

LYRIC OPERA KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Presents Puccini's Masterpiece *La bohème*

*Katie Van Kooten returns to Lyric Opera and U.S. debut of Italian tenor Giorgio Berrugi
straight from his La Scala debut*

March 15- 23 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Kansas City, MO (February 17, 2014) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues its 56th season with Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème* March 15 , 17, 19, 21 and 23, 2014 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

This glorious masterpiece with an especially strong cast continues the 2013-14 season, "Building on Greatness". Rising star **Katie Van Kooten** returns to the Lyric Opera after her acclaimed performance as Countess Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* to sing the role of Mimì. She performed the role of Mimì at Houston Grand Opera and Royal Opera House to much acclaim. *Opera News* wrote of her performance with Houston Grand Opera, "Katie Van Kooten sang with a soprano of richness and warmth, which was a delight to the ears..."

Performing the role of Rodolfo marks the United States and Lyric Opera debut of tenor **Giorgio Berrugi**. Berrugi has performed in *La bohème* at the Festival Puccini and has sung several roles at the Semperoper Dresden.

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "We have brought together a highly memorable cast. This is a group of artists that any company would be proud to have on its stage to bring to life one of the greatest operas of all time."

Perhaps the most beloved opera of all time, *La bohème* follows the adventures of a quartet of irrepressible and impoverished young Parisians. When the seamstress Mimì and the poet Rodolfo fall in love, the fragile nature of life and love follow the course of the changing seasons. Puccini's tenderly beautiful music plays in counterpoint to the comic antics of the bohemians, creating an unforgettable and enduring masterpiece.

Directed by **Linda Brovsky** and conducted by **Craig Kier**, the cast of bohemians also includes **Lucas Meachem** as Marcello, **Ellie Dehn** as Musetta, **Ben Wager** as Colline, **Marcus DeLoach** as Schaunard and **Rod Nelman** as Alcindoro/Benoit.

Linda Brovsky's innovative productions are found on operatic stages throughout North America, including San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Glimmerglass Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Florentine Opera, Opera Pacific and Cincinnati Opera among many other with repertoire ranging from standard classics to world premieres. Recent credits include a critically acclaimed new production of *Don Quichotte* for Seattle Opera, *Rigoletto* for both Cincinnati Opera and Pittsburgh Opera, *The Magic Flute* for Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra, a double bill of *Suor Angelica* and *Giannai Schicchi* for Temple University, and *Le Nozze di Figaro* for IVAI in Tel Aviv, Israel.

The production will be conducted by Craig Kier, who is making his Lyric Opera debut. Mr. Kier has already established an impressive reputation during the 2013-14 season with his return to Atlanta Opera to conduct *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. At Houston Grand Opera he conducted performances of *Die Fledermaus*, the world premiere of the East + West chamber opera *Bound*, and served as cover conductor. Mr. Kier returned to the Houston Ballet for his third season as a guest conductor leading performances of *The Nutcracker*. Rounding out his 2013-14 season, Mr. Kier makes his company debut with Central City Opera leading *The Sound of Music*. Highlights in Mr. Kier's 2012-13 season included his Glimmerglass Festival debut conducting Weill's *Lost in the Stars*, his company debut at the Royal Opera House, Muscat, Oman leading performances of *The Music Man*, and appearances with the Houston Ballet conducting *The Nutcracker* and *Peter Pan*.

University Apprentices

The Lyric Opera Apprentice Program is a collaboration with the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the School of Music at the University of Kansas. During the two-year program students gain experience and training with the Lyric Opera to become professional opera singers. University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) apprentices **Samantha Gossard** and **Elliot Harrison Brown** will perform in the chorus. University of Kansas apprentices **Dominic Johnson** will perform Sergeant and in the chorus and **Tara Cooper**, **Michael Colman** and **Clark Weyrauch** will perform in the chorus.

Principals Cast

Rodolfo: Giorgio Berrugi *
Mimi: Katie Van Kooten
Marcello: Lucas Meachem *
Musetta: Ellie Dehn *
Colline: Ben Wager *
Schaunard: Marcus DeLoach *
Alcindora/Benoit: Rod Nelman
Parpignol: Clark Weyrauch +
Custom-House Officer: Elliot Harrison Brown ~
Sergeant: Dominic Johnson +

Artistic Staff

Conductor: Craig Kier *

Director: Linda Brovsky *

Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Costume Designer: Martin Pakledinaz, from Seattle Opera

Lighting Designer: Steve Ross *

Wig and Make-Up Designer: Alison Hanks

Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell

Stage Manager: Jennifer Rimmer

*Lyric Opera Debut

~UMKC Apprentice

+ KU Apprentice

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, one hour before the performances, with a valid student ID.

***La bohème* FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL**

Approximately 1,000 students from eleven area schools will be attending a dress rehearsal performance of Puccini's *La bohème*, sung in Italian with English subtitles, at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, March 13, 2014 beginning at 6 p.m. Recommended for students at 5th grade and above, this program allows schools to bring classes to attend a final dress rehearsal of a Lyric Opera production each season. A school visit from Lyric Opera artists before the performance is included with prior scheduling. *This program is now sold out.* We encourage school groups interested in attending *La bohème* to contact [Ticketing & Patron Services](http://www.kcopera.org) at 816-471-7344 for special group sales discounts to attend a live performance.

Opera Previews

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 Don Dagenais 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.

***La bohème* "At Ease with Opera" Presentations:**

Monday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) Dr. Charles Gibb, a local physician will present a study of death and dying in opera entitled, "The Opera Ain't Over Till the Fat Lady Dies." He will investigate not only the death (by tuberculosis) of Mimì, but also the death throes of other famous operatic characters.

Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) Dr. Ernest Neighbor, a longtime opera aficionado, will present "57 Years of Loving Mimì", a

personal and entertaining romp through the many great singers who have portrayed the role of *La bohème*'s principal, Mimì. Complete with video and audio excerpts.

Tuesday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) “Love is a Stove that Burns Too Hot”, by Debra Karr, an instructor from University of Kansas, will give an in-depth preview of *La bohème* with audio and video excerpts.

First Friday

March 7 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Beth Ingram Administration Building (1725 Holmes, KCMO) During the March 7th First Friday, live *la vie bohème* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *La bohème* opera preview event! French-inspired cuisine, entertainment and live performances by Lyric Opera Apprentices will bring Paris to life here in Kansas City.

Guests will enjoy complimentary drinks and appetizers. Food catered by the Deco Street Eats food truck, with delicious entrée-sized portions available for purchase. Event is free and open to the public so bring all of your friends!

Young Friends of the Lyric Opera

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 every Friday night performance. 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 youngfriends@kcoopera.org. 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 2013-2014 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

2013-2014 Season at a Glance

The Capulets and the Montagues

(I Capuleti e i Montecchi)

Vincenzo Bellini 1830

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

September 21, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 25, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 27, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 29, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Kevin Newbury

Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Production Designer: Victoria (Vita) Tzykun

Romeo: Joyce DiDonato

Giulietta: Nicole Cabell

Tebaldo: William Burden

Capellio: Stephen Morscheck

Lorenzo: Julien Robbins

The Magic Flute

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1791

Sung in English with English and German titles

November 9, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 13, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 15, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 17, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Harry Silverstein

Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow

Production Designer: Jun Kaneko

Tamino: Shawn Mathey

Pamina: Lauren Snouffer

Queen of the Night: Kathryn Lewek

Papageno: Daniel Belcher

Monostatos: Doug Jones

La bohème

Giacomo Puccini 1896

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

March 15, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 17, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2013-14 Season Continues with *La bohème* March 15-23

March 19, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 21, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 23, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Linda Brovsky

Conductor: Craig Kier

Rodolfo: Giorgio Berrugi

Mimi: Katie Van Kooten

Marcello: Lucas Meachem

Musetta: Ellie Dehn

Colline: Ben Wager

Schaunard: Marcus DeLoach

Alcindoro/Benoit: Rod Nelman

Die Fledermaus

Johann Strauss II 1874

Sung in English with English and German titles

Saturday, April 26, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 2, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 4, 2014 2:00 p.m.

Director: Tomer Zvulun

Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Eisenstein: Liam Bonner

Rosalinde: Kelly Kaduce

Alfred: Gordon Gietz

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 follow the Lyric Opera of Kansas City online under “@kcopera” on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Flickr and “@LyricOperaKC” on YouTube.

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.

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