

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Daniel Zillmann, 612.342.1612 or dzillmann@mnopera.org

Minnesota Opera's *Werther* opens January 28

This new Minnesota Opera production, directed by Kevin Newbury,
is the first *Werther* in the company's history

International stars, tenor James Valenti and mezzo-soprano
Roxana Constantinescu, are paired for the first time on stage

- What:** Jules Massenet's *Werther*
Sung in French with English translations projected above the stage.
- Where:** Ordway, 345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102
- When:** Saturday, January 28, 7:30pm Tuesday, January 31, 7:30pm
Thursday, February 2, 7:30pm Saturday, February 4, 8pm*
Sunday, February 5, 2pm
- Tickets:** \$20 – \$200. Call the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612.333.6669,
Monday–Friday, 9am–6pm, or purchase online at mnopera.org.
- Media:** An online press kit is available now at mnopera.org/wertherkit, which includes full
bios, links to view design renderings and other useful resources.
Contact Communications Manager, Daniel Zillmann, to take advantage of the following
interview, photo and video opportunities: **Wednesday, January 25, 7:30pm** and
Thursday, January 26, 7:30pm (Dress Rehearsals at Ordway)
- Bloggers:** Minnesota Opera will host a **Blogger Preview Night**, including a reception with tenor
Nathaniel Peake and exclusive access to the Final Dress Rehearsal on **Thursday, January
26, 6pm**. Admission by invitation only.

Minneapolis—Minnesota Opera is pleased to announce the first staging of Massenet's *Werther* in company history with the pairing of international opera stars James Valenti and Roxana Constantinescu. Overflowing with yearning and heartbreaking melancholy, Massenet's most romantic tragedy is inspired by a true story of unrequited love originally penned by the genius of modern German literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Werther* is the story of the idealistic poet of the same name who cannot live without love, and the object of his obsession, Charlotte. Massenet is celebrated in 2012 by the centenary of

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his death. One of the greatest French composers in the late 19th century, his music brims with emotion and exquisite melody, and later influenced Puccini's style of composition.

Starring as the title role is tenor **JAMES VALENTI** (*La bohème*), who recently “won over the audience with his robust, ardent singing” (*The New York Times*) in his Metropolitan Opera debut. He returns to Minnesota Opera where he began his career as a Resident Artist. Opposite him as Charlotte is mezzo-soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU**, who dazzled audiences in her American operatic stage debut in Minnesota Opera's 2010 *Cinderella*. Aptly assessing that debut, *Star Tribune* said: “... it takes no clairvoyance to foresee a brilliant career for her.” **NATHANIEL PEAKE** debuts in the title role on February 4. Soprano **ANGELA MORTELLARO** and baritone **GABRIEL PREISSER**, both Resident Artists, sing the roles of Sophie and Albert. Austrian conductor **CHRISTOPH CAMPESTRINI** makes his Minnesota Opera debut, and **KEVIN NEWBURY**, on the heels of his successful interpretations of the first two installments of Donizetti's Tudor Trilogy, returns to direct. This gorgeous new production sets the action during the second industrial revolution, reflecting the elegant era in which the opera was composed. Sets are designed by **ALLEN MOYER** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*) with costumes by **JESSICA JAHN** (*Roberto Devereux*, *Mary Stuart*).

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Christoph Campestrini*
Stage Director	Kevin Newbury
Set Designer	Allen Moyer
Costume Designer	Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer	D. M. Wood

THE CAST

Werther	James Valenti Nathaniel Peake (performs February 4)*
Charlotte	Roxana Constantinescu
Albert, <i>her betrothed</i>	Gabriel Preisser+
Sophie, <i>Charlotte's sister</i>	Angela Mortellaro+
Le Bailli, <i>Charlotte's father</i>	Joseph Beutel+
Schmidt, <i>his friend</i>	John Robert Lindsey+
Johann, <i>his friend</i>	Rodolfo Nieto

*Minnesota Opera Debut, +Minnesota Opera Resident Artist

To learn more about *Werther* ...

Please visit our website at mnoopera.org/season. On it you will find casting updates, artist biographies, synopses, background notes, audio and video clips, suggestions for further reading and listening, ticketing services, education program information and other company information.

The production of *Werther* is made possible, in part, by the generosity of Judy Dayton.

Werther is presented by Target and supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 2011–2012 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.