

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Editorial style for Minnesota Opera will follow guidelines set forth in The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) and Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, and Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. For style questions not specifically addressed in this style sheet, consult Eric Broker (ebroker@mnopera.org) or one of the references above.

Opera logo: For most applications, use Logo A or B available in brand colors of red and orange, black, or white. Make sure the logo is used without distortion (both X and Y should be same percentage). The logo should always be placed in the upper left or right corner. Use EPS logo whenever possible to avoid bitmapping. Logos locked up with address, phone, and website are also available for use. Contact the Graphic Designer for questions regarding appropriate use of the logo.

Brand voice: All copy should capture the power, relevancy, and emotion of the Minnesota Opera brand, and reflect MN Opera's rightful place as a world-class opera stage, right here in the heart of the Midwest. Our written voice is passionate, confident, modern, accessible, sophisticated, and witty.

Font and point size(s): Use Gotham Book 12 for all standard business uses. Gotham Xlight can also be used to differentiate headlines.

General graphics standards: The Opera's style is clean and classic. If you need to use images, use a production image or event photo.

ACADEMIC DEGREES – In mentioning an academic degree, it is best to establish someone's credentials by stating them rather than abbreviating them. However, if abbreviations are used, please follow the guidelines below.

B.A. for "bachelor of arts"

B.F.A. for "bachelor of fine arts"

B.M. for "bachelor of music"

LOWERCASE DEGREES IN A BODY OF TEXT – John Smith received a bachelor of arts degree in theater from Columbia College Chicago.

APOSTROPHE VERSUS NO APOSTROPHE – Use as follows:

"master's degree in journalism"

"bachelor's degree in television"

ALUMNI – When referring to alumni of the Resident Artist Program, use the following:

“Alumna” – feminine, singular

“Alumnae” – feminine, plural

“Alumnus” – masculine, singular

“Alumni” – masculine, plural and both masculine and feminine, plural

“Alum” – gender neutral, singular

“Alums” – gender neutral, plural

AMPERSANDS – Event titles and taglines may include ampersands. Do not use ampersands in text body, unless referencing a program title.

ANNUAL – Do not describe an event as the first annual event. An event cannot be annual when it is the first occurrence.

ART FORM – Two words.

BEL CANTO – Capitalize when referring to the period of Italian opera: “*La donna del lago* is a Bel Canto period opera.” Downstyle when used as a descriptive adjective: “Brenda Harris is one of opera’s preeminent bel canto sopranos.”

BOARD – Capitalize only when an integral part of a proper name:

“The Minnesota Opera Board of Directors”

“The Opera’s board met for the first time this season.”

CITY, STATE – When used in text, a comma should follow both the city and the state.

COMMAS IN A SERIES – House style is to use the Oxford comma. The 2017–2018 season operas are *Don Pasquale*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Rigoletto*, and *Thaïs*.

COMPANY ARTIST PROGRAM – Capitalize each word: “Company Artist Program.” Note that “Artist” is singular.

DASHES – There are three forms of dashes: **em**, **en**, and the **hyphen**. The most common types of dashes are the en dash (–) and the em dash (—). A good way to remember the difference between these two dashes is to visualize the en dash as the length of the letter N and the em dash as the length of the letter M.

An **em-dash** is typically used as a stand-in for a comma or parenthesis to separate out phrases—or even just a word—in a sentence for various reasons (i.e. an

appositive). There are no spaces around an em-dash. Examples where an em-dash should be used:

“School is based on the three R’s—reading, writing, and arithmetic.”

“Against all odds, Pete—the unluckiest man alive—won the lottery.”

An **en-dash** is used to connect values in a range or that are related. A good rule is to use it when you’re expressing a “to” relationship. There are no spaces around an en-dash. Examples where an en-dash should be used:

“in years 1939–1945”

“pages 31–32 may be relevant”

“New York beat Los Angeles 98–95”

Conflict or connection (i.e. The liberal–conservative debate. The Los Angeles–London flight. There is a north–south railway in the same area as the highway that runs east–west.)

A **hyphen** is used to join words in a compound construction, or separate syllables of a word, like during a line break, or (self-evidently) a hyphenated name.

“pro-American”

“cruelty-free eggs”

“em-dash”

“it’s pronounced hos-pi-tal”

“Olivia Newton-John”

A **minus sign** is distinct from all three of the above.

“4 - 2 = 2”

DATES -

ARABIC FIGURE - Use Arabic figures without st, nd, rd, or th. Example: “The Minnesota Opera Gala is September 26, 2009.”

MONTH AND YEAR - When used without reference to a specific date of the month, no comma is needed. When used with a date of the month, a comma should come after the date and before the year. Do not abbreviate months or years in the body of text. Months and years may be abbreviated in lists when space is limited.

“July 23, 2001”

“March 2017”

“The Opera Gala will be held October 28, 2006 at the RiverCentre.”

DAYS OF THE WEEK – Do not abbreviate unless used in a tabular form.

DEPARTMENTS – Use lowercase in all cases excluding title; uppercase when used as part of a title.

“Artistic Director Dale Johnson’s favorite opera is Lulu.”

“The opera’s development department raised more money in FY 2016 than in any previous year.”

DERIVATIVES – Capitalize words that are derived from a proper noun and still depend on it for their meaning: English, French, Shakespearean, but not french fries, pasteurize, or venetian blind.

EXCLAMATION POINTS – Avoid overuse. Use strong, tight language instead of relying on exclamation points. Never use multiple exclamation points at the end of a sentence. Usually, one exclamation point per paragraph is the most appropriate.

HYPHENATION – Most conjunctions are not hyphenated. Refer to Webster’s. An often-used exception to this rule is co-production.

Generally, hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. This is called a compound adjective.

“an off-campus apartment”

“state-of-the-art design”

The adverb very and adverbs ending in -ly are not hyphenated. This rule only applies to adverbs.

“the very elegant watch” (no hyphen)

“the finely tuned watch” (no hyphen)

Minnesota Opera style is to not hyphenate “after party” or “meet and greet.”

ITALICIZATION –

FOREIGN TERMS – For foreign terms, italicize on first reference and use roman style for following references. Check Webster’s for the term. If the

foreign term appears in the dictionary it is considered part of our language, so use roman text even on first reference. Exception: Do not italicize choir names Ragazzi and Giovani.

OPERA TITLES – Always italicize opera titles. If the title is in English, capitalize the principal words: *The Grapes of Wrath*. For foreign language titles, follow Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians for which letters to italicize and capitalize—other languages have different rules, and when we use the original titles, we follow the rules of the original language. Exceptions to this rule include titles that are capitalized for brochure titles and marketing purposes (i.e. our *La Bohème* vs. Grove’s *La bohème*). In this case, the marketing title should be used on all externally facing communications.

PUNCTUATION – Do not italicize punctuation following an italicized word.

ORGANIZATION NAME – Minnesota Opera and MN Opera are both acceptable. There is no “The” or “the” before the formal institution names. Either name is to be used in the first reference to the institution. In subsequent references, it may be shortened to “the Opera.”

MUSICAL PERIODS – Capitalize when referring to a specific period: “Mozart is the best known Classical period composer.” “Richard Strauss was a Romantic composer.” Lowercase when using terms in general use: “Studies prove that listening to classical music is good for brain development.” “*Romeo and Juliet* is a romantic story.”

NUMBERS – Spell out numbers from one through nine. Use numerals for those 10 or larger. To form a plural, add s with no apostrophe (i.e. 60s).

ORDINAL NUMBERS – Do not use as a day when the month is also mentioned. (Incorrect: May 25th, 2004; correct: May 25, 2004). Letters in ordinals (-st, -nd, -rd) are not superscripts.

PARENTHESSES – Place periods and commas outside parentheses when parentheses exist within the sentence. Place periods inside parentheses when preceding sentence is final and sentence within parentheses is complete.

POSSESSIVE ENDING WITH A SYBILLANT S – Do not use apostrophe plus S after a singular possessive ending in an S.

Correct: “James’ opera tickets will be held at will call.”

Incorrect: “James’s opera tickets will be held at will call.”

PUBLICATION TITLES – Always italicize publication titles. Refer to the publication’s masthead to determine its name: *The New York Times*, *Star Tribune*.

QUOTATION MARKS – Place commas and periods inside quotation marks at the end of a sentence.

RESIDENT ARTISTS – Resident Artist is treated as any other title. RAPs (no periods or apostrophes) is an internal abbreviation, and should not be used externally.

RESIDENT ARTIST PROGRAM – Capitalize each word: “Resident Artist Program.” Note that “Artist” is singular.

SEASONS OF THE YEAR – Do not capitalize spring, summer, winter, or fall unless used in a header.

SPACES BETWEEN DASHES – No space before or after an em-dash, en-dash, or a hyphen.

Correct: “School is based on the three R’s—reading, writing, and arithmetic.”

Incorrect: “School is based on the three R’s – reading, writing, and arithmetic.”

SPACES BETWEEN SENTENCES – Single space after a period rather than double space when using a computer.

STATES AND CITIES – Spell out the entire name when in the body of text. Use the United States postal service abbreviations when the full address is set alone or in limited space such as calendars. Additionally, spell out United States and United Kingdom (vs. U.S. or U.K.).

STYLE FOR EMPHASIS – In general, rely on strong, tight language and good grammar to make your point, not typography. If absolutely necessary (for instance, in a sales letter), it is acceptable to bold, italicize, or capitalize a word for emphasis. Please refrain from underlining, as this can be confused with being a hyperlink.

TITLES – Capitalize formal titles. Lowercase formal titles when used alone or after a name. Lowercase all terms that are job descriptions rather than formal titles.

“According to President and General Director Ryan Taylor,”
“According Ryan Taylor, president and general director,”
“The chief marketing officer is responsible for success of the marketing and communications departments.”

Names and titles in a listing, not in a paragraph, are capitalized.

“Ryan Taylor, President and General Director”
“Karen Quisenberry, Vice President, Production”

TELEPHONE NUMBERS – Use figures in the following form: “612-333-2700”

TIME OF DAY – Use numeral, without a colon or space, with am or pm (lowercase without periods) unless required by minutes: 7:30pm. Use noon or midnight instead of 12pm or 12am. Do not use 12 noon or 12 midnight. Avoid the redundant 6 a.m. this morning. Do not use the colon plus two zeros when the time is on the hour. (i.e. 7:30pm and 7pm is vs. 7:30pm and 7:00pm.)

VOICE TYPES – Lowercase: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, bass-baritone, bass. Please note that mezzo-soprano should be written out in its entirety (vs. just “mezzo”).

YEARS – Use an “s” without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries. (ex. “the 1900s”).