

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE February 15, 2016  
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## VO appoints new General Director

Kim Gaynor to replace retiring James W. Wright  
beginning in 2016-2017 season

**Vancouver, BC** ~ The Board of Directors of Vancouver Opera is delighted to announce the appointment of **Kim Gaynor** as the company's next General Director, effective July 1, 2016. Ms. Gaynor will replace James W. Wright, who is retiring after 17 years in the position.

**Kim Gaynor** is a highly regarded Canadian administrative leader with more than 30 years in influential and senior positions with cultural and performing arts institutions and festivals in Canada, the United Kingdom, and continental Europe. She comes to Vancouver Opera from the Verbier Festival, a popular and respected international music festival in Switzerland, where she has served successfully as Managing Director for the past 10 years. Created in 1994, the Verbier Festival offers 65 classical concerts over 17 days and a range of educational activities including a professional music academy.

Before her tenure at Verbier Festival, she was Managing Director and Co-founder of Festival Retz, a chamber music and chamber opera festival in Austria; the administrator of the Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition, in London, U.K.; and Head of Marketing Administration at Royal Opera House, London.

In Canada, Kim Gaynor has served as Administrative Director of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Marketing Director of The National Arts Centre Orchestra, in Ottawa, and Managing Director of L'Opéra de Montréal. Ms. Gaynor began her career as a Touring Officer with Canada Council for the Arts, a position in which she travelled extensively throughout Canada, including to many communities in British Columbia. She holds a Master of Business Administration from York University, where she concentrated on arts and media administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Canadian Studies from the University of Toronto. She was born in Hamilton, Ontario and grew up in Burlington, Ontario.

Ms. Gaynor is bilingual in English and French.

In making the announcement, **Pascal Spothelfer**, Chair of the VO Board of Directors, said, "On behalf of the entire Vancouver Opera community I am delighted to welcome Kim Gaynor to Vancouver as our new General Director. We have been blessed with a very strong leader in Jim Wright for the past 17 years and to find the right successor who will lead Vancouver Opera's transition into its new festival format while honouring its traditions was a daunting task. Kim emerged as the ideal candidate from our extensive international search and we are thrilled to bring her back to Canada. The opera company

and the community will greatly benefit from her passion, managerial acumen and deep festival experience.”

Added Spothelfer, “Opera as an art form is continuously evolving and Vancouver Opera has always been at the forefront of innovation and creativity in anticipating and responding to change. Kim is the leader we were seeking to manage these dynamics. She understands the Canadian cultural context, has gained tremendous international experience and brings the strategic and operational skills to lead Vancouver Opera into a very exciting future.”

**Kim Gaynor** said, “I am thrilled and honoured to have been chosen to lead Vancouver Opera into a new era. Vancouver Opera already has a long history of excellent productions and a well deserved reputation for innovation under Jim Wright’s exemplary leadership. The organization is fortunate to have a professional chorus and its own opera orchestra, one of only two in Canada, under the inspiring direction of Maestro Jonathan Darlington. This tradition will be nourished and developed.

“The decision to make the transition to predominantly a festival format is a courageous one, designed to ensure the future viability and vitality of the organization, and one which I wholeheartedly endorse. To be given the opportunity to help create and define a new festival in Vancouver’s already vibrant festival scene is very exciting. The ten years I have been managing the Verbier Festival have taught me that festivals possess the power to enrich, to stimulate and to motivate existing and new audiences in ways that regular seasons often do not. They also are fertile ground for developing new partnerships, both artistic and business, and for firing the imagination of everyone involved. I am entirely convinced that the festival format will attract a new public for Vancouver Opera, as well as pleasing current audiences and supporters.”

Added Gaynor, “As a Canadian, I am excited to be able to come back ‘home’ and to contribute what I have learned in more than twenty years of arts management in Europe, to the development of the cultural community in Canada. I particularly look forward to cooperating and collaborating with the city’s other arts organizations. Vancouver is known around the world for its quality of life, and its stunning natural beauty. As a person who enjoys outdoor pursuits of all kinds, I am sure I will make myself a new home quickly.”

Ms. Gaynor currently resides in Switzerland and will relocate to Vancouver at the completion of this year’s Verbier Festival, in August, 2016.