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Lyric Opera of Kansas City perform *Così fan tutte* at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Kansas City, MO (October 3, 2011)— The Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues its 54th season with W. A. Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* performed at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, November 5 through 13.

“We wanted to follow our grand opening at the Kauffman Center with a chamber opera that showcases how intimate our new performance home can be,” notes **Lyric Opera General Director Evan Luskin**. “We also developed a list of composers to be represented in our first season here; Mozart could not be left out!”

“In casting this production I wanted to make sure that the singers cast in the roles were of similar age to the actual characters they will play,” notes **Lyric Opera Artistic Director Ward Holmquist**. “We are excited to have cast some of the best young singers on the opera scene in this production.”

Emerging opera stars take the stage in *Così fan tutte*

French **mezzo-soprano Marie Lenormand** makes her Lyric Opera debut as Dorabella. In 2010 she received the Grand Prix de la Critique, Revelation Musicale of the 2009-2010 season for her interpretation of *Mignon*, by Ambroise Thomas, in a widely acclaimed revival of the piece at the Opéra comique in Paris. Ms. Lenormand recently performed *Les Noces de Figaro* with Houston Grand Opera, *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* with Opéra de Massy, *Eugene Oneguine* with Opéra d’Avignon, and *Les Brigands* with Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux.

Soprano Amanda Hall makes her Lyric Opera debut as Fiordiligi. She has earned recognition for her performances of demanding roles on both the operatic and concert stages. Recent performances include the title role in *Rusalka* and the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for a performance of opera scenes with Yale Opera, the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Micaëla in *La Tragédie de Carmen*, both with Yale Opera.

Tenor Matthew Plenk will sing Ferrando in his Lyric Opera debut. Last season, Mr. Plenk returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and to the Boston Symphony Orchestra as the Shepherd in *Oedipus Rex*, conducted by James Levine. Recent engagements include *Così fan tutte* with Atlantic Opera and *Don Giovanni* with Boston Lyric Opera.

Baritone David Won will make his Lyric Opera debut as Guglielmo. He recently made his Seattle Opera debut in Spring 2010 in two roles: Ford in *Falstaff* and the Doctor in Daron Hagen's world premiere of *Amelia*. A recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's prestigious Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Mr. Won next returns to the Metropolitan Opera to perform Gregorio in *Romeo et Juliette* and to cover Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

Kansas City native and local favorite **Baritone John Stevens** will sing Don Alfonso. Mr. Stevens returns to the Lyric Opera after recently performing with the Company in *The Daughter of the Regiment* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. His first production with the Company was as Calchus in *La belle Hélène*. Other recent performances include *Billy Budd* with Santa Fe Opera, *Il Trovatore* with New Orleans Opera, and *Così fan tutte* with Opera Saratoga.

Mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer is making her Lyric Opera debut as Despina. "The mezzo's vocally impeccable, emotionally compelling performance proved that she is among the premier art-song interpreters of our day," noted *Opera News* for a 2005 performance at Zankel Hall in New York City. Recent performances by Ms. Mentzer include *Dead Man Walking* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Houston Grand Opera, *Eugene Onegin* with Pittsburgh Opera, and *The Golden Ticket* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

Director Kristine McIntyre has staged operas at every major opera house in America including at The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Opera Boston. Ms. McIntyre returns to the Lyric Opera having directed *Norma* in 2010, the world premiere production of Kirke Mechem's *John Brown* in 2008, and Jake Heggie's acclaimed *The End of the Affair* in 2007. During the 2011-2012 season, Ms. McIntyre will

direct *Carmen* for Kentucky Opera, *Madama Butterfly* for Arizona Opera and *Tosca* for Pittsburgh Opera.

Principal Cast

Fiordiligi: Amanda Hall*
Dorabella: Marie Lenormand*
Ferrando: Matthew Plenk*
Guglielmo: David Won*
Don Alfonso: John Stevens
Despina: Susanne Mentzer*

*Lyric Opera Debut

Artistic Staff

Conductor: Ward Holmquist
Stage Director: Kristine McIntyre
Set Designer: Riccardo Hernandez
Lighting Designer: Marcus Dilliard
Costume Coordinator: Mary Traylor
Wig and Make-up Designer: Joanne Middleton Weaver
Chorus Master and Accompanist: Mark Ferrell
Props Master: Deborah Morgan
Stage Manager: Jennifer Rimmer

About *Così fan tutte*

Così fan tutte was composed by W.A. Mozart to a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is a witty comedy about a pair of sisters whose suitors have 24 hours to test their undying affection. With the aid of a quirky maid and unforgettable melodies, the women's fiancés pull off a hysterical scheme of disguise and trickery that tests the dedication of their brides-to-be.

***Così fan tutte* will be sung in Italian with English titles visible on personal monitors mounted on each audience member's seatback in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre.** This production will be performed in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 1601 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64106.

Performance dates are as follows:

Saturday, November 5, 2011 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 11, 2011 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 13, 2011 2:00 p.m.

Ticket availability varies by performance. **To purchase tickets, call Patron Services (816)471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). Patrons can select their own seat and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available on Wednesday and Friday performances for \$15, cash only, one hour before curtain, with a valid student ID.**

Opera Previews

Audience members are invited and encouraged to attend a free opera preview in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre within the Kauffman Center one hour before curtain, presented by the Lyric Opera Guild. Lyric Opera guild presenter **Dr. Rebecca Johnson** will lead the 25-minute talks.

***Così fan tutte* “At Ease with Opera” Presentations:**

At Ease with Opera is presented free of charge by the Lyric Opera Guild.

Monday, October 10, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, Missouri. **Bob Wise** will present a program titled “Mozart and His Women: Or, No Less Interested Than Enthralled.” Join us as we explore the fascinating topic and Mozart and his women.

Monday, October 17, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., at the Kauffman Foundation. Lyric Opera Guild preview speaker **Dr. Rebecca Johnson** presents a detailed preview of *Così fan tutte*, complete with video and audio excerpts, in “*Così fan tutte*: Or, Trial by Artifice.” Join Dr. Johnson as she explores the delights and nuances of one of Mozart’s most intriguing works.

The Bohemians: Young Friends of the Lyric Opera

The Bohemians is the Lyric Opera organization for young professionals (age 21-40). The Bohemians offer great opportunities to get involved in the community, meet other young adults and learn a little something about opera too! Bohemians enjoy discounted single tickets, monthly Third Friday Happy Hour gatherings at local hot spots and special invitations to exclusive events. In addition to attending the Saturday night performance of *Così fan tutte* on November 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m., the Bohemians gather for dinner prior to the Saturday night performance of each opera at the restaurant partners of the Lyric

Opera where members receive discounted meals. To learn more, email bohemians@kcopera.org.

About Lyric Opera of Kansas City

The 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 Kansas City area and five-state region. Repertoire choices encompass original language performances of standard repertory as well as contemporary and American operas. The Company seeks to mount productions that enrich the community it serves, as well as reflect the highest artistic standards of the profession. The Lyric Opera offers innovative and award-winning programs designed to further music and arts education both in schools and in the community and serves over 20,000 students and educators each year.

Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a new multi-venue Center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie will open in Kansas City September 16, 2011. The Kauffman Center seeks to enrich the lives of all Greater Kansas City residents by presenting vibrant performances, educational programming, and creating a tradition 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 – will be in residence at the Kauffman Center's two performance venues, the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall and the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre, will 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 dramatic downtown, the Kauffman Center will bring 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 kauffmancenter.org.

Building for the Future

On November 4, 2010 the Lyric Opera of Kansas City announced a capital campaign for the renovation of property on 18th and Charlotte in the Kansas City Crossroads Arts District for its new Opera Center.

The Opera Center complex will consist of two buildings: a Production Arts building and an Administrative building with set rental inventory storage. The Production Arts

building will include a rehearsal space that will match the footprint of the stage of the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The Production Arts building will also house a full wig, costume, and set construction shop and facilities for educational and community outreach programs. Such an integrated and dedicated production facility does not exist in Kansas City; the Company envisions the Production Arts building becoming a resource for other local performing arts companies.

The second building on the property will be adjacent to the Production Arts building. It will provide the Company with set rental inventory storage, parking lots and outside green spaces for the Opera Center, and house the administrative staff.

In August 2011, the administrative offices of the Lyric Opera moved from its home of 40 years at the Lyric Theatre to a temporary home in downtown Kansas City at 1616 Broadway. The production department has already moved the scene shop from its home of 25 years, an old elementary school, to its new home in the Production Arts Building. The production and administrative offices will move to the Opera Center Complex when construction is complete in 2012.

Opera lovers can be fans of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook or follow us @kcopera on Twitter.

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America, and this production is made possible with funding from Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, Hall Family Foundation, Lyric Opera of Kansas City Foundation, William T. Kemper Foundation, Commerce Bank Trustee, and Missouri Arts Council. Frontier Airlines is the Official Airline of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.

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