

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Announces Launch of ***Explorations***, a
New Performance Series that Features
Schubert | Beatles,
Elvis Costello's The Juliet Letters and
two other concerts of musical discovery
Eclectic Performances at Lyric Opera Production Arts Building and Other Venues
Throughout 2016-2017 Season

Kansas City, MO (July 11, 2016) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced the ***Explorations*** Series, a new initiative of Lyric Opera of Kansas City. This series of four performances, in the 2016-2017 season, features an eclectic array of works to be performed in The Lyric's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building in the Crossroads District and Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral. ***Explorations*** will feature adventurous programming that crosses musical borders, experiments with a wider range of genres, and illuminates the intersection of classical music with various streams of popular music. Sandler stated, "This programming diversity allows us to touch audiences in new and personal ways, while expanding the range of our offerings. We believe the intimacy of our ***Explorations*** performances will create a new kind of experience for audiences. This new series will also showcase the extremely talented singers in our Resident Artist Program, along with other guest artists."

Explorations is made possible by a generous donation from the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation and the Thomas and Sally Wood Family Foundation.

Explorations 2016-2017

Meet the Resident Artists

Lyric Opera Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building
712 E. 18th St., East Crossroads, Kansas City, MO
Sunday, Sept. 11, 2 p.m.
Reception following concert
FREE

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Schubert | Beatles

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral
415 W. 13th St, downtown Kansas City, MO
Saturday, Oct. 1, 8 p.m.
Reception following concert
\$30 for subscribers/ \$35 for non-subscribers

This fascinating program combines Schubert *Lieder* with special arrangements of songs by the Beatles in a format that showcases their similarities and differences. Pianists **Steven Blier** and **Michael Barrett**, along with violinist **Charles Yang**, soprano **Sari Gruber**, tenor **Andrew Owens** and baritone **Theo Hoffmann**, explore the music and the connections between these iconic artists, who captured the spirit of their age. The program is a collaboration with the New York Festival of Song, with its vision of reinventing the classical solo song recital as an experience of musical discovery, presenting familiar repertory in contexts that allow us to hear it in a new way.

The performance will feature two meteoric musical careers that captured the ethos of their eras, a dual repertoire of songs so iconic as to have assumed the status of folk music: Franz Schubert and the team of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. The driving beat of Schubert and the exquisite lyricism of the Beatles will be highlighted, with titles ranging from "Der Wanderer an den Mond" to "She's Leaving Home." In an *Opera News* review, Maria Mazzaro stated, "The songs somehow were all transformed into the finest eleven o'clock ballads any classic musical ever heard, proving that the Beatles were a heck of a lot more than the average pop musicians."

Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*

Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building
712 E. 18th Street, East Crossroads, Kansas City, MO
Saturday, January 28, 8 p.m. and Sunday, January 29, 2 p.m.
Reception following concert
\$30 for subscribers/ \$35 for non-subscribers

Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters* were written in 1992 and recorded by the artist himself, together with the Brodsky Quartet. A set of 17 songs for voice and string quartet, with a few quartet-only interludes, they had an unusual inspiration: Costello heard that the lovelorn actually write letters to Shakespeare's Juliet and leave them at her supposed 'balcony' in Verona, Italy. Costello came up with his own stylized "letters" and set them to music, using the idea as a platform for the exploration of young love. Musically the material lies somewhere between that of his pop albums and his Shakespearean orchestral ballet *Il Sogno* of 2004, a more purely "classical" work. Elvis Costello's emotional and poignant renderings of some of these letters became the song cycle *The Juliet Letters*. The program will be sung by the Lyric Opera Resident Artists accompanied by a String Quartet within a special scenic environment created for this concert.

Rolling Stone stated, "While a project as ambitious as *The Juliet Letters* might have wound up mired in sentimentality and pretension, the singer and his collaborators have created something that is as accomplished as it is moving."

Art Songs Series: American Voices

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Lyric Opera Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

Sunday, March 26, 2 p.m.

Reception following concert

\$15 for subscribers/ \$20 for non-subscribers

Our resident artists perform song cycles by contemporary American composers, with selections from among the compositions of Jake Heggie (composer of the opera *Dead Man Walking*, one of the productions in the Lyric Opera's 2016-17 season), Lori Laitman, Robert Paterson, and Gabriel Kahane, and others.

In addition to the launch of *Explorations*, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City recently announced the selection of the inaugural class of the Resident Artists Program. They include: soprano **April Martin**, mezzo-soprano **Samantha Gossard**, tenor **Casey Candebat**, baritone **John Viscardi**, and pianist **Kyle Naig**.

They will perform in various roles throughout the 2016-17 season on the mainstage at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts as well as at community outreach and education events. The artists were selected after a rigorous national audition of hundreds of singers. The Resident Artists Program is led by **Vinson Cole**, UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance faculty member and one of the leading artists of his generation.

Reservations are required for all *Explorations* performances. To purchase tickets, visit kcopera.org or call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). For more information, please visit www.kcopera.org.

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: Doug Varone

Conductor: John Keenan

Hansel: Megan Marino

Gretel: Rachele Gilmore

Witch/Mother: Victoria Livengood

Peter: Troy Cook

NEW CO-PRODUCTION with Opera Philadelphia and San Diego Opera

Debut at Lyric Opera of Kansas City

The Marriage of Figaro

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.

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Friday, November 11, 2016 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 13, 2016 2:00 p.m.

Director: Stephen Lawless
Conductor: Ryan McAdams
Count Almaviva: Edward Parks
Countess Almaviva: Katie Van Kooten
Figaro: Adam Lau
Susanna: Maureen McKay
Dr. Bartolo: Arthur Woodley
Marcellina: Catherine Cook
Don Basilio/Don Curzio: Steven Cole

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

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

Director: James Alexander
Conductor: Hal France
Mabel: Anya Matanovic
Frederic: Jonathan Johnson
The Pirate King: Kevin Burdette
Major-General Stanley: Robert Gibby Brand
Ruth: Margaret Gawryslak
Sergeant of Police: Ben Wager

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 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

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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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