



Administrative: 612-333-2700
Patron Services: 612-333-6669
Fax: 612-333-0869

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Eric Broker, Marketing and Communications Director, 320-293-6616, ebroker@mnopera.org
Severin Lier, Communications Manager, 612-342-1614, slier@mnopera.org

MINNESOTA OPERA PRESENTS THE LONG-AWAITED WORLD PREMIERE OF *EDWARD TULANE*

Based on the novel by Minnesota author Kate DiCamillo, *Edward Tulane* brings together visionary composer Paola Prestini and long-time Minnesota Opera collaborator and librettist Mark Campbell to create a miraculous journey all about finding home.

MINNEAPOLIS (September 16, 2022) – *Edward Tulane*, a new opera by composer Paola Prestini and librettist Mark Campbell, premieres on Saturday, October 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Music Theater at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts more than two years after its premiere was postponed in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The opera is based on the novel *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by two-time Newberry Medalist and #1 *New York Times* best-selling author Kate DiCamillo and is the first time one of her works is being adapted for the operatic stage.

The story is centered around a toy rabbit, Edward Tulane, who thinks of himself as quite exceptional. Content in his easy life, his world is upturned when he is separated from his loving family. *Edward Tulane* takes us on a miraculous journey from the depths of the deep blue sea to the streets of Memphis. Perfect for the young and young at heart, this Minnesota original shows us a true miracle—that even the most broken of hearts can learn to love again.

The story lends itself to audiences eight to 88, making for a performance well-suited for the whole family. *Edward Tulane*'s focus on love, separation and the journey home is the kind of story to which DiCamillo has dedicated her craft, exemplified by other books like *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Flora & Ulysses*.

“It’s amazing how Kate has been able to weave this story together that talks about humanity and love and a sense of belonging, which I think is at the core of who we all are as human beings,” says President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “I think any time a company takes on the building of a brand-new work of art, it’s important to look for the right creative team. So to combine that magical story with the text of Mark Campbell and the music of Paola Prestini—who in their own way are magicians in their own work—I think it’s going to be breathtaking once we are finally able to put all of the pieces together.”

Composer Paola Prestini says she wants to capture the playful innocence found throughout the story while also highlighting its depth and complexities.

“*Edward Tulane* continues my love of working on art that brings intergenerational audiences together,” says Prestini. “The themes found in the DiCamillo novel, woven into a brilliant and

unique libretto by Mark Campbell, gave me the perfect springboard for an opera about hope and transformation—told through a rabbit’s perspective! The opportunity to unleash my imagination into sound worlds for underwater fish, a zany doll shop and ultimately a cast of characters that guide our leading soul with love and wisdom has been delightful. We all are in need of magic and transformation, and Edward’s journey brings it in spades. I’m immensely grateful that Minnesota Opera chose me for this adventure, and hope that this opera brings new audiences to our stages.”

Mark Campbell (*Silent Night, The Shining*) serves as librettist for this new work. Stillwater, Minnesota native Jack Swanson stars as *Edward Tulane* in his Minnesota Opera debut. An alum of Project Opera, Minnesota Opera’s first year-long youth opera training program, Swanson is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after young tenors in the opera world. The leading cast features several noteworthy house debuts, including those of Puerto Rican soprano Zulimar López-Hernández, baritone Brian Vu, bass Zachary James and mezzo-soprano Elise Quagliata. Former Minnesota Opera Resident Artists Benjamin Sieverding, Victoria Vargas, Lisa Marie Rogali, Danielle Beckvermit, Nicholas Davis and Christian Sanders along with current Resident Artists Jeremiah Sanders and Keely Futterer fill out the cast. Russian-American conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya, music director of Chicago Opera Theater, leads the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and the Minnesota Opera Chorus.

What: *Edward Tulane*
Based on the book by Kate DiCamillo
Music by Paola Prestini
Libretto by Mark Campbell
Commissioned by Minnesota Opera as part of its New Works Initiative
Performed in English with English captions projected above the stage

Where: Ordway Music Theater, 345 Washington St., St. Paul, MN 55102

When: Saturday, October 8, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 15, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 16, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$25-\$246. Call Minnesota Opera Patron Services at 612-333-6669, Monday–Thursday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., or purchase online at mnopera.org/edward-tulane.

Media: Digital assets are available on our [Online Press Room](#).

Creative Team

Conductor | Lidiya Yankovskaya
Stage Director | Eric Simonson
Scenic Design | Walt Spangler
Costume Design | Victoria (Vita) Tzykun
Lighting Design | Marcus Doshi
Hair & Makeup Design | David Zimmerman



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Intimacy and Fight Director | Alessandra Bongiardina
Choreographer | Heidi Spesard-Noble
Principal Coach and Chorus Director | Celeste Marie Johnson

Cast

Edward Tulane | Jack Swanson**
Young Abilene/Betty | Zulimar López-Hernández
Bryce | Brian Vu
Lucius/Witch | Zachary James
Pellegrina/Older Doll | Elise Quagliata
Abilene's Father/Bryce's Father | Jeremiah Sanders*
Bull/Neal | Benjamin Sieverding°
Lucy/Princess/Fancy Doll 1 | Lisa Marie Rogali°
Sara Ruth | Jasmine Habersham
Lolly/Marlene | Danielle Beckvermit°
Nellie/Fancy Doll 3 | Victoria Vargas°
Abilene's Mother/Abilene/ Fancy Doll 2 | Keely Futterer*
Lawrence/King/Grandfather | Nicholas Davis°
Prince/Father/Rat | Christian Sanders°

*MN Opera Resident Artist
°MN Opera Resident Artist Alum
**Project Opera Alum

To learn more about *Edward Tulane*, please visit mnopera.org/edward-tulane.

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