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## **CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY REPORTS MODEST SURPLUS FOR 2010/2011 SEASON**

**Toronto** – Today at the Canadian Opera Company’s Annual General Meeting, COC Board President Philip C. Deck announced the COC achieved another successful performance year in 2010/2011, recording a modest surplus of \$10,000. In its fifth season at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the COC generated ticket revenue of \$12.3 million and recorded an average attendance of 94%.

“In a year in which virtually every arts organization in North America visibly suffered, the COC balanced its books and achieved a very impressive attendance capacity of 94%,” said COC Board President Philip C. Deck. “For this we remain extremely grateful to the thousands of patrons and donors as well as our public and private sponsors who support the COC in the belief that the art we create improves and informs everyone’s lives.”

In total, 129,450 patrons attended the 66 performances of the seven operas comprising the 10/11 mainstage season, including a special performance of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* featuring members of the COC Ensemble Studio. Box Office revenue represented 33% of total operating revenues, with fundraising and grants accounting for 25%, government funding accounting for 19%, and 17% coming from other income sources such as space and production rentals. The remaining 6% came from other grants made up of contributions from the Canadian Opera Foundation, reflecting a normal distribution of earnings on the endowment funds, and the Canadian Opera House Corporation, through the general assets and activities of owning and operating the Four Seasons Centre.

Over 6,000 loyal supporters, subscribers and donors, corporations, and foundations contributed more than \$8.6 million (net) to the COC in 10/11, an increase of almost 5% over the previous year. Approximately 75% of the \$8.6 million – \$6.5 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 Dr. William Waters and an anonymous donor to the Year-End Matching Appeal. Individual support is particularly 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 productions of *Aida* and *The Magic Flute* were generously underwritten in part by Tim and Frances Price and the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, respectively.

COC fundraising efforts through special projects and events, including the 17th Annual KPMG Opera Golf Classic, the 12th Annual Fine Wine Auction, and Operation VII, netted over \$360,000 to the company.

The COC continued to receive support from several loyal corporate sponsors: Sun Life Financial with the Sun Life Financial Accessibility Program; Jaguar Land Rover Canada as the Official Automotive Sponsor; 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; and the Hilton Toronto as the Preferred Hospitality Sponsor. Production Sponsors for the season included RBC (*The Magic Flute*) and CIBC and CIBC Mellon (*Nixon in China*). Other sponsors were Xstrata, TD Bank Group, BMO Financial Group and National Bank Financial Group.

Government investment in, and support for, the COC continued to remain a cornerstone of the company’s core funding model, with all levels of government demonstrating their commitment for a strong and vibrant cultural sector. In addition to continued investment by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council, both funding bodies provided support for the COC’s tour of *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* to Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). The tour, which brought significant critical acclaim to the COC, would not have been possible without the support of both government and private donors. The COC is also grateful for the increase to its annual investment from Toronto Culture.

“When we prepare future seasons, the guiding principle is always to balance our artistic ambitions with the financial realities and, when planning seasons upwards of five years in advance, the ongoing fluctuations in the economy can prove challenging to navigate on a yearly basis,” says COC General Director Alexander Neef. “I am very proud that our 10/11 season was extremely successful on both the artistic and financial side, and very grateful for the constant support and dedication of our patrons, subscribers and generous donors. We continue to strive to offer our audiences opera of the highest standards, collaborating with exceptional Canadian and international artists and companies, and the results show that we continue to rank among the best in the world.”

The 10/11 season was a significant year for the COC in many ways as it saw the company add two new productions to its repertoire, perform two 20th-century works and make its long-awaited return to BAM. The COC opened its fall run with a new production of Verdi’s *Aida*, featuring a contemporary Middle Eastern setting that stripped away the conventional Egyptian iconography. Paired with *Aida* was Britten’s *Death in Venice*, starring Alan Oke in a Dora Award-winning performance. The winter months offered a new production of Mozart’s beloved *The Magic Flute* and the COC premiere of one of the most performed and respected operas of the late 20th-century, Adams’ *Nixon in China*. In the spring, the COC made its second tour in 18 years to the world-renowned BAM with its 2009 production of Robert Lepage’s *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. Upon returning to Toronto, the COC concluded its 10/11 season with an intriguing combination of operatic repertoire: Rossini’s *Cinderella (La Cenerentola)*, R. Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* and the company premiere of Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the latter earning Dora Awards for outstanding production and outstanding musical direction.

In 10/11, the COC’s popular Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre marked its fifth year with 79 free events ranging from vocal recitals to cutting-edge contemporary dance performances, and continued to draw capacity crowds. The Free Concert Series attracted approximately 15,000 audience members of all backgrounds and ages who experienced the artistic excellence and cultural diversity of the city. Also, in addition to travelling to elementary schools across Ontario, the company’s annual Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour brought opera to a completely new audience in performing its school tour adaptation of *Cinderella* for the Inuit communities of Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq in northern Quebec.

The COC began its 2011/2012 season this fall with the company premiere of Gluck’s *Iphigenia in Tauris* and a new production of Verdi’s *Rigoletto*. It continues in January 2012 with Puccini’s *Tosca* and the Canadian premiere of Kaija Saariaho’s *Love from Afar*, one of the most performed 21st-century operas. The spring run includes Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann*, a double bill of darkly witty, one-act operas: Alexander Zemlinsky’s *A Florentine Tragedy* (a Canadian premiere) and Giacomo Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*, and the COC premiere of Handel’s *Semele*. The Ensemble Studio performance of *Semele* on the mainstage takes place on May 23, 2012.

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

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the five largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. The COC celebrates its 62nd anniversary with the 2011/2012 season that was officially opened at the end of September. Under its new 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 Canadian Opera Company, please visit its award-winning website at coc.ca.

- 30 -

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