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MINNESOTA OPERA ANNOUNCES ITS 2023-2024 SEASON

MN Opera's 61st season includes three new productions at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and a double bill performance at the Luminary Arts Center.

Season features a fully orchestrated version of mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* and a new production of Puccini's *La bohème*.

MINNEAPOLIS (February 28, 2023) – Minnesota Opera is delighted to announce its 2023-2024 Season. The season consists of three productions at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, a double bill performance at the Luminary Arts Center and features exciting new works alongside beloved inherited works that take risks and explore community and belonging.

The Ordway Series features a new production of the popular mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* by composer José “Pepe” Martínez, featuring a new, fully orchestrated score by David Hanlon; the return of Donizetti's popular comic opera *The Elixir of Love*; and a new production of Puccini's beloved *La bohème*. At the Luminary Arts Center, Minnesota Opera will feature a double bill performance of Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* and Christopher Weiss and John de los Santos' *Service Provider*—two one-act operas.

“We are thrilled to bring a new set of stories to life in our 2023-2024 Season,” says Minnesota Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. “We wanted to continue to expand our circle of storytelling and explore the universal themes of vulnerability and connection. In our 61st Season, our repertoire, casting and stagecraft celebrate our Twin Cities and national opera communities, fostering the valuable connections we've worked hard to build over the past several years. We look forward to presenting the first fully orchestrated production of the popular mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, alongside our first double bill in decades featuring a company premiere by Christopher Weiss and John de los Santos, and our first production of a work by Leonard Bernstein in nearly 50 years. We also bring new life to two audience favorites as we look forward to staging new, exciting and creative productions of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and Puccini's *La bohème*.

The 2023-2024 Season sees the return of artists who have made their mark on Minnesota Opera performances in the past several years and welcomes a handful of new and exciting voices. *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, which audiences sampled during Minnesota Opera's *Ópera Afuera* in the fall of 2021, features award-winning mariachi singer mezzo-soprano Vanessa Alonzo (*Ópera Afuera*) alongside soprano Zulimar López-Hernández (*Edward Tulane*), mezzo-soprano Cecilia Duarte, baritone Octavio Moreno and baritone Efraín Solís. *The Elixir of Love* features recent star of MN Opera's *The Daughter of the Regiment*, soprano Vanessa Becerra, who will share the stage with



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tenor Andrew Stenson (*The Italian Straw Hat*), baritone Joseph Lattanzi and bass-baritone Stefano de Peppo (*The Barber of Seville*). The company's double bill evening at the Luminary, featuring *Trouble in Tahiti* and *Service Provider*, will highlight Project Opera alum and former Company Artist mezzo-soprano Zoie Reams (*Carmen*), alongside Minnesota Opera Resident Artists Charles H. Eaton, Keely Futterer, Efraín Corralejo and Jeremiah Sanders. Minnesota Opera's season closer, *La bohème*, will feature tenors Won Whi Choi (*Carmen*) and Resident Artist Alum Christian Sanders, sopranos Melinda Whittington and former Company Artist and Resident Artist Alum Symone Harcum, baritone Joo Won Kang (*La traviata*), Resident Artist Alumni bass Benjamin Sieverding (*Edward Tulane*) and baritone Andrew Wilkowske (*The Daughter of the Regiment*) and Minnesota Opera Resident Artists Keely Futterer, Charles H. Eaton, Jeremiah Sanders, and Efraín Corralejo.

Season Ticket Packages (\$64-\$575) for the 2023-2024 Season are available now online at mnopera.org or by calling Minnesota Opera Patron Services at 612-333-6669. The Luminary double bill is currently available exclusively as an add-on to a season package. Individual tickets go on sale in July.

2023-2024 SEASON

Ordway Series

MN OPERA PREMIERE

A NEW MN OPERA PRODUCTION

Cruzar la Cara de la Luna

November 4-12, 2023 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, St. Paul

Music by José "Pepe" Martínez

Libretto by Leonard Foglia

Where there is love, there is home. The U.S./Mexico border isn't the only obstacle dividing the Velásquez family. *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* tells the story of a multigenerational Mexican American family separated by countries, cultures and consequences in search of new possibilities. As their grandfather journeys back in time to reflect on his life in his final days, the members of the Velásquez family must make their own migration across land and through memory, searching their hearts to discover where they belong. Richly interwoven with mariachi tradition and a newly arranged orchestration by David Hanlon, this modern story reminds us that family knows no borders.

Cast

Diana - Zulimar López-Hernández

Renata - Cecilia Duarte

Laurentino - Octavio Moreno

Mark - Efraín Solis

Lupita - Vanessa Alonzo

Rafael - Efraín Corralejo*

Chucho - Daniel Montenegro+



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Creative Team

Stage Director – David Radamés Toro+

Scenic and Costume Designer – Arnulfo Maldonado

Lighting Designer – Carolina Ortiz Herrera

With a sold-out world premiere of *The Song Poet* opening in a little over a week, Minnesota Opera looks to the 2023–2024 Season to continue spotlighting the vibrant communities of color that call the Twin Cities their home. In the fall of 2021, Minnesota Opera presented *Ópera Afuera* in honor of Latinx Heritage Month. Among the pieces featured in that concert were excerpts from *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* performed with full orchestration by David Hanlon for the very first time. Now, two years later, Minnesota Opera is thrilled to present this powerful opera for the first time with the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and Minnesota Opera Chorus supporting its traditional mariachi elements.

The story of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* explores the meaning of home and the power of family. The opera is traditionally set in the city where the production is produced, and this production carries on this tradition as it follows the challenges, memories and perseverance of a Mexican-American family who calls the Twin Cities their home. The cast features a wealth of talent including Zulimar López-Hernández, Cecilia Duarte, Octavio Moreno, Efraín Solís, Vanessa Alonzo, Efraín Corralejo and Daniel Montenegro.

A NEW MN OPERA PRODUCTION

The Elixir of Love

January 27–February 4, 2024 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, St. Paul

Music by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Felice Romani

Wine a little, laugh a lot! When young villager Nemorino's dream of winning the beautiful Adina's heart is on the rocks, he turns to a traveling purveyor of patent medicines and California citrus in search of a love potion. After drinking every last drop of an unusually zesty "elixir," Nemorino feels his luck might just turn around. This heartwarming comedy with notes of sincerity (and a twist of fresh orange juice) embodies all the richness of Donizetti's artistry and is simply too good to keep bottled up.

Cast

Adina – Vanessa Becerra

Nemorino – Andrew Stenson

Belcore – Joseph Lattanzi

Dulcamara – Stefano de Peppo

Creative Team

Conductor – Christopher Franklin

Stage Director – Daniel Ellis+

Scenic Designer – Jaime Mejia

Costume Designer – Angela M. Kahler



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Lighting Designer – Cheri Prough DeVol

Following the recent success of Minnesota Opera's latest Donizetti production, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and continuing the company's exploration of its *bel canto* philosophy, the 2023–2024 Season brings back an old favorite, *The Elixir of Love*, with a new twist. Minnesota Opera has performed Donizetti's feel-good romantic comedy twice in its history, but never with such zest.

Winner of the Opera America Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Prize, this new production puts a new twist on Donizetti's classic comedy. Drawing on the famous "Drink an Orange" ad campaign created by Albert Lasker for Sunkist Orange Juice back in 1916, the production turns Dulcamara into a typical traveling huckster, peddling orange juice mixed with wine as a special "elixir." The production, with Christopher Franklin leading the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and Minnesota Opera Chorus, and featuring Vanessa Becerra, Andrew Stenson, Joseph Lattanzi and Stefano de Peppo, will be filled with laughs, love and plenty of citrus to go around.

A NEW MN OPERA PRODUCTION

La bohème

Subscription dates: May 4–19, 2024 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, St. Paul

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Finding love. Choosing family. On a bitterly cold winter's night in the heart of Paris, a young woman's search for a candle light fatefully sparks one of the most enduring love stories of all time. But can a love so great be sustained? Join Mimi, Rodolfo and their bohemian friends as they find levity and joy amidst the hardship and struggle of a life in pursuit of art. Featuring some of the most captivating music ever written, Puccini's *La bohème* weaves moments of warmth and ecstasy together with anguish and heartbreak in this enduring story of love, loss and life.

Cast

Rodolfo – Won Whi Choi (Orange Cast)

Rodolfo – Christian Sanders+ (Red Cast)

Mimi – Melinda Whittington (Orange Cast)

Mimi – Symone Harcum+o (Red Cast)

Marcello – Joo Won Kang (Orange Cast)

Marcello – Jeremiah Sanders* (Red Cast)

Musetta – Keely Futterer*

Colline – Benjamin Sieverding+

Schaunard – Charles H. Eaton*

Benoit/Alcindoro – Andrew Wilkowske+

Parpignol – Efraín Corralejo *

Creative Team

Conductor – Christopher Franklin

Stage Director – Rodula Gaitanou

Scenic Designer – takis

Costume Designer – Trevor Bowen



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Lighting Designer – D.M. Wood

This new production of one of opera's most celebrated works will premiere in May of 2024, taking a deeper look into what it means to make one's way in the world as an artist. Minnesota Opera will utilize the full force of our artform's creative storytelling ability through its music, libretto, costumes, sets and more to bring the art to the forefront.

The cast features a wealth of returning talent in Won Whi Choi and Joo Won Kang; Resident Artist Alumni Christian Sanders, Symone Harcum, Benjamin Sieverding and Andrew Wilkowske; and current Resident Artists Charles H. Eaton, Keely Futterer, Jeremiah Sanders and Efraín Corralejo. Melinda Whittington makes her Minnesota Opera debut as Mimí. These artists, with Christopher Franklin at the helm of the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and Minnesota Opera Chorus, will bring the world of Puccini's *La bohème* to life in full splendor.

Luminary Arts Center Double Bill

A NEW MN OPERA PRODUCTION

Trouble in Tahiti/Service Provider

March 9-23, 2024 at the Luminary Arts Center, Minneapolis

TROUBLE IN TAHITI

MN OPERA PREMIERE

Music and libretto by Leonard Bernstein

SERVICE PROVIDER

MN OPERA PREMIERE

Music by Christopher Weiss

Libretto by John de los Santos

Marital bliss amiss. Sam and Dinah are living the American dream in 1950s suburbia. Beau and Autumn are celebrating their anniversary over dinner and drinks. But there's one problem... neither couple is happy. Beau and Autumn can't seem to look up from their phones and Sam and Dinah can't stand to be in the same room with each other. Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* and Christopher Weiss and John de los Santos' *Service Provider* may not be filled with marital bliss, but these one-act crowd pleasers are sure to keep you on the edge of your seat all night long!

Cast

Dinah/Autumn – Zoie Reams^{o†}

Sam – Charles H. Eaton*

Jazz Trio #1/Charlene – Keely Futterer*

Jazz Trio #2/Dallas – Efraín Corralejo*

Jazz Trio #3/Beau – Jeremiah Sanders*

Programmed specifically for the Luminary Arts Center, Minnesota Opera's Minneapolis performance venue, this double bill of *Trouble in Tahiti* and *Service Provider* brings artists and



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audiences together more intimately, zooming in unsparingly on the joys and struggles of romantic relationships.

Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* explores the struggling marriage of Dinah and Sam against the backdrop of 1950s society, the expectations they have, and the reality they face when striving to appear as the picture-perfect family. With the pandemic having shifted our notion of family bonds even farther from decades prior, *Trouble in Tahiti* forces us to re-evaluate what lies at the core of our closest and most intimate relationships.

Service Provider, on the other hand, takes a different approach, and zeros in on one aspect of modern society that has the tendency to insert itself between romantic partners—the smartphone. The triple-entendre of distracted couples looking for the strongest phone service signal to facilitate their liaisons and the restaurant server vying for their attention should lightheartedly encourage us to put our phones aside and engage fully with those around us.

This double bill highlights the considerable talents of Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist Program and features a chamber ensemble of the Minnesota Opera Orchestra musicians on stage.

+ Resident Artist Alum

*Resident Artist

oCompany Artist Alum

† Project Opera Alum

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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.