



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 18, 2016

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Darlene Ronald (204) 255-0508
Dronald84@shaw.ca

CONTRACT FOR GENERAL DIRECTOR & CEO LARRY DESROCHERS EXTENDED TO 2021

Elba Haid, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Manitoba Opera, announced today that the company has renewed the contract for Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO, for another five years - expiring May 31, 2021.

“The Board of Trustees is delighted to renew Larry’s contract,” said Haid. “He is a respected cultural leader locally and nationally, and we feel lucky to have him work for our company. He has been sought after by a number of arts organizations, but has been committed to Manitoba Opera. Larry has provided exceptional leadership for Manitoba Opera since his hiring in the fall of 2000. The board was reassured to know that we could count on Larry’s leadership for another five years, as we work to expand our programming, extend our reach into the community, and start an endowment campaign.”

Under Desrochers’ leadership, Manitoba Opera has achieved a number of artistic high-water marks including the commissioning of the company’s first mainstage opera, *Transit of Venus* which premiered in 2007 and the presentation of the North American premiere of *Jason and Hanna* - the first opera in Manitoba to feature child performers in lead roles. In recent seasons, he’s moved the company forward artistically by programming operas never performed previously at Manitoba Opera including *Fidelio*, *Of Mice and Men*, and both of this season’s offerings: *Falstaff* and *Werther*. He has supported the development of local singers and has attracted some of this country’s finest singers to the company.

Desrochers has also improved Manitoba Opera’s financial situation. In addition to posting 12 consecutive balanced budgets, he reduced the debt from 54% of the budget in 2000 to 13% of the budget in 2016. Subscriptions have grown from 2,021 in 2001 to an average of 2,800 over the past five years, and fundraising has increased substantially under Desrochers’ guidance. *Transit of Venus* received unprecedented financial support, including two of the largest single-sum donations (\$250,000 each) ever received by Manitoba Opera.

2. MB Opera Desrochers Contract Renewal

As a director, Desrochers has staged *Fidelio*, *Salome*, *Candide* in Concert, *Transit of Venus*, *Otello*, and *The Magic Flute* for Manitoba Opera.

“I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve Manitoba Opera for another five years,” said Desrochers. “I’m blessed to work with a wonderful board of trustees, a tremendously dedicated staff, and immensely talented artists. There is lots of work to do to serve the community in the broadest means possible, but when 2,000 people jump to their feet at the end of a performance, how can you not love your job? Opera makes people happy, it challenges us, it disturbs us, it creates a sense of wonder, and it helps us understand who we are.”

Larry Desrochers was born in Manitoba and is a graduate of the University of Winnipeg theatre program. His 33-year career spans work in theatre, festivals, film, events, and opera. He founded the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in 1988. He served as the Associate Artistic Director of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (RMTC) where he directed numerous plays including *Burn This* starring Eric McCormack of the TV hit comedy *Will and Grace* and the NTC/NAC Canadian premiere of *M. Butterfly*. Desrochers also directed the world premiere of the play *Transit of Venus* at RMTC in 1992. He produced and directed the Opening Ceremonies of the 1999 Pan Am Games. He is a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Winnipeg. In 2012, Desrochers was recognized with the Winnipeg Arts Council’s *Making a Difference Award*. He has served as Chair for Opera.ca and currently sits on the board of directors for Opera America.