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Grammy-winning Conductor Michael Christie Makes Debut with Des Moines Metro Opera leading Puccini's *La Bohème* June 28 – July 21

Friday, June 28, 2019 at 7:30pm

Sunday, June 30, 2019 at 2:00pm

Friday, July 5, 2019 at 7:30pm

Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 7:30pm

Saturday, July 13, 2019 at 7:30pm

Sunday, July 21, 2019 at 2:00pm

Blank Performing Arts Center | 513 North D Street | Indianola, IA
Tickets (\$37 – \$89): www.desmoinesmetroopera.org

“Conductor Michael Christie melds fire and ice.” – *Star Tribune*

www.michaelchristieonline.com

Indianola, IA — Grammy-winning conductor **Michael Christie** makes his **Des Moines Metro Opera** debut leading **Puccini's *La Bohème*** with performances running **June 28 – July 21, 2019** at the **Blank Performing Arts Center** (513 North D Street). For over 100 years, Puccini's most celebrated opera has moved audiences to laughter and tears with its irresistible music and its timeless tale. Join the bohemian revolution in the heart of Paris as a group of struggling artists strives to create beautiful art, find love and ultimately live life to the fullest in this romantic operatic blockbuster, which features some of the most familiar and beautiful music ever written.

“It's a great pleasure to join this terrific cast and creative team for a timeless favorite,” says Christie. “In particular, this production allows stage director and DMMO favorite, Octavio Cardenas and I to collaborate again on *La Bohème*. We worked together for several years at the Minnesota Opera and on *La Bohème* specifically. In many ways, this collaboration allows us to resume our exploration of the score's many dramatic opportunities. It's rare in opera to be able to work again with a colleague on the creative team on the same title.”

Of Michael Christie's recent mainstage debut leading Lyric Opera of Chicago's acclaimed production of Verdi's *La Traviata*, the *Chicago Tribune* wrote that Christie, “drew poetic commentary from the Lyric Opera Orchestra,” while the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, “He encouraged the singers to indulge in their rattled characters' most intimate reflections without losing grip of the music's exciting forward motion.”

Soprano Julie Adams, tenor Joshua Guerrero, and soprano Mané Galoyan make their DMMO debuts as Mimì, Rodolfo and Musetta, respectively, in the beloved revival of the company's 2011 production. Additional cast members include Thomas Glass as Marcello; Timothy J. Bruno as Colline; Brian Vu as Schaunard; Matthew Lau as Benoit/Alcindoro; and Andrew Turner as Parpignol. Joining Michael Christie on the creative team is Director Octavio Cardenas; Scenic Designer Robert W. Little; Lighting Designer Sarah Riffle; and Wig and Makeup Designer Brittany Crinson.

Michael Christie is a thoughtfully innovative conductor, equally at home in the symphonic and opera worlds, who is focused on making the audience experience at his performances entertaining, enlightening, and enriching. He is the newly appointed Music Director of the New West Symphony, serving the greater Los Angeles area in Thousand Oaks and Oxnard, California. *The New York Times* reports, “Michael Christie is a director open to adventure and challenge,” and the

Cincinnati Enquirer declares, “If Michael Christie represents the future of music in this country, the future looks promising indeed.”

Christie won a 2019 Grammy Award (Best Opera Recording) for the world premiere recording of Mason Bates’ *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* with The Santa Fe Opera (PENTATONE). In 2017, Christie led the world premiere performances at The Santa Fe Opera, “with suave assurance” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), with “precision and pizzazz” (*Santa Fe New Mexican*), and “preside[d] over an expertly executed performance” (*The Financial Times*).

Christie was featured in *Opera News* in August 2012 as one of 25 people believed to “break out and become major forces in the field in the coming decade.” At Minnesota Opera, Christie led 24 productions over eight years, six seasons as its first-ever Music Director (2012-2018). Highlights for Christie’s 2018-2019 season include engagements with Indiana University Opera and Ballet Theater, Opéra de Montréal, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, and Michigan Opera Theatre. 2019-2020 will be Christie’s first full season as Music Director of the New West Symphony, and he will lead operas with San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Deeply committed to bringing new works to life, Michael Christie has championed commissions by leading and emerging composers alike, including Mark Adamo, Mason Bates, Michael Daugherty, Osvaldo Golijov, Mark Grey, Daron Hagen, Huang Ruo, Matthew Hindson, Marjan Mozetich, Stephen Paulus, Kevin Puts, and more. In 2018, he led the world premiere of *An American Soldier*, a two-act opera by Huang Ruo, with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. *The New York Times* reported, “Both the subtle colorings and pummeling intensity came through in the compelling performance the conductor Michael Christie drew from the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.”

Christie’s conducting career, spanning more than 20 years, has included serving as Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony (2005-2013) and Brooklyn Philharmonic (2005-2010), and as Chief Conductor of the Queensland Orchestra (2001-2004) in Australia, as well as guest appearances leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Rhode Island Philharmonic, and the Symphonies of Dallas, St. Louis, Atlanta, Houston, Minnesota, Oregon, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Santa Rosa. Christie’s many European engagements have included leading the Rotterdam Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, Orchestre National de Lille, Swedish and Netherlands Radio Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, NDR Hannover Orchestra and the Czech Philharmonic. In addition, Christie enjoys a strong profile in Australia, where he has conducted the Sydney Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, Opera Queensland, and the Western Australian Symphony in Perth.

Michael Christie first came to international attention in 1995 when he was awarded a special prize for “Outstanding Potential” at the First International Sibelius Conductors’ Competition in Helsinki. Following the competition, he was invited to become an apprentice conductor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra where he subsequently worked with Daniel Barenboim as well as at the Berlin State Opera during the 1996-1997 season. Christie graduated from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music with a bachelor's degree in trumpet performance.

Christie lives in the Twin Cities with his wife, Alexis, a physician, and their two children. For more information, visit www.michaelchristieonline.com.

About Des Moines Metro Opera

Des Moines Metro Opera is a major American summer opera festival and is the state’s largest performing arts organization, annually producing over 100 performances in the metro area and around the region. The company’s summer festival season runs from May through July of each year during which three operas are performed in repertory for 15 mainstage performances. The summer festival season takes place in the intimate 467-seat Pote Theater at the Blank Center for the Performing Arts in Indianola, Iowa.

Unique among local arts organizations and national opera companies, the company’s programming encompasses a distinctive mix of styles from five centuries of composition, presented in original productions that transport audiences to the intersection of art and ideas. Utilizing a spectacular array of professional talent assembled from over 1,000 national applicants, we demonstrate that opera is a contemporary and creative art form. Whether it’s a classic reimagined for the 21st century or a contemporary work, the company’s programming commitment offers high quality productions in one of America’s most unique and intimate theatres.