



Former Livent producer Garth Drabinsky. DARRYL JAMES/GETTY IMAGES

Former Broadway impresario Drabinsky found guilty

TORONTO (Reuters)—One-time Broadway impresario Garth Drabinsky was convicted of fraud and forgery by a Canadian court on Wednesday, more than a decade after the collapse of high-profile theatre producer Livent Inc.

The court found that Drabinsky, who was behind Broadway hits such as "Ragtime" and the revival of "Showboat", and fellow Livent co-founder Myron Gottlieb "systematically manipulated" the books of the Toronto-based company.

"The accounting system was fraudulent. You knew what was happening," Ontario Superior Court Justice Mary Lou Benotto told the two men seated at the front of a packed Toronto courtroom.

In the company's 1990s heyday, "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and other Livent productions were the toast of Broadway, winning more than a dozen Tony awards. Livent also backed the long-running Toronto production of "Phantom of the Opera."

Canadian prosecutors alleged that the two executives directed company accountants to falsify Livent's records to boost its earnings. Drabinsky and Gottlieb were also charged with fraud in the United States in 1999.

The judge said in an 85-page written verdict that she was "satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Drabinsky and Mr. Gottlieb initiated the improper accounting system and knew of its continuation throughout the years 1994 to 1998."

"The actions of Mr. Drabinsky and Mr. Gottlieb satisfy all three of the ways a prohibited act can be conducted: they were deceitful, they perpetrated a falsehood and reasonable people would consider them dishonest," the verdict said.

The scheme was discovered in 1998, shortly after U.S. investors, including Hollywood mogul Michael Ovitz, took control of the firm. A short time later Livent was bankrupt.

After the verdict was delivered the courtroom was closed to all but family and close friends, many of whom were seen sobbing and visibly shaken as they left the room.

Brian and Edward Greenspan, lawyers for the two men, refused comment after the decision, noting that they would not make a comment until they read the document.

Drabinsky, who was ushered through a crush of media to a waiting car, also refused comment.

"It's been an 11-year struggle, so it takes a few minutes to get a reaction to it," said David Roebuck, a member of Drabinsky's legal team.

The case returns on April 8 when sentencing begins.

Falun Gong barred from Montreal St. Patrick's Day parade

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Montreal Falun Gong practitioners were told they were not allowed to participate in the city's popular St. Patrick's Day parade last Sunday because they are "political."

An email from Beverly Murphy, VP of organization with the United Irish Societies of Montreal to Falun Gong coordinator Zhu Ying, said the group will not be allowed entry "due to the political nature of your contingent."

Ying, however, believes pressure was put on parade organizers by the Chinese embassy to bar the Falun Gong contingent, which includes the Tian Guo Marching Band. The group has participated in the parade for the last five years.

"One of their committee members told our practitioners clearly that they received a letter from the Chinese embassy. That was after the parade in 2008. But this person did not want his name to be made public."

Gerald Showers, spokesperson for United Irish Societies of Montreal, denies this.

"That's not true. We were never contacted by any government. We tried to just tell them we're an open book and there's no Chinese government that's going to tell us who we should or should not have in the parade."

In an email exchange between Murphy and Ying, Murphy wrote: "You mention that you have handed out these pamphlets in previous parades but it was not brought to our attention until after last year's parade."

The issue of the letter from the Chinese embassy was raised by Chengzhi Jin during a meeting with the organizing committee on March 12 which Ying attended.

"Their [the committee's] lawyer, McConomy Leverman, said, 'I'm warning you, be very careful what you say,'" Ying says.

Showers insists the group has been excluded because Falun Gong practitioners handed out pamphlets at last year's parade.

"We invited them to a meeting to explain our position," he says. "I said, 'I may sympathize with you but the parade is not the place to voice your opinion or your concerns about what's going on in China.'"

Ying says the group likes to hand out flyers



The Tian Guo Marching Band performs at the St. Patrick's Day parade in Chateauguy, Quebec, on March 15, 2009. The parade, which included 60 contingents, was led by Tian Guo. THE EPOCH TIMES

to raise awareness of the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong adherents in China. However, an offer to not hand out pamphlets during the parade this year did not change the committee's decision, she says.

Falun Dafa Association of Canada spokesperson Lucy Zhou says the group is not political but rather works to expose the ill treatment of their counterparts at the hands of the Chinese regime.

"Trying to protect and raise awareness about the human rights of innocent people in China does not make Falun Gong a political group, and it should therefore not be shut out of any event in Canada including a St. Patrick's Day parade."

Zhou says the Chinese embassy and consulates have a history of interfering with events that include Falun Gong.

Last May, organizers of Ottawa's Tulip Festival

dropped the Tian Guo Marching Band which was scheduled to perform at the opening ceremony for fear of upsetting the Chinese embassy, which had partially funded the event.

Speaking in the Ontario provincial legislature at the time, MPP Randy Hillier said that "the Ottawa Tulip Festival, in partnership with the Embassy of China, banned Falun Gong."

"This government gave the tulip festival \$300,000 and with it they became the latest voice of silence," he said.

After the incident whipped up a media storm, festival organizers issued an official apology and allowed the band to play.

Zhu says there are plans to take the current matter before a human rights tribunal, adding that she finds it odd that after five years the group is suddenly banned from the Montreal parade.

"It's so weird. We always had a good relationship with [the organizers]."

Vancouver mayor's first 100 days 'busy'

By HELENA ZHU
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson on Tuesday used the occasion of the Vision Annual General Meeting to bring colleagues and supporters up to speed on his accomplishments during his first 100 days in office.

"It's been an extraordinary couple of months for all of us if we think about it. It feels a lot longer than 106 days—it feels like a lifetime now," Robertson told his audience at the Chinese Cultural Centre.

"I told Marcella (Vision co-chair) and she said, 'Remember in the Hotel Vancouver and celebrating that big party that night?' I actually haven't thought about it since that night. It's been so overwhelming and busy every minute since then."

With homelessness one of the biggest issues on Robertson's agenda, on his first day in office he created the Homeless Emergency Action Team (HEAT). HEAT secured funding from the province and Streethome Foundation for five new emergency shelters, providing a secure place to sleep for up to 500 people per night.

Earlier this month, additional funding was secured from the provincial government to keep the shelters open for another three months.

"Homelessness was the number one priority coming into this term. I made it clear that it would be my top priority to take action on it and we did that on day one," Robertson said.

The infamous Olympic Village financial shortfall was also a prob-

lem inherited by the new Vision government. KPMG was hired to provide an external review of the Olympic Village finances, and open council meetings were held to keep the public informed.

"[The Budget] was not pretty; it still is not pretty, but we put it out there transparently—the situation we are in right now."

In anticipation of overloaded streets during the 2010 Winter Games, particularly with all the Vancouver public schools in session, to alleviate the traffic on the roads Robertson and his team have been making safety checks on infrastructure for cyclists. The aim is to have 10 percent of the population riding bicycles to get around, up from the current four percent.

As the co-founder of the organic juice company Happy Planet, Robertson is committed to making

Vancouver the "greenest city in the world" by forming Greenest City Action Team (GCAT) and reaching out to green businesses.

"We are going to make Vancouver the greatest city in the world—[I said that] a few thousand times now and I still believe it."

Robertson acknowledged efforts by the Vancouver Police Department to combat gang warfare. He called on other cities to start contributing to help stop this "epic struggle" that is happening across Lower Mainland municipalities.

As for the economic downturn, \$42 million was already cut from the city's budget since December without affecting core services such as the public library. However, in order to accomplish all of the above, around a 30 percent tax increase may be applied in the future, Robertson said.

CBC to cut 800 jobs

TORONTO (Reuters)—The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. the publicly owned operator of national television and radio net-

works, will chop about 800 jobs and seek to sell assets to fight a growing financial shortfall caused by a sharp advertising downturn, it

said on Wednesday.

The CBC, which has about 9,850 employees and receives more than \$1 billion a year in funding from the federal government, said it expects the shortfall to hit \$171 million in its 2009-2010 fiscal year.

It said its projections assume the government will authorize \$125 million in asset sales. It blamed its woes on weak ad markets, higher costs, a base-salary funding shortfall and aging infrastructure.

About 400 employees are being let go from the CBC's English-language service, 335 will depart the French-language arm and 70 are being cut in other areas of the company, said chief executive Hubert Lacroix.

"It's not easy," he told Reuters. Like other media companies, the CBC, which operates television and radio networks in English and French, is struggling with a plunge in ad revenue as the recession forces marketers to reduce spending. It has also been difficult to predict when a recovery may take place, which further complicates broadcasters' plans.

"The kind of visibility that we have is very foggy, like the other broadcasters," Lacroix said.

The CBC also said on Wednesday it will scale back regional radio and TV programming and make cuts in news, drama, music and current affairs. As well, it will cut executive compensation by up to 20 percent, trim discretionary spending and reduce hiring.

Aside from government funding, the CBC normally generates roughly \$600 million a year in revenue from commercial activities, including about \$340 million from advertising.

The broadcaster has turned to the government for help, but it insists it isn't asking for more money. Instead, it has suggested a line of credit or an advance on future funding to deal with the current crisis.

The Conservative government has replied that it expects the CBC to cut costs just like its private-sector competitors.

"I've been told that it is a dead end," Lacroix said on Wednesday of the prospect of government aid. "We've been told publicly that CBC/Radio Canada is not going to get a dollar more."

He added that if Ottawa had provided the CBC with temporary financing to deal with the crisis, it is possible it could have avoided asset divestitures such as the real estate sale leasebacks that it now plans to undertake.

Cost cuts at two private-sector Canadian broadcasters, CTV and Canwest Global Communications Corp, have already resulted in hundreds of layoffs. CTV has cut 225 jobs since late November, while Canwest has cut 560, including 210 at its broadcasting operations.

Canwest is also looking to sell five conventional TV stations and CTV has announced it will shut two TV stations.

NATION BRIEFS

Canada slams French bid for Atlantic shelf rights

OTTAWA (Reuters)—Canada criticized France on Wednesday for trying to claim exploration rights off the eastern Canadian coast, home to rich reserves of natural resources.

Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon said Ottawa "will take all necessary measures to defend and protect its rights with respect to its continental shelf."

The dispute concerns the two tiny French islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, which sit just off the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Cannon said France had received a claim for the rights to an extended continental shelf from the two islands despite a bilateral agreement in June 1992, which he said had settled the matter once and for all.

"Canada does not recognize France's claim to any area of the continental shelf in the northwest Atlantic Ocean beyond the area set out in the arbitration decision," he said in a statement. "Canada has made France aware of its position on several occasions."

Just over 6,000 people live on the tiny islands, the only remnants of colonial New France.

Canadian media reports from Paris say the islanders have been pressing France for the right to access the same offshore oil reserves that lie in Canada's waters.

No one was immediately available for comment at the French embassy in Ottawa.

Scotiabank CEO sees signs of financial stability

VANCOUVER (Reuters)—There are indications the global financial system has begun to stabilize, which is needed for the rest of the economy to recover, Bank of Nova Scotia's chief executive said on Tuesday.

"My sense is that the financial system, and this includes globally, is beginning to stabilize. So economies will stabilize, I expect, near the end of the year," Richard Waugh told a business gathering in Vancouver.

Stabilization of the financial systems will allow consumers and businesses to take advantage of economic stimulus actions being taken by governments around the world, Waugh said.

The head of Canada's third largest bank said he is also seeing signs that bond markets have begun to recover, adding: "We get that happening, then the equity markets will take care of themselves."

Waugh said that while he is disappointed by the payment of executive bonuses at troubled U.S. insurer AIG as it accepts massive U.S. bailouts, he is also worried that lawmakers will overreact and cause unintended problems for the rest of the financial sector.

"If a ship has to be turned around, you're going to need a crew. Before you tell the exiting crew they are no longer needed you had better have your new crew ready, able and trained to do that," Waugh told reporters.

Irving plans new power corridor to U.S. Northeast

CALGARY (Reuters)—Irving Oil Ltd, a privately held refiner and gasoline retailer, said on Wednesday it is planning to create an "energy corridor" that could deliver as much as 1,500 megawatts of power from New Brunswick to the U.S. Northeast.


Irving has launched a feasibility study into developing the initial stage of the corridor. The plan includes transmission lines capable of carrying between 1,200 and 1,500 megawatts of electricity from wind generators, as well as a natural gas co-generator that would supply base-load power for the line.

The projected 1,500 MW would be more than enough to light a city of 1 million.

The company, which is also planning a new \$8 billion refinery at Saint John, New Brunswick, did not specify the cost of the proposed project, but said completing the first phase would likely require an investment of "several billion dollars."

Irving said in its release the energy corridor could also accommodate natural gas and petroleum product pipelines.

The feasibility study is also being supported by the governments of New Brunswick and Maine.



Water80
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- ❖ rust: a cause of liver cancer
- ❖ chloramine: a toxic chemical compound
- ❖ lead: a poisonous metal that can damage nervous connections and cause blood and brain disorders
- ❖ bacteria
- ❖ other contaminants

In just three days, the onion root grows much larger in ionized microcluster alkaline water than the other one in bottled water or tap water. Our water is the water of life. It brings more nutrients into cells, improves metabolism, helps your body battle diseases and heal itself faster.

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- ❖ Achieves reverse aging
- ❖ Improves hydration
- ❖ Low cost
- ❖ No wasted water as in other ionizers
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