



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City opens at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts with a new production of *Turandot*

Kansas City, MO (August 9, 2011)—The Lyric Opera of Kansas City opens its 54th season and its inaugural season at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts October 1 through 9 with a new production of Puccini's *Turandot*.

"In selecting an opera to celebrate our first season in the Kauffman Center, the obvious choice was *Turandot*," states Lyric Opera General Director Evan Luskin. "Composed by one of the greatest and most beloved masters of the operatic repertoire, Giacomo Puccini, *Turandot* is the very essence of grand opera. *Turandot* will showcase everything that the Kauffman Center can offer an opera company, and it will showcase everything the Lyric Opera can offer Kansas City audiences."

Lyric Opera Artistic Director Ward Holmquist notes. "In working with Director Garnett Bruce and Director of Design and Technical Production R. Keith Brumley to produce this new production we pulled out all of the stops and our patrons will be blown away by the concept, scenic design and world-class singers that will fill the 5,000 square foot stage. This will be opera in a class all of its own."

"*Turandot* is a wonderful opportunity to explore the possibilities of the new Kauffman Center stage," states Director of Design and Technical Production R. Keith Brumley. "With the addition of our new Opera Center in the East Crossroads Arts District we will be able to construct, paint and rehearse productions of a scale that has never before been possible for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City."

Internationally acclaimed artists star in *Turandot*

Soprano Lise Lindstrom will sing the title role. "In a remarkably short time, Lise Lindstrom has become one of the opera world's leading Turandots," noted Scott Barnes of *Opera News*. Of her Metropolitan Opera debut, the *New York Post* said, "Lindstrom sailed through the daunting solo with an aplomb rarely seen even in the most experienced divas. Her voice...gleamed like a blue-white laser up to high C." Ms. Lindstrom recently performed *Turandot* at Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Opera Berline, San Diego Opera, Florida Grand Opera, De Nederlandse Opera, Festival de Ópera de A Coruña, and Opera Hong Kong.

International opera star **Samuel Ramey (bass)** will make his Lyric Opera debut as Timur. Mr. Ramey, a native of Colby, Kansas, is the most recorded bass in history with more than 80 recordings and three Grammy Awards to his credit. Over his 30 year career he has made numerous appearances at The Metropolitan Opera and is featured with that company on many PBS and radio broadcasts. He has appeared at many of the major houses across the globe including Teatro alla Scala, Covent Carden, Vienna Staatsoper, Opéra de Paris, San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Tenor Arnold Rawls (who made his Lyric Opera debut in 2007 as Radames in *Aida*) returns to the Lyric Opera to portray Calaf. Mr. Rawls made his Metropolitan Opera debut earlier this year in *Il Trovatore*. Mr. Rawls recently performed *Turandot* with Arizona Opera and Pensacola Opera, *Pagliacci* with Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Indianapolis Opera.

Soprano Elizabeth Caballero makes her Lyric Opera debut as Liù. Ms. Caballero was praised for her performance in *La bohème* with the New York City Opera by Steven Smith of *The New York Times* for providing: "the evening's most show-stopping performance offering a thrilling balance of pearly tone, exacting technique and brazen physicality." Ms. Caballero recently performed Liù at Florida Grand Opera and made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Carmen* last season. Other recent performances include *Le nozze di Figaro* with Nashville Opera, Seattle Opera, and Florida Grand Opera.

Baritone Michael Chioldi returns to the Lyric Opera as Ping, after debuting at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Escamillo in *Carmen* (2005). **Tenor Scott Wicha**el makes his Lyric Opera debut as Pang. He recently performed *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Tulsa Opera. **Tenor Doug Jones** returns to the Lyric Opera as Pong. Mr. Jones debuted at the Lyric Opera in 2008 as Monostatos in *The Magic Flute* and has performed with the Company as Spoletta in *Tosca* and Remendado in *Carmen*.

Director Garnett Bruce returns to the Lyric Opera after receiving critical acclaim for his productions of *La bohème* (2002), *Cinderella* (2004), *The Magic Flute* (2008) and *Rigoletto* (2010) with the Company. Mr. Bruce recently directed *Tosca* and *Turandot* with Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Don Giovanni* with Opera Omaha. He is widely known for his interpretation of *Turandot*, having directed it at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Cleveland Opera, and Kentucky Opera. Mr. Bruce will direct the San Francisco production of *Turandot* directly prior to this Lyric Opera of Kansas City production.

Principal Cast

Turandot: Lise Lindstrom*
Calaf, The Unknown Prince: Arnold Rawls
Liù: Elizabeth Caballero*
Timur: Samuel Ramey*
Ping: Michael Chioldi
Pang: Scott Wichael*
Pong: Doug Jones
A Mandarin: Stephen Fish
The Emperor Altoum: Jerry Jay Cranford*

* Lyric Opera Debut

Artistic Staff

Conductor: Ward Holmquist
Stage Director: Garnett Bruce
Set Designer: R. Keith Brumley
Lighting Designer: James D. Sale
Costume Designer: Mary Traylor
Wig and Make-up Designer: Joanne Middleton Weaver
Chorus Master and Accompanist: Mark Ferrell
Children's Chorus Master: Paula Winans
Props Master: Deborah Morgan
Stage Manager: Jennifer Rimmer

About *Turandot*

Turandot was composed by Giacomo Puccini to a libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni and based on Carlo Gozzi's dramatic fairy-tale. Princess Turandot, scarred from her ancestor's brutal death at the hand of a foreign suitor, has gone to extreme measures to protect herself. This year alone, 12 princes have tried to win the hand of the princess by attempting to solve her riddles but all have met a fatal end. Nevertheless, a nameless prince is not deterred from volunteering to face death to win her heart.

Turandot 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 will be the Lyric Opera of Kansas City premiere production in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 1601 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64106.

Performance dates are as follows:

Please note new curtain times*

Saturday, October 1, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.*

Wednesday, October 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 7, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.*

Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 2 p.m.

Season tickets are on sale now and prices range from \$135 to \$450. Season ticket holders for the 2011-2012 season receive a substantial discount - four shows for the price of three. **Single tickets go on sale to the general public on August 29, 2011. Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, cash only, one hour before curtain, with a valid student ID.** Ticket availability is extremely limited and varies by performance. To purchase tickets, call Patron Services at (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). Patrons will be able to select their own seat and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org beginning August 29.

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 Don Dagenais will lead the 25-minute talks.

***Turandot* "At Ease with Opera" Presentations:**

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

Monday, September 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Ernest Neighbor, a longtime opera enthusiast, will share his interesting take on the relationship between Puccini and the iconoclastic conductor who led the opening performances of this stunning opera.

Monday, September 26, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., at the Kauffman Foundation. Lyric Opera Guild preview speaker **Don Dagenais** will give a detailed preview of *Turandot*, including audio and visual excerpts.

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 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 *Turandot* on October 1, 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 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 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. 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 dynamic 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 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 August 2011, the administrative offices of the Lyric Opera will move 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 on 18th and Charlotte. 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 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, National Endowment for the Arts, 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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