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April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

As the national service organization for the entire opera community and a national cosponsor of Arts Advocacy Day, OPERA America encourages you to support federal policy that will strengthen the arts in America.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes nearly 200 Company Members, 300 Associate and Business Members, 2,000 Individual Members and more than 18,000 subscribers who receive a variety of free and fee based services. OPERA America provides to its members: artistic services which help opera companies and creative and performing artists to improve the quality of productions and increase the creation and presentation of North American works; information, technical and administrative services which reflect the need for strengthened leadership among staff, trustees, and volunteers; and education, audience development, and community services which are designed to enhance all forms of opera appreciation.

On behalf of OPERA America's membership and those that it serves, we urge you to strengthen federal support for the arts in the following ways:

- Encourage international cultural exchange by increasing funding by \$10 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges and supporting legislation that would reduce the total processing time for O and P nonprofit arts related visa petitions to a maximum of 45 days;
- Support artistic excellence by restoring funding for the National Endowment for the Arts to \$176 million;
- Improve student achievement by allocating \$53 million for the Arts in Education programs at the U.S. Department of Education;
- Promote private contributions to the arts by reinstating the IRA Charitable Rollover Provision that expired in December 2007;
- Preserve the ability of wireless microphones used in performing arts venues to operate without interference by supporting legislation that would ensure adequate testing before permitting new devices.

We encourage you to support funding and policies that continue to strengthen opera and the performing arts in communities across the nation.

Sincerely,


Marc A. Scorca
President and CEO


Haley Gordon
Government Affairs Director