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News Release

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Minnesota Opera Announces Its 55th Anniversary Season Season includes three operas new to Minnesota Opera audiences

MINNEAPOLIS (February 12, 2017) – Minnesota Opera today announced its 2017-2018 season, which features three operas never before seen on the Minnesota Opera stage. This milestone anniversary season builds upon the company’s reputation as a champion of new work, and also continues to reinvent the classics in pioneering ways.

The season begins in October with the Minnesota Opera premiere of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*, a bubbly comedy reimaged in 1950s Hollywood. November offers a new production of Mozart’s timeless comedy of errors, *The Marriage of Figaro*. 2018 opens with Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, a modern story of grief, grace, and redemption coming to Minnesota Opera for the first time. The season continues with an original production of Verdi’s time-honored masterpiece, *Rigoletto*. The season concludes with the Minnesota Opera premiere of *Thaïs*, Massenet’s melodic and sensual rarity.

“We have selected five mainstage shows in the upcoming season that are designed to entertain and engage our community members, whether you are brand-new to Minnesota Opera or a long-time fan of the company,” said President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “I remain incredibly grateful to our supporters, whose generosity allows Minnesota Opera not only to bring the highest quality musical storytelling to the stage of the Ordway, but throughout schools and communities around our state. At its best, opera offers a terrific exploration of different cultures and experiences, and encourages a deeper understanding about our shared human experience. We believe that this artful, lively experience is increasingly important in the modern world. For that reason, I couldn’t be more excited to share this new collection of powerful performances with our Minnesota audience.”

Artistic Director Dale Johnson added, “We are all so excited for the season ahead. This mix of a rare gem, a contemporary standout, and beloved classics are sure to dazzle our audiences both vocally and visually. With the wonderful casts and creative teams we are bringing together, this potent blend of comedies and tragedies is going to be stunning.”

Our new season marks the return of several artists familiar to Minnesota Opera audiences, in addition to noteworthy debuts. Current Resident Artist David Walton, tenor, returns as a mainstage artist in *Don Pasquale*, which also features the return of comedic favorite Craig Colclough (*Diana’s Garden*, 2017) in the title role. *The Marriage of Figaro* stars former Resident Artist pair Richard Ollarsaba (*Carmen*, 2015) and Angela Mortellaro (*Romeo & Juliet*, 2016), and South African baritone Jacques Imbrailo joins them as Count Almaviva. Bass-baritone Seth Carico leads the cast of *Dead Man Walking*. Internationally-renowned Icelandic baritone Olafur Sigurdarson makes his company debut in the title role of *Rigoletto*. *Thaïs*, directed by Andrea Cigni (*Tosca*, 2016), marks the return of Minnesota-native and crowd-favorite soprano Kelly Kaduce (*Rusalka*, 2016; *Tosca*, 2016; *The Shining*, 2016).

Don Pasquale by Gaetano Donizetti

Oct. 7, 10, 12, 14, and 15, 2017

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Bursting with pure fun. This production of Donizetti’s bubbly farce presents the miserly aristocrat Don Pasquale as a silent movie star facing the end of his career in 1950s Hollywood. Locked in a battle of wits and wills with his lovesick nephew Ernesto and the crafty widow Norina, Pasquale must grapple with the new problems and possibilities of the modern technicolor world. It takes the clever scheming of the family doctor to teach the old curmudgeon a lesson—but not before a series of amusing catastrophes threaten to shatter his ego for good.

Conductor Jonathan Brandani*
Stage Director Chuck Hudson
Don Pasquale Craig Colclough

Norina Susannah Biller
 Ernesto David Walton*
 Dr. Malatesta Andrew Wilkowske*

The Marriage of Figaro by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Nov. 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 19, 2017

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Comedy, classism, and cross-dressing. Love is in the air in this new staging of Mozart’s timeless comedy of errors, widely considered the perfect opera. Mozart’s infectious score and Da Ponte’s witty dialogue bring humor, drama, and humanity to this story of class struggle. It should be the happiest day of their lives, but the wily servant Figaro and his charming fiancée Susanna must fend off the philandering, arrogant Count Almaviva before he ruins everything. On a day filled with chaos and confusion in which disguised identities are revealed and shenanigans ensue, will the young lovers finally make it to the altar?

Conductor Michael Christie
 Stage Director Stephen Lawless
 Figaro Richard Ollarsaba*
 Susanna Angela Mortellaro*
 Count Almaviva Jacques Imbrailo
 Cherubino Adriana Zabala*

Dead Man Walking by Jake Heggie

Jan. 27, 28, 30, Feb. 1, and 3, 2018

Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage.

A New Works Initiative production.

A contemporary standout. The most performed new opera of the 21st century, this heartbreaking story of grief, grace, and redemption is a modern classic. Based on Sister Helen Prejean’s memoir that inspired the Oscar-winning movie of the same name, it recounts her courageous struggle to provide spiritual guidance to a condemned Louisiana murderer in the months leading up to his execution. With a powerful libretto by Terrence McNally and lyrical music by Jake Heggie—praised as one of the great living opera composers—*Dead Man Walking* has moved audiences world-wide since its premiere.

Conductor Michael Christie
 Stage Director Joel Ivany
 Joseph De Rocher Seth Carico
 Sister Helen Catherine Martin
 Sister Rose Karen Slack

Rigoletto by Giuseppe Verdi

Mar. 17, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 31, 2018

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Verdi’s sinister tragedy. Verdi’s time-honored tale of seduction and bitter revenge is boldly imagined in this new production. The disfigured jester Rigoletto must do everything in his power to protect his innocent daughter from the lecherous Duke of Mantua before she falls into his clutches. Brimming with rich melodies in verdant color and featuring the famous aria “La donna è mobile,” *Rigoletto* tragically unfurls as it races toward its devastating conclusion.

Conductor Michael Christie
 Stage Director Austin Regan
 Rigoletto Olafur Sigurdarson
 Gilda Marie-Eve Munger
 Duke of Mantua Joshua Dennis
 Sparafucile Matt Boehler*

Thaïs by Jules Massenet

May 12, 15, 17, 19, and 20, 2018

Sung in French with English translations projected above the stage.

Spiritual conviction meets earthly desire. A devout monk seeks to convert Thaïs, a ravishingly beautiful courtesan, but realizes too late that his pious obsession is rooted in lust, not religion. Minnesota Opera produces Massenet’s sensual and melodic creation for the first time with Minnesota-born soprano Kelly Kaduce (*Rusalka, Tosca, The Shining*) in the glamorous title role. Set in the deserts and oases of 4th-century Egypt, this searing drama explores the conflict between the passion of the flesh and the salvation of the soul.

Conductor	Christopher Franklin
Stage Director	Andrea Cigni
Thaïs	Kelly Kaduce
Athanaël	Lucas Meachem
Nicias	John Robert Lindsey*

*Resident Artist Program Alumnus

TICKETS

Season ticket packages (\$62-\$821) for the 2017-2018 season are available now online at mnopera.org, or by calling or visiting the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612-333-6669 or 620 North First Street in Minneapolis (open Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.). Individual tickets go on sale July 2017.

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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.