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MINNESOTA OPERA ANNOUNCES NEW RESIDENT ARTISTS

**Cohort of five artists will work with the company, develop career skills,
and perform in season productions**

MINNEAPOLIS (February 24, 2026) – Minnesota Opera is proud to announce its cohort of singers and a pianist/coach who will join its Resident Artist Program for the 2026-2027 season. Soprano Emily Finke (Los Altos, CA), mezzo-soprano Julia Holoman (Raleigh, NC), and pianist/coach Yueqi Zhang (Nanjing, Jiangsu, China) will join tenor Ángel Vargas (San Juan, Puerto Rico) and bass John Mburu (Warwick, RI), who will both return for a third season with the company.

Selection for the Resident Artist Program involves a rigorous multi-round audition process that begins with nearly a thousand applicants. The final cohort is chosen based on technical and artistic strength, professional potential, and the company’s production needs for the upcoming season. Because MN Opera regularly casts its Resident Artists in leading and featured roles—a rarity in the field—the program is highly competitive. Under the leadership of Director of the Resident Artist Program and Head of Music Mario Antonio Marra, the artists will perform in productions at the Ordway and in recitals on the MNOP+ series while receiving individualized coaching and career development from company staff and guest clinicians.

Vargas and Mburu have already sung key roles in multiple productions for the company, having both appeared in each production this season alone. Mburu will also sing the role of Gualtiero in a concert presentation of Puccini’s *Edgar* in April and Vargas will appear as Beppe in *Pagliacci* in May.

Titles and roles for the 2026-2027 season will be announced publicly on March 10.

“I am looking forward to welcoming these artists to MN Opera,” says Marra. “Their artistry represents the present and future of opera, and the Resident Artist Program will provide the necessary tools and experience to carry that artistry with passion and vigor onto our stages in Minnesota, and beyond.”

MN Opera’s Resident Artist Program was first introduced in 1997 and has since become one of North America’s premier training programs within the art form.

Headshots and full bios for the Resident Artists are available [here](#).

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Minnesota Opera connects people in the pursuit of an empathetic, equitable, and joyful life,
advancing the art and experience of opera.