

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City's Resident Artists Win International Awards

Samantha Gossard Wins Prestigious William Matheus
Sullivan Musical Foundation Award and John Viscardi
Wins Top Prize at Tosti Competition

Kansas City, MO (Dec. 19, 2016) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced that two [Lyric Opera of Kansas City Resident Artists](#) have won international awards. **Samantha Gossard** has won the prestigious William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation Award and **John Viscardi** has won top prize in the international Tosti competition in Italy.

"We couldn't be more proud of our inaugural class of Resident Artists. This program identifies and provides professional training and performance experience to some of the most gifted young operatic talent in our country. We share them enthusiastically with the Kansas City community, and then the world. These awards also recognize that the Lyric Opera has joined the ranks of other distinguished opera companies in North America who commit to nurturing the next generation of exceptional artists for opera," stated Sandler. "We hope you will take every opportunity to hear them while they are still in Kansas City. Look for them to be featured in our upcoming Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters* January 28 and 29 at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building at the Richard J. Stern Opera Center. You will not be disappointed."

[The William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation](#) awarded fifteen \$12,000 grants to young artists who auditioned for the Foundation in New York on November 13 and 14, 2016. In addition to these cash awards, winners will participate in the five-year program of continued financial aid for coaching in new roles which is one of the unique features of the Sullivan awards. Judges for the auditions were Susanne Mentzer, Bruce Donnell, and Evans Mirageas. The Foundation was established in 1956 through the will of William Matheus Sullivan, a prominent New York lawyer and opera-lover who presented opera performances sung by Metropolitan Opera artists in his country home in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

[The National Institute Tostiano](#) hosted the sixth international competition on December 2 dedicated to Francesco Paolo Tosti, the Ortona composer known throughout the world. The Jury

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included Francesco Telli, President of the Jury and composer/professor of Conservatory of Music Santa Cecilia composition, Rome; Emanuele Moris (UK), Guildhall School of Music, London; Glenn Morton (USA), Teacher, Manhattan School of Music and Mannes College- The New School for Music, New York; Miwako Matsumoto (Japan), Soprano, interpreter of Tosti's repertoire in Japan and professor, University of Tokyo Musashino Academia Musical; and Luisa Prayer (Italy), pianist, artistic director of Symphonic Institution of Abruzzo, L'Aquila. The First Prize winner receives 7000 euros and a concert to be programmed in 2017-18 in Italy, and Nara, Japan.

During their Residency, in addition to appearing in mainstage roles, the Resident Artists 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 have completed their post-graduate education and may have some professional experience. The Resident Artists have a full time 8-month contract for one or two years.

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 2016-2017 Resident Artists

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 has performed the critically acclaimed role of Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and will perform the role Jade Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*, and Kate in *Pirates of Penzance*. She will also be featured with Resident Artist coach accompanist Kyle Naig, along with fellow Resident Artists April Martin and Casey Candebat. in the upcoming **Explorations** series, Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*, January 28 and 29 at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building at the Richard J. Stern Opera Center.

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

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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*. He will also be featured along with fellow Resident Artists April Martin and Casey Candebat. in the upcoming **Explorations** series, Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*, January 28 and 29 at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building at the Richard J. Stern Opera Center.

Soprano April Martin, and tenor Casey Candebat along with coach-accompanist Kyle Naig, round out the roster of the inaugural class of Resident Artists. Ms. Martin and Mr. Candebat will appear in Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters* along with Ms. Gossard and Mr. Viscardi.

2016-2017 Season at a Glance:

Hansel and Gretel

Engelbert Humperdinck 1893

Sung in German with English subtitles

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/Choreographer: Doug Varone

Conductor: John Keenan

Hansel: Megan Marino

Gretel: Rachele Gilmore

Witch/Mother: Victoria Livengood

Peter: Troy Cook

Sandman: Laurel Weir

Dew Fairy: April Martin

The Marriage of Figaro

CO-PRODUCTION with Opera Philadelphia, San Diego Opera and Palm Beach Opera

Debut at Lyric Opera of Kansas City

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

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Costume Designer: Leslie Travers
Lighting Designer: Thomas C. Hase
Count Almaviva: Edward Parks
Countess Almaviva: Katie Van Kooten
Figaro: Adam Lau
Susanna: Maureen McKay
Dr. Bartolo: Arthur Woodley
Marcellina: Margaret Gawrysiak
Don Basilio/Don Curzio: Steven Cole
Cherubino: Samantha Gossard
Babarina: April Martin
Antonio: Rhys Lloyd Talbot

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
Father Grenville: Casey Candebat
Jade Boucher: Samantha Gossard
Howard Boucher: Brian Frutiger
Kitty Hart: April Martin
Motorcycle Cop: John Viscardi
George Benton: Jeffrey Beruan
Prison Guard #1: Rhys Lloyd Talbot
Prison Guard #2: Armando Contreras

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.
Saturday, April 29, 2017	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 30, 2017	2:00 p.m.

Director: James Alexander
Conductor: Hal France
Mabel: Anya Matanovic
Frederic: Jonathan Johnson

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The Pirate King: Kevin Burdette
Major-General Stanley: Robert Gibby Brand
Ruth: Margaret Gawrysiak
Sergeant of Police: Ben Wager
Edith: April Martin
Kate: Samantha Gossard
Samuel: Rhys Lloyd Talbot

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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