

# LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For Tickets: [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org) or 816.471.7344

Lyric Opera of Kansas City's  
*Explorations* Series  
Continues with  
**Laura Kaminsky's *As One***

*A Powerful and Moving One-Act Opera for Our Times:  
At the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building Jan. 27-28*

**Kansas City, MO (Jan. 9, 2018)** – Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *Explorations* series continues with Laura Kaminsky's *As One*, Jan. 27 and 28 at the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building in the Crossroads. *Explorations* features eclectic programs in intimate spaces, with programming that crosses musical borders and experiments with a wide range of lyrical expression.

From the fertile imaginations of composer Laura Kaminsky and co-librettists Mark Campbell and filmmaker Kimberly Reed, *As One* is a one-act chamber opera for two singers and string quartet. *As One* captures the experiences of its sole transgender protagonist, Hannah, through the voices of a baritone (Wes Mason as Hannah *Before*) and a mezzo-soprano (Blythe Gaissert as Hannah *After*). Hannah endeavors to resolve the discord between herself and the outside world through these two strong voices, creating a dramatic tension that brilliantly reflects the contemporary challenges of gender and identity. Audiences watch Hannah's growing sense of self over the course of 15 songs, from football quarterback fighting feminine impulses to the joyous moment of being recognized on the street with a stranger's words, "pardon me, miss."

The production creates a universal story with "winning humor and a satisfying emotional arc...*As One* forces you to think, simultaneously challenging preconceptions and inspiring empathy..." (New York Times) The *New York Classical Review* writes: "*As One* is everything that we hope for in contemporary opera: topical, poignant, daring, and beautifully written." And *Opera News* called *As One* "a piece that haunts and challenges its audience with questions about identity, authenticity, compassion and the human desire for self-love and peace."

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*As One* was commissioned by American Opera Projects and premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2014 to unanimously positive reviews. Propelled forward by Ms. Kaminsky's pulsating score, the two singers share the stage throughout the intimate production, coexisting in harmonic tension until each song's final line, when they sing in unison: "as one." "Musically, the score allows each scene to go where it needs to, and in a clear dramatic trajectory." (Operavore.) Video projections, created by filmmaker and co-librettist Kimberly Reed, add context to Hannah's story.

Opera America reports that *As One* is one of the most widely produced new operas in recent history. "The popularity of *As One* is very gratifying," wrote the creative team. "Even more gratifying to us is how the opera's message about human rights is reaching so many people."

"I'm especially delighted to share this universal and deeply moving production with Kansas City," commented Lyric Opera of Kansas City General Director and CEO **Deborah Sandler**. "Hannah's character is very real. The empathetic story is compelling and genuine, and could not be more relevant to today's pressing issues of gender diversity, recognition and self-acceptance." The Explorations Series was created for just such an intimate production, Sandler added: "**Explorations** allows us to touch audiences in new and personal ways, while expanding the range of our offerings."

### Cast and Creative Team

View *As One* cast and artistic team biographies at <https://kcopera.org/performances/as-one-18/>

Hannah Before  
Hannah After

Wes Mason  
Blythe Gaissert

Composer  
Co-librettists  
Conductor  
Director  
Music

Laura Kaminsky  
Mark Campbell and filmmaker Kimberly Reed  
Robert Wood  
Mary Birnbaum  
Fry Street Quartet (Anne Francis Bayless, Rebecca McFaul, Bradley Ottesen, Robert Waters)

### Related Events

Please join us for our **FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS** that will explore this fascinating new opera and the important social questions it raises.

#### ***Journey to Self: An As One Open House***

Saturday, January 13 | 1:00 pm Reception; 2:00 pm Preview

Michael & Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

712 E 18th St, Kansas City, MO 64108

Featuring a taped interview with the opera's creators discussing the making of this innovative work of art, a screening of Kimberly Reed's appearance on The Moth Radio Hour, a selection from the opera sung by Lyric Opera's Resident Artists, and a performance by Transfinity | A Chorus for All Voices

RSVP encouraged at [kcopera.org/AsOneJourney](https://kcopera.org/AsOneJourney)

#### ***Explore the Score: The Music of As One***

Tuesday, January 23 | 7:00 pm

Michael & Ginger Frost Production Arts Building

712 E 18th St, Kansas City, MO 64108

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**Laura Kaminsky's *As One* Jan 27-28**

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Conductor Robert Wood and director Mary Birnbaum will take you through the music and story of *As One*. Learn from the artists themselves how Laura Kaminsky's gorgeous score creates the perfect backdrop for Hannah's journey to self-realization. RSVP encouraged at [kcopera.org/AsOneJourney](http://kcopera.org/AsOneJourney)

### ***As One Talk-Backs***

Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building  
712 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, East Crossroads, Kansas City, MO, 64108  
Saturday, January 27, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, January 28, 2 p.m. (Following each performance)

*As One* is an 75-minute opera with no intermission. However, please stay after the performance for an intimate talk-back with composer Laura Kaminsky and librettist Mark Campbell, and the community. Talk-backs will follow each performance, and will include discussion about the making of the opera and the important social questions it raises.

Tickets to *As One* are \$25.

To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344. Patrons can purchase and print their tickets at home by visiting [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org). Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, 90 minutes before the performances, with a valid student ID. Capacity is limited.

***Explorations Series*** season sponsored by Virginia & Charles Clark and Spencer Fane, LLP. Additional Support from The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation and The Estate of Richard Hill, Charter. *As One* is underwritten by Reach Out Kansas, Inc.

### **2017-2018 Season at a Glance:**

\* Lyric Opera debut

#### ***Rigoletto***

Giuseppe Verdi, 1851  
Sung in Italian with English subtitles

<b>Saturday, March 3, 2018</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 7, 2018</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Friday, March 9, 2018</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Sunday, March 11, 2018</b>	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>

Director: David Gately  
Conductor: David Charles Abell  
Rigoletto: Leo An \*  
Gilda: Nicole Haslett \*  
Count Monterone: Andrew Gangestad  
Duke: Scott Quinn  
Maddalena: Zanda Švėde  
Sparafucile: Peixin Chen \*  
Marullo: Tim Murray  
Giovanna: Alice Chung  
Countess Ceprano: Lauren Auge\*  
Page: Marlen Nahhas\*  
Usher: Armando Contreras  
Borsa: Martin Luther Clark

#### ***REIMAGINED PRODUCTION***

***The Barber of Seville***  
Gioachino Rossini, 1816

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Sung in Italian with English subtitles

**Saturday, April 28, 2018** 7:30 p.m.  
**Wednesday, May 2, 2018** 7:30 p.m.  
**Friday, May 4, 2018** 7:30 p.m.  
**Sunday, May 6, 2018** 2:00 p.m.

Director: Michael Shell \*

Conductor: Leonardo Vordoni

Lighting Designer: Driscoll Otto\*

Almaviva: Jack Swanson \*

Rosina: Cassandra Zoe Velasco \*

Figaro: Jarett Ott \*

Don Basilio: Brian Banion

Don Bartolo: Matthew Burns \*

Berta: Marlen Nahhas

Fiorello: Armando Contreras

Officer: Tim Murray

## About Lyric Opera of Kansas City

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 productions that enrich the community it serves, as well as reflect the highest artistic standards of the profession. 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 Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @kcopera or on Instagram @kcopera.

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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