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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Capital Campaign to Build New Opera Center, Awarded Mabee Foundation Challenge Grant

Kansas City, MO (November 4, 2010)— Joyce Holland, member of the Board of Directors of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, announced a capital campaign for the renovation of property in downtown Kansas City for its new Opera Center. Ms. Holland, who is serving as the chair of the capital campaign, made the announcement at the same time as the Lyric Opera was informed that the J. E. and L. E. Mabee Foundation, Inc. of Tulsa, Oklahoma had awarded the Company a challenge grant of \$320,000 towards the campaign.

The Lyric Opera purchased properties at 18th and Charlotte Streets in the Kansas City Crossroads Arts District for its new Opera Center in 2007. 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 also will 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.

Funds amounting to \$2.45 million were secured earlier to allow the Company to purchase the properties, and initial seed grants made it possible to complete preliminary renovations to the Production Arts building. The Mabee grant and the matching funds it will attract will enable the Company to complete renovations to the Production Arts building.

The Lyric Opera has one year to raise the matching funds. However, to produce new sets for the inaugural season in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in the fall of 2011, the matching funds will need to be raised no later than March 2011 so renovations can proceed. When the matching campaign is completed, the Company will have raised \$5.77 million.

“We are thrilled to receive this stamp of approval from the Mabee Foundation. This extraordinary gift is a catalyst to help us complete this important project,” stated Holland. “The opening of the world class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts will catapult our Company into national visibility, and this new headquarters for the Lyric Opera will provide us the tools to produce and partner with major American opera companies.”

A second phase to the project, which will cost \$4.52 million, will add a second building adjacent to the Production Arts building. It would provide the Company with set rental inventory storage, parking lots and outside green spaces for the Opera Center, and house the administrative staff.

“The importance of living in one space cannot be overstated,” said Evan Luskin, general director of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. “The ability for administrative and production staff to work together with creative artists will have an immediate impact on not only the efficiencies of operation but on the creative process as well. The new Opera Center will serve as a catalyst for the Kansas City arts community.”

In the summer of 2011, the production and administrative offices of the Lyric Opera will be moving from its home of 40 years at the Lyric Theatre to a temporary home in downtown Kansas City at 1616 Broadway. The production and administrative offices will move to the headquarters on 18th Street when construction is completed in 2012. Lyric Opera productions will move to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in October 2011.

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 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 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 18,000 students and educators each year. For more information, please visit kcopera.org.

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**Tours of the headquarters are available for the media. Photographers welcome.
Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.**