

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City
2017-18 Season Continues with
Rigoletto

March 3, 7, 9 and 11 at
Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Kansas City, MO (Feb. 14, 2018) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues its 60th season with the Italian classic ***Rigoletto***, with music by Giuseppe Verdi and libretto by Francesco Maria Piave. Performances are March 3, 7, 9 and 11 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The production will be sung in Italian with English titles. High-res production and artist photos can be downloaded [here](#).

Lyric Opera of Kansas City returns to its Italian roots to revel in the gritty realism of Verdi's dark ***Rigoletto***, directed by **David Gately** and featuring major Lyric Opera debuts of **Leo An** as Rigoletto, **Nicole Haslett** as Gilda, and **Peixin Chen** as Sparafucile. Returns to Lyric Opera include **Scott Quinn** (Lyric Opera's *La traviata* in 2014) as Duke of Mantua, **Zanda Švėde** (title role in Lyric Opera's *Carmen* in 2016) as Maddalena, and **Andrew Gangestad** (Lyric Opera's *The Magic Flute* in 2013) as Count Monterone. Its highly recognizable melodies and often intimate tunes offer the small comfort of familiarity as the characters careen toward their intense and famously tragic end. Returning to Lyric Opera, **David Charles Abell** will conduct the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra.

The stellar principal cast is supplemented by all four singers in the 2017-18 class of Lyric Opera's Resident Artist program, including winners from the Kansas City District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in January 2018. Gaining important stage experience are soprano **Marlen Nahhas** as a Page, mezzo-soprano **Lauren Auge** as Countess Ceprano, baritone **Tim Murray** as Marullo, and tenor **Martin Luther Clark** as Matteo Borsa. Apprentice Artists **Alice Chung** and **Armando Contreras** are also cast as Giovanna and an Usher, respectively.

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Three things about RIGOLETTO

1. Using Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse* as his source, and a real French king as the villain, Verdi's first version of the opera didn't get past the censors; they took exception to the portrayal of an evil monarch, whose bad acts were not punished. Verdi fought the censors and almost gave up on the project, but eventually moved the action to Mantua and changed the king to a duke, satisfying the censors.
2. *Rigoletto* was a huge success for Verdi, due in no small part to the showstoppers "La donna è mobile," "Questa o quella," "Caro nome," and the famous quartet in Act III. Two of those big arias (and arguably the most famous one) were given to the villain, the Duke of Mantua.
3. The catchy melody of "La donna è mobile" has been used in dozens of commercial messages worldwide, to sell everything from tomato paste and cookies to men's body spray and Italian travel packages. Groupon used it most recently – changing the text – to sell coupons for ["things you do every day."](#)

Related Events

Explore the Score

Thursday, Feb. 15 7 p.m.

Join conductor **David Charles Abell** (*Silent Night 2015*, *Carmen 2016*) and stage director **David Gately** (*La Traviata 2014*) for a personal introduction to the music and characters of this Verdi masterpiece at the Michael & Ginger Frost Production Arts Building, 712 E 18th St., Kansas City, MO 64108. **FREE** Event, RSVP required at <https://kcopera.org/programs/community/rigoletto-community-events/> or by phone at (816) 471-7344.

First Friday, March 2, from 5 to 8 p.m. Presented by Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Young Friends of the Lyric at the Beth Ingram Administration Building (1725 Holmes, KCMO). The theme for March is "Twisted Love," and the event features the Resident Artists in selections from *Rigoletto*, refreshments (including "Love-Drunk Punch"), and a quiz themed "Fifty Shades of *La donna è mobile*." More information available [here](#).

***Rigoletto* "At Ease with Opera" Presentations:**

Monday, February 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. #METOO AND RIGOLETTO.** The opera *Rigoletto* is about one of the master sexual manipulators of all time and his innocent victim. Does this remind you of recent headlines? We are putting together a panel to discuss the way that this 19th-century opera foreshadows developments in our own day.

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Tuesday, February 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Verdi: The Galley Years.** Prior to composing *Rigoletto*, Giuseppe Verdi spent many years writing early works, slowly honing his craft. He later called these his “galley years,” and opera aficionados Bob Wise and Don Dagenais will explore them, complete with video and audio excerpts.

Monday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO 64110). **Free to the public. Rigoletto: Where Verdi Hits His Stride.** Join us as we explore the revolution in operatic composition that Giuseppe Verdi wrought with *Rigoletto*. We will discuss the compositional background, history, plot and music of one of Verdi’s greatest masterpieces. This program is designed for the novice and experienced opera-goer alike. Don Dagenais is the speaker.

Cast (View cast bios at the [Lyric Opera website](#))

The Duke of Mantua: Scott Quinn
Rigoletto: Leo An*
Gilda: Nicole Haslett*
Count Monterone: Andrew Gangestad
Sparafucile: Peixin Chen*
Maddalena: Zanda Švėde
Marullo: Tim Murray+
Matteo Borsa: Martin Luther Clark +
Count Ceprano: Evan Edwards
Giovanna: Alice Chung~
Countess Ceprano: Lauren Auge+*
A Page: Marlen Nahhas+*
Usher: Armando Contreras~

Creative Team (View creative team bios at the [Lyric Opera website](#))

Director: David Gately
Conductor: David Charles Abell
Set Designer: Lawrence Shafer, New Orleans Opera Association
Costume Designer: Jane Greenwood*, Lyric Opera of Chicago
Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith
Wig and Make-up Designer: Alison M. Hanks
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell

~ UMKC Apprentice
+ Resident Artist
@ former Lyric Opera Apprentice
* Lyric Opera Debut

Ticket availability varies by performance. To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344. Patrons can select their own seats and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available 90 minutes before performances for \$15, with a valid student ID.

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Young Friends of the Lyric

Young Friends of The Lyric provides an exciting outlet for young arts supporters (ages 21 and up) in Kansas City to get involved in the community, meet other young professionals and support Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Membership benefits include complimentary beverages at Lyric Opera performances, networking opportunities, restaurant discounts, invitations to special events and more.

Young Friends of the Lyric membership is \$40, and includes benefits for two for a full 12 months. To join, visit www.kcopera.org/yfl or contact Ticketing & Patron Services at 816-471-7344. Become a fan on [Facebook](#) @YoungFriendsLyric to keep up with current events.

About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is a major center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie, and opened September 2011. The Kauffman Center presents vibrant performances and advances the role 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. The Kauffman Center's two performance venues, the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall, 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 dynamic 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.

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is fully accessible and provides assistive listening devices plus Braille and large print programs. Service animals are welcome with advance notice. All dates, operas and artists are subject to change.

Visit www.kcopera.org for more information about Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2017-18 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

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Upcoming 2017-2018 Season at a Glance

REIMAGINED PRODUCTION

The Barber of Seville

Gioachino Rossini, 1816

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. Lyric Opera of Kansas City's production of *Rigoletto* is supported by the Master Craftsmen Foundation, Sherrill Mulhern.

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