

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Lyric Opera of Kansas City Presents *Verdi's La Traviata* To Open 2014-15 Season

*Joyce El-Khoury, Scott Quinn and Anthony Michaels-Moore Making KC Debuts*  
*Sept. 27 – Oct. 5 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts*

**Kansas City, MO (Sept. 2, 2014)** – Lyric Opera of Kansas City opens its 57<sup>th</sup> season with Giuseppe Verdi's lush and grand opera, *La Traviata*, September 27, October 1, 3 and 5, 2014 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The production will be sung in Italian with English and Italian titles.

Verdi's *La Traviata*, featuring a set from the Lyric Opera of Chicago, features the Tony Award-winning production design of **Desmond Heeley**, making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut. Also making their Lyric Opera of Kansas City debuts, playing Violetta Valéry is **Joyce El-Khoury**, **Scott Quinn** in the role of Alfredo Germont and **Anthony Michaels-Moore** in the role of Giorgio Germont.

"I am thrilled to announce our opening production which reflects a season full of rich talent and numerous debuts to our Kansas City audiences," stated Deborah Sandler, General Director and CEO of the Lyric Opera. "It is my fervent belief that this season will appeal to the first time opera goer, those who may not have been for a while, and those loyal audience members who are passionate about opera. This will be a season to fall in love with opera and what better way to start the season than with this heartbreaking masterpiece, *La Traviata*."

The theme of heart-wrenching love is indeed timeless. Violetta is the most desirable courtesan in Paris. Sought after by society's most important men and wealthy in her own right, she is perfectly content—until she falls in love with Alfredo Germont. But when Alfredo's father

insists that she'll ruin Alfredo's family name, she selflessly pushes away the only man she's ever loved. Will they ever be together again? Yes, but by then it's much, much too late.

### **All Star Cast and Production Team**

Canadian soprano **Joyce El-Khoury** will be making her Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut as Violetta. *The New York Times* recently reviewed her performance in this summer's Santa Fe Opera's Carmen, stating that "Micaëla was sung radiantly by the Canadian soprano Joyce El-Khoury. Her portrayal of Don José's village sweetheart was a lot more feisty and likable than the pious bore of many a production." "The Canadian soprano is a gorgeous Violetta. ..it is indisputable that she is one of the major Violettas today," wrote concerto.net. Joyce El-Khoury is rapidly establishing herself as one of the major singing actresses in the world today. She has performed worldwide, including Opera Canada, L'Opéra Théâtre de Saint-Étienne, and De Nederlandse Opera. She was recently nominated for an OPERA Award for her performance in Donizetti's *Belisario* on Opera Rara. Born in Lebanon, Joyce immigrated to Canada with her family when she was just four years old.

Joining Joyce El-Khoury is baritone **Anthony Michaels-Moore** who will also be making his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut as Giorgio Germont. *Opera News* raved of Michaels-Moore, calling him "one of the most gorgeous voices on the opera stage today. His sound has a real presence, and its honeyed opulence dominated every scene in which he appeared." Anthony is the first British winner of the Luciano Pavarotti Competition (1985) and has since performed in all of the world's major opera houses. In a career spanning more than 25 years, Anthony has distinguished himself as a specialist in Verdi roles.

Tenor **Scott Quinn** will also be making his Lyric Opera debut in the role of Alfredo. A graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, one of the most respected young artists programs in the country, Quinn was lauded by the *Dallas News* for his "clarion" voice. Lyric Opera of Kansas City is dedicated to identifying emerging talent and has supported alumni of Houston Grand Opera Studio numerous times. Lyric Opera of Kansas City Artistic Director Ward Holmquist and beloved Kansas City native Joyce DiDonato are two of the most notable alumni.

**David Gately**, who is known for his vivid storytelling and lively and clever productions, will direct this production. His last production with Lyric Opera of Kansas City was the *Barber of Seville* in 2000. Recent productions of note include *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Dallas Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with Seattle Opera, *La bohème* with Florida Grand Opera as well as several others throughout the world. He has also worked with Vancouver Opera, Glimmerglass and Opera Colorado. *Opera Magazine* noted of his Vancouver Opera production of *La Traviata*, "David Gately showed considerable flair in deftly defining the character interplay at the very heart of this eternally moving opera."

One of the most pre-eminent designers of the twentieth century and winner of three Tony Awards for his brilliant design, **Desmond Heeley**, will also make his Lyric Opera of Kansas City

debut with this production. Lyric Opera of Kansas City Artistic Director **Ward Holmquist** will conduct.

This production of *La Traviata* is owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago and is a generous and deeply appreciated gift of the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa. Original production staged by Frank Galati. Production design by Desmond Heeley.

### **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 **Ashley Wheat** will perform Annina and **Elliot Harrison Brown** will perform Marchese D'Obigny. **Samantha Gossard** and **April Martin** will perform singing in the chorus. University of Kansas apprentice **Clark Weyrauch** will perform Gastone de Letorieres.

### **Principals Cast**

Violetta Valéry: Joyce El-Khoury \*  
Alfredo Germont: Scott Quinn\*  
Giorgio Germont: Anthony Michaels-Moore\*  
Gastone de Letorieres: Clark Weyrauch +  
Baron Duphol: Robert McNichols @  
Marchese D'Obigny: Elliott Harrison Brown ~  
Doctor Greenville: Tyler Simpson @  
Flora Bervoix: Kristee Haney @  
Annina: Ashley Wheat ~

### **Artistic Staff**

Conductor: Ward Holmquist  
Director: David Gately  
Set and Costume Designer: Desmond Heeley \*  
Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith  
Wig and Make-Up Designer: Joanne Middleton Weaver  
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell  
Stage Manager: Jennifer Rimmer

\*Lyric Opera Debut  
~UMKC Apprentice  
@ Former Lyric Opera 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](http://www.kcopera.org). Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, cash only, one hour before the performances, with a valid student ID.

## **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 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 Traviata* “At Ease with Opera” Presentations:

**First Friday, Presented by Lyric Opera of Kansas City, September 5 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Beth Ingram Administration Building** (1725 Holmes, KCMO) Walk the red carpet, snap a few photos and enjoy FREE drinks and appetizers like an A-lister! Explore the numerous appearances of opera in the movies and enjoy live performances by Lyric Opera Apprentices. Food catered by Detroit Coney Food Truck – event is FREE and open to the public.

**Monday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) by Lyric Opera preview speaker **Richard Byrum** will give a presentation featuring a historical look at courtesans.

**Monday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (1725 Holmes Street, KCMO) Ever wonder how an opera goes from the score to the stage? Come see where the magic happens. Join **Linda Ade Brand** (Director of Education and Community Outreach) and R. Keith Brumley (Director of Design and Technical Production) on a fun and fact-filled behind-the-scenes tour. (Lyric Opera Company - 7:00 pm)

**Monday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation** (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) Lyric Opera Guild presenter **Don Dagenais** will give a detailed preview of *La Traviata*.

## **Where Opera and Style Meet**

To kick off the 2014-15 Season to Cherish in style, what better way than to bring your very own personal style to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts? Noted photographer Aaron Lindberg will be on hand on opening night, September 27<sup>th</sup>, to capture our Kansas City style and fashion at its best and will be shared online for all to enjoy. Photos will be available for purchase from the photographer.

## **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 some 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.**

## **2014-2015 Season at a Glance:**

### *La Traviata*

Giuseppe Verdi 1853

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, September 27, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 1, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 3, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 5, 2014, 2014 2:00 p.m.

Director: David Gately

Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Set and Costume Designer: Desmond Heeley

Violetta Valery: Joyce El-Khoury

Giorgio Germont: Anthony Michaels-Moore

*The Italian Girl in Algiers*

Gioachino Rossini 1813

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, November 8, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 14, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 16, 2014, 2014 2:00 p.m.

Director: Michael Cavanagh

Conductor: Leonardo Vordoni

Set Designer: Robert Innes Hopkins

Isabella: Irene Roberts

Mustafa: Patrick Carfizzi

Lindoro: Taylor Stayton

*Silent Night*

Kevin Puts 2011

Sung in English, German, French, Italian, and Latin with English titles

Saturday, February 21, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 27, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 1, 2015 2:00 p.m.

Director: Octavio Cardenas

Lt. Audebert: Liam Bonner

Anna Sorenson: Erin Wall

Lt. Horstmayer: Craig Irvin

Nikolaus Sprink: Sean Panikkar

Father Palmer: Daniel Belcher

*Tosca*

Giacomo Puccini 1900

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

Saturday, April 18, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 24, 2015 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 26, 2015 2:00 p.m.

Director: Garnett Bruce

Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Floria Tosca: Melody Moore

Mario Cavaradossi: James Valenti

Baron Scarpia: Gordon Hawkins

Sacristan: Julien Robbins

**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 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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