

Montana  PBS

Presents

A **RIVER** RUNS  
THROUGH  
IT

A televised special featuring a new opera celebrating the 50th anniversary of Norman Maclean's now-classic novella

MUSIC BY  
**ZACH REDLER**

LIBRETTO BY  
**MATT FOSS AND KELLEY ROURKE**

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY  
**NORMAN MACLEAN**

COMMISSIONED, DEVELOPED, AND PREMIERED BY  
**OPERA MONTANA**



The September 2026 premiere of this new opera, commissioned by Opera Montana, will be recorded by Montana PBS for a fall television broadcast release. Montana PBS is known for exceptional filmmaking about the performing arts in Montana and the nation, with credits that include 12-time Emmy® award-winning *11th & Grant with Eric Funk*, now in its sixteenth season, *The Violin Alone* documentary, *Handel's Messiah: Montana Baroque*, *Montana Summer Symphony*, and many others. Montana PBS performing arts broadcasts regularly reach audiences across the state.

# A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

## Norman Maclean's Novel

Brothers Paul and Norman Maclean were each other's closest companions as boys, raised in a strict but loving Montana household where there was no clear line between fishing and religion, and where both were practiced with fervor and exactitude. Now in their thirties, the brothers have grown apart, and Paul, always a free spirit, is in more trouble than he cares to admit. Meanwhile, Jessie, Norman's wife, is worried for her own brother, who has left Montana for California and seems to have lost his way. She hopes a family fishing trip will have a salutary effect for all concerned. On the river, Paul and Norman bond over Neal's hopeless big-city ways, giving Norman an opening to try to help his brother, but Paul brushes his concerns aside. As Paul's troubles mount, he suggests that he and Norman travel home to visit their parents and take their father fishing. That fishing trip—which will turn out to be their last—is a snapshot of where they have come from, how their roles have shifted, and their abiding love. Not long afterward, Paul's body is found in an alley, beaten to death with the butt of a revolver. As the story unfolds, Norman and Jessie grow into their love for each other as they move through exasperation, concern, helplessness and grief.



## OPERA MONTANA

Opera Montana, established in 1978, is a distinguished nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the cultural landscape through the powerful artistry of opera. Committed to fostering appreciation and accessibility, we showcase exceptional performances, nurture emerging talent, and engage diverse audiences. Our legacy of excellence in the performing arts continues to inspire and captivate communities, shaping a vibrant future for opera.



### CONDUCTOR

#### **Michael Sakir**

Conductor Michael Sakir serves as Artistic Director of Opera Montana where the innovative programming, community partnerships, and robust education programs under his leadership have led to record-breaking ticket sales and company growth. Sakir previously served as Music Director of Opera Memphis, with whom he was deeply involved in the company's groundbreaking civic practice programs and commissioning projects. Recent guest conducting engagements include Pittsburgh Opera, Seattle Opera, Arizona Opera, among others.



### STAGE DIRECTOR

#### **Matt Foss**

Matt Foss received his M.F.A. in acting from Chicago's Roosevelt University and Ph.D. in theatre studies and directing from Wayne State University in Detroit. Recent professional credits include Red Tape Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Oracle Theatre, American Blues Theatre, The Jewish Ensemble Theatre and Tipping Point Theatre. He has acted, directed, and written for Montana Shakespeare in the Parks for 25 years now and first came to Montana to work for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in 1999 as a conservation biologist researcher in the Beartooths.

# A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

## PROJECT STATUS

Montana PBS is actively seeking support to reach a \$150,000 production budget for this exciting project. Scheduled for completion in fall 2026, the program is slated for broadcast shortly thereafter—with the potential to remain a viewer favorite for years to come.

To contribute or learn more, contact Aaron Pruitt at [aaron@montanapbs.org](mailto:aaron@montanapbs.org) | 406.994.5021 or Kristina Martin at [kristina@montanapbs.org](mailto:kristina@montanapbs.org) | 406.994.6221.

## MONTANA PBS PRODUCTION TEAM



**SCOTT STERLING**  
PRODUCER & DIRECTOR

Scott Sterling was born and raised in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, where exposure to the rugged outdoors, arts, and culture inspired a passion for visual art and storytelling. His attendance at the Aspen Music Festival and collaborative work with world-class musicians for many years led to a deep passion for music and performance. Sterling is the Director of Production for Montana PBS in Bozeman, MT, and has been producing and directing award-winning films and television series for Montana PBS for 24 years. He produces and directs the signature Montana PBS series *11th & Grant with Eric Funk*, now in its sixteenth season. Scott has earned 14 Northwest Emmy® Awards from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.



**AARON PRUITT**  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

For more than 31 years, Aaron has provided leadership in programming, production, fundraising and management at Montana PBS. He served as Executive Producer for many award-winning productions, including *11th & Grant with Eric Funk*, *Class C: The Only Game in Town*, *the Montana Summer Symphony*, *Noël! Concert 2025*, *Ivan Doig: Landscapes of a Western Mind*, and *Charlie Russell's Old West*. Pruitt collaborates with independent filmmakers distributing programs to national public television, such as *The Last Artifact* (APT), *Before There Were Parks: Yellowstone and Glacier Through Native Eyes* (PBS NPS) and two PBS INDEPENDENT LENS documentaries, *Butte America* and *Indian Relay*.



**JEREMIAH SLOVARP**  
DIRECTOR OF AUDIO

Jeremiah began his career as a sound recordist and location sound mixer for film and TV. In 2002 he started Jereco Studios, designing his first commercial recording facility in Bozeman, Montana. Today, Jeremiah leads an event production team, entertainment system designers, and AV technicians at Jereco Studios. He is responsible for producing and engineering Post Production Sound, Live Sound, Music Recording, and Location Sound for shows and events both nationally and regionally.