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Opera's ultimate ladies man set to steal the hearts of KC women

Baritone Heartthrob Keith Phares Returns to Lyric Opera

Sought-after International Opera Star Makes Lyric Opera Debut

Cast Jam-packed with Returning Acclaimed Singers

Lauded Director returns to the Lyric Opera

Don Giovanni At a Glance

KANSAS CITY, MO. (April 1, 2010) – The Lyric Opera of Kansas City closes the 2009-2010 season with Mozart's most famous opera, *Don Giovanni*, April 24, 28, 30 and May 2 at the Lyric Theatre. This production of *Don Giovanni* features an incredible cast of singers as well as an exceptional orchestra comprised of members of the Kansas City Symphony conducted by Lyric Opera Artistic Director **Ward Holmquist**.

"*Don Giovanni* is Mozart at his best," notes Mr. Holmquist. "We have assembled a cast filled with the industry's brightest young stars, many of which have received critical acclaim with our Company in recent years, with a brilliant director to bring this Mozart masterpiece to life. This will be an incredible musical and theatrical experience for our audience."

Baritone Heartthrob Keith Phares Returns to the Lyric Opera

Keith Phares (baritone) returns to the Lyric Opera to play opera's ultimate bad boy Don Giovanni. Mr. Phares made his debut with the Company in 2003 in *Romeo and Juliet* followed by *The Merry Widow* in 2006. He sang the role of Maurice in the critically acclaimed production of *The End of The Affair* in 2007. Of that performance, critic Paul Horsley described Mr. Phares' voice as a "ringing, bronze baritone [that is] always pleasing to the ear."

In addition to Mr. Phares' Lyric Opera credits, he recently appeared with San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, New York Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Florentine Opera, Glimmerglass Opera and Opera Company of Philadelphia. Following Mr. Phares' performances of *Don Giovanni* with the



Company he will perform the role of Marcello in *La bohème* with Utah Opera, in *Carmina burana* with San Francisco Symphony and the role of Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Opera Colorado. Mr. Phares is a graduate of the Juilliard Opera Center and was the winner of the 1998 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Sought-after International Opera Star Makes Lyric Opera Debut

Brenda Harris (soprano) will make her Lyric Opera debut as Don Giovanni's latest conquest, Donna Anna, a role she has performed with Washington National Opera. Ms. Harris has performed at The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Montreal Opera, Vancouver Opera, Spoleto (Italy), and Opéra national du Rhin (Austria). She is a regular at Austin Opera, Minnesota Opera and Portland Opera. *Classical Singer Magazine* hails Ms. Harris as "...a soprano of immense accomplishment and stunning technical control."

Cast Jam-packed with Returning Acclaimed Singers

Kansas City resident **Andrew Gangestad** (bass), who was last seen in the Lyric Opera production of *The Barber of Seville* in 2007, will sing the role of Don Giovanni's comedic assistant Leporello, a role in which he has received critical acclaim from the *Arizona Daily Star*:

"But the star, judging by the audience's ovation at the end, was Gangestad. His Leporello was funny and puppy-dog charming with hints of being capable of his own deception. He employed a big, rich bass that was particularly impressive throughout 'Madamina! Il catalogo questoas' as he unfurled Giovanni's list of conquests for the spurned Elvira."

Chad A. Johnson (tenor) and **Christine Abraham** (mezzo-soprano) also will return to the Lyric Opera stage for *Don Giovanni*. Mr. Johnson will portray Don Ottavio, a role he has sung with numerous companies including Virginia Opera, New Orleans Opera and Florida Grand Opera. Mr. Johnson was recently seen at the Lyric Opera as Frederik in *The Pirates of Penzance* (2009). Ms. Abraham will perform the role of one of Don Giovanni's scorned lovers, Donna Elvira, and previously was seen in the Company's production of *Julius Caesar* in 2008. She has received acclaim for her work at Opera Boston, Glimmerglass Opera, and Berkshire Opera.

"Having this outstanding cast singing Mozart's masterful work is a magnificent way to end the season," noted Lyric Opera General Director **Evan Luskin**. "*Don Giovanni* is



perhaps Mozart's finest opera, and opera lovers will be in for a real treat when they hear this talented cast of singers."

Lauded Director returns to the Lyric Opera

Ellen Douglas Schlaefer, Director of Opera for the University of South Carolina, returns to direct *Don Giovanni* after her critically acclaimed production of *La bohème* in 2008. Ms. Schlaefer recently directed *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Green Mountain Opera Festival, *La bohème* at National Symphony Orchestra and Wolf Trap Opera, *Scott Joplin* and *Treemonisha* at Opera Memphis and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Connecticut Opera.

Don Giovanni At a Glance

The Story

With more than 2,000 names in his book of female conquests, Don Giovanni finds himself in a sticky situation and kills the father of his latest female interest. Will the main character, based on the legendary Don Juan, be able to get away with his devil-may-care lifestyle or will he finally get what he deserves?

Music by W. A. Mozart

Performed in Italian with English subtitles projected above the stage

Lyric Theatre, 11th and Central, Downtown Kansas City

4 performances:

Saturday, April 24 at 8 p.m.

Wednesday, April 28 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 30 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, May 2 at 2 p.m.

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 www.kcopera.org, or call the ticket office at (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252).



Don Giovanni “At Ease With Opera” Presentations

Don Juan in Music and Literature: Centuries of Seduction

On **Monday, April 5, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** Morton Creditor will look at the history of Don Juan. The presentation is located in the Plaza Branch of the Kansas City Public Library at 4801 Main St., Kansas City, MO.

Lorenzo Da Ponte: Ghetto Jew, Venetian Priest, Poet, Librettist, Merchant and Columbia University Professor.

On **Monday, April 12, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** Morton Creditor will discuss the fascinating life of Mozart’s librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte. The presentation is located at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO.

Don Giovanni: Super Man or Super Villain?

On **Monday, April 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** Eugene Butler will lecture on *Don Giovanni*. The presentation is located in the Plaza Branch of the Kansas City Public Library at 4801 Main St., Kansas City, MO.

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

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America, and this production is made possible with funding from the Lathrop and Gage, LLP, Bank of America, The Kansas City Star, Midwest Airlines, Missouri Arts Council and the Arts KC Fund.

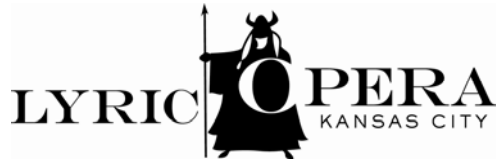
Cast List

Don Giovanni: Keith Phares
Leporello: Andrew Gangestad
Donna Anna: Brenda Harris*
Don Ottavio: Chad Johnson
Donna Elvira: Christine Abraham
Masetto: Robert McNichols, Jr.~
Zerlina: Sara Burke+
Commendatore: Andrew Harris

*Lyric Opera Debut

~University of Kansas Apprentice

+University of Missouri-Kansas City, Conservatory of Music Apprentice



Artistic Staff

Conductor: Ward Holmquist

Director: Ellen Douglas Schlaefer

Scenic Designer: R. Keith Brumley

Lighting Designer: Julie Duro

Chorusmaster/Accompanist Coach: Mark Ferrell

Wig and Makeup Designer: Jan Delovage

Production Stage Manager: Erin Thompson

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