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**OPERA NEW JERSEY ANNOUNCES THE DEPARTURE OF CO-FOUNDERS SCOTT AND LISA ALTMAN**

October 14, 2009 PRINCETON, NJ – John Salapatas, chairman of the Opera New Jersey Board of Trustees announced that Founder Scott Altman has accepted the position of General Director of Arizona Opera. Scott and Lisa Altman will relocate to Arizona and begin the next stage of their careers. They will both continue working with Opera New Jersey through the end of the current calendar year to facilitate a smooth transition for the organization.

“The Trustees are extremely proud that the artistic accomplishments of Opera New Jersey have been recognized on a national level with Scott’s appointment at Arizona,” Board Chairman Salapatas commented. “Scott’s appointment is a major step in his career, comparable to the opportunities afforded to past performers at Opera New Jersey. Opera New Jersey is poised to make a smooth transition from a founding company,” he added, “to institutionalizing the company’s growth and development throughout the State. The Board is committed to attracting new leadership that will advance the mission of Opera New Jersey, and continue offering high quality performances with international artists while showcasing emerging talent.”

Opera New Jersey is not only the Garden State’s most prolific opera company but also provides extensive education and outreach programs. The company produces four fully-staged performances over the winter and the summer seasons. In addition, Opera New Jersey’s artists-in-residence and educational programs reach thousands of children and adults throughout the state.

Arizona Opera was founded in 1971 and annually produces five major productions each season throughout the state with a budget three times the size of Opera New Jersey’s.

All major programming and artists have been set for the 2010 seasons. The Winter Season performances of *Carmen* starring Denyce Graves have been scheduled for the

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New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark; State Theatre, New Brunswick; McCarter Theatre, Princeton; and The Lyric Opera House in Baltimore, Maryland. Preparations are also completed for the Summer Season 2010 productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Faust*, and *Don Pasquale*.

Opera New Jersey achieved several major milestones in 2009. Summer 2009 saw the successful initiation of an artistic collaboration with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra that raises the quality and consistency of the pit orchestra. During a season that saw the contraction of many arts organizations, Opera New Jersey increased both attendance and ticket revenue.

The Board of Trustees of Opera New Jersey is initiating a national search for new executive-level administrative and artistic leadership. The goal is to have a new team in place in approximately four months.

“The organization has grown and flourished beyond our highest expectations,” said Scott and Lisa Altman, Co-Founders of Opera New Jersey, “we are thrilled to see Opera New Jersey mature from a founder-led company to the exciting artistic institution it has become; we can’t wait to see what it can accomplish next.”

Opera New Jersey is recognized nationally as a leader among regional opera companies, providing high quality opera performances and exceptional educational offerings. Opera New Jersey seeks to stimulate, promote and satisfy interest in opera, build a strong and diverse audience base for the art form and foster the development of emerging artists. Opera New Jersey has received three prestigious Citations of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA). The Citation is NJSCA’s highest honor and recognizes arts organizations that “exhibit the highest standards of excellence in artistry, operations, governance, public benefit and fulfillment of areas of Council priority. Most recently, Opera New Jersey was honored with a prestigious National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America grant, in recognition of its outstanding educational programming. For more information [www.Opera-NJ.org](http://www.Opera-NJ.org).

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