



FROM:
Lisa Middleton
Director of Marketing

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Lyric Opera of Chicago
Holly H. Gilson
hgilson@lyricopera.org
312-827-5939

Magda Krance
mkrance@lyricopera.org
312-827-5924

Kamaria Morris
kmorris@lyricopera.org
312-827-5928

#ChicagoVoices

Winners announced for Lyric's

Chicago Voices Community Created Performances

**Three Chicago groups will embark on a journey to
bring their untold stories to life on stage**

Sunday, September 10 at 2pm at the Harris Theater

Chicago (4/3/2017) – For the second year in a row, **Lyric Unlimited’s** groundbreaking **Chicago Voices** program invited groups of Chicagoans to transform their diverse stories into original music theater works. Groups based in an array of Chicago neighborhoods applied to share their compelling stories with the public, and eight were selected to move forward as semi-finalists.

Now, after three weeks of online public voting that resulted in more than 10,000 votes, three finalist groups have won the opportunity to bring their untold stories to life through song! Each of the winning groups will receive a \$10,000 stipend and will work with a Lyric-hired creative team to help transform their narratives into a one-of-a-kind musical presentation. The program will culminate in a fully staged, free public performance featuring all three original works on **Sunday, September 10 at 2pm** at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance.

The three winning finalist groups are:

Blu Rhythm Collective

Blu Rhythm Collective is a group of Chicago urban artists pushing the boundaries of original live theater using a mix of artforms to focus on some of the city’s hardest-hitting topics. Its members are a direct reflection of Chicago and its various neighborhoods. Blu Rhythm looks

to illuminate one of Chicago's biggest issues by providing insight into the lives of young Chicagoans from these marginalized communities and their struggle to overcome the challenges of violence in order to succeed.

Kuumba Lynx

Kuumba Lynx is a youth development art making organization that utilizes urban arts to cultivate strong communities built on a foundation of love. Members come from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The group strives to use Hip Hop as a means to mentor, motivate, and inspire artists to produce, share, and publish meaningful works of art. The group members see the making of an original music theater work as an opportunity to shift the perceptions of Chicago youth and their communities by telling their own stories rather than have them told by someone else.

YOLO Boomers

YOLO Boomers is a group of Northcenter Chicago seniors actively engaged in different forms of creative expression including writing and improvisational acting. The group hopes to use the collective, personal stories of its members spanning decades to bust negative stereotypes associated with age. This group intends to demonstrate what it truly means to be an active senior in Chicago.

This summer, each group will embark on a 16-week creative process supported by a professional team of animateurs (facilitators), scriptwriters, songwriters, and directors provided by Lyric.

"Once again, we were thrilled to see so many Chicagoans participate in the Community Created Performances program, either by applying to share their stories or by voting online," said **Cayenne Harris**, director of Lyric Unlimited. "Each of the three finalist groups have incredibly unique and compelling stories to tell, and we are looking forward to working with them this summer to develop their stories into original works."

Last year during the first round of **Community Created Performances, Harmony, Hope & Healing, Kirin-Gornick Band,** and **Tellin' Tales Theatre** each presented their final works to a sold-out crowd at the Harris Theater. Learn more about each of these group's creative journeys and watch elements of final performances at chicagovoices.org/ccpblog.

Spearheaded by world-renowned soprano and Lyric's creative consultant **Renée Fleming, Chicago Voices** is a groundbreaking, multi-year initiative celebrating the city's distinct music culture and exploring the diverse stories of Chicago communities.

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, 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

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.



Partners for **Chicago Voices** are **Chicago Public Library**, **Chicago History Museum**, and **Columbia College Chicago**.

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Lyric Opera of Chicago
20 N. Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606