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## **Lyric Opera of Kansas City Announces Retirement of General Director Evan Luskin**

**Effective End of First Season at Kauffman Center June 30, 2012**

**Kansas City, MO (March 16, 2011)**— Richard Bruening, president of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, announced today that Evan Luskin, the Company's general director since 1998, will be retiring on June 30, 2012. Mr. Luskin's retirement will come at the conclusion of the Lyric's first year of residence in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, which will open this fall.

Mr. Luskin joined the Lyric on June 1, 1986 as its managing director, and became general director in 1998. During his years at the Lyric Opera Mr. Luskin has seen many changes at the Company.

"I have been fortunate to be at the Lyric Opera during a period of growth and transformation," he commented. "For twenty five years I have worked with a wonderful staff, board, and volunteers, and together we have achieved so much. Our productions are stronger every year, our education programs continue to introduce young people to the art form I love, and we have done this in a financially sound way. I am retiring when our move into the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts will be the catalyst which enables the Lyric to rise to a whole new level of artistic achievement. Opera began for me as a hobby, and I am so lucky that for my entire career I have been able to earn my keep by indulging my passion for opera."

The tenure under Luskin has seen a marked increase in the artistic standards and financial health of the Company.

- Opera is now performed in its original languages, which has helped attract major talent to Kansas City.
- The education program, now in its twentieth year, introduces 20,000 children to opera each year.
- The Lyric Opera of Kansas City purchased and later sold the Lyric Theatre when circumstances dictated, and it is now preparing for the move to the Kauffman Center.
- To enable the Company to make full use of the opportunities offered by the Kauffman Center, the Lyric has embarked on a capital campaign to create modern rehearsal, set building, administrative, and storage facilities.
- The Lyric established an endowment, which has grown to over ten million dollars.
- Since 1986 when he joined the company, the annual budget has grown from 1.45 million to 5.5 million for the 2011-2012 season.
- For the past three seasons the Lyric's subscription base has grown, and is now at its highest level since 1997.
- Mr. Luskin has served on the Missouri Arts Council's Touring panel, and was an onsite reviewer and a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

According to Dick Bruening, the Lyric will be forming a committee to conduct a national search for a new general director. "Evan has been a great asset to the Lyric Opera. After a quarter of a century we understand his desire to move ahead to the next phase of his life. As we begin our search I feel confident that the Lyric will be able to attract many excellent candidates for the position. The Lyric will be moving into a world class performance facility, and Evan leaves the Company in a strong position both artistically and financially."

A lifelong fan of opera, Mr. Luskin received an MBA with a specialization in Arts Management in 1977 from the State University of New York at Binghamton. He then served as Assistant Director of the Tulsa Opera from 1977 to 1979, Managing Director of the Chattanooga Opera from 1979 to 1982, and Vice President for Finance and Administration of Michigan Opera Theatre from 1982 until coming to Kansas City in 1986. He is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Andrea and his grandchildren in Topeka and Washington, D.C. He also plans to become involved in volunteer activities with children, take up the piano after a hiatus of many years, and travel.

### **About Lyric Opera of Kansas City**

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City was founded in 1958; it is one of the nations' 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.

### **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 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.

The second building on the property will be 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.

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.

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 The Lyric Opera Circle, Bank of America, Frontier Airlines, The National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council and the Arts KC Fund.

**Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.**

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