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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Presents *Il Trovatore*

Traditional production presented with new technology
Prestigious conductor makes Company debut
Acclaimed cast anchored by emerging Russian baritone

Kansas City, MO (September 18, 2012) – After a 29-year absence from the Lyric Opera of Kansas City repertoire, the Company presents Verdi's *Il Trovatore* November 3, 7, 9, 11, 2012 at the Kauffman Center of the Performing Arts.

“Verdi’s opera of lust, love, power and vengeance has thrilled audiences since its premiere,” notes Lyric Opera General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler. “We have assembled a talented artistic team which is integrating new theatrical technologies into this popular work. This production will be a memorable reintroduction of Verdi’s masterpiece to Kansas City audiences.”

Traditional production presented with new technology

This traditional production of *Il Trovatore* will combine new technologies with customary scenic design to present the story in a manner which could not have been realized before the Company moved its productions to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. This production will utilize front and rear projections inspired by the Spanish painter El Greco and created especially for this Lyric Opera production.

“Our *Il Trovatore* will be opera presented in a grand way. The projections will heighten the deep emotional torment felt by the opera’s characters as opposed to showing literal scene locations.” notes R. Keith Brumley, Lyric Opera Director of Design and

Technical Production. Mr. Brumley is working closely with the stage director to create this new interpretation while preserving the traditional nature of the opera.

Visionary stage director Kathleen Smith Belcher will return to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City to direct this production, having last directed *La Traviata* with the Company in 2009. Ms. Belcher is in her 11th year as a member of the directing staff at The Metropolitan Opera and is a resident of Liberty, Missouri. She has worked extensively with the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera and the San Diego Opera. Ms. Belcher assisted Peter Sellars on the world premiere of John Adams' *Dr. Atomic* in San Francisco and has worked with acclaimed directors Woody Allen, Anthony Minghella, Bartlett Sher and Julie Taymor.

Prestigious conductor makes Company debut

Guest Conductor John Keenan will make his Company debut and international production debut conducting *Il Trovatore* with this production. Mr. Keenan has a long – standing relationship with the Metropolitan Opera, having made his debut with that company at 26 years old. Recent credits with The Metropolitan Opera include Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Das Rheingold* with James Morris and *Gotterdammerung* with Deborah Voigt.

“It was with thoughtful consideration that we engaged guest conductor John Keenan,” noted Artistic Director Ward Holmquist. “John’s incredible skills as a conductor are suited perfectly to this work – a composition that includes the singular greatest string of memorable opera melodies Verdi composed.”

Mr. Keenan is a frequent guest conductor at the prestigious Kirov Opera (Mariinsky Theatre) in St. Petersburg, Russia. He also has conducted with the Canadian Opera Company, Opéra de Montréal, Los Angeles Opera, New Zealand Symphony, and Santa Fe Opera, among many others.

Acclaimed cast anchored by emerging Russian baritone

Russian baritone Roman Burdenko will sing the role of Count di Luna. Mr. Burdenko makes his Lyric Opera debut with this role, and his appearance with the Company marks his second engagement within the United States. He has sung in houses across Europe and Asia, including at Opera de Strasbourg and Teatro Calderon Valladolid. Mr. Burdenko placed third in Placido Domingo's Operalia competition in Beijing, China this year and has covered roles at The Metropolitan Opera, and will perform at the Glyndebourne Festival, Komische Oper Berlin, and Mikhailovsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in upcoming seasons.

The role of Manrico will be sung by tenor Rafael Davila, who returns to the Lyric Opera having previously sung in the Company's productions of *Tosca* (2009) and *Norma* (2010). Mr. Davila has sung with the opera companies of Fort Worth, Austin, and New Jersey in the United States, and internationally at Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Opera de Puerto Rico, and will make his debut in Bilbao, Spain this season. Additionally, he makes his Washington National Opera debut this year reprising the role he originated in our Company's production of *Norma*.

Soprano Michele Capalbo will make her Lyric Opera debut in *Il Trovatore* singing the role of Leonora. Ms. Capalbo has sung at Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and many others. *Opera Canada* raved her performance of Leonora stating that she is "a rising superstar whose particularly luminous Leonora nearly stopped the show with her soaring bel canto aria 'D'amor sull'ali rosee...' enthralling the audience with her impeccable control and feather-light pianissimo."

Native Kansan and mezzo-soprano Nancy Maultsby will make her Lyric Opera debut singing the role of Azucena. A regular singer at The Metropolitan Opera, Ms. Maultsby also has sung with Lyric Opera Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Pittsburgh Opera and Royal Opera, Covent Garden. She also appeared in the recent Stephen Wadsworth *Ring* cycle for Seattle Opera, singing the role of Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and the role of Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*.

Principal Cast

Count di Luna: Roman Brudenko*

Manrico: Rafael Davila

Leonora: Michele Capalbo*

Azucena: Nancy Maultsby*

Ferrando: Kirk Eichelberger*

Ruiz: Benjamin Cleveland +*

Inez: Tara Curtis+*

Artistic Staff:

Director: Kathleen Belcher

Conductor: John Keenan

Set: Opera Carolina

Projections: Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Costumes: Seattle Opera Costume Shop
Costume Designer: John Conklin
Lighting Designer: Michael Baumgarten
Wig and Make-Up Designer: Joanne Middleton Weaver
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell
Props Master: Deborah Morgan
Stage Manager: Erin Thompson-Janszen

About *Il Trovatore*

Nobility, gypsies, murders, curses, kidnappings, a suicide, and a love triangle all combined with a sensational Verdi score no – wonder this opera has been bringing audiences to their feet since its premiere. This opera is filled with show-stopping music including the legendary “Anvil Chorus”.

Il Trovatore will be sung in Italian with English titles visible on personal monitors mounted on each audience member’s seatback in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre. This production will be performed in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 1601 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64108.

Performance dates are as follows:

Saturday, November 3, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 7, 2012 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 9, 2012 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 11, 2012 2:00 p.m.

Ticket availability varies by performance. To purchase tickets, call 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. A limited number of student rush tickets are available for \$15 one hour prior the performances. Students must present a valid student ID and pay in cash at the Kauffman Center ticket office.

Opera Previews

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 Debra Karr will lead the 25-minute talks.

Il Trovatore “At Ease with Opera” Presentations:

“At Ease with Opera” is presented free of charge by the Lyric Opera Guild at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO).

Monday, October 15, 7:00 p.m. “What’s Opera, Doc?” by Dr. Charles Gibbs, local opera fan. This program will show the famous Looney Tunes opera cartoons with Bugs Bunny and other characters, interspersed with comments about the opera tunes and plots which are featured in the cartoons.

Monday, October 22, 7:00 p.m. “Famous Leonoras” by Richard Byrum, Lyric Opera Guild preview speaker. This will contain audio and video excerpts of famous singers throughout the years who have portrayed the crucial role of Leonora in *Il Trovatore*.

Monday, October 29, 7:00 p.m. “A Plot Only a Gypsy Mother Would Love” by Debra Karr. This will be an in-depth preview of *Il Trovatore*, focusing on the rather improbable nature of the plot, along with musical highlights and other highlights of this popular opera.

The Bohemians: Young Friends of the Lyric Opera

The Bohemians is the Lyric Opera organization for young professionals (age 21-40). The Bohemians offer great opportunities to get involved in the community, meet other young adults, and learn a little something about opera too! Bohemians enjoy discounted single tickets, monthly Third Friday Happy Hour gatherings at local hot spots, and special invitations to exclusive events. In addition to attending the Saturday night performance of *Il Trovatore* on November 3, 2012 at 7:30 p.m., the Bohemians gather for dinner prior to Saturday night performances at one of the many Lyric Opera restaurant partners, where ticket holders receive discounted meals when they show their performance ticket. To learn more, email bohemians@kcoopera.org.

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 patrons of Kansas City 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 20,000 students and educators each year.

New Leadership at the Lyric Opera

On July 1st, 2012, Deborah Sandler began her tenure as new Executive Director and CEO at the Lyric Opera. Previously, Ms. Sandler served as General Director of Opera Festival of New Jersey, in Princeton, NJ for ten years and then as General Director of Kentucky Opera. During her tenure in each of these companies, Ms. Sandler developed institutional resources and capacities resulting in the growth and acclaim of each company. Ms. Sandler has a commitment to deepening community connections through the creation of programs which involve and engage audiences of diverse ages. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ms. Sandler received her Bachelor's of Arts in Music from Temple University and a Master's degree in Musicology from New York University. Ms. Sandler also has studied at the Mandel Center for Nonprofits at Case Western Reserve and at the Fundraising School at Indiana University.

Building for Success

On July 5, 2012, the Lyric Opera moved from its temporary home to the new Opera Center located at 1725 Holmes.

The Opera Center complex consists of two buildings: a Production Arts building and an Administrative building with set rental inventory storage. The Production Arts building includes a rehearsal space that matches the footprint of the stage of 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 did not exist until now 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.

Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a new multi-venue center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie, opened in Kansas City September 16, 2011. The Kauffman Center seeks to enrich the lives of all Greater Kansas City residents by presenting vibrant performances, educational programming, and creating a tradition 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's two performance venues. The 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall and the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre 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 dramatic 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 www.kauffmancenter.org.

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 production is made possible with funding from Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, Hall Family Foundation, Lyric Opera of Kansas City Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, ArtsKC and Missouri Art Council.

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