

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City Presents Bellini's *The Capulets and the Montagues* to Open 2013-14 Season

*KC Native & Grammy Award-Winning Joyce DiDonato Makes
Muriel Kauffman Theatre Debut
Sept. 21-29 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
for Bel Canto Opera*

Kansas City, MO (Aug. 15, 2013) – Lyric Opera of Kansas City opens its 56th season with a Company premiere and new production of Vincenzo Bellini's *The Capulets and the Montagues* September 21, 25, 27 and 29, 2013 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Based on Renaissance legend (rather than Shakespeare's play), a longstanding political feud drives the drama in Bellini's opera, adding a fascinating layer to this *bel canto* masterpiece. *Bel canto*, which means beautiful singing in Italian, is a classic form of opera which is rarely performed. The score's vocal fireworks are tempered by elegant and luminously beautiful duets illustrating Bellini's passionate love affair with the human voice. The production will be sung in Italian with English and Italian titles.

General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler stated, "We have created our own new production of this *bel canto* masterpiece with a cast that brings world class singing to Lyric Opera of Kansas City and the Kauffman stage." She continued, "And, we place this talent in a theatrical environment which illuminates man's eternal conflicts, leading to war and its consequences on the lives of its everyday citizens. Our Romeo and Juliet deal with the struggle of "Love in a War Zone" – which can happen anywhere and anytime. It happened centuries ago and continues in the present."

All Star Cast and Production Team

Kansas City beloved native and Grammy award-winning superstar Joyce DiDonato, who last appeared with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City in 2004 (*Cinderella*), will make her debut in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, playing the ‘trouser role’ of Romeo. The ‘trouser role’ literally means a role in which a female performer puts on a male costume and plays a male character. DiDonato, widely recognized in the opera community as the pre-eminent mezzo-soprano, has performed on stages around the world. *Opera News* raved of her performance in this role with San Francisco Opera, writing that “DiDonato’s voice is a marvel – tender and expressive in Bellini’s long-breathed melodies, mercurial in the opera’s most intricate passagework – and her ornamentation is focused and flawless.” David Littlejohn, cultural critic for *The Wall Street Journal*, wrote that “As Romeo, Joyce DiDonato created a new world every time she sang. The basic tone of her voice was pure gold. Her control, nuance and range-shifts were impeccable, from her lowest tenor tones to her highest trills—at every instant she was acting with her voice.”

Singing alongside DiDonato is internationally acclaimed soprano **Nicole Cabell** who will be making her Lyric Opera debut as Giulietta. She recently sang the role at the San Francisco Opera with Joyce Di Donato to great critical acclaim. *The Times (London)* wrote of Cabell’s voice, “It’s a voice that wraps itself around you...long, sinuous phrasing, warm tone and a sophistication that touches everything she sings.” Along with performances at the Metropolitan Opera and Royal Opera House, she won the 2005 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition.

The pair was lauded for their beautiful duets, which many consider some of the most difficult in operatic literature. In *Classical Review*, Lisa Hirsch said, “Both have the vocal agility, range, and breath control to make Bellini’s long lines and florid outbursts sound easy to sing.”

Joining DiDonato and Cabell and making his debut with Lyric Opera of Kansas City is tenor **William Burden**, whose voice has been described as, “honest, expressive and clear” by *The New York Times*. Burden, who has garnered an outstanding reputation in a wide-ranging repertoire through Europe and North America, has sung at acclaimed opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. In concert, Burden has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and with Les Arts Florissants at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. In addition, **Stephen Morscheck** will sing the role of Capellio and **Julien Robbins** will sing the role of Lorenzo.

Kevin Newbury will direct this evocative opera. *The New York Times* raved of one of Newbury’s productions writing that it was “...directed with imagination and emotional nuance...” This will be Newbury’s Lyric Opera company debut, as well as his debut with this opera. Newbury has directed at major opera houses including San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Santa Fe Opera and will direct upcoming performances at Lyric Opera Chicago and Canadian Opera Company.

Lyric Opera of Kansas City is proud to debut an all-new production of *The Capulets and the Montagues*, with sets and costumes designed by **Victoria (Vita) Tzykun**. Tzykun has worked as a production designer on several operas, many of which were praised for their originality. Tzykun worked in close collaboration with acclaimed director Kevin Newbury to design a production which allows the audience to reflect on the personal nature of conflict between the two families as well as the high cost of war. **Tzykun** has worked in a variety of arts forms: operas, ballets, film, commercials, and television including art direction for Lady Gaga's television special, "A Very Gaga Thanksgiving." She has designed for opera companies such as Boston Lyric Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Dallas Opera and the Kennedy Center.

The production will be conducted by Lyric Opera of Kansas City Artistic Director Ward Holmquist.

Holmquist stated "This Company premiere is a brilliant ensemble of talent, the likes of which Kansas City audiences rarely get an opportunity to see locally." He continued, "This rarely seen opera with luscious and achingly beautiful vocal lines is an absolute joy to conduct."

University Apprentices Make Their Company Debut

The Lyric Opera Apprentice Program is a collaboration with the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the School of Music at the University of Kansas. During the two-year program students gain experience and training with the Lyric Opera to become professional opera singers. University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) apprentices **Samantha Gossard, Ben Werley and Elliot Harrison Brown** will make their Company debut singing in the chorus. University of Kansas apprentices **Tara Cooper, Dominic Johnson and Michael Colman** will perform in the chorus. **Clark Weyrauch** will make his Company debut singing in the chorus.

Principle Cast

Romeo: Joyce DiDonato
Giulietta: Nicole Cabell*
Tebaldo: William Burden
Lorenzo: Julien Robbins*
Capellio: Stephen Morscheck

Artistic Staff

Conductor: Ward Holmquist
Director: Kevin Newbury *
Lighting Designer: Japhy Weideman *
Scenery and Costume Designer: Victoria Tzykun *
Wig and Make-Up Designer: Alison Hanks
Chorus Master: Mark Ferrell
Stage Manager: Jennifer Rimmer

*Lyric Opera Debut

Ticket availability varies by performance. To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). Patrons can select their own seat and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, cash only, one hour before the performances, with a valid student ID.

Opera Previews

Audience members are invited and encouraged to attend a free opera preview, presented by the Lyric Opera Guild, in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre within the Kauffman Center one hour before curtain. Lyric Opera Guild presenter Don Dagenais will lead the 25-minute talks. The Lyric Opera Guild also presents a series of free “At Ease with Opera” presentations prior to the performance dates.

The Capulets and the Montagues “At Ease with Opera” Presentations:

Monday, August 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) “**The Hatfields and the McCoys in Renaissance Italy,**” by **Sarah Tyrrell**. A member of the musicology faculty at UMKC, she will speak about the origins of the Romeo and Juliet legend in Italian literary history, focusing on the feud between the infamous Montague and Capulet families which form the basis for this opera. Bellini’s opera is not based upon the Shakespeare play, but rather earlier literary sources which emphasize the feud more than the love story, and this lecture will prepare you for that angle on the tale.

Monday, September 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) “**Why Should You Attend an Opera Whose Name You Can’t Pronounce?**” by Lyric Opera preview speaker **Don Dagenais**. This presentation will be an in-depth preview of *The Capulets and the Montagues*, complete with historical and plot details and a number of audio and video excerpts.

Tuesday, September 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kauffman Foundation (4801 Rockhill Road, KCMO) Local opera maven **Bob Wise** will discuss the life and music of Vincenzo Bellini, a composer whose work has been heard only once before on the Lyric Opera stage (*Norma*, 2010). His talk is called “**Bellini: The Man Behind the Conflict.**” Enjoy audio and video excerpts of several of Bellini’s other works.

Young Friends of the Lyric Opera

Young Friends of the Lyric provides an exciting outlet for young arts supporters (ages 21-40) in Kansas City to get involved in the community, meet other young adults and support the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The group hosts **FREE First Friday happy hours** during the opera season at the rehearsal facility in the Crossroads where attendees can mingle with other young arts patrons with complementary cocktails, food, and entertainment. You do not have to be a member to attend these free happy hours. Membership benefits include admission into a private

room with complementary drinks and food during intermissions, networking opportunities, restaurant discounts, invitations to special events and all the benefits of being a Lyric Opera Guild member.

Young Friends of the Lyric membership is \$25 for an individual, \$40 for a couple, or \$75 for a dual patron membership. To join, contact youngfriends@kcopera.org. Become a fan on [Facebook](#) to keep up with current events.

About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is a major center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie opened September 2011. The Kauffman Center presents vibrant performances and advances the role 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—are in residence at the Kauffman Center. The Kauffman Center's two performance venues, the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall, 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 brings 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.

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is fully accessible and provides assistive listening devices plus Braille and large print programs. Service animals are welcome with advance notice. All dates, operas and artists are subject to change.

Visit www.kcopera.org for more information about Lyric Opera of Kansas City 2013-2014 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center.

2013-2014 Season at a Glance

The Capulets and the Montagues

(I Capulet e i Montecchi)

Vincenzo Bellini 1830

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

September 21, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 25, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 27, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

September 29, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Kevin Newbury
Conductor: Ward Holmquist
Production Designer: Victoria (Vita) Tzykun
Romeo: Joyce DiDonato
Giulietta: Nicole Cabell
Tebaldo: William Burden
Capellio: Stephen Morscheck
Lorenzo: Julien Robbins

The Magic Flute

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1791

Sung in English with English and German titles

November 9, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 13, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 15, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

November 17, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Harry Silverstein

Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow

Production Designer: Jun Kaneko

Tamino: Shawn Mathey

Pamina: Lauren Snouffer

Queen of the Night: Kathryn Lewek

Papageno: Daniel Belcher

Monostatos: Doug Jones

La bohème

Giacomo Puccini 1896

Sung in Italian with English and Italian titles

March 15, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 17, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 19, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 21, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

March 23, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Director: Linda Brovsky

Conductor: Craig Kier

Rodolfo: Giorgio Berrugi

Mimi: Katie Van Kooten

Marcello: Lucas Meachem

Musetta: Ellie Dehn

Colline: Ben Wager

Schaunard: Marcus DeLoach

Alcindoro/Benoit: Rod Nelman

Die Fledermaus

Johann Strauss II 1874

Sung in English with English and German titles

Saturday, April 26, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 2, 2014 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 4, 2014 2:00 p.m.

Director: Tomer Zvulun

Conductor: Ward Holmquist
Production Designer: R. Keith Brumley
Eisenstein: Liam Bonner
Rosalinde: Kelly Kaduce
Alfred: Gordon Gietz

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 the new Richard J. Stern Opera Center. The Company moved from its temporary home to the new Opera Center campus located at 1725 Holmes on July 5, 2012.

The new Opera Center complex consists of two buildings: the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building and the Beth Ingram Administration building with set rental inventory storage. The Production Arts Building includes a rehearsal space that matches the footprint of the stage in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The Production Arts Building houses 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 is adjacent to the Production Arts building. It provides the Company with set rental inventory storage, parking lots and outside green spaces for the Opera Center, and houses the administrative staff.

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 mounts 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 more than 18,000 students and educators each year.

Opera lovers can be fans of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @kcopera.

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America and this season is made possible with funding from Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, and the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation.

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Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.

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