

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ellen McDonald
(816) 444-0052
Or (816) 213-4355 (c)
publicity@kcopera.org

For Tickets: kcopera.org or 816.471.7344

Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Conductors
for 2015-16 Season at
the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
David Charles Abell and Gary Thor Wedow Return to Kansas City
Christopher Allen and Alexander Polianichko Make Lyric Opera DEBUT

Kansas City, MO (August 17, 2015) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City **General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler** today announced the four conductors for the 2015-2016 season in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. **Gary Thor Wedow** (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), and **David Charles Abell** (Bizet's *Carmen*) will be returning to the Lyric Opera. **Alexander Polianichko** (Dvořák's *Rusalka*) and **Christopher Allen** (Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*) will be making their Lyric Opera debut. High res artists' photos can be found [here](#).

Four spectacular works, including Mozart's haunting *Don Giovanni*, Dvořák's mesmerizing tale *Rusalka*, the delightful romp of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, and finally Bizet's sweeping masterpiece *Carmen* will comprise the 58th season.

"We wanted this season to encompass a variety of opera styles and musical periods and bring the best conductor talent to the Lyric Opera to showcase this classic yet unexpected season. These four conductors are highly regarded in the industry and we are thrilled to include them," said Sandler.

Conductor **Gary Thor Wedow** has established an enviable reputation for dramatically exciting and historically informed performances with opera companies, orchestras and festivals throughout North America. Maestro Wedow last appeared with Lyric Opera of Kansas City conducting the critically acclaimed *The Magic Flute*.

He debuted with the New York Philharmonic in 2012 conducting *Messiah* and returned in December of 2014 for the same work. A frequent guest of Seattle Opera, some of his recent successes there include Handel's *Semele*, the double bill of Poulenc's *La voix humaine* and Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, Gluck's *Orphée*, and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and *Don Giovanni*. Maestro Wedow was closely associated with New York City Opera for many years where he led their *Don Giovanni* in the Christopher Alden production and in May 2012 conducted the New York premiere of Telemann's *Orpheus*.

In addition to Lyric Opera of Kansas City's upcoming production of *Don Giovanni*, his schedule for the 2015-2016 season includes *Le nozze di Figaro* for Seattle Opera and Utah Opera, *La Calisto* for

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Carnegie Mellon, concerts with the Alabama Symphony and the Dvorak *Requiem* with the Berkshire Choral Festival.

Born in La Porte, Indiana and now a resident of New York City, he has been a member of the Juilliard School faculty since 1994. He has helmed performances there of *Le nozze di Figaro*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *La finta giardiniera*, *Ariodante* and *Don Giovanni* and recently led Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* on tour with the Juilliard 415 Historical Performance Ensemble culminating with a performance in Alice Tully Hall. Wedow has prepared several performing editions of baroque works in collaboration with countertenor Lawrence Lipnik and his long association with director Stephen Wadsworth has included productions of Handel's *Xerxes*, *Ariodante* and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Maestro Wedow studied with piano virtuoso Jorge Bolet at the Indiana University School of Music and received his Masters of Music Degree from Boston's New England Conservatory of Music.

Wedow has been a frequent guest of Wolf Trap Opera, Merola Opera, Arizona Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Glimmerglass Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Opera Saratoga, Amherst Early Music Festival and Pittsburgh Opera among others. In Philadelphia, he conducted the world premiere of Paul Richards and Wendy Steiner's *Biennale* at the Barnes Foundation. The choral masterpieces and symphonic repertoire have taken him to the podiums of the Seattle Symphony, Orchestra London – Ontario, Phoenix Symphony, The Berkshire Choral Festival, Edmonton Symphony, Santa Fe Symphony, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and Boston's Handel and Haydn Society where he was, for many years, Associate Conductor.

Making his Lyric Opera debut conducting ***Rusalka*, Alexander Polianichko** was formerly a violinist in the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Philharmonic Orchestra under Evgeny Mravinsky, Mr. Polianichko studied conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire with Prof. Iliya Musin. In 1988, he was awarded first prize in the Sixth All-Union Conducting Competition. He has been a House Conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre since 1989 and has toured with the Company to Europe, Asia, and the United States.

In 1994, Polianichko made his London debut conducting English National Opera's production of *Eugene Onegin*. Performances with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden lead to his conducting two productions of Tchaikovsky's operas with the Royal Opera; a revival of *Queen of Spades* with Plácido Domingo, and a new production by Francesca Zambello of *Cherevichki* (The Tsarina's Slippers). He has appeared with many of the world's leading opera companies including Bolshoi Theatre, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Gothenburg Opera, La Scala Milan, Nationale Reisopera, Norwegian Opera, Opera Australia, Opera Colorado, Opéra de Lyon, Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Opéra National de Paris, Royal Danish Opera, San Francisco Opera, Stuttgart Opera, Welsh National Opera and Zurich Opera. In 1996 he was invited to take the Opera National de Paris to New York for their appearances at the MET.

Polianichko is also a distinguished symphonic conductor. Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Byelorussian State Chamber Orchestra (1986-1989), the Bournemouth Sinfonietta (1996-1999), he collaborates with many prestigious symphony orchestras in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and US (including Chicago Symphony Orchestra).

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He is a sought-after adjudicator for several voice competitions, including BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2011, and also participated among others in Edinburg, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh, Bergen, Savonlinna Festivals; White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, and Gold Mask Festival in Moscow.

Christopher Allen will be making his Kansas City debut conducting *The Elixir of Love*. Recently named The John L. Magro Resident Conductor for Cincinnati Opera, Allen made his Cincinnati Opera debut conducting Ricky Ian Gordon's world premiere production of *Morning Star* and led the Cincinnati Symphony in Cincinnati Opera's Washington Park Concert.

Also in the 2015 – 2016 season, he makes his UK debut conducting *The Barber of Seville* at the English National Opera. He will also conduct Opera in the Park, the annual free concert in Washington Park that opens the Opera's summer season. He was nominated as a finalist for 2015 International Opera awards in London in the "Newcomer" category. Allen made his Los Angeles Opera conducting debut in Patrick Morganelli's *Hercules vs. Vampires*. He also returned to the company as Associate Conductor in *La traviata* with Plácido Domingo as Germont and in *The Ghosts of Versailles* with James Conlon.

He made his debut with Opera Santa Barbara in *Rigoletto* in the fall of 2014 and returned to Intermountain Opera in Bozeman, MT to conduct a double-bill of *Gianni Schicchi* and *Suor Angelica*. Allen made his Asian debut conducting *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Daegu Opera House in the spring of 2014. Since 2011, Allen has maintained a close relationship with the Atlanta Symphony working with Music Director Robert Spano and Principal Guest Conductor Donald Runnicles. He was on the music staff of Cincinnati Opera as assistant conductor, a position he has held for the past three years.

He has been a recipient of numerous piano awards, including a Bruno Walter Award, which have led to debuts in venues such as Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Juilliard School and the Tenri Cultural Institute. While a student at the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music, his production of Benjamin Britten's *Turn of the Screw* was awarded a National Opera Association prize.

David Charles Abell will be returning to Kansas City to conduct the 2015-16 season final production of *Carmen*, after having received critical acclaim for his appearance conducting the 2015 production of Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *Silent Night*.

Born in North Carolina, Abell gained degrees from Yale University and the Juilliard School. He went on to study and work with Leonard Bernstein and attended the Conservatoire Américain in Fontainebleau, France. He made his operatic debut at age 25 conducting Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at The Washington Opera. Since then, he has conducted for many North American opera companies including the New York City Opera, Opera Pacific, the Edmonton Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre. He conducted two American national tours: *Carmen* for the San Francisco Opera and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the New York City Opera. In the United Kingdom, his home for the past nineteen years, he has conducted opera at English National Opera, Opera North, and the Royal Albert Hall.

He has conducted many of the top British orchestras including the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and Hallé. Internationally, he has appeared

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with the Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Hong Kong Philharmonic, West Australian, Atlanta and Cincinnati Symphonies, Philly Pops and New York Pops orchestras, among many others.

Abell conceived and conducted the Stephen Sondheim 80th birthday celebration at the BBC Proms, and has given the French premieres of four Sondheim musicals: *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Into the Woods* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris and *Follies* at Opéra de Toulon. His London credits include the 10th and 25th Anniversary concerts of *Les Misérables* and the world premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies*.

Abell's recent engagements include *Sweeney Todd*, starring Emma Thompson and Bryn Terfel, at English National Opera, *Fiddler on the Roof*, also with Terfel, at Grange Park Opera and the BBC Proms, and *Porgy and Bess* at Cincinnati Opera and on tour with Cape Town Opera.

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 have access to the best seats at the best prices, with savings of up to 49% over single ticket prices. They also receive the first opportunity to either keep their original seats or secure new seats before the general public. .

Season ticket prices range from \$79 to \$499. Single tickets start at only \$39 and are on sale now. For ticket information, go to www.kcopera.org, 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.

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. Under the leadership of General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler, 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, serving more than 8,000 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

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Building houses a full wig, costume and set construction shop and facilities for educational and community outreach programs. The company envisions the Production Arts Building as 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 and opened in 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.

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 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.

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 for more information about the Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2015-2016 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

2015-2016 Season at a Glance:

NEW PRODUCTION

Don Giovanni

W.A. Mozart 1787

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, September 26, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 30, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 2, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 4, 2015 2:00 p.m.

Director: Kristine McIntyre

Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow

Set and Costume Designer: R. Keith Brumley

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Don Giovanni: Daniel Okulitch
Donna Anna: Rachelle Durkin
Donna Elvira: Elizabeth Caballero
Leporello: Joshua Bloom
Don Ottavio: Matthew Plenk

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Rusalka

Antonín Dvořák 1901

Sung in Czech with English and Czech titles

Saturday, November 7, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 11, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 13, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 15, 2015 2:00 p.m.

Director: Eric Simonson

Conductor: Alexander Polyanichko

Production Designer: Erhard Rom

Rusalka: Ellie Dehn

Ježibaba: Nancy Maultsby

Vodník: Robert Pomakov

Foreign Princess: Kirsten Chambers

The Elixir of Love

Gaetano Donizetti 1832

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, March 12, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 18, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 20, 2016 2:00 p.m.

Director: James Robinson

Conductor: Christopher Allen

Adina: Susannah Biller

Nemorino: Norman Reinhardt

Dulcamara: Patrick Carfizzi

Belcore: Elliot Madore

Carmen

Georges Bizet 1875

Sung in French with English and French titles

Saturday, April 23, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 27, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 29, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 1, 2016 2:00 p.m.

Director: Jose Maria Condemi

Conductor: David Charles Abell

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Carmen: Zanda Svēde

Don Jose: Rafael Davila

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Escamillo: Corey Crider
Micaëla: Janai Brugger
Zuniga: Jeffrey Beruan

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