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MINNESOTA OPERA CONTINUES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH DONIZETTI'S *THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT*

MN Opera kicks off the new year with a company premiere featuring Vanessa Becerra, David Portillo and *RuPaul's Drag Race* double crown winner Monét X Change.

MINNEAPOLIS (January 5, 2022) – Minnesota Opera returns to the Ordway in February to present Gaetano Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment* for the first time in the company's history. The company is no stranger to Donizetti's work, having produced over half a dozen of the composer's operas in the past two decades, most recently *Don Pasquale* during the 2017–2018 Season. The production sees the return of familiar faces like Vanessa Becerra (*Ópera Afuera*) and David Portillo (*Albert Herring*, *Anna Bolena*) and an appearance by *RuPaul's Drag Race* double crown winner Monét X Change as the Duchess of Krakenthorp.

This company premiere tells the story of Marie, an abandoned child who is adopted and raised by a squadron of French soldiers. Unaware of her aristocratic lineage, this spunky young woman grows up to become a canteen girl for her squadron of “fathers” and falls for a young villager. But when her past comes to whisk her away, she must choose between her chosen family and her royal roots. A laugh-out-loud hit, Donizetti's romantic comedy mixes hilarious hijinks with vocal pyrotechnics in this witty and heartwarming production.

The opera's composer, Gaetano Donizetti, has nearly 70 operas to his credit and was the leading Italian composer in the decade between Vincenzo Bellini's death and the ascent of Giuseppe Verdi. Donizetti found success in dealing with both comic stories such as *Don Pasquale* and *The Elixir of Love* and tragic settings including *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Maria Padilla*.

The Daughter of the Regiment is written in the genre of French opéra comique, which includes musical numbers separated by spoken dialogue. First performed on February 11, 1840 by the Paris Opéra-Comique at the Salle de la Bourse, the opera has gone on to become one of Donizetti's most popular operas and one of the artform's most cherished comedies.

“After an exciting start to our season with *Edward Tulane*, our latest opera to come out of the New Works Initiative, and a thrilling sojourn into the world of baroque opera with Handel's *Rinaldo*, *The Daughter of the Regiment* offers something different with a return to the bel canto style that is deeply ingrained in this company's DNA,” says Minnesota Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “Donizetti's compositional style has become a favorite with our audiences. We're

thrilled to present this classic comic opera and bring a little laughter and warmth during the long winter months.”

The cast features soprano Vanessa Becerra (*Ópera Afuera*) in her debut as Marie. She is joined by tenor David Portillo (*Albert Herring, Anna Bolena*) as Tonio, baritone, Minnesota Opera Resident Artist Alum and MN Opera favorite Andrew Wilkowske (*Silent Night, Don Pasquale, The Magic Flute*) as Sergeant Sulpice and Margaret Gawrysiak as La Marquise de Berkenfield. Current Minnesota Opera Resident Artists Jeremiah Sanders and Charles H. Eaton are featured in supporting roles.

The opera also features an iconic cameo role, the Duchess of Krakenthorp. The role has been performed by actors, public figures, and most famously by the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg, a well-known opera lover. In Minnesota Opera’s production, the role of the Duchess of Krakenthorp will be performed by *RuPaul’s Drag Race* double crown winner Monét X Change.

Born in New York City, Monét X Change is a comedian, singer and actress and one of the biggest winners in *Drag Race* history. Monét was named Miss Congeniality in season 10, co-winner in All Stars season 4 and the runner-up on All Stars season 7. *Sibling Rivalry*, Monét’s podcast with her comedy partner Bob the Drag Queen, is now on its sixth season and is also hitting the road, playing major venues in the US and Canada in the fall of 2022 and winter of 2023. Monét has also recently entered the stand-up comedy space with a sold-out tour of clubs and small theaters kicking off in the summer of 2022.

“Opera was my first love in the arts,” says Monét X Change. “It’s definitely how I discovered the artiste that lives in me, and drag was how I discovered my queerness. You put those together, add a pair of 301 lashes, and you have the perfect intersection of an opera-singing drag diva!” Monét X Change says she wants audiences to realize how cool opera can be and says her participation in *The Daughter of the Regiment* is just the beginning. “People can maybe see their favorite drag queen being Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* or Colline in *La bohème*! The sky’s the limit. Let’s get people talking more about opera and shake things up!”

Kelly Kuo makes his Minnesota Opera debut conducting the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and the Minnesota Opera Chorus. John de los Santos makes his official stage directing debut with the company in this production featuring sets from Fort Worth Opera and costumes from Washington National Opera at the Ordway Music Theater.

What: *The Daughter of the Regiment*
Music by Gaetano Donizetti
Libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean-François Bayard
Sung and spoken in French with English captions projected above the stage

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

When: Saturday, February 4, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 12, 2023 at 2 p.m.



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Tickets: \$25-\$228. Call Minnesota Opera Patron Services at 612-333-6669, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., or purchase online at mnopera.org/daughter.

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

Creative Team

Conductor | Kelly Kuo
Stage Director | John de los Santos
Scenic Designer | Boyd Ostroff
Original Costume Designer | Zack Brown
Additional Costume Designer | Timm Burrow
Duchess of Krakenthorp Costume Design | Trevor Bowen
Lighting Designer | Chad R. Jung
Co-Hair and Makeup Design: Priscilla Bruce, Emma Gustafson

Cast

Marie | Vanessa Becerra
Tonio | David Portillo
Sergeant Sulpice | Andrew Wilkowske+
La Marquise de Berkenfield | Margaret Gawrysiak
Hortensius | Jeremiah Sanders*
Duchess of Krakenthorp | Monét X Change
Corporal | Charles H. Eaton*

*MN Opera Resident Artist
+MN Opera Resident Artist Alum

To learn more about *The Daughter of the Regiment*, please visit mnopera.org/daughter.

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