

## Pacific Opera Victoria Annual General Meeting

17 November 2008

Three important things happened at POV's Annual General Meeting in Victoria, BC, on Monday, November 17. The company celebrated a modest operating surplus on a budget that increased by 13%, it elected a slate of new members to the Board and it honoured two local arts supporters who have been instrumental in the company's success.



Board President Michael Morres pointed to the financial success of the 2007/2008 Season. Pacific Opera Victoria realized a surplus on an overall operating budget that has grown from \$1.6 million to nearly \$3 million since 2001. He attributed the success to:

- 1) Ticket buyers and patrons who, on a per capita basis, support POV at a higher level than any other opera company in Canada.
- 2) A Board of Directors that is consistently effective in decision-making and advocacy.
- 3) The quality of staff, technical artists, craftspeople, musicians and stage performers who share a personal commitment to the success of the company.
- 4) The growing popularity of Opera worldwide.

Executive Director David Shefsiek noted that the company is the fastest growing opera company in the country, and gave an overview of his outlook for the next season.

"Implementation of our strategic plan is on track. The plan has been well received and has set the stage for new funding, including a major increase from Canada Council and a new matching gifts initiative from Arts Sustainability Victoria. This is not to say we are unaware of the changing economic picture. Flexibility, along with our planned working capital reserve, is required to ensure that we can move ahead with confidence during this changing economic time."

Artistic Director Timothy Vernon presented a special tribute to two local arts supporters who have worked with him since the Company began 31 years ago. It was with great pleasure that he awarded Erika Kurth and Jane Heffelfinger with Honourary Life Memberships in Pacific Opera Victoria in recognition of their substantial contributions to the Company. The women received standing ovations from the Board and members.

Erika Kurth had a very successful singing career and was Pacific Opera Victoria's first "diva". She moved from leading lady to leading philanthropist and was one of the company's first major donors. She continues to lead the way in establishing the power of individual philanthropy.

Jane Heffelfinger is known for the tenacity with which she established Pacific Opera Victoria's position in the community. She is a tireless advocate and has spent countless hours in the office, leading meetings and managing successful fundraising campaigns.

Newcomers David Flaherty, Devi Jawl and Margot McLaren Moore were elected to the Pacific Opera Victoria Board of Directors along with returning Board members Marshall Berkin, Fran Gilley, Barbara Hubbard, Brian Johnston, Gary Karr, Hana Kinsman, Michael Morres and Elisabeth Silvester. Nine members are in the middle of their two-year terms. They are: Marianne Bianco, Jane Heffelfinger, Joan Kyba, Frank May, Robert Milne, David Schneider, Tom Siemens, Deborah Wickins and Lydia Wingate. The Chair of the POV Foundation, Maryla Waters, serves as an ex officio member.