

News Release

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Minnesota Opera announces commission of *The Shining*

Composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell will collaborate on operatic adaptation of Stephen King's 1977 best-selling novel, launching the second generation of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative

Minneapolis—Minnesota Opera announces its commission of *The Shining*, a new opera by composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell, based on the 1977 best-selling novel by Stephen King. Minnesota Opera will give *The Shining* its world premiere in May 2016 at Ordway in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

The Shining is the iconic supernatural horror novel that helped establish Stephen King as the genre's definitive voice. In the story, Jack Torrance moves his wife Wendy and son Danny to the remote Overlook Hotel in Colorado, where he has been hired as winter caretaker. The family endeavors to remain together in spite of their growing isolation from the world, the hotel's paranormal activity and Jack's abusive nature, alcoholism and growing madness.

"It is tremendously exciting to have received Stephen King's permission to adapt *The Shining* into an opera," said ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DALE JOHNSON. "Opera has the unique ability to amplify a story's emotions, and by putting one of the most powerfully imagined stories of our time into the hands of Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell, I have no doubt *The Shining* will be an intensely thrilling horror opera."

Paul Moravec, a prolific composer whose music has been described as "highly engrossing" and "remarkably accessible," considers *The Shining* a perfect fit for the art form. "King's novel is naturally operatic: it sings," said MORAVEC. "It features the classic elements of operatic conflict, notably the power of love in the face of extraordinary evil and destructive forces. It's a joy to imagine the musical form of this timeless contest, along with the story's evocation of terror and the supernatural."

"I really look forward to working with Paul to help make King's original story sing," said Mark Campbell, the librettist for Minnesota Opera's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* and the upcoming world premiere

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of *The Manchurian Candidate* (both with composer Kevin Puts). “I’m thrilled to once again be working with everyone from Minnesota Opera and the New Works Initiative, director Eric Simonson and maestro Michael Christie.”

Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative

The commission of *The Shining* launches the second generation of Minnesota Opera’s New Works Initiative (NWI). A pioneering movement in new opera when it was launched in 2008, the NWI was designed to invigorate the operatic art form with an infusion of contemporary works and formalized Minnesota Opera’s commitment to artistic growth, leadership and innovation. Its first iteration – a seven-season commitment to producing premieres and revivals of new works – funded the commissions of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* (Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell), last season’s *Doubt* by Douglas J. Cuomo and librettist John Patrick Shanley and the upcoming political thriller, *The Manchurian Candidate* (also by Puts and Campbell), which will have its premiere in March 2015.

Now in the penultimate year of that first phase, Minnesota Opera reveals the future of the NWI. This next iteration is being conceived as a 10-year program that will not only encompass major commissions like *The Shining* for its mainstage season at the Ordway, but endeavors to further invigorate the art form and expand its audience by creating new works conceived for non-traditional opera venues. To that end, a hallmark of this new program will be the creation of local and national partnerships to develop new ways of creating, workshopping and presenting opera. Programmatic plans will be released seasonally.

Composer Paul Moravec

Paul Moravec, recipient of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in Music, is a prolific composer for the orchestral, chamber, choral, lyric, film and operatic genres as well as holding the position as a professor at Adelphi University. Mr. Moravec’s first opera, *The Letter* – commissioned by Santa Fe Opera with libretto by Terry Teachout – premiered in the 2009 season, and its score was praised in *Opera News* as “richly orchestrated ... it amplifies emotions, emphasizes confrontation and crisis and drives the action forward. But it also creates a dramatic world in which singing seems to be the only appropriate medium.” *The Shining* will be Mr. Moravec’s fourth opera.

Librettist Mark Campbell

Mark Campbell was profiled in *Opera News* as one of the twenty-five people “poised ... to become major forces in opera in the coming decade.” He is most known for writing the libretto to *Silent Night*, which garnered a Pulitzer Prize in Music for composer Kevin Puts and has five productions scheduled in the next two years after its premiere at Minnesota Opera. Other successful works include *Volpone* (which received a Grammy nomination for Best Classical Recording), *Later the Same Evening*, *Bastianello/Lucrezia*, *Approaching Ali* and his theatrical song cycle, *Songs from an Unmade Bed*. Mark has received many prestigious awards for his work, including the first Kleban Foundation Award for Lyricist, two Richard Rodgers Awards and a New York Foundation for the Arts Playwriting Fellowship. He is also an advocate for contemporary American opera and mentors the next generation of opera writers with such organizations as American Lyric Theater, the American Opera Initiative, American Opera Projects and Opera Philadelphia’s Composer-in-Residence program. Upcoming projects include new operas with Kevin Puts, William Bolcom and Laura Kaminsky.

Stephen King

Stephen King was born in Portland, Maine in 1947, the second son of Donald and Nellie Ruther Pillsbury King. He

made his first professional short story sale in 1967 to Startling Mystery Stories. In the fall of 1973, he began teaching high school English classes at Hampden Academy, the public high school in Hampden, Maine. Writing in the evenings and on the weekends, he continued to produce short stories and to work on novels. In the spring of 1973, Doubleday & Co., accepted the novel *Carrie* for publication, providing him the means to leave teaching and write full time. He has since published more than 50 books and has become one of the world's most successful writers.

Stephen lives in Maine and Florida with his wife, novelist Tabitha King. They are regular contributors to a number of charities including many libraries and have been honored locally for their philanthropic activities.

***The Shining* and its earlier adaptations**

The success of *The Shining* firmly established Stephen King as a preeminent author in the horror genre. A film based on the novel, directed by Stanley Kubrick, was released in 1980, and in 1997, Mr. King adapted his book into a television mini-series. Minnesota Opera's commission is the work's first adaptation for the stage.

Doctor Sleep, a sequel to *The Shining* that follows the middle-aged Danny Torrance into another epic battle of good against evil, will be released on September 24, 2013, and in October a limited edition of *The Shining* signed by Stephen King will be published by Subterranean Press.

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.

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