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CONTACT:

Jim DeGood, (816) 471-4933

Shannon Sundberg, (816) 471-4933

LYRIC OPERA ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR SEASON:

Upcoming Season features World-renowned Singers

KANSAS CITY, MO. (June 15, 2009) –The Lyric Opera of Kansas City will present its 52nd season of opera showcasing productions drawn from the works of the great operatic composers and featuring world-renowned singers. The season opens in September with Puccini’s tragic masterpiece *Tosca*, followed by Gilbert and Sullivan’s sidesplitting satire *H.M.S. Pinafore* in November. March will bring Verdi’s ever-popular *Rigoletto*, and the season will conclude with Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* in May 2010.

All four full-length operas will be presented in their original language with English subtitles projected above the stage. For downloadable season photos please visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/kcopera/sets/72157619563669909/>.

Performance Casting Details

***Tosca* – New Production**

by Giacomo Puccini

sung in Italian with English subtitles

September 11, 13, 16, 19, 2009

Cast Highlights

Lisa Daltirus, who has been seen at the New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), will portray *Tosca*. Ms. Daltirus previously has received rave reviews for the role: “Imperious, her eyes ablaze, the very



image of Tosca...she exuded an intangible electricity, that charge that comes across to the audience when something is really happening onstage.” - *The New York Times*.

Critics hail **Greer Grimsley** who will play Scarpia at the Lyric Opera: “In Pittsburgh Opera’s production of *Tosca*, Greer Grimsley brings to the villain’s role such a multifaceted performance that the Opera might as well change the billboards to read ‘Scarpia!’” - *The Pittsburgh City Paper*. Mr. Grimsley also has performed at many of the major opera houses around the globe including The Metropolitan Opera, Vancouver Opera, Seattle Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin (Germany), and Teatro Comunale di Bologna (Italy).

Stage Director **Bernard Uzan** will return to the Lyric Opera having made his directing debut with the Company with *The Marriage of Figaro* in 2005. Mr. Uzan’s productions have appeared on the stages of 50 opera companies in North America, France, Italy, Switzerland, and South America with more than 300 productions.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have artists of this high caliber opening our season,” noted Lyric Opera Artistic Director **Ward Holmquist**. “Many of the large opera houses do not begin rehearsal until October, allowing us to cast these talented singers in one of the slower times in their schedules.”

H.M.S. Pinafore

by Gilbert and Sullivan

sung in English with English subtitles

November 6, 8, 11, 14, 2009

Cast Highlights

Daniel Belcher, who will portray Captain Corcoran, has been heard in the Lyric Opera productions of *La bohème*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Cinderella*, and has been said to have “rich expressive tone” by critic Timothy McDonald at *The Kansas City Star*. Mr. Belcher recently appeared with San Francisco Opera, Stadttheater Klagenfurt (Austria), Utah Opera, Houston Grand Opera and New National Theater (Japan).

Robert Gibby Brand will return to the Lyric Opera as Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. “...Brand’s performance as the Major-General is as precise as it is broad (indeed,



he's the one who will remain in your head after you leave the theater)," noted critic Robert Trussell, *The Kansas City Star*.

Two up-and-coming opera singers will make their Lyric Opera debuts in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. **Ava Pine** will sing Josephine and **Jon-Michael Ball** will sing Ralph. Ms. Pine recently performed in *Die Fledermaus* and *L'italiana in Algeri* with Dallas Opera, in *Xerxes* with Boston Baroque and as The Angel in the Southwest premiere of the opera *Angels in America*. She was the first singer to don a harness and perform the role with theatrical aerials. "Ava Pine flies in and out on wires like some celestial Peter Pan, trilling and vocalizing in the shimmering cascades of coloratura." - *The Dallas Morning News*.

Mr. Ball is a graduate of the famed Manhattan School of Music and has recently appeared in the United States with New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Orlando Opera. He also recently made international debuts with Hong Kong Philharmonic and Orquesta de Cámara (Lima, Peru).

"Our production of *The Pirates of Penzance* last season proved to be a popular and critical hit," commented General Director **Evan Luskin**. "During these uncertain economic times, we thought our audiences would enjoy another comedic reprieve, produced as only our Company can."

Rigoletto

by Giuseppe Verdi

sung in Italian with English subtitles

March 20, 24, 26, 28, 2010

Cast Highlights

Dramatic leading baritone **Richard Paul Fink**, a regular at major opera houses worldwide – including the Metropolitan Opera, Opera National de Paris and the Sydney Opera – will perform the role of Rigoletto. In 2007 the *Calgary Herald* hailed, "Fink showed the full heft of a classic Verdi baritone... Dramatically he was completely convincing."

Metropolitan Opera Star **Mary Dunleavy** returns to the Lyric Opera stage as Gilda after a highly-acclaimed turn as Violetta in the 2009 production of *La Traviata*. "Dunleavy graces the stage with a hearty soprano voice that has both power and subtlety... her voice



was stunning - expressive and quite lovely,” raved Timothy McDonald, *The Kansas City Star*. Miss Dunleavy has recently appeared at Los Angeles Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Seattle Opera and San Francisco Opera.

Kevin Short will return to the Lyric Opera as Sparafucile after being heard as King Claudius in the 2006 production of *Hamlet*. Mr. Short has sung for major opera houses in the United States including LA Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Santa Fe Opera. He has also performed in over twenty operas at The Metropolitan Opera, in roles that spanned from Colline in *La bohème* to Masetto in *Don Giovanni*.

Garnett Bruce, director of the acclaimed production of *Cinderella* in 2004 and the 2008 audience favorite *The Magic Flute*, will return to the Lyric Opera to direct this production. Mr. Bruce has recently garnered acclaim for his productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Omaha and San Diego Opera.

“This production of *Rigoletto* is an example where our Company’s growing reputation and the realities our industry is facing,” noted **Ward Holmquist**. “As other opera companies reduce their artistic offerings or close their doors, we continue to engage artists of the highest caliber. Mary’s experience with our company was so positive she accepted our offer immediately and Richard and I have been dying to work together for years.”

Don Giovanni

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

sung in Italian with English subtitles

April 24, 28, 30 and May 2, 2010

Cast Highlights

Don Giovanni will be sung by **Keith Phares**, whose 2007 work in *The End of the Affair* was called “magnificent” and his voice described as a “ringing, bronze baritone [that is] always pleasing to the ear,” by *The Kansas City Star*. Mr. Phares has recently appeared at San Francisco Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia and Washington National Opera



Bass **Andrew Gangestad**, whose voice was deemed “glorious” by *The Kansas City Star* during the 2007 production of *The Barber of Seville*, will sing the role of Giovanni’s comedic and loyal servant Leporello in which he has received rave reviews.

“But the star, judging by the audience’s ovation at the end, was [Andrew] 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 e questo’ as he unfurled Giovanni’s list of conquests for the spurned Elvira.” - *Arizona Daily Star*.

Soprano **Brenda Harris** will make her Lyric Opera debut as Donna Anna. Ms. Harris has performed the role with Washington National Opera and has performed with numerous companies around the globe including: The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Montreal Opera, Vancouver Opera, Spoleto (Italy), and Opéra national du Rhin (Austria). *Classical Singer Magazine* hails that Ms. Harris “...is a soprano of immense accomplishment and stunning technical control.”

Tenor **Chad A. Johnson** and Mezzo-soprano **Christine Abraham** will return to the Lyric Opera stage in 2010. Mr. Johnson will portray Don Ottavio and was recently seen at the Lyric Opera as Frederik in the 2009 production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. He has sung the role of Don Ottavio with numerous companies including Virginia Opera, New Orleans Opera and Florida Grand Opera. Ms. Abraham will perform the role of scorned lover Donna Elvira and was previously seen in the Company’s first Baroque opera *Julius Caesar* in 2008. She has received acclaim for her work at Opera Boston, Glimmerglass Opera, and Berkshire Opera.

“This outstanding cast is a magnificent way to end the season,” noted **Luskin**. “*Don Giovanni* is said to be Mozart’s finest opera, and opera lovers will be in for a real treat when they hear this talented lineup of singers.”

Ticket Information

Season ticket prices range from \$60 to \$252. For ticket information, contact the Lyric Opera Ticket Office at (816) 471-7344 or toll free at (877) OPERAKC (673-7252), visit www.kcopera.org or visit the Lyric Opera ticket office at the Lyric Theatre, 11th and Central Streets in downtown Kansas City.



Season ticket holders receive a substantial discount – four shows for the price of three. Subscriptions are on Sale now. Single tickets will go on sale to the general public on August 17, 2009.

The Lyric Theatre is fully accessible and provides assistive listening devices plus Braille and large print programs. Service animals are welcome. For more information on the Lyric Opera, visit www.kcopera.org. The Lyric Opera of Kansas City also can be found on Facebook, Linked In, Twitter, MySpace, and Flickr. All dates, operas and artists are subject to change.

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.

2009-2010 Casting

TOSCA – New Production

Floria Tosca - Lisa Daltirus*
Baron Scarpia - Greer Grimsley*
Mario Cavaradossi - Rafael Davila*
Cesare Angelotti - Andrew Harris
A Sacristan - Kevin Glavin
Spoletta - Doug Jones
Sciarrine - Stephen Fish*~

Artistic Staff

Conductor - Ward Holmquist
Stage Director - Bernard Uzan
Set Designer - R. Keith Brumley
Lighting Designer - Donald Thomas

H.M.S. PINAFORE

Sir Joseph Porter - Robert Gibby Brand
Captain Corcoran - Daniel Belcher
Ralph Rackstraw - Jon-Michael Ball*



Dick Deadeye - Matthew Treviño
Bill Bobstay - Robert McNichols Jr.^
Bob Beckett - Stephen Fish~
Josephine - Ava Pine*
Cousin Hebe - Jennifer Forte~

Artistic Staff

Conductor - Ward Holmquist
Stage Director - TBA
Lighting Designer - Michael Baumgarten

RIGOLETTO

Rigoletto - Richard Paul Fink*
Gilda - Mary Dunleavy
Duke of Mantua - David Pomeroy
Sparafucile - Kevin Short
Maddelena - Catherine Ratliff^
Giovanna - Jennifer Forte~
Count Ceprano - Stephen Fish~
Borsa - Benjamin Gulley~
Marullo - Robert McNichols, Jr.^
Countess Ceprano - Amy Cahill*^

Artistic Staff

Conductor - Ward Holmquist
Stage Director - Garnett Bruce
Set Designer - Lawrence Schafer
Lighting Designer - Jim Sale

DON GIOVANNI

Don Giovanni - Keith Phares
Leporello - Andrew Gangestad
Donna Anna - Brenda Harris*
Don Ottavio - Chad Johnson
Donna Elvira - Christine Abraham



Masetto - Robert McNichols, Jr.^

Zerlina - Sarah Burke~

Commendatore - Andrew Harris

Artistic Staff

Conductor - Ward Holmquist

Stage Director - TBA

Set Designer - R. Keith Brumley

*Lyric Opera Debut

~University of Kansas City Missouri Apprentice

^University of Kansas Apprentice

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