

# Lyric

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LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

20 North Wacker Drive

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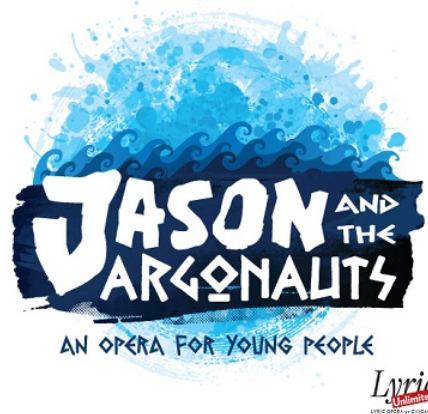
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#LyricJason

Lyric Unlimited Presents  
A New Opera for Young People

**Jason and the Argonauts**

By composer Gregory Spears and librettist Kathryn Walat, the opera premieres  
August 20 and 21 at Chicago's Vittum Theater



CHICAGO – Commissioned by **Lyric Unlimited**, Lyric's department devoted to education, community engagement and new artistic initiatives, **Jason and the Argonauts**, a new opera for youth, premieres with four performances: **Saturday, August 20 at 10am and 12pm**, and **Sunday, August 21 at 2pm and 4pm** at **Vittum Theater (1012 N Noble St, Chicago)**. With music by acclaimed composer **Gregory Spears** and libretto by celebrated playwright **Kathryn Walat**, this is the fourth world-premiere opera commissioned by Lyric Unlimited.

Inspired by ancient Greek mythology, *Jason and the Argonauts* is the thrilling story of a young man on an adventure with his friends as they courageously search for the Golden Fleece, fight a ferocious dragon, and learn what it takes to be a true hero. The production, which features four singers and four instrumentalists, updates the ancient myth, incorporating themes of nature and sustainability. Lyric Unlimited is partnering with Chicago's National Hellenic Museum on this project.

*Jason and the Argonauts* is recommended for children ages 7 to 12. Although all tickets for the free performances have been reserved, a limited number of tickets may be available at the door, one hour prior to each performance on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information visit <http://lyricopera.org/argonauts>.

If for any reason current ticket holders can no longer attend the August 20 or 21 performance date, they can email [audienceservices@lyricopera.org](mailto:audienceservices@lyricopera.org) or call 312.827.5600 to return their tickets.

The production features tenor **Kyle Knapp** (Jason), baritone **Vince Wallace** (Male Narrator), soprano **Amy Kuckelman** (Female Narrator), and bass-baritone **Peter Morgan** (Chiron).

**Gregory Spears** is an award-winning, critically-acclaimed composer, whose work blends aspects of baroque style, minimalism, and romanticism. *The Wall Street Journal* praised his "subtle, lyrical music [which] is beautiful without being obvious or sentimental." His *Fellow Travelers* premiered at the Cincinnati Opera in June 2016 and was called "one of the most accomplished new American operas," in recent years by the *Chicago Tribune*. According to an *Opera News* review, "The precision of [Spears'] operatic technique is formidable: this is music that breathes along with the story it tells."

**Kathryn Walat** is a playwright and librettist whose work has been produced Off-Broadway and across the country. In 2014 and 2015, Walat's plays were named on the Kilroy's List of most recommended plays by women and in 2016, she received an Honorable Mention for her new work, *Small Town Values*. Walat has worked with Spears in the past as co-librettist on the chamber opera *Paul's Case*, adapted from the short story by Willa Cather. *The New York Times* said, "Ms. Walat's libretto turns Cather's poignant story of alienation and unspoken longing into economical poetry."

*Jason and the Argonauts* will be directed by **Loren Meeker**, who directed Lyric's *Die Fledermaus* (2013). Set design is by **Joe Schermoly** (debut), and costumes are by **Theresa Ham**. Ensemble musicians are **Matthew Gemmill** (music supervisor and harpsichord), **Dawn Gingrich** (violin), **Amanda Grimm** (viola), and **Larry Glazier** (cello).

### Sponsors

Major support provided by the **Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performances Fund**. *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Opera in the Neighborhoods* are supported by Lead Sponsor **J. Christopher and Anne N. Reyes** and cosponsors two **Anonymous Donors**, **Dover Foundation**, the **Donna Van Eekeren Foundation**, the **Walter Family Foundation**, and **Wintrust Community Banks**.

Lyric Unlimited was launched with major catalyst funding from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and receives major support from the **Caerus Foundation, Inc.**

## **About Lyric**

**Lyric Opera of Chicago's** mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of general director Anthony Freud, music director Sir Andrew Davis, and creative consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become The Great North American Opera Company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

For more information visit [lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org)

## **About Lyric Unlimited**

**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. In the 2015/16 season, 94,386 individuals participated in Lyric Unlimited programs.

For more information about Lyric Unlimited program offerings, visit [lyricopera.org/lyricunlimited](http://lyricopera.org/lyricunlimited).

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