



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Embargoed until 31 January 2012**

West Australian Opera announces the appointment of Joseph Colaneri as Artistic Director. Mr Colaneri succeeds Richard Mills AM who held has the position since 1997. Mr Colaneri was appointed following an extensive international search.

A conductor and opera educator, Mr Colaneri lives in New York. For many years he has conducted regularly with The Metropolitan Opera, The New York City Opera and is Artistic Director of The Mannes Opera at Mannes College The New School for Music (New York City).

While he will continue to conduct with international opera companies he is looking forward to spending significant time in Perth each year working with the team at West Australian Opera and engaging with audiences, donors and the public.

Mr Colaneri said, "It's an honor for me to join the West Australian Opera as Artistic Director. After several seasons as a guest conductor, I look forward to building on the wonderful relationship I have with the entire company, to bolstering and expanding the repertoire, and to collaborating with Perth's arts organizations to bring a new perspective the rich cultural life of the city."

Chairman Warwick Hemsley said the company was thrilled to have secured the talents of such an outstanding international conductor in this important position and said 'Mr Colaneri brings new ideas, international networks and a new perspective on developing singers and audiences'.

Carolyn Chard, General Manager, said that the company had built a rapport with Mr Colaneri over a number of years as a visiting conductor. He recently conducted 'Tosca' and later this year will conduct 'Madam Butterfly'. She said that Mr Colaneri would be in residence to conduct two operas each year for West Australian Opera.

Ms Chard acknowledged the work of Richard Mills over fifteen years during which time the company had the opportunity and privilege of presenting Batavia and The Love of the Nightingale, both composed and conducted by Richard, landmark moments for both Richard and the company. Richard Mills will succeed Richard Gill in the position of Artistic Director with Victorian Opera in Melbourne.

Mr Colaneri will commence in the position on 1 July and will be in residence during September and October this year.

**Further media information:**

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