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## THE 2021 MN OPERA VIRTUAL BENEFIT

### Featuring the world premiere of *Art is a Verb*.

MINNEAPOLIS (February 11, 2021) – For the second installment of its 2021 Spring Season, Minnesota Opera presents the 2021 MN Opera Virtual Benefit, broadcasting online Saturday, February 27. In place of its annual in-person gala, MN Opera opted to move this year's event exclusively online given the continued need for physical distancing.

This fundraising event will feature the world premiere of *Art is a Verb*, a newly commissioned opera for the virtual landscape written by Harrison David Rivers, composed by B.E. Boykin and directed by Lily Tung Crystal.

“The main message [of *Art is a Verb*] is that art and opera are beautiful, a refuge, necessary in our human experience,” said Director Lily Tung Crystal. “But we have a collective responsibility to create an industry that is equitable and anti-racist. Art is a home, and we need to make it a better home for artists in general and particularly artists of color.”

In addition to the premiere of *Art is a Verb*, the 2021 MN Opera Virtual Benefit will include performances from members of MN Opera's Resident Artist Program, bits of trivia about MN Opera's history and discourse about the importance of opera's cultural impact across Minnesota.

“Even though we aren't currently able to gather in-person, we still wanted to host an opportunity for our opera community to come together to celebrate the power of artmaking, especially during these times,” said MN Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “We believe that this virtual event provides an entirely unique opportunity to connect with old and new audiences.”

While MN Opera is accepting individual and corporate sponsorships for this event, it will be free to view online. Sponsorship benefits include unique treats from vendors located throughout the Twin Cities, as well as access to exclusive events like a recital by Project Opera alum Jack Swanson and intimate discussions with the creators of *Art is a Verb*.

This event will begin at 6:30 p.m. CST on Saturday, February 27. Attendees interested in participating in the online auction will need to register beforehand. Proceeds from this event will support MN Opera artists and artmaking.

What: 2021 MN Opera Virtual Benefit

Where: Streaming online. Visit [mnopera.org/virtual-benefit](https://mnopera.org/virtual-benefit) for more information.

When: Live on Saturday, February 27 with a pre-show at 6:30 p.m. and the main program from 7-8 p.m.

Tickets: Digital access is free. Registration is required to participate in the online auction.



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*Art is a Verb*

**Cast**

Soprano | Karen Slack

Tenor | Andres Acosta

Baritone | Sidney Outlaw

Baritone | Andrew Wilkowske

**Creative Team**

Composer | B.E. Boykin

Librettist | Harrison David Rivers

Director | Lily Tung Crystal

Pianist/Arranger | Joseph Li

Music Direction | Andrew Whitfield

To learn more about the 2021 MN Opera Virtual Benefit, please visit [mnopera.org/virtual-benefit](https://mnopera.org/virtual-benefit).

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Minnesota Opera changes lives by bringing together artists, audiences and community, advancing the art of opera for today and for future generations.