Join us as we celebrate 60 years of Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Our longevity is a testament not only to the power of opera, but to the quality of our productions, and the support of KC’s opera lovers like you.

This season’s lineup reflects our long history, with iconic stories, unforgettable music, and groundbreaking productions that explore opera’s ability to create truly compelling storytelling.

Our vision is to produce the best of opera for KC while expanding our impact beyond the stage, from outreach opportunities that meld opera with current events and education, to programming that helps to cultivate new opera lovers and the next generation of opera performers.

As with every season, our 60th year is designed to give you an experience like no other, whether it’s having your breath taken away by a beloved classic, or marveling at a brand new work seen for the first time since its Dallas world premiere.

Thank you in advance for subscribing to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and I look forward to seeing you at the opera!

Deborah Sandler
General Director and CEO
## The Elements of Opera

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© Tim Hursley
There’s more to opera than meets the ear.
EUGENE ONEGIN
PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

CONDUCTOR: Stuart Stratford
DIRECTOR: Tomer Zvulun
SCENIC DESIGNER: Erhard Rom
LIGHTING DESIGNER: Robert Wierzel

SUNG IN RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
With this simple recipe for regret, Tchaikovsky turned Pushkin’s classic Russian novel into one of the world’s most beloved operas. Awash in aristocratic formality and extravagance, Onegin’s youthful disillusionment snowballs into a tragic love story saturated with drama, death, and desperation. Yet, along this cold, dark descent, Tchaikovsky never fails to flood us in famed arias, renowned ballroom dance numbers, and unforgettable moments.
Baritone **Morgan Smith (Eugene Onegin)** joins Lyric Opera of Kansas City for the first time in the title role of Eugene Onegin. Since his time as a Seattle Opera Young Artist from 2001-2003, Mr. Smith has had a varied career, originating many roles, including Starbuck in *Moby-Dick*, for which he was praised as an artist of “vocal splendor, moral authority and deep empathy.” Mr. Smith’s other recent appearances include his home company, Seattle Opera, Arizona Opera, Vancouver Opera and Austin Lyric Opera.

The Seattle Times wrote of **Joyce El-Khoury (Tatyana)**: “On Saturday night, El-Khoury scored a triumph… combining an exquisite delicacy of sound with affecting vulnerability – yet producing plenty of steel in the confrontation scene in which she denounces Elizabeth...” In the 2016-2017 season, Ms. El-Khoury made several major debuts: first in London at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Violetta in *La traviata*; at the Glyndebourne Festival, also as Violetta; and with Opéra National de Bordeaux as Leila in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. She made her role and house debuts with Opera Philadelphia as Liù in *Turandot*, and also as Salome in Massenet’s *Hérodiade* with Washington Concert Opera.

**Jonathan Johnson (Lensky)** returns to the Lyric Opera stage after debuting as Fredric during *The Pirates of Penzance* in the 2016-2017 season. He recently completed a fellowship at the A.J. Flecher Institute at the University of North Carolina School of Arts. While an A.J. Fletcher Institute Fellow, Mr. Johnson performed the roles of Ruggiero from Giacomo Puccini’s *La Rondine*, Lechmere from Benjamin Britten’s *Owen Wingrave*, Azaël in Debussy’s *L’enfant prodigue*, and Fenton from Otto von Nicolai’s *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*. He also made his Piedmont Opera debut in the role of Ezekiel Cheever in Robert Ward’s *The Crucible*.

American mezzo-soprano, **Megan Marino (Olga)** is a genre-adventurous musician and showman of “impressive clarity”, “warm, plummy tone” and “considerable range and confidence” [*Washington Times*]. She returns to the Lyric Opera stage after debuting during the 2016-2017 season as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*. Whether on the opera or concert stage, she’s driven by the glory of the art form, a love of obscure forgotten gems and pure undiluted moxie. Her recent appearances include the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Spoleto Festival USA and Caramoor Music Festival.
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Subscribers save up to 77% over single ticket prices.
EVEREST

COMPOSER: Joby Talbot
LIBRETTIST: Gene Scheer
CONDUCTOR: Nicole Paiement
DIRECTOR: Leonard Foglia

EVEREST

SUNG IN ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
WHY? BECAUSE IT’S HERE.

This contemporary tragedy brings to life the white-knuckle rush and devastating true stories of three climbers caught in a blizzard on Mt. Everest in 1996. As the first staged performance since the world premiere in Dallas, Everest promises to take you on an operatic journey unlike anything you’ve experienced before.

Together, Gene Scheer’s unrelenting libretto and composer Joby Talbot’s luminous and inventive score surrounds us with the insurmountable beauty of the Himalayas, the demons and dreams driving each climber upwards, and the undeniable danger that infuses every exhausted step with fear.
With a “powerful” voice and an “arresting stage presence”, baritone **Michael Mayes (Beck Weathers)** is known for his consummate portrayals of iconic characters in the operatic repertoire. Originally from Cut and Shoot, Texas, Michael has performed with opera companies across the United States including Cincinnati Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Kentucky Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Arizona Opera, Central City Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, and Fort Worth Opera. In the 2016-2017 season, Mr. Mayes will make his debut with Washington National Opera in his celebrated role of Joseph De Rocher in *Dead Man Walking* in addition taking his De Rocher to Pensacola Opera and appearing with Boston Lyric Opera as Escamillo in *Carmen* and returning to Dallas Opera as Doug in *Everest*.

**Andrew Bidlack (Rob Hall)** is a celebrated tenor, named one of Opera News “top 25 brilliant young artists” in 2015. Known for his work in contemporary opera, Bidlack originated the role of Rob Hall in the Dallas Opera debut of *Everest*. In its review, *Opera* magazine noted he “made a very strong impression… agile of technique, absolutely secure and sweet-toned.”

Praised for his “arrestingly vibrant” and “robust” baritone, **Craig Verm (Doug Hansen)** has brought his riveting dramatic portrayals to stages around the world. Most recently, he made his company debut at The Santa Fe Opera as Sonora in *La fanciulla del West* along with Der Graf in *Capriccio*, performances for which he was praised for his “deep, velvet baritone [whose] featured moments leapt out from the crowd.” Mr. Verm has made international debuts on stages including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro Municipal de Santiago, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse and the Nationale Reisopera in the Netherlands. Frequently sought after for new works, Mr. Verm created the role of Doug Hansen in the world premiere of Joby Talbot’s *Everest* at Dallas Opera.

**Mark McCrory (Mike Green)** has attracted considerable attention for an imposing voice and galvanizing stage presence. Notable appearances include the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Hawaii Opera Theatre, Minnesota Opera, Opera Festival of New Jersey, the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the New Orleans Opera, the title role in *Don Giovanni* for Opera Pacific, Capellio in Bellini’s *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* for the Opera Company of Philadelphia, Claudius in Thomas’ *Hamlet* with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Friar Lawrence in *Romeo et Juliette* for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. He has appeared at the Rome Opera as Marco in William Bolcom’s *A View from the Bridge*. As an alumnus of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, he sang numerous roles with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.
SHOWTIMES

7:30 PM  SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2017
7:30 PM  WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2017
7:30 PM  FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017
2:00 PM  SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2017

Subscribers get 4 operas for the price of 3.
GIUSEPPE VERDI

CONDUCTOR: David Charles Abell
DIRECTOR: David Gately

SUNG IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
A TALE SO TRAGIC, YOUR TISSUES WILL NEED TISSUES.

When his comedic cruelty crosses the line, a hunchbacked jester named Rigoletto is cursed by a courtier, threatening his futile attempts to protect his daughter from the depravity of a powerful Duke deadset on defiling her. Verdi’s gritty revenge opera contrasts its haunting, careening storyline with radiant melodies, unforgettable arias, and some of the most recognizable music in all of opera.
Leo An (Rigoletto) makes his Lyric Opera debut in the title role. He is highly regarded internationally for his Verdi roles such as the title roles in Rigoletto and Nabucco, Giorgio Germont in La Traviata, Euzio in Attila, Conte di Luna in Il Trovatore and Pagano in I Lombardi. He has performed the opera houses of Florence, Teatro Regio Turin, Teatro Filarmonico Verona, Teatro Comunale Bologna, Washington Opera, Seoul Arts Center and many others.

Nicole Haslett (Gilda) makes her debut with Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the 2017-2018 season. She recently joined Deutsche Oper Berlin for several roles including Adele in Die Fledermaus and Berthe in Le prophète, both new productions. Other recent performances include the title role in Lucia di Lammermoor (Utah Opera), Zerbinetta in Ariadne auf Naxos (Berkshire Opera Festival), Papagena in Die Zauberflöte, First Niece in Peter Grimes, and Frasquita in Carmen (Deutsche Oper Berlin), and Adele in Die Fledermaus (Cincinnati Opera). She was a 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions grand finalist, and 2015 2nd Place winner of the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition.

Lauded by the Dallas News for a “clarion” voice, tenor Scott Quinn (Duke of Mantua) returns after making his role debut at Lyric Opera as Alfredo in La Traviata. He sings his first performances of Boris in Káta Kabanová in his Seattle Opera debut in the 2016-17 season. Last season, he made role and company debuts with San Francisco Opera as Števa Buryja in Jenůfa, Den Jyske Opera as Fritz in L’umico Fritz, and Arizona Opera as Don José in Carmen. He also returned to Houston Grand Opera to create the role of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham in the world premiere of Floyd’s Prince of Players.

A recent graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Peixin Chen (Sparafucile) is recognized for his majestically resonant bass voice and for a keen dramatic. His repertoire spans from the comic parts of Donizetti, Mozart, and Rossini to the strong and serious of Puccini, Verdi, and Wagner. Peixin Chen has worked with an illustrious array of conductors and directors on many of the great stages of the world including at the Lincoln Center, National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Washington National Opera.

Praised by The Independent for her “movie-star looks” and “chocolaty mezzo-soprano,” Latvian mezzo-soprano Zanda Švēde (Maddalena) is quickly gaining recognition as one of opera’s rising young stars. Operatic highlights include Suzuki in Madama Butterfly at San Francisco Opera, the title role in Carmen at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Olga in Eugene Onegin with North Carolina Opera, and Maddalena in Rigoletto at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ms. Švēde recently completed her Adler fellowship at San Francisco Opera and is an alumna of Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, Latvia, Scuola Italia in Italy, and the Tyrolean Opera Program in Austria.
SHOWTIMES

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Subscribers have the greatest ticket flexibility.
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

CONDUCTOR: Leonardo Vordoni
DIRECTOR: Michael Shell

SUNG IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
YOU KNOW IT. YOU JUST DON’T KNOW IT YET.

Check your powdered wigs at the door and join us in Seville, Spain for a Barber of a different color. While true to every character, every wink and every note, this vibrant performance of *The Barber of Seville* draws inspiration from the magical realism of filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar to stretch the opera’s Spanish setting into an experience that is as ’60s psychedelic as it is laugh-out-loud hilarious.
American baritone Jarrett Ott (Figaro) was recently named one of twenty-five “Rising Stars” by Opera News, who described his voice in Cold Mountain as having an, “often ravishing, airy vocal finish… he brought the testing role not only lovely, Pelléas-like sound but a deep investment in the words.” Role debuts in the 2016-2017 season include Curly in Oklahoma! with Glimmerglass Festival and Zurga in The Pearl Fisher’s with North Carolina. In the 2015-16 season, Jarrett performed W.P. Inman in the East Coast premiere of Cold Mountain with Opera Philadelphia.

Mezzo-soprano Emily Fons (Rosina) is impressing audiences and critics alike through her remarkable versatility as an interpreter of Mozart and baroque music as well as of Rossini and more modern composers. Recent engagements included returns to the Dallas Opera as Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro, Zerlina in Don Giovanni for San Diego Opera, her first Rosinas in Il Barbiere di Siviglia with the Madison Opera and Opera Theatre of St Louis and the role of Ruby in the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s highly-acclaimed Cold Mountain as well as Prince Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Stillwater, Minnesota native Jack Swanson (Count Almaviva) is quickly becoming one of the most sought after young tenors in the opera world. His distinctive high lyric voice is known for singing the acrobatic arias of Rossini and the legato melodies of Donizetti. Jack earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Oklahoma, where he performed the roles of Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni and Nemorino in L’elisir d’amore. In May of 2016 he received his Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from the highly reputable Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

Possessing a “beautiful bass-baritone voice,” according to The New York Times, Richmond-native Matthew Burns (Dr. Bartolo) is a dynamic performer known for his unique portrayals of opera’s most acclaimed bass-baritone roles. This season, Mr. Burns will perform the role of Bartolo in Il barbiere di Siviglia with his hometown opera company, Virginia Opera and his signature role of Leporello in Don Giovanni with Utah Opera. This season also marks several role debuts for Mr. Burns, including the role of Gus O’Neill in John Musto’s Later That Same Evening and Pistacchio in Donizetti’s Il campanello di notte both with Opera Memphis and the role of Bagaers in Milhaud’s Mère Coupable with Onsite Opera.

American bass Peter Volpe (Don Basilio) continually receives critical and popular acclaim worldwide. Possessing a vast and ever-expanding repertoire of over 80 roles in six languages, his captivating style and interpretive skill embraces the depth of every historical and fictional character he embodies. Of a recent portrayal of Prince Gremin in Eugene Onegin, Opera News said he “managed to create in his single aria and scene an impressive dignity. His full-bodied bass and great candor of tone, together with his intelligent interpretation, won him a well-deserved ovation.”
SHOWTIMES

7:30 PM  SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018
7:30 PM  WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2018
7:30 PM  FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2018
2:00 PM  SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018

Season subscriptions start at only $79 – subscribe now.
WORLD CLASS OPERA. MADE IN KC.

Even with Kansas City’s rich musical history and thriving performing arts community, many people still don’t know KC is an “opera town.”

Yet the operas you see here aren’t touring shows or stripped down local versions of major productions. In every performance, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City blends acclaimed international talent with the skills and experience of performing arts professionals cultivated right here in KC.

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE BY BECOMING A DONOR.

As a donor, you are more than an audience member; you become an exceptional member of our opera family and you demonstrate your commitment to bringing the best of opera to Kansas City. Our donors receive benefits and access sure to thrill and excite even the most ardent opera enthusiast. Whether it’s a behind the scenes tour, access to the Ewing & Muriel Kauffman Reception Suite, opportunities to meet artists and directors, or being acknowledged in our production program ($150 and above), there is something special for all of our donors.

Adding a donation with your ticket order today is the easiest way to become a donor and will ensure you receive a full season of benefits and access to your Lyric Opera Experience. For more information visit kcopera.org or call 816.471.4933.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE MISSOURI ARTS COUNCIL, A STATE AGENCY.
EXPLORATIONS 2017-2018

The Explorations Series continues in the 2017-18 season, featuring eclectic programs in intimate spaces with programming that crosses musical borders and experiments with a wide range of lyrical expression. This year we offer Lyric Opera subscribers the opportunity to add a discounted subscription to all four Explorations Series productions for $60, a savings of $15 over single ticket prices.

MEET THE RESIDENT ARTISTS
September 24, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. | Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

Join us for an informal afternoon ‘salon’ to meet Lyric Opera’s talented 2017-2018 Resident Artists! Through conversation and musical selections including arias, art songs and show tunes, sneak a first peek at the quartet and pianist whom you will see onstage and at our Explorations Series presentations throughout the season. FREE for all, RSVP’s are required.

THE BERNSTEIN SONGBOOK with the New York Festival of Song
October 14, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. | Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

The creators of last year’s brilliant Schubert | Beatles program, the New York Festival of Song, now bring us The Bernstein Songbook. This special second collaboration with Lyric Opera of Kansas City focuses on the remarkable musical output of the iconic Maestro, Leonard Bernstein, in celebration of the centennial of his birth. The program will include Bernstein’s final song cycle, Arias and Barcarolles, along with other favorites and rarities, and will bring fascinating insights into one of the 20th Century’s American musical legends. Tickets are $25, subscribe to all four Explorations Series productions for only $60.

AS ONE
January 27 (7:30 p.m.) & 28 (2:00 p.m.), 2018
Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

In this chamber opera for two singers and string quartet, by composer Laura Kaminsky and co-librettists Mark Campbell and filmmaker Kimberly Reed, a mezzo-soprano and a baritone depict the experiences of its sole transgender protagonist, Hannah, as she endeavors to resolve the discord between her self and the outside world. The New York Observer says “As One is everything we hope for in a contemporary opera: topical, poignant, daring, and beautifully written.” Tickets are $25, subscribe to all four Explorations Series productions for only $60.

AMERICAN VOICES
March 24 (7:30 p.m.) and 25 (2:00 p.m.), 2018
Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

The number of American Composers creating new operas and art songs provides an embarrassment of musical – and lyrical – riches…perhaps a new ‘Golden Age.’ Join Lyric Opera’s Resident Artists for a program celebrating our nation’s musical heritage, past and present. Tickets are $25, subscribe to all four Explorations Series productions for only $60.