



PRESS RELEASE
330 Seventh Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10023

For Immediate Release

January 19, 2010

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**OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE
2010 NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARD**

New York, NY—**OPERA America**, the national service organization for opera, is pleased to announce the recipients of the **2010 National Opera Trustee Recognition Award**. In its third year, this award honors trustees of U.S. opera companies for exemplary leadership, generosity and audience-building efforts on behalf of their respective opera companies.

The 2010 National Opera Trustee Recognition honorees are **Marc I. Stern of Los Angeles Opera, Jeffrey A. Evershed of Portland Opera, Eve and Fred Simon of Opera Omaha and Benjamin Keaton of Long Leaf Opera** (North Carolina).

OPERA America is committed to recognizing strong trustee leaders, acknowledging the pivotal role they play in the success of opera companies and the vitality of the communities they serve. By celebrating the dedication of board members at the national level, the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program seeks to inspire exemplary service to opera companies and to strengthen the relationships between opera companies and their trustees across the U.S.

“We are delighted to celebrate the substantial achievements of these dedicated trustees,” stated Marc A. Scorca, president and CEO of OPERA America. “The National Opera Trustee Recognition Award provides OPERA America and the opera community with the opportunity to recognize those who have been so generous in their passion for the art form, vision and support of their opera companies.”

Each year, OPERA America member companies are invited to nominate one of their trustees for this award. Honorees from each of the four OPERA America budget levels are chosen by an adjudication committee through a competitive selection process.

The honorees represent a significant range of accomplishments, generosity and a deep commitment to promoting opera in their communities. The following profiles illustrate just a few examples of the dedication of these trustees.

Marc I. Stern, Los Angeles Opera

Marc I. Stern has been one of Los Angeles’s preeminent cultural leaders for over a decade. He has served as Los Angeles Opera’s chairman and CEO since 2002, leading the company to become one of the most important in the U.S., and providing volunteer leadership for artistic and community service initiatives that have solidified Los Angeles Opera’s unique artistic identity. Through their personal giving and through the Marc and Eva Stern Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Stern are among Los Angeles Opera’s most generous benefactors, providing extraordinary support for new productions, special events and artistic programming. He also serves on the boards of the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the California Institute of Technology and Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA. Mr. Stern is vice chairman and CEO of The TCW Group Inc., an asset management firm with over \$100 billion in assets under

management. Mr. Stern has been appointed as a "Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Mérite" by the President of France. He is a member of the management committee of Société Générale Group and chairman of Société Générale's Global Investment Management and Services (GIMS) North America unit. TCW was acquired by Société Générale in 2001. He currently serves as a director of Qualcomm, Inc. (NASDAQ), a director of Rockefeller & Co., Inc., and is a member of the advisory board and an owner of the Milwaukee Brewers.

Jeffrey A. Evershed, Portland Opera

Prior to joining Portland Opera's board of directors in 1990 as a corporate representative from one of the organization's major sponsors, Jeffrey A. Evershed had never attended a single opera. That first exposure to opera has fueled a passionate commitment to both Portland Opera and to the art form. In his 19 years on the board of Portland Opera, he has amassed an astounding resume of inspired leadership, advocacy and governance. During Mr. Evershed's tenures as president of the board and as chairman, he led Portland Opera through the *Fresh Aria Campaign*, a five-year effort to enhance the sustainability of Portland Opera and the artistic quality of productions. This successful \$16.7 million campaign was the largest fundraising effort conducted by a Portland cultural institution to date and set a new bar for arts support in the community. It also placed the company on a strong and stable financial footing that has resulted in Portland Opera completing 11 of the past 12 years in the black. Mr. Evershed also played a pivotal role in helping Portland Opera acquire its new home in 2003. The purchase and renovation of The Hampton Opera Center marked the first time in its 40-year history that Portland Opera was able to consolidate its administrative, artistic and rehearsal facilities and a studio theater under one roof. Together with General Director Christopher Mattaliano, he has helped expand the season and dramatically grow Portland Opera's audience, establish the new Portland Opera Studio Artist program and launch a new chamber opera series. Mr. Evershed also led the company in the launch of the *New Era Initiative*, a five-year strategic effort focused on creating sustainability in virtually every area of operations — from earned revenue and fund raising to program planning and endowment.

Eve and Fred Simon, Opera Omaha

For five generations, the Simon family and their family-owned business, Omaha Steaks, have been critical supporters of every major arts organization in Omaha, as well as others nationally. For nearly 40 years, Eve and Fred Simon's generous personal giving and participation in all aspects of Opera Omaha's activities, coupled with their company's ongoing sponsorship, have made them wonderful advocates for fundraising and have ensured the health of Opera Omaha. Their individual gifts have allowed Opera Omaha to provide productions of the highest artistic quality possible for the people of this community, while at the same time ensuring the company's longevity. Most recently, Mr. Simon served as the lead fundraiser for Opera Omaha's collaboration with the Institute for Holocaust Education's production of *Brundibár*, which was attended by 9,000 area schoolchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Simon's monumental fundraising efforts, including reaching out to other patrons and helping to build new audience, have resulted in continued fiscal health for the arts in Omaha. For more than 20 years, Mr. Simon's company has annually sponsored productions, community outreach events, the opera chorus, artists, personnel and season program books. In 2008, in celebration of Opera Omaha's 50th anniversary, Mr. Simon was also the co-sponsor of the production of a retrospective, full-color book entitled *Opera in Omaha: The First Fifty Years*, which chronicles the rich history of the organization through the eyes of those who have witnessed the organization's success. In addition to providing long-term fiscal support to Opera Omaha, thus ensuring that this beautiful art form is available for future generations, Mr. and Mrs. Simon are major sponsors of other key arts organizations in the community: the Omaha Symphony, Film Streams, the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha Performing Arts Society and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts.

Benjamin Keaton, Long Leaf Opera (Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, NC)

Twelve years ago, conductor and composer Benjamin Keaton co-founded Long Leaf Opera with Randolph Umberger as an alternative company with two missions: to present exclusively operas written originally in English and to develop a multicultural company of artists at all levels. Concerned with the

lack of opportunities for young American composers, Mr. Keaton set out to recruit the finest regional and national composing talents available and to follow a colorblind casting policy on stage, in the pit and in the board room. Since then, Mr. Keaton has overseen the production of 33 operas, including seven world premieres. In 2007, Keaton established an international competition for new operatic works, and to date over 100 compositions have been received from countries including Germany, Australia and the U.K. Under his baton, the company's orchestra and vocalists have evolved from local performers to a professional company of artists with established careers at major opera houses both in Europe and the U.S. In his 12 years on the board of directors, Mr. Keaton has served as vice-chair and treasurer, and has tirelessly encouraged others to donate time and money to Long Leaf Opera. A native of Belhaven, NC, Keaton holds a Master's degree from East Carolina University, where he was a founding member of the Zeta Psi Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha and where he has recently endowed scholarships for voice majors. Keaton taught 20th century music and theory for 18 years at NCCU and has served as maestro for musical organizations throughout the southeast and west. He has directed in England and serves as opera advisor to Chez Nous Productions in Paris. He is a composer of vocal and instrumental music and was recently awarded the Durham Jaycees Outstanding Citizen Award and the ECU School of Music's Distinguished Alumni Award for 2009.

OPERA America will pay tribute to the 2010 honorees and celebrate their remarkable achievements at a February dinner and reception in New York City.

OPERA America's commitment to recognizing excellence in governance is shared by its sister organization Opera.ca, the Canadian national association for opera. Opera.ca honors **Ms. Alberta Cefis of Opera Atelier** as the 2010 recipient of its National Opera Directors Recognition Program.

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About OPERA America

OPERA America leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

- Artistic services help opera companies and creative and performing artists to improve the quality of productions and increase the creation and presentation of North American works.
- Information, technical and administrative services to opera companies reflect the need for strengthened leadership among staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Education, audience development and community services are designed to enhance all forms of opera appreciation.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes nearly 200 Company Members, 300 Associate and Business Members, 2,000 Individual Members and more than 18,000 subscribers to the association's electronic news service.

OPERA America's long tradition of supporting and nurturing the creation and development of new works led to the formation of *The Opera Fund*, a growing endowment which allows OPERA America to make a direct impact on the ongoing creation and presentation of new opera and music-theater works. Since its inception, OPERA America has made grants of more than \$10.5 million to assist companies with the expenses associated with the creation and development of new works.