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MINNESOTA OPERA ANNOUNCES COMMISSION OF THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE

Composer Paola Prestini and librettist Mark Campbell collaborate on an opera adaptation of Minnesota author Kate DiCamillo's book.

MINNEAPOLIS (December 14, 2017) – Minnesota Opera today announced its commission of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, an opera based on the young adult novel of the same name by Kate DiCamillo. One of only six authors to have won the prestigious Newbery Medal twice since the award was introduced in 1922, this will be the first opera adaptation of her work.

The title character is an aloof toy rabbit owned by a young girl named Abilene Tulane. Edward's early life in a loving, comfortable household ends when he is taken from Abilene and thrown into the sea from the Queen Mary. His adventures take him far and wide: he is adopted by a kindly fisherman and his wife, rides the rails with a drifter and his dog, helps provide solace to an ailing young girl and performs on the streets of Memphis. He finally opens his heart, learns to accept love and finds his way back home. As a fully produced, mainstage opera based on a children's book and meant for audiences of all ages, it also pushes the art form in a new and exciting direction.

"New works have been a part of Minnesota Opera's DNA, starting with the company's debut—the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *Masque of Angels*," said Artistic Director Dale Johnson. "Since then, we have produced numerous world and American premieres, remaining steadfast in our support of contemporary opera even at times when this commitment was a rarity. Rather than simply relying on the stories from the existing cannon, though valuable they are, the form can embrace new narratives and engage audiences in new ways. *Tulane* is a part of our mission to do just that."

"The last three large works I have written for the stage have been written for children, but geared towards an inter-generational audience: *Aging Magician*, *Epiphany* and *Gilgamesh*," said composer Paola Prestini. "Of late, I tend to veer toward everyday stories of life, with leads that are relatable, and who have an innocence in them that is then transformed by everyday life. From Abilene to Nellie to Sarah Ruth, deep relationships are formed with Edward, and his transformation is one to which any soul can relate, encompassing rich human emotions. For me, opera is about transformation and magic, and I love finding new audiences for it. *Edward Tulane* feels like the perfect opera to bring new lovers to the form, and at the same time, resonate with all ages."

This commission is supported in part by grants from OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers program and OPERA America's Repertoire Development Grants program.

New Works Initiative

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A pioneering movement in new opera when it was launched in 2008, Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative continues to invigorate the operatic art form with an infusion of contemporary works, while fulfilling the company's commitment to artistic growth, leadership and innovation. Find out more at mnoopera.org/new-works.

Composer Paola Prestini

Named one of Musical America's "Top 30 Musical Innovators 2016" and one of the "Top 100 Composers in the World under 40" (NPR), Prestini's music has been commissioned by and performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, BAM, and the Barbican Centre, among others. She is the Creative and Executive Director of National Sawdust, a nonprofit Brooklyn-based space for arts incubation and performance, and the "visionary-in-chief" (*Time Out New York*) of VisionIntoArt, the multimedia production company she cofounded in 1999.

Librettist Mark Campbell

Mark Campbell is one of the most in-demand librettists in the country, having written over 15 operas, including *Silent Night* (which received the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music), *Later the Same Evening*, *Volpone*, *Bastianello/Lucrezia* and *As One*. In 2017, Mark premiered four new operas: *Dinner at Eight* for Minnesota Opera, *Some Light Emerges* for Houston Grand Opera, *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* for The Santa Fe Opera and *Elizabeth Cree* for Opera Philadelphia. *The Adventures of Edward Tulane* represents librettist Mark Campbell's fifth premiere with Minnesota Opera, following the successes of *Silent Night* (2011), *The Manchurian Candidate* (2015), *Memory Boy* (2016), *The Shining* (2016) and *Dinner at Eight* (2017).

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