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Minnesota Opera 2010–2011 season update

Casting updates for *Cinderella*, *La traviata* and *Wuthering Heights*

Minneapolis, MN—Minnesota Opera announces updates to its 2010–2011 season casting for *Cinderella*, *La traviata* and *Wuthering Heights*. A new production of **BERNARD HERRMANN**'s *Wuthering Heights*, based on the novel by Emily Brontë, will replace *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* as the 2010–2011 season finale, and based on anticipated demand, an eighth performance of *La traviata* has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2011. 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 20th 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 Verdi's signature tragic love story, *La traviata*. **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** makes his company debut conducting the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. Casting information has been updated to this popular double-cast production below. The season concludes in April with the major revival of **BERNARD HERRMANN**'s only opera, *Wuthering Heights*, based on the gothic romance by Emily Brontë. Directed by Academy Award-winning director **ERIC SIMONSON** with **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** returning to conduct, this lyric drama of unrequited love and revenge was written by the Hollywood legend who scored such films as *Psycho*, *Citizen Kane* and *Taxi Driver*.

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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 Amore. 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 stepfather 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-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. Minnesota Opera Resident Artists **ANGELA MORTELLARO** and **VICTORIA VARGAS** sing the roles of Angelina's scheming stepsisters Clorinda and Tisbe, and **DANIEL MOBBS** (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) is the philosopher and former tutor of the Prince, Alidoro, who replaces the Fairy Godmother in Rossini's rendition. **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 a future 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*, 9+, 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*** (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) makes her long-awaited return as opera's most intriguing party girl, Violetta, opposite **BRUNO RIBEIRO*** (*Roberto Devereux*) as Alfredo, alternating performances with **GEORGIA JARMAN+**, who makes her Minnesota Opera debut. **STEPHEN POWELL** also makes his Minnesota Opera debut as Germont for all performances. The beloved Minnesota Opera production features the company debuts of director **LAWRENCE EDELSON** and the ambitious and adventuresome **MICHAEL CHRISTIE**, conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

Wuthering Heights by Bernard Herrmann

Based on the novel by Emily Brontë

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

Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative production.

Unable to bridge the chasm of social class, Heathcliff and Catherine are consumed by a love that can never be, and its legacy haunts the windswept Yorkshire moors. Based on Emily Brontë's gothic romance, this lyric drama underscores the novel's passion, prejudice and mystery.

Composer Bernard Herrmann (1911–1964) was a Hollywood legend – an Academy Award-winning American composer who scored almost every Alfred Hitchcock soundtrack from 1955–1964, including *Psycho*, *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*, and his numerous, unforgettable collaborations include *Citizen Kane* with Orson Welles and *Taxi Driver* with Martin Scorsese. Though Herrmann completed *Wuthering Heights* in 1951, the opera did not see its premiere until 1982, when it was staged by Portland Opera.

KELLY KADUCE (*Rusalka*) makes her greatly anticipated return as Catherine Earnshaw opposite **LEE POULIS**,

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who makes his Minnesota Opera debut as Heathcliff. Edgar Linton, who becomes Catherine's husband, is sung by lyric tenor **ERIC MARGIORE** in his Minnesota Opera debut with former Resident Artist **ADRIANA ZABALA** (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) as his sister and later wife of Heathcliff, Isabella Linton. Catherine's brother Hindley, who proves ruinous to the Earnshaw name, is sung by **BEN WAGER** (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) and Mr. Lockwood, the opera's narrator, is sung by **JESSE BLUMBERG** (*The Grapes of Wrath*). **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. Academy Award-winning director **ERIC SIMONSON** (*The Grapes of Wrath*) leads a world-class creative team: Set Designer **NEIL PATEL** (*Roberto Devereux*, *Mary Stuart*), Costume Designer **JANE GREENWOOD** in her Minnesota Opera debut (nominated a record 15 times for the Tony Award), Lighting Designer **ROBERT WIERZEL** (*The Grapes of Wrath*) and Projections Designer **WENDALL HARRINGTON** (*The Grapes of Wrath*).

Minnesota Opera's new production of this forgotten masterpiece celebrates the centennial of the composer's birth and is the first major stage revival of the work since its 1982 premiere. It 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 works.

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 September 25 (Opera Gala 2010) and February 5 (Winter Carnival Torchlight Parade), 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.

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at the highest artistic level that inspire and entertain our audiences
and enrich the cultural life of our community.

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