



THE ATLANTA OPERA

DENNIS HANTHORN - Zurich General Director

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## **THE ATLANTA OPERA CUTS BACK IN RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

### **2010-2011 Season to Include Three Productions**

### **Budget Trimmed to \$5.3 Million**

ATLANTA (December 10, 2009) – In response to the current economic environment, The Atlanta Opera will make changes to the budget and programming for its next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010, Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn announced today. The 2010-2011 season will include only three opera productions, down from the four productions the company has presented since moving to the Cobb Energy Centre in 2007. The three productions, presented with four performances each, will span October 2010 through April 2011, with one production in the fall of 2010 and two in the winter/spring of 2011. Through reducing the number of the productions and making other expense reductions, the company's 2010-2011 budget will decrease 21.5 percent to \$5.3 million from \$6.75 million for the current 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The Atlanta Opera's decision to cut back results from a decline in ticket sales and the challenging fundraising environment since the onset of the recession. The economic downturn

has reversed much of the ticket sales growth and fundraising successes the company achieved as a result of its move to the Cobb Energy Centre in 2007. Total ticket sales revenue, including season and single ticket sales, has decreased 19 percent over the past two seasons. Fundraising revenue has decreased 13 percent. Fundraising, in particular, has become very challenging as corporations and foundations reduce their giving and individuals have less disposable income to donate. Like many other organizations, The Atlanta Opera completed fiscal year 2009 with a deficit. The company is projecting a deficit as well for the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2010.

“We’re not alone in making difficult decisions like these, but that doesn’t make it any easier,” commented Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn. “Our goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of The Atlanta Opera so that we can continue to bring high-quality opera performances to the Atlanta community. We felt that cutting a production was the most fiscally responsible decision we could make at this point in time.”

The three opera productions planned for the 2010-2011 season will be announced in late January 2010 and season tickets to the season will be on sale at that point as well. The Atlanta Opera’s current 2009-2010 30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary season goes on as previously announced with the company’s first production of Verdi’s *Aida* at the Cobb Energy Centre in February/March, 2010 and a new production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* in April/May 2010. Tickets for *Aida* and *The Magic Flute* can be purchased by visiting [www.atlantaopera.org](http://www.atlantaopera.org) or by calling 404-881-8885.

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### **About The Atlanta Opera**

Founded in 1979, The Atlanta Opera is currently celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Led by Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn, The Atlanta Opera strives to enhance the experience of its patrons with memorable and exciting performances reflecting the highest musical and theatrical standards, while supporting community and educational programs. The company also works to attract the finest international, national and regional singers, conductors, stage directors and designers. For more information about The Atlanta Opera, please visit [www.AtlantaOpera.org](http://www.AtlantaOpera.org) or call 404-881-8801.