

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2015-16 Season to Conclude with *Bizet's Carmen*

**Jose Maria Condemi, Zanda Švēde, Corey Crider and
Janai Brugger Winner of 2016 Marian Anderson Vocal Award
Making Lyric Opera Debuts
Rafael Davila and Jeffrey Beruan Return
April 23- May 1 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**

Kansas City, MO (March 25, 2016) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City concludes its dynamic 58th season with Georges Bizet's *Carmen* April 23, 27, 29 and May 1 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Bizet's sweeping masterpiece of seduction and betrayal, complete with flaming dress and fighting bull, will be sung in French with English titles. High res production and artists' photos can be downloaded [here](#).

Georges Bizet's *Carmen* 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+.

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "We are thrilled to close our season with perhaps the most popular and charismatic opera of them all- *Carmen*. Bizet's passionate work is filled with tunes that even non opera goers are familiar with. And to our KC Audiences, we bring a number of exciting mainstage debuts including Zanda Švēde in the title role as well as Janai Brugger, the 2016 winner of the Marion Anderson Vocal Award. Joined by other top tier artists in the industry, and coupled with the magic of this score, this production is not to be missed."

Jose Maria Condemi will be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City directorial debut. Also making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City main stage debut, **Zanda Švēde** will sing the title role. She appeared alongside world renowned singers Christine Brewer and Daniel Belcher in the 2015 benefit concert for Lyric Opera, *Vinson Cole & Friends*. **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*. **Janai Brugger**, winner of the 2016 Marian Anderson Vocal Award, will also be making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Micaëla, Making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City Concludes 20-15-16 Season with *Carmen* April 23 – May 1 at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

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Opera of Kansas City debut, **Corey Crider** will perform the role of Escamillo. **Jeffrey Beruan**, returning from his masterful Lyric Opera of Kansas City performances as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Haygood in *Of Mice and Men* and Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, will portray Zuniga.

About the Artists

Making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City mainstage debut in the title role of *Carmen*, Latvian mezzo- soprano **Zanda Švēde** is an alumna of the 2013 Merola Opera Program and currently a third-year Adler Fellow at the San Francisco Opera. Critics claim Zanda Švēde “possesses the looks, the glamour and the voice.” She made her professional debut at San Francisco Opera as Flora Bervoix in *La traviata* in the summer of 2014 and returned as Tisbe in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*. In 2015 she made her debut as Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at Opera Idaho, starred as Lena in the world premiere of Marco Tutin’s *Two Women*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* at San Francisco Opera. Other roles in her repertoire include María (Piazzolla’s *María de Buenos Aires*), Endimione (Cavalli’s *La Calisto*), and the title role in Massenet’s *Cléopâtre*. On the concert stage she has performed soli in Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Liszt’s *Missa Coronationalis*, Bach’s *Weihnachtsoratorium*, Haydn’s *Mass in the time of War* and Mozart’s *Missa de Requiem*.

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*. Davila began his musical training at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, completing later a master’s degree in opera performance at the University of Texas at Austin under the guidance of Metropolitan Opera tenor William Lewis. This past season also marked his debut as Don Alvaro in *La forza del destino* for Washington National Opera, his debut as Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West* for Minnesota Opera, his German debut as *Cavaradossi* in *Tosca* for Leipzig Opera, a role he also sang recently for Sarasota Opera and for Florida Grand Opera. Davila made his debut at the Washington National Opera as Pollione in *Norma* opposite Angela Meade and Dolora Zajick, as well as Radames in *Aida* for Manitoba Opera. 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.

Baritone **Corey Crider** will be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Escamillo. He is an alumnus of Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center and recently returned to the company as Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*. Additional recent highlights include Marcello in *La bohème* with Arizona Opera and the Munich Philharmonic, Cavaliere di Belfiore in *Un giorno di regno* with Sarasota Opera, and Escamillo in *Carmen* with Opera Lyra Ottawa. *The Washington Times* opined, “Corey Crider convincingly portrayed Bizet’s irresistible matinee-idol bullfighter as elegant, confident, and masculine to a fault.” In the 2014-15 season Corey debuted the title role of *Sweeney Todd* with Madison Opera, sang Marcello in *La bohème* with Opera on the James, Scarpia in *Tosca* with the New Philharmonic, Escamillo in *La tragédie de Carmen* with Opera Naples, the Sacristan in *Tosca* with the Detroit Symphony, and Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love* with Finger Lakes Opera. The 2015-2016 season includes the reprise of his celebrated *Sweeney Todd* with Opera Roanoke, Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly* with Dayton Opera, and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with Sarasota Opera.

Soprano **Janai Brugger** is one of opera’s brightest rising stars. A 2012 winner of Plácido Domingo’s prestigious Operalia competition and of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Lyric Opera of Kansas City Concludes 20-15-16 Season with *Carmen* April 23 – May 1 at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

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Auditions, Brugger began the 2015-16 season as Micaëla in ***Carmen*** at Washington National Opera. She is the proud recipient of the 2016 Marian Anderson Award presented by the John F. Kennedy Center and Washington National Opera. The Award, which honors trailblazing contralto Marian Anderson's personal and humanitarian achievements, celebrates excellence in performance by recognizing a young American singer who has achieved initial professional success in the vocal arts and who exhibits promise for a significant career.

Identified by Opera News as one of their top 25 "brilliant young artists" (October 2015 issue), Janai joined the Metropolitan Opera for their Rising Stars concert series and made several US concert appearances during the season, along with various recital performances. She debuted as Norina in *Don Pasquale* at Palm Beach Opera, and revived the role of Musetta in *La Bohème* which she sings under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel. Recent highlights include the role of Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* in which she made her UK debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden to great acclaim, and sang at Los Angeles Opera in a new production by Barrie Kosky; Liu in *Turandot* at the Metropolitan Opera of New York where she also sang the role of Helena in *The Enchanted Island*.

American Bass **Jeffrey Beruan**, returning from his masterful Lyric Opera of Kansas City performances as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Haygood in *Of Mice and Men* and Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, will portray Zuniga. His singing has been described as "intensely dramatic," "melodious," and "powerful." An excellent actor, the young bass has received acclaim for bringing dramatic life to the smallest roles: *Chautauqua Daily News* stated "Jeffrey Beruan proved that there are no small parts by giving us a splendid Angelotti impressive in stature, good looks and rich baritone....". *The New York Times* said of his performance for Caramoor: "Jeffrey Beruan sang with a mellifluous bass and chilling conviction as Sparafucile, the assassin." The 2015-2016 season also comprises a role debut singing Don Fernando in *Fernando* for Sarasota Opera, and a return to Florentine Opera Company for a reprise of The Bonze in *Madame Butterfly* while his 2016-2017 season includes a reprise of The Bonze and Sarastro, which is quickly becoming a signature role.

Jose Maria Condemí will be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City directorial debut with this beloved opera. He has been hailed by the *Oakland Post* as "one of the most promising and impressive directors in all opera," and the *Seattle Weekly* called his production of *La bohème* for Seattle Opera "flawless," "handsome," and "impressively crafted." In addition to his busy schedule directing for other companies, he was Artistic Director of Opera Santa Barbara from 2010 to 2015. Condemí is the newly appointed Director of Opera of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Recent triumphs include his return to San Francisco Opera to direct *Così fan tutte* and the world premiere of Nolan Gasser's *The Secret Garden*; Catan's *Florencia en el Amazonas* for Utah Opera, and also Opera Colorado; *Maria de Buenos Aires* in his debut with Florida Grand Opera; *La traviata* in his Wolf Trap Opera debut; Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* for Seattle Opera; *Carmen* for San Francisco Opera; *La traviata* for Opera San Jose and Cincinnati Opera, for which he also directed *Maria de Buenos Aires*; *Così fan tutte* with Atlanta Opera; *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera San Jose; and *Simon Boccanegra* for Teatro Colón in his native Argentina.

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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 conducting the hugely popular 2015 production of Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *Silent Night*. Abell gained degrees from Yale University and the Juilliard School. He made his operatic debut at age 25 conducting Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at the Washington National 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.

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

Principal Cast

Carmen: Zanda Švėde
Don José: Rafael Davila
Escamillo: Corey Crider
Micaëla: Janai Brugger
Zuniga: Jeffrey Beruan
El Dancaire: Doug Jones
El Remendado: Derrek Stark~
Moralès: John Viscardi
Frasquita: April Martin~
Mercedes: Samantha Gossard@
~ *UMKC Lyric Opera Apprentice*
@ *former Lyric Opera Apprentice*

Artistic Staff

Director: Jose Maria Condemi
Conductor: David Charles Abell
Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley
Costume Designer: Eduardo V. Sicangco (Opera Omaha)
Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith
Wig and Make-up Designer: Alison Hanks
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell
Stage Manager: Audrey Chait

Ticket availability varies by performance. To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). Patrons can select their own seat and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, cash only, one hour before the performances, with a valid student ID.

Education and Community Opportunities

First Friday, April 1 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Presented by Lyric Opera of Kansas City at the Beth Ingram Administration Building (1725 Holmes, KCMO) – Join Lyric Opera for a preview of Bizet's classic, *Carmen*! Fight the bulls and dance the habanera while listening to our Lyric Opera of Kansas City Concludes 20-15-16 Season with *Carmen* April 23 – May 1 at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

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Opera apprentices perform excerpts from this seminal work. We'll have snacks and drinks for those over 21. See you at the bullfight, Friday, April 1! Olé! The event is FREE and open to the public. Invite your friends to attend on [Facebook](#).

Pre-Opera Talks

Audience members are invited and encouraged to attend a free opera preview, presented by the Lyric Opera Guild, in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre within the Kauffman Center one hour before curtain. Lyric Opera Guild presenters Don Dagenais, John C. Tibbets and Dr. William Everett will lead the 25-minute talks. The Lyric Opera Guild also presents a series of free "At Ease with Opera" presentations prior to the performance dates.

Carmen "At Ease with Opera" Presentations:

Monday, April 4, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Blood and Sand** With its company of soldiers, smugglers, gypsies, and toreadors – not to mention the greatest music score this side of a bullring – what's not to like about Georges Bizet's *Carmen*? Apparently, the critics and some audience members thought otherwise. At the Paris premiere in 1875, they were shocked and offended by its "noise," "amorality," and "dull and obscure" music. Bizet died soon thereafter. Can you blame him? Now that we've recovered ourselves and rightly deem *Carmen* the classic that it is, American film critic, historian, author, painter, and pianist, John C. Tibbets, will take a look at some of *Carmen*'s more bizarre manifestations over the years – from Broadway to ice shows, to hip-hop.

Monday, April 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. The Roma in Music and Art** Many nineteenth-century composers and painters were obsessed with the image of the Roma people. Exotic sounds and images filled concert halls and galleries, some endorsing stereotypes, others creating them. This discussion between music historian, Dr. William Everett, and art curator, Dr. Nicole Myers, will explore connections between musical and artistic representations of the Roma and look at why the "gypsy soul" held such tremendous allure in the nineteenth century and beyond.

Monday, April 18, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Is That a Rose I See in Your Teeth?** *Carmen* is arguably the most popular opera ever written, and certainly one of the most often performed. What is it that makes this simple story so intriguing and so evergreen more than 125 years after its premiere? Don Dagenais, one of our opera preview speakers, will explore the background, history, music and story of *Carmen* in a wide ranging attempt to answer that question. Even if you are a dedicated *Carmen* fan who has seen many past productions, we hope to offer you something new in this presentation.

Women of Note

Women of Note is a new, dynamic lecture series and networking event on Wednesday nights this season. Featuring engaging presentations by notable women in the Kansas City community, this series will provide a unique perspective for opera-goers, as well as an opportunity to connect with other attendees. Events will be held at Lyric Opera's Production Center in the Crossroads, allowing plenty of time for attendees to get to the Kauffman Center for that evening's performance.

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Wed. April 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the Michael and Ginger Frost Lyric Opera Production Center (712 E. 18th St, KCMO) \$65 per person. Includes one Grand Tier section ticket and entry to one Women of Note speaker series event, which includes pre-opera reception with cocktails, heavy appetizers and presentation.

Finding your Free Spirit – The Harley Davidson Way featuring Gail, owner, Gail's Harley- Davidson. Gail purchased the dealership in 1997. Today the business is recognized as one of the top dealerships in the country and nationally recognized in the top 15% of Harley dealers for customer satisfaction. For Gail, success in business is also about cultivating fun and long-lasting relationships. Gail's Harley-Davidson is dedicated to giving back to the community; she supports many non-profit and charitable organizations each year and encourages all of her employees to make a difference. To purchase tickets or for more information, please click [here](#).

Lyric Opera Guild Soiree Dinner with the cast of Carmen

Join the Lyric Opera Guild Sunday April 24th at the 47th Symphony Designers' Showhouse at 444 Westover Road, Kansas City, MO. Enjoy tours of the house starting at 5:45pm, followed by cocktails and dinner with members of the cast of Carmen at 6:30pm. Tickets are \$70 per person, and are open to the public. For more information and to RSVP contact Una Creditor at 816-666-8818 or ucreditor@gmail.com.

Kansas City Art Institute and Lyric Opera of Kansas City Partnership

For the third consecutive year, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City is pleased to partner with the Kansas City Art Institute to provide this unique educational collaboration. Assistant Professor in the School of Foundation, Misty Gamble will continue her spring class work with students, focusing on themed pieces from the Lyric Opera of Kansas City's production of *Carmen*. This will include student visits to the Lyric Opera Production Center studio to study the costumes, a rare opportunity to observe rehearsals, a visit to the Kauffman Center to study the scenery with Scenic Designer R. Keith Brumley, culminating in a public exhibition of their work on Friday, May 6th at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Young Friends of the Lyric

Young Friends of the Lyric provides an exciting outlet for young arts supporters (ages 21-40) in Kansas City to get involved in the community, meet other young adults and support the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The group hosts "Cocktails with Friends" social hours prior to some performances. You do not have to be a member to attend these happy hours. Membership benefits include admission into a private room with complimentary drinks and food during intermissions, networking opportunities, restaurant discounts, invitations to special events and all the benefits of being a Lyric Opera Guild member.

Young Friends of the Lyric membership is \$25 for an individual, \$40 for a couple, or \$75 for a dual patron membership. To join, contact Ticketing & Patron Services at 816-471-7344. Become a fan on [Facebook](#) to keep up with current events.

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.

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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 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.

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 **Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2014-2015 season** and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

2016-2017 Season at a Glance:

Hansel and Gretel

Engelbert Humperdinck 1893

Sung in German with English subtitles

Saturday, September 17, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, September 21, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Friday, September 23, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 25, 2016	2:00 p.m.

Director: Doug Varone

Conductor: John Keenan

Hansel: Megan Marino

Gretel: Rachele Gilmore

Witch/Mother: Marianne Cornetti

Peter: Troy Cook

CO-PRODUCTION with Opera Philadelphia and San Diego Opera

Debut at Lyric Opera of Kansas City

The Marriage of Figaro

Wolfgang A. Mozart 1784

Sung in Italian with English subtitles

Saturday, November 5, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 9, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Friday, November 11, 2016	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 13, 2016	2:00 p.m.

Director: Stephen Lawless

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Conductor: Ryan McAdams
Count Almaviva: Edward Parks
Countess Almaviva: Katie Van Kooten
Figaro: Adam Lau
Susanna: Maureen McKay
Dr. Bartolo: Arthur Woodley
Marcellina: Catherine Cook
Don Basilio: Steven Cole

Lyric Opera of Kansas City PREMIERE
Dead Man Walking
Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Terence McNally 2000
Based on the novel by Sister Helen Prejean
Sung in English with English subtitles

Saturday, March 4, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 8, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 10, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 12, 2017	2:00 p.m.

Director: Kristine McIntyre
Conductor: Steven Osgood
Sister Helen Prejean: Kate Aldrich
Joseph de Rocher: David Adam Moore
Mrs. Patrick de Rocher: Maria Zifchak
Sister Rose: Karen Slack
Owen Hart: Daniel Belcher

The Pirates of Penzance
Gilbert & Sullivan 1879
Sung in English with English subtitles

Saturday, April 22, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, April 26, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Friday, April 28, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 30, 2017	2:00 p.m.

Director: James Alexander
Conductor: Hal France
Mabel: Anya Matanovic
Frederic: Jonathan Johnson
The Pirate King: Kevin Burdette
Major-General Stanley: Robert Gibby Brand
Ruth: Margaret Gawryslak
Sergeant of Police: Ben Wager

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

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further music and arts education both in schools and in the community and serves more than 18,000 students and educators each year.

Opera lovers can be fans of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @kcopera.

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America and this season is made possible with funding from Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, and the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation.

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Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052 or 816.213.4355.

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