

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Lyric Opera of Kansas City to Present *Donizetti's The Elixir of Love*

***Susannah Biller, Norman Reinhardt and Elliot Madore join director James Robinson and conductor Christopher Allen in making Lyric Opera debuts as Patrick Carfizzi and Ashley Yvonne Wheat return in charming bel canto comedy March 12 – 20 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts***

**Kansas City, MO (Feb. 12, 2016)** – Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues its 58th season with a Lyric Opera Premiere production of Gaetano Donizetti's charming comedy ***The Elixir of Love***, March 12, 16, 18 and 20 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The production, directed by **James Robinson**, will feature members of the Kansas City Symphony under the baton of **Christopher Allen**. The production will be sung in Italian with English titles. High res production and artists' photos can be downloaded [here](#).

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+.

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "This charming production comes to life with deep inspiration from beloved Kansas City native and internationally renowned painter Thomas Hart Benton and regionalist Grant Wood. Audiences will immediately recognize the vibrant use of color and depictions of Americana in this glorious design. We continue to bring the best in opera to our stage and this production includes several notable Lyric Opera debuts. We believe audiences will be delighted by this new take on the piece."

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*.

### **About the Artists**

Making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut in the role of Adina, soprano **Susannah Biller** was praised by the San Francisco Chronicle as an “artist ready for the big time”. She was recently seen as Daisy in the San Francisco premiere of John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby* with Ensemble Parallele. While in San Francisco, she was seen as Frasquita in *Carmen*, Lolita in the world premiere of John Harbison’s *Heart of a Soldier*, Kristina in *The Makropoulos Case* and Madame Herz in *Der Schauspieldirektor*. The 2014-2015 season saw Ms. Biller as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with Portland Opera, Mica in Carly Simon’s *Romulus Hunt* with Nashville Opera, Marie in *La fille du régiment* with Arizona Opera and Costanza in *Riccardo Primo* with Opera Theater of St. Louis.

She made her mark, earning critical acclaim for her role as Selena in the 2013 world premiere of *Dolores Claiborne* with San Francisco Opera. She received multiple accolades for her work in this role including from the San Francisco Chronicle, which hailed that she “was a bright toned, poignant Selena; her aria during the eclipse garnered a well-earned explosion of applause” and Opera Now, who acclaimed that she “was hugely impressive as the abused daughter.”

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, tenor **Norman Reinhardt** is a graduate of the prestigious Houston Grand Opera Studio. Highlights of his 2015-16 season include Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* (Teatro Real Madrid), Lensky *Eugene Onegin* (Houston Grand Opera), and Tony *West Side Story* at the Salzburg Whitsun and Summer Festivals with Cecilia Bartoli. Recent engagements include Cassio in Verdi’s *Otello* (Houston Grand Opera), Arturo *La straniera* (Theater an der Wien), Verdi’s Requiem in Lisbon, Tom Rakewell *The Rake’s Progress* in Leipzig and Utah, and Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* in Leipzig and at the Bregenz Festival in a new production by David Pountney. 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. A winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, he is already gaining international notoriety for his exceptional voice and artistry. In the 2015–2016 season, Elliot Madore returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. He also makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Anthony in *Sweeney Todd* and returns to the Bayerische Staatsoper as Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* under music director Kirill Petrenko to be performed both in Munich and at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. He debuts at Teatro de la Maestranza as Figaro and at Santa Fe Opera as Mercutio in a new production of *Roméo et Juliette* conducted by Harry Bicket. Mr. Madore will be seen in concert with Charles Dutoit and Orchestre de la Suisse Lyric Opera of Kansas City Continues 58<sup>th</sup> Season with ***The Elixir of Love***

March 12-20 at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Romande in L'heure espagnole and L'enfant et les sortilèges. Elliot Madore is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Director **James Robinson** will be making his Lyric Opera debut as well. Robinson is Artistic Director at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he has mounted productions including Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* (American premiere), Ash's *The Golden Ticket* (world premiere), Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* (also presented at the Wexford Festival), and Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* and *Nixon in China*. Robinson has directed new productions for Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Canadian Opera Company. His work has also been seen at the Australian Opera, the Washington Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Seattle Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera, the Dallas Opera, the Minnesota Opera and Chicago Opera Theater. Additionally, he has created productions for the London Symphony Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, and the Minnesota Orchestra. Recent highlights include the critically acclaimed world premiere of *Champion* by jazz and film composer Terence Blanchard for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

The design team is **Allen Moyer** (Set Design), **Paul Palazzo** (Lighting Designer) and the late **Martin Pakledinaz** (Costume Design).

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

#### **Principal Cast**

Adina: Susannah Biller  
Nemorino: Norman Reinhardt  
Sergeant Belcore: Elliot Madore  
Dulcamara: Patrick Carfizzi  
Gianetta: Ashley Yvonne Wheat

#### **Artistic Staff**

Conductor: Christopher Allen  
Director: James Robinson  
Set Designer: Allen Moyer  
Costume Designer: Martin Pakledinaz  
Lighting Designer: Paul Palazzo  
Wig and Make-up Designer: Alison Hanks  
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell  
Stage Manager: Kimberley S. Prescott

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](http://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

**Sat., Feb. 13 at 10:00 a.m. at the Kansas City Museum** (3218 Gladstone Blvd, KCMO 64123) **Fourth Annual “Art of Love” Valentine Coffee. *The Elixir of Love* Sneak Peek.** Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* is a valentine of an opera about a boy, a girl and a love potion. The setting has been reimagined as early 20<sup>th</sup> century America in a style reminiscent of Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton. Come celebrate the heart and the heartland with LOKC apprentice artists and chorus members, who perform excerpts from *Elixir* paired with its classic music theatre cousin, *The Music Man*. Breakfast hors d’oeuvres and gourmet coffee at 9:00 a.m. with the Lyric performance starting at 10:00 a.m., and lasting approximately 50 minutes. Free to attend but **RSVP is required** to Paul Gutierrez at [paul.gutierrez@kcmo.org](mailto:paul.gutierrez@kcmo.org). **Spaces are Limited** (with both seated and standing RSVPs available for the performance).

**Sat, Feb. 20, from 3:30 p.m. - 7:35 p.m. (snow day reserved date - Saturday, Feb. 27) at the Beth Ingram Administration Building** (1725 Holmes St., KCMO 64108) **Elixir Mixir** The Lyric Opera Elixir Mixir will combine story elements from *The Elixir of Love* with the Thomas Hart Benton-inspired set design and our own local “elixirs”, creating a unique upscale pub-crawl experience. The first stop is the Administrative offices of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, where guests begin by getting a taste of the opera and its regional artist/Americana update. Then, via shuttle bus, we’ll go to the Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio for a guided tour followed by a wine tasting at Amigoni Urban Winery and a special “elixir” cocktail and appetizer at Affäre. The shuttle will then bring guests back to their cars at the Lyric Administration Building. Still hungry? Return to Affäre for supper and receive a 20% discount. For fun-loving guests aged 21 and up. Price: **\$45; \$40** for subscribers and members of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City Guild, Circle and Young Friends. Buy tickets online at [KCOpera.org](http://KCOpera.org) or call Ticketing & Patron Services at 816-471-7344 to reserve your seats. *This event is underwritten by R.C. Kemper, Jr. Charitable Trust, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee*

**Tues., March 1, at 6:30 p.m. at the KC Public Library – Central Location** (14 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St.) **Meet the Past.** Library Director Crosby Kemper III interviews Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton, regional artists whose work served as inspiration for the production design of *The Elixir of Love*. Filmed by KCPT.

**First Friday, March 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) – Join the Lyric Opera for some good old fashioned Americana fun! Enjoy FREE food, drinks, performances and a classic “town festival”. 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. March 16 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the Michael and Ginger Frost Lyric Opera Production Center** (712 E. 18<sup>th</sup> 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. **The Elixir of Creativity: Thinking Beyond the Quick Fix** featuring Becky Blades, writer, artist, business strategist and civic leader. Since she merged her award-winning public relations firm, Blades & Associates, with Trozzolo Communications a decade ago, Becky has launched three more companies including her newest venture, Startistry Publishing. Her first book, *Do Your Laundry or You'll Die Alone; Advice Your Mom Would Give if She Thought You Were Listening*, was named a Best Book of 2014 and a Top 100 Indie Release by Kirkus Reviews. To purchase tickets or for more information, please click [here](#).

### **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, Dr. Charles Gibbs 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.

*The Elixir of Love* “At Ease with Opera” Presentations:

**Mon., Feb. 22, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. True Love Always Finds a Way** This introduction to *The Elixir of Love* will include information on the circumstances surrounding the work’s creation and premiere, an illustrated synopsis of the plot, and insights from preview speaker, Dr. Bill Everett into some of the opera’s many clever allusions. We’ll watch clips from several landmark productions of the effervescent work, including one where Dulcamara is an Elvis impersonator!

**Mon., Feb. 29, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Music, Art and Modern Technology in Building a Superpower** When the US entered WWI, a national effort was needed to encourage young men to enter military service and fight for their country abroad. In this presentation, Dr. Charles Gibbs will explore the way visual, musical, and theatrical art was used to emphasize the adventurous and patriotic allure of foreign military service. We will also examine ways in which emerging technology and mass communication allowed a national “call to arms”, and how the skillful use of propaganda convinced a skeptical nation to support US involvement in the “war to end all wars”.

**Mon., March 7, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Donizetti: A Man for All Opera Seasons** Donizetti, the composer of *The Elixir of Love*, not only wrote delightful comic operas but powerful dramatic ones as well. His career ranged across several decades and different musical styles, and this program will provide a sampling of his music from a number of different works, both dramatic and comic, to give you a taste for this wide-ranging composer. Your speakers will be Don Dagenais and Bob Wise, two opera aficionados, who will accompany their presentation with video and audio excerpts.

### **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

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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.

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](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.

## 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 Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Costume Designer: Mary Traylor

Don Giovanni: Daniel Okulitch

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Donna Anna: Rachelle Durkin  
Donna Elvira: Elizabeth Caballero  
Leporello: Joshua Bloom  
Don Ottavio: Matthew Plenk  
Commendatore: Richard Wiegold  
Zerlina: Samantha Gossard  
Masetto: Rhys Lloyd Talbot

**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: Alexander Polianichko

Set Designer: Erhard Rom

Costume Designer: Kärin Kopischke

Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel

Projection Designer: Wendell K. Harrington

Rusalka: Ellie Dehn

Prince: Maxim Aksenov

Ježibaba: Nancy Maultsby

Vodnik: Robert Pomakov

Foreign Princess: Kirsten Chambers

1<sup>st</sup> Sprite: Ashley Yvonne Wheat

2<sup>nd</sup> Sprite: April Martin

3<sup>rd</sup> Sprite: Samantha Gossard

***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: Christopher Allen

Set Designer: Allen Moyer

Costume Designer: Martin Pakledinaz

Wigs and Make up: Alison Hanks

Adina: Susannah Biller

Nemorino: Norman Reinhardt

Dulcamara: Patrick Carfizzi

Belcore: Elliot Madore

Gianetta: Ashley Yvonne Wheat

***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.

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Director: Jose Maria Condemini  
Conductor: David Charles Abell  
Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley  
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 Urscardi  
Frasquita: April Martin  
Mercedes: Samantha Gossard

### **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.

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.**

**For Tickets: [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org) or 816.471.7344**