

For immediate release: October 3, 2012

## **COC REGRETFULLY ANNOUNCES ABSENCE OF RADIO BROADCASTS OF ITS 2012/2013 SEASON**

**Toronto** - The Canadian Opera Company is disappointed to announce that, after four months of negotiations, the company's offer to the membership of Canadian Actors' Equity Association and the Toronto Musicians Association has been rejected. An agreement would have allowed the COC to continue to produce, in partnership with the CBC, broadcasts of the COC's entire 2012/2013 season on CBC Radio 2 and Radio-Canada's Espace Musique. These broadcasts have been in place since the fall of 2009.

These broadcasts of COC productions are non-revenue generating initiatives that the COC has been proud to produce. They are a valuable means to raising awareness about the vitality and relevancy of opera in the 21st-century, as well as serving as the only tool available to the COC at present to reach all Canadians, enabling the company's season to be heard coast to coast. The COC's seasons were also allowed an international presence via CBC Radio 2's, Radio-Canada's and the COC's websites.

"It is very unfortunate that we were unable to come to an agreement with the unions in order to allow the CBC to broadcast our season as we have for the past three years," says COC General Director Alexander Neef. "The broadcasts were extremely important to the future of opera in this country, and the COC has tried very hard to broker this arrangement because we felt so strongly about it. I am personally very disappointed, but we simply were unable to meet the financial expectations of the performers and musicians."

Over the past three seasons, the COC has been pleased to provide the artists of the company over \$600,000 in fees for the right to broadcast these performances. These fees were in addition to the artists' normal performance fees. This season the COC requested a reduction in fees to \$150,000 (from \$200,000 per season) for the broadcasts.

Neef continues, "I am also extremely sorry that this rejection by CAEA and TMA of the COC's offer has affected the CBC's Saturday broadcast schedule. CBC has been an extraordinarily good partner in this venture, helping us re-launch these broadcasts in 2009, but there is no question that we are dealing with an extremely challenging economic environment right now that has affected both our companies. We are disappointed on so many levels, and we can only hope that there will be an opportunity to bring these broadcasts back at some point in the future."

A total of 21 COC productions have been heard over Canadian airwaves since the 2009/2010 season, including the world premiere of *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (2009); the Canadian premieres of *Maria Stuarda* (2010), *Love from Afar*, (2012) and *A Florentine Tragedy* (2012); and the COC premieres of *Nixon in China* (2011), *Orfeo ed Euridice* (2011), *Iphigenia in Tauris* (2011) and *Semele* (2012). In addition to featuring the world-renowned COC Orchestra and Chorus, these productions showcased such illustrious and world-famous singers as Jane Archibald, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Russell Braun, Lawrence Brownlee, Alice Coote, Clifton Forbis, Susan Graham, Jill Grove, Alan Held, Joseph

Kaiser, Richard Margison, Evgeny Nikitin, Adrienne Pieczonka, Sondra Radvanovsky, John Relyea, Michael Schade, Erin Wall and Lawrence Zazzo.

### **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).

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Jennifer Pugsley, Media Relations Manager, 416-306-2303, e-mail: [jenniferp@coc.ca](mailto:jenniferp@coc.ca)