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## Michigan Opera Theatre Concludes 2015-16 Season with Surplus, Milestones

*2015-16 Season Celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Detroit Opera House,  
Inauguration of MOT Studio and Groundbreaking Performances*

**Detroit, Dec. 8, 2016** – Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) concluded its 2015-16 season on strong financial footing celebrating company milestones and a successful run of five operas and four dance productions. The company reported both a 23 percent increase in ticket revenue and a 26 percent increase in contributions from the year earlier, resulting in a surplus for the second year in a row.

“With a range of thought-provoking new productions and beloved classics and the tremendous support of our patrons, we are delighted to announce another successful season at Michigan Opera Theatre,” said MOT CEO Wayne Brown. “We are proud to consistently produce high quality operas and to also bring world-class dance presentations to Metro Detroit.”

The 2015-16 season was a landmark year for MOT, marking both the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Detroit Opera House and the launch of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio young artists program.

Following its founding in 1971, MOT bought and transformed the historic Grand Circus Theatre into the Detroit Opera House in April 1996, making it one of the few opera companies in the United States to own its own theater.

“Through the support of our wonderful community, we have created one of Detroit’s most beautiful cultural destinations,” said MOT Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera. “As the city continues to revitalize, we are proud to be a thriving focal point in the development that continues around us.”

Michigan Opera Theatre’s new Studio program brought five up-and-coming singers and their coach/accompanist to Detroit for a season-long residency of performance and continued training. The program supports the next generation of opera talent and provided the studio artists the opportunity to star in their own full-length opera with the production of Aaron Copland’s *The Tender Land* at the Macomb Center for the Arts and at the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center. The studio artists also provided patrons additional opportunities to hear opera with several community concerts throughout Southeast Michigan.

The company’s 45<sup>th</sup> opera season featured five full-length operas, including a heart-wrenching and powerful production of Mieczysław Weinberg’s *The Passenger*, a contemporary opera exploring ramifications of the Holocaust. In conjunction with the opera, MOT partnered with more than 60 community organizations to create programs to promote dialogue and understanding of the production’s theme of the Holocaust and man’s inhumanity to man. The opera season also included the company

# MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

premiere of Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*, perennial favorites *La Boheme* and *The Magic Flute*, and the community presentation of Copland's *The Tenderland*.

MOT's 20th dance season featured four dance companies, concluding with American Ballet Theatre's spectacular production of *The Sleeping Beauty* featuring ballet superstar Misty Copeland. The ballet was the beginning of a three-year partnership with the University Musical Society, supported with a generous commitment by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to grow the local dance audience. The production included five nearly sold-out performances. It also required the largest supernumerary cast in MOT dance history, allowing more than 100 children and adults to take part in the lavish production. ABT dancers, including Copeland, Calvin Royal III and Katie Williams, presented public master classes and interacted with local schools and children's organizations. The Greater Wayne County Chapter of The Links served as the exclusive community partner for the American Ballet Theatre Residency. The dance season also included performances by BalletMet, Eisenhower Dance, and Dance Theatre of Harlem.

On the administrative side, MOT Board Chairman R. Jamison Williams announced that MOT Founder and Artistic Director David DiChiera will assume the position of Artistic Director Emeritus at the conclusion of the 2016-17 season in celebration of his legacy. The Board of Directors re-elected Williams as Chairman, C. Thomas Toppin as Secretary and Cameron Duncan as Treasurer and also announced the addition of two new members - Peter Oleksiak and Devon Hoover. To see a full copy of the annual report, visit <http://www.michiganopera.org/annualreport/>.

The MOT 2015-16 season was made possible with generous support from Ford Motor Company, General Motors Foundation, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles US LLC, The Kresge Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional support has been made by numerous businesses, foundations, and individuals.

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### ***About Michigan Opera Theatre***

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).