annual report

vancouver opera 2015 – 2016

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bold programming & box office success

In the year preceding its transition to a season featuring an opera festival, Vancouver Opera continued to achieve artistic success with imaginative productions that created excitement throughout the community. The company's uncompromisingly high standards were demonstrated in both traditional and contemporary repertoire, beginning in the fall with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, featuring Canadian soprano Simone Osborne. A new production — and the Canadian and company premiere — of Nico Muhly's hauntingly scored *Dark Sisters* (2011) connected strongly with audiences on an important social issue. Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, beautifully staged and beautifully sung by alternating principal casts, was followed by a new production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*. Astute casting of top-tier Broadway stars, together with dazzling design and expressive playing by the VO Orchestra, under the baton of music director Jonathan Darlington, resulted in record-setting ticket revenues, capping a season of box office achievement. At the O'Brian Centre and in community venues, "Opera Tales", VO's beguiling fairy tale / opera mash-up, delighted audiences of all ages.



Above Left: ***Dark Sisters.*** **Photo by Tim Matheson.**
Right: **Mohoko Kinoshita in *Madama Butterfly*. Photo by Tim Matheson.**

stickboy on tour

VO's fifth originally-commissioned opera, by composer Neil Weisensel and librettist Shane Koyczan, which had its world premiere in 2014, was subsequently adapted for spring 2016 regional touring. Thanks to a generous investment from the Province of British Columbia, the work played to nearly twenty thousand high school students throughout B.C., producing profound responses and eliciting meaningful discussion on the timely issue of bullying.

new leadership, new perspectives

In February 2016, the company announced the appointment of Kim Gaynor as its next general director, succeeding James W. Wright, who retired after 17 years at the company's helm. In June, Jim and his many accomplishments were honoured at BraVO, a gala concert and dinner. Kim Gaynor, whose credentials include a decade managing the internationally admired Verbier Festival, joins the company for the 2016-2017 season, which begins in November with an enthralling new production of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. In January 2017 VO will present a daring South African adaptation of Verdi's *Macbeth* in collaboration with PuSh International Performing Arts Festival and Il Centro | Italian Cultural Centre. The season culminates in April / May 2017 with the three-week inaugural Vancouver Opera Festival.

community support for the Vancouver Opera Festival

By the end of the 2015–2016 season, support for the inaugural Vancouver Opera Festival was gathering momentum from stakeholders: all three levels of government expressed confidence in the company's new direction through undiminished or increased operating grants; support from individuals conveyed robust enthusiasm; and VO's corporate sponsors and supporters remained steadfast. Since then, there have been even more meaningful expressions of support through generous individual donations. The momentum will continue to build in the fall of 2016 with the public announcement of a rich array of additional inter-disciplinary festival programming.

BMO overture

VO's stylish annual fundraising event, this year held in April, was once again a sparkling success. After being entertained by headliners The Tenors, guests enjoyed a sumptuous meal served by Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver, with wines provided by Mission Hill Family Estate, both of which were event sponsors. VO thanks them, as well as presenting sponsor BMO, entertainment sponsor Magnum Projects Ltd., limelight sponsors Aquilini Group and Anthem Properties, and additional event sponsor M.J. Jewellers Ltd. VO is grateful to the BMO Overture committee, co-chaired by Cindy Richmond and Chantelle Wong, to VO Board members Susan Van der Flier and Divyesh Gadhia, and to Isabelle Spothelfer, for their tireless work on this event.

education – inspiring young people

VO's educational initiatives received heightened focus and concentrated energy during the 2015–2016 season. In addition to the popular perennial programs Project Opera, Work Experience, Opera Experience, and the TD Canada Trust Student Dress Rehearsals, VO's two-week Summer Opera Camps, for middle school-aged students, delivered by VO's own teaching artists, continued to be a huge success. The program was expanded for summer 2016 to add teen participants, who accomplished great things in an intense week of exploration, collaboration and creativity. In the spring, the Delta School District announced its innovative Delta Opera & Performance Academy, to begin in fall 2016 in partnership with VO. The fruits of the school-year-long curriculum program will be presented as a performance at the Vancouver Opera Festival.

engaging the community

Since its first ground-breaking "Opera Speaks" forum in 2002, VO has engaged thousands of people in the community in discussion and reflection about serious issues and themes arising from its productions. The tradition continued in 2015–2016 with interactive panel discussions on polygamy and freedom of religion and association (*Dark Sisters*) and the cult of stardom and personality in politics and popular culture (*Evita*). VO also continued its series of free previews / ticket giveaways, known as the Jim Green Night Before The Opera, after one of VO's most ardent past champions and celebrated community leaders, presented in collaboration with Carnegie Community Centre. And, VO opened the doors of the O'Brian Centre to the community, as part of the annual national Culture Days initiative.

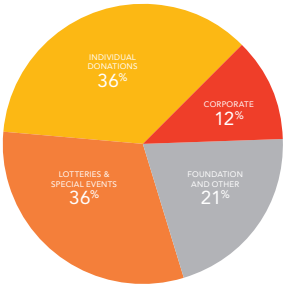




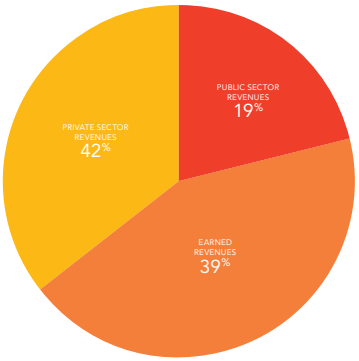
Above: ***Rigoletto.*** **Photo by Tim Matheson.**
Front Page: **Caroline Bowman as Evita. Photo by Tim Matheson.**

stability in a time of unprecedented transition

In a year of careful planning and measured preparation for the 2016–2017 season and the inaugural Vancouver Opera Festival, VO nevertheless also remained focused on the business at hand. VO achieved or exceeded earned revenue targets for all but one campaign, with *Evita*'s ticket sales, in particular, proving an unprecedented success for the company. Contributed revenues remained similarly strong throughout the season, with nearly $100,000 being realized in support of *Stickboy*'s touring production alone, in addition to $200,000 in extraordinary support from the Province of B.C. Ongoing support from many of our corporate partners — including Goldcorp's multi-year season sponsorship — proved key to continued stability in a year of significant transition. As a result, VO achieved an operating surplus of $134,663 on a budget of $9.75 million. This had the effect of reducing its accumulated operating deficit to a manageable $657,266.



Total Private Sector Revenues
2015 – 2016
$4,164,210



Total Revenues
2015 – 2016
$9,909,575

major public, individual & corporate support

Vancouver Opera thanks these leading donors and sponsors for their generosity in 2015–2016:

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