



Administrative: 612-333-2700

Patron Services: 612-333-6669

Fax: 612-333-0869

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Severin Lier, Associate Communications Director, 612-342-1614, [slier@mnopera.org](mailto:slier@mnopera.org)

## MINNESOTA OPERA RECEIVES CITY OF SAINT PAUL CULTURAL STAR GRANT

### **The Saint Paul City Council Awards Minnesota Opera a Cultural STAR Grant of \$25,000 in support of its upcoming, fully-orchestrated production of the mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*.**

**MINNEAPOLIS (April 18, 2023)** – The Saint Paul City Council, through funding from its Cultural STAR program has awarded Minnesota Opera \$25,000. The funds have been granted in support of the company’s upcoming production of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. The production follows the St. Paul Latinx community’s overwhelmingly positive reception of *Ópera Afuera*, a concert presented by Minnesota Opera in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at Allianz Field in September of 2021.

Scheduled as a part of Minnesota Opera’s upcoming 2023–2024 season, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* is the first in a series of mariachi operas composed by the late José “Pepe” Martínez, a well-known mariachi musician and band leader. Minnesota Opera’s production will feature a new, fully-orchestrated score by David Hanlon alongside traditional mariachi elements.

In its current season, Minnesota Opera made significant efforts to engage local Twin Cities AAPI talent for its world premiere of *The Song Poet*, based on the memoir by Hmong-American author Kao Kalia Yang. The company is making similar plans to seek Latinx and Mexican-heritage talent for *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. With this production, Minnesota Opera hopes to engage international mariachi performers such as Vanessa Alonzo, who sang an excerpt from *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (“Di mi nombre”) in Minnesota Opera’s *Ópera Afuera*. The company hopes that featuring singers like Alonzo will attract interest from local Latinx singers, encouraging them to audition for *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, and other future productions. The company hopes to authentically engage with local Latinx audiences as well, inviting them to experience *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* and return for future Minnesota Opera productions.

“*Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* honors the stories of hope, sacrifice and belonging experienced by so many immigrant communities that call the Twin Cities their home, and evokes the ultimate expressions of love and humanity woven into the rich fabric of our culture in the United States,” said Minnesota Opera Vice President of Artistic Joseph Li. “Minnesota Opera is proud to bring this masterful blend of operatic and mariachi traditions to its stage.”

The Saint Paul City Council approved the 2022 Round 2 Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) Grant Program awards on January 25, 2023. Cultural STAR provides grants and grows Saint Paul’s economy by strengthening the arts and cultural sector and supporting Downtown as a vital cultural center. Cultural STAR is funded by Saint Paul’s half-cent sales tax. The four major goals of



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

Cultural STAR are to build and diversify audiences; promote a broad range of cultural offerings; produce a long-term impact; and leverage additional financial support. This year's grants, totaling over \$950,000, will support programming, capital improvements and organizational development activities for 41 local non-profit arts and cultural organizations including Minnesota Opera.

"I'm thrilled we're able to support the Minnesota Opera and everything they do to bring art, passion and vibrancy to Saint Paul," said Saint Paul City Councilmember Rebecca Noecker. St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter showed support as well, saying, "The immigrant's story is not just the American story, but it's also the story of so many people who call Saint Paul home. We are proud to be a community with a rich, multicultural history. I'm thrilled that we can share this particular story at the Ordway."

*Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* will be performed on November 4, 9, 11 and 12, 2023 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in Downtown St. Paul.

To learn more about *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, please visit [mnopera.org/cruzar](https://mnopera.org/cruzar).

###

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