

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 16, 2009

**LIGHTS ON AT THE CONRAD CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS!**

KITCHENER, Ontario - This Friday night (September 18, 2009) marks the opening of the **Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts** (CCPA) in Downtown Kitchener with a gala event celebrating the launch of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) concert season.

In spring 2009, the Manfred & Penny Conrad Family Foundation stepped in to preserve the former King Street Theatre Centre as a community-based venue for Performing Arts for the Region, with the KWS as anchor-tenant and building manager.

As President and CEO of The Cora Group, Manfred Conrad is a well-known business leader in the region. For over twenty years, The Cora Group has enjoyed tremendous success in the development and management of some of the most prestigious properties in local markets.

"We care deeply about the future of this city and are honoured to be in a position to make a substantial contribution to the arts in downtown Kitchener through our Family Foundation" says Manfred Conrad.

"Our vision is to re-invigorate the downtown core by developing a vibrant arts space that is a true resource for the community at-large. I am thrilled that the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony will be the anchor tenant of this bustling space that will be used by a wide range of talented local artists and arts groups throughout the year. Our hope is that this facility will also be a preeminent destination for music and performing arts education." says Penny Conrad.

The KWS administrative offices have moved to the downtown location and Centre In The Square continues to be its primary performance venue. Ron Craigen, Chair of the KWS Board says, "The Centre In The Square was purpose-built for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony - and as one of North America's finest concert halls it will remain home to the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. We are looking forward to continuing a strong leadership role within the community to create a vibrant arts centre. We are extremely grateful to the Manfred & Penny Conrad Foundation and look forward to working with a wide variety of performing arts organizations as the new anchor tenants of the King Street Theatre Centre."

The KWS concert season opens Friday, September 18 with a concert featuring opera star Frederica von Stade. The celebration continues with a post-concert gala event; the first public event to be held at the refurbished Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts. Concert and Party tickets are still available – call KWS Patron Services at 519 745 4711 or go online [www.kwsymphony.ca](http://www.kwsymphony.ca) for information.

The CCPA is now available for external bookings for groups of all sizes. The IMPACT Festival, ([www.mtspace.ca](http://www.mtspace.ca)), breaks in the new rental spaces by hosting six events. For information about building rentals go online [www.kwsymphony.ca/conradcentre](http://www.kwsymphony.ca/conradcentre).

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