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**Zany Pirates invade the Lyric Opera in *The Pirates of Penzance***

*International Opera Stars make Kansas City Debut at the Lyric Opera*

*World-renowned Director Shares Trademark Production*

*Conductor Comes Home to Conduct Lyric Opera Production*

*Local Favorites Perform Opera Classic Including KU Apprentices*

KANSAS CITY, MO. (March 27, 2009) – Gilbert & Sullivan’s swashbuckling tale of duty gone wrong will be produced by the Lyric Opera of Kansas City to conclude its 2008-2009 season April 25, 27, 29 & May 1, 3, 2009.

Audiences young and old will be swept away to the zany port of Penzance where everyone’s favorite “model of a modern major-general” will leave them aching from laughter over the slight miscalculation of a February 29<sup>th</sup> leap year birthday. Can contractual obligations, kidnapping, and fallen noblemen lead to love-struck couples living happily ever after?

**International Opera Stars make Kansas City Debut at the Lyric Opera**

Baritone **Markus Beam** (The Pirate King) is rapidly establishing himself as an up-and-coming force on the international operatic scene. As a former member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin he performed roles in *I Pagliacci*, *Carmina Burana*, *Das Rheingold*, *Germania* and *Arabella*.

This season he has performed in *La bohème* at Komische Oper Berlin and Oper Leipzig. In addition to his international career, Mr. Beam has performed with Santa Fe Opera, Opera Orchestra of New York, Virginia Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Wolf Trap Opera and Glimmerglass Opera.

Tenor **Chad A. Johnson** (Frederick) also is garnering attention and acclaim as an emerging opera star. Mr. Johnson’s Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance* at Glimmerglass Opera in 2006 was noted for “great comic skill and a surprisingly deft sense of physical comedy” (*The Post-Standard*).

This season Mr. Johnson has performed the title role in *Candide* for Lyric Opera of San Diego, and will perform in *Lakmé* at Florida Grand Opera. He has performed at Chicago Opera Theater, Mobile Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and in concert with the Atlanta Symphony.



Soprano **Nili Riemer** (Mabel) has been called a “show stealer” of a singer. This season she has performed in *La cenerentola* with Florida Grand Opera and *L’etoile* with Austin Lyric Opera. She has performed with Minnesota Opera, Tri-Cities Opera, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Mezzo-soprano **Jennifer Roderer** (Ruth) returns to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City after her triumphant turn in *The Turn of the Screw*, in which her singing was hailed as “vocally resplendent” and having “physical, dramatic and vocal strength” (*The Kansas City Star*). Ms. Roderer has garnered acclaim for her many roles at New York City Opera, including the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Jade Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*, and Cecilia March in *Little Women* during that company’s first tour of Japan.

### **World-renowned Director Shares Trademark Production**

Stage director Dorothy Danner turned to directing after performing in a dozen Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, including George Abbot’s *Once Upon A Mattress*. Ms. Danner danced on many television specials, Ed Sullivan shows, and in film, including Mel Brooks’ *The Producers*.

Ms. Danner is known for her inventive and fast-paced comedic style of direction. She has directed more than 150 operettas, musicals and plays throughout the U.S., Canada and Belgium, and has staged operas for many companies including Glimmerglass, Houston, Minnesota, Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Portland. Ms. Danner directed the 2006 Lyric Opera of Kansas City production of *The Merry Widow* and *The Most Happy Fella* (1983).

### **Conductor Comes Home to Conduct Lyric Opera Production**

Andy Anderson was named artistic director of the Mobile (AL) Opera in Spring 2008. Mr. Anderson was assistant conductor for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City for three years and conducted *The Barber of Seville* for the Company in 2007. He was founder and conductor of the Kansas City Puccini Festival for nine seasons and was the conductor of the Kansas City Civic Orchestra.

### **Local Favorites Perform Opera Classic Including KU Apprentices**

Baritone **Robert Gibby Brand** (Major General Stanley) is a familiar face to Kansas City audiences, having performed in *A Christmas Carol* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre, *I Am My Own Wife* at the Unicorn Theatre, and at Quality Hill Playhouse, Actors’ Theatre of Kansas City, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, the Kansas City Ballet, and others. Mr. Brand has performed numerous roles with the Company, including Koko in *The Mikado* (2001) and Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1991, 1997).

Bass **John Stephens** (Sergeant of Police) is professor and division director of voice at the University of Kansas. He has sung leading roles with numerous opera companies, including the Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Washington Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Glimmerglass Opera. Among Mr. Stephens’ roles with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City are



Governor Shannon/Governor Wise in the world premiere of *John Brown* (2008) the title role in *The Mikado* (2001).

**Graduate students from the University of Kansas** will round out the cast. **Robert McNichols, Jr.**, who has been seen in *John Brown* (2008), *Julius Caesar* (2008), and *La Traviata* (2009), will play the role of Samuel. **Catherine Ratliff** (Kate) and **Clare Mortimer Jacobs** (Edith) will make their debuts with the Company.

*The Pirates of Penzance Performance Information*

**Music by Gilbert & Sullivan**

**Performed in English with subtitles projected above the stage**

**Lyric Theatre, 11<sup>th</sup> and Central, Downtown Kansas City**

**5 performances: April 25, 27, 29 and May 1, 3, 2009**

Friday and Saturday performances begin at 8 p.m.; Monday and Wednesday curtains are at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday is a 2:00 p.m. matinee.

Audiences are invited and encouraged to attend a free opera preview in the theatre one hour before curtain, presented by the Lyric Opera Guild.

Ticket availability varies by performance. Limited student rush tickets are \$10 one hour before curtain, with valid ID. To purchase tickets, visit [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org), or call the ticket office at (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252).

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America, and this season is made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council.

### **Cast List**

The Pirate King: Markus Beam  
Frederick: Chad A. Johnson  
Ruth: Jennifer Roderer  
Samuel: Robert McNichols, Jr.  
Sergeant of Police: John Stephens  
Mabel: Nili Riemer  
Edith: Clare Mortimer Jacobs  
Kate: Catherine Ratliff  
Major General Stanley: Robert Brand



### **Artistic Staff**

Conductor: Andy Anderson  
Director: Dorothy Danner  
Scenic Designer: Peter Dean Beck  
Costumes Designer: Malabar  
Lighting Designer: Peter Dean Beck  
Chorusmaster/Accompanist Coach: Mark Ferrell  
Wig and Makeup Designer: Jan Delovage  
Production Stage Manager: Erin Thompson

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