

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Contact: Sarah Mieras, 616.451.2741 ext.14
smieras@operagr.com or www.operagr.com**

Opera Grand Rapids Announces New Executive Director – Michael W. Havlicek

GRAND RAPIDS – Following an extensive national search, Opera Grand Rapids is pleased to announce Michael W. Havlicek has joined the Company as its new Executive Director.

A seasoned development executive, Havlicek brings to Opera Grand Rapids more than 30-years of high level fundraising experience.

“With the assistance of Interim Executive Director, Juanita Sharpe, the Company conducted an exhaustive search for the best candidate for the position,” stated Board President William Fehsenfeld.

“As part of the search process the Company conducted an inventory of our needs. The most prominent of these included the expansion of our donor base and the completion of our campaign for The Betty Van Andel Opera Center. We believe Mr. Havlicek’s extensive and varied fundraising skills are a perfect fit for Opera Grand Rapids.”

Havlicek’s experience includes serving as President and CEO for the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association (ALSA), Vice President of Development for The National Easter Seals Society, and Director of Program Development for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Havlicek and his wife Rebecca are in the process of relocating to Grand Rapids from their home in Ludington, MI.

“I am honored to join Opera Grand Rapids at such a pivotal time. This Company has an impressive 41-year history, and is currently working toward a permanent rehearsal location and faces fundraising challenges in a competitive economy,” said Havlicek.

To create a smooth transition period, Interim Executive Director, Juanita Sharpe has agreed to stay in place throughout the month of December.

“I am very excited about the professional characteristics that Mr. Havlicek brings to the Opera Grand Rapids staff,” said Sharpe. “For me, working with Opera Grand Rapids over the past few months has been an absolute delight. I have discovered the power of generosity in this community and have come to love all things opera. I am pleased that I could help the Company make this critical transition into the next phase of its growth.”

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Opera Grand Rapids is West Michigan’s only professional opera production company. For additional information about the Company’s ongoing building project, or our remaining 08-09 productions

The Elixir of Love (Feb. 13 & 14) and Faust (May 1 & 2), visit www.operagr.com.

For interviews with Michael Havlicek, please contact Sarah Mieras, at 616.451.2741 ext. 14.