



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 18, 2026

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Darlene Ronald, Director of Marketing
204-255-0508/204-470-3189
Dronald@mbopera.ca

MANITOBA OPERA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF GORDON GERRARD AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Manitoba Opera today announced that Gordon Gerrard, a Manitoba-born conductor, pianist, and educator, has been selected as the company's artistic director. Gerrard brings a wealth of artistic and administrative experience to the role and is well known as a proponent of innovative and inclusionary programming that explores social change and community engagement. Gerrard begins his five-year contract with the company Tuesday, September 1.

"We are so pleased to welcome Gordon Gerrard to the Manitoba Opera team as artistic director. Gordon is a highly respected conductor, artistic leader, and musician, who many in our community already know through his work across the country," commented Board of Trustees Chair Lori Yorke.

"Manitoba Opera audiences are sure to remember Gordon from his impressive company debut conducting *The Marriage of Figaro* in April. This is a historic moment for Manitoba Opera as we look ahead to new artistic possibilities and ways that we can continue to deepen our engagement with our community, and Gordon will play a vital role in the shaping of all of this."

The artistic director (AD) will be responsible for establishing an inspiring, aspirational artistic vision that reflects Manitoba Opera's heritage and future ambitions. The AD will guide all programming choices, operational artistic priorities, and community interaction with this vision.

Also included in the AD responsibilities: developing and implementing a financially sustainable multi-year repertoire strategy that blends traditional and contemporary works that engage and challenge diverse audiences, from longtime enthusiasts to newcomers; hiring artists; curating productions, community engagement, and education programs that align with MO's values, considering diversity, equity and inclusion, and Indigenous reconciliation; and mentor emerging and established artists.

The artistic director will work closely with all factions of the company: production and artistic team, marketing, public relations, and publicity, development and fundraising, education, and community engagement.

2. MB Opera appoints Gordon Gerrard as Artistic Director, June 2026

“A proud Manitoban, Gordon has built a distinguished career working with leading orchestras and opera companies across the country,” commented Executive Director Michael Blais. “He is widely recognized for his artistic excellence and collaborative leadership. We are thrilled to welcome Gordon into this leadership role, and the entire team is looking forward to working with him as we continue to build on Manitoba Opera’s strong foundation and exciting future.”

Growing up on a farm just outside of Brandon, Manitoba, Gordon Gerrard grew up with music in the house. He started piano lessons at the age of seven and left the farm at 17 for his undergrad at the University of Manitoba. He completed his master’s degree at the Manhattan School of Music (New York). Gerrard believes music serves as a kind of animating life force and appreciates its potential to change people.

Besides his extensive guest engagements with orchestras for both symphonic concerts and opera repertoire, Gerrard just completed a decade-long tenure as the music director for the Regina Symphony Orchestra (which resulted in him being honoured with an appointment as Conductor Emeritus). Since 2023, he has served as the artistic director for City Opera Vancouver, a professional chamber opera company. He will continue in this position in tandem with his role with Manitoba Opera. (See full bio for more information.)

"Coming home to join Manitoba Opera is a true full-circle moment. This is the company where I saw my first opera in the 1990s, and it's where my fascination with this art form truly began," explains Gerrard.

“Manitoba Opera has long been a vital leader in Winnipeg’s rich and vibrant arts scene, earning a formidable reputation across the country not only for the exceptional work on its stage, but for its deeply impactful education and community engagement initiatives. It's a great privilege to work alongside the team and its many partners, including the wonderful musicians of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. I'm excited to help shape the future of the arts in Manitoba.”

Manitoba Opera embarked on a year-long search to fill this newly created position following General Director & CEO Larry Desrochers’ decision to not seek a renewal of his contract which expired in May 2026. Desrochers held the position of general director & CEO for over 25 years. Following a leadership transition review, the company created two roles: executive director and artistic director. Michael Blais, who was the company’s director of operations and joined the company in 2010, was promoted to executive director last August.

The search was led by Harris Leadership Strategies, an executive search, leadership coaching, strategic planning, and career transition services company based in Winnipeg.