

**In Face of Global Pandemic, Opera Grand Rapids Transforms  
Scalia/Ginsburg into Virtual Performance**  
*The Show Will Go On: Grand Rapids Company One of First in World to Stage Comic Opera*

**Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 13, 2020** – While arts organizations around the country canceled performances and closed their doors, Opera Grand Rapids found a way to bring a performance safely to its community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rather than risk gathering a large audience in a confined space, the company received unprecedented permission from composer and librettist Derrick Wang to record and share the performance of *Scalia/Ginsburg* with ticket holders. The cast will perform in front of a very small audience at the Betty Van Andel Opera Center, where the production will be recorded by Aria Show Technology and then virtually broadcast to ticket holders.

“As the week progressed, the Met, Broadway and other arts organizations began closing their doors in an effort to halt the spread of this novel coronavirus,” said Emilee Syrewicze, executive director of Opera Grand Rapids. “We could not in good conscience continue with our scheduled performances in front of a live audience without potentially risking everyone’s health.

“Yet, we did not want to simply cancel. Instead, in less than 24 hours, we found a way to transform this performance into an experience that highlights the power and possibility of opera. We are an opera company with a millennial staff committed to finding unique solutions and opportunities to bring opera to the masses — even in the face of a global pandemic. We hope that now, even more people will be able to tune into the virtual performance.”

Proving public health and the arts do not have to be mutually exclusive, the show would not have been able to go on without the support of title sponsor Metro Health—University of Michigan Health.

“As a physician, I believe the arts are essential to our overall well-being – especially at moments like this, when our routines are upended and anxiety comes into everyday life,” said Peter Y. Hahn, president and CEO of Metro Health. “We cannot lose sight of what enriches the human experience. As an organization that prizes innovation, Metro Health is proud to support this solution by Opera Grand Rapids to ensure that this historic performance of *Scalia/Ginsburg* can be appreciated in a new way.”

Ticket holders will receive password-protected access for the online screening, which will be available beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 14 and remain open through Sunday March 15 at 4 p.m. This also opens up the potential for new audiences to appreciate the previously sold-out Saturday show. Anyone in the world, including those staying home due to illness or out of precaution during the pandemic, will be able to purchase a virtual ticket to this historic performance.

Additional tickets to this unique performance are available for \$50. To purchase, call the Opera Grand Rapids box office at 616.451.2741 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or visit [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). Student tickets are available exclusively through the box office.

Those who have already purchased tickets will receive an email within the next 24 hours containing a link and password to view the virtual performance. Attendees who don’t have an email on file are encouraged to share one with [hello@operagr.org](mailto:hello@operagr.org).

A comedy about friendship in a divided world, inspired by the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia, *Scalia/Ginsburg* was first heard at the Supreme Court of the United States before its world premiere production at renowned conductor Lorin Maazel's Castleton Festival. Opera Grand Rapids is one of the first companies in the world to produce this opera.

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