

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Launch of Resident Artists Program

*Vinson Cole, renowned operatic tenor and UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance
faculty member Program Director*

Kansas City, MO (August 31, 2015) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced the launch of the first-ever **Resident Artists Program** for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City to be led by Vinson Cole, UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance faculty member and one of the leading artists of his generation. The program will begin with auditions in December and will include four singers and one pianist for the initial class of the 2016-17 season.

The Resident Artists Program is an expansion of the highly successful apprentice program which partners with the University of Kansas and UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance to offer college students invaluable experiences in training and main stage performances to become an opera singer. The launch of the Resident Artists Program, alongside the apprentice program, signals the creation of the first-ever Resident Company for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

The resident artists will have a full time 8-month contract for one or two years and receive artistic training via master classes with guest artists, acting, movement and stage combat and professional career development. The artists will have completed their post-graduate education and may have some professional experience.

Sandler stated, "Kansas City has many boasting rights and among them is one of opera's most distinguished musical and operatic talents as its citizens. Vinson Cole, having grown up in KC, is foremost among international leading operatic tenors. He is held in universally high esteem by his colleagues and we at Lyric Opera of Kansas City are thrilled to welcome him to steward this vitally important program."

Mezzo-Soprano Samantha Gossard, who recently completed the Lyric Opera young apprentice and studied under Vinson Cole, stated, "Vinson Cole is a master of the art of singing, and he is one of the rare gems who can truly teach it. He has taught me not just how to sing, but what it **means** to sing. His knowledge and wisdom are invaluable and his love for the art form is

infectious. His mentorship through the years has not only made me a better singer and artist, but has made me a better person.”

“Creating this Resident Artists Program has long been a goal of mine since my arrival,” Sandler continued. “Our intent is to give these artists access to the opera world’s leading conductors, directors and principal artists and Company leadership to help them grow as an artist within this industry. As well, the Lyric Opera will gain a resident group of young artists who will perform on our main stage as well as in the community. This Resident Artists Program will certainly increase our visibility in the industry as we commit to creating the next generation of exceptional artists for this beautiful art form.

For those interested in auditioning, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City will be using YAP Tracker for Resident Artist Program applications. The application can be found [here](#) .

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, 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 *Lakmè*, *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.

The program's launch this year is made possible by a generous pledge by Mr. Richard Hill, the Charter Sponsor of the Resident Artist Program.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City

2015- 2015 Season at a Glance:

NEW PRODUCTION

Don Giovanni

W. A. Mozart 1787

Sung in Italian with English 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

Commendatore: Richard Wiegold

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

Production Designer: Wendell K. Harrington

Rusalka: Ellie Dehn

Ježibaba: Nancy Maultsby

Vodník: Robert Pomakov

Foreign Princess: Kirsten Chambers

The Prince: Maxim Aksenov

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

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 Condemi

Conductor: David Charles Abell

Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Carmen: Zanda Švēde

Don José: Rafael Davila

Escamillo: Corey Crider

Micaëla : Janai Brugger

Zuniga: Jeffrey Beruan

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
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