

CALGARY OPERA ANNOUNCES BEN HEPPNER AS HONORARY CHAIR OF NEW LEGACY SOCIETY

July 18, 2018 (Calgary, Alberta) – Calgary Opera’s General Director and CEO, Keith Cerny, Ph.D., is delighted to announce distinguished Canadian tenor and broadcaster Ben Heppner, O.C., LL.D., as Honorary Chair of Calgary Opera’s new Legacy Society.

“Calgary Opera is deeply privileged to have Mr. Heppner serve as Honorary Chair of our Legacy Society”, said Keith Cerny. “Mr. Heppner’s remarkable career serves as a model for Canadian singers achieving success at the world’s greatest opera houses, including his extraordinary performances in Calgary in 2012 as Captain Ahab in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Moby-Dick*. He, better than almost anyone, understands the importance of legacy giving to Calgary Opera’s long-term financial and artistic success.”

Calgary Opera Board Chair Michael Brown noted, “Speaking as an admirer of Mr. Heppner’s career for many years, we are delighted to have the benefit of his leadership and support as we work to develop and grow our Legacy Society.”

A new endeavour for the company, The Legacy Society is focused on building long-term sustainability for Calgary Opera through donations and gifts from patrons wishing to leave a lasting legacy that goes beyond their lifetime.

Mr Heppner noted that “Having sung at leading opera houses all over the world, I have seen first-hand the need for consistent financial support from governments, corporations, and individual donors to keep this vibrant and vital art form healthy and innovative. Calgary Opera’s new Legacy Society will enable the company to add to its existing base of support, and make bold artistic plans for the future.”

The Legacy Society will allow patrons to pledge gifts through their wills, retirement plans, life-income plans, and many other creative planned-giving arrangements. Associates of the Legacy Society will be joining a very special group of Calgary Opera friends who believe in supporting high-quality arts. Appreciation for their gift will be acknowledged through recognition and with invitations to attend especially planned events, including an annual dinner with Honorary Chair, Ben Heppner.

More information on the Calgary Opera’s Legacy Society can be found at www.calgaryopera.com/support/legacy-giving.



Ben Heppner, internationally renowned operatic tenor, public advocate for the arts, and radio broadcaster. For almost 3 decades, Mr. Heppner has been hailed among the most sought after musical talents in the operatic world. His command of the heroic repertoire of Wagner, Strauss and Verdi, among others – is second to none. He is widely appreciated for the depth and intelligence of his interpretations and for the expressive character that he has brought to the roles that he has played.

Ben Heppner first came to the attention of the Canadian public as the winner of the CBC Talent Festival, in 1979. He won the Metropolitan Opera auditions in 1988. Heppner's career has taken him to the most prestigious opera and concert stages of the world – from Vienna to Paris, Berlin, London, New York and beyond. He set new standards of performance in some of the most demanding operatic roles including such as Wagner's Tristan, Verdi's Otello and the complex and dark leading role of Benjamin Britten's Peter Grimes.

Ben Heppner has appeared on numerous recordings by Deutsche Grammophon and other labels, on DVDs and in the Metropolitan Opera's HD series in cinemas. His recorded work has won three Juno and three Grammy awards and he has also received nine honorary doctorates from prestigious academic institutions throughout Canada. He has been the recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award and, in 2008, was promoted to Companion of the Order of Canada. Just last year, Ben received a life-time achievement award from the Governor General Performing Arts Award.

Heppner announced his retirement from the opera and concert stage a couple of years ago, but he continues his arts and charitable work. Canadians continue to hear his voice as host of CBC Radio 2's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera and Backstage with Ben Heppner. He offers the insights and stories that can only come from someone who has spent a lifetime as an engaged interpreter and performer.

For more information, interviews and photos, please contact Nicola Dawes, Executive Assistant & Artist Relations Coordinator at ndawes@calgaryopera.com (403) 802-3402