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## **OPERA NEW JERSEY APPOINTS RICHARD RUSSELL AS GENERAL DIRECTOR**

### **Experienced Arts Administrator and Marketing Professional selected to lead Opera New Jersey.**

**April 9, 2010, PRINCETON, NJ** – The Board of Trustees of Opera New Jersey is pleased to announce the appointment of Richard Russell as its new General Director. Mr. Russell will assume his responsibilities full-time on Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Russell is only the second General Director of the eight year old, Princeton-area based company. As General Director, Mr. Russell will oversee all artistic and administrative activities of OperaNJ, which is the Garden State’s largest and most prolific opera company.

“After a national search that yielded some incredibly talented and qualified applicants, we are thrilled to appoint the super-star of the group,” said John Salapatas, OperaNJ’s Chairman of the Board. “His experience, enthusiasm, and savvy business acumen will be valuable qualities to maintain our mission of attracting enormously talented emerging artists and to achieve our vision of producing world-class opera in the state of New Jersey. I am excited that Richard Russell will lead Opera New Jersey into the next chapter of artistic achievement.”

Mr. Russell is leaving his current responsibilities as Director of Marketing for Sarasota Opera, a highly respected regional opera company, where he has worked for the last 5 years. One of his first duties was to oversee the marketing and communications strategy for a \$60 million Capital Campaign to renovate their historic theater, build endowment, and add programs and activities. During his tenure he oversaw approximately \$3 million in earned revenue, managed public relations and marketing, dramatically increased the company’s internet presence, and participated in every aspect of the company, including artistic planning and donor cultivation.

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Mr. Russell holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree from the prestigious Indiana University in Voice Performance and Choral Conducting. After pursuing a successful performing career, he worked for several technology and financial companies ultimately achieving the position of Vice-President and Global Webmaster for Citigroup's Emerging Markets Sales and Trading Division.

"I have been watching the growth of Opera New Jersey over the past few years with great interest and admiration and am honored to be asked to be General Director at this time," said Mr. Russell. "After a career as an artist, in finance, and as an opera administrator, I am extremely excited about taking the leadership role with this company as it enters a new phase of its history. I am looking forward to working with this talented and energetic staff and with this visionary and supportive board to ensure that OperaNJ continues to grow as an important cultural asset for New Jersey and a destination for opera lovers from around the country."

Following the record-breaking Winter Season performances of *Carmen*, OperaNJ will present the 2010 Summer Season featuring productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Faust*, and *Don Pasquale* all to be held within the McCarter Theatre Complex in Princeton, NJ. For tickets: 609.258.2787 or [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org).

### **About Opera New Jersey**

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. Opera New Jersey is honored to be the recipient of multiple National Endowment for the Arts grants in recognition of our outstanding programming. For more information: [www.Opera-NJ.org](http://www.Opera-NJ.org).

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