

# Lyric

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO



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PHOTO: Rebecca Fay

**Soprano Ailyn Pérez to portray Marguerite in Lyric's *Faust***

**March 3-18, replacing Erin Wall,**

**who has withdrawn for health reasons.**

**Ana María Martínez to sing March 21 performance as scheduled.**

CHICAGO (1/18/18) -- Canadian-American soprano **Erin Wall** has withdrawn from *Faust* at Lyric Opera of Chicago to undergo chemotherapy, **Anthony Freud**, Lyric's general director, president & CEO, announced today. Freud added that "her doctors expect a full recovery within a few months, according to her manager. Everyone at Lyric wishes Erin all the best and looks forward to welcoming her back in future seasons." An alumna of Lyric's **Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center** program (2001-04) with a major international career, Wall has portrayed Marguerite/*Faust*, Donna Anna/*Don Giovanni*, Pamina/*The Magic Flute*, Fiordiligi/*Così fan tutte*, Helena/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Konstanze/*Die Entführung auf dem Serail*, and Antonia/*Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Lyric.

Internationally celebrated American soprano **Ailyn Pérez** will portray Marguerite in Lyric's new production of Gounod's popular opera. Said Freud, "Ailyn made a wonderful debut at Lyric in last season's **Celebrating Plácido** concert, and we are delighted that she is able to join us for *Faust* when rehearsals begin in February." Pérez will sing six performances March 3 - 18, with soprano **Ana María Martínez** singing the final performance as scheduled on March 21.

Said Pérez, "It's such a joy for me to return to Lyric Opera of Chicago for my operatic house debut as Marguerite. I'm honored to be singing this extraordinary and complex role with a dream cast of wonderful colleagues in this new production, directed by Kevin Newbury. As a proud Chicago native it will be such a pleasure to perform Gounod's mesmerizing score in front of a home crowd, and I also look forward to working with Maestro Villaume again this season, following our collaboration on *Thaïs* at the Metropolitan Opera."

Pérez comes to Chicago in the middle of a busy season of lead roles at the Metropolitan Opera, including the title role in Massenet's *Thaïs*, the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* and, later in the season, more French repertoire at the Met, this time for Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*. In one of her signature roles of Violetta (*La traviata*), Pérez has performed in the world's major opera houses including Milan's Teatro alla Scala, London's Royal Opera House, and the San Francisco Opera, as well as the prestigious companies of the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Opernhaus Zürich, Staatsoper Berlin, and the Hamburgische Staatsoper. Her other signature role, Mimi in *La bohème*, has brought Ailyn great success at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Opernhaus Zürich, and LA Opera, among others. She has previously portrayed Marguerite at Santa Fe Opera and in Staatsoper Hamburg to great acclaim.

Pérez was the first Hispanic recipient in the 35-year history of the highly prestigious Richard Tucker Award, which she won in 2012. Winner of the 15th annual Plácido Domingo Award, the 2017 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, and the 2016 winner of the Beverly Sills Award, among many additional awards and accolades, Pérez was also featured as the cover story of *Opera News* in September 2017. Born in Chicago and currently residing in Elk Grove Village with her family, Ailyn Pérez is a graduate of Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

#### New Production

***Faust*** by Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893)

Seven performances, Mar. 3 – Mar. 21, 2018, in French with projected English translations

This exceptionally romantic, universally popular work premiered in Paris in early 1859. The story is one of the most justly celebrated in opera. The aged philosopher Faust – at the urging of Satan's agent, Méphistophélès – is made young again in exchange for his soul. The drama encompasses Faust's encounter with the innocent Marguerite, his wooing and subsequent abandonment of her, the death of her brother Valentin at Faust's own hand, and Marguerite's ensuing madness, death, and redemption. Siébel is the boy in love with Marguerite, and Marthe, Marguerite's busybody neighbor, offers comic relief. Lyric's haunting new production is designed by the renowned visual artist **John Frame**.

#### **Faust**

Benjamin Bernheim\*

#### **Marguerite**

#### **Valentin**

Edward Parks\*

#### **Siébel**

Ailyn Pérez (3/3 – 3/18)

Annie Rosen<sup>°</sup>

Ana María Martínez (3/21)

**Méphistophélès**

**Marthe**

Christian Van Horn<sup>°</sup>

Jill Grove

**Conductor**

Emmanuel Villaume

**Lighting Designer**

Duane Schuler

**Director**

Kevin Newbury

**Projection Designer**

David Adam Moore\*

**Production Designer**

John Frame\*

**Chorus Master**

Michael Black

**Set/Costume Designer**

Victoria Tzykun\*

**Movement Director**

Zack Winokur\*

\*Lyric Debut    °Ryan Opera Center Alumni

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



New Lyric Opera coproduction of Gounod's *Faust* generously made possible by **Henry M. and Gilda R. Buchbinder**, **Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson**, **Ethel and William Gofen**, the **Harris Family Foundation**, and **ITW**. Christian Van Horn's appearance generously sponsored by **Lois B. Siegel**.

*Faust* is a coproduction of Lyric Opera of Chicago and Portland Opera.

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