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**Minnesota Opera Launches Ambitious 2016-2017 Season
of Imaginative Productions Featuring National and World Premieres**
Season Includes Three Operas New to Minnesota Opera Audiences

MINNEAPOLIS (January 21, 2016) – Today, Minnesota Opera announced its 2016-2017 season, which features three operas never before seen on the Minnesota Opera stage. The company builds upon its reputation as a champion of new work, as well as continuing to reinvent the classics in fresh and innovative ways.

The 2016-2017 season opens with Charles Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet* (September 24 – October 2, 2016), in a fresh production starring Angela Mortellaro as Juliet and Joshua Dennis as Romeo. This exciting production of Shakespeare's immortal tale will be conducted by Minnesota Opera Music Director Michael Christie, and directed by rising star Matthew Ozawa, heralded for recent world premieres including *Arizona Lady* (Arizona Opera), *Second Nature* (Lyric Opera of Chicago) and *Tsuru* (Houston Ballet).

From November 12 – 20, 2016 comes a bold reimagining of Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. This prologue to the epic *Ring Cycle* gets its first-ever Minnesota Opera production, starring Richard Cox as Loge, Denyce Graves as Erda, Katharine Goeldner as Fricka, and is directed by Brian Staufenbiel (creative director of San Francisco's Opera Parallèle) in his Minnesota Opera debut. Making use of the Music Theater at the Ordway in new and inventive ways, *Das Rheingold* will also feature the 80-piece Minnesota Opera orchestra on stage conducted by Christie.

The season continues with the American premiere of Vicente Martín y Soler's *Diana's Garden* (*L'arbore di Diana*), January 21 – 29, 2017. First performed in 1787, *Diana's Garden* is a politically and socially-charged farce with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (famed for writing the librettos to *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*). Well-known in their time, Martín y Soler's operas have fallen out of contemporary repertoire, and Minnesota Opera's staging of this gem follows successful revivals in Germany (2007-08) and Spain (2008-09). Christie will conduct.

March brings the world premiere of *Dinner at Eight* (March 11 – 19, 2017) by acclaimed American composer William Bolcom and librettist Mark Campbell, based on the depression era play by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber. A Pulitzer Prize and multi-Grammy Award winner, Bolcom is known for his diverse output, including operatic works *A View From the Bridge* and *A Wedding*. *Dinner at Eight* is the latest work to come out of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative, marks the 44th new work produced by the company and is a co-production with Wexford Festival Opera (Ireland) and The Atlanta Opera where it will be performed subsequent to its premiere run in Minnesota. David Agler, artistic director of Wexford Festival Opera, will conduct the production, which will be directed by Tomer Zvulun (general and artistic director, The Atlanta Opera).

The season concludes with Giacomo Puccini's beloved *La Bohème* (May 6 – 21, 2017), featuring sets and costumes from the acclaimed San Francisco Opera production. This will be Minnesota Opera's eighth

production of the popular opera, which was last produced in 2010. *La Bohème* will star Nicole Cabell as Mimi, Scott Quinn as Rodolfo, and Ed Parks as Marcello. Christie will conduct; Octavio Cardenas will direct.

“We are thrilled about the season ahead,” said Artistic Director Dale Johnson. “This season exemplifies Minnesota Opera’s continued commitment to excellence and artistry. By bringing innovative new directors and some of this country’s most exciting young singers to the Twin Cities, and by advancing artistic collaborations nationally and internationally, we are eager to share with our audiences all that opera can and should be.”

President and General Director Designate Ryan Taylor added, “I’m so excited to join Minnesota Opera later this spring, in advance of a season brimming with vibrant new talent, direction, creativity, sights and sounds that promises to be a feast for the senses. The Twin Cities is known throughout the country as having curious, adventurous and supportive audiences, and I look forward to becoming reacquainted with them. I invite those familiar with Minnesota Opera, and those who may be new to opera, to join us for an amazing journey through the 2016-2017 season.”

TICKETS

Season ticket packages (\$68 - \$815) for the 2016-2017 season are available now online at mnopera.org, or by calling or visiting the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612-333-6669 or 620 North First Street in Minneapolis (open Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm). Single tickets to individual productions will go on sale in July 2016.

ABOUT MINNESOTA OPERA

Founded in 1963, Minnesota Opera has paved a bold, illustrious path. As an artistic pioneer, its dedication to excellence and inventive vision make it a steadfast leader in the opera community and beyond. Each year the company reaches nearly 400,000 people through its mainstage productions, groundbreaking education and training programs, community engagement, radio broadcasts and digital content. Heralded for its commitment to develop original works, the company has commissioned and produced more than 40 new operas that have been seen throughout the world. One of the nation’s largest and most distinguished opera companies, Minnesota Opera is consistently recognized for its innovation and world-class artistry, delighting audiences young and old for more than 50 years. Together with the Ordway, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and The Schubert Club, Minnesota Opera is a member of the Arts Partnership and performs on the stage of the Ordway. www.mnopera.org

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2016-2017 Season

Romeo & Juliet by Charles Gounod

Sept. 24, 27, 29, Oct. 1 and 2, 2016

Sung in French with English Translations Projected Above the Stage

Shakespeare's immortal tale. The world's most famous love story meets the sumptuous music of French composer Charles Gounod, brought to life through vibrant young singers. Based on Shakespeare's classic tale of romance and tragedy, this exquisite opera boasts arias, duets, choruses, dances, and swashbuckling sword fights, making it the perfect outing for the whole family.

Das Rheingold by Richard Wagner

Nov. 12, 15, 17, 19 and 20, 2016

Sung in German with English Translations Projected Above the Stage

Gold rules. The prologue to Wagner's epic *Ring Cycle* comes to Minnesota Opera for the first time ever! Featuring characters brought to life through innovative staging and video, and integrating the Minnesota Opera orchestra on stage as the opera's dramatic central character, *Das Rheingold* begins the story of the ring, which allows the wearer to rule the world, but only if they renounce love. The theft of the ring sets in motion a tale of love, deception, greed, and betrayal that will eventually alter the order of the universe.

Diana's Garden by Vicente Martín y Soler

Jan. 21, 26, 28 and 29, 2017

Sung in Italian with English Translations Projected Above the Stage

A sexy, comedic romp. Minnesota Opera brings an 18th-century musical gem to the stage in its American premiere. Diana, the goddess of chastity, is the target of Cupid's vengeance as he brings unwelcome love and passion to her sacred garden. First performed the same year as *The Marriage of Figaro*, and with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (famed for Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan Tutte*, as well as *The Marriage of Figaro*), *Diana's Garden* is a vivacious comedy, filled with social commentary on sexual freedom and political power.

Dinner at Eight

Music by William Bolcom

Libretto by Mark Campbell

Based on the play by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber

A New Works Initiative Production

Mar. 11, 16, 18 and 19, 2017

Sung in English with English Captions Projected Above the Stage

You're invited. Manhattan socialite Millicent Jordan plans a lavish dinner party for visiting English nobility, unaware that her guest list abounds with people linked by business intrigues and romantic entanglements. In adapting the witty and biting depression-era play by Kaufman and Ferber, Pulitzer Prize- and Grammy-Award winning composer William Bolcom (*A View from the Bridge*, *A Wedding*) and renowned librettist Mark Campbell (*Silent Night*, *The Shining*), have created a winning new opera that successfully weds American musical comedy and opera.

La Bohème by Giacomo Puccini

May 6, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 21, 2017

Sung in Italian with English Translations Projected Above the Stage

As timeless as love itself. One of the most popular operas in history, *La Bohème's* tale of young bohemians finding their way in Paris, looking for love, and struggling to make their dreams come true is simply brilliant. Simultaneously heartwarming and heartbreaking, this timeless *La Bohème* features sets and costumes from the San Francisco Opera production, and is filled with the luscious arias and duets that have made this opera a classic for generations.