

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces 2014-2015 ‘Season to Cherish’ at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

*Highlights include Kansas City Premiere of Silent Night and Significant Lyric Opera Debuts of Major International Artists in Key Roles Including Melody Moore, Joyce El-Khoury, Anthony Michaels-Moore, Irene Roberts, Patrick Carfizzi and James Valenti*

Kansas City, MO (March 10, 2014) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City **General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler** today announced the 2014-2015 season in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Two grand operas in the best tradition of the repertoire, *La Traviata* and *Tosca*, a Kansas City premiere of a new, award-winning production, *Silent Night*, and a light-hearted, charming story, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, complete the ‘Season to Cherish.’

Lyric Opera of Kansas City is producing a ‘Season to Cherish’ in its 57<sup>th</sup> season by creating rich and large scale productions that will fill the Kauffman stage, engaging some of the world’s most talented opera stars making their Lyric Opera debuts, and the most sought-after directors.

“I am thrilled to announce our upcoming season which brings rich talent and numerous debuts to our Kansas City audiences,” stated Deborah Sandler. “It is my fervent hope to produce works which will appeal to the first time opera goer, those who may not have been for a while, and those loyal audience members who are passionate about opera. This will be a season to fall in love with opera as we present two gems of the opera repertoire, a Rossini comedy with a fresh take, and a Pulitzer Prize winning opera which will be new to our audiences. Our season will feature four emotionally contrasting and power packed operas.”

The 2014-2015 season opens with Verdi’s *La Traviata*, one of the truly great operas in the repertoire. This lush and grand production of the Lyric Opera of Chicago features the Tony Award-winning production design of **Desmond Heeley**, making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. Also making their Lyric Opera of Kansas City debuts, playing Violetta Valery is **Joyce El-Khoury** and **Anthony Michaels-Moore** in the role of Giorgio Germont.

The ‘Season to Cherish’ continues with Rossini’s light-hearted charming *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. Audiences will delight with the children’s pop-up book style set to this enchanting

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

story. Making their Lyric Opera of Kansas City debuts are **Irene Roberts** as Isabella and **Patrick Carfizzi** as Mustafa.

Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Music, *Silent Night* will debut at the Kauffman Center. **Liam Bonner**, who will be making his Lyric Opera debut as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* in late April, will lead the cast as Lt. Audebert. Kansas City native and much beloved in *The Magic Flute*, **Daniel Belcher** will return to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Father Palmer.

The season concludes with the grand opera, *Tosca*. Making their Lyric Opera of Kansas City debuts, soprano **Melody Moore** will perform the role of Floria Tosca and tenor **James Valenti** the role of Mario Cavaradossi.

## 2014-2015 Season

### *La Traviata*

Giuseppe Verdi 1853

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, September 27, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 1, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 3, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 5, 2014, 2014 2:00 p.m.

This lush and grand opera could only be performed on the stage of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The theme of heart-wrenching love is indeed timeless.

Violetta is the most desirable courtesan in Paris. Sought after by society's most important men and wealthy in her own right, she is perfectly content—until she falls in love with Alfredo Germont. But when Alfredo's father insists that she'll ruin Alfredo's family name, she selflessly pushes away the only man she's ever loved. Will they ever be together again? Yes, but by then it's much, much too late.

Canadian soprano **Joyce El-Khoury** will be making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut as Violetta. "The Canadian soprano is a gorgeous Violetta. ..it is indisputable that she is one of the major Violettas today," wrote *concerto.net*. Joining Joyce El-Khoury is baritone **Anthony Michaels-Moore** will also be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. *Opera News* raved of Michaels-Moore, calling him "one of the most gorgeous voices on the opera stage today. His sound has a real presence, and its honeyed opulence dominated every scene in which he appeared." Tenor **Scott Quinn** will also be making his Lyric Opera debut in the role of Alfredo. A graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Quinn was lauded by the *Dallas News* for his "clarion" voice.

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

**David Gately**, who is known for his vivid storytelling and lively and clever productions, will direct this production. He has worked with Dallas Opera, Vancouver Opera, Glimmerglass and Opera Colorado. *Opera Magazine* noted of his Vancouver Opera production of *La Traviata*, “David Gately showed considerable flair in deftly defining the character interplay at the very heart of this eternally moving opera.”

One of the most pre-eminent designers of the twentieth century and winner of three Tony Awards for his brilliant design, **Desmond Heeley**, will also make his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut with this production. Lyric Opera of Kansas City Artistic Director **Ward Holmquist** will conduct.

This production of *La Traviata* is owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago and is a generous and deeply appreciated gift of the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa. Original production staged by Frank Galati. Production design by Desmond Heeley.

### *Italian Girl in Algiers*

Gioachino Rossini 1813

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, November 8, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 14, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 16, 2014, 2014 2:00 p.m.

*The Italian Girl in Algiers* is one of Rossini’s most popular operas, written when he was only 21 years old, with a score marked by brilliant orchestration and witty melodies. Reminiscent of a story set inside a child’s pop-up book, 1930s, *The Italian Girl in Algiers* tells the bubbly and comedic story of Isabella as she lands on the Algerian coast to rescue her true love, Lindoro, only to find herself the focus of the powerful Mustafa’s unwanted affections. This updated production set in the 1930s features Isabella as an aviatrix.

**Irene Roberts**, in her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Isabella, is internationally renowned for her “plush, opulent voice” (*San Jose Mercury News*). Her breakthrough performance in her debut in the Metropolitan Opera’s Live in HD series while performing in *Parsifal* won accolades. Critics have praised her voice and technique, saying, “here is the vocally plush and lovely mezzo-soprano Irene Roberts.” (*Anthony Tommasini, New York Times*.)

Playing the role of Mustafa is bass-baritone **Patrick Carfizzi**, also making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. In addition to charming critics with his ‘smooth, rich baritone’ (*Albuquerque Journal*), his Mustafa in Houston Grand Opera won raves. “As the opera’s gullible antagonist, Patrick Carfizzi’s Mustafa steals the show. His rich bass instrument is

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

powerfully employed in the production, giving the audience countless memorable and remarkable moments in the show.” (*Broadway World*).

Also making his Lyric Opera debut, **Taylor Stayton** will perform the role of Lindoro. One of the more sought-after tenors of his generation, Taylor Stayton has worked with Met Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin and Opéra de Lille. *Opera News* noted his “laser-bright timbre” and “exceptional fluidity.”

**Leonardo Vordoni**, also making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, will conduct. **Michael Cavanaugh**, known for his imaginative and fresh approach in recent productions in Minnesota Opera and Santa Fe Opera, will direct.

Production originally designed for and created by the Santa Fe Opera. Scenery designed by **Robert Innes Hopkins**. Costumes designed by **David C. Woolard**.

Kansas City and Lyric Opera of Kansas City Debut

### ***Silent Night***

Kevin Puts 2011

Sung in English, German, French, Italian, and Latin with English titles

Saturday, February 21, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 27, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 1, 2015 2:00 p.m.

*Silent Night*, which premiered at Minnesota Opera in 2011 to worldwide critical acclaim, will debut at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. “We are very proud to present this new and important work, which has quickly entered the opera repertoire, to Kansas City audiences,” Deborah Sandler stated. “An extremely poignant work, its premiere is especially timely in light of the commemoration of the centennial of World War 1. Through our art, we are able to focus on the price that war extracts. We use our lens to understand that when we relate to each other’s humanity, conflict becomes unreasonable.”

Composer **Kevin Puts** was named the Pulitzer Prize Winner in Music in 2012. The libretto is based on the multilingual screenplay by Christian Carion for the 2005 film *Joyeux Noël* that tells a story during the historical short-lived spontaneous 1914 Christmas truce between enemy combatants in World War I. The libretto is mostly sung in English, French and German, but also includes some Italian and Latin.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City Artistic Director Ward Holmquist noted, “One of the more singularly brilliant aspects of this opera is the skillful use of the instrumentation and musicality. There are three distinct battlegrounds, featuring soldiers from Germany, Scotland

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

and France, each with its own distinct scoring. Beautiful melodies featuring original instruments and ensembles with deep rich harmonies are simply stunning.”

A fascinating true story, *Silent Night* recounts a miraculous moment of peace during one of the bloodiest wars in human history. On World War I's western front, weapons are laid down when the Scottish, French and German officers defy their superiors and negotiate a Christmas Eve truce. Enemies become brothers as they come together to share Christmas and bury their dead. Acclaimed baritone **Liam Bonner** stars as the conflicted French commander Lt. Audebert, which won critical acclaim from the *New York Times*. “Mr. Bonner brought warmth and wistfulness to Audebert.” Currently playing the lead role in LAOpera in Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* where General Director Placido Domingo is thrilled to welcome him, “Liam Bonner is going to be a wonderful Billy.” Liam Bonner will be playing Eisenstein in our upcoming production of *Die Fledermaus*.

Playing the only female role, Anna Sorenson, soprano **Erin Wall** will be making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. In her recent title role in *Thaïs* at the Edinburgh Festival, Erin won raves such as, “I hesitate to write ‘a star is born’ after a single hearing, but she will unquestionably become one if she carries on like this.” (*Tim Ashley, The Guardian, UK*).

Baritone **Craig Irvin**, also making his Lyric Opera debut, will play the role of Lt. Horstmayer, the German commanding officer. Returning to the Lyric Opera after his much heralded turn as Papageno in *The Magic Flute* in 2013, **Daniel Belcher** will perform the role of Father Palmer.

**Octavio Cardenas** will direct *Silent Night* at Fort Worth Opera. Also making his Lyric Opera debut is Conductor **David Charles Abell** who has recently conducted *Porgy and Bess* for Cincinnati Opera to rave reviews.

Scenery and Properties designed by Francis O'Connor. Costumes designed by Karin Kopischke. Projections designed by Andrzej Goulding. Sound designed by Andrew C. Mayer. Scenery, properties, costumes and media files for this production are owned by the Minnesota Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Cincinnati Opera and Fort Worth Opera and were constructed by the Minnesota Opera Shops.

### *Tosca*

Giacomo Puccini 1900

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, April 18, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 24, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 26, 2015 2:00 p.m.

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

One of the most popular and beloved operas of the repertoire, Puccini's *Tosca* will close out the 2014-15 season. *Tosca* is the passionate tale set to some of the most beautiful music of all time. Set in Rome, *Tosca* tells the tale of a fiery prima donna forced to play a role she never imagined when she becomes trapped between her allegiance to her rebel lover and the scheming of a treacherous police officer who will stop at nothing to claim her as his own. This explosive triangle builds to one of the most bloody and intense moments in opera and features Puccini's best-known lyrical arias.

This production hosts many Kansas City debuts of international artists, much to the good fortune of Kansas City audiences. Making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, soprano **Melody Moore** will perform the role of Floria Tosca. This international artist has won accolades around the globe, including rave reviews for her recent performance as Marta in the world premiere of *The Passenger* at Houston Grand Opera. "Moore sings with abandon when the music needs it, but the tenderness and soul she gives Marta's interactions with the other prisoners are even more telling." (*Houston Chronicle*). The *San Francisco Chronicle* said of her Tosca, "Tosca is an ideal role for Melody Moore, drawing on her ability to launch potent, full-bodied high notes...while still bringing power and clarity to more intimate passages."

Internationally acclaimed tenor **James Valenti** is also making his Kansas City debut, in the role of Mario Cavaradossi. *The New York Times* noted his "dark-centered, expressive tenor" for his recent lead role in *Don Carlos*. Rising star baritone **Gordon Hawkins** will make his Kansas City debut in the role of Baron Scarpia. Bass-baritone **Julien Robbins** will return to the Lyric Opera in the role of Sacristan. Kansas City audiences may remember him for his recent role as Lorenzo opposite Joyce DiDonato in *The Capulets and the Montagues*.

**Garnett Bruce** will direct and **Ward Holmquist** will conduct. Lyric Opera of Kansas City Director of Design and Technical Production **Keith R. Brumley** will design the production.

### **Ticket Information**

All performances will be held in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. All performances will be accompanied by members of the Kansas City Symphony. Subscribers will receive a 25% discount, and receive the first opportunity to either keep their original seats or secure new seats before the general public. Subscribers to the 2013-2014 season will receive subscription renewal information beginning the week of March 10, 2014, and will have until May 12, 2014 to renew or improve their current subscription and seat locations. Reservations for new subscriptions will go on sale to the general public on March 10, 2014. Renewing subscribers receive priority seating. Single tickets will go on sale to the general public on Monday, August 11, 2014.

Season ticket prices range from \$90 to \$465. For ticket information, contact Lyric Opera Ticketing & Patron Services at (816) 471-7344, toll free at 1-877-OPERA KC (673-7252), or visit Lyric Opera Ticketing & Patron Services at 1725 Holmes Street in downtown Kansas City.



# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

### **About Lyric Opera of Kansas City**

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City was founded in 1958; it is one of the nation's premier regional opera companies and brings high quality live operatic performances to the people of the Kansas City area and a five-state region. Repertoire choices encompass original language performances of standard repertory as well as contemporary and American operas. The Company mounts productions that enrich the community it serves, as well as reflect the highest artistic standards of the profession. The Lyric Opera offers innovative and award-winning programs designed to further music and arts education both in schools and in the community and serves more than 18,000 students and educators each year.

### **Building for the Future**

On November 4, 2010 the Lyric Opera of Kansas City announced a capital campaign for the renovation of property on 18th and Charlotte in the Kansas City Crossroads Arts District for the new Richard J. Stern Opera Center. The Company moved from its temporary home to the new Opera Center campus located at 1725 Holmes on July 5, 2012.

The new Opera Center complex consists of two buildings: the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building and the Beth Ingram Administration building with set rental inventory storage. The Production Arts Building includes a rehearsal space that matches the footprint of the stage of the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The Production Arts Building houses a full wig, costume and set construction shop and facilities for educational and community outreach programs. Such an integrated and dedicated production facility does not exist in Kansas City; the Company envisions the Production Arts Building becoming a resource for other local performing arts companies.

The second building on the property is adjacent to the Production Arts building. It provides the Company with set rental inventory storage, parking lots and outside green spaces for the Opera Center, and houses the administrative staff.

### **About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is a major center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie opened September 2011. The Kauffman Center presents vibrant performances and advances the role of the performing arts as a catalyst for Kansas City's civic, economic, and educational vitality.

Three of the region's leading performing arts organizations—Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City—are in residence at the Kauffman Center. The Kauffman Center's two performance venues, the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall, offer audiences engaging and intimate experiences, while at the same time providing resident companies with dramatically enhanced performance capabilities.

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

Serving as a cultural cornerstone for Kansas City's dynamic downtown, the Kauffman Center brings a new spotlight to the region's performing arts community while simultaneously attracting some of the world's most talented performers and entertainers, further establishing Kansas City as a major cultural destination.

More information on the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is available at [kauffmancenter.org](http://kauffmancenter.org).

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is fully accessible and provides assistive listening devices plus Braille and large print programs. Service animals are welcome with advance notice. All dates, operas and artists are subject to change.

Visit [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org) for more information about Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2014-2015 season and [www.kauffmancenter.org](http://www.kauffmancenter.org) for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

## 2014-2015 Season at a Glance:

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Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Set and Costume Designer: Desmond Heeley

Violetta Valery: Joyce El-Khoury

Giorgio Germont: Anthony Michaels-Moore

Lindoro: Taylor Stayton

### *The Italian Girl in Algiers*

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Sunday, November 16, 2014, 2014 2:00 p.m.

Director: Michael Cavanagh

Conductor: Leonardo Verdoni

Production Designer:

Isabella: Irene Roberts

Mustafa: Patrick Carfizzi

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Conductor:

Lt. Audebert: Liam Bonner

Anna Sorenson: Erin Wall

Lt. Horstmayer: Craig Irvin

Father Palmer: Daniel Belcher

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Conductor: Ward Holmquist



# LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Sacristan: Julien Robbins

Flora Tosca: Melody Moore

Mario Cavaradossi: James Valenti

Baron Scarpia: Gordon Hawkins

**Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.**

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