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March 13, 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

OPERA America leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of opera. Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes nearly 200 Company Members, 300 Affiliate and Business Members, 2,000 Individual members, and more than 16,000 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.

As a national co-sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2007, OPERA America urges Congress to strengthen federal support for the arts by:

- Increasing funding for the National Endowment for the Arts to \$176 million.
- Increasing funding for national arts education programs through the U.S. Department of Education to \$53 million.
- Supporting legislation that will reduce the total processing times for O & P artist visa petitions filed by or on behalf of nonprofit arts related organizations to a maximum of 45 days.
- Increasing funding by \$10 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges.
- Enacting permanent IRA Rollover legislation and allowing artists to take a fair market value tax deduction for contributions of their own artistic work to museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your support of these initiatives.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Scorca
President and CEO

Haley Gordon
Government Affairs Director