

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Selection of 2017-2018 Resident Artists

*Resident Artists Program, led by  
World-Renowned Tenor and Teacher Vinson Cole, includes  
Soprano Marlen Nahhas, Mezzo-soprano Lauren Auge, Tenor Martin Luther Clark,  
Baritone Tim Murray and Coach/Accompanist James Maverick*

*Meet the Resident Artists Sept. 24 @ 2p  
at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building*

**Kansas City, MO (August 9, 2017) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler** today announced the selection of the artists for the Resident Artists Program for the 2017-2018 season. They include: soprano **Marlen Nahhas**, mezzo-soprano **Lauren Auge**, tenor **Martin Luther Clark**, baritone **Tim Murray** and coach/accompanist **James Maverick**. Led by Vinson Cole, UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance faculty member and one of the leading artists of his generation, they will perform in various roles throughout the 2017-2018 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 350 singers.

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, receive 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 **Explorations Series**, which will focus on intimate gems of the vocal music repertoire. The Resident Artists have completed their post-graduate education and have some professional experience. The Resident Artists will have a full time 8-month contract for one to two years. High res photos of the Resident Artists can be found [here](#).

**Meet the Resident Artists  
Sun., Sept. 24, 2p  
Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building**

Lyric Opera audiences will have an opportunity to meet the Resident Artists on Sunday, September 24 at 2p at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building for an informal afternoon 'salon'. Through conversation and musical selections including arias, art songs and

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show tunes, audiences are invited to sneak a first peek at the quartet and pianist who will grace the main stage and our **Explorations Series** presentations throughout the season. The event is **FREE**. Seating is limited and RSVPs are required. For ticket information, visit [kcoopera.org](http://kcoopera.org) or contact Lyric Opera Ticketing & Patron Services at (816) 471-7344.

"We launched the Resident Artists Program last year and it has been an unqualified success," stated Sandler. "We join the international opera community in the training of talented, emerging professional young artists. This professional development program involves performance experience and the ability to work with our field's leading conductors, directors and principal artists. Our audiences have embraced our young artists and have been touched by them in a surprising number of ways. I look forward to another season of productive and engaged experiences. Lyric Opera now joins the ranks of other distinguished opera companies in North America who are committed to nurturing the next generation of exceptional artists for opera."

The program was made possible by a generous donation from the Estate of Richard Hill, Charter Sponsor of the Resident Artist Program.

### **About the Resident Artists**

Lebanese-Mexican soprano **Marlen Nahhas** has been an apprentice artist at Central City Opera for the last two summers where she was awarded the coveted young artist scholarship. The year prior, she was a festival artist at Utah Festival Opera where she won first place in the Michael Ballam International Opera Competition. Ms. Nahhas has been a two-time regional finalist in the Midwest region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions. She received her Bachelors of Music in vocal performance and musical theatre at Oklahoma City University and her Masters and Performance diploma from Indiana University under the tutelage of Carol Vaness. Recent roles include the title role in *Tosca*, Cio-Cio San in *Madama butterfly*, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Mimi in *La bohème*.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Ms. Nahhas will perform the roles of The Page in *Rigoletto* and Berta in *The Barber of Seville*.

**Lauren Auge**, mezzo-soprano, is described as "offering something transformative to the audience" in her work on the stage. Most recently, Ms. Auge was seen as Jennie in Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley* and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. Making her mark on the competition scene, Ms. Auge was a semi-finalist in the 2015 Bel Canto Foundation competition, the 2014 winner of Sinfonietta Bel Canto Voice Competition, a finalist in the Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition and a first place winner in the 2013 Pantazelos Performing Artists Foundation Vocal Competition. Recently Ms. Auge was also a Danis Wilson Apprentice Artist at the Sugar Creek Symphony and Song Festival. Previous operatic roles have included Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, The Duchess in Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operetta *The Gondoliers*, Thelma in *Cold Sassy Tree* and The Wife in Darius Milhaud's dark opera *Le pauvre matelot*.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Ms. Auge will perform the role of Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*.

Tenor **Martin Luther Clark** is an alumnus at the University of North Texas holding a Graduate Artist Certificate and Bachelor of Music degree, both in Vocal Performance. While at UNT, Mr. Clark studied voice with Dr. Stephen F. Austin and Professor William Joyner. He recently made

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his Charlottesville Opera debut as a Young Artist singing the role of Borsa (*Rigoletto*) and covering Curly (*Oklahoma!*). In May of 2017, he covered the role of Arjuna (*Arjuna's Dilemma*) with the Dallas Opera. For the 2016 season, Mr. Clark performed roles including Tonio (*La fille du regiment*) with Opera North, Bastien (*Bastien and Bastienne*) with the Dallas Opera Outreach, Mozart (*Mozart and Salieri*) with Opera in Concert, and several others. Also in 2016, he was selected as a semi-finalist in the Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition where he was the youngest competitor by two years. Throughout his college career at UNT, he performed numerous roles including Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Count Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Camille (*The Merry Widow*), and Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*) to name a few. Making his debut at Wolf Trap Opera, he sang the role of Le Fils (*Les mamelles des Tirésias*) as a Studio Artist.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Mr. Clark will perform the roles of The Peasant in *Eugene Onegin* and Borsa in *Rigoletto*.

Lauded for his "...consistent, attractive baritone" (Opera News) and "...firm, flexible baritone" (The New York Times), Wisconsin-born baritone **Tim Murray** makes his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut this season as a member of the 2017-2018 Resident Artist Program. Mr. Murray's 2016-2017 season included a return to the Oratorio Society of New York to cover the baritone soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*, a short-notice Silvio in *I pagliacci* with Cedar Rapids Opera, Dandini in *La Cenerentola* with ARE Opera, NYC, and Moralès in *Carmen* and Ananias in Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* with Central City Opera as a member of the Apprentice Artist program. Previous credits include the baritone soloist in both Berlioz's *Lélio* with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Mahler's *8th Symphony* with the Oratorio Society of New York. While a student at Manhattan School of Music, Mr. Murray recorded the role of Le Vicomte de Valmont in Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* with Albany Records.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Mr. Murray will perform the roles of Zaretsky/Captain in *Eugene Onegin*, Guy Cotter in *Everest*, Marullo in *Rigoletto* and The Officer in *The Barber of Seville*.

Coach and accompanist **James Maverick** is from Bloomington, Indiana. Most recently, he was Apprentice Coach at San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program and the Coach Accompanist for Indiana University Opera Theater where he worked on productions of *La fille du régiment* and *Peter Grimes*. Mr. Maverick is a graduate of Indiana University.

### **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 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, 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, 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,

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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* and 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, he 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.

Mr. 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, he won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the WGN Competition, and was awarded both the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Opera Institute grants. His 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. Mr. Cole became well known for his interpretation of French repertoire after singing in the Manon centennial performances with Paris's Opéra Comique in 1984. Since then, he has performed singular interpretations in such roles for *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.

### 2017-2018 Season at a Glance:

\* Lyric Opera debut

#### **NEW PRODUCTION**

#### ***Eugene Onegin***

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 1897

Sung in Russian with English subtitles

**Saturday, September 30, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, October 4, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, October 6, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, October 8, 2017** 2:00 p.m.

Director: Tomer Zvulun

Conductor: Ari Peltó\*

Scenery Designer: Erhard Rom

Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel

Onegin: Morgan Smith \*

Tatyana: Joyce El-Khoury

Olga: Megan Marino

Lensky: Jonathan Johnson

Gremin: Paul Whelan \*

Filipievna: Jane Bunnell

Monsieur Triquet: Steven Cole

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Zaretsky/Captain: Tim Murray\*

## ***KANSAS CITY PREMIERE***

### ***Everest***

Composer: Joby Talbot, 2015

Librettist: Gene Scheer

Sung in English with English subtitles

**Saturday, November 11, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, November 15, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, November 17, 2017** 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, November 19, 2017** 2:00 p.m.

Director: Leonard Foglia \*

Conductor: Nicole Paiement \*

Beck Weathers: Michael Mayes \*

Jan Arnold: Sarah Larsen \*

Rob Hall: Andrew Bidlack \*

Doug Hansen: Craig Verm \*

Mike Groom: Mark McCrory

Guy Cotter: Tim Murray

### ***Rigoletto***

Giuseppe Verdi, 1851

Sung in Italian with English subtitles

**Saturday, March 3, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, March 7, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, March 9, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, March 11, 2018** 2:00 p.m.

Director: David Gately

Conductor: David Charles Abell

Rigoletto: Leo An \*

Gilda: Nicole Haslett \*

Count Monterone: Andrew Gangestad

Duke: Scott Quinn

Maddalena: Zanda Švėde

Sparafucile: Peixin Chen \*

Marullo: Tim Murray

Giovanna: Alice Chung

Countess Ceprano: Lauren Auge\*

Page: Marlen Nahhas\*

Usher: Armando Contreras

## ***REIMAGINED PRODUCTION***

### ***The Barber of Seville***

Gioachino Rossini, 1816

Sung in Italian with English subtitles

**Saturday, April 28, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 2, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, May 4, 2018** 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 6, 2018** 2:00 p.m.

Director: Michael Shell \*

Conductor: Leonardo Vordoni

Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith

Almaviva: Jack Swanson \*

Rosina: Cassandra Zoe Velasco \*

Figaro: Jarett Ott \*

Don Basilio: Brian Banion

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Don Bartolo: Matthew Burns \*  
Berta: Marlen Nahhas  
Fiorello: Armando Contreras  
Officer: Tim Murray

## **About Lyric Opera of Kansas City**

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. 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.

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

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