

2015/16

LYRIC OPERA NEWS

VOLUME 2

STRAUSS
SOPRANO *returns in* *Der
Rosenkavalier*

SHALL WE DANCE *with*
The King & I

Nabucco:
THE POWER *of a* Chorus

*Romeo and
Juliet:*
A Shakespeare LOVE STORY



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LYRIC OPERA NEWS

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ON THE COVER Amanda Majeski as Countess Almaviva in the 2015/16 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Photo: Todd Rosenberg

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GENERAL DIRECTIONS

BY Anthony Freud
 General Director, Lyric Opera of Chicago

Happy New Year and welcome to the mid-season edition of *Lyric Opera News*. I hope you've had the pleasure of joining us in the opera house for some of Lyric's most ambitious and acclaimed performances to date, including the much-celebrated world premiere of *Bel Canto*.

As this issue reaches you, some of the season's most highly anticipated productions are about to open on the main stage and we have recently announced our most far-reaching and groundbreaking Lyric Unlimited project to date.

Let's look first at the titles that will take us through the winter with productions full of romance, laughter, passion, and unparalleled artistry from each cast and, of course, from the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus. You'll learn more about the specific productions in the pages to come. *Nabucco*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Romeo and Juliet* (a key part of Shakespeare400 Chicago, the international celebration of the Bard's 400th birthday based here in Chicago), an intimate recital by superstar baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky on February 26, and the opening of *The King and I*, this year's contribution to Lyric's ongoing American Musical Initiative.

All of the main-stage operas and the musical feature incredible guest artists and some of the world's top production teams, all hallmarks of Lyric's

commitment to achieving world-class excellence with each offering.

The other exciting news comes from Lyric Unlimited, Lyric's community engagement and education initiative. In early January Lyric Unlimited unveiled plans for Chicago Voices, its most ambitious new project to date. Made up of four key components, Chicago Voices will fuel celebration of the human voice in extraordinarily creative and innovative events taking place over the next two years. You can read more about Chicago Voices and the leadership role that our creative consultant, Renée Fleming, is playing in every element of this project.

The pages that follow will bring you insights and behind-the-scenes access into the second part of the season that music director Sir Andrew Davis and I have designed for you. None of the work onstage would be possible without Andrew's astonishing talent and sheer dedication to Lyric. I'm grateful to him, our orchestra and chorus, and the artists of the Ryan Opera Center who are all such integral parts of Lyric's unique voice in the world.

Continued thanks for your interest and support. I do hope you enjoy the rest of Lyric's season, and I look forward to welcoming you to the opera house.

See more on
Der Rosenkavalier
at [lyricopera.org/
Rosenkavalier](http://lyricopera.org/Rosenkavalier)



amanda Majeski is one of Lyric's own.

A Ryan Opera Center alumna, she's now starring at one major company after another, from the Met to Glyndebourne, Zurich, and Madrid. Luckily for Chicago, she's returned repeatedly to Lyric, bringing her lustrous lyric soprano, elegant musicality, and radiant stage presence to heroines as diverse as irrepensible Eva (*Die Meistersinger*), vindictive Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*), courageous Marta (*The Passenger*), and – to open the 2015-16 season – melancholy Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*). She'll be back in February for her latest role, the Marschallin, in Lyric's eagerly awaited revival of Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Wonderful Mozart sopranos also frequently excel in Strauss, as Majeski showed in Dresden singing *Capriccio*'s Countess (she reprises that role at The Santa Fe Opera this summer) and in her first Marschallin, a triumph last spring at Frankfurt Opera. Majeski cherishes *Der Rosenkavalier* because, both musically and dramatically, “it takes everybody by the heart.” Onstage in Act One of the Frankfurt performances, when the Marschallin was quietly ending her romance with her much-younger lover, Octavian, “often we both would have tears

streaming down our faces. You can't help getting swept up in the poignancy of the music. It's the best there is.”

The Marschallin isn't about vocal fireworks. What it offers instead are “those colors that you have to find and bring out, because she's so complex. You can't just say it's an easy sing and toss it off like it's nothing. There's so much *depth*. How to shape the phrases to bring out that emotion — that's the biggest challenge.”

Majeski's ascent to stardom has been an extraordinary journey, crowned by her 2014 Met debut in the premiere of a new *Figaro*. Through all the acclaim, she's kept her feet on the ground. She remains a Midwesterner through and through, delighted with what she's achieved yet at the same time utterly genuine, irresistibly friendly, and still apt to begin her response to a question by endearingly exclaiming, “Oh, my gosh!”

Growing up in Gurnee, Illinois, Majeski didn't give singing much thought – she was an athlete and a professional tap dancer. But after failing to get into her high school's annual variety show, she took some voice lessons, progressing enough to pursue a double major in voice performance and music education at Northwestern University. “I dropped music ed,” she recalls, “because I went to Lyric and saw Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*. I never thought opera could be that powerful, and I fell in love with it. I thought this could be a cool thing to look into and take more seriously.”

At Northwestern University, the young soprano told herself, “If I get a part in my junior year, then that will be my sign.” Sure enough, she was cast as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. Her music-education major was history after that role and the much larger one that followed, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*. Graduate school at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music brought some huge performance opportunities, including

AMANDA MAJESKI: A LYRIC SUCCESS STORY

The Illinois-born star of *Der Rosenkavalier* has a terrific international career

“...Illinois-born soprano
Amanda Majeski, who
(contributes) some of the
opera’s most moving moments
and most exquisite singing.”
— *Chicago Sun-Times*

“Majeski brings fearless vocalism
and feistiness... Her technique is
equal to the murderous demands
of Vitellia’s bravura arias,
not least the huge vocal
leaps and plunges...”
— *Chicago Tribune*

“Soprano
Amanda Majeski
is one of the most
ideal interpreters of this
main character available.
She surpasses the most
celebrated Marschallin
of our day, even with
technique and
soulful expression.”
— *Deutschlandradio
Kultur*

“... Amanda Majeski
delivers a top flight
performance, reconciling
youthfulness and
experience, power
and fragility.”
— *Opéra Magazine*

Majeski has returned to Lyric as Countess Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* (pictured with Luca Pisaroni).



TODD ROSENBERG



Majeski continued to move audiences while singing the role of Marta in *The Passenger* last spring.

ROBERT KUSEL

Poulenc's one-woman opera, *La voix humaine*: "That was the highlight of my time at Curtis, presenting it in a black-box theater and really digging into it. So rich, full of emotion and tension – I loved it! Not every soprano gets to do that piece."

When Majeski was attending Lyric performances during her college days, she says, "I saw Nicole Cabell, Erin Wall, all those wonderful people in the Ryan Opera Center, and I thought, 'Wouldn't this be the most amazing thing?' I always had it in the back of my mind." She got into the program and suddenly she was onstage at Lyric, debuting as a peasant girl in *Figaro*. She also understudied major roles, beginning with Marguerite in *Faust*, portrayed by Ana María Martínez: "I remember being in awe of her. She'd always show up to rehearsal on time, she had a positive attitude, was willing to take advice, was open, and exemplified 'the class act.' I was so inspired watching her and thought, 'This is the kind of singer I want to be' – not just because she was a beautiful artist, but also because she was so gracious throughout the process."

Daily training with Lyric's terrific coaches gave Majeski the opportunity for constant growth. Today, she misses the time spent with them: "They celebrate your successes, but they also help you understand your failures, so you can keep growing."

From Chicago, Majeski went right

into leading roles at Dresden's renowned Semperoper, spending a year there before going freelance. While she continues to work frequently in Europe, Chicago is home – "hopefully for life," she declares. When in town with her husband, bass-baritone (and Ryan Opera Center alumnus) Sam Handley, their idea of a fun night out would "probably be to go to Bavette's for a fantastic meal. Or we'd go to The Publican, where we had our wedding reception."

Majeski still has her tap-dancing chops, memorably displayed earlier this season during one of the Harris Theater's "Beyond the Aria" programs. As the Ryan Opera Center's Jonathan Johnson sang Frank Loesser's song "Dolores," Majeski complemented her tenor colleague's ebullient performance with a marvelous tap routine. Just as she does in opera, she brought down the house.



Majeski had great success in 2013 as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, seen here with Dimitry Ivashchenko

Lyric Opera presentation of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* generously made possible by an ANONYMOUS DONOR and MR. & MRS. DIETRICH M. GROSS.

DANIEL ST

Lyric

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Nabucco at
[lyricopera.org/
podcasts](http://lyricopera.org/podcasts)

Nabucco's **CHORAL STAR POWER**

*Before Rigoletto, Il trovatore, La traviata, Aida,
and so many more...there was NABUCCO.*

Simply put, *Nabucco* is the opera that made Giuseppe Verdi an international star before he turned 30 – largely because of the chorus's starring role as Hebrews enslaved by the Babylonians in the biblically - inspired potboiler (whose main story concerns struggles over power and love). Back in 1842 when *Nabucco* premiered, it was a new trend in opera to have the chorus do more than set the scene. And when they sang "Va, pensiero," a powerful expression of longing for their lost homeland (based on Psalm 137) – well, the crowds went wild. That piece quickly became the unofficial Italian national anthem, and is widely considered the #1 opera chorus ever written. Not everyone knows *Nabucco* as well as Verdi's more famous operas, which are performed far more frequently – but virtually everyone can hum along with That Chorus.

Lyric will present *Nabucco* this winter for the first time since it opened the 1997 season, and only the third time in the company's history. Of the 82 singers comprising the expanded choral forces, just a handful of the 48 regular-chorus members have sung the full opera previously. Director Matthew Ozawa is confident they're up to the mighty challenge: "I know this exceptional chorus very well, and I believe they are one of the best in the nation, if not the world."

As chorus master Michael Black notes, this opera entails learning a vast amount of music beyond the big hit – which isn't so easy either. "It's hard work – *Nabucco* has so many words! In 'Va, pensiero' nothing really repeats. Often in Verdi's other works you get things that come around many times, and there are a few choruses like that in *Nabucco*, but there are many where the words just don't come back again. It's through-composed; you have to remember this stream of storytelling. And the challenge for those choruses that repeat five times is you have to remember the differences – whether it's short or long, major or minor, how it scans. It's difficult!" It took Lyric's chorus nearly five months to learn and memorize the score, while preparing the rest of the season's also-challenging choral music, including a world premiere.

"It's a great sing," Black adds. "The chorus actually gets to sing – blood-and-guts, pour-your-heart-out choral music. There are some more intimate, quiet moments, but a lot of it is right out there." Thrilling for performers and audience alike, in other words.



MICHAEL BLACK
Lyric Chorus Master



COURTESY LYRIC OPERA



SCOTT HOLMES
Bass, in his 44th season at Lyric



JANET MENSEN REYNOLDS
Mezzo-soprano,
in her 26th and final season at Lyric



RONALD WATKINS
Baritone, in his 24th season
at Lyric



MATTHEW CARROLL
Baritone, has been in Lyric's chorus
for a decade

In most operas, the chorus has a few scenes interspersed with long stretches of down time in the dressing rooms and lounge. In *Nabucco*, the chorus figures prominently throughout the entire opera, portraying both the oppressed Hebrews and the oppressive Babylonians.

Bass Scott Holmes, in his 44th season at Lyric, calls *Nabucco* “daunting” in quantity, complexity, and range. “Verdi’s choral writing requires the chorus to convey such a wide range of emotion and temperament,” Holmes notes. “A great deal of the music is incredibly rhythmic and ‘muscular,’ demanding so much varied detail to be absorbed in rehearsal and concentrated on in performance. Verdi’s choral writing in *Nabucco* is in a very high *tessitura*, especially for the basses, and the basses have an entire scene by themselves. Within two or three pages, approximately 18 high E-naturals are required, then Verdi asks for a repeat of that section, followed by a coda with about 16 more high Es.” Holmes adds that the most tiring aspect of *Nabucco* “is that the men (particularly the basses, because of the extra scene) are constantly changing costumes backstage – from Hebrews to Babylonians, back and forth. Once an act has started we don’t return to our dressing rooms until the act is over.” He calls the experience “a full and tiring night, and an extremely rewarding one as well.”

Baritone Matthew Carroll, who has been in Lyric’s chorus for a decade, was “extremely surprised at the volume of the work as well as how well written it is musically.” He compares rigorous demands to the choral music of *Aida*, *Turandot*, and *Lohengrin*, and looks forward to “seeing and hearing the audience’s reaction to the sound of the chorus, both huge in the dramatic sections and intimate in the soft portions. The chorus alone in this

opera has the potential to really move the audience in an emotional way they’ve never experienced before. In my opinion this is one of Verdi’s better scores. It has all the drama of grand opera and then some. To hear our orchestra play and our chorus sing this enormous score will give you major goosebumps moments.”

Baritone Ronald Watkins, in his 24th season here, recalls his first *Nabucco* under the baton of the late Bruno Bartoletti, then Lyric’s artistic director and principal conductor. Singing “Va, pensiero” with the beloved Italian maestro “was special due to its status among Italians. It’s a rare moment among any composers’ works where there is an ‘aria for chorus.’ Even out of context, such as the concerts we sang last season, it’s recognized and revered among audiences.” Watkins appreciates that the chorus “is a key character within the opera. The choral music is voluminous and technically challenging. You have to feel nearly exhausted after the performance to know that you did it well. It is a true masterwork.” He and the others returning to this work admit “we didn’t recognize or remember a lot of the music at first reading. However, after the second or third time it came flooding back – not just the notes and rhythms, but articulation, dynamics, and character as well. I am truly looking forward to this season’s *Nabucco*!”

For mezzo-soprano Janet Mensen Reynolds, in her 26th and final season at Lyric, the famous chorus “will always hold a dear place in my heart.” She was pregnant with her daughter (now a promising young singer) when Lyric last staged *Nabucco*, and less than a year later sang “Va, pensiero” at her father’s memorial service. After opening night in September, Mensen Reynolds adds, the chorus took a celebratory riverboat cruise,

singing the familiar refrain as they passed the opera house. “It was so cool.”

Bass Jeffrey Taylor, in his 34th season, recalls singing “Va, pensiero” at the 1996 gala concert celebrating the life of Lyric’s second general director, Ardis Krainik, who, “sadly, did not live to hear us do the complete opera the next fall.” For the iconic chorus, “we sang directly to the audience, letting the music speak our emotions. The house had been renamed the Ardis Krainik Theatre. It was the first opening night without her physical presence, yet I truly felt she was listening from the next world and applauding with the audience. It was an amazing night I’ll always remember.”

Bass Earl Hazell relished performing in Lyric’s 2008 and 2014 productions of *Porgy and Bess*, and returns as a member of Lyric’s supplementary chorus. “*Nabucco* is far less about the life and times of Nebuchadnezzar from the Old Testament than it is about the community who, in their unshakeable love of each other and faith in God, changed the entirety of his life more than he could ever change theirs. This rendering of the spirit of a community and its effect on an individual made Verdi an opera star.” He predicts that on hearing the opera’s most famous music, “you will find yourself not just moved, but humbled; not just touched, but changed.”

Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, the Harris Family Foundation, and Katherine A. Abelson and Robert J. Cornell are the generous sponsors of Lyric’s presentation of Verdi’s *Nabucco*. Lyric Opera production originally made possible by the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa.



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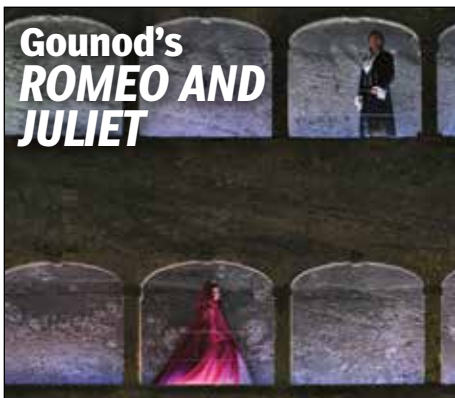
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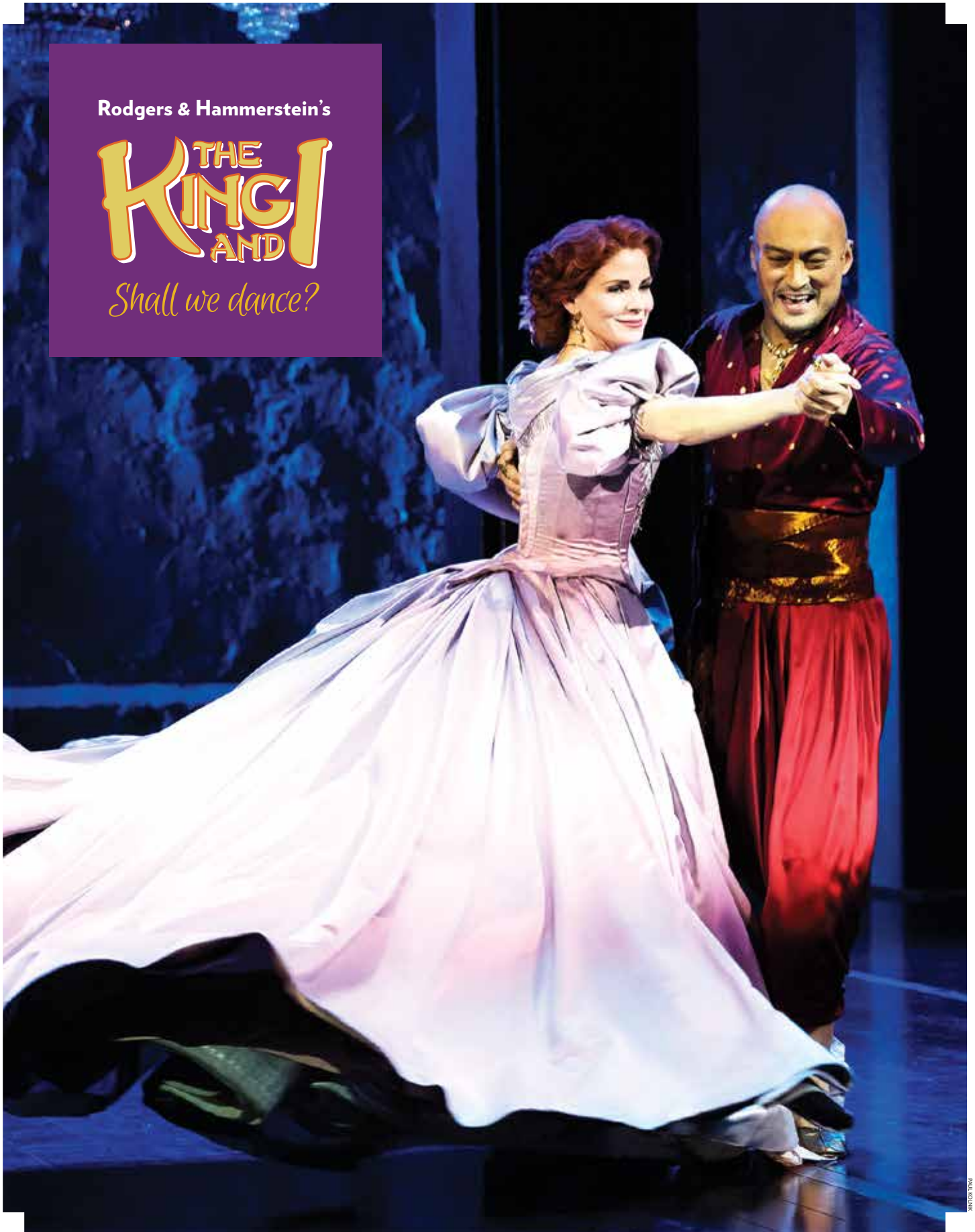


April 29- May 22, 2016

Rodgers & Hammerstein's

THE KING AND I

Shall we dance?



The
women
behind
the
show

ANNA LEONOWENS was the real-life teacher of the children of Mongkut, King of Siam, and the author of two memoirs of her experiences, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870) and *Romance of the Harem* (1873).

MARGARET LANDON turned Anna's story into a novel, *Anna and the King of Siam* (1944).

GERTRUDE LAWRENCE, the unforgettably charismatic star of the London and New York theater, read Landon's novel and instantly knew it could be worked into a play to mark her eagerly awaited return to Broadway.

Theatrical attorney **FANNY HOLTZMAN**, Lawrence's agent, suggested to Oscar Hammerstein's wife that she read the novel and mention it to her husband.

DOROTHY HAMMERSTEIN and **DOROTHY RODGERS**'s enthusiasm for the book led to their husbands' considering it.

IRENE DUNNE's portrayal of Anna (opposite Rex Harrison) in the film version of the novel had much to do with the initially reluctant R&H deciding that this story would, in fact, make a terrific musical!



IS IT A LOVE STORY OR ISN'T IT?

Early in the pre-Broadway tryout in New Haven, Yul Brynner realized there was nothing but conflict between the King and Anna – no love story: “After the show, which lasted about five hours and was obviously a flop, I took Gertrude Lawrence to supper, alone, and I said, ‘Darling, from now on, from the moment you come into my palace, from the moment we are together onstage, we are going to play a great love story, through conflict, through everything.’ So she said, ‘Well, we’ll try. I don’t see how, but we’ll try.’”

In the Boston tryout, Hammerstein saw what the couple was doing onstage. “And out of that came his writing of the whole section that surrounds ‘Shall We Dance?’, Brynner recalls.” She finds the king reading poetry, he tells her what nonsense the English poets write about ‘love, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.’ And that leads into ‘Shall We Dance?’ Which is really as close to being a love scene between them as anything can be. It was marvelous to see how these things happen, how Rodgers could write ‘Shall We Dance?’ in something like three or four minutes. That’s the length of time it takes to play it – and that’s how fast he wrote it.”*

*Brynner quotes in *On Broadway* by Fred Fehl, William Stott, and Jane Stott: University of Texas Press, 1978.

What you didn't know about the king

Mongkut spent years as a Buddhist monk (he was ordained at age 20), and not until he was 47 – in 1851 – did he become king.

His many hundreds of letters during his reign kept him in regular touch with leaders from all over the world, from three U.S. presidents to Pope Pius IX and Queen Victoria.

By the time he died in 1868 at the age of 63, he'd fathered more than 80 (!!) children.



The King and I's Progress

1. **PRE-BROADWAY TRYOUTS:**
New Haven, Boston
2. **SHOW'S BUDGET:**
All those exotic sets and costumes cost just \$360,000 (!)
3. **SHOW'S LENGTH AT ITS FIRST PERFORMANCE:**
Four (!!) hours
4. **BROADWAY PREMIERE:**
March 29, 1951
1,246 Performances
5. **TONY AWARDS, 1952:**
Best Musical,
Best Actress (Gertrude Lawrence),
Best Featured Actor (Yul Brynner)
6. **NUMBER OF BROADWAY REVIVALS TO DATE:** 4
7. **FIRST U.S. TOUR:** 1954
8. **FILM: 1956**
Five Academy Awards (nine nominations), including Best Actor (Yul Brynner)

WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE REAL "MRS. ANNA"

▶▶ Born in India to a cabinet maker who enlisted in the Bombay infantry and his Anglo-Indian wife, Anna took pains to disguise her mixed-race heritage to improve the opportunities available to her and her children.

▶▶ To pass as a Victorian lady in Singapore (where she received the invitation to move to Siam), Anna changed the following facts about her life: her actual age, her birthplace, her mother's Indian parentage, her father's military rank, and her late husband's pro-

fession. "The most important thing in life," she wrote, "is to choose your parents."

▶▶ Anna had a daughter named Avis, who was sent to a boarding school in England when Anna left Singapore for Siam, because Siam wasn't a safe place for young women at the time.

▶▶ Anna's son Louis (her only child in *The King and I*) was schooled by his mother alongside the royal children and later returned to Siam, where he founded

the successful trading company Louis T. Leonowens Ltd., which is still trading in Thailand today.

▶▶ In Siam, Anna's pupils included the crown prince, Chulalongkorn. Thirty years after leaving Siam, Anna met her former pupil again, when – as King Rama V of Siam – he visited London in 1897.

▶▶ A prolific writer, a feminist, and a suffragist, Anna settled in Canada, dying in Montreal at age 83 in 1915.

Some wonderful
songs *you may have
forgotten*

“MY LORD AND MASTER”

– The Burmese slave Tuptim, given by her king as a gift to the King of Siam, reflects that the latter will never have her heart, for she loves another man.

“A PUZZLEMENT”

– The King wonders what to tell his son (the crown prince) about the world, which has become so much more complex than formerly.

“WESTERN PEOPLE FUNNY”

– Lady Thiang, the King’s head wife, is amused by westerners who attempt to remake the Siamese in their own image.

“SHALL I TELL YOU WHAT I THINK OF YOU?”

– Having been outraged hearing the King refer to her as his servant, Anna, once alone, explodes with rage and disgust.

“Small House of Uncle Thomas”

Jerome Robbins, the original choreographer, studied Southeast Asian court dancing extensively, attempting to develop a special authenticity in creating the now-celebrated Act Two ballet (staged as a special entertainment for the English guests at the King’s banquet). The ballet didn’t work in rehearsal, since Robbins was



trying to be too authentic! Once Rodgers suggested that he create the ballet with the perspective of his Broadway experience, he was able to develop a masterpiece.



Who’s *covered* “Hello, Young Lovers”?

The greatest hit in the glorious score of *The King and I* has been recorded countless times – by everyone from Lyric’s own Renée Fleming, Julie Andrews, Stevie Wonder, Nancy Wilson, Tom Jones, and Eydie Gormé to the kings of ’50s pop (Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Paul Anka, Bobby Darin, Mel Tormé), as well as the Temptations and at least two very unexpected gentlemen – Lorne Greene (of TV’s *Bonanza* fame) and Jimmy Durante!

See and hear
more at
[lyricopera.org/
kingandi](http://lyricopera.org/kingandi)

Lyric

Find out more at
[lyricopera.org/
romeoandjuliet](http://lyricopera.org/romeoandjuliet)

A love story
for the ages:

Romeo AND Juliet

Lyric Opera presents *Romeo and Juliet* in conjunction with the Shakespeare 400 Chicago Festival



In 2016, the world commemorates the 400-year anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Known as one of the greatest poets and playwrights to have ever lived, the spirit of Shakespeare is alive and well today. His plays have been adapted into popular movies, TV shows, novels and much more. To celebrate his legacy, the city of Chicago is hosting the world's largest global festival in his honor: the Shakespeare 400 Chicago campaign. The year-long international arts festival will showcase how the words of Shakespeare still resonate with Chicagoans from all walks of life. The campaign will bring together various cultural institutions such as the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Joffrey Ballet, the Art Institute of Chicago, along with Chicago Public Libraries and the Chicago Park District to present multi-faceted events to Chicago residents. Lyric's contribution to the Shakespeare 400 Chicago campaign is a take on the playwright's most famous love story:



Director Bartlett Sher makes his Lyric debut.

Romeo and Juliet.

Beginning in late February, Lyric will present nine performances of *Romeo and Juliet* in a new-to-Chicago production. It's directed by Bartlett Sher (Lyric debut), who brings a wealth of experience directing Shakespearean plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*. His production of *Cymbeline* went on to become the first American theater production to be seen at the Royal Shakespeare Company, located in Stratford-upon-Avon, the celebrated birthplace of William Shakespeare.

Singing the heroine will be soprano Susanna Phillips, while her ill-fated lover is set to be sung by tenors Joseph Calleja and Eric Cutler (the latter sings the role in the last three performances). Composed

by Charles Gounod in 1867, *Romeo and Juliet* brings iconic scenes and characters



Susanna Phillips, Ryan Opera Center alumna, returns as Juliet.

from Shakespeare's unforgettable tragedy, which tell the classic, deeply romantic story of feuding families and star-crossed lovers. The opera features four iconic love duets, a spectacular duel scene, dazzling costumes, and of course, unforgettable music from the chorus and orchestra, conducted by Emmanuel Villaume.

Originally presented at the Salzburg Opera House in Vienna, followed by La Scala in Milan, Lyric will be the third stop for this production of *Romeo and Juliet*. However, Lyric's version will be presented with adjustments due to the fact it has been adapted from significantly



Joseph Calleja sings the role of Romeo in the first six performances.

different venue types: Salzburg is an outdoor amphitheater, while the stage at La Scala is raked opposed to flat. Lyric's technical department has modified the production in slight ways that will make performances intimate.

Lyric has a long history of undertaking extraordinary Shakespeare-inspired operas. The first was back in 1954 when *The Taming of the Shrew* was performed during its first-ever season. Since then, Lyric has presented productions of *Otello*,

A Midsummer Night's Dream, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, to name a few. The city of Chicago has also long-embraced the works of Shakespeare. Director Barbara Gaines (director of this season's *The Marriage of Figaro*) is founder and artistic director of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, which performs at Navy Pier, in city parks and throughout various public schools and neighborhoods across the far north, west and south sides of the city. The Shakespeare 400 Chicago festival will engage more than 500,000 Chicagoans and visitors with roughly 850 events throughout the year.

"Chicago will take center stage in 2016, as more than 1,000 local and international artists will create a global celebration of Shakespeare like no other in the world," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "During this landmark year, Shakespeare will be alive on our stages, in our schools and across



Romeo will be sung by Eric Cutler for the final three performances.

our neighborhoods. The power of our world-class cultural institutions uniting behind one theme serves to amplify Chicago's role as a global destination for cultural tourism."

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has proved to be a love story for the ages, and Lyric is excited to present the dazzling, devastatingly beautiful operatic masterpiece this winter. The full line up of Shakespeare 400 Chicago productions, events, and programs can be found at www.shakespeare400chicago.com.

Lyric Opera presentation of Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* generously made possible by the NIB Foundation, Julie and Roger Baskes, Mr. and Mrs. W. James Farrell, and PowerShares QQQ. Production owned by The Metropolitan Opera.

Lyric's standout programming extends beyond the main stage to Chicago-area schools and neighborhoods each season through Lyric Unlimited, our education and community engagement division. Lyric Unlimited brings opera and the arts to thousands of Chicagoans each year. Many participants are children who come from low-income, at-risk neighborhoods where opportunities to engage in arts education and live theater are limited or nonexistent. Season-long Lyric Unlimited programs like *Student Backstage Tours*, *Opera Residencies*, *Performances for Students*, and *Opera in the Neighborhoods* introduce young people to enchanting arts experiences they would not otherwise have access to, all for little to no cost. In the last year alone, Lyric Unlimited served more than 126,000 children, families, and adults!

Lyric Unlimited is redefining how

Lyric
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LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

opera companies interact with and serve their cities, acting both as a laboratory and a playground for interaction with the community, an incubator through which groundbreaking, innovative, and transformational programs are developed. Through fresh, radical, and surprising new opportunities for participation, Lyric Unlimited is extending Lyric's civic footprint and drawing in new individuals and communities, unleashing the creative potential that exists within our society and demonstrating how opera has relevance to a much broader public.



Educate, Engage, Explore

Lyric Unlimited was launched with major catalyst funding from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and receives major support from the **Hurvis Family Foundation** and the **Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performances Fund**. Additional support for Lyric Unlimited is provided by: Anonymous (2); Baxter International, Inc.; Helen Brach Foundation; Nancy Dehmow; Roger and Chaz Ebert Foundation; Richard B. Egen; Envestnet; Dan J. Epstein Family Foundaton/Judy Guitelman & ALAS Wings; Helyn D. Goldenberg; The Dolores Kohl Education Foundation-Morris and Dolores Kohl Kaplan Fund; Judith Z. and Steven W. Lewis Family; Daniel Lome; Northern Trust; Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation, Inc.; and The Wallace Foundation.

Help us keep these programs accessible! Please call 312-827-3500 or go to www.lyricopera.org/support to make a contribution to Lyric Unlimited.

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Dec 10 – Jan 27

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LYRIC STARS

DMITRI HVOROSTOVSKY

Whenever Lyric Opera presents a singer in recital, you can be sure that the singer we've chosen is one of the greats. That's what it's been from the start – just think of names like Leontyne Price, Marilyn Horne, Luciano Pavarotti, and more recently a remarkable duo, Renée Fleming and Susan Graham. On February 26, we add another distinguished name to the list – Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

Lyric has long cherished the Siberian baritone, who made his American debut here in *La traviata* (1993). He's returned for *Faust*, *Traviata* again, *Un ballo in maschera*, and his signature role, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. In each portrayal, he's provoked ecstatic responses from audiences and critics alike.

That's nothing new to Hvorostovsky – he's the idol of the Met, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and every major concert hall worldwide.

Audiences can't get enough of Hvorostovsky's uniquely velvety sound. Onstage he's all electricity when ringing the rafters with power, yet he can also mesmerize his audiences with the most extraordinarily quiet and intimate singing.

Throughout his career, Hvorostovsky's innumerable fans have been thrilled that he's devoted so much attention to recitals. His range is vast – Mahler, Strauss, a wide

variety of Italian and French material – but he's made his greatest contribution in his native repertoire.

Hvorostovsky's all-Russian programs run the gamut, featuring the big names (Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff) but also many lesser-known composers. He's developed a particular specialty – popular songs from Soviet-era Russia: "I am one of the first 'ambassadors' coming from the Soviet Union, with a certain Russian repertoire," he told *Venice* magazine. "I have been performing Russian music and I have been trying to make people all around the world understand and appreciate the music that I love and grew up hearing."

It's depth of feeling, above all, that makes a Hvorostovsky recital memorable: "Any piece of art – literature, painting, music – is always expressive of extreme human feelings, whether it is grief or

joy....It actually is a very productive way for artists, because they cannot lead a normal human life; they put themselves into this extreme state of being and come up with great creativity."

"I have been performing Russian music and I have been trying to make people all around the world understand and appreciate the music that I love and grew up hearing."

—HVOROSTOVSKY

"Even as a kid, singing in a cathedral choir, I remember thinking what you could do with the shape of an Elgar motet to make it tell more dramatically"

—GARDNER

Mercutio's exhilarating aria, the Ballad of Queen Mab, "I'd describe as playful, flighty, very quickly paced. It involves a ton of words that go by in a flash!"

—HOPKINS



RELOVICA

EDWARD GARDNER

Edward Gardner's enthusiasm is boundless, and his every performance communicates his consuming desire to share great music with his audiences. This electrifying English musician debuts at Lyric this season in *Der Rosenkavalier*. In Strauss's opera he savors "the combination of effervescent comedic energy and the most passionate, most full-of-ardor expressions of love and relationships – the *honesty* of relationships, too. It's also about the passage of time, and in that respect completely heartbreaking. It's grand-scale, but also intimate – it's extraordinary!"

Gardner searches out the drama in any music he conducts ("Even as a kid, singing in a cathedral choir, I remember thinking what you could do with the shape of an Elgar motet to make it tell more dramatically"). A very impressive musical education led to several years working under Sir Mark Elder at the Hallé Orchestra ("He was a very generous colleague and really looked after me"), then the music-directorship of Glyndebourne's touring company, and by his early thirties that same position at London's English National Opera. The highlight of his eight years at ENO? "*Meistersinger* in my last season. It's those kinds of pieces that an artistic institution is really judged by – they're gargantuan to put on. I was so proud of what the company did. As an advert for our work together at ENO, I thought *Meistersinger* was extraordinary."

Gardner has guest-conducted at the Met, Paris, La Scala, and many major

orchestras internationally ("Colin Davis said whenever you go to a new orchestra, it's like a blind date -- you don't know if it's going to work!"). He leaves time for non-musical pursuits, such as cycling "and here's one that won't translate over the Atlantic – watching cricket." A soccer fan, he roots especially for "my team, Arsenal, in London." He's very excited about coming to Chicago for "my first proper conducting there. Venturing outside in January isn't going to be easy – it's not T-shirt weather! – but I'm going to delve right into it. All my colleagues who have been to Chicago love it, and I'm sure it's going to be the same for me."

JOSHUA HOPKINS

Joshua Hopkins made an unforgettable Lyric debut last season in *The Passenger*. He portrayed the concentration-camp prisoner Tadeusz, riveting the audience with his glowing voice and profound expressiveness. The Canadian-born baritone treasures being part of *The Passenger*, especially because "we were blessed to have Zofia Posmysz [author of the original novel] there to witness this piece. She spoke to the cast about her experiences, she took our questions. I felt extremely honored to be in her presence."

Quite a different role awaits Hopkins for his return to Lyric. In *Romeo and Juliet* he's Romeo's friend Mercutio, "the life of the party - witty, cynical, but also very *fun*." Mercutio's exhilarating aria, the Ballad of Queen Mab, "I'd describe as playful, flighty, very quickly paced. It involves a ton of words that go by in a flash!"

Hopkins discovered his voice in his early teens. A few years later he landed his first serious gig, Haydn's *Creation*: "I'd never sung in front of an orchestra before – I was 16. It was crazy!" After graduating

from McGill University, Hopkins joined Houston Grand Opera Studio, the springboard for a hugely successful operatic career taking him across North America (Toronto, Washington, Dallas, Santa Fe) and Europe (Glyndebourne, Frankfurt, Lisbon). A particular highlight was portraying the protagonist, Junior, in Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* at New York City Opera, where "I really sank my teeth into playing a tortured and emotionally complex character."

Also highly praised for recitals, Hopkins loves the intimacy they can provide: "I think it comes down to vulnerability. In recital, I'm in front of an audience without makeup or staging. I need to connect with



SIMON PAULY

text and emotion, that's all it comes down to."

Offstage, Hopkins's idea of "blissful serenity" would be "hiking on forest and mounting trails, or downhill skiing, or kayaking down a secluded river." Good food is another major enthusiasm; Hopkins also considers himself "a genuine foodie – I'll try anything once." Wherever he and his wife Zoe travel, interesting eateries are a priority. Zoe is "great at finding the restaurants people are talking about wherever we go. We're prepared with an arsenal of places to try!"



Chicago
Voices
LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

Lyric Opera creative consultant Renée Fleming and Lyric Unlimited are joining forces to present an extraordinary new initiative that will celebrate the diversity of Chicago vocal traditions. The initiative, beginning in 2016, will include a multi-year community engagement program, symposia and special events, and a citywide celebration, culminating in an all-star, multi-genre gala performance at the Civic Opera House on February 4, 2017. The distinct yet interconnected activities that make up the *Chicago Voices* initiative will bring together music enthusiasts from throughout Chicago's many communities, including patrons of the arts, music scholars, and professional and amateur performers across genres. By distilling opera to its core components of music and storytelling, *Chicago Voices* will offer audiences throughout the city an accessible avenue to connect the art form to genres that hold meaning for them. Directly in line with the Chicago Cultural Plan, *Chicago Voices* will promote community participation in the arts and will facilitate creativity and self-expression through the essential elements of music and theater.

Gala Performance

The *Chicago Voices* gala, a one-night-only event, will showcase

an array of vocal talent with deep ties to Chicago. It will feature a dynamic, high-quality performance that will highlight the best of Chicago vocalism, exploring distinctions between vocal styles and resonating across social, ethnic, and economic boundaries. The gala will be an opportunity to share and celebrate the legacy of great Chicago vocalists and will attract first-time attendees into the Civic Opera House, demonstrating how Lyric connects with music enthusiasts across genres.

Renée Fleming will curate, headline, and perform in the gala performance. Chicago is a city known for its essential role in American music history, and is home to generations of groundbreaking artists across a wide range of genres. The vocalists featured at the gala will represent the city's deep musical traditions and will include top singers in blues, jazz, soul, rock, hip-hop, house, gospel, and classical, among other genres.



The performance will pay tribute to the great Chicago vocalists of the past, such as Mary Garden, Mahalia Jackson, Muddy Waters, Louis Armstrong, Sam Cooke, the Staples Singers, and others. Narrated video segments will ground the performance in Chicago's rich vocal history and will make connections to the social and political movements that are so deeply entwined with the musical genres associated with the city.

Through *Chicago Voices*, Lyric will expand the traditional role of an opera company within the cultural



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Unlimited

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

ecosystem of its city, engaging greater audiences through participatory arts experiences and dynamic programming initiatives. *Chicago Voices* will establish Lyric as an epicenter of the arts in Chicago's cultural landscape that not only brings world-class opera stars to the city, but which also draws on Chicago's unique musical heritage to expand opera's reach, creating a product that is fresh, innovative, and significant to a wider audience.

Chicago Voices is made possible by major support from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and the **Ford Foundation**. This project is partially supported by **The Chicago Community Trust** and an IncentOvate Grant from the **City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events**.

Shall we dance?

Join the Women's Board and Guild Board of Directors on Saturday, May 7, 2016, to celebrate Rodgers & Hammerstein's musical masterpiece, *The King and I*. More than 400 guests will gather at the Civic Opera House for a fun and festive themed party with cocktails at 5:00 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, and a 7:30 pm performance.

Event sponsors will have the option to dine like kings in their own premium boxes or in the Graham Room. Following the performance, the festivities continue onstage with dancing like *Anna and the King of Siam* – a once in a lifetime opportunity!

The King and I Celebration Lead Sponsor: **Zurich**

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Tickets begin at \$500. Limited tickets available.

For reservations and inquiries, please call (312) 827-5681.



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BREAKING NEW GROUND

A CAMPAIGN FOR LYRIC |



TECHNOLOGY BRINGS STORYTELLING TO LIFE Behind the thrill of every Lyric production *should be* sophisticated technology and engineering. This is not the case. It takes dozens of talented stagehands countless hours and considerable manpower to lift, light, fly, and maneuver Lyric's increasingly realistic scrim and sets.

When the Civic Opera House was built in 1929, it was the most state-of-the-art building of its time. Today, the Ardis Krainik Theatre is one of the most antiquated of any major opera house in the U.S. and the world. For both cost-effectiveness and safety reasons, we need to fix this problem and we need your help.

Our most pressing needs:



①

POINT HOISTS

Point hoists enable us to fly anything, anywhere, in any direction. In 2001, we purchased motors from the Millennium Dome in London which we were able to inexpensively obtain secondhand. Fifteen years later, these outdated motors are severely slowing us down. New motors are capable of lifting 1,200 pounds each at triple the speed of our current motors!

NEEDED: 48 NEW POINT HOISTS

Cost: **\$64,000** each



②

**COUNTERWEIGHT PIPE
AUTOMATION SYSTEM**

With the existing equipment, we can only move scenery and scrims either horizontally or vertically. We need to be able to move them along angles as well.



Cost: **\$5 million**



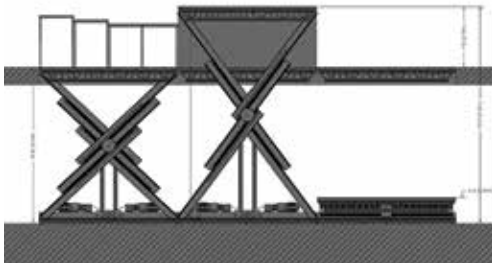
③

PROJECTORS

Increasingly, opera productions require video projections as part of their design. Right now, Lyric has two projectors that are very old; only one can be used at a time, and their projection capacity is only 27' x 36'. We need 6 projectors that can project 70' wide x 40' tall.



Cost: **\$800,000**

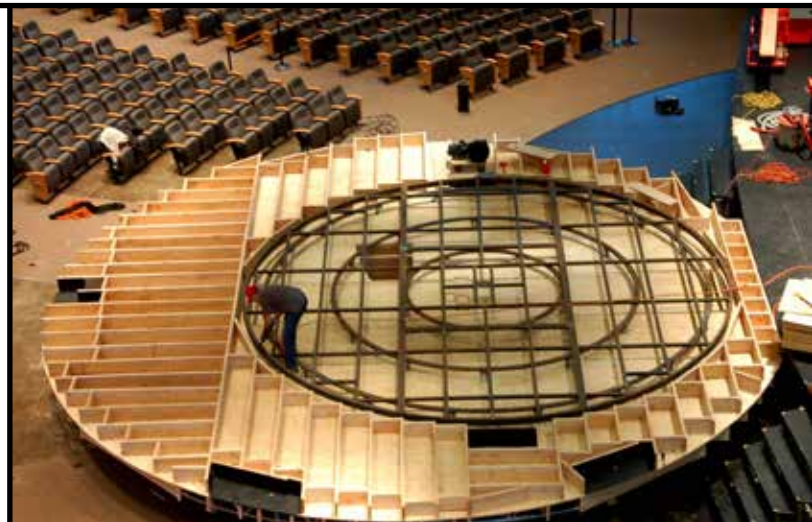


④

STAGE LIFTS

Lyric has no stage lift system. We only have one single temporary stage lift which was installed in 1994 as a short-term solution in preparation for our first *Ring* cycle. Right now, we have to build the elevations for each production instead of pushing a button to create the elevations instantly. As we prepare for our new *Ring* cycle, we still have only that one temporary stage lift! We need to demolish the pylons in the third sub-basement of the stage and install a customized lift system comprised of 12 lifts.

Cost: **\$6 million**



⑤

TURNTABLE

Scenic automation is at the forefront of the largest, most intricate opera productions in the world, ensuring that the most mind-numbingly complex sequences of scene changes can happen at the touch of a button. The Ken Pigott Stage has no turntable. We have been inventing temporary solutions on an ad-hoc basis. Safety is our principal concern when there are 15 tons of scenery and as many as 82 chorus members (*Nabucco*) in our upcoming productions.

Cost: **\$1 million**

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Ariadne auf Naxos featuring Marjorie Owens **, with Cecelia Hall ** and Levi Hernandez **
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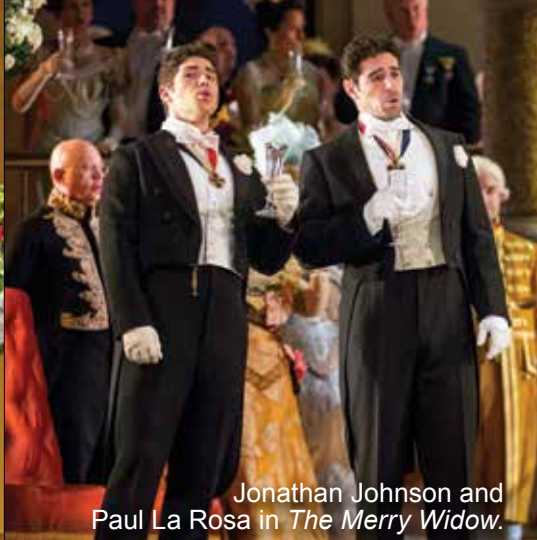
EARLY JUNE 2017

For more information regarding this trip and the Lyric on the Move travel program, please contact Leslie Mastroianni at 312.827.5723 or lmastroianni@lyricopera.org. Please note: itinerary details are subject to change and are posted on Lyric's website at www.lyricopera.org/travel. Airfare is not included in program fee. Lyric on the Move operates in partnership with Act 1 Tours. Lyric on the Move is offered to current annual donors of \$2,000 and above.

Lyric



Bradley Smoak in *The Marriage of Figaro*.



Jonathan Johnson and Paul La Rosa in *The Merry Widow*.



Jesse Donner in *Tannhäuser*.

Join us Monday, February 29, 2016, supporters of the Ryan Opera Center will gather at The Casino Club for an evening of merriment and song benefiting the program. For more information or to attend the event, please call Meaghan Stainback at 312-827-5691.

The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center is internationally recognized as one of the premier artist-development programs of its kind in the world. During their residency, young artists

Lyric



THE PATRICK G. AND SHIRLEY W. RYAN OPERA CENTER

actively participate in Lyric's mainstage productions, performing thirty-five roles and covering sixty others in the 2015/16 season. Additionally, thirteen roles are sung by celebrated Ryan Opera Center alumni this season as Lyric continues to engage successful graduates of the program.

On Monday, February 29, 2016,

supporters of the Ryan Opera Center will gather at The Casino Club for an evening of merriment and song benefiting the program. Current ensemble tenors Alec Carlson, Jesse Donner, Jonathan Johnson and Mingjie Lei will join tenor alumnus René Barbera and music director Craig Terry for an unforgettable and intimate evening, as other alumni and current members join guests for an elegant seated dinner.

For more information or to attend the event, please call Meaghan Stainback at 312-827-5691.

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Lyric

HIGH NOTES

Mozart's MARRIAGE OF FIGARO



(L-R) Kim Smith, Luca Pisaroni/Count Almaviva, and Lyric Executive Committee Member Eric Smith representing JP Morgan Chase & Co.



Lyric Board member Melvin R. Berlin and Randy L. Berlin



Mozart's THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

New Lyric Opera production generously made possible by **The Negaunee Foundation**, the **Abbott Fund**, **Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin**, **Exelon**, **JPMorgan Chase & Co.**, and **Sylvia Neil and Daniel Fischel**.



(L-R) Daniel Fischel, Adam Plachetka/ Figaro, and Lyric Board member Sylvia Neil



(L-R) Christiane Karg/Susanna, Women's Board Member Liz Stiffel, Lyric Executive Committee Member Ruth Ann Gillis, and Anthony Freud

Rossini's CINDERELLA

Lyric Opera presentation generously made possibly by **Margot and Josef Lakonishok**, **The Nelson Cornelius Production Endowment Fund**, and **PowerShares QQQ**.



(L-R) Director Barbara Gaines with Robin and Steve Solomon representing Exelon



Rossini's CINDERELLA



(L-R), Lyric Executive Committee member Josef Lakonishok, Christian Van Horn/Alidoro, and Margot Lakonishok



Lawrence Brownlee/Don Ramiro (C) with representatives of PowerShares QQQ



(L-R) Lyric Board member Stefan Edlis, Tomasz Konieczny/Wozzeck, and Gael Neeson



(L-R) Jill Grove/Margret, Stewart Grimshaw of The Monument Trust (UK), and director Sir David McVicar



Sir Andrew Davis with Lyric Board member Joseph Rubinelli, Jr. (R) and the Mazza Foundation

Berg's WOZZECK

New Lyric Opera production generously made possible by **The Monument Trust (UK)** and **Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson**, with additional support from **Robert L. Turner**.



(L-R) Thomas Hampson/Count Danilo, Andrea Herberstein, Lyric Executive Committee member Donna Van Eekeren, and Dale Connelly



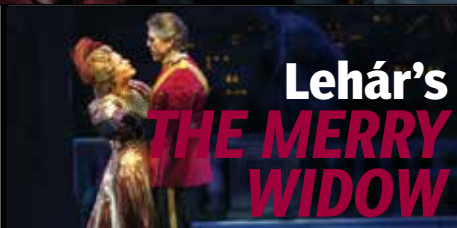
(L-R) Angela Denoke/Marie, Robert L. Turner, and Peter Speliopoulos

Lehár's THE MERRY WIDOW

Lyric Opera presentation of Lehár's *The Merry Widow* generously made possible by the **Donna Van Eekeren Foundation, Howard Gottlieb and Barbara Greis, Mr. J. Thomas Hurvis, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and the Mazza Foundation**. Production owned by The Metropolitan Opera.

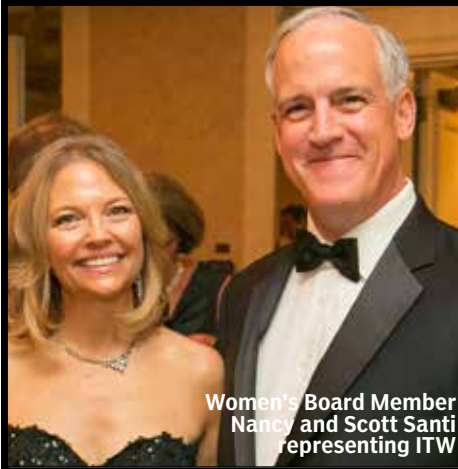


(L-R) Lyric Executive Committee member Howard Gottlieb, Heidi Stober/Valencienne, and Barbara Greis



Renée Fleming/Widow Hanna Glawari with Lyric Executive Committee member J. Thomas Hurvis (3rd-L) and guests

HIGH NOTES



Women's Board Member Nancy and Scott Santi representing ITW



(L-R) Nancy Crown and Caryn Harris, Opening Night Gala co-chairs



Gregory Case of Aon and Women's Board member Mamie Biggs Case



(L-R) Marlys A. Beider with Elizabeth DeShong

THE OPENING NIGHT BENEFIT

The Opening Night Benefit generously sponsored by **Aon**.



(L-R) Sheila Ormesher, Christiane Karg, and Lyric's President and CEO David T. Ormesher of closerlook, inc.

THE OPERA BALL

The Opera Ball is cosponsored by **ITW** and **Northern Trust**. The Opera Ball Reception is sponsored by **Liz Stiffel**.



(L-R) Beatrice Crain and Michael Maling of the Crain-Maling Foundation with Amanda Majeski and Sam Handley

THE GRAND MARCH

The Grand March is sponsored by **Barlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP**



Sir Andrew Davis with Lyric Executive Committee member Marion Cameron representing Sipi Metals Corp.



Elizabeth Yntema and Lyric Board member Mark Ferguson of Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP

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Stars of Lyric Opera at Millennium Park
Generously supported by Lead Sponsor **closerlook, inc.** and cosponsors two Anonymous Donors, **Marlys A. Beider**, **Rhoda L. and Henry S. Frank**, **Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP**, **Christine and Paul Branstad Family Foundation**, **Crain-Maling Foundation**, **Ernst & Young LLP**, **Greg and Annie Jones/The Edgewater Funds**, **Sipi Metals Corp.**, and the **Music Performance Trust Fund and Film Fund**.



Lyric Executive Committee member Jana Schreuder representing Northern Trust and Amanda Majeski/Countess Almaviva



Cast members from *Second Nature* perform at Café Brauer at Lincoln Park Zoo.

Aucoin *Second Nature*

Major support provided by the **Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performances** fund. *Second Nature* and Opera in the Neighborhoods are supported by Lead Sponsor **J. Christopher and Anne N. Reyes** and cosponsors: **Anonymous Donors (2), Joyce E. Chelberg, Dover Foundation, Brent and Katie Gledhill, Goldman Sachs, Mr. and Mrs. Eric L. Hirschfield, Kenneth R. Norgan, the Donna Van Eekeren Foundation, Marilyn D. Ezri, M.D., Walter Family Foundation, and Wintrust Community Banks**, with additional support from **Norman and Virginia Bobins/ The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation** and **Richard P. and Susan Kiphart**.

Lyric Signature Events

Lyric Signature Events are generously cosponsored by **PwC** and **United Scrap Metal, Inc.**

NEXT

NEXT is supported by Lead Sponsor **The Grainger Foundation** and cosponsors **Mr. and Mrs. Paul F. Anderson, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Atkinson, Jr., The Brinson Foundation, The Ferguson-Yntema Family Charitable Trust, Elaine Frank, the Komarek-Hyde-McQueen Foundation/ Patricia Hyde, NiSource, Nuveen Investments, Satter Family Foundation, and the Donna Van Eekeren Foundation.**

The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center Final Auditions

Generous Support for the Final Auditions is provided by Lead Sponsor: **Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation**
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Lawrence Brownlee (C) with Maggie Rock (L) and Amy Newkirk (R) representing PwC.



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Dmitri Hvorostovsky
in Recital
Feb 26



Rodgers and Hammerstein
The King and I
Apr 29 - May 22