

# LYRIC OPERA

## KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Lyric Opera of Kansas City Presents *Vinson Cole & Friends*

**Sun., Jan. 11, 2015 at 4pm at historic Folly Theatre**

*Benefit for Lyric Opera to feature Christine Brewer and Daniel Belcher for a night of dazzling music and a celebration of opera*

**Kansas City, MO (Nov. 16, 2014)** – Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues its 57<sup>th</sup> season with a very special event, *Vinson Cole & Friends*, on Sunday, January 11, 2015 at 4pm at the historic Folly Theatre. This benefit for Lyric Opera will include Christine Brewer and Daniel Belcher for an evening of opera classics. All have strong Missouri ties: Daniel Belcher called Kansas City home for several years and performed with Lyric Opera of Kansas City several times. Christine Brewer began her career with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and performed several times with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Vinson Cole, a beloved Kansas City treasure, received his training at University of Missouri-Kansas City and is currently a member of the faculty of their Conservatory of Music and Dance.

This concert, co-chaired by Mr. J. Michael Sigler and Dr. Maria Kunstader, **will honor Vinson Cole for his illustrious career and recognize his contributions to music in Kansas City and around the world.** A reception will follow with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres at the Folly. Tickets range from \$20 – \$125 and can be purchased at 816.471.7344 or online at [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org). Patrons can choose special tickets that include a reception following the concert with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres at the Folly. High resolution headshots can be found [here](#).

“Kansas City has many boasting rights,” said Deborah Sandler, General Director and CEO of Lyric Opera of Kansas City. “Among them is counting some 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 want to celebrate his achievements. Helping to honor him are two other operatic stars, Christine Brewer and Daniel Belcher.”

Born in 1950, tenor Vinson Cole 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*.

As a teacher, Cole has taught at the University Washington School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music, the Aspen Music Festival and School, 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 and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Grammy Award-winning American soprano Christine Brewer is known for her unique timbre, at once warm and brilliant, combined with a vibrant personality and emotional honesty reminiscent of the great sopranos of the past. She was named one of the top 20 sopranos of all time by BBC Music. Highlights of her career include performances with the Boston, Atlanta, San Francisco, Toronto, and Chicago Symphonies. In 2011 she debuted in the iconic title role of Puccini's *Turandot* in a concert performance at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Brewer has performed at such prestigious venues as Carnegie's Zankel Hall, London's Wigmore Hall, Oberlin Conservatory, the Friends of Chamber Music, Washington, D.C.'s Vocal Arts Society, and many others. On the opera stage, Brewer is highly acclaimed for her portrayal of the title role in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which she has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Théâtre du Châtelet, Santa Fe Opera, English National Opera, and Opera Theater of St. Louis.

Grammy Award-winning American baritone Daniel Belcher has a 50-role repertoire that has taken him to many of the world's music capitals including Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Stuttgart, and many more. In 2004, Belcher received international attention for creating the role of Prior Walter in Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America* for the *Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris. Belcher is a graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio and has returned there to perform numerous roles such as Billy Budd in *Billy Budd*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Schaunard in *La bohème* and Mercutio in *Roméo and Juliette*. Belcher is one of the premiere interpreters of Rossini performing today, and is well known for the roles of Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Taddeo in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Belcher is a recipient of the International Circle of Friends and Patrons of Théâtre du Châtelet Award for his performance in *Angels in America*. He has performed Dandini in *Le Cenerentola*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, and Captain Corcoran in *HMS Pinafore* for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

## **Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2014-2015 Season at a Glance:**

### *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

**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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