

Minnesota Opera is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and collaborative workplace. Ensuring dignity and respect between performers and the creative team is essential to the success of establishing a safe space for a scene to thrive.

This document addresses policies and procedures specifically related to staging and performing scenes of intimacy onstage in Minnesota Opera productions. Minnesota Opera maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment, as outlined in our separate Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior policy.

## **What are scenes of intimacy?**

Intimacy Directors International broadly defines scenes of intimacy as scenes with intimate physical contact, such as sex scenes and kissing. They also include familial intimacy between parents and children, embraces between dear friends, sexual tension and chemistry where no touching occurs, and intimacy is also an element in scenes of sexual violence.

## **Who is impacted by scenes of intimacy?**

Everyone in the room including performers, staging staff, music staff, designers, and crew are participants and may have an emotional reaction to intimate scenes. The intimacy director along with the staging staff will work to ensure no performer or observer feels **unsafe** in the room. It is acceptable and sometimes even the intention for a performance to make observers **uncomfortable**. Where this is likely to happen, stage management or the intimacy director will give a content warning to those in the room.

## **Who is an Intimacy Director?**

An Intimacy Director is a movement professional specifically trained to handle intimate scenes. In addition to training in consent, sexual harassment, mental health first aid, and protocols to cover a range of situations and acting as a performer advocate, an intimacy director is an artist with the skill and choreographic techniques for telling clear, dynamic stories of intimate interactions that help create moving productions for our audience.

## **Creating Safe Space for Dangerous Art: The Five Pillars**

The intimacy director will ensure that staging protocol conforms to Intimacy Directors International's Five Pillars.

**Context** - The director and intimacy director will ensure that everyone understands the story and the intention of the scene.

**Consent** - The intimacy director will establish protocols to ensure that consent is freely given, retractable, informed, enthusiastic, and specific. Permission may come from anyone in the room. Consent comes only from the person directly impacted. Performers are responsible for establishing consent directly with their scene partners.

**Communication** - Everyone will work to maintain an atmosphere of open, respectful communication.

- While we want to maintain a light, playful environment in rehearsal, be aware that inappropriate jokes or comments may have unintended impact on others.
- Refer to scenes of intimacy in neutral language (i.e. scene 2 or the duet).
- Unwanted discussion of your own or others sexual history or appearance is inappropriate.
- Anything of a personal nature shared in rehearsal is treated as confidential.
- The intimacy director will establish open communication of consent and boundaries. Staging staff will facilitate continued openness.
- If you make a mistake that unintentionally impacts another participant, own it, apologize, and move forward. If you are impacted negatively by another participant and you feel safe doing so, address the incident directly with the intimacy director, staging staff, and/or the person involved.
- Please also refer to Minnesota Opera's Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior policy for reporting harassment.

**Choreography** - The intimacy director will establish safe, consensual, repeatable choreography. Staging staff and performers will ensure the choreography does not change once set.

**Closure** - The intimacy director will establish appropriate closure practices for participants to end the work within the scene.