

Lyric

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO



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#LyricYardbird

Lyric Unlimited presents the Chicago premiere of

Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD

Performances March 24 & 26 at the Harris Theater

Acclaimed tenor Lawrence Brownlee stars in the chamber opera

based on legendary jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker

Chicago (2/14/17) – **Lyric Opera of Chicago** and **Lyric Unlimited** are proud to present the Chicago premiere of a jazz-infused operatic event, ***Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD***. Directed by Ron Daniels, this 90-minute chamber opera by Daniel Schnyder and Bridgette A. Wimberly explores the extraordinary life of legendary jazz saxophonist **Charlie Parker**.

Tickets are now on sale for ***Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*** on March 24 at 7:30 p.m. and March 26 at 2 p.m. at the Harris Theater (205 E. Randolph Street, Chicago). Tickets start at \$35 and are available at lyricopera.org/yardbird or by calling 312-827-5600.

Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD, based on the story of celebrated saxophonist and bebop artist Charlie Parker (1920-1955), is an electrifying fusion of opera and jazz. *The New York Times* called it "a 90-minute, swift-paced chamber opera with a pulsing, jazz-infused score" before it went on to become the first opera performed at New York's famed Apollo Theater. Set in the renowned New York City jazz club Birdland, the opera takes place in the days after Parker's death, and stars tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** as the "Yardbird" himself. In that empty twilight between life and death, tortured jazzman Charlie

Parker composes his final masterpiece, revisiting the inspirations, demons, and women who fueled his creative genius.

Angela Brown sings the role of Parker's mother, Addie, with **Krysty Swann**, **Rachel Sterrenberg** and **Angela Mortellaro** portraying his wives Rebecca, Chan, and Doris. Ryan Opera Center alumnus **Will Liverman** sings the role of Dizzy Gillespie, a fellow jazz great, and Ryan Opera Center alumna **Julie Miller** portrays the "Baroness of Jazz," Baroness Nica.

Kelly Kuo conducts a 16-piece orchestra with music by **Daniel Schnyder** and libretto by **Bridgette A. Wimberly**. The production is performed in English with projected English texts.

Before each performance, there will be a 30-minute pre-opera talk with opera expert **Jesse Gram** and jazz historian **Neil Tesser**. Following the opera, audience members are invited to enjoy a performance of Parker's music by members of **Orbert Davis' Chicago Jazz Philharmonic** featuring **Rajiv Halim** (alto sax).

"It's a thrill to be presenting a new opera with a story and music that I know will have deep resonance for audiences in Chicago," says **Cayenne Harris**, Lyric Unlimited director. "The story of the virtuosic saxophonist and bebop pioneer Charlie Parker is not one you will soon forget, especially when sung by this dynamic cast."

Discover more about **Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD** [here](#).

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.

About Lyric Opera of Chicago

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, President & CEO 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.

To learn more about Lyric's current season, go to lyricopera.org. You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1617 #LongLivePassion



Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD is made possible by Lead Sponsor **Lauter McDougal Family Foundation** and cosponsors the **Eisen Family Foundation**, **The Ferguson-Yntema Family Charitable Trust**, **Joseph and Madeleine Glossberg**, **Eric and Deb Hirschfield**, and **Kenneth R. Norgan**.

The opera is presented in partnership with the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Production owned by Opera Philadelphia.

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