season, of the opportunity to consolidate all of its administrative and production operations in one building. The three most generous contributions made towards infrastructure and programming at the new centre were a \$1-million gift from **Michael & Inna O'Brian**; a \$500,000 gift from philanthropist and longtime VO supporter **Martha Lou Henley**, and \$1-million to the Vancouver Opera Foundation from the family of **Moh and Yulanda Faris** to launch and support the **Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program**, a new season-long training intensive for emerging singers that will operate out of the O'Brian Centre beginning in the fall of 2012. Several other major gifts from Mission Hill Family Estate, Gordon and Mary Christopher, Yoshiko Karasawa, Regina Boxer, and Bruce and Lis Welch went toward supporting the O'Brian Centre and VO's programming.

The O'Brian Centre was a catalyst for several collaborations with the local community and arts groups in 2011-2012. For national Culture Days, VO opened its doors to the community for a behind-the-scenes look at opera production. Several donor and subscriber appreciation events were also held in the new facility, as well as tours for media and local political and community leaders. The O'Brian Centre will provide ever-increasing opportunities for VO to continue its long-standing commitment to engaging the local community and the community at large.

Elsewhere in the community, VO continued its practise of offering free dress rehearsal tickets to residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside at the Carnegie Community Centre, and is proud to have renamed the program **The Jim Green Night Before the Opera**, in memory of the respected arts advocate, community builder and opera lover.

New Board Members

Three esteemed community leaders were elected to the VO Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on August 23, 2012:



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Patricia Graham is Vice President, Digital for Pacific Newspaper Group, publisher of *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* and their digital properties. She was editor-in-chief of *The Vancouver Sun* and vancouver.sun.com for 8 years. She serves on the board of VGH-UBC Hospital Foundation, and the Advisory Group to the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology at Simon Fraser University. She received a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in 2012.

Sherry Killam is a practicing artist, specifically in painting and photography. She is a graduate of UBC and The Emily Carr School of Art and Design (now Emily Carr University). She is Co-Founder of French Country Antiques and has a long association with The Vancouver Art Gallery, including serving for eight years as a trustee.

Michael Stevenson was President of Simon Fraser University from 2000 to 2010 and has extensive experience in international education. He is a prize-winning scholar and author and has received the Queen's Jubilee Medal and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his contributions to education. In addition to Vancouver Opera, he serves on the boards of the PuSh Festival, GenomeBC, and Ebound Canada.

Vancouver Opera Board of Directors, 2012-2013

Bev Park - Chair

Yuri Fulmer – Vice Chair

Mary Jordan - Treasurer

Lis Welch - Secretary

Directors

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Heather Clarke

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Patricia Graham

Yoshiko Karasawa

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Martin L. MacLachlan

Paul McEwen

Inna O'Brian

Michael O'Brian

Bill Sirett

Michael Stevenson

Susan Van der Flier



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Gwyneth Westwick, President, **Vancouver Opera Guild**
Bruce M. Wright, Chair, **Vancouver Opera Foundation**

Distinguished Honourary Members:

Yulanda M. Faris
Martha Lou Henley CM
Kenneth W. Mahon

*The 2011-2012 season was sponsored by **Goldcorp Inc.** in the third of a three-season sponsorship, the first multi-season sponsorship in VO's history. Goldcorp has renewed its sponsorship for an additional three years.*

-30-