

*Lyric*  
**Unlimited**  
LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

*Charlie Parker's*  
**YARDBIRD**

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LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

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# Lyric

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**Orphée & Eurydice** GLUCK  
Featuring *The Joffrey Ballet*  
Sep 23 – Oct 15, 2017

**Rigoletto** VERDI  
Oct 7 – Nov 3, 2017

**Die Walküre** WAGNER  
Nov 1 – 30, 2017

**The Pearl Fishers** BIZET  
Nov 19 – Dec 10, 2017

**Turandot** PUCCINI  
Dec 5, 2017 – Jan 27, 2018

**I Puritani** BELLINI  
Feb 4 – 28, 2018

**Così fan tutte** MOZART  
Feb 17 – Mar 16, 2018

**Faust** GOUNOD  
Mar 3 – 21, 2018

**Fellow Travelers** SPEARS/PIERCE  
Mar 17 – 25, 2018

**Jesus Christ Superstar** WEBBER/RICE  
Apr 27 – May 20, 2018

**Celebrating 100 Years of Bernstein**  
Mar 10, 2018

**Piotr Beczala in Recital**  
Feb 25, 2018

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## **Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD**

Music by Daniel Schnyder

Libretto by Bridgette A. Wimberly

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*Lyric*

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*Lyric Unlimited Premiere*

**CHARLIE PARKER'S YARDBIRD**

Music by Daniel Schnyder

Libretto by Bridgette A. Wimberly

Characters:

*Charlie Parker* LAWRENCE BROWNLEE  
*Addie Parker* ANGELA BROWN\*  
*Chan Parker* RACHEL STERREBERG\*  
*Doris Parker* ANGELA MORTELLARO\*  
*Rebecca Parker* KRISTY SWANN\*  
*Dizzy Gillespie* WILL LIVERMAN°  
*Baroness Nica* JULIE MILLER°

*Instrumentalists:* Katherine Hughes, *Violin 1*; Michele Lekas, *Violin 2*;  
 Aurelien Pederzoli, *Viola*; Jill Kaeding, *Cello*; Jeremy Attanaseo, *Bass*; Rachel Blumenthal, *Flute*;  
 Erica Anderson, *Oboe*; Sean McNeely, *Clarinet*; Jim Gailloro, *Alto Saxophone*;  
 Peter Brusen, *Bassoon*; Matthew Oliphant, *Horn*; Rob Parton, *Trumpet 1*; Matt Lee, *Trumpet 2*;  
 Tom Stark, *Trombone*; Jim Widlowski, *Percussion*; Michael Keefe, *Piano*

*Conductor* KELLY KUO

*Director* RON DANIELS\*

*Scenery designed by* RICCARDO HERNANDEZ

*Costumes designed by* EMILY REBHOLZ\*

*Lighting Designer* SCOTT ZIELINSKI\*

*Wig and Makeup Designer* DAVID ZIMMERMAN\*

*Assistant Director* JORDAN LEE BRAUN

*Stage Manager* KRISTEN BARRETT

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*Assistant Stage Managers* ADRIENNE BADER

BEN BELL BERN

ANYA PLOTKIN

*Projected Titles* BRIDGETTE A. WIMBERLY\*

\*Lyric Opera debut

° Alumna/Alumnus, Ryan Opera Center

- First performed at Opera Philadelphia, June 5, 2015.
- Scenery and costumes constructed by Opera Philadelphia.
- Production owned by Opera Philadelphia.
- Projected titles © Bridgette A. Wimberly.
- This season's projected English titles are funded in part by a generous grant from the Lloyd E. Rigler-Lawrence E. Deutsch Foundation.
- Lyric Opera of Chicago wishes to thank its Official Airline, American Airlines.
- The opera will last approximately ninety minutes.

***Please join us in the theater after the intermission for a 30-minute performance of works recorded and popularized by Charlie Parker, featuring members of Orbert Davis' Chicago Jazz Philharmonic (CJP).***

"April In Paris" - Vernon Duke / E.Y. "Yip" Harburg

"Summertime" - George Gershwin / Ira Gershwin

"Hot House" - Tadd Dameron

"A Night In Tunisia" - John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie

*All selections transcribed and arranged by Orbert Davis*

*CJP Ensemble Members:* Rajiv Halim Orozco, *Alto Sax* - Featured Soloist;  
 Chris Davis, *Trumpet*; Amy Barwan, *Oboe/English Horn*; Phyllis Sanders *Violin 1*;  
 Erendira Izguerra, *Violin 2*; Lynn LaPlante Allaway, *Viola*; Ellen Frolichstein, *Cello*;  
 Darwin Noguera, *Piano*; Junius Paul, *Bass*; Clif Wallace, *Drums*

# Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD

By *Bridgette A. Wimberly*

**“If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn.”**

— *Charlie Parker, Jr.*

## Historical Introduction

On March 9, 1955, on his way to a gig in Boston, jazz great Charlie Parker stopped at the Stanhope Hotel to visit his friend and jazz patron, Baroness Nica de Koenigswarter (Nica). He was near death. Years of heroin addiction, alcoholism, a bad heart, cirrhosis, and depression had taken their toll. His wife, Chan, had left him and moved to another state with their remaining children after the devastating death of their two-year-old daughter, Pree. For the next few days, Nica would try her best to nurse him back to health, soliciting the help of her physician, who warned Charlie that he should be hospitalized or risk death, but Charlie refused. On March 12, while watching television, Charles Parker, Jr. died. His death certificate stated the cause of death as lobar pneumonia. He was 34.

The facts about his untimely death and what happened to him postmortem created quite a media sensation, which followed the baroness for the rest of her life. These accusations included the deliberate misidentification of his body with the wrong name and age on his toe, the amount of time it took to get his body to the morgue (about five hours), and why Nica did not tell anyone he had died, allowing his body to lay unclaimed in the morgue for days. Because Nica was part of the Rothschild family, her actions were attributed to covering up the scandal of a black man dying in a wealthy, married, white woman's hotel suite. Nica vehemently countered, stating she was only trying to help a sick friend get well, and – when it appeared that he had died – immediately called the doctor, who returned within minutes, pronounced him dead, and notified the coroner. He was taken to Bellevue's morgue with his correct name.

Nica wanted to find Chan to let her know about his death first, from a friendly source, before the newspapers or radio announced it. She searched all of New York, but Chan had moved to Pennsylvania. It wasn't until Nica was able to find and notify Chan's mother that Chan found out, adding a day or two more to Charlie's stay in the morgue. As soon as Chan claimed his body, however, Charlie's third wife, Doris, officially claimed him, because Charlie and Chan had not legally married. As they fought over his body and later his estate for decades, Nica was evicted from the Stanhope, a segregated hotel, and disinherited by her family. Her husband later divorced her. This mother of five lost custody of her youngest children.

## The Opera

Charlie Parker died without writing an autobiography or little else about himself other than his music. It was an honor writing this opera; the research needed to complete it relied heavily on biographies and interviews by other people he knew and loved, i.e., Chan Parker's autobiography. We tried to use only actual testimonies by the people involved, so as to not put words in their mouths.

Imagine having that final opportunity to realize that one last thing before you die. Charlie Parker often talked about writing new music for an orchestra of 40 or more. He had already accomplished quite a bit, but as of March 12, 1955, this had eluded him. As his body lies misidentified in the morgue, Charlie's ghost enters Birdland, a 500-seat club named after him that also featured caged finches inside the club. Celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, and Joe Louis could be seen there regularly. Owning no part of Birdland, Charlie was kicked out in 1954 by the owner after an altercation with another musician. On March 4, 1955, he made his final appearance there. Eight days later he was dead. His spirit now stands in this new Birdland, both surprised and inspired. Here he will create his new masterpiece, but he is interrupted by Nica, who suddenly appears, frantic to find his wife, Chan, so she can tell her about his unfortunate death.

Charlie knows he has a limited amount of time available to write. Nica, on the other hand, needs Chan to claim Charlie's body and end the potential nightmare of the press announcing that he has died in her hotel suite, forcing the hotel to evict her.

Charlie tries to write, but the notes will not stay on the paper. As a master of improvisation, he long realized that the 12 semitones of the chromatic scale could lead melodically to any key, freeing musicians from the 12-bar blues. But this work must be notated on paper.

Needing a new freedom, Charlie is visited and inspired by people who have meant much in his life. With the inspiration of his strong mother Addie, three of his four wives, Rebecca, Doris, and Chan, and his partner in the jazz revolution that was bebop, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker will struggle to calm his demons and write his new masterpiece before his body is identified in the morgue and this gig is up forever.

Can Charlie do it, or will the demons of his past rear their ugly heads? Will he succumb to heroin or alcohol, or is he just too tired and sick to go on? Will he channel the strength and love of his mother, a woman who worked long hours to give him everything she could? He was her only child. Did she mother him too much or will he honor her with a new masterpiece? He left his first wife Rebecca with an infant son nearly twenty years earlier. Can she forgive him? Charlie will bravely revisit Camarillo State Mental Hospital, a purgatory, searching

for inspiration and healing. Will he find it and will he be able to forgive himself for the death of his daughter Pree, whom he could not save? Can her forgiveness save him? This opera searches for the music in dreams deferred and the power of redemption.

Included in this opera is the last stanza of the poem “Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906). We proudly close *Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD* with this last stanza, understanding and acknowledging both the struggle and triumph of Mr. Charlie Parker, Jr.

## SYNOPSIS

### “Birdland”

Charlie Parker has just died and while his body lies unidentified in the Bellevue morgue, his ghost appears at Birdland, the jazz club named after him. He will try to compose a musical masterpiece before the news of his death becomes public.

### “The Secret”

A panicked Nica de Koenigswarter, in whose segregated apartment hotel suite Charlie died, finds him at last. He begs her, “Keep this a secret for now. I’ve got to work.”

### “Just Us Birds Trying to Fly”

Charlie tries to write, but the notes continue to escape him. “So how do I capture these black dots, blue notes flying out of my horn? How do I freeze these notes on paper?”

### “Twelfth and Vine”

Looking for inspiration, Charlie remembers his youth in Kansas City. But the neighbors complain about the noise and sinfulness of his jazz. His mother Addie worries about his lifestyle and drug use.

### “Calvary”

Charlie’s first wife Rebecca is there with their young son. She and Addie lament the challenges of being a wife and mother to black males in the United States. “This land ain’t no place for a black man child, got dreams.”

### “Addie’s Blues”

Charlie tells his mother he will make her proud of him one day, but Addie asks him to leave Kansas City for good, hoping to save his life. He asks her to take care of his wife and son.

### “Charlie’s Angel”

Sensing his anguish, Doris, his third wife, tries to help him make peace with himself and God. Charlie asks, “So, if there is a God, why does the Negro suffer? Is my prayer, my music lesser, smaller in God’s eye?”

### “Scandal”

Nica hopes all will be well, but fears the scandal that will occur when the headlines about where he died appear in the morning papers.

### “Bebop’s Gonna Change the World”

Dizzy brings inspiration and the triumph of bebop with him.

### “Love Sick”

Suddenly, Chan, the mother of two of his children, appears. All at once, they are young again and reminisce about the first time they met.

### “YATAG,” Chan’s solo

But just as quickly, Chan is gone from his arms as Moose the Mooch, his drug dealer, beckons. Despite Dizzy’s protest, Charlie leaves with Moose to get a fix.

### “California”

Maybe conquering California holds the key to Charlie’s freedom. Dizzy sings, “Come on, Yard! Let’s get out of here! We still have to write that music down.”

### “Jazzman”

Now high, Charlie sings, “I’m a jazzman. I’m blowing all my pain out through this horn. I’m gonna heal the world with my horn. I ain’t gonna sit in the back of the bus no more, ain’t going around the back no more.”

### “My Boy is King”

Addie hears Charlie playing for the first time. “Oh listen, just listen to that. That’s my boy, that’s my boy, what a joy! My boy is King of Sax.”

### “Pree is Dead”

While he is in California, Chan breaks the news about their two-year-old daughter. “Pree is dead. Where were you to calm her fears? Where were you to dry her tears?”

### “Relaxin’ at Camarillo/Bellevue”

Charlie breaks down. He is arrested for indecent exposure and sent to Camarillo State Hospital.

### “My Horn”

Now recovered, Charlie says goodbye to his horn. “I chose you, my horn. I don’t believe I ever chose anything else but you.”

### “Next of Kin”

Charlie’s body has now been discovered in the morgue, and when Addie walks in, she collapses in grief. Chan tries to make peace with her. Chan wants Charlie to remain in New York but Addie wants him buried in Kansas City. Soon Doris and Rebecca are there, and the women argue over where he is to be buried.

### “Farewell”

Addie, his three wives, and Dizzy sing of their love for Charlie.

### “Starless Night”

Nica, alone on stage, also bids her farewell.

### “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”

Charlie realizes that playing his saxophone was indeed his life’s work and that there is no need to write a masterpiece. He sings lines from Paul Laurence Dunbar’s classic poem, “Sympathy.”

### Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD

*Opera Running Time:*

*Approx. 90 minutes.*

*Intermission.*

*Performance by Chicago Jazz  
Philharmonic*

*Approx. 30 minutes.*



**DANIEL SCHNYDER**  
(Composer)

With a growing reputation as a dynamic composer and performer in both jazz and classical fields, the Swiss-American saxophonist has recorded more than ten CDs and toured and recorded with many well-known classical musicians and jazz artists. Following the successful opening of his opera, *Abraham* (2014 Düsseldorf Festival), Schnyder's *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* won great acclaim in its Philadelphia world premiere and subsequent revival with the New York Philharmonic at New York's celebrated Apollo Theater. Among Schnyder's numerous other credits as a composer are commissions from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchestra, Berlin's Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Vienna Art Orchestra, Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, Bern's Stadttheater, and the American Composers Orchestra, among many other prestigious ensembles. His symphonic work *Sundiata Keita*, for large symphony orchestra, chorus, and four soloists from Mali playing traditional instruments, was successfully premiered at Berlin's Philharmonie during his stay as composer-in-residence with the city's Radio Symphony Orchestra. *Absolution*, featuring Schnyder's Trombone Concerto, received a Grammy nomination in 2002. *ToopART Reinventions*, a work reflecting on Bach's two-part piano inventions, recently appeared on CD. This season Schnyder's jazz, chamber music, and operatic works will be performed in Germany, Switzerland, the United States, and Great Britain.



**BRIDGETTE A. WIMBERLY** (Librettist)

Words by award-winning poet, playwright, and librettist have been commissioned and produced by a number of prominent theaters Off-Broadway and across the U.S., including Opera Philadelphia (*Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*); Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, The Cherry Lane Theatre, St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre, and The Women's Project (*Saint Lucy's Eyes*, starring Ruby Dee); Kuntu Repertory Theatre (*The Separation of Blood*); New York's Ensemble Studio Theatre, of which she is a lifetime member (*Rally, Mail*); Cleveland Play House (*Forest City*), Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Mark*), and Karamu Theatre (*From Breast Cancer to Broadway*). Her celebrated plays have been published by Samuel French and anthologized in *Best Plays by Women 2001*, *Best 10-Minute Plays 2010*, *A Theatre for Women's Voices 2003*, and *Cherry Lane Mentor Project 2014*. Wimberly is founder and program director of *From Breast Cancer to Broadway*, a program that teaches playwrighting to and presents short plays by breast cancer survivors, performed by professional actors in collaborations with hospitals and medical centers. The recipient of

fellowships and awards from The New York Foundation for the Arts, The New York Urban Arts Initiative, and the Harlem Arts Alliance, Wimberly serves on the board of directors of Off-Broadway's Cherry Lane Theatre.



**LAWRENCE BROWNLEE**  
(Charlie Parker)  
*Previously at Lyric:*  
Ramiro/*Cinderella*  
(2015-16).

The American tenor, who last season made one of the most acclaimed Lyric debuts of recent years, enjoyed a triumph for the world premiere of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* with Opera Philadelphia last season, and will reprise his portrayal of the title character at London's English National Opera later this spring. This season he also sings Belmonte/*The Abduction from the Seraglio* at Houston Grand Opera and Idreno/*Semiramide* at the Bavarian State Opera. One of today's most celebrated bel canto interpreters, Brownlee has made Ramiro/*Cinderella* a signature role, singing it with ten major companies internationally, among them the Metropolitan Opera and La Scala. His artistry has also earned acclaim at Covent Garden and the leading houses of Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and Brussels, as well as the Salzburg Festival. Among his recent successes are appearances at Seattle Opera, (*Le Comte Ory*, *Don Giovanni*), the Met (*La donna del lago*, *The Barber of Seville*), the Zurich Opera House (*I puritani*, *Cinderella*), Munich's Bavarian State Opera (*Così fan tutte*), and San Francisco Opera (*Don Pasquale*). Brownlee was the first to sing Rinaldo/Rossini's *Armida* at the Met, a portrayal seen worldwide in HD and available on DVD. His recent recording of "Virtuoso Rossini Arias" was nominated for a Grammy Award. His latest album, "Allegro Io Son," features arias by Donizetti and Bellini.



**ANGELA BROWN**  
(Addie Parker)  
*Lyric debut*

The American soprano appears this season as a soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the National Chorale at Lincoln Center and reprises the role she created in *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* with English National Opera in London. She previously triumphed in another highly successful world premiere, portraying Cilla/Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner* at Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit. Brown subsequently repeated the role at Opera Philadelphia and Cincinnati Opera. Danielpour later set the poetry of Maya Angelou for Brown in an orchestral song cycle, *A Woman's Life*, recorded in 2012 with the Nashville Symphony. The soprano came to prominence as Aida at the Metropolitan Opera,

a portrayal reprised at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opera Pacific, Bilbao's Opera de la ABAO, Cape Town Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, and Milwaukee's Florentine Opera. Other Verdi credits include *Amelia/Un ballo in maschera* (Paris, Philadelphia), *Leonora/La forza del destino* and *Elisabetta/Don Carlo* (both in Cincinnati, the latter also in Philadelphia), *Leonora/Il trovatore* (Atlanta), and the *Requiem* (Barcelona, Madrid). A noted interpreter of African-American spirituals, Brown can be heard on several acclaimed CDs, including the newly-released, Grammy-nominated recording of "Ask Your Mama," composer Laura Karpman's setting of Langston Hughes's poem of the same title.



**RACHEL STERREBERG**  
(Chan Parker)  
*Lyric debut*

The soprano, Opera Philadelphia's inaugural Emerging Artist, appeared in the company's world premiere of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*. She reprises her portrayal of Chan Parker this season in London and Madison. At Opera Philadelphia her roles have also included Sara/Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain* (East Coast premiere), Annina/*La traviata*, and Mrs. Coyle/Britten's *Owen Wingrave*. Last season Sterrenberg sang her first *Carmina Burana* with the Reading Choral Society and was heard with the Aizuri Quartet. She has also sung with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and the Curtis Chamber Orchestra (with Robert Spano conducting). At Curtis, where she received her master's degree, she portrayed such heroines as the title role/*Iolanta*, Anne Trulove/*The Rake's Progress*, Adina/*L'elisir d'amore*, Blanche de la Forcel/*Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Armida/*Rinaldo*. A former Gerdine Young Artist at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Sterrenberg won second place in the 2014 Mid-Atlantic Region of the Metropolitan National Council Auditions after winning in the Philadelphia District. More recently she has received the prestigious Richard F. Gold Career Grant.



**ANGELA MORTELLARO**  
(Doris Parker)  
*Lyric debut*

The Chicago-based soprano created the role of Doris Parker in Opera Philadelphia's world premiere of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*. Her other current season highlights include two role debuts: Juliet/*Romeo and Juliet* (The Minnesota Opera) and Norina/*Don Pasquale* (Sarasota Opera). This summer, she will debut as Micaëla/*Carmen* (Central City Opera). Last season Mortellaro was the soprano soloist in a double bill, singing Anna/Stella Sung's *The Book Collector* and

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*Carmina Burana* with Dayton Opera. She also sang *Fiorilla/Il turco in italia* with Opera Southwest, and *Musetta* at Sarasota Opera. In 2015 she sang *Jocie* in Minnesota Opera's world premiere of Kevin Puts's *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Adinal/L'elisir d'amore* with the Dorset Opera Festival in the U. K. Other previous roles with The Minnesota Opera include *Madeleine/Kevin Puts's Silent Night* (world premiere), *Sophie/Werther*, the title role/*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Gretel/Hansel and Gretel*, and *Jean Acker/Dominick Argento's The Dream of Valentino*. The soprano also recently sang the title role/*Thais* with Florida Grand Opera, and *Anna/Nabucco* with Opera Philadelphia.



**KRYSTY SWANN**  
(Rebecca Parker)  
*Lyric debut*

In addition to *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* at Madison Opera, the mezzo-soprano's 2016-17 season includes performances of *Olga/Eugene Onegin* (Spoleto Festival USA), *Handel's Messiah* (Boise Philharmonic), and *Mahler's Symphony No. 3* (Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra). Recent operatic highlights include *Amneris/Aida* (Bucharest National Opera), *Maddalena/Rigoletto* (Atlanta Opera), and *Santuzza/Cavalleria rusticana* (Vero Beach Opera). Swann returned to the Metropolitan Opera for productions of *Francesca da Rimini* and *Die Walkure*, and to Carnegie Hall (where she previously performed in the *Mozart Requiem*) as *Lola/Cavalleria rusticana* with the Opera Orchestra of New York. She also recently appeared in *Verdi's Requiem* at Lincoln Center. Swann has been heard at Austria's Bregenz Festival, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, in South Africa with the KZN Philharmonic, and in Milan with the Giuseppe Verdi Symphony Orchestra. Born in Philadelphia and raised in Detroit, she is a winner of the Marcello Giordani International Vocal Competition in Italy and the Intermzzo Foundation Award (Elardo International Opera Competition), as well as a two-time winner of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant.



**WILL LIVERMAN**  
(Dizzy Gillespie)  
*Previously at Lyric:* Eight roles since 2012-13, most recently *Papageno/The Magic Victrola* (2015), *Lawyer Frazier/Porgy and Bess*, *Servant/Capriccio*

(both 2014-15).

The American baritone, a Ryan Opera Center alumnus, earned considerable critical acclaim as *Dizzy Gillespie* in Opera Philadelphia's world premiere of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*. He reprises this portrayal at London's English National Opera later this season. He also can be heard as *Figaro/The Barber of Seville*

with Virginia Opera and as baritone soloist/*Brahms's A German Requiem* with the Las Vegas Philharmonic. Last season he made his Seattle Opera debut as *Raimbaud/Le Comte Ory*. Other recent performance highlights include *Figaro* at Madison Opera and Utah Opera, *Tarquinius/Britten's The Rape of Lucretia* and *Beaumarchais/Corigliano's The Ghosts of Versailles*, both at Wolf Trap Opera, and *Andrew Hanley/Kevin Puts's The Manchurian Candidate* (world premiere) at The Minnesota Opera. Liverman also has portrayed *Sam/The Pirates of Penzance* (Atlanta Opera), the Protestant Minister/Menotti's *The Last Savage* (The Santa Fe Opera), and the title role/*Noye's Fludde* at his alma mater, Wheaton College. He has sung with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago in *Mozart's Mass in C Minor*, and in *Carmina Burana* and *Handel's Messiah* as a guest artist at the University of Chicago. In 2015 Liverman won the Stella Maris International Vocal Competition, the Gerda Lissner Charitable Fund Award, and a top prize from Opera Index, Inc.



**JULIE MILLER**  
(Baroness Nica)  
*Previously at Lyric:* Four roles since 2013-14, most recently *Krystina/The Passenger* (2014-15); *Ida/Die Fledermaus*, *Annina/La traviata* (both 2013-14).

In addition to *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* at Madison Opera and London's English National Opera upcoming, the Sacramento-born mezzo-soprano, a Ryan Opera Center alumna, appeared this season as a soloist in *Mahler's Symphony No. 2* (Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra) and *Handel's Messiah* (Apollo Chorus of Chicago). Miller debuted at Lyric on opening night of the 2013-14 season, portraying *Emilia/Otello*, a role she has reprised with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra. Other recent opera credits include *Ma Joad/The Grapes of Wrath* (Sugar Creek Opera) and *Orlofsky/Die Fledermaus* (Vero Beach Opera). Miller has been heard in numerous concerts in the Chicago area, including appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus. She has also appeared at Carnegie Hall, with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, as *Jol/Little Women* at the Sugar Creek Festival, and widely in her home state: with the Sacramento Opera, West Bay Opera, Townsend Opera, Marin Symphony, and VITA Academy. Miller is the recipient of prestigious awards from the American Opera Society of Chicago, the Shoshana Foundation, and the Musicians Club of Women.



**KELLY KUO** (Conductor)  
*Previously at Lyric:* *Porgy and Bess* (2008-09).

A versatile musician with a diverse repertoire, including more than 80 operas, the conductor, an Oregon native, is music director and conductor of the Butler Opera Center at The University of Texas at Austin and artistic director of Oregon Mozart Players. This season Kuo leads performances of *Mozart's The Magic Flute* and *Mark Adamo's Little Women* at the BOC, as well as a collaboration with Ballet Fantastique and cellist DaXun Zhang. Last season, he conducted BOC performances of *Poulenc's Dialogues des Carmélites* and *Jake Heggie's At the Statue of Venus* (world premiere – orchestrated version), and debuted with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. Prior to his current positions, Kuo was assistant conductor of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, and, for five years, assistant conductor and artistic administrator at Opera Pacific. In addition to his engagements with The Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, and Glimmerglass Festival, he has led performances of New York Harlem's production of *Porgy and Bess* in Hamburg, Munich, and Las Palmas. Kuo, a recipient of a 2009 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award for young conductors, holds a master's degree in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music and is an alumnus of the Houston Grand Opera Studio.



**RON DANIELS** (Director)  
*Lyric debut*

The Brazil-born director's world-premiere production of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* will be remounted later this season at London's English National Opera. He has also revived *Carmen* at Michigan Opera Theatre and will create a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at The Santa Fe Opera. His extensive operatic work includes *Carmen* (Houston Grand Opera, Opera Pacific) and new productions of *La forza del destino* (San Francisco Opera), *Madama Butterfly* (San Francisco Opera, Opera Pacific, Florida Grand Opera), and *The Turn of the Screw* (Berkshire Opera). Last season he directed the world premiere of *Ricky Ian Gordon's Morning Star* at Cincinnati Opera and *La bohème* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In 2010, Daniels directed the critically acclaimed world premiere of *Daniel Catán's Il Postino* at LA Opera. That production has been revived in Vienna, Paris, and Mexico City. His widely praised production of *Sondheim's Sweeney Todd* (St. Louis) followed his successful direction of the hip-hop musical, *Kingdom*, at San Diego's Old Globe. Former associate artistic director of the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Daniels has directed that company's productions of *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *The Seagull*, among others.



**RICCARDO HERNANDEZ**  
(Set Designer)  
*Previously at Lyric:*  
*La traviata* (2013-14),  
*Amistad* (1997-98).

The designer has created sets for more than 250 productions at most leading regional theaters and opera houses across the U.S. and internationally. Hernandez has designed sets recently for The Santa Fe Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Giovanni*), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (*La bohème*, *Pagliacci*, *Il tabarro*, *Sweeney Todd*), and New York's Gotham Chamber Opera (*La hija de Rapaccini*). He also has created both sets and costumes for many other opera productions, including the notable world premieres of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino* (LA Opera, Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, Theater an der Wien, PBS telecast), Philip Glass's *Appomattox* (San Francisco Opera), and Ricky Ian Gordon's *A Coffin in Egypt* (Houston Grand Opera). His extensive Broadway credits include *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*, *The People in the Picture*, Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change* (also at Royal National Theatre, London), *TopDog/UnderDog*, and *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* (also at West End's Old Vic and National Tour). His designs for the original Broadway production of *Parade* earned him Tony and Drama Desk award nominations. Hernandez has designed more than 20 productions for New York Shakespeare Festival/The Public Theater. An alumnus of the Yale School of Drama, he is an assistant professor of theater design at SUNY Purchase and a lecturer in theater at Princeton University.



**EMILY REBHOLZ**  
(Costume Designer)  
*Lyric debut*

The work of the designer, in addition to Opera Philadelphia's *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*, has been seen at The Santa Fe Opera (*Don Giovanni*) and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (*La bohème*, *Il tabarro*, *Pagliacci*, *Sweeney Todd*). Her Broadway credits include *Iff/Then*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. Off-Broadway, Rebholz's work has been seen in *Our Lady of Kibebo* (Signature Theatre); *The Substance of Fire*, *The Last Five Years*, *Lonely, I'm Not*, and *Bachelorette* (Second Stage); *The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World*, *Mr. Burns, A Post-electric Play*, and *The Call* (Playwrights Horizons); *The Madrid* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *The Who and the What*, *Slowgirl*, and *Broke-ology* (Lincoln Center Theater); *Into the Woods* (The Public Theater); *What Rhymes with America* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Carrie* (MCC Theater), and *This Wide Night* (Naked Angels). Regionally, she has created costumes for many productions, among them *The Rocky Horror Show* (San Diego's Old Globe) and *Prometheus Bound* (American Repertory Theater).

Rebholz also designed costumes for *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn* and *Another Word for Beauty* at the Goodman Theatre. Her work has been honored with multiple Henry Hewes Design Award nominations. Rebholz received her MFA from the Yale School of Drama.



**SCOTT ZIELINSKI**  
(Lighting Designer)  
*Lyric debut*

Current season highlights for the designer include creating lighting for productions of *The Magic Flute* (Canadian Opera Company) and *La traviata* (Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre). Zielinski's recent opera credits include *Turandot* (Opera Australia) and *Matsukaze* (Spoleto Festival). His designs have also been seen at Houston Grand Opera, London's English National Opera, Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera, and the Bregenz Festival. Zielinski has lit more than 300 productions and has worked with numerous directors and choreographers, including Neil Bartlett, Ron Daniels, Sir Peter Hall, Hal Hartley, Tony Kushner, Diane Paulus, Anna Deavere Smith, Twyla Tharp, and Mary Zimmerman. Major dance credits include productions at Joyce Theater, the Kennedy Center, American Dance Festival, American Ballet Theatre, National Ballet of Canada, Centre National de la Danse, and the San Francisco, Boston and Kansas City ballets. He has received numerous awards and nominations and was exhibited in the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design in 2003. As a young designer he was a recipient of the TCG/NEA Design Fellowship in 1991. He has been a guest lecturer or visiting artist at Bard College, Boston University, University of Chicago, Florida State University, New York University, and Yale University.



**DAVID ZIMMERMAN**  
(Wig and Makeup Designer)  
*Lyric debut*

The makeup designer has worked with several opera companies around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, The Santa Fe Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Opera Philadelphia, The Minnesota Opera, The Dallas Opera, International Music Festival of Macau, China, and Opera Santa Barbara. Zimmerman's career extends to Broadway, as well, where he has worked with shows including *Wicked*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Show Boat*, *South Pacific*, and *Evita*. His personal clients have included major figures from opera, and other arts and media luminaries, such as Deborah Voigt, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Patricia Racette, Martha Stewart, Olympia Dukakis, and Ricky Martin. He has also done the makeup for DIFFA Fashion Runway, Dallas Fashion and

Art Charity, and the Yelp.com fashion event. Print credits include three features in *Opera News*, plus features in both *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker*. TV and film credits include "Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year."



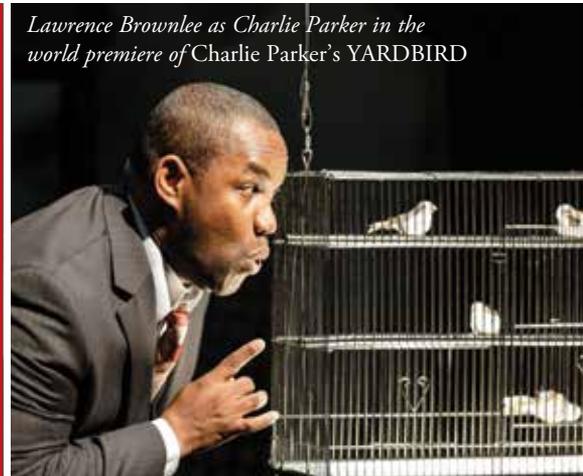
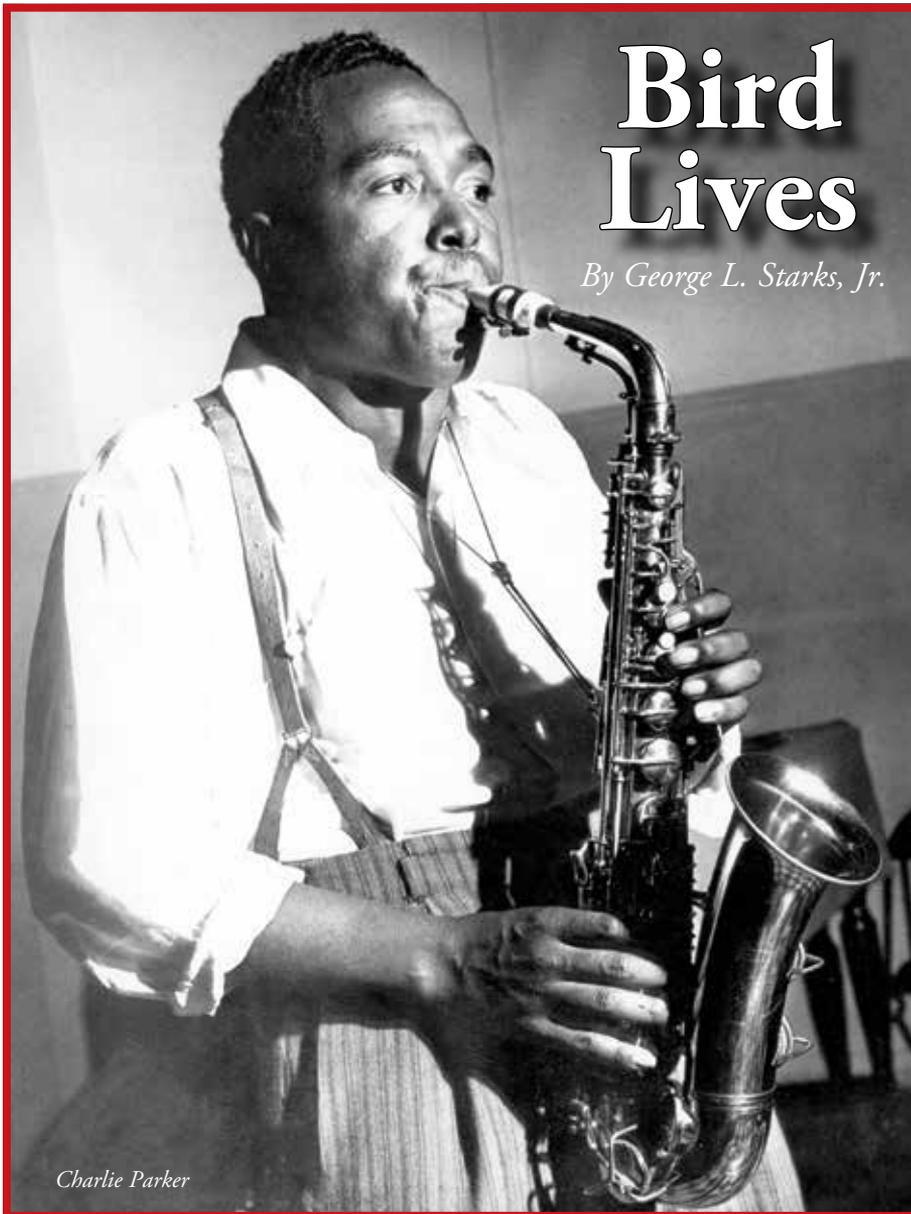
**CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC**

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic unites jazz, classical, and other genres to create a new, evolved, "third stream" sound. On stage and in classrooms, CJP brings together unlikely audiences, musicians, and cultures, from school age to adulthood, locally and globally. Chicago Jazz Philharmonic was born out of an invitation from the Jazz Institute of Chicago to artistic director Orbert Davis to "think big" when planning his appearance at the 2004 Jazz Festival. This performance marked the first time a resident Chicago Jazz artist headlined the festival, not to mention being accompanied by a 55-piece jazz orchestra. Drawing from a wealth of Chicago-area talent, CJP has the flexibility and depth in its programming and instrumentation to perform works from the standard jazz big band repertory to the classical symphony, while creating a "new aesthetic" in cross-genre collaborations.



**RAJIV HALIM OROZCO**  
(Alto Sax Soloist)

A saxophonist, composer, and educator from Chicago, Rajim Halim Orozco performs regularly in the Chicagoland area and midwest as a freelance saxophonist, as well as a part of four bands, including The Rajiv Halim Quintet. His debut album, "Foundation," was released in August 2015 and is available for digital purchase worldwide. Internationally, Halim has performed at venues and festivals in Canada, Poland, Belize, and Taiwan. Nationally, he has performed and/or recorded with many great musicians: Jennifer Hudson, Chance the Rapper, Cory Henry, Von Freeman, Mike Stern, Martha Reeves, Bob Mintzer, The Four Tops, and others. Locally, he has also performed at four consecutive Chicago Jazz Festivals, beginning in 2013. A highlight of his recording career came in 2016, when he contributed saxophone solos and harmony parts to the track "Finish Line" by Chance the Rapper for his project "Coloring Book" (nominated for a 2017 Grammy Award for Best Rap Album). He teaches at Oak Park River Forest High School, St. Patrick High School, and Terra Sounds School of Music & Arts.



Charles Parker, Jr., was born on August 29, 1920, in Kansas City, Kansas, and grew up across the river in the fertile musical environment of Kansas City, Missouri. This was the wide-open Kansas City of the Tom Pendergast Machine, during which nightlife flourished. In the city's African American neighborhood, so did the music of Bennie Moten, Andy Kirk, and Walter Page. Count Basie from Red Bank, New Jersey, Lester Young from Woodville, Mississippi, and Mary Lou Williams from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, took up residence in Kansas City. Theirs was the Kansas City of all-night jam sessions, riff-based blues, spontaneous

“head” arrangements, and blues shouters – big-voiced vocalists who sang the blues.

This was Charlie Parker's Kansas City. He absorbed it all, particularly the lessons of residents like tenor saxophonist Young and alto saxophonist Buster Smith. From guitarist Effergie Ware he learned about chords and their relationships. Here, he played in the bands of Jay McShann, Tommy Douglas, and Harlan Leonard. During a road trip with the McShann band, Parker retrieved a chicken that had been struck and killed by the car in which he was riding, a retrieval that earned him the moniker “Yardbird.” Among the non-Kansas City men who inspired him was the great tenor

saxophonist “Chu” Berry – so much so that Parker gave his son Berry's first name of Leon.

But Kansas City could not contain Charlie Parker. It was in New York in the 1940s that Bird truly spread his wings. He was the perfect example of a prime axiom of the jazz idiom – one must find one's own voice. He did so by building upon the foundation which had been laid by Young, Smith, Berry, and other of his predecessors. It was in Harlem after-hours sessions at Monroe's Uptown House and Minton's Playhouse that he, along with participants like Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Christian, Thelonious Monk, and Kenny Clarke, found a nurturing environment for the development of the new music that became known as bebop.

Parker's innovations defined bebop and therefore defined what came to be called modern jazz. Though rooted in tradition, the changes were nevertheless dramatic. On many levels the music became more complex. Parker's music demonstrated great harmonic acuity. In this regard, there were altered chords and new chord progressions. There were substitute



(Left to right) Max Kaminsky, Lester Young, Hotlips Page, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Lennie Tristano at Birdland, 1949.



Above and below: production photos from the world premiere of Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD at Opera Philadelphia. Above, left to right: Angela Brown (Addie Parker), Will Liverman (Dizzy Gillespie), Rachel Sterenberg (Chan Parker), and Angela Mortellaro (Doris Parker).



Will Liverman (Dizzy Gillespie) and Lawrence Brownlee (Charlie Parker)



Angela Mortellaro (Doris Parker) and Lawrence Brownlee (Charlie Parker)



Angela Brown (Addie Parker) sings "My Boy is King."

DOMINIC M. MERCIER (5)

chords and substitutes for the substitutes. In pre-composed melodies and in improvisations, his work featured melodic twists and turns that were completely new. Frontline instruments interacted with rhythm sections in new and dramatic ways, pianists comped, and drummers played polyrhythmically. Parker brought a new timbre to the alto saxophone and other saxophonists followed his lead. Most of all, the rhythmic sophistication that he brought to his music was unlike that of anyone who had preceded him.

The musical tradition of which jazz is a part has always been responsive to, and reflective of, the socio-cultural environment in which it is situated. Parker's music gave voice to much of what was felt in this country during the decade of the 1940s. This was particularly true of the African-American community. Participation in the war effort led the black community to expect fundamental change in that community's position in American society. New times demanded new artistic expression, and bebop was a part of that expression.

Parker's contributions have been recognized in numerous ways. One of the first was Birdland, a jazz club in New York City named in his honor, the original of which opened in 1949. Also, there is an annual Charlie Parker Jazz Festival in his adopted hometown of New York City, and a Charlie Parker memorial sculpture in Kansas City. Largely as a result of the role that it played in the development of bebop, Minton's Playhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dead at the age of 34, Parker had an enormous influence that has extended far beyond his lifetime. It is indeed ironic that the appellation "Bird" was not originally bestowed in recognition of the creative output of a genius whose music soared like an eagle. Much in the sense that Parker found his voice by studying the music of Lester Young, Buster Smith, and Chu Berry, many post-Parker musicians passed through his music on the way to finding their own voices. A short but imposing list would include Ornette Coleman, whose innovations

led the way in the "Free Jazz" movement of the 1950s and '60s; Steve Coleman, one of the most original thinkers in jazz of the last thirty or so years; and Rudresh Mahanthappa, an American saxophonist of South Asian descent whose work reflects his Indian ancestry. Today, bebop remains the principal style through which improvisation is taught in colleges and universities. Aspiring musicians on college campuses study Parker's improvisations and play his compositions. As a testament to his genius, recordings by Parker, "live" and studio, are still being issued or reissued. His influence is felt and heard both inside and outside of the jazz community. Evidence of that is *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*, the opera that you are here to witness. What was written on walls in New York City after his passing in 1955 remains true today – "Bird Lives."

*George L. Starks, Jr., Ph.D. is professor of music and director of the Jazz Orchestra at Drexel University, Philadelphia.*

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## Director's Note

DOMINIC M. MERCIER/OPERA PHILADELPHIA



Angela Brown (Addie Parker) and Lawrence Brownlee (Charlie Parker) in the world-premiere production of Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD, Opera Philadelphia, 2015.

*Charlie opens the cages and the birds fly out!*

Yes, well. That's all well and good. Easy enough on the page, as a stage direction in the libretto. But well-nigh impossible in the theater, on the stage! Unless, perhaps, there is the use of video, with shots of graceful birds flying across endless expanses of blue sky...but, then, to be coherent, the use of video would impose itself on the whole production, determining a number of other solutions – requiring a screen, for instance, or at least some surface which could take projections, and around which the set would have to be designed. Indeed, solutions like this often determine the whole nature of the work.

But what is this flight of birds? What does it mean?

And where are we, after all?

Charlie Parker is dead. Incomprehensibly, his body lies forgotten in the morgue, a John Doe tag tied to his toe, and – this is the wonderful conceit of the opera! – until he is properly identified, his spirit can wander in limbo, attempting to realize in death what in life had eluded him: writing an orchestral masterpiece, with music written down on paper, caged within musical staves, and not soaring in magnificent, inspired improvisations. But what, then, is this limbo? Limbo is Birdland of the imagination, the jazz club named after him, and it is here, where he and some of the great men and women, the titans of jazz, performed, that Charlie can look back on his life and encounter once more the women who loved him and, in remembering, write his masterpiece.

Until the moment, that is, when his body, lying in the morgue, is recognized, given a name, and it is time for him to truly depart.

But if it is theatrically impossible for the birds to fly free of their cages, why not have the cages themselves fly away, while Charlie can finally come to rest, reconciled to himself at last, his orchestral masterpiece forgotten? And now that his spirit, like the birds, is free from the joys and agonies of his life, why not have everything around him, Birdland, and all that made him who he was, fly into the void, leaving nothing behind but our loving memory of one of the great tormented and loved geniuses of our time?

— Ron Daniels

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Lyric Unlimited, a division of Lyric Opera of Chicago, offers a multifaceted program of education, community engagement and artistic initiatives. The purpose of Lyric Unlimited is to provide a relevant cultural service to communities throughout the Chicago area, including communities for whom opera and opera companies have been largely

irrelevant; to explore a wide range of ways in which Lyric can collaborate with cultural and community organizations throughout the area; and to advance the development of opera, exploring ways in which opera as an art form can resonate more powerfully, and in a range of different ways, with people of multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, and interests.

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## ABOUT HARRIS THEATER



The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater for Music and Dance is a 1,500-seat state-of-the-art performance venue located in Chicago's Millennium Park. Opened in November 2003, the nonprofit Harris Theater was the first multi-use performance venue built in downtown Chicago since 1929. Harris Theater serves as a unique national model of collaboration between the philanthropic community and performing arts organizations in music and dance. More than a decade later, the Theater features the most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago, hosting local, national, and internationally renowned artists and ensembles.

The Harris Theater is Chicago's primary residence for music and dance, connecting diverse audiences with outstanding artists from across the city, the nation, and the world. The Theater's activities fall under three central strategies: support for local music and dance companies, community engagement and educational programs, and presentation of national and international artists.

Support for local companies includes subsidized rent, technical expertise, and marketing support, allowing the organizations to focus on what they do best—bringing the finest in music and dance performances to the public. The Theater offers professional development opportunities, including the innovative *Learning Lab*, endorsed with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Harris Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include a wide range of diverse and exceptionally talented performing arts organizations, including internationally acclaimed Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Music of the Baroque, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNow, and collaborations with Lyric Opera of Chicago, National Museum of Mexican Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and Columbia College Chicago. Through these partnerships, the Theater has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration, performance, and artistic advancement.

The Harris Theater is also dedicated to presenting internationally acclaimed music and dance organizations to enhance its reputation as well as to help build audiences and provide collaboration opportunities for the Theater's resident companies and community partners. Through the *Harris Theater Presents* series, the Theater has achieved widespread recognition as a vital cultural anchor in Chicago. Daniel Barenboim, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Renée Fleming, the Hamburg Ballet, Lang Lang, the New York City Ballet, the Paris Opéra Ballet, the San Francisco Ballet, Stephen Sondheim, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and many others have graced the Harris' Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage through this series.

Through our commitment to artistic excellence, collaboration, and inclusion, the Harris Theater's community engagement and education programs seek to deepen understanding of the arts and our world. We inspire people of all ages and communities, and nurture the next generation of artists and audiences. Since 2009, the Theater has provided over 11,000 tickets to children and families, representing 25 neighborhoods across the city of Chicago. Learn more about Community Engagement programs at [engage.harristheaterchicago.org](http://engage.harristheaterchicago.org).

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## HARRIS THEATER INFORMATION

**Rental information:** If you have any questions about the Harris Theater, including rental of the facility, group tours, or volunteer opportunities, please call the administrative office Monday through Friday, 9AM–5PM, at 312.334.2407.

**Ticket purchases:** To purchase tickets, visit [HarrisTheaterChicago.org](http://HarrisTheaterChicago.org). Call or visit our Box Office at 312.334.7777 Monday through Friday, 12–6PM or until curtain on performance days.

**In consideration of other patrons and the performers:** Please turn off all cell phones. Photography is not permitted in the Theater at any time and texting during performance is strictly prohibited. Film or digital images will be confiscated or deleted by the Harris Theater house staff; violators will be subject to a fine. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house management. Smoking is prohibited within the Harris Theater. Allowance of personal items and baggage into the auditorium space is at the sole discretion of House Management.

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**Parking:** Discounted parking validation is available for all ticket holders using the Millennium Park Garage. A validation machine is located next to the Box Office on the Orchestra Level, as you enter the Theater lobby.

**Lost and found:** Retrieved items will be held for 30 days with the Harris Theater house staff at 312.334.2403.

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*Lyric*

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