

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 is an Intimacy Director?**

An intimacy director helps create brave, respectful, and collaborative workplaces where everyone involved can bring their full selves to the process. Ensuring dignity and respect between performers and the creative team helps establish a rehearsal environment where creativity thrives. An intimacy director is not a replacement for the sexual harassment policy which defines appropriate behavior, reporting mechanisms and consequences for everyone including the intimacy director.

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

Intimacy Directors and Coordinators 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, as well as 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 works to ensure no performer or observer feels **unsafe** in the room. It is acceptable and sometimes even the intention for a performance to feel **uncomfortable**. Where this is likely to happen, stage management or the intimacy director will give a content warning to those in the room.

## How are scenes of intimacy staged?

The Five Pillars (based on the work of Intimacy Directors International)

**Context** - The director and intimacy director ensure that everyone understands the intended story. This might include whether the intimacy is romantic, sexual, flirtatious, friendly, familial, etc.; whether it is consensual for the characters; where the intimacy might lead next; how it changes through the scene and so forth.

**Consent** - **Consent** comes only from the person directly impacted. **Permission** may come from anyone in the room. Performers need to establish consent directly with their scene partners.

**Consent is:**  
**C**onsidered  
**R**eversible  
**I**nformed  
**S**pecific  
**P**articipatory

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

- No one should be expected to reveal their personal history in order to have their **boundaries** respected. When someone states a boundary, others might ask questions to understand it more specifically, but never why the boundary exists.
- While we want to maintain a light, playful environment in rehearsal, be aware that inappropriate jokes or comments may have an 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 sexual harassment.
- Anything of a personal nature shared in rehearsal is treated as confidential. There will be no implied expectation for anyone to reveal their personal experiences.
- The intimacy director establishes open communication of consent and boundaries. Staging staff facilitates 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, address it. Depending on how you feel safe doing so, you may talk with the intimacy director, staging staff, and/or the person involved.
- Please also refer to the sexual harassment policy for reporting harassment.

**Choreography** - The intimacy director establishes safe, consensual, repeatable choreography. Staging staff and performers work together to ensure that the choreography, once set, is performed within the mutually agreed upon boundaries that have been established and rehearsed.

**Closure** - The intimacy director establishes appropriate closure practices for participants to end the work within a scene. Participants may include anyone in the room (e.g. music staff, crew, et al).

## **What are the qualifications of 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 audiences.