

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Project Opera presents Alumni Concert celebrating tenure of Music Director Dale Kruse on December 21

Minnesota Opera's premier training program boasts nearly three hundred graduates

MINNEAPOLIS (December 2, 2015) – After eleven years of innovation in opera training, Minnesota Opera's Project Opera training program celebrates Dale Kruse's final year as music director with its first ever Alumni Concert. Approximately eighty-five Project Opera members and alumni will perform selections from past productions and concerts, including an excerpt from the upcoming world premiere of *Memory Boy*. The concert takes place at Hoversten Chapel on the campus of Augsburg College on Monday, December 21 at 7 p.m.

"After over a decade of achievement in educating young musicians, we knew it was time to bring together members of the Project Opera family to celebrate the end of Dale Kruse's impressive tenure leading this program," said Community Education Director Jamie Andrews. "Between commissions of new works written specifically for young opera artists and nearly three hundred singers trained, Project Opera has a great deal to be proud of."

Project Opera, a training program for students in grades 4-12, is the centerpiece of Minnesota Opera's expanding education program for young singers. The program features three large divisions – Ragazzi (grades 4-8), Giovani (grades 9-12) and the Apprentice Program (grade 12). Currently led by Music Director Dale Kruse, Project Opera fosters a healthy vocal technique, exposes students to repertoire in the major operatic languages and instills the fundamentals of acting technique throughout the year-long program. Project Opera's most talented singers participate in the Apprentice Program, which includes individualized training and performance opportunities in main stage productions.

The group performs one opera per year that is performed by children and for children. This season's Project Opera production is the world premiere of *Memory Boy*, based on the young adult novel by Will Weaver, with music composed by Reinaldo Moya and libretto by Mark Campbell. The opera premieres February 5, 2016 at The Lab Theater.

Two-hundred and ninety three students ages 9 to 18 have participated in Project Opera over the past eleven years. Project Opera graduates have been accepted into many of the most prestigious music schools and conservatories in the country including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, The Juilliard School, and Eastman School of Music and have gone on to sing professionally with companies including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and Theatre der Stadt in Koblenz, Germany.

The Project Opera Alumni Concert includes holiday favorites, opera chorus standards, an excerpt from *Memory Boy* and an audience sing-along. The concert is free and open to the public. A reception immediately follows the concert at the Minnesota Opera Center.

The 2015-16 season marks the eleventh and final year of Kruse's tenure as music director of Project Opera. Kruse has performed in thirty-seven Minnesota Opera productions, making his company debut in Puccini's *La Bohème* in 1989. A frequent performer in the Twin Cities, Kruse has also sung with Minnesota Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Prairie Home Companion. He is the former president of the Minnesota National Association of Teachers of Singing chapter and currently directs the Cedar Singer's men's choir at Augsburg College and teaches voice at St. Olaf College.

"Dale Kruse has deep roots with Minnesota Opera, and has been a tremendous part of the growth and success of our education efforts," said Artistic Director Dale Johnson. "Under his direction, Project Opera has grown into a model opera education program and a true asset to our community. I'm thankful for the opportunity to celebrate his legacy at the Project Opera Alumni Concert."

What: Project Opera Alumni Concert celebrating the tenure of Music Director Dale Kruse

Where: **Concert**
Hoversten Chapel at Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55454

Reception
Minnesota Opera Center
620 North First Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401

When: Monday, December 21 at 7 p.m.

Cost: Performance is free and open to the public.

Media: An online press room (available at mnopera.org/dropbox) includes headshots and event photography. Check back after the concert for updated resources and information.

To learn more about *Memory Boy* ...

Please visit mnopera.org/memory-boy. There you will find background notes and biographies of composer Reinaldo Moya and librettist Mark Campbell. Tickets go on sale January 4, 2016.

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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.