



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
August 16, 2007

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OPERA COLORADO EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP CHANGES FOR GENERAL AND ARTISTIC DIRECTORS - GREG CARPENTER APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DENVER -- Opera Colorado announces that its President and General Director, **Peter Russell**, and Artistic Director, **James Robinson**, have resigned from their respective positions. Russell's resignation is effective **September 1, 2007** and is based on his need to pursue other personal and professional interests. Russell will remain an advisor on artistic and production matters to Opera Colorado through January of 2008, and will continue his efforts on behalf of the National Performing Arts Convention (NPAC) due to take place in Denver in June 2008. He was a leader in the effort to attract the convention to our city. Denver was awarded the second NPAC as of September 2004, and since that time Russell has been actively involved in preparations for the event. Russell has been Opera Colorado's President and General Director since September 2001. Robinson, Artistic Director since 2000, has announced that he will be leaving his position as Artistic Director effective **September 1, 2008** and will be assuming a new position at another American opera company but declined to discuss the specifics as a courtesy to that company until their official announcement next month. The Board of Directors has accepted both resignations and promoted **Greg Carpenter**, currently Director of Development, as the company's Executive Director. **Jeremy Shamos** has been named President of the Board of Directors. Opera Colorado is investigating its next steps in regard to artistic leadership and will announce plans for that position in the coming months.

During Russell's tenure at Opera Colorado, the company's budget grew from just over \$3 million to over \$5 million; the amount of cash in the company's endowment grew from \$275,000 to over \$1.5 million; and the number of performances and donor database have grown considerably. Russell summarizes his resignation and future plans, stating that:

The company is currently establishing a five-year strategic plan and as we've analyzed our recent history and where we need to go, I concluded that my recent efforts in opening our new home, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, and preparing a 25th Anniversary Season would be the final stages of my role as President and General Director. Also, while James and I did not come to Opera Colorado as a "package deal," the close nature of our collaboration is so strong that it seems in

the best interests of all concerned for me to shift my role with Opera Colorado at this time to allow the Board a clean slate for a new leadership team. In the interim, James and I will be working in tandem with the board and staff to ensure the ongoing artistic stability and quality of the company.

I have the highest respect for Greg Carpenter, and am confident that he will be an outstanding Executive Director for Opera Colorado.

Robinson has directed numerous productions for the company and this season will direct a revival of his production of LA TRAVIATA and the final production of the season, NIXON IN CHINA. One of America's leading directors, he concentrated on invigorating the production style at Opera Colorado, expanding the company's repertory, collaborating with other North American opera companies and helping to bring national attention to Opera Colorado.

Expanding on his decision, Robinson says:

It has been nothing short of a marvelous experience for me and I have been delighted with the progress Opera Colorado has made over the years. We have achieved wonderful things as a company and as a community, and I am happy that Denver has become a real artistic port of call. I know Opera Colorado will continue to thrive given the great enthusiasm of the board and the opera-going public. I will always lend my support and talents to Opera Colorado. But it's time for someone else to oversee the artistic future of the company. This is a business in which moving forward often means change.

Opera Colorado's Board of Directors shares similar sentiments regarding the transition of leadership. Board Chairman **Sheila Bisenius** remarks:

It is a bittersweet announcement; for the past six years Peter has successfully elevated the company's standing and James Robinson has directed our most successful productions and brought our artistic standard to the highest level of excellence. On behalf of the board, I thank them both for their dedication to Opera Colorado and wish them well as they pursue new interests.

The obvious choice was to appoint Greg Carpenter as the company's executive leader. His background in music performance and arts management, combined with his esteemed reputation in the Denver community, provide the ideal foundation for him to be successful in this position. The opportunity to create a new artistic position is exciting and through our work in developing a strategic plan, we will allow ourselves the opportunity to identify a position that satisfies our needs.

Carpenter is committed to broadening Opera Colorado's audiences as well as increasing financial support and invigorating the company's identity. In a statement regarding his appointment, he says:

Opera Colorado is at a very exciting time in our history and we owe Peter Russell and James Robinson so much for creating a vibrant opera company focused on artistic excellence and arts education. During our 25th Anniversary, we will have the opportunity to showcase the best artists and designers in the field, demonstrating an ability to present something for everyone through traditional and modern works. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this organization and I am eager to work with the board, staff and partners to formulate plans for continued growth and success.

Opera Colorado will be soon be announcing a search for a Director of Development.

GREG CARPENTER

For the past three years, Greg Carpenter has served as Opera Colorado's Director of Development, managing the company's fundraising efforts. He has proven himself as an exemplary leader in the areas of fundraising operations, working with a forty-five member governing board and overseeing a full-time professional staff of four. He has successfully generated revenue through special events, donor cultivation, community partnerships and corporate support. His accomplishments include exceeding fundraising goals for two consecutive years by more than \$100,000, doubling the number of individual donors from 495 to 1,100, and securing numerous corporate and foundation sponsorships through cash and in-kind contributions. He is currently leading the five-year strategic plan process for the company.

Prior to joining Opera Colorado, he worked for three years as the Manager of Development with the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. There he worked closely with the National Symphony Orchestra leadership and an eighty-five member board to achieve and exceed annual fundraising goals averaging \$8.9 to \$10.5 million. Carpenter has significant experience creating both short and long term multi-faceted strategic plans and managing aggressive goals.

His previous work experience also includes two years as the Arts and Events Manager with the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland and as a Professional Opera Singer from 1986-1998. Carpenter sang leading and supporting roles at Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Theatre of North Virginia, Cleveland Opera and Lyric Opera Cleveland.

Carpenter is currently the Chairman of the fundraising committee for the National Performing Arts Convention; member of Curious Theatre Company's special events committee; and a member of OPERA America.

He received a Bachelor of Music from Wittenburg University; a Master of Music from Michigan State University and was a Post-Graduate Studies/Doctor of Musical Arts Candidate at the University of Maryland School of Music.

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