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CONTACT: Daniel Zillmann, 612.342.1612 or dzillmann@mnopera.org

Minnesota Opera announces its 2011–2012 season

Highlights include:

Elegant new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*

World Premiere of *Silent Night*

James Valenti's return in new production of Massenet's *Werther*

Susanna Phillips in Donizetti's Bel Canto masterpiece *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Brilliant remount of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* starring Kelly Kaduce

Minneapolis—Minnesota Opera announces its 2011–2012 season, featuring operatic masterpieces that explore love, war and heartbreak. Highlights include the first commission of the Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative – the world premiere of *Silent Night*, by Kevin Puts (composer), Mark Campbell (librettist) and Eric Simonson (director), based on the 2005 Academy Award-nominated film *Joyeux Noël*. The season boasts the return of international opera superstar, tenor James Valenti, in the title role of Massenet's *Werther*. Also included in the 2011–2012 season is Mozart's wittiest comedy (*Così fan tutte*), a Bel Canto masterpiece by Donizetti (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and a popular favorite by Puccini (*Madame Butterfly*).

The season opens on September 24, 2011, with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's sophisticated comedy *Così fan tutte*, in a new production with the main stage debut of Twin Cities director, **PETER ROTHSTEIN**. Maestro **CHRISTOPHER FRANKLIN**, who recently thrilled audiences with *Cinderella*, conducts the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. In November, Minnesota Opera presents the first commission of the New Works Initiative – the world premiere of *Silent Night* by **KEVIN PUTS** and **MARK CAMPBELL** – featuring the return of internationally acclaimed tenor **WILLIAM BURDEN**. In January, the season continues with the exquisite pairing of Romanian mezzo-soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU**, who captured the hearts of audiences as Cinderella last November, and tenor **JAMES VALENTI** in Jules Massenet's romantic tragedy, *Werther*. Directed by **KEVIN NEWBURY**, this new production is designed by **ALLEN MOYER**. Minnesota Opera's acclaimed Bel Canto series continues in March with Donizetti's masterpiece *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Soprano **SUSANNA PHILLIPS** returns opposite tenor **MICHAEL**

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SPYRES with LEONARDO VORDONI conducting. The season concludes in April with the revival of the late Colin Graham's intimate 2004 production of Puccini's beloved *Madame Butterfly*. KELLY KADUCE and YUNAH LEE alternate in the title role under the debut direction of REED FISHER.

"The 2011–2012 season is a very exciting one for Minnesota Opera. The world premiere of *Silent Night*, by acclaimed composer KEVIN PUTS and librettist MARK CAMPELL, is only one of the highlights of a brilliant and diverse season," said Artistic Director DALE JOHNSON. "I am thrilled to have JAMES VALENTI and ROXANNA CONSTANTINESCU singing together for the first time in Massenet's *Werther*. Up-and-coming superstar SUSANNA PHILLIPS sings Lucia, and KELLY KADUCE returns in one of her signature roles in *Madame Butterfly*. The season opens with an exciting new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. It will be a year of exhilarating singing, riveting theater and the discovery of a new operatic masterpiece."

"It is with great enthusiasm that I look forward to my first full season with Minnesota Opera," said incoming President and General Director ALLAN NAPLAN. "With an exciting line-up that both honors our rich operatic past, as well as introduces the future of the art form, Minnesota Opera is, once again, providing its audiences with an entertaining and engaging season of exploration and celebration. As I begin my journey leading Minnesota Opera, I eagerly look forward to welcoming audiences, both new and returning, to what is sure to be a spectacular 2011–2012 season."

Così fan tutte by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Love Shaken and Served with a Twist

September 24, 27, 29, October 1 and 2, 2011

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

A new Minnesota Opera production.

The battle of the sexes rages on in Mozart's most provocative comedy. As a philosopher engages a quartet of young lovers in a subversive game that confronts their idealistic views of love, the two men disguise themselves and try to seduce each other's lover. This sublime masterpiece reminds us of love's power to confound reason. For over two centuries this opera was considered risqué, and it was not until after World War II that it gained its place in the standard operatic repertoire.

Twin Cities director PETER ROTHSTEIN makes his main stage debut in this thrilling new production. Soprano JACQUELYN WAGNER makes her Minnesota Opera debut in the role of Fiordiligi opposite fast-rising young baritone MATTHEW WORTH also debuting as her lover, Guglielmo. Mezzo-soprano JENNIFER HOLLOWAY, in another company debut as Dorabella, is paired with tenor JOHN TESSIER (*Cinderella*) as Ferrando. DANIEL MOBBS (*Cinderella*) returns as the cynical advisor Don Alfonso and Minnesota Opera Resident Artist ANGELA MORTELLARO (*Orpheus and Eurydice*) is the manipulative maid Despina. CHRISTOPHER FRANKLIN returns after his much lauded conducting debut in 2010 of *Cinderella*.

Silent Night

The true story of Christmas Eve, 1914

Music by Kevin Puts, Libretto by Mark Campbell

Directed by Eric Simonson

Based on the screenplay for *Joyeux Noël* by Christian Carion for the motion picture produced by Nord-Ouest Production.

November 12, 15, 17, 19 and 20, 2011

Sung in English, German, French, Italian and Latin with English translations projected above the stage.

World premiere. A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative production.

Based upon a fascinating true story, *Silent Night* recounts a miraculous moment of peace during one of the bloodiest wars in human history. On the western front of World War I, Scottish, French and German officers defy their superiors and negotiate a Christmas Eve truce. Enemies become brothers as they come together to share Christmas and bury their dead.

This world premiere production is part of the company's ongoing **NEW WORKS INITIATIVE** and marks the return of Academy Award-winning director **ERIC SIMONSON** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *Rusalka*). Acclaimed tenor **WILLIAM BURDEN** (*Passion*) stars as the soldier whose voice inspires peace among adversaries. Local favorite baritone **ANDREW WILKOWSKE** (*Cinderella*) creates the role of Ponchel; bass-baritone **CRAIG IRVIN** debuts as Lieutenant Horstmayer; baritone **LIAM BONNER** makes his debut as the French Lieutenant Audebert and **TROY COOK** (*The Barber of Seville*) makes his return as Father Palmer. **MICHAEL CHRISTIE** returns after his highly anticipated debut this season conducting both *La traviata* and *Wuthering Heights*. **FRANCIS O'CONNOR** (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) takes on the difficult task of creating a World War I front on the Ordway stage with costume designer **KÄRIN KOPISCHKE** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *Rusalka*).

Werther by Jules Massenet

In the Name of Love

January 28, 31, February 2, 4* and 5, 2012

Sung in French with English translations projected above the stage.

A new Minnesota Opera production.

Overflowing with yearning and heartbreaking melancholy, Massenet's most romantic tragedy is inspired by a true story of unrequited love. *Werther* is the story of the idealistic poet of the same name who cannot live without love, and the object of his obsession, Charlotte. Massenet, one of France's greatest composers in the late 19th century, greatly influenced Puccini's style of composition. *Werther* overflows with exquisite melody and emotion.

International operatic superstars, mezzo-soprano **ROXANA CONSTANTINESCU** (*Cinderella*) and tenor **JAMES VALENTI** (*La bohème*), are united onstage for the first time as the ill-fated lovers. Minnesota Opera Resident Artist tenor **AJ GLUECKERT*** sings the title role on February 4. Soprano **ANGELA MORTELLARO** and baritone **GABRIEL PREISSER**, both Resident Artists, sing the roles of Sophie and Albert. Austrian conductor **CHRISTOPH CAMPESTRINI** makes his Minnesota Opera debut and **KEVIN NEWBURY**, on the heels of his successful interpretations of the first two installments of Donizetti's Tudor Trilogy (concluding with *Anne Boleyn*

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in the 2012–2013 season), returns to direct. This gorgeous new production features sets by **ALLEN MOYER** (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*) and costumes by **JESSICA JAHN** (*Roberto Devereux*, *Mary Stuart*).

Lucia di Lammermoor by Gaetano Donizetti **Madness on the Moors**

March 3*, 4, 6*, 8*, 10* and 11, 2012

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Revival of the 2001 James Robinson production.

In Donizetti's powerful and gripping opera, Lucia secretly loves Edgardo, her clan's enemy. Scheming to restore the family's fortune, her brother forces her into a loveless marriage – with disastrous consequences. Opera's greatest superstar sopranos, such as Maria Callas, Beverly Sills and the recently departed Joan Sutherland, have thrilled audiences with their interpretations of this Bel Canto masterpiece. Its melodies have bubbled up in such movies as *Scarface* and *The Fifth Element*. The intensity of this piece should not be missed.

Winning the hearts of Minnesota Opera audiences as Eurydice, **SUSANNA PHILLIPS*** returns as the fragile heroine of this exhilarating masterpiece of melodic beauty and psychological depth. As her brother, Enrico Ashton, baritone **JAMES WESTMAN*** (*The Barber of Seville*) returns. Highly acclaimed tenor **MICHAEL SPYRES***, noted by *The Wall Street Journal* for the “Bel Canto beauty” of his voice, debuts as Edgardo. Italian conductor **LEONARDO VORDONI** returns to the company after leading the faultless musical direction of *Casanova's Homecoming*. This riveting production features set designs by **CHRISTINE JONES** and costumes by **CONSTANCE HOFFMAN**.

Madame Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini **To die with honor is to live without shame**

April 14, 15*, 17, 18*, 19, 20*, 21 and 22*, 2012

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Remount of the 2004 Colin Graham production.

Seduced by the handsome American naval officer Pinkerton, a young geisha falls deeply in love, but his betrayal leads to one of opera's most heartrending conclusions. Colin Graham's celebrated production evokes the beauty and romance of Puccini's gorgeous, unforgettable classic.

Minnesota-born **KELLY KADUCE** was praised as the tragic heroine Cio-Cio-San by *The Huffington Post* in the 2010 “performance to treasure” at Santa Fe Opera. The versatile soprano previously sang the title role in Minnesota Opera's *Rusalka* and sings the difficult role of Catherine in the upcoming production of *Wuthering Heights*. Ms. Kaduce alternates with another celebrated Butterfly, soprano **YUNAH LEE*** (*Faust*), in this revival. Tenor **ARTURO CHACÓN-CRUZ** makes his debut as Pinkerton. Mezzo-soprano **MIKA SHIGEMATSU** (*The Barber of Seville*) alternates the role of Suzuki with Minnesota Opera Resident Artist **VICTORIA VARGAS*** (*Cinderella*). This nationally acclaimed production, remounted by director **REED FISHER**, features sets by **NEIL PATEL** (*Roberto Devereux*, *Mary Stuart*) and immaculately detailed costumes by **DAVID WOOLARD**.

The 2011–2012 Minnesota Opera Resident Artists

Minnesota Opera is pleased to announce the 2011–2012 roster of Resident Artists. Soprano **ANGELA MORTELLARO** and mezzo-soprano **VICTORIA VARGAS** return, as well as assistant conductor/chorus master **CLINTON SMITH**, assistant director **OCTAVIO CARDENAS** and coach/accompanists **ERIC MCENANEY** and **JEREMY REGER**. New in the 2011–2012 season are tenors **AJ GLUECKERT**, **JOHN LINDSEY** and **DUSTIN LUCAS**; baritone **GABRIEL PREISSER**; basses **JOSEPH BEUTEL** and **RYAN GREEN**; and administrator **MARY-LACEY ROGERS**.

Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist Program offers a full season of employment for talented artists beginning their professional careers. From late August through April, Resident Artists gain valuable experience in assignments ranging from ensemble, understudy and comprimario to leading roles in mainstage performances.

Mainstage Season Information

All productions will be staged at Ordway, 345 Washington St., St. Paul. Sunday matinee performances begin at 2pm. All other performances begin at 7:30pm, with the exception of Opening Night on September 24, 2011 (Opera Gala 2011), and February 4, 2012 (Winter Carnival Torchlight Parade), which begin at 8pm.

Season tickets are now on sale and may be ordered by calling 612-333-6669 or online at mnopera.org. Full-season subscription packages range in price from \$80-\$755, with three- and four-opera packages starting as low as \$50. Single tickets ranging from \$20-\$200 per ticket will be on sale to the general public for all shows on July 18 and will be available by calling 612-333-6669 or online at mnopera.org.

For ticketing services, education programming and other company information, please visit mnopera.org. Season-related background notes, synopses, casting updates and artist biographies will be posted as the information is available.

The 2011–2012 Minnesota Opera season is sponsored by The Private Client Reserve at U. S. Bank.

The Minnesota Opera's mission is to produce opera and opera education programs
at the highest artistic level that inspire and entertain our audiences
and enrich the cultural life of our community.

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