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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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# Minnesota Opera Announces *Voices of Opera*, An Immersive Choral Education Program for Older Adults

## Selected as one of 15 grantees from over 200 applicants, Minnesota Opera joins the Artful Aging movement

**MINNEAPOLIS (February 16, 2017)** - Minnesota Opera today announced a new opera education initiative for active adults age 55 plus, *Voices of Opera*. This program is a workshop series led by professionally trained artists and coaches that provides older adults with an opportunity to not only learn about, but also actually make art, culminating in a public performance open to family, friends, and the broader community. *Voices of Opera* promotes a personal sense of vitality, purpose and happiness, as well as deeper social connections through music and creativity.

Chosen from a highly competitive national field of more than 200 applicants, *Voices of Opera* is one of 15 projects that form the first cohort of grantees to partner with Aroha Philanthropies in its Seeding Artful Aging initiative designed to support the development and expansion of successful Artful Aging programs. The initiative is designed to demonstrate the potential impact of such programs for older adults, arts organizations, senior service providers, senior residential communities, and diverse groups everywhere.

Artful Aging programs inspire and enable older adults to learn, make and share the arts in ways that are novel, complex and socially engaging. The work is driven by teaching artists whose creative process brings joy, connection, improved health and well-being, and a renewed sense of purpose to older adults in community and residential settings.

“I couldn’t be more excited to build upon Minnesota Opera’s core commitment to life-long learning by launching this new engagement initiative focused on active participation,” said President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “*Voices of Opera* expands upon our learning opportunities for adults age 55 and older by providing a social program where participants not only learn about but create and perform opera. By removing barriers to the art form, we will more effectively meet our education objective of improving the lives of those in our community. This program goes beyond opera education by recognizing older adults’ capacity to make a tremendous contribution to local culture, not just as a passive audience, but as thinkers and makers of art, thereby positively altering public perception around age. I’m proud that Minnesota Opera can be a leader in the Artful Aging educational movement.”

*Voices of Opera* is structured as a three workshop series led by professionally trained teaching artist Mathew Abernathy and pianist and vocal coach Kathleen Kraulick. Each series is comprised of eight rehearsals and two public performances. Weekly sessions will be held on-site at two partnering organizations and the Minnesota Opera Center. Project partners include Artistry at Bloomington Center for the Arts (Bloomington, MN) and the Sheldon Theater (Red Wing, MN). Each series will serve 50 participants. Recruitment begins in April 2017, and the program runs from July to August at the Minnesota Opera Center, September to October at the Sheldon Theater, and October to November at Blooming Center for the Arts. On November 19,

2017, all 150 participants attend Minnesota Opera's second show of the 2017-2018 season and perform in the Ordway lobby in advance of the show.

Exact program dates are TBA. Interested parties can sign up to receive more information at [mnopera.org/voices](http://mnopera.org/voices).

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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.