



**FROM: Susan Mathieson Mayer**  
**Magda Krance ([mkrance@lyricopera.org](mailto:mkrance@lyricopera.org))**  
**Jack Zimmerman ([jjzimmerman@lyricopera.org](mailto:jjzimmerman@lyricopera.org))**  
**LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO**  
**20 North Wacker Drive**  
**Chicago, IL 60606**  
**312-332-2244**

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## **Lyric Opera sells 98% of its seating capacity for 2007/08 season**

**Lyric again “in the black,” as it has been for 20 of the past 21 years—  
a record among the country’s major not-for-profit  
music and dance performing arts companies**

**Lyric exceeds its \$16.85-million fundraising goal**

**Surplus expected to exceed \$800,000**

Lyric Opera of Chicago sold 98% of its seating capacity for the 79-performance 2007/08 season—generating \$27.4 million in ticket revenue. The company also exceeded its \$16.85-million fundraising goal.

Fully audited financial statements will be issued in August; the company expects to have a surplus that exceeds \$800,000. Lyric has operated in the black for 20 of the past 21 years—a record among the country’s major not-for-profit music and dance performing arts companies.

Sixty-six percent of the performances in the 2007/08 season sold at 100%. A grand total of 279,327 tickets were sold for the season.

More than 33,800 season subscribers—the largest number for any major opera company in the country—enjoyed a season that included Verdi’s *La traviata*, Puccini’s *La bohème*, Handel’s *Julius Caesar*, R. Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, Verdi’s *Falstaff*, Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, and Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*.

“This was a very strong season artistically,” general director William Mason stated, “and we were thrilled with the response from our audiences. Very strong box-office and fundraising results, combined with strict cost controls, have put us in the black once

again. Our board of directors, headed by Richard P. Kiphart, is committed to deficit-free seasons because only through fiscal responsibility can we assure our audiences that we will always be able to present grand opera at the highest international level,” Mason said.

In addition to tickets sold for the mainstage performances, more than 25 million listeners in Chicago, the United States, and around the world heard Lyric via the WFMT Radio Network. (The Bucksbaum Family Lyric Opera Broadcasts are made possible by The Matthew and John Bucksbaum Families and General Growth Properties, with matching funds provided by The Crown Family, Richard P. and Susan Kiphart, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.)

An additional 60,000 listeners tuned in to Lyric’s own podcast series, which was made available on Lyric’s website and iTunes. The company produced 26 podcasts in 2007/08, which included interviews with singers, directors, and other artists appearing in the season.

Close to 85,000 children and adults took part in Lyric’s myriad outreach and educational offerings, including the new pre-opera lectures, which were offered free of charge for four of the eight 2007/08 productions.

At the company’s annual dinner meeting, Edgar D. Jannotta was presented with Lyric’s Carol Fox Award, the company’s highest honor. Jannotta was Lyric’s board president from 1996 to 2001, and is now co-chairman emeritus. An indefatigable fundraiser, Jannotta was instrumental in enabling Lyric to successfully complete the \$100 million “Building on Greatness Capital Campaign,” which made possible the purchase and renovation of the Civic Opera House. He led Lyric’s annual fund drives from 1996 through 2001, helping to raise more than \$62 million during that period. Jannotta also led the team that chose the late Ardis Krainik’s successor—William Mason, Lyric’s current general director. Jannotta is Chairman of William Blair and Company.

Mason reported the total operating expenses for fiscal 2009 are projected at \$55 million, with the fundraising goal set at \$18.65 million.

Lyric Opera’s annual meeting dinner took place May 19 at the Four Seasons and was sponsored by Kirkland & Ellis LLP and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. The annual meeting dinner is a project of the Women’s Board. Annual Meeting chairman: Mrs. Todd D. Mitchell. Women’s Board president: Mrs. Richard W. Durkes.

Lyric’s 2008/09 season opens on September 27 with Massenet’s *Manon*, starring Natalie Dessay and Jonas Kaufmann.

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