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MINNESOTA OPERA ANNOUNCES ITS 2024-2025 SEASON

62nd season features the return of two audience favorites, a newly orchestrated Minnesota premiere.

MINNEAPOLIS (February 27, 2024) – Minnesota Opera is proud to announce its 2024-2025 season, which consists of the return of multiple audience favorites and a newly reorchestrated MN Opera premiere. It is a season of timeless stories that features the joy of infinite possibilities, the anguish of heartbreak, and everything in between.

The season features the tragic romance *Romeo and Juliet* by composer Charles Gounod and librettists Jules Barbier and Michel Carré; a MN Opera premiere of *The Snowy Day* by composer Joel Thompson and librettist Andrea Davis Pinkney, based on the Caldecott Medal-winning children's book by Ezra Jack Keats and scored with a brand-new orchestration by the composer; and the classic comedic opera *The Barber of Seville* by composer Gioachino Rossini and librettist Cesare Sterbini. Additionally, the 2024-2025 season will also include the first ever **Glam Jam**, a benefit concert in September, hosted by audience favorite Monét X Change (*The Daughter of the Regiment*). The introduction of a new recital series titled MNOP+ will provide additional opportunities for audiences to get closer to artists and their process in the intimate setting of the Luminary Arts Center in Minneapolis's North Loop.

Finally, MN Opera is excited that the Arts Partnership will present a concert of musical excerpts from *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* performed by composer and trumpet player Terence Blanchard with The E-Collective and the Grammy Award-winning Turtle Island Quartet.

"Our 2024-2025 season promises to take audiences on an emotional journey," says MN Opera President and General Director Ryan Taylor. "We open with a return to French Grand Opera with *Romeo and Juliet*, where we're brought face-to-face with the highs and lows of romantic love in the face of cultural division. Then, we'll step into the world of *The Snowy Day*, full of the unique joy that only the first snowfall can bring before rounding out the season with a production of *The Barber of Seville* that will be as jaw-dropping in its technical virtuosity as it is hilarious. We're also thrilled to be welcoming back Monét X Change to host the first-ever Glam Jam Benefit Concert where we'll celebrate some of the finest talent to light up the Ordway stage in recent years."

The 2024-2025 season will present a mix of faces familiar to the Ordway stage as well as several company debuts. Lead roles for *Romeo and Juliet* will be sung by soprano Jasmine Habersham (*Edward Tulane*), tenor and Project Opera alum Evan LeRoy Johnson, and baritone and Resident Artist alum Charles H. Eaton (*Trouble in Tahiti*). Johnson and bass Adam Lau make their MN Opera debuts. *The Snowy Day* will feature sopranos Flora Hawk in her company debut, Zulimar López-Hernández (*Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*), and Karen Slack (*Dead Man Walking*). *The Barber of Seville* will be performed by a double cast of artists, many of whom will make their debuts with MN Opera: baritones Takaoki Onishi and David Wolfe, mezzo-sopranos Katherine Beck and Kara Morgan, tenor Lunga Eric Hallam, and basses Matthew Anchel and Stefan Egerstrom, the latter of whom appeared



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in the chorus for *The Shining* in 2016 but will make his principal debut with the company. Tenor and Resident Artist alum David Walton (*Don Pasquale*) and bass Stefano de Peppo (*The Elixir of Love*) return to round out the cast.

Season ticket packages start at \$66 are available online at mnopera.org or by calling MN Opera Patron Services at 612-333-6669. Tickets for Glam Jam and *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* are currently available only to subscribers. Individual tickets will go on sale in early September.

2024-2025 SEASON

ORDWAY SERIES

Romeo and Juliet

November 2-10, 2024 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Music by Charles Gounod

Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

In fair Verona, timeless love blooms and family feuds rage. The Montague and Capulet families have despised each other for generations, but their children only have eyes for each other. Charles Gounod's evocative score captures Shakespeare's enduring story of two star-crossed lovers who are willing to sacrifice everything to be together.

Cast

Juliette – Jasmine Habersham

Roméo – Evan LeRoy Johnson

Mercutio – Charles H. Eaton +

Frère Laurent – Adam Lau

Count Capulet – John Mburu

Stéphano – Kara Morgan

Tybalt – Ángel Vargas

Gertrude – Victoria Vargas +

Gregorio – David Wolfe

Creative Team

Conductor – Christopher Franklin

Original Direction – Matthew Ozawa

Scenic Designer – William Boles

Costume Designer – Sarah Bahr

Lighting Designer – Paul Whitaker



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MN Opera's 2024-2025 season will kick off in grand fashion in November with *Romeo and Juliet* by composer Charles Gounod and librettists Jules Barbier and Michel Carré. Fielding the largest contingent of the MN Opera Chorus and MN Opera Orchestra of its season under Principal Conductor Christopher Franklin, the cast of *Romeo and Juliet* will be headlined by both new and returning talent including Jasmine Habersham and Project Opera alum Evan LeRoy Johnson, who will be making his principal debut with the company.

A MN OPERA PREMIERE

The Snowy Day

February 8-16, 2025 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Music by Joel Thompson

Libretto by Andrea Davis Pinkney

Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera

In the fresh snow, every footstep is marked with magic. A young boy wakes to find that the first snow of winter has fallen overnight-- an exciting day of adventure awaits. Peter delights in making footprints in the snow and meeting new friends, before returning home to the cozy embrace of Mama and Daddy. Based on the Caldecott Medal-winning book by Ezra Jack Keats, Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney's *The Snowy Day* brings centerstage the fleeting but indelible magic of childhood.

Cast

Peter – Flora Hawk

Amy – Zulimar López-Hernández

Mama – Karen Slack

Jasper/Papi – Ángel Vargas

Daddy/Tim – John Mburu

Billy – Benjamin Sieverding +

Creative Team

Conductor – Kelly Kuo

Original Direction – Omer Ben Seadia

Scenic Designer – Amy Rubin

Costume Designer – Jessica Jahn

The Snowy Day premiered in 2021 at Houston Grand Opera and has since captivated audiences around the country with its joyful adaptation of Ezra Jack Keats' book of the same name, which is known for being one of the earliest examples of a Black protagonist in children's literature as well as being the most checked out book of all time at the New York Public Library.

In creating the work, composer Joel Thompson (recipient of the 2018 American Prize for his choral work *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*) and librettist Andrea Davis Pinkney (*New York Times*-bestselling author and 2022 Kerlan Award winner) were very intentional in their mission to depict Black joy and experience on the operatic stage, with Pinkney's playful yet earnest text set to a sweeping, cinematic score which Thompson will reorchestrate specially for MN Opera's production.

to feature the full musical forces of the MN Opera Orchestra, led by returning guest conductor Kelly Kuo (*The Daughter of the Regiment*).

The cast will be led by Flora Hawk in her MN Opera debut, Karen Slack, who debuted the role of Mama in HGO's production and was last seen with MN Opera in *Dead Man Walking*, and Zulimar López-Hernández who was most recently on the Ordway stage earlier this season in *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*.

The Barber of Seville

May 3-18, 2025 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Music by Gioachino Rossini

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

Where love is concerned, too much is not even enough. Rosina is young, clever, and wealthy, but her greedy guardian desires her and her fortune for himself. Using her wits to outsmart him and find her true love, she enlists Figaro, the mischievous and well-connected local barber, who has more than a few tricks up his sleeve. Plans go awry (resulting in several close shaves) against the backdrop of Gioachino Rossini's iconic score as romance and a little old-fashioned trickery combine in one of the best-loved comedies of all time.

Cast

Rosina – Katherine Beck (orange cast)

Rosina – Kara Morgan (red cast)

Count Almaviva – Lunga Eric Hallam (orange cast)

Count Almaviva – David Walton (red cast) +

Figaro – Takaoki Onishi (orange cast)

Figaro – David Wolfe (red cast)

Doctor Bartolo – Matthew Anchel (orange cast)

Doctor Bartolo – Stefano de Peppo (red cast)

Don Basilio – Stefan Egerstrom

Berta – Tessa McQueen

Fiorello – John Mburu

Creative Team

Conductor – Christopher Franklin

MN Opera will close out the 2024-2025 season with *The Barber of Seville*, a bright, colorful *bel canto* celebration that is the company's most sought-after rental production ever by opera houses nationwide. Rossini's classic prequel to Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* has become a staple for MN Opera, where it has been staged seven times since the company's inception in 1963. With beautifully painted drop sets and a score known for the impressive vocal fireworks it requires of performers, *The Barber of Seville* will place an emphatic exclamation point on the 2024-2025 season.



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The double casts showcase a rich mixture of debuts and returning talent: Takaoki Onishi, Lunga Eric Hallam, Katherine Beck, Matthew Anchel, and Stefan Egerstrom all make their principal debuts with MN Opera, while Resident Artist alum David Walton returns alongside Stefano de Peppo, who made his MN Opera debut as Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* in 2001 with none other than President and General Director Ryan Taylor singing the title role as a Resident Artist. Principal Conductor Christopher Franklin helms the MN Opera Chorus and MN Opera Orchestra.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Glam Jam: A Star-Studded Benefit Concert

September 28, 2024 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Monét X Change returns to host a unique benefit extravaganza featuring a star-studded lineup of some of the most captivating performers from the MN Opera stage. With Principal Conductor Christopher Franklin leading the full forces of the MN Opera Orchestra behind them, audience favorites like Jasmine Habersham, Symone Harcum, Ellie Dehn, Adriana Zabala, and more come together to showcase the breadth and power of their artistry in a one-night-only event you won't want to miss.

MNOP +

MN Opera is excited to announce a new recital series titled MNOP+ that will take place at the Luminary Arts Center in the North Loop. These special, artist-driven events will afford audiences the opportunity to get closer to the artists and their process in an intimate setting.

Recital with David Leigh and Mario Antonio Marra

Tuesday, December 18, 2024

***Notte Napolitano* with Mario Antonio Marra and Resident Artists**

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Recital with Ann Toomey and Joseph Li

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Recital with Warren Jones Residency with the MN Opera Resident Artist Program (RAP)

Saturday, March 8, 2025



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Arts Partnership Presentation

Fire Shut Up in My Bones: Excerpts in Concert with Terence Blanchard, The E-Collective, and Turtle Island Quartet

February 23, 2025 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Based on the 2014 memoir by Charles M. Blow, with music by Terence Blanchard, and libretto by Kasi Lemmons, the opera *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* premiered at Opera Theater St. Louis in 2019. The Metropolitan Opera opened its season with the work in in 2021 – the first in its 138 years written by an African American composer. It became an unparalleled success and was staged again during the Met's 2023-2024 season. In an effort to continue the message that opera and classical music are for everyone, Blanchard and The E-Collective have teamed up with the Grammy-winning Turtle Island Quartet and visual artist Andrew F. Scott to create a concert production that features excerpts from the opera performed by the composer, this incredible ensemble, and two guest singers. The music and Scott's video projections give the audience a look inside the mind of Blanchard and the world he created.

* Resident Artist

+ Resident Artist Alum

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Minnesota Opera advances the art of opera for today and for future generations
by expanding the circle of musical storytelling.