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## MN Opera Rehearsal Room Guide - Staff

*Updated 09/11/2023*

Having gradually eased COVID-19 restrictions and policies for our rehearsal process over the past year, we are once again pleased to welcome MN Opera staff to the rehearsal room!

Observing a rehearsal is a fantastic way to interact with our season and the creative people whose work brings each production to stage. The rehearsal process is the central artistic building block of any given show, and one that is near and dear to any of its involved artists – getting to know their work is a key step to knowing them!

*Who are the MN Opera people responsible for the rehearsal room?*

- VP, Production (Karen Quisenberry, [kquisenberry@mnopera.org](mailto:kquisenberry@mnopera.org))
  - ❖ Responsible for all production personnel including, but not limited to: director and design team, stage management, supernumeraries, costume shop, scenes shop, props, facilities
- VP, Artistic (Joseph Li, [jli@mnopera.org](mailto:jli@mnopera.org))
  - ❖ Responsible for all music personnel including, but not limited to: conductor, guest artists, chorus, orchestra, music staff, Resident Artists
- Production Stage Manager (Kerry Masek – Interim, [kmasek@mnopera.org](mailto:kmasek@mnopera.org))
  - ❖ The information superhighway nexus. Supervises stage management, runs the rehearsal room, and serves as the primary point of contact for all staging needs, scheduling, run sheets, clock management, safety, room setup
- Head of Music (Mario Antonio Marra, [mamarra@mnopera.org](mailto:mamarra@mnopera.org))
  - ❖ Supervises music staff (pianist/coaches, Chorus Director) and serves as the primary point of contact for all music-related needs including musical preparation, coachings, off-stage/banda music, Resident Artists, and assistant conducting duties

*Where can I find the schedule for upcoming rehearsals?*

At MN Opera's callboard website: <https://callboard.mnopera.org/>. All schedules and a wealth of other information can be found here.



*Can I ask questions of folks in the rehearsal room?*

If to Karen and/or Joseph, yes. Otherwise, conversation/talking apart from what's taking place between the creative team and the performers can be disruptive to an active rehearsal room. We'd suggest introducing yourself and saying hello to folks before or after the rehearsal, or during break, but save anything work-related or time-intensive for a later context out of respect to artists needing that precious break time to prep, decompress, or call/text their loved ones.

*Can I bring food or drink into the rehearsal room?*

You may bring beverages in a closed-top container.

*How do I know if a rehearsal is closed to visitors?*

The Production Stage Manager will let you know if a rehearsal is closed for any reason. Also check the daily schedule as it will likely have the most up-to-date information on a rehearsal, and check for any signage around the entrance to the rehearsal room.

*Can I bring a guest?*

Not without prior permission. All rehearsals are closed to guests (including guests of artists) unless permission has been granted by both the stage director and the conductor. Please make any requests for guests to the Production Stage Manager at least one day in advance of your guests' proposed attendance.

*Where should I sit?*

If you are attending rehearsal in Bemis Rehearsal Hall, there is some seating available immediately to your left as you walk in. If you want to visit with Karen and/or Joseph, you can sit with us at the top of the stairway against the window. Please do not cross in front of the production/director table or the conductor during an active rehearsal – if you want to reach the opposite side of the room, please do so via the props storage room at the rear of Bemis.



*When is usually the best time to see a rehearsal?*

It depends on what part of the process you'd like to see!

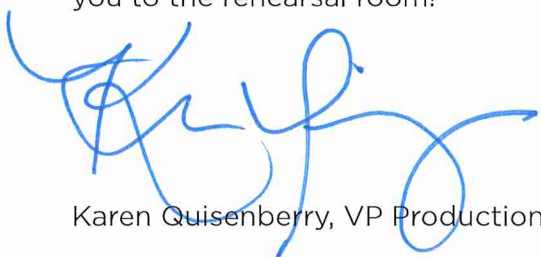
- If you prefer big rehearsals with lots of folks in the room, chorus and supernumerary rehearsals generally take place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- If you prefer smaller rehearsals with more focused, individual work, morning and afternoon rehearsals on weekdays are generally principals-only.
- If you prefer rehearsals with orchestra and musical focus, orchestra reading rehearsals begin during the final week of staging rehearsals. The conductor, orchestra, and music staff use this time to rehearse the show musically in detail without singers or any staging elements. The conductor will usually focus on making sure any cuts and transitions are executed smoothly, fixing ensemble and intonation, and helping the orchestra begin to understand the larger dramatic context of their role both as an ensemble and individual players.
- The final room run is a great rehearsal to attend as it is our last chance to run the show in the rehearsal room before moving all of the elements to the performance venue, and an opportunity for the design team to observe the unique story-telling vision of the conductor and director. Let the Production Stage Manager know if you would like to attend this rehearsal and give them as much advance notice as possible, as seating space for folks is extremely limited.
- After the final room run, we begin the technical rehearsal process of putting musical and production elements together and moving them to the theater. This period of time represents the final push of the rehearsal process marathon, and your colleagues in Production and Artistic will typically be working until midnight or later most days.
  - ❖ *Sitzprobe* – a German term for “sitting rehearsal,” this rehearsal involves finally putting all of the musical elements together – orchestra, chorus, principal guest artists – without staging. Up until this point every rehearsal has been with piano, so this is the first time our creative team gets to hear the piece as it was conceived musically. We typically hold these in Bemis Rehearsal Hall.



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- ❖ *Wandelprobe* – a German term for “wandering rehearsal,” this rehearsal involves moving all of the musical elements to the performance venue to hear what the piece actually sounds like in the venue with the orchestra in the pit (if the venue has one) and the singers doing a basic version of stage blocking (movement/placement) on stage. The conductor and music staff focus primarily on ensemble and sound balance, and there will typically be no production elements of costumes, lighting, set changes, supertitles, fight/dance/intimacy choreography, or hair & makeup.
- ❖ *Piano Tech/Dress*: a rehearsal where Production staff, director, and design team put together elements of costumes, lighting, set changes, supertitles, fight/dance/intimacy choreography, and hair & makeup in the performance venue. The rehearsal is conducted with piano in the pit to help the creative team focus primarily on production elements, so singers may often elect to mark (sing at a fraction of their volume capacity) their music to preserve their voices during these late night rehearsals.
- ❖ *Orchestra Dress Rehearsal*: the final stage of a rehearsal process where the MN Opera team puts together all elements of music and production – the entire show. While typically we aim to run the show in its entirety without stopping, we may stop to fix major musical or production elements that can occur. We capture production photography during this time and often host an invited audience at the final dress rehearsal.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions about observing rehearsals as we get our season underway. We look forward to seeing and welcoming you to the rehearsal room!



Karen Quisenberry, VP Production



Joseph Li, VP Artistic