

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces 2015-2016 Season at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

*Highlights include NEW Lyric Opera of Kansas City production of
Don Giovanni, Lyric Opera Premiere of Rusalka and
Notable Lyric Opera Debuts Including Daniel Okulitch, Rachelle Durkin, Susannah Biller,
Norman Reinhardt , Jose Maria Condemi and Zanda Švėde*

Kansas City, MO (Feb. 9, 2015) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City **General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler** today announced the 2015-2016 season in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. 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.

“This season encompasses a variety of opera styles and musical periods, from the classicist Mozart, to the Bel Canto style of Donizetti, to the music of Dvořák, featuring for the first time a Czech opera on the Lyric stage, to the all-time no. 1 opera by Bizet – Carmen,” said General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler. “Our desire to bring the best of the world of opera to our Kansas City audiences is showcased through these productions with vivid contrasting looks and musical languages. And we continue to bring fresh and new talent to our stages. You will be pleased.”

Director **Kristine McIntyre** will direct a new production of **Don Giovanni**. Mozart’s haunting tale of lust and ultimate consequence is updated to the smoky days of film noir, complete with fedoras and femme fatales. Singing the title role, **Daniel Okulitch** makes his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. Also making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, **Rachelle Durkin** will portray Donna Anna. Returning to Lyric Opera of Kansas City after her highly-acclaimed performances as Liù in *Turandot* and Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, **Elizabeth Caballero** will perform Donna Elvira.

Rusalka is Dvořák’s lush and enchanting legend of a mermaid whose desperate quest for love means sacrificing her very self. Academy Award-winning Tony and Emmy Award-nominated director **Eric Simonson** will make his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut as he brings his talents to the Muriel Kauffman Theatre stage to direct **Rusalka**. **Ellie Dehn** returns to play the tormented heroine of **Rusalka** after her highly lauded performance in the 2013 Lyric Opera production of *La bohème* as Musetta. This is not

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only the first Dvořák opera produced by the Lyric Opera of Kansas City but the first Czech opera for the Company and Kansas City audiences.

The Elixir of Love by Donizetti is a delightful, bright and funny romp in a charming small town where snake oil may actually work. Making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Adina is **Susannah Biller**. **Norman Reinhardt** is also making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Nemorino. Kansas City audience favorite **Patrick Carfizzi** returns in the role of Dulcamara, after his hilarious portrayal of Mustafa in Lyric Opera's November 2014 production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

And completing the 2015-2016 season is **Carmen**, Bizet's sweeping masterpiece of seduction and betrayal, complete with flaming dress and fighting bull. **Jose Maria Condemi** will be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City directorial debut. Also making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, **Zanda Švėde** will sing the title role. **Rafael Davila** returns to Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the role of Don José, after highly acclaimed performances in Lyric productions of *Norma* and *Il Trovatore*.

2015-2016 Season

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.

Reimagined with a film noir aesthetic, complete with snap-brim fedoras, trench coats and dimly lit speakeasies, *Don Giovanni* sets the stage with legendary libertine Don Giovanni and his comic sidekick, Leporello. Seville has been replaced by the mean streets of the big city as dark shadows hide mistaken identities while intrigue and revenge abound. Mozart's music is evocative and glorious as the Don romances and then discards his conquests. He finally meets his end at the cold hand of destiny in this beautifully reimagined masterpiece. This production is appropriate for children 13+.

Singing the title role, bass-baritone **Daniel Okulitch** will be making his Lyric Opera debut. "**Daniel Okulitch** sings Giovanni with an irresistible bass-baritone that helps explain why women would be drawn to an oleaginous sociopath..." (*New York Magazine*). He has performed worldwide, including La Scala, Théâtre du Châtelet, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Dallas Opera, and Los Angeles Opera.

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Soprano **Rachelle Durkin**, in the role of Donna Anna, will be making her Lyric Opera debut. “Durkin sings with poised, well-sculpted clarity and her voice flashes with admirable precision in rapid passages” (*Sydney Morning Herald*). Hailing from Australia, Ms. Durkin has performed worldwide, including Opera Australia, the Metropolitan Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Hong Kong and Chicago Opera Theatre.

Soprano **Elizabeth Caballero** as Donna Elvira makes her triumphant return to Lyric Opera of Kansas City after her highly acclaimed performances as Liù in *Turandot* and Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*. She regularly performs on leading opera and concert stages internationally including the Metropolitan Opera and Seattle Opera. *The New York Times* hailed Ms. Caballero as “the evening’s most show-stopping performance offering a thrilling balance of pearly tone, exacting technique and brazen physicality.”

Also making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, bass **Joshua Bloom** will portray Leporello. “Joshua Bloom, the extravagantly gifted Australian bass deployed his resonant tone with appealing flexibility.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). He has sung principal roles with Opera Australia, San Francisco Opera, LA Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, Metropolitan Opera, Badisches Staatstheater, Opera Northern Ireland and Garsington Opera, among others.

Returning to Lyric Opera of Kansas City after his highly acclaimed performance as Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte* in 2011, tenor **Matthew Plenk** will perform Don Ottavio.

Director **Kristine McIntyre** “not only honed dramatic moments of unerring accuracy, but also mined every ounce of humor in the work...” (*Opera Today*). McIntyre returns to Lyric Opera of Kansas City to direct this film noir-inspired new production of *Don Giovanni*. Known for her visually stunning and emotionally rich productions, Ms. McIntyre’s other Lyric Opera credits include *Così Fan Tutte*.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City Director of Design and Technical Production **R. Keith Brumley** will design this new production.

This season, to celebrate this all-new production of *Don Giovanni*, Lyric Opera will be hosting **Film Fatale: A Film Noir Experience** on September 10th, 2015 at the Tivoli. Guests are invited to preview the story of *Don Giovanni* through three film noir classics and get exclusive artist access during artist talk backs with *Don Giovanni* Director Kristine McIntyre and Scenic Designer R. Keith Brumley.

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Rusalka

Antonín Dvořák 1901

Sung in Czech with English 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.

The story of the opera, which is about a water spirit's tragic romance with a human prince, is drawn from several folktale sources including Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." A hauntingly poetic libretto matched with a lush score, ***Rusalka*** tells the story of a lovely yet lovelorn mermaid who yearns to become human. The soaring aria "Song to the Moon" is filled with longing as she prays for the prince to return her love. Her wish is granted, but she discovers that what we desire can also destroy and redemption is seldom granted. This production is appropriate for children 11+.

Soprano **Ellie Dehn** returns to play the tormented title role in ***Rusalka*** after her highly lauded performance in the 2013 Lyric Opera production of *La bohème* as Musetta. *Opera News* wrote, "She has a luscious, silky voice and a pleasing stage presence." Ms. Dehn has sung in many of the world's finest opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, San Francisco Opera, and the opera houses of Geneva, Rome, and Bologna.

Returning to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City after her lauded performance as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in 2012, mezzo-soprano **Nancy Maultsby** will perform Ježibaba.

Making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, Canadian bass **Robert Pomakov** will portray Vodnik. Also making her Lyric Opera debut, soprano **Kirsten Chambers** will perform the role of the Foreign Princess.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City is especially pleased to welcome Academy Award-winning and Tony and Emmy Award-nominated director **Eric Simonson**, who brings his talents to the Muriel Kauffman Theatre stage to head ***Rusalka***. His opera credits include many premieres at Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, Pittsburgh Opera, and Carnegie Hall, most notably the world premiere of *Silent Night* at Minnesota Opera. He is a member of Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

The design team for ***Rusalka*** includes **Erhard Rom** (Set Design), **Kärin Kopischke** (Costume Design), **Robert Wierzel** (Lighting Design), and **Wendall K. Harrington** (Projection Design).

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LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY PREMIERE

The Elixir of Love

Gaetano Donizetti 1832

Sung in Italian with English 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.

Donizetti's *bel canto* comedy ***The Elixir of Love*** has been reimagined as early 20th-century Americana, in a style reminiscent of American master Grant Wood and Kansas City painter Thomas Hart Benton. Upright and slightly naïve Nemorino is infatuated with beautiful and slightly fickle Adina, who in turn is in the sights of the calculating and highly devious Sergeant Belcore. Enter snake-oil salesman Dr. Dulcamara, a cheap bottle of wine (or two) and a whimsical romp ensues. A beguiling tonic of passion and humor, ***The Elixir of Love*** features exhilarating duets as well as the wildly romantic aria, "Una furtiva lagrima." This production is appropriate for children 7+.

Making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Adina, **Susannah Biller** was noted by the critics of the *Chicago Tribune* who declared, "Biller's light, sweet lyric voice and coloratura agility allow her to nail the highest high notes with ease and are at one with the spirited heroine she's portraying." She is a graduate of the highly respected Adler Fellowship Program at San Francisco Opera, and has performed for many prestigious opera companies including San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, Portland Opera, and Opera Theatre of St Louis.

Making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Nemorino, **Norman Reinhardt** is a graduate of the prestigious Houston Grand Opera Studio. He has performed worldwide, including Houston Grand Opera, Theater an der Wien, Opéra de Lille, Theater Basel, and Garsington Opera. "Reinhardt possesses a somewhat dark-hued lyric tenor with a strength and steadiness to intensify his vocal achievement" (*International Record Review*).

Kansas City audience favorite **Patrick Carfizzi** returns in the role of Dulcamara after his hilarious portrayal of Mustafa in Lyric Opera's production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. "Mr. Carfizzi's impressive bass is as powerful as it is handsome. Make no mistake, he certainly knows how to use a full arsenal of buffo vocal tricks and colors to nail his laughs..." (*Opera Today*). Mr. Carfizzi made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1999 and recently celebrated his 300th performance with the company.

Making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, Canadian baritone **Elliot Madore** portrays Belcore.

Director **James Robinson** will be making his Lyric Opera debut as well. The design team is **Allen Moyer** (Set Design) and **Martin Pakledinaz** (Costume Design).

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Original Production owned jointly by Opera Colorado/Boston Lyric Opera/San Francisco Opera/Fort Worth Opera.

Carmen

Georges Bizet 1875

Sung in French with English 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.

Carmen, the passionate and devastating masterpiece by Georges Bizet, is one of the most famous operas of all time. Bizet's score is seductive, alluring and perfectly matched to Carmen's conquest of bullfighters, soldiers and smugglers. The fiery gypsy sings the signature "Habanera" as she sets her sights on local corporal Don José. He quickly falls under her spell, only to be cast aside and humiliated. The music follows his descent from soldier and lover to desperate murderer as he sends Carmen to her doom against the roar and cry of the bullring. This production is appropriate for children 13+.

Critics claim Latvian mezzo-soprano **Zanda Švēde** "possesses the looks, the glamour and the voice." She is an alumna of the 2013 Merola Opera Program and currently an Adler Fellow at the San Francisco Opera. She recently appeared alongside world renowned singers Christine Brewer and Daniel Belcher in the benefit concert for Lyric Opera, *Vinson Cole & Friends*. She will make her Lyric Opera of Kansas City mainstage debut in the title role of *Carmen*.

Tenor **Rafael Davila** returns to Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the role of Don José, after highly acclaimed performances in Lyric productions of *Norma* and *Il Trovatore*. A *Kansas City Star* critic wrote, "Davila displayed a lyrical voice with a spectacular upper range and beautifully focused tone." Davila has performed at opera houses worldwide, including Teatro di San Carlo, Palau de les Arts Valencia, Washington National Opera, Oper Leipzig, and L'Opéra de Montréal.

Making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut, baritone **Corey Crider** will perform the role of Escamillo. Soprano **Janai Brugger**, in the role of Micaëla, will also be making her Lyric Opera debut. Bass **Jeffrey Beruan**, returning from his masterful Lyric Opera of Kansas City performances as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* and Haygood in *Of Mice and Men* and Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, will portray Zuniga.

Jose Maria Condemí will be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City directorial debut with this beloved opera **Carmen**. Condemí's work spans all the major North American opera houses including San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Cincinnati Opera, and Seattle Opera. The *Oakland Post* considers Condemí "one of the most promising and impressive directors in all opera."

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Director of Design and Technical Production, **R. Keith Brumley**, will design this renovated production, last seen by Kansas City audiences in 2010.

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.

Subscribers to the 2014-2015 season will receive subscription renewal information beginning the week of Feb. 9, 2015, and will have until May 15, 2015 to renew or improve their current subscription and seat locations. Reservations for new subscriptions will go on sale to the general public at the same time. Renewing subscribers receive priority seating. Single tickets will go on sale to the general public on Monday, August 10, 2015.

Season ticket prices range from \$79 to \$499. 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.

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 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.

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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.

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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.
Wed., 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

Set and Costume Designer: R. Keith Brumley

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.
Wed., 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

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.
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Friday, March 18, 2016 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 20, 2016 2:00 p.m.

Director: James Robinson

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

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Carmen: Zanda Švėde

Don Jose: Rafael Davila

Escamillo: Corey Crider

Micaëla: Janai Brugger

Zuniga: Jeffrey Beruan

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