

# LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City  
Announces  
*Explorations Series* production  
***Penelope***

***Groundbreaking song cycle, based on The Odyssey, told from Penelope's point of view  
Sat. March 30 at  
Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building***

**Kansas City, MO (March 4, 2019) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler** today announced the final production of Lyric Opera of Kansas City's 2018-19 ***Explorations Series***, *Penelope*, a groundbreaking song cycle based on *The Odyssey*, as told from Penelope's point of view. Composed by Sarah Kirkland Snider, *Penelope* was named one of the five best genre-defying works in 2010 by National Public Radio. The performance, conducted by Carolyn Watson and directed by Alison Moritz, will be held March 30 at 7:30 p.m. at Lyric Opera's Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building. High res photos can be found [here](#).

*Penelope* originated as a music-theatre piece, co-written by playwright Ellen McLaughlin and Sarah Kirkland Snider in 2007-2008 and commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Center. Lyric Opera will debut a new edition of the work, for voice, string quintet, percussion, and electronica, and which will be produced with a great deal of local and regional talent, including KU conductor Carolyn Watson, and members of the string quintet, all based in the region.

In *Penelope*, a woman's husband appears at her door after an absence of twenty years, suffering from brain damage. A veteran of an unnamed war, he doesn't know who he is, and she doesn't know who he's become. While they wait together for his return to himself, she reads to him from *The Odyssey*, and in the journey of that book, she finds a way into her former husband's memory, and the terror and trauma of war.

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "Our *Explorations Series* is designed to bring new and important works to our audiences, particularly those which benefit from an intimate space, and those who ask 'what if...?'. In *Penelope*, we feature the work of Sarah Kirkland Snider, in a new version composed for Lyric Opera, and which takes another look at the return of Odysseus; as a result, the story is told from a fresh and unexpected point of view. Please join us

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in our new black box theater at the Opera Center, as we once again take you on an unforgettable journey.”

### **Penelope**

Sat., March 30, 7:30 p.m.

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

What happens when a soldier finally comes home—but remembers nothing? This groundbreaking song cycle, based on *The Odyssey* but told from Penelope’s point of view, is a meditation on the trauma of war, memory, and home. *Penelope* is sure to be touching, intimate, and dramatic.

*“PENELOPE paints the landscape of this tale of homecoming, epic and unheroic at once. Like the play where the modern experience of war is mediated through its ancient literary incarnation, her music embraces the expressive range of instruments from the violin family to the electric guitar and the laptop. Eloquently indifferent to the boundaries of style and genre, the music juxtaposes collective experiences crystallized in the vocabularies of romanticism, modernism, minimalism, folk and rock, as if to set in motion a diorama of the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Vietnam and beyond.”*

*– Murat Eyuboglu, filmmaker and photographer, about Sarah Kirkland Snider’s Penelope*

The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild will provide a reception immediately following the performance; additionally, there will be a talkback after the performance including composer Sarah Kirkland Snider, director Alison Moritz, and Annie Rosen, who portrays Penelope.

Tickets to *Penelope* 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](http://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.

The *Explorations Series* is sponsored by Spencer Fane, LLP, Virginia & Charles Clark, and the William Randolph Hearst Endowed Fund at Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

### **Cast and Creative Team (bios available at [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org))**

Penelope	Annie Rosen, mezzo-soprano *
Odysseus (spoken)	Michael Scahill *
Composer	Sarah Kirkland Snider
Librettist	Ellen McLaughlin
Conductor	Carolyn Watson
Director	Alison Moritz *

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String Quintet            Julie Rosenfeld, Violin \*  
                                 Amy Appold, Violin \*  
                                 Alyssa Bell, Viola \*  
                                 Eli Lara, Cello \*  
                                 Samuel Copeland, Contrabass \*  
Sound Design            Michael Hammond \*

Costume Designer        Nancy J. Robinson  
Lighting Designer        Mario Raymond  
Technical Director      Brad Kanouse

\* Lyric Opera debut

## RELATED EVENTS

### Read Along with *Penelope*

Sat., March 9, 11 a.m.

Join a “pop-up” book discussion at Lyric Opera’s Frost Production Arts Building (712 E. 18<sup>th</sup> KCMO 64108)

The noted author Margaret Atwood offers a shrewd, funny and insightful retelling of the myth of Odysseus from Penelope’s viewpoint, writing in the foreword, “I’ve chosen to give the telling of the story to Penelope and to the twelve hanged maids. I’ve always been haunted by the hanged maids and in *The Penelopiad*, so is Penelope herself.” Combine the sass and wit of Dorothy Parker with the drama of “Desperate Housewives” to get a lively twist on an ancient classic.

**FREE** Event, RSVP required to Kaite Stover, Director of Readers’ Services for the Kansas City Public Library at [kaitestover@kclibrary.org](mailto:kaitestover@kclibrary.org) or 816-701-3683.

## Remaining 2018-2019 Season at a Glance:

### *Così fan tutte*

Wolfgang A. Mozart, 1798

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.**

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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 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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**Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.213.4355. For Tickets: [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org) or 816.471.7344.**