



## LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

Lyric Opera of Chicago, founded in 1954, is one of the world's greatest opera companies. It is renowned internationally for its artistic excellence, its financial strength, and its large subscription audience. There are 26,000 season ticketholders for the current season. Lyric Opera is also distinguished for having operated in the black for 22 of the past 23 years, a record among the country's major not-for-profit music and performing-arts companies. The budget for fiscal year 2011 is \$52.4 million.

**Sir Andrew Davis** is Lyric's music director, having assumed his responsibilities in 2000. He leads performances of three Lyric productions in 2010/11: *The Mikado*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, and *Lohengrin*. Maestro Davis is the conductor laureate of the Toronto Symphony (having previously served as principal conductor), the conductor laureate of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the former music director of the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has conducted all of the major orchestras of the world, and at opera houses and festivals throughout the world.

Maestro Davis has recorded for Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics International, Capriccio, EMI, and CBS. His 2008 recording of Elgar's Violin Concertos with violinist James Ehnes and London's Philharmonia Orchestra (Onyx Classics) won *Gramophone's* coveted "Best of Category – Concerto" award. Also in 2008, his recording of operatic favorites sung by soprano Nicole Cabell with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Decca) won the Solti Prize from the French Académie du Disque Lyrique. Sir Andrew currently records exclusively for Chandos Records.

In the 2010/2011 season he appears with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and with the major orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland, Montreal, Detroit, and Toronto, where he leads performances of his own new orchestration of Handel's *Messiah*. Maestro Davis also returns to the Metropolitan Opera (*Capriccio*), the Canadian Opera Company (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*Peter Grimes*), and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera this season.

In 1992, Maestro Davis was created a Commander of the British Empire for his services to British music, and in 1999 he was made a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.

**William Mason** has served as general director of Lyric Opera of Chicago since 1997. He first joined the company in 1962, and will retire following the 2011/12 season. Previously, Mason served as director of operations, artistic, and production for 16 years. He succeeded Ardis Krainik, Lyric's general director since 1981, when she died in January of 1997. Mason joined the Lyric administration in 1962 under Carol Fox, Lyric's founding general manager. Mason performed on Lyric's stage as a member of the Lyric Children's Chorus during the 1954, 1955, and 1956 seasons. He sang the role of The Young Shepherd Boy in the famous 1954 and 1956 productions of Puccini's *Tosca*, which starred, respectively, Eleanor Steber, Giuseppe Di Stefano, and Tito Gobbi; and Renata Tebaldi, Jussi Björling, and Tito Gobbi. While most of his career has been based at Lyric, Mason also served as the artistic administrator for the San Francisco Opera from 1979 to 1980.

Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2010/11 season runs October 1 through March 27, offering 68 performances of opera classics and 20th-century repertoire over that time span. (Several world premieres have also been presented over the years, most recently William Bolcom's *A Wedding* during the 2004/05 season.)

The eight operas comprising Lyric's 56th season are *Macbeth* by Giuseppe Verdi/new production, *Carmen* by Georges Bizet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Benjamin Britten/Lyric premiere, *A Masked Ball* by Verdi, *The Mikado* by W. S. Gilbert & Sir Arthur Sullivan/new production, *The Girl of the Golden West* by Giacomo Puccini, *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner, and *Hercules* by George Frideric Handel /new production, Lyric premiere. The Bizet and Puccini are revivals; all others are new to Chicago audiences.

The company, originally known as The Lyric Theatre of Chicago, was formed in 1954 by Carol Fox, Lawrence V. Kelly, and Nicola Rescigno. The latter two founders withdrew after the 1955 season, and the company was renamed Lyric Opera of Chicago prior to the beginning of the 1956 season. Carol Fox served as general manager until 1981. Ardis Krainik was general director from 1981 until her death in early 1997.

Among the international artists who made their American debuts at Lyric Opera of Chicago are Maria Callas, Régine Crespin, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Jonas Kaufmann, Alfredo Kraus, Christa Ludwig, Anna Moffo, Rudolf Nureyev, Georges Prêtre, Renata Scotto, Sir Georg Solti, Christoph von Dohnányi, and many others.

Lyric Opera of Chicago performs in the Ardis Krainik Theatre of the Civic Opera House, built in 1929 by the architectural firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White.