

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Selection of First-Ever Resident Artists

***NEW Resident Artists Program, Led by
World-Renowned Tenor and Teacher Vinson Cole, includes
April Martin, Samantha Gossard, Casey Candebat, John Viscardi and Kyle Naig***

Kansas City, MO (June 24, 2016) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced the selection of the inaugural class of the Resident Artists Program. They include: soprano ***April Martin***, mezzo-soprano ***Samantha Gossard***, tenor ***Casey Candebat***, baritone ***John Viscardi*** and pianist ***Kyle Naig***. They will perform in various roles throughout the 2016-17 season on the mainstage at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts as well as at community outreach and education events. The artists were selected after a rigorous national audition of more than 100 singers. Led by Vinson Cole, UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance faculty member and one of the leading artists of his generation, Resident Artists Program signals the creation of the first-ever Resident Company for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

During their Residency, in addition to appearing in mainstage roles, the Resident Artists will work with visiting guest artists' conductors and directors, participate in master classes, career coaching, study leading roles, make musical appearances in the community, and appear in their own intimate musical performances as a part of Lyric Opera of Kansas City's new 'Explorations' series, which will focus on intimate gems of the vocal music repertoire. The Resident Artists will have completed their post-graduate education and may have some professional experience. The Resident Artists will have a full time 8-month contract for one or two years.

"Since my arrival here, four years ago, I had hoped to create a Resident Artists Program," stated Sandler. "Our intent is to contribute to the training of these talented, young, emerging professional artists and grant them experience with our field's leading conductors, directors, and principal artists. Through this new initiative, Lyric Opera will develop a resident group of young artists who will perform on our mainstage as well as in the community. In so doing, Lyric Opera joins the ranks of other distinguished opera companies in North America who commit to nurturing the next generation of exceptional artists for opera."

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The program's launch is made possible by a generous donation from the late Richard Hill, Charter Sponsor of the Resident Artist Program.

About the Resident Artists

Soprano **April Martin** recently performed a thrilling depiction of the Governess in Britten's thought provoking opera, *Turn of the Screw*. In November 2015, she sang the 2nd Wood Sprite in Dvořák's, *Rusalka*, with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and in the spring of 2016 Ms. Martin sang Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen*. This summer, Ms. Martin will make her debut with Finger Lakes Opera. Other credits include Antonia (*Man of La Mancha*) with the Central City Opera Company as an apprentice artist, Musetta (*La bohème*) with the Bar Harbor Music Festival in Maine, Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Niece 1 (*Peter Grimes*), Anne Egerman (*A Little Night Music*) and Blanche de la Force (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*). April has won awards in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Heafner/Williams Vocal Competition (2nd Place) and the Opera Carolina Guild Competition (2nd Place). She studies under the tutelage of renowned American tenor, Vinson Cole.

As a Resident Artist for the 2016-2017 season, Ms. Martin will perform the roles of Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel*, Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Kitty Hart in *Dead Man Walking* and Isabel in *Pirates of Penzance*.

Mezzo-soprano, **Samantha Gossard**, is recognized by critics and audiences alike for her rich, warm voice and powerful stage portrayals. This past spring, Ms. Gossard sang on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera as a National Semi-Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Earlier last season, she made her "stunning" role debut as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City (KC Metropolis) and also appeared as Mercedes in *Carmen* and the Third Woodsprite in *Rusalka*. She was previously an Apprentice Artist for Lyric Opera of Kansas City and performed the roles of Zulma in *L'italiana in Algeri* and Madeleine Audebert in *Silent Night*. Ms. Gossard was a Gerdine Young Artist with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2015, and has also been an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera in Colorado, where she covered and performed Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Other favorite opera credits with these companies include *Dead Man Walking*, *La Rondine*, *Emmeline*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *La Traviata*. Ms. Gossard was a New Horizon Fellow with the Aspen Music Festival and School for two summers and is a former student of the Aspen Opera Theatre Center.

As a Resident Artist for the 2016-2017 season, Ms. Gossard will perform the roles of Cherubino in the production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, Jade Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*, and Kate in *Pirates of Penzance*.

Tenor **Casey Candebat**, a native of New Orleans, has been hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as having "the big, straightforward Italian sound" and by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as being "one of the up and coming stars of opera." A recent two-time participant in the illustrious Merola Opera Program, Mr. Candebat performed the role of Il Podestà in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, and covered the role of Mr. Owen in Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*. He returned to Merola Opera in 2014 to perform the role of Mitch in Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and a highly

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acclaimed scene from Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*. A frequent performer with the New Orleans Opera, he has been featured in their productions of *Dead Man Walking*, *Salome*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trittico*, *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, and *Turandot*. Mr. Candebat has been a young artist at Chautauqua Opera in their 2009 and 2010 seasons. He has also been a young artist at Opera North where he performed the role of Dr. Cajus in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Mr. Candebat has won several prestigious vocal competitions, including the Grand Prize in the Bel Canto Foundation Voice Competition, 2011, a four-time regional finalist at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and the Chautauqua Opera Guild's Encouragement Award, 2010. Mr. Candebat is a graduate of Northwestern University and Loyola University New Orleans.

As a Resident Artist for the 2016-2017 season, Mr. Candebat will perform the role of Father Grenville in *Dead Man Walking*.

Baritone **John Viscardi** is a New York native and graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts. His 2015-16 season includes his Carnegie Hall debut with Maestro Z. Randall Stroope, performing Vaughn Williams' Five Mystical Songs and Stroope's American Rhapsody. This is followed by Morales in *Carmen* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Baritone Soloist in *Carmina Burana* with Opera Philadelphia, Silvio in *Il Pagliacci* with Venture Opera and Opera San Luis Obispo, and Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me Kate* with the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice. In the 2014-15 Season, Mr. Viscardi made a series of role debuts beginning with Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with New York Opera Exchange, followed by his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Valentin in *Faust*, Bumerli in *The Chocolate Soldier* with Concert Operetta Theatre and Robert in *Iolanta* with Tri-Cities Opera. Mr. Viscardi has seen great success in the American Competition circuit. Awards include first place in the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, Santa Fe Opera's Anna Case MacKay Memorial Award, the Lys Symonette Award from the Kurt Weill Foundation, Lotte Lenya Competition, and George London Foundation Encouragement Award.

As a Resident Artist for the 2016-2017 season, Mr. Viscardi will perform the role of the Motorcycle Cop in *Dead Man Walking*.

Pianist and coach **Kyle Naig** is from Des Moines, Iowa. Most recently he was a Mosher Studio Artist at Opera Santa Barbara, where he worked on productions of *L'elisir d'amore* and *Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi* as well as the promotional concert and outreach tour. Other recent engagements include work at Des Moines Metro Opera (*Galileo Galilei*, *Manon*, *La hija de Rappaccini*, *Three Decembers*) and Opera Bozeman (*Don Pasquale*). Kyle is a graduate of the University of Kansas.

About Vinson Cole

American tenor Vinson Cole is internationally recognized as one of the leading artists of his generation. His career has taken him to all of the major opera houses across the globe including the Metropolitan Opera, Opera National de Paris Bastille, Teatro alla Scala Milan, Theatre Royale de la Monnaie, Brussels, Berlin State Opera and the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Munich State Opera, San Francisco Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Opera Australia and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Seattle Opera and many more. Equally celebrated for his concert appearances, Mr. Cole has been a frequent guest of the most prestigious orchestras throughout the world and has collaborated with the greatest conductors of this era including Christoph Eschenbach, Claudio Abbado, Carlo Maria Giulini, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, James Conlon, Kurt Masur,

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Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Gerard Schwarz as well as Sir Georg Solti and Giuseppe Sinopoli. Mr. Cole had an especially close working relationship with the late Herbert von Karajan, who brought the artist to the Salzburg Festival to sing the Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier* – the first of many performances there together. Their collaboration went on to include works such as Verdi's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bruckner's *Te Deum*. Many of these were issued on recordings on Deutsche Grammophon. He was the performer on the soundtrack for the film *Immortal Beloved*.

As a teacher, American tenor Vinson Cole has taught at the University of Washington School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Aspen Music Festival and School, Glimmerglass Opera, and the Santa Fe Opera. He has conducted master classes for San Francisco Opera's Merola Program and the Canadian Opera Company. Currently, Cole is a faculty member at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Vinson Cole, born in Kansas City, studied at the University of Missouri, Kansas City before attending the Philadelphia Musical Academy and the Curtis Institute of Music. In 1977, Cole won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the WGN Competition, and was awarded both the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Opera Institute grants. Cole's career took off from there as he went on to perform principal roles with the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Paris Opera-Bastille, Teatro alla Scala, and many more. Cole became well known for his interpretation of French repertoire after singing in the *Manon* centennial performances with Paris's Opera Comique in 1984. Since then, he has performed singular interpretations in such roles as *Lakmé*, *Carmen*, *Don Carlos*, and *Faust*. He has been honored with numerous awards including special invitations to perform with the Harriman-Jewell Series recitals and received an honorary doctorate from William Jewell College. He also received the Alumni Award from the Conservatory at UMKC, plus the Seattle Mayor's Arts Award for outstanding individual achievement and commitment to the arts.

2016-2017 Season at a Glance:

Hansel and Gretel

Engelbert Humperdinck 1893

Sung in German with English subtitles

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|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 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: Victoria Livengood

Peter: Troy Cook

Dew Fairy: April Martin

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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

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

Barbarina: April Martin

Cherubino: Samantha Gossard

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

Kitty Hart: April Martin

Jade Boucher: Samantha Gossard

Father Grenville: Casey Candebat

Motorcycle Cop: John Viscardi

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.

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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
Isabel: April Martin
Kate: 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.

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