

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Minnesota Opera 2013–2014 season update

Four additional performances added of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Cast and creative team updates announced for all five productions

Individual tickets now on sale to the general public

New Minnesota Opera website launched

Minneapolis—Minnesota Opera is pleased to announce casting updates for the 2013–2014 season, which boasts three company premieres and five productions new to Minnesota audiences. Based on anticipated demand, the boundary-busting production of *The Magic Flute* will receive nine performances. Other season highlights include James Valenti starring in the premiere of a revised *The Dream of Valentino* by Dominick Argento as part of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative; Kelly Kaduce in an opulent production of Puccini's soulful *Manon Lescaut*; Jacquelyn Wagner, Elizabeth Futral, Brian Jagde and Craig Irvin in a stylish production of Strauss' romantic comedy, *Arabella*; and Verdi's chilling take on the Shakespearean thriller, *Macbeth*, starring Brenda Harris and Greer Grimsley. Minnesota Opera is also pleased to announce the roster for the 2013–2014 Resident Artist Program, as well as unveil a new website.

The season opens on September 21, 2013, with *Manon Lescaut*, which presents the first tragic heroine in a long list of Puccini favorites. **KELLY KADUCE** stars in the title role with tenor **DINYAR VANIA**, who makes his Minnesota Opera debut as her star-crossed lover, Chevalier des Grieux. Maestro **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** continues in his second season as Music Director conducting the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. In November, the Opera presents Richard Strauss' *Arabella*, with the return of sopranos **JACQUELYN WAGNER** and **ELIZABETH FUTRAL**, tenor **BRIAN JAGDE** and bass-baritone **CRAIG IRVIN** in a stylish co-production with **SANTA FE OPERA** and **CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY** by scenic and costume designer **TOBIAS HOHEISEL**. In January, the season continues with Giuseppe Verdi's adaptation of a Shakespearean thriller, *Macbeth*. Bass-baritone **GREER GRIMSLEY** makes his long-awaited return to the Minnesota Opera stage as the ambitious and sinister King of Scotland with soprano **BRENDA HARRIS** as Lady Macbeth. In March, the sixth production of **MINNESOTA OPERA'S NEW WORKS INITIATIVE** – a major revival of Dominick Argento's *The Dream of Valentino* – stars internationally acclaimed tenor **JAMES VALENTI** as the 1920s film icon and sex symbol, Rudolph Valentino, with **BRENDA HARRIS** as June Mathis, the catalyst of his meteoric rise to fame, and bass-baritone **ALAN HELD** as The Mogul, a film studio boss. Directed

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by **ERIC SIMONSON**, Maestro **CHRISTOPH CAMPESTRINI** returns to conduct. The season concludes in April with an exciting production of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's beloved *The Magic Flute*, originally produced at **KOMISCHE OPER BERLIN** in 2012. Created by the British theatre group 1927, Minnesota Opera brings this dynamic interpretation of Mozart's masterful comedy to the United States in a co-production with **LA OPERA**.

This summer, Minnesota Opera launched a new website. Whether watching opera videos or reading performance programs, users can enjoy content on **MNOPERA.ORG** from virtually any device, and thanks to new ticketing technology, their purchase experience will be enjoyable and easy.

"It seems a fitting tribute to the company's 50-year rich history of new work that we are staging three company premieres and a whole season of productions new to our audiences," said **PRESIDENT AND GENERAL DIRECTOR KEVIN RAMACH**. "Beyond our mainstage season at the Ordway, Minnesota Opera also provides educational programs that engage communities statewide with a unique depth of interaction. Through our New Works Initiative, we will be reaching a wider audience with a PBS broadcast of *Silent Night*. As we move into our next 50 years, those activities will grow as we find new ways to reach out to our community. None of this would be possible without the support of our patrons and donors, and our stewardship of their trust and resources is a primary value of this company. That is why last June, Minnesota Opera reframed its mission statement to the following: 'Minnesota Opera combines a culture of creativity and fiscal responsibility to produce opera and opera education programs that expand the art form, nurture artists, enrich audiences and contribute to the vitality of the community.'"

"The 2013–2014 season is a wonderful mix of the old and the new," said **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DALE JOHNSON**. "*Manon Lescaut* is the opera that put Puccini on the map and made him a rising star in the Italian opera world. This emotionally charged and gorgeous opera will be sung by Kelly Kaduce in her role debut, and we welcome an exciting new tenor, Dinyar Vania, as Des Grieux. *Arabella* is a warmhearted comedy by the composer of *Der Rosenkavalier*, Richard Strauss. This splendid co-production with Santa Fe Opera and Canadian Opera Company is elegant, sophisticated and will be directed by Tim Albery. *Macbeth* returns to Minnesota Opera with a dynamic cast in which Greer Grimsley and Brenda Harris are the ambitious and tragic couple. *The Dream of Valentino*, the sixth installment of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative, is an exciting debut for Minnesota Opera of legendary composer Dominick Argento's last major opera. We're excited to have James Valenti return as screen icon Rudolph Valentino and Brenda Harris as the Hollywood screen writer who discovers him. The season closes with a very special production of Mozart's beloved *The Magic Flute*. Prepare to be blown away by this exciting look at this delightful comedy. I look forward to sharing details with you in the coming months."

## *Manon Lescaut* by Giacomo Puccini

September 21, 24, 26, 28 and 29, 2013

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A Washington National Opera production.

### **You can't take it with you.**

The irresistible lure of money seduces the beautiful Manon, triggering her downfall. But true love is her redemption in this soulful opera by the composer of *La bohème*, *Madame Butterfly* and *Turandot*. *Manon Lescaut* was Puccini's third opera and arguably his first major success. Defending his work against another opera based on the 1731 novel by the Abbé Prévost, Puccini said, "Manon is a heroine I believe in, and therefore she cannot fail to win the hearts of the public. Why shouldn't there be two operas about Manon? A woman like Manon can have more than one lover." He added, "Massenet feels it as a Frenchman, with powder and minuets. I shall feel it as an Italian, with a desperate passion."

Soprano **KELLY KADUCE** (*Madame Butterfly*, *Turandot*) stars in the title role with tenor **DINYAR VANIA**, who makes his

Minnesota Opera debut as her star-crossed lover, Chevalier des Grieux. This Washington National Opera production, called “impassioned, sensual” by *The Baltimore Sun*, was designed by **JOHN PASCOE** (debut). **MICHAEL CAVANAGH** (*Tosca*) is stage director and Minnesota Opera Music Director **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** (*Anna Bolena, Turandot*) conducts.

## *Arabella* by Richard Strauss

November 9, 12, 14, 16 and 17, 2013

Sung in German with English translations projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Canadian Opera Company co-production.

### **For love or money?**

Arabella wants to marry for love, but her parents need her to marry for money. When the man of her dreams appears, will their manipulations ruin her chance to find true happiness? Richard Strauss’ sumptuous romantic comedy is set in Vienna’s golden age. The composer’s sixth and final operatic collaboration with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal is as relevant today as at its 1933 premiere in Dresden during the American Great Depression and an impending second World War.

Soprano **JACQUELYN WAGNER**, heralded as “one of the great Fiordiligis of our time” by *MinnPost* at her Minnesota Opera debut in *Così fan tutte*, stars in the title role with bass-baritone **CRAIG IRVIN** (*Silent Night*) as the mysterious Croatian landowner Mandryka, who ultimately sweeps Arabella off her feet. Soprano **ELIZABETH FUTRAL** (*La traviata*) is Zdenka, Arabella’s sister, tenor **BRIAN JAGDE** (*Madame Butterfly*) is the young officer Matteo and bass-baritone **DALE TRAVIS** (*The Barber of Seville*) is Arabella’s father, Count Waldner. The creative team that debuted this co-production in Santa Fe (2012) brings it to Minnesota: stage director **TIM ALBERY** (*The Fortunes of King Croesus*), scenic and costume designer **TOBIAS HOHEISEL** (debut) and lighting designer **DAVID FINN** (debut). **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

## *Macbeth* by Giuseppe Verdi

January 25, 28, 30, February 1 and 2, 2014

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera production.

### **Power corrupts.**

Verdi’s dark-hued *Macbeth* examines the corrosive consequences of tyranny. At the urging of his scheming wife, Macbeth murders the king to claim the crown. His desperate and deadly reign of terror devastates his country and hastens his doom in this masterwork based upon Shakespeare’s classic thriller. Though the composer did not encounter the original work (in English) until after the first performance of the opera, it was the first of several Shakespeare plays he adapted for the operatic stage. Verdi noted in a 1865 letter: “He is one of my favorite poets. I have had him in my hands from my earliest youth.”

Bass-baritone **GREER GRIMSLEY** (*The Flying Dutchman*) makes his long-awaited return as the ambitious and sinister King of Scotland with soprano **BRENDA HARRIS** (*Nabucco*) as his scheming wife, Lady Macbeth. Fast-rising American bass-baritone **ALFRED WALKER** (*The Magic Flute*) returns to Minnesota Opera as Banquo, the one-time ally Macbeth betrays in his lust for power, and tenor **HAROLD MEERS** (*La bohème*) is Macduff, Lord of Fife and foil to Macbeth. **JOEL IVANY** (*Nabucco*) directs a Minnesota Opera production with costumes by **CARMELIA COO** (debut) and lighting by **JASON HAND** (debut). **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

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## *The Dream of Valentino* by Dominick Argento

March 1, 6, 8 and 9, 2014

Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative production.

### Fame is a dangerous dance.

A sultry young dancer is transformed from an unknown immigrant into a silent film sensation. Rudolph Valentino's stardom blazes across the silver screen but is quickly consumed by the same forces that ignited it. Seduction and scandal swirl in Dominick Argento's tango-tinged opera about an artist discovered and destroyed by Hollywood. Composed by Argento with a libretto by Charles Nolte as a joint commission between Washington and Dallas operas, the work received its world premiere in 1994 at The Kennedy Center, where it was described by the *Chicago Tribune* as "visually and theatrically ... a thumping success."

"I have known Dominick since my first season when Minnesota Opera premiered *Casanova's Homecoming* in 1985 and have always admired the freshness and vibrancy of his works," said **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DALE JOHNSON**. "*The Dream of Valentino* is the only major Argento opera that we have not staged, and I thought it imperative, as we began the New Works Initiative, that we invest in producing his entire canon. After I approached Dominick to discuss this revival, he spent the summer making major changes to literally give *Valentino* a new beginning. By reworking the dramaturgy and focusing more on Valentino the artist, Dominick feels that the work will better embody how Hollywood uses its stars and tosses them away when they are no longer convenient."

Internationally acclaimed tenor **JAMES VALENTI** (*Werther*) reimagines the role of the 1920s film icon and sex symbol, Rudolph Valentino. As the catalyst of his meteoric rise to fame, soprano **BRENDA HARRIS** sings the role of June Mathis, a screenwriter. Mezzo-soprano **EVE GIGLIOTTI** (debut) sings the role of Alla Nazimova, a celebrated movie star, and **ALAN HELD** (*The Aspern Papers*) is The Mogul. **ERIC SIMONSON** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *Silent Night*) directs a production by **ERHARD ROM** (sets), **KÄRIN KOPISCHKE** (costumes) and **ROBERT WIERZEL** (lighting). Maestro **CHRISTOPH CAMPESTRINI** (*Werther*) conducts this Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative production.

*The Dream of Valentino* is part of **MINNESOTA OPERA'S NEW WORKS INITIATIVE**, a landmark program designed to invigorate the operatic repertoire with an infusion of contemporary works. Produced as part of the Initiative: an American premiere, *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Dove); two revivals, *Casanova's Homecoming* (Argento) and *Wuthering Heights* (Herrmann); and two world premieres, the Pulitzer Prize Award-winning *Silent Night* (Puts/Campbell) and *Doubt*, composed by Douglas J. Cuomo with libretto by John Patrick Shanley. Following *The Dream of Valentino*, the world premiere of *The Manchurian Candidate*, with music by Kevin Puts and libretto by Mark Campbell, will complete the seventh and final year of the Initiative in the 2014–2015 season. Since fundraising began in March 2008, Minnesota Opera has raised more than \$6.77 million to support the New Works Initiative.

## *The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

April 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23 and 27, 2014

Sung in German with English translations projected above the stage.

A Minnesota Opera and LA Opera co-production.

### Love conquers all.

Minnesota Opera will co-produce this North American premiere of a dynamic and engaging staging of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with LA Opera. The original production at **KOMISCHE OPER BERLIN** in 2012 was created by the British theatre group 1927. Mozart's masterful comedy about love, truth and the pursuit of enlightenment is richly reimagined

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in this boundary-busting production. Connecting the tale’s enduring meaning with modern metaphor, this extraordinary staging delves deeply into the opera’s surreal magic, odd characters and crazy love.

**1927** is a London-based performance company that specializes in combining performance and live music with animation and film to create avant-garde theater. Celebrated at home and overseas, **1927** was founded in 2005 by director Suzanne Andrade and animator Paul Barritt. All creative members of the company come from different artistic backgrounds, and it is the collaboration and complete integration between these various disciplines that has paved the way for the company to create its innovative and original work. Audiences around the world have thrilled to their humorous performances, which feature interaction between film animation and live acting: “A perfect mixture of all the things worth loving: silent films, the cabaret of the Weimar Republic, David Lynch and the brothers Grimm.” (*The Guardian*) For more information, visit [www.19-27.co.uk](http://www.19-27.co.uk).

Soprano **LAYLA CLAIRE** (debut) alternates the role of Pamina with **CHRISTIE HAGEMAN** (*Turandot*) opposite tenors **JULIEN BEHR** (debut) and **AARON BLAKE** (debut) as Tamino. Baritones **ANDREW WILKOWSKE** (*Madame Butterfly*) and **JESSE BLUMBERG** (*Wuthering Heights*) alternate the role of the hilarious birdcatcher, Papageno. Soprano **JENNIFER O’LOUGHLIN** makes her Minnesota Opera debut in the iconic role of The Queen of the Night. Resident Artist tenor **JOHN ROBERT LINDSEY** sings the role of the scheming overseer Monastatos and bass **CHRISTIAN ZAREMBA** is the High Priest of the Sun, Sarastro. **AARON BREID** (*Turandot*) conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

## The 2013–2014 Minnesota Opera Resident Artists

Minnesota Opera is pleased to announce the 2013–2014 roster of Resident Artists. Soprano **CHRISTIE HAGEMAN**, mezzo-soprano **VICTORIA VARGAS**, tenor **JOHN ROBERT LINDSEY** and baritone **MATTHEW OPITZ** return, as well as assistant conductor/chorus master **AARON BREID**, coach/accompanist **SHELDON MILLER** and assistant director **DANIEL ELLIS**. New in the 2013–2014 season are sopranos **REBECCA KRYZNSKI** and **SHANNON PRICKETT**, bass **CHRISTIAN ZAREMBA** and coach/accompanist **GEOFFREY LOFF**.

Minnesota Opera’s Resident Artist Program offers a full season of employment for talented artists beginning their professional careers. From late August through the end of the season, Resident Artists gain valuable experience in assignments ranging from ensemble, understudy and comprimario to leading roles in mainstage performances.

## Mainstage Season Information

All productions will be staged at Ordway, 345 Washington Street, St. Paul. Sunday matinee performances begin at 2pm. All other performances begin at 7:30pm, with the exception of Opening Night on September 21, 2013 (Opera Gala 2013), and February 1, 2014 (Winter Carnival Torchlight Parade), which begin at 8pm.

Season tickets are now on sale and may be ordered by calling 612-333-6669 or online at [mnoopera.org](http://mnoopera.org). Full-season subscription packages range in price from \$80-\$800, with three- and four-opera packages starting as low as \$50. Single tickets ranging from \$20-\$200 per ticket are now on sale to the general public.

For ticketing services, education programming and other company information, please visit [mnoopera.org](http://mnoopera.org). Season-related background notes, synopses, casting updates, artist biographies and videos will be posted as available.

The 2013–2014 Minnesota Opera season is sponsored by Ascent Private Capital Management of U. S. Bank.

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