

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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La fanciulla del West opens with a Free Simulcast in Rice Park on September 20

Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*, opera's first "Spaghetti Western," opens Minnesota Opera's 2014-2015 season, led by Music Director Michael Christie and a powerful trio: Claire Rutter, Rafael Davila, and Greer Grimsley.

Minneapolis – From the Italian master who wrote *La bohème*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *Turandot* comes a romantic portrait of America's iconic Golden West. Puccini's gorgeous melodies and blazing orchestral colors are set against a backdrop of a gold-mining frontier town, where a poker-playing, pistol-wielding saloon owner finds herself in a love triangle with a handsome outlaw and the sheriff who is in hot pursuit of him. Considered by Puccini as one of his greatest works, *La fanciulla del West* (The Girl of the Golden West) had its successful and highly publicized premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in 1910.

Soprano **Claire Rutter**, who was hailed as "blest with a powerful stage presence and a top-end coloratura like warm steel" by Classical Source, makes her Minnesota Opera debut as the high-spirited Minnie. Tenor **Rafael Davila** also debuts with the company as the bandit Dick Johnson, who was applauded by Bachtrack as "a real revelation ... with a full and strong voice and a powerful and expressive sound." Completing the love triangle, as the mining camp's shady sheriff Jack Rance, is **Greer Grimsley**, who returns after a critically acclaimed performance as Macbeth in January 2014. The Star Tribune praised, "Greer Grimsley is a force of nature; his bass-baritone, dark and sinewy, is tactile. The man may earn his keep singing Wagner, but he knows how to squeeze import from an Italian vowel."

Michael Christie (*Manon Lescaut*, *Arabella*, *Macbeth*) returns for his third season as Minnesota Opera Music Director to conduct the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. **Doug Scholz-Carlson**, Great River Shakespeare Festival's artistic director and acclaimed fight choreographer (*Silent Night*, 2011), makes his mainstage directorial debut with this Minnesota Opera production.

What: *La fanciulla del West* by composer Giacomo Puccini. Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

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

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When: Saturday, September 20, 8pm; Thursday, September 25, 7:30pm; Saturday, September 27, 7:30pm; Sunday, September 28, 2pm

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

Free Simulcast in Rice Park

**Be a part of history with Minnesota Opera's first simulcast
on September 20 in downtown St. Paul's Rice Park.**

Minneapolis—As the Minnesota Opera season opens inside the beautiful Ordway theater, the drama and excitement extends outside with a free, live video simulcast of *La fanciulla del West* under the stars in Rice Park. The opera is perfect for anyone who loves strong women, Italian romance, or period Westerns. Invite your family and friends and enjoy a relaxed autumn night to remember.

Video entertainment, including Minnesota Opera's popular show preview Opera Insights, will begin at 6pm, and intermission features will be presented to enhance the evening's entertainment. Food trucks, beer and wine, fire elements, vendors, and more will transform Rice Park into a festive and inviting atmosphere perfect for families, opera lovers, and the opera curious. This event is free with an online registration.

What: Free Simulcast of *La fanciulla del West* by composer Giacomo Puccini. Sung in Italian with English translations projected on the outdoor screen.

Where: Rice Park (in front of Ordway), St. Paul, MN

When: Saturday, September 20, 8pm

Tickets: Free and open to the public. Register online at mnop.co/simulcast.

Dress Rehearsal Schedule

Media: Contact Communications Manager Julie Behr to take advantage of interview, photo and video opportunities at *La fanciulla del West* dress rehearsals at Ordway on **Wednesday, September 17** or **Thursday, September 18 at 7:30pm**.

Preview: Minnesota Opera invites a group of press members, bloggers and social media influencers to attend the *La fanciulla del West* dress rehearsal at Ordway on **Thursday, September 18 at 6pm**. We encourage live tweeting, blogging, note taking, and illustrating. Prior to the start of the rehearsal, an informal meet and greet with other attendees is held in the Marzitelli Foyer of Ordway. A member of Minnesota Opera's creative team will speak about the production and answer questions from the group. Please submit the online application at mnop.co/preview by September 16.

The 2014–2015 Minnesota Opera season is presented by Target.

The *La fanciulla del West* Free Simulcast is made possible due to the generous support of the Knight Foundation and St. Paul Cultural STAR.

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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.