

News Release

Contact: Eric Broker, Communications Manager, 612-342-1612, ebroker@mnopera.org

Minnesota Opera Announces Expansion of its 55th Anniversary Season with McCarthy-era Gay Love Story *Fellow Travelers* and Three Concerts

Minnesota Opera takes a trip to Minneapolis with *Fellow Travelers* at The Cowles Center

Three new concerts announced: 55th Anniversary Celebration, Resident Artist Program 20th Anniversary Event, and chamber orchestra the Sphinx Virtuosi

MINNEAPOLIS (June 22, 2017) – Minnesota Opera has announced four major additions to its 55th Anniversary Season, including three concerts and a fully-staged production of *Fellow Travelers* at The Cowles Center in Minneapolis.

“I couldn’t be more excited to expand Minnesota Opera’s artistic offerings during our 55th Anniversary Season,” said Minnesota Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “Our 55th Anniversary Celebration and Resident Artist Program 20th Anniversary Event create opportunities for long-time Minnesota Opera fans to experience the art form they love in new and exciting ways. Our co-presentation of the Sphinx Virtuosi with Minnesota Opera’s fellow Arts Partners offers an opportunity for us to continue our efforts to connect with diverse communities. *Fellow Travelers*, running during Twin Cities Pride in 2018, fosters inclusion and celebrates Minnesota’s LGBT community through a story focused on the romantic journey of two gay people. Through all these new initiatives, I’m thrilled to widen Minnesota Opera’s artistic footprint to be the best stewards of opera as possible.”

Fellow Travelers is the story of a forbidden love affair between two men in 1950s McCarthy-era Washington, D.C.. A chance encounter between recent college graduate Timothy Laughlin and handsome State Department official Hawkins Fuller results in Tim’s first job—and his first love affair with a man. As McCarthy mounts a desperate bid for power and internal investigations focus on removing “sexual subversives” in the government, Tim and Fuller find it increasingly dangerous to navigate their double lives. *Fellow Travelers* is a searing opera infused with political drama, unexpected humor and sincere heartbreak. The work premiered at Cincinnati Opera in 2016 to critical acclaim, praised for its “subtle, lyrical music” (*The Wall Street Journal*) and lauded as a “sharp-edged romantic drama” (*The New York Times*). The production runs from June 16-23, 2018 and coincides with Twin Cities Pride, which takes place June 23-24, 2018.

“Despite the historical setting of *Fellow Travelers*, the opera is both timely and enormously relevant today,” said Artistic Director Dale Johnson. “There are some similarities between the McCarthy period and the current rise of nationalism across the world. Telling a story that is relatable to contemporary audiences in this way makes *Fellow Travelers* compelling to people of all ages, including younger

audiences. At its core, the opera is about the bravery it takes to stand up to political oppression and the importance of being one's self. These themes are universal, and make for a powerful operatic experience."

The 55th Anniversary Celebration on October 1, 2017 offers a free sneak preview of Minnesota Opera's 55th Anniversary Season hosted by President and General Director Ryan Taylor and Artistic Director Dale Johnson. The program features excerpts from each of this season's productions and a variety of other opera selections.

The Minnesota Opera Resident Artist Program 20th Anniversary Event honors the legacy and accomplishments of the company's esteemed training program founded by Artistic Director Dale Johnson. Surprise guests perform an eclectic musical program on April 8, 2018 at the Concert Hall at the Ordway that promises a memorable evening in support of the past, current and future members of the highly selective program for artists and administrators. The program offers a full season of employment for talented artists, bridging the gap between their formal education and the beginning of their professional careers, and has grown into one of North America's premier training programs.

Minnesota Opera as a member of the Arts Partnership (The Schubert Club, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, and Minnesota Opera) co-presents a concert by chamber orchestra the Sphinx Virtuosi. Since their debut at Carnegie Hall in 2004, the Sphinx Virtuosi, led by the Catalyst Quartet, has been recognized as one of the nation's most dynamic professional chamber orchestras. Comprised of 18 of the nation's top Black and Latino classical soloists, these alumni of the internationally renowned Sphinx Competition come together each fall as cultural ambassadors to reach new audiences. The performance takes place at the Concert Hall at the Ordway on October 22, 2017.

Previously announced 55th Anniversary Season performances include Minnesota Opera's regular season taking place at the Music Theater at the Ordway. The mainstage season consists of *Don Pasquale*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Rigoletto* and *Thais*.

55th Anniversary Celebration

October 1, 2017 at 2 p.m.

Music Theater at the Ordway (345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102)

For additional details, visit mnoopera.org/community-events.

The Sphinx Virtuosi

October 22, 2017 at 3 p.m.

Concert Hall at the Ordway (345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102)

For additional details, visit mnoopera.org/community-events.

Resident Artist Program Concert

April 8, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Concert Hall at the Ordway (345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102)

For additional details, visit mnoopera.org/community-events.

Fellow Travelers

June 16, 17, 19, 21, and 23, 2018

The Cowles Center (528 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403)
Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage.

An opera by Gregory Spears

Libretto by Greg Pierce

Based on the 2007 novel *Fellow Travelers* by Thomas Mallon

Developed and Co-Commissioned by G. Sterling Zinsmeyer & Cincinnati Opera

For additional details and to sign up for more information, visit mnopera.org/fellow-travelers.

###

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.