



For Immediate Release

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**Michigan Opera Theatre Reports Balanced Budget,
Surplus for Fiscal Year 2017**

*Landmark year highlighted by DiChiera tributes, appointment of
Stephen Lord as Principal Conductor*

Detroit, Dec. 18 - There are good years and bad years in the entertainment business. For Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), fiscal 2017 was a very good year.

Highlighted by a balanced budget and a \$665,000 operating surplus, its third consecutive surplus, the company saw its subscription ticket sales, ticket fees, theater rentals, concessions, parking and public support all showing gains, said Wayne S. Brown, President and Chief Executive Officer. The nearly ten percent gain in subscription ticket sales bucks national trends to the contrary.

"The positive outcome we experienced in 2017 is the result of herculean effort by all our stakeholders, staff, partners and our board and trustees," said Brown. "Our goal is to continue to build on the solid foundation of David DiChiera's vision and dedication to maintaining a vibrant, growing and financially stable company and to provide consistently outstanding artistic programs for our audiences. I believe we are doing that."

Brown cited fiscal prudence, expanded outreach and new corporate and community partnerships for the positive results.

Michigan Opera Theatre's 2017 season was largely dedicated to the company's legendary and visionary founder and Artistic Director, David DiChiera. The season started with the DiChiera Legacy Ball which generated more than \$500,000 in revenue, and concluded with *The DiChiera Grand Salute*, a multi-media extravaganza that raised nearly \$2 million and attracted a variety of opera and dance luminaries from around the globe. A highlight of the Salute was the announcement by Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and former Mayor Dennis Archer of the new name designation of the Detroit Opera House: David DiChiera Center for the Performing Arts.

As DiChiera transitioned to Artistic Director *Emeritus* in 2017, the company named internationally renowned conductor Stephen Lord as Principal Conductor of Michigan Opera

Theatre. Lord, who enjoyed a long association with DiChiera and MOT, returned to the company after more than 25 years as Music Director of the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He assumed his responsibilities as Principal Conductor and artistic advisor in November of 2016.

R. Jamison (Rick) Williams, who has been chairman of Michigan Opera Theatre since 2004, was re-elected chairman for another term at the company's recent Trustees meeting.

While opera dominated MOT's stage in 2016-17, with performances of *Carmen*, *Silent Night*, *Girl of the Golden West* and *Cyrano*, dance continued to grow in popularity with performances by the *Royal Winnipeg Ballet*, *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater*, *Eisenhower Dance* and *BalletMet Columbus*. In addition to its major productions, MOT continued to support its innovative Opera of Our Time, the MOT Studios resident program for young artists and its strong statewide education program, including a relationship with Detroit Public Schools. The company increased its rental business for graduations, weddings and corporate events during fiscal 2017 and strengthened its key partnerships with the Nederlander Organization, the University Musical Society and Macomb Center for the Performing Arts.

"We had a busy and very successful year in just about every respect and we're especially grateful for the continuing enthusiasm and support of our audiences," said Brown. "Our hope is to continue delighting our audiences with exciting and innovative productions and performances and to grow with Detroit as the city grows and flourishes in the future."

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About Michigan Opera Theatre

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Stephen Lord, Principal Conductor, Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus), 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.