

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Groundbreaking production of *The Magic Flute* returns  
to Minnesota Opera by popular demand November 14 - 22  
Production also travels to Duluth for one performance and educational events



The Magic Flute - 2014 (c) Michal Daniel for Minnesota Opera

**MINNEAPOLIS** (October 5, 2015) – After breaking box office records in 2014, Mozart’s timeless comedy *The Magic Flute* returns to Minnesota Opera (November 14 – 22 at the Ordway) in the revolutionary production by Komische Oper Berlin and the British theater group 1927. Fantastical hand-drawn animation, synchronized with live performance, sets a surreal stage upon which its quirky characters, all cleverly based on familiar silent-movie personalities, explore love, truth and the pursuit of enlightenment. This acclaimed production has been seen in just two American cities – Los Angeles and Saint Paul – but has received international praise. Britain’s Guardian said, “This production is a joy to watch: an enchanting, big-hearted, supremely lovable piece of whimsical animation and nimble stagecraft.” The New York Times concurred: “... this production stays miraculously fresh, sustaining surprise and delight in its two-and-a-half hours.” Packed with exquisite singing and stage wizardry, Mozart’s final opera will enchant young and old alike.

“This is not your grandparents’ *Magic Flute*,” said Minnesota Opera Artistic Director Dale Johnson. “Komische Oper’s Barrie Kosky is a visionary who challenges opera companies to use the theatrical space differently. His bright, Technicolor production mixes silent movies with children’s cartoons

and folk art for an exhilarating, family-friendly experience.” Videos of the production can be watched on Minnesota Opera’s *The Magic Flute* playlist on [YouTube](#).

Minnesota Opera’s 2014 production of *The Magic Flute* quickly sold out and broke all box office records for ticket sales, prompting this return engagement. Prior to the Ordway run, Minnesota Opera hits the road, bringing Mozart’s [The Magic Flute](#) to the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) for one spectacular Halloween matinee, Saturday, October 31, 2015. With its cast, orchestra, staff and production crew totaling nearly 160 (plus more than 30 Duluth-area stage crew members); three semi-trailer trucks and three coach buses to transport the set, props, costumes and personnel for the tour; and nearly five weeks of community-wide regional events including readings and performances at local libraries, and master classes, conducting classes, workshops and residencies at local colleges and public schools, *The Magic Flute* will have an outsize economic and artistic impact in the Duluth area. The tour is made possible by a generous grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This is Minnesota Opera’s first performance in Duluth thanks to a generous touring grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

Much of the 2014 cast returns for the encore production, including French tenor Julien Behr, a 2015 finalist in Plácido Domingo’s prestigious Operalia competition, who made his U.S. debut in this production as Tamino in 2014. Behr gave up a law career to pursue music, and he has since performed in opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe, including at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the Theater an der Wien (Vienna), the Opéra national de Paris, and the Barbican Centre in London. Earlier this year he was Tamino at the Opéra Bastille in a staging by Robert Carsen.

Behr stars opposite Christie Conover, the breakout star of the original production. This season marks Conover’s international debut with the Komische Oper Berlin as Pamina in their tour of *The Magic Flute* to China, including performances in Guangzhou and Xiamen.

Minnesota Opera favorite Andrew Wilkowske likewise reprises his role as Papageno. He was seen at Minnesota Opera last season as Dulcamara in *L’Elisir D’Amore*. His recent performance of La Rocca in Verdi’s *King for a Day* at Glimmerglass Festival was called “superb” by The New York Times and “brought impressive command to the text” according to The Wall Street Journal. Like Conover, Wilkowske will travel with the Komische Oper Berlin Tour of *The Magic Flute* to China.

New to the cast are Benjamin Sieverding as Sarastro and Jeni Houser as The Queen of the Night. Sieverding’s recent credits include *Oscar* with Opera Philadelphia, as well as The Santa Fe Opera and Opera Colorado. Houser recently made her debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was also seen as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Glimmerglass Opera.

Music Director Michael Christie will conduct the Minnesota Opera Orchestra.

**What:** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s [The Magic Flute](#)

**Presented in co-production with LA Opera.**

Sung in German with English translations projected above the stage

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

**When:** Sat. Nov. 14, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sun. Nov. 15, 2015 at 2 p.m.  
Tues. Nov. 17, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat. Nov. 21, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sun. Nov. 22, 2015 at 2 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$25 – \$200. Call the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612-333-6669, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., or purchase online at [mnopera.org](http://mnopera.org).

**Media:** An online press room (available at [mnop.co/dropbox](http://mnop.co/dropbox)) includes artist headshots, preview video and production photography. Check back for updated resources and information. Interview, photo and video opportunities also available during **the final dress rehearsal** at the Ordway Music Theater on **Tuesday, November 10** at 7:30 p.m.

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor..... Michael Christie  
Production..... Suzanne Andrade and Barrie Kosky for Komische Oper Berlin  
Animation Designer..... Paul Barritt  
Concept..... 1927 (Suzanne Andrade and Paul Barritt) and Barrie Kosky  
Set and Costume Designer..... Esther Bialas  
Associate Director..... Tobias Ribitzki

#### THE CAST

Tamino, *a prince*..... Julien Behr  
Pamina, *daughter of the Queen*..... Christie Conover  
Papageno, *a birdcatcher*..... Andrew Wilkowske  
Sarastro, *High Priest of the Sun*..... Benjamin Sieverding  
The Queen of the Night..... Jeni Houser  
Monostatos, *overseer at the temple*..... John Robert Lindsey

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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.