

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 JANUARY 2012

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

Minnesota Opera presents premiere webcast of *Werther* on February 5

Minneapolis – Minnesota Opera announces it will webcast its new production of Massenet's *Werther* on Sunday, February 5, at 2pm. This project, in collaboration with SoundQue, will further the company's efforts to expand accessibility to the operatic artform and exposure to Minnesota Opera's artistic excellence. These efforts utilizing new media began in the 2010–2011 season with the HD video shoot of *Wuthering Heights*. The webcast, available at OPERAMUSICBROADCAST.COM, will be offered free of charge, removing barriers of price and location.

For the last three years, Minnesota Opera has made new media a priority, working with those at the vanguard of the fast-changing field of digital distribution for opera. This project is an opportunity for Minnesota Opera to become the first major American opera company to webcast its works through this emerging distribution channel. Thanks to major funding provided by the St. Paul Cultural STAR Program, Minnesota Opera's production of *Werther* has the potential to reach exponentially greater audience members than it could in its one-week engagement on the Ordway stage.

Minnesota Opera's partner on this project, Michigan-based production firm SoundQue, brings its vast experience of webcasting a wide variety of live events, including large outdoor festivals, professional sporting events, high-profile classic car auctions and dog shows, just to name a few. One of SoundQue's great abilities is combining the skill of shooting a live event with a tremendous proficiency for attracting an internet audience through their ten different networks, including operamusicbroadcast.com.

Given SoundQue's existing audience for performing arts webcasts, as well as the international appeal of *Werther* stars tenor James Valenti and mezzo-soprano Roxana Constantinescu, Minnesota Opera anticipates drawing a large and diverse online audience that SoundQue estimates could approach 100,000 viewers. "This *Werther* webcast will likely provide the first experience of opera for many," said **MINNESOTA OPERA PRESIDENT AND GENERAL DIRECTOR ALLAN NAPLAN**. "Harnessing this technology, Minnesota Opera can not only efficiently reach a much broader audience than it can during a standard run onstage, but the webcast will showcase the high quality of the organization's productions, igniting a greater interest in Minnesota Opera and the art form in general."

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.

###