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## SANTA FE OPERA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLANS FOR LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

GENERAL DIRECTOR CHARLES MACKAY HAS ASKED THE BOARD TO PLAN FOR A TRANSITION  
IN LEADERSHIP FOLLOWING THE 2018 SEASON

**SANTA FE, NM** - Susan G. Marineau, President of Santa Fe Opera, announced at the company's August Board of Directors meeting that General Director Charles MacKay has asked the Board to plan for a transition in leadership following the 2018 season.

The Board of Directors has appointed a Search Committee co-chaired by Mrs. Marineau and Mrs. Sarah Billingham Solomon to develop recommendations for selecting Santa Fe Opera's fourth General Director. Santa Fe Opera is one of the world's leading opera companies, with critically-acclaimed summer seasons, year-round education programs, and an operating budget of \$24 million. The Board's continued priority is to ensure the future of this national treasure. As such, they will take a thorough, thoughtful, and orderly approach to succession planning. The timing of Mr. MacKay's transition will be determined in collaboration with the Search Committee.

Speaking on behalf of the Board, Mrs. Marineau said, "Charles' tenure at Santa Fe Opera has been remarkable. Considering the company's unwavering artistic excellence, sound financial stability, vast improvement in facilities, and symbiotic relationship between Board and staff, 2008-2018 will have been a very successful decade for the company. We have a strategic plan and repertory planned through 2020. We have a talented staff and a dedicated Board. We have developed resilience and an organizational depth to handle this change. Change is part of life, part of how we grow and adapt. I have complete confidence in the future of Santa Fe Opera."

Speaking first to the Board at the company's August meeting, and then to an assembly of the company members in the Crosby Theatre, Mr. MacKay said, "As you know, I grew up in Santa Fe, and was dazzled by The Santa Fe Opera after my first Youth Night performance of *Die Fledermaus*. The company has been part of my life for almost as long as I can remember. Starting as a parking lot attendant at 13, becoming an extra horn player and orchestra assistant at 18, and then working backstage and in the business office for the next ten years, I never imagined I'd end up as the General Director. It has been a huge honor to lead this remarkable company and to follow in the footsteps of John Crosby and Richard Gaddes – two giants in our field. But part of the responsibility of a job like this is knowing when to pass the baton. Throughout my career, it has always been my goal to stop while I'm still feeling on top of things. The timing seems right. Fifty years is a nice round number. The Opera is in excellent shape and I look forward to working with the Board to find my successor and ensure a smooth transition."

2018 will be Mr. MacKay's 10th season as General Director and will complete his 20 years of cumulative service to Santa Fe Opera, marking 50 years since the first engagement of his professional career.

### **CHARLES MACKAY**

Charles MacKay became General Director of Santa Fe Opera in 2008 as only the third general director in the company's history. Under his leadership, Santa Fe Opera completed one successful capital campaign, launched another, and oversaw a massive renovation of the front-of-house areas and backstage shops – many of which had not been updated for 50 years. His artistic leadership has furthered Santa Fe Opera's tradition of bold and innovative repertory with the commission of five mainstage world premieres – including Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain* in 2015 and Mason Bates' *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* in 2017. In addition, he has actively promoted education and community outreach – having experienced his first opera in Santa Fe at a formative age – and the development of young artists in the Apprentice Program for Singers and Technicians, long considered one of the best programs of its kind.

Before assuming leadership of Santa Fe Opera, Mr. MacKay served as general director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis from 1985-2008. During his tenure, Mr. MacKay made major artistic and institutional strides for the company: undertaking its first major endowment campaign, establishing a permanent home for the company in the Sally S. Levy Opera Center, producing fifteen world premieres, and presenting two international touring productions in Tokyo. He has also served as Director of Development and Finance of the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. and the "Festival of Two Worlds" in Spoleto, Italy. His career began at Santa Fe Opera, playing French horn in the orchestra, after which his positions included Box Office Manager, Development and Sales Manager, and Business Manager.

Mr. MacKay is a member of the Board of Directors of OPERA America, serving as its Chairman from 2004-2008. He is President of the William M. Sullivan Musical Foundation, an organization which supports the development of young vocal artists. He is a frequent adjudicator for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and served as the Chairman of the Opera-Music Theater panel of the National Endowment for the Arts.

*The mission of The Santa Fe Opera is to advance the operatic art form by presenting ensemble performances of the highest quality in a unique setting with a varied repertory of new, rarely performed, and standard works; to ensure the excellence of opera's future through apprentice programs for singers, technicians, and arts administrators; and to foster and enrich an understanding and appreciation of opera among a diverse public.*

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