

*Lyric*

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO



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PHOTO: Ken Howard/ Met Opera

### What You Need to Know About

### ***I PURITANI*** at Lyric Opera of Chicago

**Star-crossed love & political intrigue in 17th-century England**

**with Olympic-caliber bel-canto singing**

**Starring Albina Shagimuratova, Lawrence Brownlee,**

**Anthony Clark Evans, Adrian Sâmpetean**

**Seven performances Feb. 4 - 28**

No opera composer glorified the human voice more than Vincenzo Bellini (1801-35). His final opera, *I puritani*, delivers some of the most thrilling and challenging vocal music ever written. Opera companies produce this work only when they can cast fabulous singers with masterful technique and superb style. Bellini places them within a sweeping historical drama in 17th-century England, in which a passionate young couple find themselves caught up in a conflict between opposing political factions

- **A 17th-century *Romeo and Juliet* – with a happy ending.** Shakespeare set his play in Italy; Bellini set his opera in England.
- **And actually, Bellini wrote a *Romeo and Juliet* opera five years before *I puritani* -- *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830).**
- **Did you love the love-triangle drama and aerialist singing of Bellini's *Norma* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Lyric last year?** Then you won't want to miss ***I puritani***.
- **World-class cast will captivate you with their breathtaking bel canto vocalism.** Russian soprano **Albina Shagimuratova** (Elvira), American tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** (Arturo), American baritone and Ryan Opera Center alumnus **Anthony Clark Evans** (Riccardo), and Romanian bass **Adrian Sâmpetrean** (Giorgio), plus Ryan Opera Center ensemble members contralto **Lauren Decker** (Queen Enrichetta), tenor **Alec Carlson** (Bruno), and bass-baritone **Alan Higgs** (Sir Gualtiero Walton).
- **The story:** In 1650, during the English Civil War, it's the wedding day of Elvira, a Puritan betrothed to fellow Puritan Riccardo, whom she doesn't want to marry. Unbeknownst to the bride, her father has decided she may marry the man she loves, Arturo, a Royalist opposed to the Puritan cause. Riccardo is crestfallen. Elvira's uncle Giorgio delivers the happy news to the now-joyful bride. As wedding guests gather, newly designated bridegroom Arturo recognizes the condemned royal prisoner, Queen Enrichetta, and promises to rescue her. When Elvira asks the queen to hold her veil while she gets ready, Arturo persuades the queen to wear it as a disguise to aid her escape. Elvira sees them ride off, assumes she's been jilted, and promptly goes mad. Several plot twists later, Elvira and Arturo are joyfully reunited and are finally allowed to marry.
- **Bellini composed 11 operas** before falling ill and dying at age 33. He never married.
- **Five have survived the test of time:** *Il pirata* (1827), *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* (1830), *La sonnambula* (1831), *Norma* (1831), and ***I puritani*** (1835).
- **Lyric's presentation of *I puritani*** is led by Italian conductor **Enrique Mazzola**, who debuted triumphantly at Lyric last season with *Lucia di Lammermoor*. **Eric Einhorn** directs the production with set designs by **Ming Cho Lee**, costume designs by the late **Peter J. Hall**, and lighting designs by **Chris Maravich**. **Michael Black** is chorus master. Fight director is **Chuck Coyl**.
- **These are the first performances of *I puritani* at Lyric since 1991.**
- **7 Performances** Sun. Feb. 4 through Wed. Feb. 28 at the Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago.
- **Evening performances start at 7:30pm** (Feb. 7, 10, 13, 16, 24), matinees start at 2pm (Feb. 4 and 28).
- **Running time approximately 3 hours 30 minutes**, including two intermissions
- **Sung in Italian** with projected English translations above the stage.
- **Did you know...?** The composer's full name was Vincenzo Salvatore Carmelo Francesco Bellini. He came from a multigenerational musical family and was a child prodigy, able to sing an aria at 18 months, study music theory at age two, and piano at age three.

- **His nickname?** “The Swan of Catania,” for his flowing melodic lines.
- **Famous composers who admired Bellini included Verdi,** who praised his “long, long, long melodies,” Wagner, Liszt, and Chopin.

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

For more information and tickets, visit [lyricopera.org/puritani](http://lyricopera.org/puritani) 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 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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This production was originally directed by Sandro Sequi and premiered at The Metropolitan Opera. All scenery, properties, and costumes constructed by The Metropolitan Opera.

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