

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Townsend Opera Cancels *Don Pasquale*, the Opening Production of the 2010/11 Season

Townsend Opera regretfully announces that due to the unexpected loss of two significant funders in the last few weeks, one production in the 2010/11 had to be cancelled, and the company will present two full operas this season. The upcoming production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* has been cancelled, and the season will continue with Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* in January and Puccini's classic *Madama Butterfly* in late April.

"While this was a difficult decision, it is the wisest decision for our company in the midst of these lengthy tough economic times," said Matthew Buckman, Executive Director of Townsend Opera. "We have the busiest artistic calendar of any opera company in northern California, short of San Francisco Opera, and as our company continues to evolve to meet the new standards of excellence in our community established by the opening of a world-class arts center, we have to commit more resources to fewer artistic endeavors each season. While we had been planning for just two major productions in the 2011/12 season, the unexpected loss of two major funders and the general economic climate has forced us to implement those plans this season as well."

"This was a tough decision," said Steve Collins, President of the Board of Directors, "but other companies in our region, from Fresno to Sacramento, have budgets three times our size, and they only do two full productions and a concert annually. We are trying to achieve a level of artistic excellence similar to these other companies, which for us means reducing the number of productions we do each season so we can do each production very well. We would prefer to not make a decision like this in the middle of the season, but we also need to respond to the changing economic conditions in a manner that guarantees the financial health of the company."

Townsend Opera was founded in 1983, and is the only professional opera and musical theater company in Stanislaus County. Townsend Opera has performed three major productions each season, as well as many other smaller productions and gala performances. In addition, Townsend Opera Players offers many educational opportunities to the community through the Townsend Opera Program, including an early music development program for children aged 8-12, an academic year master class series and a summer institute for students aged 13-18, a collegiate division for pre-professionals, opportunities to access the art form for underserved adult demographics, and productions of fully-staged operas for schools throughout the county.

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