

NEWS RELEASE

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Minnesota Opera announces its 2010–2011 season

World Premiere of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*

Second installment of the Bel Canto-period Tudor trilogy: *Mary Stuart*

Highlights include the Minnesota debut of internationally renowned
countertenor David Daniels in *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the
long-awaited return of Elizabeth Futral in *La traviata*

Minneapolis, MN—Minnesota Opera announced its 2010–2011 season, featuring the first commission of the Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative – the world premiere of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, based on the novel by Giorgio Bassani, by the creative team of *The Grapes of Wrath* (2007): Ricky Ian Gordon (composer), Michael Korie (librettist) and Eric Simonson (director). The season also boasts the Minnesota debut of an operatic superstar, countertenor David Daniels, who headlines Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*. This wide-ranging season spans the early Classical period to the 21st century and includes the vocal pyrotechnics of Rossini's fairy tale opera (*Cinderella*), a Bel Canto masterpiece (*Mary Stuart*, second in Donizetti's Tudor trilogy) and Verdi's most famous love story (*La traviata*).

The season opens September 25, 2010, with Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, in a stylish new production starring **DAVID DANIELS** and **SUSANNA PHILLIPS**. **HARRY BICKET** makes his greatly anticipated return conducting **THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**. In October, Romanian mezzo-soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU** makes her debut on the American opera stage opposite the dashing tenor **JOHN TESSIER** in Gioachino Rossini's *Cinderella*. **DOUG VARONE** directs this rollicking comedy after last heating up the stage with Minnesota Opera's 2009 *Faust*. In January, Minnesota Opera's acclaimed Bel Canto series continues with *Mary Stuart*, the second installment in Donizetti's Tudor trilogy. Singing her role debut as Queen Elizabeth I is Minnesota Opera favorite **BRENDA HARRIS**, who stars opposite **JUDITH HOWARTH** as Mary, Queen of Scots. Completing this ultimate love triangle as Leicester is **ERIC CUTLER**, hailed as one of the most promising singers of his generation. This new production is directed by **KEVIN NEWBURY**. The decadence of Parisian high society takes center stage in March, featuring the long-awaited return of soprano **ELIZABETH FUTRAL** in

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Verdi's signature tragic love story, *La traviata*. **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** makes his company debut conducting the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. The season concludes in April with the world premiere of **RICKY IAN GORDON** and **MICHAEL KORIE**'s second Minnesota Opera collaboration, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, based on the novel by **GIORGIO BASSANI**. Directed by Academy Award-winning director **ERIC SIMONSON**, this thrilling drama of unrequited love in war-time Italy stars **KELLY KADUCE** opposite **ERIC MARGIORE** in his Minnesota Opera debut.

"Minnesota Opera has been lauded both by national and international press for its bold and exciting repertoire plans," said **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DALE JOHNSON**. "We're fortunate in the 2010–2011 season to be so flexible as to go back to the classical masterpiece *Orpheus and Eurydice* at the beginning of our season and end with the world premiere of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*. We are also excited to present the second part of our Tudor trilogy with *Mary Stuart* while revisiting such glorious works as Rossini's *Cinderella* and Verdi's *La traviata*. This season will surely thrill all veteran operagoers as well as those who are seeking a brand new experience."

"The 2009–2010 season is one that only a major opera company could present," said **PRESIDENT AND CEO KEVIN SMITH**. "We are pleased to present three new productions and a season full of world-class artists. Minnesota Opera's season has been artfully created to provide our audiences with a perfect balance of entertainment and discovery. It is not to be missed."

Orpheus and Eurydice by Christoph Willibald Gluck

September 25, 28, 30, October 2 and 3, 2010

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A new Minnesota Opera production.

Orpheus mourns the loss of his wife, Eurydice, with such despairing grief that Zeus takes pity, permitting him to enter Hades to reclaim her, with one condition: he must not look at her until they cross the river Styx. On his journey from heartbreak to ultimate triumph, Orpheus charms the god of Love with his voice, and is at last restored to his beloved.

Internationally acclaimed countertenor **DAVID DANIELS** stars as Orpheus in his Minnesota debut opposite the exquisite soprano **SUSANNA PHILLIPS** (*The Fortunes of King Croesus*) as Eurydice. **ANGELA MORTELLARO** debuts as Amor. Baroque specialist **HARRY BICKET** (*The Fortunes of King Croesus*) returns to conduct **THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**. Making their company debuts, **LEE BLAKELEY** directs this stylish, sophisticated production by British designer **ADRIAN LINFORD**. Portuguese choreographer **ARTHUR PITA** also debuts.

Cinderella by Gioachino Rossini

October 30, November 2, 4, 6 and 7, 2010

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Rebuild from Kentucky Opera/Washington Opera production.

Angelina, known as Cinderella, is ill-treated by her father Don Magnifico and her obnoxious stepsisters, but finds her Prince Charming. During the confusion of hilarious mistaken identity, it is ultimately a silver bracelet (in the place of a glass slipper) that unites Angelina to Prince Ramiro as his bride.

Though *The Barber of Seville* made Rossini famous, his take on the Cinderella story cemented his reputation as a master of comic opera. Starring in this rollicking score ablaze with vocal pyrotechnics is Romanian mezzo-

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soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU** as Angelina in her American opera stage debut. The dashing tenor **JOHN TESSIER** (*Little Women*) is Ramiro, with baritone **JOHN MICHAEL MOORE** (*Casanova's Homecoming*) as his hilarious valet Dandini. **DONATO DISTEFANO**, one of the most sought after buffo basses in the opera world, makes his company debut as the cantankerous stepfather Don Magnifico. **DOUG VARONE**, who last heated up the stage with *Faust*, directs with **CHRISTOPHER FRANKLIN** in his conducting debut.

Mary Stuart by Gaetano Donizetti

January 29, February 1, 3, 5 and 6, 2011

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A new Minnesota Opera production.

Queen Elizabeth I of England, at the request of her favorite, Leicester, is persuaded to visit Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, her imprisoned rival to the throne. Amidst the intrigue of a royal love triangle, the ruthless Elizabeth sentences Mary to death, securing her rule over the Empire.

These performances of *Mary Stuart* represent the continuation of Minnesota Opera's commitment to repertoire from the Bel Canto period and comprise the second installment of Donizetti's Tudor trilogy of operas, which Minnesota Opera will conclude in the 2011-2012 season with *Anne Boleyn*. Dueling sopranos vie for the English throne with **JUDITH HOWARTH** (*Faust*) starring in the title role opposite **BRENDA HARRIS** (*Roberto Devereux*) in her role debut as Queen Elizabeth I. Skyrocketing tenor **ERIC CUTLER** makes his company debut as Leicester, who completes the royal love triangle. The creative team that brought *Roberto Devereux* returns: **NEIL PATEL** (sets), **JESSICA JAHN** (costumes), **D.M. WOOD** (lighting) and director **KEVIN NEWBURY** (*The Barber of Seville*). Previously thrilling Minnesota audiences with *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, the accomplished conductor **ANNE MANSON** returns.

La traviata by Giuseppe Verdi

March 5*, 6, 8*, 10*, 11, 12* and 13, 2011

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera production.

Violetta's romantic happiness is dashed in this heartrending story of a courtesan who falls for a younger man, but must give him up. Alfredo learns her true motive just in time for a heartbreaking reunion. Verdi's unforgettable characters and vivid portrayal of the decadence and consequence of Parisian high society inspired the 2001 Oscar-winning film *Moulin Rouge*.

La traviata is one of the world's favorite operas, and for good reason – it has the most well-known tragic heroine, Verdi's most intimate score and all the emotion of Parisian nightlife, both public and private. The captivating soprano **ELIZABETH FUTRAL** (*Pélleas et Mélisande*) makes her long-awaited return as opera's most intriguing party girl, Violetta. The beloved Minnesota Opera production features the company debut of the ambitious and adventuresome **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** conducting the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

The Garden of the Finzi-Continis
Based on the novel by Giorgio Bassani
Music by Ricky Ian Gordon
Libretto by Michael Korie

April 16, 17, 19, 21 and 23, 2011

Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage.

World premiere. A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative production.

When Fascist law bans Jews from playing at the community tennis courts in World War II Italy, the daughter of the wealthy Finzi-Continis invites the young people of Ferrara to gather in her family's garden. In this sacred place unmolested by the bustle of everyday political concerns, Giorgio becomes enamored with the elusive Micòl in this story of unrequited love.

Composer **RICKY IAN GORDON** and librettist **MICHAEL KORIE** return to collaborate with Academy Award-winning director **ERIC SIMONSON** after their triumph, *The Grapes of Wrath*, 2007. Set against one of history's greatest tragedies, Micòl, the beautiful daughter of the Finzi-Continis, will be realized by the equally lovely and entrancing soprano **KELLY KADUCE** (*Rusalka*, *The Grapes of Wrath*). Giorgio, this story's narrator and youthful protagonist whose love is unrequited, will be created by lyric tenor **ERIC MARGIORE**, making his Minnesota Opera debut. Baritone **JESSE BLUMBERG** (*The Grapes of Wrath*) will play the tragic role of Micòl's brother, Alberto. **BEN WAGER** (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) is the fiery friend of the Finzi-Continis, Giampiero Malnate. **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* is the third production of the **MINNESOTA OPERA NEW WORKS INITIATIVE**, a multi-year program designed to infuse the operatic art form with new commissions and revivals of contemporary American work.

Mainstage Season Information

All productions will be staged at the Ordway, 345 Washington St., St. Paul. Sunday performances are matinees beginning at 2:00 p.m. All other performances begin at 7:30 p.m., with the exception of the September 25 (Opera Gala 2010) and February 5 (Winter Carnival Torchlight Parade) performances, which begin at 8:00 p.m.

Season tickets are now on sale and may be ordered by calling 612-333-6669 or online at mnopera.org. Full-season subscription packages range in price from \$80-\$755, with three-opera and four-opera packages starting as low as \$50. Single tickets ranging from \$20-\$200 per ticket will be on sale to the general public for all shows on July 19 and will be available by calling 612-333-6669 or online at mnopera.org.

For ticketing services, education programming and other company information, please visit mnopera.org. Season-related background notes, synopses, casting updates and artist biographies will be posted as the information is available.

The 2010–2011 Minnesota Opera season is sponsored by The Private Client Reserve at U. S. Bank.

The Minnesota Opera's mission is to produce opera and opera education programs
at the highest artistic level that inspire and entertain our audiences
and enrich the cultural life of our community.

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