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COC 2011/2012 SEASON ACHIEVES 91% ATTENDANCE AND FOURTH HIGHEST SINGLE TICKET SALES IN HISTORY

Toronto – Today at the Canadian Opera Company’s Annual General Meeting, COC Board President Philip C. Deck announced that in 2011/2012 the company achieved an average attendance of 91%, and its fourth highest single ticket sales in its history. The COC also overcame an operating deficit by accessing its special cash reserves to post a modest surplus of \$10,000.

“In 2011/2012, the Canadian Opera Company continued to raise the bar for opera in Toronto with artistic triumphs such as our new productions of *Rigoletto*, *Love from Afar* and the double-bill of *A Florentine Tragedy* and *Gianni Schicchi*, and new heights in performance quality on the way to posting an impressive 91% attendance capacity,” said COC Board President Philip C. Deck.

The COC’s operating expenses for the 11/12 season were \$35,575,000 with revenues of \$35,585,000. Box Office revenue represented 31% of total operating revenues, with fundraising accounting for 25%, government funding accounting for 19%, and 15% coming from other income sources such as space and production rentals. The remaining 10% came from other grants generated by the parking fee and third-party rental revenue drawn from the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, as well as a contribution from the Canadian Opera Foundation drawn from the normal distribution of interest earnings on the endowment funds and a special cash reserve created from the COC’s prior operating surpluses that is specifically earmarked to support artistic goals for future seasons.

“I am incredibly grateful to our patrons, subscribers and generous donors for their constant support and dedication because they allow us the means to reach the artistic heights that we do,” added Deck. “In the face of modest reductions in ticket sales and increasing production costs this year, we were forced to utilize our foundation capital to bring our budget to breakeven. To continue on the artistic path we have committed to at the COC, we need to constantly renew our subscriber base, look for ways to control the escalation of costs and build up our financial resources in order to ensure that we can continue to earn the loyalty that our long term supporters have always shown us.”

COC General Director Alexander Neef said, “I am very proud of the artistic achievements that we saw in the past season but great art takes time and money, and we are constantly challenged to fund our ambitious artistic mission. We will continue to raise our artistic standards to deliver the best operatic experiences, and I am gratified to know that our productions increasingly stand with the best in the world. The world’s opera artists and administrators acknowledge what we’ve known for years: that we have a great company. The casts, the music, the productions, the magnificent hall, it’s all right here to create a live experience, which is unlike any other.

“In everything we do at the COC, we will continue to stretch our artistic boundaries on stage and reach out to new communities through our programs and initiatives off stage as much as possible,” added Neef. “There is much work to do, but, if there’s one thing I can say about this company, it’s that we are never complacent. We are always looking for new and different ways to present art and develop the means to share it with others.”

The company’s 11/12 season was among its most captivating and innovative to date, featuring two Canadian premieres, two COC premieres and three new productions. The COC opened its fall run with the COC premiere of Gluck’s *Iphigenia in Tauris*, featuring the world’s leading Iphigenia, mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, in a Dora Award-winning performance and a Dora Award-winning production. It was paired with a new COC production of Verdi’s *Rigoletto* set within the rich, ribald surroundings of a 19th-century gentleman’s club. The winter months

offered the return of the COC's lavish 2008 production of Puccini's *Tosca* and the Canadian premiere of acclaimed Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's *Love from Afar*, one of the most performed and successful operas written in this century. The COC concluded its 11/12 season with the return of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, absent from the COC stage for 24 years; a double bill of witty one-act operas with the Canadian premiere of Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy* and the return of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* in a new COC production that won the Dora Award for outstanding set design; and, the COC premiere of Handel's *Semele*.

In total, 125,238 patrons attended the 67 performances of the seven productions comprising the 11/12 mainstage season at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. The COC recorded 77,509 subscription tickets and 42,216 single tickets – the fourth highest number of single tickets sold in the COC's history – generating a net ticket revenue of \$10.9 million.

Over 6,000 loyal supporters, subscribers, donors, corporations, and foundations contributed more than \$8.24 million (net) to the COC in 11/12. Approximately 76% of the \$8.24 million – \$6.3 million – came from individuals in support of the COC's mainstage productions and artists, as well as transition and endowment funding, training, and education and outreach programs. In addition, many donors contributed annually through the Golden Circle, President's Council and Friends of the COC patron programs, including a lead gift from an anonymous donor to the Year-End Matching Appeal.

Individual support is especially crucial to the COC's commitment to stage new productions each season in order to remain an artistically relevant producer of opera, as well as providing a diversified revenue stream from rental and co-production opportunities. The COC's new production of *Rigoletto* was generously underwritten in part by Tim and Frances Price, Judy and Wilmot Matthews and Gail and Bob Farquharson; the new double-bill production of *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi* was generously underwritten in part by Riki Turofsky and Charles Petersen, and the Ensemble Studio production of *Semele* was generously underwritten in part by Wendy J. Thompson, the late Samuel A. Rea and ARIAS. The COC's production of *Tosca* was originally made possible through a generous gift from Delia M. Moog.

COC fundraising efforts through special projects and events, including the 18th Annual KPMG Opera Golf Classic, the 13th Annual Fine Wine Auction, and Operation 8, netted over \$418,000 to the company.

The COC continued to receive support from a number of loyal corporate sponsors: Sun Life Financial as the Presenting Sponsor of SURTITLES™ and supporter of Wheelchair Seating, Hearing-Assistive and Vision-Impaired Devices; Jaguar Land Rover Canada as the Official Automotive Sponsor; Xstrata as the Title Sponsor of the Ensemble Studio School Tour; Trius wine from Andrew Peller Limited as the Official Canadian Wine of the COC; Delvinia as the Digital Marketing Sponsor; CTV and *The Globe and Mail* as the Official Media Sponsors; Hilton Toronto as the Preferred Hospitality Sponsor; Calvin Klein as the Preferred Fragrance Sponsor; Air France as the Official Airline Sponsor; and TD Bank Group as Presenting Sponsor of Opera Under 30 and Operation 8. Production Sponsors for the 11/12 season included BMO Financial Group (*Love from Afar*), RBC (*Semele*) and CIBC and CIBC Mellon (*A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi*).

Stable government investment in the COC was vital to the company's operations in the 11/12 season, with all levels of government demonstrating their support through grants from Toronto Culture, Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. Additional investment was also received from the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund in support of the COC's 11/12 spring season.

The COC's Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre welcomed almost 15,000 people of all ages to its 76 free events in 11/12. The Free Concert Series' programming spans classical, jazz, world music and contemporary dance and last season featured four world premieres, highlighted 438 artists – 388 of them Canadian – and presented 14 works by Canadian classical composers, 42 works by living composers and 26 works by female composers.

The Ensemble Studio Competition was launched in 11/12, opening the final round of auditions for the COC's training program for young opera professionals to public attendance for the first time. Ten finalists performed

before a sold-out audience in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre on November 28, 2011, with four singers ultimately selected to join the illustrious Ensemble Studio program in the 12/13 season. The COC Ensemble Studio Competition was presented in part by RBC Foundation and the Hal Jackman Foundation and with the individual support of Laurie and Fareed Ali, Earlane Collins, Ninalee Craig, George and Kathy Dembroski, Marjorie and Roy Linden, Sandra L. Simpson, The Stratton Trust, Colleen Sexsmith, Trina and Don McQueen, Jo Lander, Sue Mortimer, Brian Wilks and an anonymous donor.

In total, 47,652 adults, youths and families were introduced to opera and engaged with the COC last season, through the company's 20 education and outreach programs for children, young adults, school groups and adults, which include the Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour, After School Opera Program, March Break Opera, Summer Opera Camp presented by Scotiabank, Summer Youth Intensive, Youth Opera Lab, Living Opera, Opera Creation Program, Opera 101, Opera Exchange, Opera Talks, BMO Financial Group Pre-Performance Opera Chats, BMO Financial Group Student Dress Rehearsals, custom workshops, opera appreciation courses and tours, and building tours.

The COC began its 12/13 season on September 29, 2012, and is currently presenting Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and J. Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* – the latter in a new COC production. The season continues in January 2013 with one of music history's most influential works, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. The spring run includes Donizetti's *bel canto* masterpiece, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the return of the COC's acclaimed production of Strauss's *Salome*, and Poulenc's operatic masterpiece, *Dialogues des Carmélites*. The Ensemble Studio performance of *La clemenza di Tito* takes place on February 6, 2013.

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 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.

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