

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Minnesota Opera opens its 2016-2017 season with *Romeo & Juliet*

Former Resident Artist Angela Mortellaro and Joshua Dennis star as opera's classic lovers in Gounod's lush, Shakespeare adaptation

MINNEAPOLIS (September 1, 2016) – Minnesota Opera kicks off its 2016-2017 season at the Ordway Music Theater on September 24, 2016, with a new production of Charles Gounod's tragic – yet meltingly beautiful – masterpiece: *Romeo & Juliet*. Vibrant young singers, opulent costumes, and striking sets breathe new life into the world's most famous story of star-crossed lovers.

“William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* has been the inspiration for numerous works in several genres, including art, music, opera, ballet, musical theater and film,” said Minnesota Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “As we approach a new production of Gounod's classic retelling, I am most excited to see how this ingenious group of artists, under the leadership of celebrated young stage director Matthew Ozawa, brings new life to this ever-appealing story.”

Juliette, daughter of the Capulets, has fallen in love with Roméo, scion of the Montague family, but their two families are embroiled in enmity and hatred. Roméo and Juliette's transcendent love triumphs as they die together in an immortal embrace. Perhaps the most enduringly successful of the many operatic settings of the world's consummate love story, Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet* values subtlety, sensuality and graceful vocal delivery over showy effects. In this telling, there is a slight shift of focus away from the word games of the original play and a greater focus on the two lovers, who are given four irresistible duets, including a brief final reunion in the tomb scene that does not appear in the play.

Former Resident Artist Angela Mortellaro, who delivered a captivating performance in Minnesota Opera's 2014 production of *Hansel and Gretel*, returns to the company to sing the iconic role of Juliette. Described as “beautiful to watch on stage” by the *Portland Press Herald*, Ms. Mortellaro's richness of voice, skillful delivery of dazzling vocal pyrotechnics, and innate acting ability have kept her in high demand. She has appeared with prestigious opera companies all over the U.S., including Opera Philadelphia and Sarasota Opera.

Ms. Mortellaro stars opposite tenor Joshua Dennis, who sings the title role of Roméo. Possessing a tenor voice *The New York Times* declared as filled with “youthful ardor,” *Romeo & Juliet* marks Mr. Dennis' Minnesota Opera debut. He has previously sung with Arizona Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Idaho and Dallas Opera.

Music Director Michael Christie returns for his fifth season to conduct the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

What: Charles Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet*
Sung in French with English translations projected above the stage

Where: Ordway Music Theater, 345 Washington St., Saint Paul, MN 55102

When: Saturday, September 24, 2016, at 8 p.m.
Tuesday, September 27, 2016, at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 29, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 1, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 2, 2016 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$25-\$200. Call the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612-333-6669, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., or purchase online at mnoopera.org.

Media: Press information and digital assets are available at our [Online Press Room](#). Check back for updated resources and information.

The Creative Team

Conductor Michael Christie
Stage Director Matthew Ozawa
Scenic Designer William Boles
Costume Coordinator Sarah Bahr
Lighting Designer Paul Whitaker
Wig & Make-Up Designer David Zimmerman

The Cast

Juliette Angela Mortellaro++
Roméo Joshua Dennis*
Mercutio Phillip Addis*
Tybalt David Walton+
Frère Laurent Benjamin Sieverding+
Stéphano Gina Perregrino+
Capulet Thomas Glass+
Lady Capulet Evelyn Hanglely+
Gertrude Nadia Fayad+
The Duke of Verona William Lee Bryan+
Count Paris Alex Ritchie
Grégorio Joel Mathias
Benvolio Christopher Colmenero+

*Minnesota Opera Debut
+Minnesota Opera Resident Artist
++Former Minnesota Opera Resident Artist

To learn more about *Romeo & Juliet*, please visit mnoopera.org/romeo-and-juliet. There you will find a full synopsis, artist biographies, audio clips, set and costume renderings, ticketing services and other company information.

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