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**Opera Naples
Announces Appointment of New General Director**

A thirty-year veteran widely recognized in the industry

Naples, Florida - The Board of Opera Naples is pleased to announce that **Dennis Hanthorn** has been appointed General Director of Opera Naples, effective November 15, 2015.



The announcement comes following a six month international executive search guided by Arts Consulting Group, resulting in over 70 applications.

Widely known and respected throughout the opera world, Hanthorn has more than thirty years in the industry serving as the senior executive of three consecutive city opera companies. He is particularly known for getting new initiatives off the ground and helping them flourish.

Most recently, Hanthorn was General Director and CEO of The Atlanta Opera (2004-2012), one of the most distinguished regional opera companies in the nation, where he was recognized as a charismatic leader credited with elevating the company to new levels on many fronts, and successfully managing financial challenges both before and after the recession.

Prior to leading Atlanta Opera, Hanthorn served as General Director for 15 years (1989-2004) with the Milwaukee Florentine Opera Company, and, before that, eight years as Managing Director of the Dayton Opera Association (1982-1989). Earlier still, he was General Manager of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra.

Hanthorn has served on the Board of Directors of OPERA America as Secretary and Chair of the Membership Committee, and as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Commenting on the appointment, **John Hushon**, Chairman of the Board of Opera Naples, said, “We feel extremely fortunate to have attracted an executive of Dennis’ stature in the industry. He has a very demonstrable track record of success. His considerable experience, vast knowledge of the industry and proven leadership skills will be great assets for us.

“We now have the David and Cecile Wang Opera Center as our permanent base. In **Ramón Tebar**, we have an Artistic Director of international stature. We have the support of our city, county and state. Now, with Dennis Hanthorn as General Director, we feel we have in place all the essential elements we need to build the city’s opera company into a major cultural institution Southwest Florida can look to with pride.”

Commenting on his appointment, Hanthorn said, “Those who love and support opera and consequently invest in us, expect a return on investment in various forms of musical presentation, education and special events. Opera Naples has built such a foundation over the last decade.

“I am honored to be the Board’s choice to lead Opera Naples forward, and grateful to be working with such a dedicated Board of Directors, with Maestro Tebar and the talented staff at Opera Naples, to maximize the company’s potential already evident and help move it to another level.

“I look forward to learning more about Southwest Florida and the company’s many collaborators as we continue to help build the region’s cultural economy and help enhance the quality of life.”

Carol Shaw, the former Executive Director and CEO of Opera Naples, retired in June at the end of the 2014-2015 season.

Opera Naples

Situated on the Gulf of Mexico in Florida's Collier County, Opera Naples is dedicated to presenting opera productions and concerts of the highest quality. A regional artistic powerhouse in an area known for its world class dining, shopping, arts galleries and pristine beaches, the city's opera company is a cultural jewel in Southwest Florida.

Opera Naples presents internationally renowned performers and directors, while encouraging, grooming, and showcasing young regional talent. It produces classic grand opera at various local venues each season, and chamber opera and concerts at the David and Cecile Wang Opera Center, its new home. A staunch proponent of community service and education outreach, the company has introduced opera to over 60,000 local area children since its inception, and offers various programs, including Lee and Collier county in-school programs and performances; the Young Artists Program; summer programs, and ONcore (for local and regional semi-professional singers).

Opera Naples is led by Artistic Director, internationally renowned Spanish conductor, Ramón Tebar, known for his musical versatility, compelling interpretations and orchestra building skills.

Over the past decade, the company has earned local, regional and state government support. Opera Naples is grateful to its sponsors, patrons and many supporters who have helped it become an important part of the cultural fabric of the region.

A high-resolution color j-peg of Dennis Hanthorn is available upon request.

This release and Dennis Hanthorn's full biography may be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

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Dennis Hanthorn

Biography

Dennis Hanthorn has more than 30-years of experience in the performing arts industry and a history of building companies in Atlanta, Milwaukee, and Dayton. During his career, total fundraising dollars have reached \$75 million. His professional experience includes providing leadership and guiding vision in arts administration; stewarding fundraising, fiscal management, strategic planning, organizational development, and board governance; and providing artistic direction by mounting quality artistic productions with a proven track record in identifying new local, national and international talent.

Dennis has worked in Atlanta for eight years and most recently served as General Director & CEO for The Atlanta Opera, where he is credited with increasing the artistic production quality in all areas and surviving financial challenges before and after the recession. During his tenure, total fundraising reached \$35 million-the endowment grew to \$6 million, the organization established a working cash reserve, and the company secured a \$9.4 million bequest for annual and endowment support. Additionally, he moved all opera performances to the newly constructed Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre and increased season ticket sales by 120% in the first two seasons in the new facility. Artistic highlights include a European tour with The Atlanta Opera Chorus performing *Porgy and Bess* at Opéra-Comique in Paris, Granada, Normandy, and Luxembourg; the CD recording of a full-length opera of Peter Ash's *The Golden Ticket*; and the Public Radio broadcast of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio)*.

Prior to joining The Atlanta Opera, Dennis was General Director for 15 years for the Milwaukee Florentine Opera Company and launched the largest and most successful fundraising campaign for expanded artistic and educational programming with a goal of \$10 million. Mainstage opera performances averaged an over-all 95% capacity. During his tenure, the company presented the American premiere and the National Public Radio Broadcast of Lowell Liebermann's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for Milwaukee Public Television, Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville)*, and Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos (Ariadne on Naxos)*, presented Luciano Pavarotti in concert, Jose Carreras in recital, and presented and co-produced opera productions with the Michigan Opera Theatre while managing the Dayton Opera Association.

Dennis has served on the Board of Directors of OPERA America where he served as Secretary of the Board, chaired the membership committee, and consulted for international and national opera companies. He served as an adjudicator for the District and Regional Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the Belvedere International Singing Competition, the MacAllister Awards, and served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Michigan and the Wisconsin Arts Boards.

In higher education, Dennis has completed postgraduate studies in Arts Administration and Music Performance from the University of Cincinnati-CCM; earned a Master of Music, Music Performance in French horn from the University of Wisconsin; and a Bachelor of Science in Music Education K-12 from Missouri State in Springfield, Missouri.

Dennis and his wife, Rebecca, have three grown children. In his spare time, Dennis likes traveling with family, cuisine, reading, professional sports, and listening to classical music.
