

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 APRIL 2013

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Minnesota Opera Orchestra contract negotiations completed

Minneapolis–Minnesota Opera announced today the successful completion of contract negotiations with its orchestra musicians. The process, which began on February 1, establishes a tentative agreement for a new four-year contract for the Minnesota Opera Orchestra that will go into effect on July 1, 2013.

“Everyone is very pleased that the process went so smoothly,” said **PRESIDENT AND GENERAL DIRECTOR KEVIN RAMACH**. “Both sides feel that we made a lot of progress together over the last four years of the current agreement. The orchestra has never sounded better, and their involvement in our New Works Initiative workshops and HD video recordings – particularly *Silent Night*, which will be seen on PBS later this year – has contributed to the positive growth of Minnesota Opera. That track record, combined with our shared vision for the future, helped both the management and the musicians maintain a working relationship that everyone feels good about.”

Musicians’ pay in the first year of the new agreement remains flat, but small increases in per-service fees and pension contributions occur in the following seasons. The agreement also changes some working conditions, enhancing the role of the musicians’ input in the audition process and establishing assistant principal positions in a number of sections of the orchestra. The tentative agreement is expected to be ratified in the coming weeks in a vote by the musicians of the orchestra and approved by the board of the Twin Cities Musicians Union, Local #30-73 of the American Federation of Musicians.

“This has been a positive and productive working relationship for many years exemplified by mutual respect between the highly skilled musicians who serve this company, their supportive union and the forward-thinking administration of the opera company,” said **PRESIDENT OF THE TWIN CITIES MUSICIANS UNION, BRAD C. EGGEN**.

A historic desire of the players and a key element of the Opera’s previous strategic plan was the engagement of a permanent music director who would provide consistent leadership from the podium and

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support the artistic growth of the orchestra. Maestro Michael Christie, who is currently conducting the company's nearly sold-out production of *Turandot*, was named Music Director in 2012, and his leadership is seen by players and management alike as key to the organization's artistry and future. **JOHN MICHAEL SMITH**, who serves as principal bass and chairs the committee that represented the musicians in the contract negotiations, said "We're thrilled to be working with Michael on a regular basis. His leadership brings something special to every rehearsal and performance. This is an exciting time to be a part of Minnesota Opera. We've enjoyed a great working relationship with the Opera for many years. The negotiating process has had such great continuity and mutual respect that has grown from our common goals for the good and welfare of the entire company and for opera, and our place in the Twin Cities arts community."

"Minnesota Opera has exciting plans for its next 50 years," said **MUSIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL CHRISTIE**. "and this is a critical part of the foundation for that success."

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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