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11 JULY 2011

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Minnesota Opera finishes in the black for the ninth year in a row

Artistic, box office and fundraising success reported at Annual Meeting

Minneapolis—Minnesota Opera finished its 2011 fiscal year on June 30 with a balanced budget.

“With great enthusiasm, I announce that Minnesota Opera finished the 2010–2011 season in the black for the ninth year in a row,” said new **PRESIDENT AND GENERAL DIRECTOR ALLAN NAPLAN**. “The company’s track record of artistic excellence matched with fiscal responsibility is what attracted me to this company, and I’m thrilled that this season’s success will both add to this estimable record while laying a healthy foundation for seasons to come.

NAPLAN continued: “This season, Minnesota Opera achieved tremendous success through performances that attracted record attendance, education programming which exposed more people than ever to the operatic art form and fundraising from generous donors both locally and nationally that exceeded \$3 million. In addition to the Annual Fund, donors also contributed over \$1 million to The Kevin Smith Legacy Fund to honor the company’s long-time president. The fund created an endowment for the company’s rehearsal and administrative home, the Minnesota Opera Center. On behalf of the entire Opera family, I am proud to extend my deepest appreciation to the many supporters and patrons whose commitment to great opera made this yet another successful season for Minnesota Opera.”

The company reported many institutional successes at its annual meeting on June 16, 2011, including:

Strong Ticket Sales and Subscription Growth

Minnesota Opera played to 92.3% capacity, an increase over the previous season, and experienced a 1.8% growth in subscription base. In addition to achieving an unprecedented surplus on its operational budget through ticket sales, for the first time in company history, Minnesota Opera sold over \$1 million in single ticket revenue and made the original budget goal by the closing of the penultimate production of the season (*La traviata*).

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Artistic, Educational and Institutional Success

The 2010–2011 season was also a year of artistic, programmatic and institutional growth, as encapsulated below:

MINNESOTA OPERA'S NEW WORKS INITIATIVE, the company's landmark program designed to infuse the operatic art form with new commissions and revivals of contemporary American works, continued with the first American professional revival of Bernard Herrmann's *Wuthering Heights*. Now in the third year of a seven-year program, the New Works Initiative has raised over \$5 million of its \$7 million goal. Minnesota Opera recorded the April 19 and 21 performances in HD for national and international release. This project has been made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Cultural STAR Program and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

"Other highlights of the year included the stylish, sophisticated production of Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* with internationally acclaimed countertenor **DAVID DANIELS** and the exquisite soprano **SUSANNA PHILLIPS** in the title roles," said **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DALE JOHNSON**. "In her American operatic stage debut, Romanian mezzo-soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU** thrilled audiences as Cinderella, dueling sopranos **JUDITH HOWARTH** and **BRENDA HARRIS** returned in *Mary Stuart* (the second installment of Donizetti's Tudor trilogy of operas and a part of Minnesota Opera's acclaimed Bel Canto series) and the captivating soprano **ELIZABETH FUTRAL** made her long-awaited return to the stage in *La traviata*.

The Education Program, through the in-school program **COOPERATION!**, brought opera to over 6,500 students in 27 schools statewide. A highlight of the year was a week-long collaboration with the Central Lakes Symphony and School District 206 in Alexandria, Minnesota, which included the community orchestra and school students performing a concert version of *Carmen* with professional soloists. **PROJECT OPERA**, Minnesota Opera's vocal training program for young singers, performed Hans Werner Henze's children's opera, *Tom Thumb*, at the Ritz Theater in Northeast Minneapolis. Next season, **PROJECT OPERA** will perform a newly commissioned opera for young voices based on Lois Lowry's novel, *The Giver*.

Changes in Minnesota Opera's Leadership

Minnesota Opera announced November 11, 2010, **ALLAN NAPLAN** had been named President and General Director of Minnesota Opera effective March 1, 2011. After a national search, he was the enthusiastic choice of a search committee comprising present and past board members, and appointed by the Minnesota Opera Board on November 10, 2010. "Finding the right successor to Kevin Smith's 30-year legacy was both a challenge and an honor," said **MINNESOTA OPERA BOARD CHAIR CHIP EMERY**. "We're thrilled to have found an extraordinary talent in Allan Naplan. He will be an exceptional asset to the Twin Cities arts community."

Changes in the Minnesota Opera Board of Directors

Minnesota Opera's Board expressed appreciation at its annual meeting to directors completing their terms: Tom Foley, Denver Gilliland, Mary Lazarus, Diana Murphy, Elizabeth Redleaf, Connie Remele and Virginia Stringer.

The board welcomed directors who were voted on for a first term: Jane Confer, Sharon Hawkins, Margaret Houlton, Ruth Huss, David Meline, Don Romanaggi and Bernt von Ohlen. The board also welcomed renewing directors who were voted on for a second term: Heinz Hutter, Lynne Looney, Luis Pagan-Carlo, Jose Peris and Simon Stevens.

Officers were elected to serve one-year terms at the annual meeting, as well. Sidney "Chip" Emery will serve as Chair, Shelli Chase as Vice-Chair, Stephanie Prem as Secretary and Heinz Hutter as Treasurer.

The 2011–2012 season opens September 24, 2011, with a new Minnesota Opera production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

The Minnesota Opera's mission is to produce opera and opera education programs
at the highest artistic level that inspire and entertain our audiences
and enrich the cultural life of our community.