

# Lyric

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO



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PHOTO: Elise Bakketun

## What You Need to Know About

### ***The Pearl Fishers*** at Lyric Opera of Chicago

**A tale of conflicted friendship, love, and broken vows — featuring opera's most iconic tenor-baritone duet, starring Matthew Polenzani, Mariusz Kwiecień, and Marina Rebeka**

**November 19 - December 10**

*For sheer transcendent beauty, Georges Bizet's The Pearl Fishers has few rivals in the entire repertoire. He transports us to Ceylon, where two devoted friends find themselves in love with the same woman, an entrancingly beautiful priestess, Leïla. The Pearl Fishers demands the ultimate in vocal beauty and elegance to do justice to this sweepingly romantic drama.*

- **Torn between duty and desire -- *The Pearl Fishers*** is a captivating tale in which a love triangle tests the bonds of friendship, political power, and sacred vows.
- **Bizet was just 25 when he composed this opera in 1863**, a dozen years before *Carmen* made him famous.
- **The popularity of *The Pearl Fishers* has surged in recent years**, with new productions winning audience and critical

acclaim internationally.

- **You'll recognize the soaringly beautiful melody of the famous tenor-baritone duet, "Au fond du temple saint"** ("At the back of the holy temple") from films and commercials -- now hear it complete and in context.
- **Our splendid international artists will move you** with their ardent singing and impassioned acting.
- **The story:** On the day the village elects Zurga (baritone **Mariusz Kwiecień**) as its new chief, Nadir (tenor **Matthew Polenzani**) returns after a long absence. Their friendship had been threatened by their love of the same woman; they reconcile briefly, until they discover that the enchanting priestess from long ago, Leïla (soprano **Marina Rebeka**), is in their midst. The high priest Nourabad (bass **Andrea Silvestrelli**) represents the old order and demands severe punishment for broken vows.
- **Operatic double-header by Ryan Opera Center alumnus** Matthew Polenzani, who also portrays the Duke in *Rigoletto* at Lyric (through Nov. 3).
- **Lyric Opera Orchestra conducted by Sir Andrew Davis**, Lyric's music director, in his first exploration of this opera score.
- **Lyric Opera Chorus prepared by Michael Black**, Lyric's chorus master.
- **New-to-Chicago Production directed by Andrew Sinclair.**
- **Wildly colorful set and costume designs by fashion legend Zandra Rhodes** (Lyric debut) with lighting design by **Ron Vodicka** (Lyric debut) will transport audiences.
- **Powerful, vivid choreography by John Malashock** (Lyric debut) propels the story.
- **7 Performances** Sunday November 19 through Sunday December 10 at the Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago.
- **Only 2 hours 15 minutes, including intermission.**
- **Performances start at 2:00pm & 7:30pm**, and doors open to the Rice Grand Foyer and Opera Club two hours before curtain.
- **30-minute preview talk about the opera before every performance** -- Come to the theater one hour before the curtain rises for a free pre-opera talk about the composer, the themes within the music and drama, and overall production.
- **Sung in French** with projected English translations.
- **The Pearl Fishers has been presented in only three previous seasons at Lyric:** in 1966, in 1997-98, and in 2008/09.

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*The opening-night performance of The Pearl Fishers can be heard live locally on **98.7WFMT** and globally on [wfmt.com](http://wfmt.com), beginning at 1:45pm.*

*For more information and to order tickets, visit [lyricopera.org/PearlFishers](http://lyricopera.org/PearlFishers) or call 312-827-5600.*

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#### 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 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 new season, go to [lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org). You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1718 #LongLivePassion



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Production designed by San Diego Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre.  
Sets for *The Pearl Fishers* executed by San Diego Opera Scenic Studio.  
Costumes for *The Pearl Fishers* executed by San Diego Opera Costume Shop.

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