



MANITOBA OPERA

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Manitoba Opera Announces Cancellation of 2020/21 Season Opening Production of *Sweeney Todd*

Manitoba Opera announced today that the 2020/21 season opening production, *Sweeney Todd*, is cancelled. The company made the decision to cancel the Manitoba premiere of this Broadway masterpiece scheduled to run at the Centennial Concert Hall November 7, 10, and 13, owing to a number of reasons in response to the pandemic.

“The Board of Trustees and I came to this conclusion based on a number of factors,” explained Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO. “First and foremost, the safety of our patrons, artists, crew, staff, and volunteers is of paramount importance, and we do not believe that we can guarantee the appropriate level of safety for a full-scale production at this time.

The Province has indicated that it will not be reviewing the re-opening of large venues like the Centennial Concert Hall until September. To prepare a production for November, chorus rehearsals would normally start in August, and rehearsals are not possible with social distancing in place.

Social distancing measures that must be in place for the audience in the Centennial Concert Hall reduces the number of available seats to sell and that means producing large-scale productions is not economically viable at this time.”

Though the fall production has been cancelled, Manitoba Opera will continue to present opera throughout the year. Plans have been developed for a variety of artistic, community engagement, and education programming. Some events will be online, some live, and others will be a combination of both, depending on circumstances.

2. *MB Opera Cancels Sweeney Todd*

These plans include live-streamed concerts in November and February; garden tours; a new Digital Emerging Artists Program; for the kids, Celebrity Opera Storytime; and much more that's currently in development.

Season Opening Concert: The Sopranos of Winnipeg, Saturday, November 7, 7:30 pm

The Sopranos of Winnipeg will feature some of North America's most talented artists who all live right here in our Prairie town! Tracy Dahl, Lara Ciekiewicz, and Monica Huisman, to name a few, along with members of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, will be performing a selection of works in a 75-minute, live-streamed event from the Centennial Concert Hall, Saturday, November 7, beginning at 7:30 pm.

Ticket details and program information to be announced soon.

Sweeney Todd ticket holders will be contacted regarding options for their tickets.

Tosca, Puccini's suspense-filled political thriller, is still scheduled for April 10, 13, and 16, 2021; however, the company will continue to monitor circumstances closer to the production.

"We look forward to returning to the mainstage as soon as it is safe and responsible to do so. In the meantime, we have developed a portfolio of programming content that will provide work for local artists, while helping to build a stronger community during this time of uncertainty," added Desrochers.

"This has been one of the most memorable seasons in our organization's history and with the strength of our board, the commitment of our staff, the passion of our artists, and the support of our loyal fans, I know that before too long we will be together again celebrating our love of opera."

**GALA RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF MRS. TANNIS M. RICHARDSON
POSTPONED UNTIL SPRING 2021**

The Gala Reception at which Winnipeg champion, philanthropist, and volunteer, Mrs. Tannis M. Richardson, C.M, B.Sc. (H. Ec.), LL.D., is to receive The Gail Asper Award, has also been postponed until spring 2021.

The Gail Asper Award was created by Manitoba Opera in 2018 to honour individuals who demonstrate exemplary leadership in a field of endeavor or pursuit of a visionary goal.

Originally planned for April 16, 2020, it was re-scheduled for the fall, but continued uncertainty around the pandemic in terms of gatherings and the current economy, resulted in the committee determining that was not viable.

“Our planning committee is certainly disappointed with the delay in honouring one of Winnipeg’s very deserving champions, but a healthy and safe event is of the utmost importance,” commented Susan Thompson, Honorary Committee Co-Chair.

“COVID-19 has required that we all do our best to plan this event with what we hope will be better timing and a state of wellness. We look forward to seeing everyone in the spring of 2021!”