

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Announces Latest
Explorations Series production
Mack The Knife is The Man I Love: A Weill-Gershwin Cabaret

***Cabaret to showcase Resident and Apprentice Artists Sat. Feb. 9 at the
Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building***

Kansas City, MO (Jan. 9, 2019) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced the next production of Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *Explorations Series*, *Mack The Knife is The Man I Love: A Weill-Gershwin Cabaret* which will feature the songs of George and Ira Gershwin and Kurt Weill. The 2018-2019 Explorations Series performance, with musical direction by Mark Markham and stage direction by Fenlon Lamb, will showcase the Lyric Opera's Resident Artists, including Kaylie Kahlich, Kelly Birch, Joseph Leppek, and James Maverick, plus Apprentice Artists Ruby Dibble, Jonathan Ray, and Armando Contreras. The performance will be held February 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building.

Mack The Knife is The Man I Love: A Weill-Gershwin Cabaret

Featuring the songs of George and Ira Gershwin and Kurt Weill
Sat., Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building
712 E. 18th Street, Kansas City, MO, 64108 (East Crossroads)

Kurt Weill and the Gershwins contributed significantly to a set of works that would truly "set the standard" for American popular song. Enjoy a slate of standards, such as "I Got Rhythm," "S Wonderful," "September Song," and "Mack the Knife" in a cabaret setting that promises to chase away the winter blues. General admission tickets include a complimentary glass of wine during the performance.

The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild will provide a reception immediately following the performance. Tickets to *Mack The Knife is The Man I Love: A Weill-Gershwin Cabaret* are \$30. To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services at (816) 471-7344. Patrons can purchase and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, starting 90 minutes before the performance, with a valid student ID. Capacity is limited.

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Mack the Knife is The Man I Love is sponsored by Virginia and Charles Clark. Lyric Opera's Explorations Series is sponsored by Spencer Fane LLP, and the William Randolph Hearst Endowed Fund at Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

About the Creative Team

Music Director **Mark Markham** is considered one of the finest artists of his generation, with an exceptionally wide breadth of repertoire. Equally at home as a soloist, a collaborator with singers, a chamber musician, a jazz pianist, or a vocal coach, his interpretations have been praised by the public and press alike. His international career encompasses performances in North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, while the artistry of his playing has been described as "brilliant", "exquisitely detailed" and "in full service to the music."

markmarkhampianist.com

Director **Fenlon Lamb** returns to Lyric Opera of Kansas City after leading the noteworthy production of Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters* for the inaugural season of the *Explorations Series* in 2017. She is the co-creator and Artistic Director of Papermoon Opera Productions. Their production of *La voix humaine* was just awarded first prize in the National Opera Association Competition. Lamb recently directed the world premiere production of *Riders of the Purple Sage* for Arizona Opera and returned in Fall 2018 for a new production of *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*. She is the Director of Opera and Vocal Programming at the Bar Harbor Music Festival.

Kurt Weill (March 2, 1900 – April 3, 1950) was a German Jewish composer, active from the 1920s in his native country, and in his later years in the United States. He was a leading composer for the stage who was best known for his fruitful collaborations with Bertolt Brecht. With Brecht, he developed productions such as his best-known work *The Threepenny Opera*, which included the ballad "Mack the Knife." Weill held the ideal of writing music that served a socially useful purpose. He also wrote several works for the concert hall. He became a United States citizen on August 27, 1943.

George Gershwin (born Jacob Bruskin Gershowitz, September 26, 1898 – July 11, 1937) was an American composer and pianist whose compositions spanned both popular and classical genres. Among his best-known works are the orchestral compositions *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and *An American in Paris*, the songs "Swanee" (1919) and "Fascinating Rhythm" (1924), the jazz standard "I Got Rhythm" (1930), and the opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935) which spawned the hit "Summertime."

Ira Gershwin (born Israel Gershowitz, December 6, 1896 – August 17, 1983) was an American lyricist who collaborated with his younger brother, composer George Gershwin, to create some of the most memorable songs of the 20th century. The success the Gershwin brothers had with their collaborative works has often overshadowed the creative role that Ira played. His mastery of songwriting continued, however, after the early death of George. He wrote additional hit songs with composers Jerome Kern, Kurt Weill, Harry Warren and Harold Arlen.

Resident Artist Program

Lyric Opera of Kansas City is committed to the future of opera as an art form. In 2016, Lyric launched the Resident Artists Program, creating a true Resident Company of artists beginning

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their career in opera. Artists are chosen following a series of local and national auditions and are overseen and mentored by renowned tenor Vinson Cole. During their residency, in addition to appearing on the Lyric stage, the Resident Artists work with visiting guest artists, conductors, and directors, perform in outreach programming throughout the community, participate in Master Classes and workshops, and receive career coaching and mentoring.

About the Resident Artists

Kaylie Kahlich, Soprano, received her Master's Degree in Voice Performance from the University of Houston Moores School of Music, and her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Baylor University. Professionally, Kahlich has sung roles for Operativo Houston and Miami Summer Music Festival. For the 2018-19 Season, Kahlich appears in *High Fidelity Opera*, and *Mack the Knife is The Man I Love* as part of the Explorations Series.

Kelly Birch, Mezzo-soprano, received her DMA in Vocal Performance from the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Professionally, Birch has sung roles for Topeka Symphony Orchestra, Opera NEO (San Diego), and the Varna International Opera Academy in Bulgaria. For the 2018-19 Season, Birch appears as Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* on the main stage, and in *High Fidelity Opera*, and *Mack the Knife is The Man I Love* as part of the Explorations Series.

Joseph Leppek, Tenor, received his Master's Degree in Voice Performance from Rice University and his Bachelor's Degree from DePauw University. Professionally, Leppek has sung roles for Michigan Opera Theatre, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Saratoga, and The Glimmerglass Festival. For the 2018-19 Season, Leppek appears as Glad Hand in *West Side Story* on the main stage, and in *High Fidelity Opera* and *Mack the Knife is The Man I Love* as part of the Explorations Series.

James Maverick, Pianist, is completing his second year of residency with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and is a graduate of Indiana University. Last season, Maverick served as rehearsal pianist and vocal coach for the Resident Artists in each of Lyric's four mainstage productions and played in the orchestra during *Everest*. Maverick has also coached at the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, and Indiana University Opera Theater.

Lyric Opera's Resident Artist Program was made possible by a generous donation from the Estate of Richard Hill, Charter Sponsor of the Resident Artist Program, the Ingram Family Foundation, and a generous anonymous donor.

Apprentice Artist Program

Separate from the Resident Artist Program, Lyric Opera's Apprentice Artist Program gives university vocal students the opportunity to gain valuable experience and training on their way to becoming professional opera singers. Throughout the season, our Apprentice Artists gain practical career experience working alongside the industry's most notable singers, conductors, and directors.

About the Apprentice Artists

Ruby Dibble, Mezzo-Soprano is a recent graduate of Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio. Dibble has been nationally recognized as the first-place winner of the 2018 FAVA Grand Concours as well as a national winner of the 2016 Shirley Rabb Winston and Bev Sellers

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scholarships in voice. Dibble debuted professionally with Lyric Opera of Kansas City as a chorus member in last season's *Eugene Onegin* and was featured in a principal role as Berta in *The Barber of Seville*. This season, Dibble appears in the chorus for *Madama Butterfly* and *The Pearl Fishers*.

Jonathan Ray, Tenor recently completed his doctoral studies in Vocal Performance and Choral Conducting at Louisiana State University. He also holds an MM in Vocal Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a BME from Arkansas Tech University. Last season at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Ray sang in the chorus for all four mainstage productions.

Armando Contreras, Baritone received his Master's Degree at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Contreras has appeared on Lyric Opera of Kansas City's stage in *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *The Barber of Seville*. For the 2018-19 season, Contreras sang the role of Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*.

Remaining 2018-2019 Season at a Glance:

Così fan tutte

Wolfgang A. Mozart, 1786

Sung in Italian with English subtitles

Saturday, March 16, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 22, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 24, 2019 2:00 p.m.

Conductor: Jane Glover * ☒ Director: James Alexander

The Pearl Fishers

Georges Bizet, 1863

Sung in French with English subtitles

Saturday, April 27, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 1, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 3, 2019 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 5, 2019 2:00 p.m.

Conductor: Antony Walker* ☒ Director: Andrew Sinclair*

* Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut

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

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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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