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## **CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY CLOSES ACCLAIMED 2012/2013 SEASON WITH 90% ATTENDANCE**

**Toronto** – The **Canadian Opera Company** has closed another successful opera season by recording an average attendance of **90%** for 2012/2013. A total of **114,133** patrons attended the **61** performances of the company's seven mainstage productions this season in the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts: Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Richard Strauss's *Salome* and Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

This season, the COC recorded **73,606 subscription tickets** and **35,691 single tickets**, generating a **net ticket revenue of \$9.9 million**. The 12/13 season also saw at least **9,278** of these tickets sold to people under the age of 30.

"I am proud to say that this has been one of the best seasons the COC has ever had, receiving high praise from critics and patrons alike for our performances and demonstrating great consistency in our productions," says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. "All of the operas we presented were extremely well thought-through, with superb casts and great artists involved on stage, in the pit, and behind the scenes. The fantastic work by our orchestra and chorus is a testament to the great job our music director, Johannes Debus, has been doing since he arrived four years ago, as well as the expert stewardship that our chorus master, Sandra Horst, brings to the chorus."

On June 3, 2013, the COC received **25 Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations** (presented by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts) for its artists and productions this season, taking 16 nominations in the opera division and another nine nominations in the musical theatre/opera division.

More than 30 of opera's brightest and acclaimed stars, including singers, conductors, directors and designers made their mainstage debuts with the COC in 12/13, including singers **Anna Christy, Stephen Costello, Melanie Diener, Elza van den Heever, Isabel Leonard, Brian Mulligan, Franz-Josef Selig, Erika Sunnegårdh and Ramón Vargas**; director **Peter Sellars**; and visual artists **Jean-Noël Lavesvre and Bill Viola**. Returning artists included singers **Isabel Bayrakdarian, Russell Braun, Judith Forst, Alan Held, Ben Heppner, Richard Margison, Adrienne Pieczonka, Michael Schade and Tamara Wilson**; conductor **Stephen Lord**; directors **Christopher Alden, David Alden, Robert Carsen and Atom Egoyan**; and designer **Michael Levine**.

The COC's 12/13 productions achieved great critical success opening with *Il Trovatore*, "a stunning, virtually note-perfect production" (*Globe and Mail*) that "will be remembered as yet another jewel in the ever-more impressive crown of the Canadian Opera" (*Toronto Sun*).

The return of *Die Fledermaus* to the COC mainstage was heralded as "rich, racy, randy and irreverent" (*Toronto Star*) and described as a "smart, sexy production [that] will make you see and hear it in a new light" (*NOW Magazine*).

*Tristan und Isolde* allowed "the audience to see the opera in a fresh, imaginative framework" (*NOW Magazine*), creating "one of the most dramatic, moving and resonant operatic experiences the COC has ever presented" (*Globe and Mail*), filled with "a treasure trove of truly impressive vocal talent" (*Toronto Sun*), and drew forth the statement that "we live in a city with a truly great opera company and this production of *Tristan und Isolde* is a triumphant reminder of that fact" (*Toronto Star*).

*La clemenza di Tito* boasted “a galaxy of stellar vocal performances and a superb orchestral performance (Daniel Cohen conducting) to support it” (*Toronto Star*) and a directorial concept that suggested “opera is better when it provokes, for whatever reason” (*Globe and Mail*) and “the opera will get you talking. And that’s a good thing” (*NOW Magazine*).

*Lucia di Lammermoor* was received as “not your standard *Lucia*; it is not simply a feast of great singing, although its singing is first-rate. It is an almost too-powerful interpretation of a classic that works, even as it disturbs” (*Globe and Mail*) and noted for how it “offered us a fresh and splendid approach to a work that has been too frequently denigrated as a series of vocal set pieces in search of a home” (*Toronto Star*).

The revival of *Salome* was heralded as “one of the dark jewels of the Canadian Opera Company and essential viewing for anyone looking for riveting music drama” (*NOW Magazine*) and commended as “the sort of production that will thrill some viewers, amuse others, and enrage a few – and that’s pretty much as it should be” (*Globe and Mail*).

The season came to an end with *Dialogues des Carmélites*, called “one of the COC’s best productions” (*NOW Magazine*) and receiving such praise as “the COC has done it again and with an array of stunning leading performances that truly put the ‘Canadian’ in the organization’s name” (*Toronto Star*), and “this production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* was powerful and sobering. . . . We leave the theatre silenced by great art” (*Globe and Mail*).

Success was also seen beyond the mainstage for the 12/13 season, where the COC presented a variety of activities and events aimed at opera enthusiasts, and engaged local patrons and visitors in new and exciting entertainment opportunities.

The COC’s **Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre** welcomed **approximately 15,000** people of all ages to its **77** free events. This season the Free Concert Series, with programming that spans classical, jazz, world music and contemporary dance, featured **five world premieres** and **seven Canadian premieres**, showcased **451** artists and presented **49** works by Canadian composers, **63** works by living composers and **31** works by female composers. The full 2013/2014 performance schedule will be available in August 2013 at [www.coc.ca](http://www.coc.ca).

In the 12/13 season, the **Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour** introduced opera to **15,842** children from kindergarten to grade 6 across Ontario with performances of Dean Burry’s *The Brothers Grimm* and *Hansel and Gretel*, a specially adapted version of Engelbert Humperdinck’s classic fairy tale opera. Commissioned by the COC in 1999, *The Brothers Grimm* is the most-performed Canadian opera of all time. The COC celebrated its 500th performance on December 7, 2012 in Toronto, as part of a specially-created **GrimmFest** that featured three public performances of the school tour production of *The Brothers Grimm* as well as other fairy tale-inspired events. In the GTA, the COC’s popular **After School Opera Program**, presented by Scotiabank, celebrated its 15th anniversary on June 13, 2013. Since it was established in 1997, ASOP has introduced **4,876** children between the ages of seven to 12 to opera and the performing arts through creative and interactive after-school activities offered at five locations in communities across the city.

In total, **43,507** adults, youths and families were introduced to opera and engaged with the COC this past season through the company’s **19** education and outreach programs for children, young adults, school groups and adults, which included the Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour, After School Opera Program, GrimmFest, March Break Free Concert, Summer Opera Camp, Summer Youth Intensive, Youth Opera Lab, Living Opera, Opera Creation Program, Opera Connect, Opera Exchange, Opera Talks, BMO Financial Group Pre-Performance Opera Chats, BMO Financial Group Student Dress Rehearsals, custom workshops, student group packages to mainstage performances, teacher-focused opera professional development, opera appreciation courses and tours, and building tours.

The COC’s 13/14 season begins **October 3, 2013**. It ranks among the most exciting yet for the company with more Canadian and international stars on the mainstage than ever before, and includes three COC premieres and three new COC productions: the COC presents Giacomo Puccini’s *La Bohème* in a new production featuring

some of Canada's brightest stars; COC Music Director **Johannes Debus** conducts his first *Peter Grimes* with a production of Benjamin Britten's operatic masterpiece starring acclaimed Canadian tenor **Ben Heppner** in the iconic title role; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Così fan tutte* returns in a new COC production by renowned film and theatre director **Atom Egoyan** with Debus conducting and a company debut by renowned baritone **Sir Thomas Allen**; Giuseppe Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* stars great Canadian diva **Adrienne Pieczonka** in a role debut; George Frideric Handel's *Hercules* is a COC premiere in a new COC production by world-renowned director **Peter Sellars** with a star-studded cast; Gaetano Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*, also a COC premiere, stars soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky** and baritone **Russell Braun** in role debuts; Jules Massenet's *Don Quichotte* is the season's final COC premiere, featuring Debus in another conducting debut and the world's pre-eminent bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto** in the title role.

Making their COC debuts in the 13/14 season are singers **Phillip Addis, Sir Thomas Allen, Paul Appleby, Layla Claire, Lucy Crowe, Grazia Doronzio, Joyce El-Khoury, Giuseppe Filianoti, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Ekaterina Gubanova, Teodor Ilincăi, Eric Owens** and **Roland Wood**; conductors **Carlo Rizzi** and **Corrado Rovaris**; and directors **Linda Brovsky, Sergio Morabito** and **Jossi Wieler**. Returning artists include singers **Russell Braun, Alice Coote, Richard Croft, Tracy Dahl, David Daniels, Alan Held, Ben Heppner, Quinn Kelsey, David Lomeli, Allyson McHardy, Adrienne Pieczonka, Dimitri Pittas** and **Sondra Radvanovsky**; conductors **Harry Bicket** and **Stephen Lord**; and directors **Neil Armfield, John Caird, Atom Egoyan, Stephen Lawless** and **Peter Sellars**. All performances take place in the company's home, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, and feature the renowned COC Orchestra and Chorus.

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Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour: **Xstrata**

Presenting Sponsor of Opera Under 30 and *Operation 9: Sweet Revenge*: **TD Bank Group**

Presenting Sponsor of After School Opera Program: **Scotiabank**

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The COC's production of *Salome* was generously underwritten in part by **Mark and Gail Appel**

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*Lucia di Lammermoor* Production Co-Sponsors: **CIBC** and **CIBC Mellon**

The COC's new production of *La Bohème* has been generously underwritten by **Jerry and Geraldine Heffernan**

The COC's new production of *Così fan tutte* has been generously underwritten in part by **BMO Financial Group**

*Un ballo in maschera* Production Sponsor: **CIBC**

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**The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb and The Slight Family Foundation, is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is also supported by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC Foundation and other generous donors.**

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### **About the Canadian Opera Company**

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. Designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006, and is also the performance venue for The National Ballet of Canada. For more information on the COC, visit its award-winning website, [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

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For more information or to request production photographs, please contact:  
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