

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City
2015-2016 Season to Open with
ALL NEW PRODUCTION of Mozart's Haunting ***Don Giovanni***

Daniel Okulitch and Rachel Durkin Making Lyric Opera Debuts
Elizabeth Caballero Returns in Film Noir Production September 26 – October 4
at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Kansas City, MO (August 24, 2015) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City opens its 58th season with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's haunting ***Don Giovanni*** September 26 and 30 and October 2 and 4 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The production will be sung in Italian with English titles. High res production and artists' photos can be downloaded [here](#).

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "This new production of *Don Giovanni* includes the dark elements of film noir complete with fedoras and trench coats. The story of Don is morally ambiguous; who is telling the truth, who is the bad guy? Film noir is the perfect world to explore this dark tale. "

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 the role of Donna Elvira. The production will be directed by **Kristine McIntyre**. **Gary Thor Wedow** will conduct.

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 Seville has been replaced by the mean streets of the big city as dark shadows hide mistaken identities while intrigue and revenge abound. Like a great noir film, the opera follows our anti-hero Giovanni through a series of betrayals and failed seductions right up to the moment when his past finally catches up with him and he meets his inevitable, violent end. In noir, there are no happy endings.

Shortly after *Don Giovanni's* triumphant premiere in Prague in 1787, the opera received its highly anticipated Viennese premiere. For these performances, Mozart composed two new arias and a duet, partially to please the new prima donnas and partly to substitute the less demanding 'Dalla sua pace' for the virtuosic 'Il mio tesoro' for the tenor. As this greatly increased the length of the opera, the 'happy ending' epilogue was cut; it was not printed in the Viennese libretto and this practice continued through the 19th century (Mahler did not conduct the epilogue in his landmark performances).

"Mozart was a man of the theater and was keenly aware of what worked and what pleased," Wedow explains. "The Vienna performances became like a Broadway show tryout: shaping, improving and experimenting. Mozart left us with no definitive version, and many contemporary productions try to combine both versions which can become a little like an overstuffed Christmas dinner: delicious, but numbing, leaving us staggering from the groaning table."

Sandler continued, "For the Lyric Opera noir production, we've decided to do a hybrid version, leaning heavily on the original Prague version; dispensing with the added Vienna material and streamlining in a few other places, giving our wonderful tenor the more virtuosic original aria, *Il Mio Tesoro*, and ending the opera as they did in Vienna with the death of the anti-hero.

Mozart saw opera as a flexible, mutable and living experience. He was keenly attuned to the cast, the dramatic situation and his audience, I feel he would enjoy our sleek Kansas City noir look at his seductive scoundrel."

About the Artists

Daniel Okulitch most recently garnered worldwide attention in his moving performance as Ennis in the world premiere of *Brokeback Mountain* for Teatro Real Madrid in 2014. He has established himself as a leading singer of Mozart's operas, most notably *Don Giovanni*. "He sings Giovanni with an irresistible bass-baritone that helps explain why women would be drawn to an oleaginous sociopath..." (*New York Magazine*). He first garnered national attention in the original cast of Baz Luhrmann's Tony award-winning Broadway production of *La Bohème*. He has performed worldwide, including La Scala, Théâtre du Châtelet, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Dallas Opera, and Los Angeles Opera.

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. The *San Francisco Chronicle* mentioned his, “bright, piercing tone and flawless diction needed to make this music work, and he shaped the songs with dramatic sureness.”

Director **Kristine McIntyre** has directed more than 60 operas across the U.S. with a focus on new and contemporary works. Productions include Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* (Des Moines Metro Opera, Madison Opera), Jonathan Dove’s *Flight* (Pittsburgh Opera, Austin Lyric Opera), and the world premier of *The Canticle of the Black Madonna* (Newmark Theater, Portland). McIntyre began her career at the San Francisco Opera and then spent eight years on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera where she directed revivals of *La Traviata*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Luisa Miller*, and directed *La Traviata* on tour for the company in Japan. McIntyre has trained opera singers in the studio programs at the Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera, Portland Opera, and Pittsburgh Opera.

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*.

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.

Principals Cast

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

Artistic Staff

Director: Kristine McIntyre
Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow
Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley
Costume Designer: Mary Traylor
Lighting Designer: Marcus Dillard
Wig and Make-up Designer: Alison Hanks
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell
Stage Manager: Erin Thompson- Janszen

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. This production is appropriate for children 13+.

First Friday, Sept. 4 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Presented by Lyric Opera of Kansas City at the Beth Ingram Administration Building (1725 Holmes, KCMO) – Fedoras and Trench coats. Take a trip to the world of film noir and the glamour of 40's Hollywood .Experience 'sinfully' delicious goodies and libations. Enjoy performances by Lyric Opera Apprentices, free drinks and food. The event is FREE and open to the public. Invite your friends to attend on [Facebook](#).

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.

Wed. Sept. 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the 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. **Real Life or Art? The Truth About Bad Boys, Good Girls and Stormy Relationships** featuring Vivien Jennings, Owner Rainy Day Books and Debra Kunz, speaker and transformational coach and author.

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 presenter Debra Karr 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.

Don Giovanni "At Ease with Opera" Presentations:

Monday, August 31 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Mozart Goes to the Movies!** Join Tom Poe, Professor of Film at UMKC, and Linda Ade Brand, Lyric Opera of Kansas City Director of Education and Community Engagement, in a discussion of Mozart, movies and our film noir inspired production of *Don Giovanni*. Information will also be available about our collaborations with the Tivoli Theatre: Film Fatale and Opera Goes to the Movies.

Monday, Sept. 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. A New Set** Always engaging, set director Keith Brumley will discuss the impetus and "look" of the black and white set being used for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City's new production of *Don Giovanni*. This opera presents unique challenges for set designers. In this presentation Mr. Brumley will address ways the new set engages those problems and creatively explores new vistas for addressing visual dimensions of this opera classic.

Monday, Sept. 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. The Perfect Seduction** The opera *Don Giovanni* is as captivating as its alluring main character. It will seduce you with its universal portrayal of the human experience, from light, comic scenes to devastatingly tragic pieces. For her preview of this opera that the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard called “a work without blemish,” Debra Karr will discuss the perfect union of Mozart’s music with Da Ponte’s words and story.

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. Membership benefits include exclusive ticket offers, networking opportunities, restaurant discounts, invitations to special events and more.

Young Friends of the Lyric membership is \$30 for an individual, \$50 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.

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 2015-2016 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

2015- 2015 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 Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Costume Designer: Mary Traylor

Don Giovanni: Daniel Okulitch

Donna Anna: Rachelle Durkin

Donna Elvira: Elizabeth Caballero

Leporello: Joshua Bloom

Don Ottavio: Matthew Plenk

LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY PREMIERE

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.

Director: Eric Simonson

Conductor:

Set Designer: Ehrard Rom

Costume Designer: Kärin Kopischke

Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel

Production Designer: Wendell K. Harrington

Rusalka: Ellie Dehn

Ježibaba: Nancy Maultsby

Vodník: Robert Pomakov

Foreign Princess: Kirsten Chambers

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.

Director: James Robinson

Conductor:

Set Designer: Allen Moyer

Costume Designer: Martin Pakledinaz

Adina: Susannah Biller

Nemorino: Norman Reinhardt

Dulcamara: Patrick Carfizzi

Belcore: Elliot Madore

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.

Director: Jose Maria Condemni

Conductor:

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Carmen: Zanda Švēde

Don José: Rafael Davila

Escamillo: Corey Crider

Micaëla : Janai Brugger

Zuniga: Jeffrey Beruan

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 in 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 Lyric Opera of Kansas City

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City was founded in 1958; it is one of the nations' 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.

Opera lovers can be fans of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook follow us on Twitter at @kcopera, and Instagram 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. For
Tickets: kcopera.org or 816.471.7344**