

DONIZETTI

Lyric

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT



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On the cover: Photo by Tristram Kenton at the Royal Opera House.

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At Lyric, you'll be amazed, replenished, and inspired with must-see, must-hear live experiences. Through the timeless power of voice, acting that brings characters to life in triumph and tragedy, the splendor of a great orchestra and chorus—coupled with theater, dance, design, and truly magical stagecraft—Lyric is devoted to immersing audiences in worlds both familiar and unexpected, creating shared experiences that resonate long after the curtain comes down.



Anthony Freud
*General Director,
President & CEO*
Enrique Mazzola
Music Director

Lyric

Welcome to your Lyric

From the Chair and the General Director

Dear Lyric Community,

It is hard to believe that Lyric Opera of Chicago has not presented *The Daughter of the Regiment* in nearly 50 years. We're long overdue for this highly popular, delightful work by Gaetano Donizetti to return to Lyric's repertoire. We are thrilled to be bringing Laurent Pelly's internationally acclaimed production to Chicago for the first time.

Our line-up is a mix of old friends and new. Leading the way is the remarkable Lisette Oropesa, making her long-awaited Lyric debut in the glittering title role. At her side, playing Tonio, is one of Lyric's favorite stars, the dazzling Lawrence Brownlee, returning to our house in one of the virtuosic showpieces he owns like no one else. Alessandro Corbelli, the great comic baritone, has been charming audiences both at Lyric and across the world with his dazzling patter and superb *bel canto* singing throughout his long and celebrated career. Sulpice marks his 10th role at Lyric—and he'll return later this season for *Cinderella*. It is a delight to once again experience his mixture of vocal virtuosity and comedic timing, the key components that make these comedies shine.

Making her Lyric podium debut is Speranza Scappucci, who is enjoying a major international career, with a wide repertoire including a specialization in *bel canto*. In the 2025/26 Season, she will become principal guest conductor of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

And, of course, we welcome you, whether old friend or new, to this second production in our season of tremendous variety. After a high-seas Wagnerian drama to open the season, we follow with this laugh-out-loud, high-Cs comedy. Many thanks, as always, for all that you do to help bring our wide-ranging art form to life.

Enjoy the rollicking fun and vocal fireworks!



Sylvia Neil

SYLVIA NEIL
Chair



Anthony Freud Obe

ANTHONY FREUD OBE
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Once More, with Feeling

With its innovative SoundShirt program, Lyric leads the way into a new realm of accessibility.

By David Zivan



Rachel Arla, commissioner of Chicago's Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, was among the garment's first testing cohort.

All photos Lyric Opera of Chicago

"I'm always interested in what technology can do for people," says Brad Dunn, Lyric's Senior Director of Digital Initiatives and Interim Head of Marketing and Communications. "My framework is, it either needs to solve a problem or to provide some delight and enjoyment and learning." It's no surprise that Dunn has led the way on the company's newest accessibility initiative, the SoundShirt—a pilot program that checks both those aspirational boxes. An immersive new technology, the SoundShirt is a garment, worn like a jacket, that brings the power of touch to live opera. Audience members, particularly those people who are deaf or hard of hearing, will experience the music

being played as real-time vibrations. It is the only such program of its kind in the field of opera.

"I am proud that Lyric Opera of Chicago will be the first opera company in the world to bring this new technology to its live audiences," says Anthony Freud, Lyric's General Director, President & CEO. "The SoundShirt reinforces Lyric's commitment to accessibility and to broadening the impact of our live performances on all audience members."

Designed and built by London-based CuteCircuit, the SoundShirt program is launching in partnership with the City of Chicago's Mayor's Office for People with

Disabilities (MOPD), with support from the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Innovation Initiative and in part by a grant from the League of Chicago Theatres and ComEd.

Following extensive testing and refinements in the 2022/23 Season, the program had its maiden voyage during a performance of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, the opening production for 2023/24. The initial reception has been extraordinarily positive. "It was such a wonderful experience," said one audience member. "My first time using a jacket that had vibration. I'm excited to see where this product goes."

SoundShirt wearers experience the feeling of music rendered on their upper body through a process known as haptic actuation—technology familiar to many, due to the vibrations most cell phones can produce. While the orchestra and artists perform in the pit and on stage, microphones capture their sound and transform it into a digital feed for the SoundShirt wearers. (In the theater itself, there is generally no amplification of any kind.) Computer software transforms this closed-circuit audio feed into touch data that is then broadcast wirelessly to the SoundShirts in real time with the performance. Different



Brad Dunn (center) discusses the SoundShirt technology with CuteCircuit's founders in London.



Audience members have reported a truly enhanced experience while using the SoundShirt.

instruments and voices map to different locations across the body and sleeves of the garment, creating a deepened multisensory experience for operagoers.

Rachel Arfa, the commissioner of MOPD (and the first deaf person to hold the role), helped give the technology a tryout last season. She noted recently that she had arrived to the opera house with a great deal of skepticism—she has seen many different kinds of technological attempts to mirror the sensation of music—but was pleasantly surprised at the results.

“The SoundShirt gave me access to the sound of the performance in a way I have never experienced before, and it honestly made my experience at Lyric even more richly satisfying,” she says. “Chicago has long been known for its embrace of innovation and for its spirit of inclusiveness, so it is fitting that this technology is being piloted by one of our city’s—and the world’s—most important cultural institutions.”

The journey to bring that experience to life in the audience was multifaceted, to say the least, involving not just technical challenges, but complex artistic and experiential considerations.

“The software has eight audio channels, so we have seven microphones in the orchestra, and then we take a single feed of the stage mics,” Dunn notes. While that main audio feed from the stage is always in place (to keep offstage performers and backstage personnel apprised of the live action), setting up the equipment for the rest

of the SoundShirt signal presented a puzzle. Head Audio Technician Nick Charlan and Audio Technician Matt Swiatkowski from Lyric’s Technical department were instrumental in finding wireless frequencies that would help the SoundShirt system avoid the numerous other signals swirling in the theater, and rigging the new microphones so as not to interfere with regular performance activities.

Dunn then began the painstaking process of determining where on the shirts the various sounds of live opera would be manifested as vibration. That task was further complicated by the fact that the full complement of singers and orchestra only play all together on Lyric’s main stage during final rehearsals for each production.

As it happens, Dunn polished the settings in as diverse a crucible as you could imagine; the garments were first ready for full live-testing last season during the rehearsal process for Bizet’s *Carmen*, followed by Lyric’s world-premiere work *Proximity*, and then the classic American musical *West Side Story*—works quite different from one another.

“There were essentially two buckets of things to consider,” Dunn recalls. “There’s the technology. One of the first hurdles we had to overcome was the fact there’s just a lot of wireless signal flying around a theater—public wifi, wireless headsets for backstage personnel, and so on. We had to be sure that the connection to the SoundShirts would be seamless—just a few, undetectable milliseconds of lag time.”



A member of the media (at left) tries on one of the shirts. At right, Brad Dunn demonstrates the complex software that controls the garment.



Then there is the equally invisible, though more abstract question: What is music supposed to *feel* like?

"Refining the quality of the experience is critical," Dunn says. "I actually began my career as a sound engineer, so I can't think of any word other than 'mix.' But instead of mixing the sound output, I'm mixing the amount of intensity to different haptic motors in the shirt. It's a bunch of pretty boring stuff to many, but we worked extensively with CuteCircuit to add features to their software to help us manage the wide dynamic range of classical music, and to update the frequencies on which the hardware transmits. By the end of *Carmen*, I actually was very optimistic about the experience of the shirts."

Further testing, especially with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, continued to refine the settings—and the process will be ongoing. The brass sound in Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment* is, after all, different from the brass in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*.

"What we're seeking is an enhancement; we're not recreating what it's like to hear music, because you can't do that for someone who doesn't have their hearing," Dunn says. "But you can create an experience that is unique, that is a thing in and of itself, that layers on top of the audience's experience of seeing a show. It adds some richness."

Increasing access to opera is an ongoing priority across all departments at Lyric. Tickets for SoundShirt seats are currently available for \$20, though nearly all other accessibility services are complimentary. The company offers seating for those in wheelchairs, FM and Telecoil loop assisted listening devices, touch tours, audio-described performances, braille and large-print programs, high-powered opera glasses, accessible restrooms, automatic exterior doors, and other benefits. Even the recent large-scale reseating and house renovation was undertaken with an eye toward accessibility.

Like the SoundShirt, many of those improvements started at a modest scale. At present, a small collection of shirts is available, in medium and large, with more sizes on the way. They will be deployed at selected performances of each opera this season, on dates also featuring projected English titles or sign language interpretation.

"I don't think I made the opera house a destination necessarily in the way that I would now," Arfa noted. "Because the SoundShirt provides a new experience and makes people curious." **L**

For more information on the SoundShirt program, and to purchase tickets for SoundShirt performances, visit lyricopera.org/SoundShirt.

Donizetti's ***The Daughter of the Regiment*** is *bel canto* opera's equivalent of vintage champagne. Marie, the lovable, irrepressible, spirited heroine—a foundling, raised by soldiers—loves handsome Tonio. Things get complicated when the Marquise carts her off to refine her with a “proper” education. In one exhilarating number after another, Marie throws off coloratura flourishes like shooting stars, while her tenor sweetheart pops out nine high-Cs in a single aria! *Bel canto* superstar Lawrence Brownlee and comedic veteran Alessandro Corbelli partner with the dazzling Lisette Oropesa in her eagerly awaited Lyric debut. The marvelously stylish Speranza Scappucci conducts Laurent Pelly's quick-witted, uproarious production.



Marilyn Seltzer/Metropolitan Opera

A scene from the Metropolitan Opera Company's production of *The Daughter of the Regiment*.

Lyric

The Daughter of the Regiment



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The Daughter of the Regiment (La fille du régiment)

New-to-Chicago production

Music by **Gaetano Donizetti** | Opera in two acts in French

Libretto by **Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges** and **Jean-François Bayard**

New Dialogues by **Agathe Mélinand**

November 4, 10, 14, 16m, 19m, 22m, & 25, 2023

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Hortensius
Marquise
Sulpice
Marie
Tonio
Corporal
Duchess of Crakentorp
Notary

Alan Higgs^{••}
Ronnita Miller
Alessandro Corbelli
Lisette Oropesa⁺
Lawrence Brownlee
Ron Dukes[•]
Joy Hermalyn
Laureano Quant[•]

Dancers:

Ervin Dix III⁺, Tanner Gloystein⁺, Vernon Gooden,
Marcus Hardy, Christopher Kelley, Drew Lewis,
Isaac Alan Lindy⁺, Mickey Nixon, Nick Schrier⁺,
Mathew Skorupski⁺, Malachi Squires

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Original Director
Revival Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Chorus Director
Original Choreographer
Revival Choreographer
Ballet Mistress
Wigmaster and
Makeup Designer
Dramaturg
Assistant Director
Stage Manager
Stage Band Conductor
Musical Preparation

Ballet Accompanist
Fight & Intimacy
Director

Speranza Scappucci⁺
Laurent Pelly
Christian Răth⁺
Chantal Thomas⁺
Laurent Pelly
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Noah Lindquist
Jerad Mosbey
Stefano Sarzani
Greg Smith
Samantha Kaufman

Projected English Titles for *The Daughter of the Regiment* by Christopher Bergen are provided by the San Francisco Opera Association

First performed by Paris Opéra-Comique at the Salle de la Bourse on February 11, 1840.

First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on October 20, 1973.

⁺ Lyric debut

[•] Current Member, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center
^{••} Alumnus, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

Synopsis


PLACE | The Tyrolean mountains

ACT I

Marie was found as a baby on a battlefield, and raised as the “daughter” of the 21st Regiment. Her foster-father Sulpice has decreed she must marry a soldier from the Regiment, but Marie has other ideas: She has fallen in love with the Tyrolean peasant Tonio.

Caught up in the conflict between the French and Austrians, the Marquise de Berkenfield and her steward Hortensius stumble across the regiment. Sulpice recognizes the Marquise’s name from papers found near the infant Marie on the battlefield. The Marquise claims to be Marie’s aunt and resolves to take Marie away with her to give her a proper education. Marie has to leave behind her Regiment—and Tonio, who has enlisted in order to marry her.

ACT II

The Marquise plans to marry Marie to Duke Scipio of Krakentorp. Marie is not happy about this, or about her aunt’s attempts to train her to be a lady. She longs for the Regiment. To her delight, they rush in to see her. Tonio pleads with the Marquise to be allowed to marry Marie. When she refuses, he reveals that he knows that Marie is the Marquise’s illegitimate daughter. The Marquise and the formidable Duchesse de Krakentorp try to force Marie to sign her marriage contract. When Marie learns that the Marquise is her mother, she prepares to do so but is stopped by the Regiment, who come crashing in, led by Tonio. The Marquise decides she cannot make her daughter unhappy and gives Marie permission to marry Tonio after all. Everyone celebrates. 

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W. James & Maxine P. Farrell French
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APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

**This production will be performed
with one intermission.**

Running time

Act I	1 hour 20 minutes
Intermission	30 minutes
Act II	55 minutes

TOTAL 2 hours 45 minutes

Lyric



A poster, by Emile Finot, for a 1910 production in Paris.

Donizetti's Conquest

The critics panned the composer's glittering comedy—but he won the hearts of Paris.

By Colin Jones

'Monsieur Donizetti seems to treat us like a conquered country; it is a veritable invasion. One can no longer speak of the opera houses of Paris, but only of the opera houses of Monsieur Donizetti.'

Hector Berlioz's newspaper review of the first performance of Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment* (*La fille du régiment*) at Paris's Opéra-Comique on February 11, 1840 set the work in the context of the many other productions of the Italian's operas then dominating the city's houses. The carping and unpleasantly nationalistic note struck by the great French composer was echoed by other critics: The opera was facile and unconvincing, plagiarized, too noisy, too disjointed, too Italian (and for others, not Italian enough), merely a big "bag of candies," and so on.

Happily, *The Daughter of the Regiment* survived this early barrage of criticism—in style. The French public disregarded Berlioz and his acolytes, warmly welcomed the Donizetti "invasion," and was pleased to count itself among the Italian's "conquests." The sparkling opera was to become one of his most popular works in France over the course of the nineteenth century. From 1848, it entered the Opéra-Comique's repertoire, and it stayed there until 1916. In 1914, on the eve of the World War I, it celebrated its 1,000th performance.

Part at least of *The Daughter of the Regiment's* popularity across France, moreover, lay in its brazen display of patriotic national fervor. This was particularly evident in the stirringly militaristic "Salut à la France"

("Long live France") sung by the eponymous heroine Marie, an orphan born to the sound of cannon-fire and adopted by France's 21st "La France" Regiment. In the 1840s, the French government still associated Rouget de Lisle's 1792 *Marseillaise* with rebels and critics. Before the *Marseillaise* was adopted as the official national anthem in 1879, festive national celebrations on July 14 often involved the performance of Marie's "Salut à la France." The custom declined (along with Donizetti's reputation) in the early twentieth century, but in a notable exception, the Franco-American soprano Lily Pons sang the aria at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1941, draped in a tricolor flag bearing the Cross of Lorraine emblem that Charles de Gaulle's Free French had adopted for national Resistance against the Nazis. It was the diva's *Casablanca* moment.

Donizetti can hardly have imagined such a trajectory for what he called "his little opera," but he certainly intended *The Daughter of the Regiment* to flatter French sensibilities and national pride.

The Paris production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1837 had brought him new commissions and the popularity in Paris that Berlioz so resented. But *The Daughter of the Regiment* was the first of his many operas to be world-premiered in the city, and the composer was aware that its success would consecrate his talent, crown his whole career, and open the road to fatter fees and more commissions. After all, Paris was the world capital of opera: The city boasted an enviable ensemble of opera houses and troupes, a very large, knowledgeable, and



Gaetano Donizetti, in a portrait by Giovanni Carnevali



Lily Pons triumphed as Marie in the Met's 1940/41 Season.

cultivated audience for opera, and a music press that offered dozens of informed reviews of new work. If composers or performers could make it there, it was generally held, they could make it anywhere. Donizetti had been angling for a Parisian commission from the mid 1830s. Though he remained a restless composer who, in the words of an admirer, “writes like a steam-engine and lives half his life in a coach,” the city remained his main operating base until his death in 1848.

Donizetti's careerist calculation came off. His 1840 apotheosis elevated him to the status of Parisian celebrity; he was recognized in the street and received endless invitations from fashionable society. Among other successes, *Lucrezia Borgia* and his final triumph, *Don Pasquale*, followed. In time, he came to tire of “the courtesies, the dinners, the portraits, the plaster busts” of polite society, but the world he inhabited was altogether more salubrious than the drafty garrets of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Moreover, after the peevish censorship that his work had incurred in conservative Naples, he also found

the air of intellectual freedom for which Paris was famed refreshing and invigorating.

Donizetti soon recovered from any hurt he felt from the initial criticisms of *The Daughter of the Regiment*. He took heart from the fact that virtually all his reviewers, critical or otherwise, acknowledged that the opera lay outside the Italian protocols that had dominated Donizetti's music thus far and was clearly recognizable as a genuine comic opera in the French style. That had been his aim—to make of the work, as one of his kinder reviewers noted, a successful application for French naturalization.

Donizetti chose as principals two young French singers at early stages in what would prove illustrious careers. Juliette Bourgeois (who had changed her name to Borghese while touring in Italy) played Marie, while the tenor Marié played Tonio, her Italian suitor. The choice proved only half-successful. Reviews were loud in praise of Borghese's looks, voice, and acting, but united in panning Marié, who was said to have sung off-key all night. (It is interesting, if excruciating, to imagine quite how he mangled the eight high Cs in the “Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête” aria for which the part has become famous.)

Donizetti's strategizing over other aspects of the production was more effective. He employed two very experienced and highly rated librettists based in Paris, with an ear for changing public moods. They delivered him a risk-averse piece: a classic Romantic love affair, complete with Italianate color and the mandatory happy ending. Admittedly, *The Daughter of the Regiment's* plot was lightweight and predictable. At the first night, the coup de théâtre by which Marie was revealed to be the daughter of the aristocratic villain of the piece was greeted by a heckler proclaiming, “That was obvious!” But as Donizetti's librettists knew, comic opera never lets predictability get in the way.

Donizetti also played to his audience's prejudices by orienting the opera's plot around past French military glories associated with the expansion of France in northern Italy under Napoleon's First Empire (1804–15). This was all the more pertinent in that patriotism was very much in the air at that moment. An international crisis over Egypt in 1839–40 triggered a war scare that led the government to call up troops and fortify defenses around Paris. The Orleanist king Louis Philippe, set on the throne by the 1830 Revolution after the overthrow of the reactionary Bourbon dynasty, positioned himself as a liberal patriot, resisting conservative forces at home and abroad.

The year 1840 also witnessed a flaring up of pro-Napoleonic sentiment. Louis Philippe regarded Napoleon not as the creator of a rival dynasty but rather as a great French patriot and conqueror. The king sought to capitalize on the Napoleonic Legend that had grown up around the ex-Emperor since 1815

in ways that would buttress his own regime. To this end, he took the initiative of getting Britain to agree to the return of Napoleon's ashes from Saint-Helena where the British had confined him in his last years. In a hugely spectacular ceremony in December 1840, the ex-Emperor's remains were interred in the Invalides.

The setting of the hyper-nationalistic *The Daughter of the Regiment* in Napoleonic Italy had personal resonance for Donizetti: It was where the composer was born and bred. He was born in the city of Bergamo in 1797, a matter of months after it was incorporated into the pro-French Cisalpine Republic, one of the so-called "Sister Republics" that Napoleon had set up all over the Italian peninsula after his brilliant Italian campaigns of 1796–97. The region would later be incorporated into the kingdom of Italy, a key part of the transnational Napoleonic empire. In 1815, Donizetti's elder brother volunteered (like Tyrolean Tonio in the opera) for service in Napoleon's Grand Army.

Given these connections, Donizetti must have followed the return of Napoleon's ashes with great interest. Reports of the day's ceremonies highlighted the presence, wearing their old, threadbare uniforms, of many so-called *groggnards* ("old gruntern"), that is, veterans from Napoleonic armies. Since the 1820s, the *groggnard* had become a stock type in the literature, popular songs, engravings, and caricatures that had burnished the Napoleonic Legend among the French people. Though still a serving officer, Donizetti's Sulpice is very much in the literary *groggnard* mode. Heroine Marie, for her part, was modelled on the related stereotype of the *vivandière*. Such women, selling troops tobacco, alcohol, and other petty commodities to supplement army rations, and adopting laundry and nursing duties, had a history going back well into the 17th century. But they were particularly numerous in the Napoleonic wars and reputed for acts of patriotic valor and devotion. Ex-*vivandières* rubbed shoulders with Napoleon's *groggnards* in the watching crowds.

Threatening to thwart Tonio and Marie's happy ending are forces both international and domestic. On the one hand, the French army removes the heel of reactionary Austrian and Bavarians rulers—represented in the opera by the Germanic-sounding Marquise de Berkenfield—over the Italian peasantry. The latter warm to French conquerors who have brought them "land,

culture, and equality," and they look to benefit from the confiscation of aristocratic lands, including the Marquise's manor-house. They feel comfortable with the fraternal, egalitarian backslapping of the French soldiery, which shocks the Marquise, who confesses to regarding as "nonsensical, absurd, and preposterous" the democratic ideal of the common people governing the state.

The conflict of values between the Tyrolean ruling classes and the French patriots is most clearly evidenced in the singing lesson that the Marquise administers to a very resistant Marie. The song at issue is not a Germanic *Lied*, moreover, but a French poem and melody. Yet it is of an out-of-date, whimsically artificial sort that Donizetti's

bourgeois opera audiences would have associated with the old French aristocracy. Music comes to mirror the Marquise's progressively comical failure to produce a veneer of gentility in an increasingly rebellious Marie. The winsome simpering ditty is drowned out by the marches and fanfares of trumpets, trombones, and drum-rolls of the French nation in arms. The music thus underlines the moral: Following one's heart is always to be preferred to social promotion into the hide-bound aristocracy, and a noble heart will always trump a noble escutcheon. So Marie gives up high heels for army boots,

abandoning her German, aristocratic, and anti-democratic mother so as to remain under the protection of her adoptive father, the 21st "La France" Regiment—and thus, more broadly, of her fatherland.

With *The Daughter of the Regiment*, Donizetti gave the French public what he thought it would like to hear, as a shrewd but effective means of ensuring his own Parisian consecration. It showed a receptive audience that French patriotism could be seen and felt and sung—and all the better in the context of a successful love story. In that respect, Donizetti took a leaf out of the book of an earlier itinerant composer keen to make his mark in the Parisian opera world, namely, Mozart. In *The Marriage of Figaro* as in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, "tout finit par des chansons"—a fact that all lovers of happy endings and great operas will strongly approve. **17**

Colin Jones is Emeritus Professor of History at Queen Mary University of London and Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago. His many books include *Paris: Biography of a City* (2006).



The bravura performances of Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti (shown here in 1973) cemented the opera's popularity in the U.S.

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Artist profiles



LISETTE OROPESA MARIE

Lyric debut

The soprano is known for leading roles at major opera houses worldwide. Her major successes include Violetta in *La traviata*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and the title role in Massenet's *Manon* at the Metropolitan Opera; the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and Amalia in *I Masnadieri* at Teatro alla Scala; Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La traviata* at the Wiener Staatsoper; Konstanze, Amalia, and Violetta at the Bayerische Staatsoper; Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Marguerite de Valois in *Les Huguenots*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Ophélie in *Hamlet* at the Opera national de Paris; *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La traviata*, *Alcina* and Gilda at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Lucia, *La traviata*, and Fiorilla in *Il turco in Italia* at the Teatro Real Madrid; *Rodelinda* and *La traviata* at the Gran Theatre del Liceu; and Lucia at the Salzburger Festspiele and the Opernhaus Zürich. In the U.S., she has performed at LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, and Opera Philadelphia, among other theaters. In 2019, she won the Beverly Sills and Richard Tucker awards and in 2023, she won the prestigious "Franco Abbiati" award from the National Music Critics Association of Italy. Her latest album, *French Bel Canto Arias*, has received multiple awards and continues to top the operatic classical charts.



LAWRENCE BROWNLEE TONIO

Previously at Lyric: Five roles since 2015/16, most recently Ory/*Le Comte Ory* (2022/23) and Count Almaviva/*The Barber of Seville* (2019/20).

Last season, the celebrated American tenor performed a program with fellow Rossini expert Michael Spyres titled *Amici e Rivali* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and premiered a program titled *Rising* with pianist Kevin J. Miller, performing songs with texts drawn from writers of the Harlem Renaissance. He recently made his role debut as Rodrigo in Rossini's *Otello* as part of Opera Philadelphia's Festival O22. Other highlights include Elvino in Bellini's *La sonnambula* at Teatro Real in Madrid, Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and Tamino in a new production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Metropolitan Opera. He has recently dazzled audiences in Amsterdam as Don Ramiro/*La Cenerentola* and in Houston as Fernand/*La favorite*. Upcoming engagements include Count Almaviva (San Francisco, New York), Arturo/*I puritani* (Zurich),

and Edgardo/*Lucia di Lammermoor* (Tokyo). Brownlee has starred in *bel canto* repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera (*I puritani*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rinaldo*, *La donna del lago*), in Zurich (*Le Comte Ory*), Paris (*Don Pasquale*), and Munich (*Semiramide*), among others. He was featured as Don Ramiro/*La Cenerentola* at Lyric in 2015/16.



RONNITA MILLER MARQUISE

Previously at Lyric: Erda/*Siegfried* (2018/19).

This season, the Grammy-nominated mezzo-soprano will sing Ella in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* with Seattle Opera. On the concert stage, she joins the Rotterdam Philharmonic on tour for *Die Walküre*, singing Grimgerde under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Additionally, she joins the New World Symphony for Beethoven's 9th Symphony and the Tucson Symphony for Verdi's *Requiem*. In the summer of 2022, Miller joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* at the Hollywood Bowl. She then returned to San Francisco Opera as Filipjevna in *Eugene Onegin* before reprising the role of Ella with Opera Omaha. She also returned to Atlanta Opera as Erda in *Das Rheingold*. In concert, she appeared twice during the season at Carnegie Hall, with the American Symphony Orchestra as Gaea in Strauss's *Daphne* and with Oberlin College as the mezzo soloist for Dett's *The Ordering of Moses*. Miller was a member of the ensemble at Deutsche Oper Berlin for seven seasons.



ALESSANDRO CORBELLI SULPICE

Previously at Lyric: Nine roles since 1986/87, most recently Dr. Bartolo/*The Barber of Seville* (2019/20) and Don Alfonso/*Così fan tutte* (2017/18).

Recent highlights for the Turin-born baritone include Michonnet/*Adriana Lecouvreur* at La Scala, Don Magnifico/*La Cenerentola* in Zurich and Vienna, and Dr. Bartolo/*The Barber of Seville* at Arena di Verona, Monte Carlo, Glyndebourne, and San Francisco Opera. He sang the role at Lyric in 2013/14. Other recent successes include *Don Pasquale* (Vienna, Glyndebourne, DVD), *Taddeo/L'italiana in Algeri* (Salzburg), *Dulcamara/L'elisir d'amore* (Lyric, Metropolitan Opera, Madrid, Leipzig, Barcelona, San Francisco, and Houston, among other houses), and Sulpice/*La fille du régiment* (Covent Garden, Paris, Metropolitan Opera). Corbelli is also renowned as Michonnet/*Adriana Lecouvreur* (Berlin, London, Paris), Don Alfonso/*Così fan tutte* (Vienna), *Falstaff* (Toulouse, Glyndebourne), and *Gianni Schicchi* (Metropolitan Opera, Glyndebourne, Turin). In 2017 he sang his first

Melitone/*La forza del destino* and recently reprised the role in the acclaimed new production at London's Royal Opera House. He holds the Premio Abbiati, the Italian music critics' prize, for his Leporello at La Scala and the similarly prestigious Rossini d'Oro for his Don Geronio at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival.



ALAN HIGGS HORTENSIVS

Previously at Lyric: Five roles since 2017/18, most recently Sacristan/*Tosca* (2021/22) and The King/*Cendrillon* (2018/19).

The bass-baritone, a Florida native and Ryan Opera Center alumnus, was formerly a studio artist at The Atlanta Opera. His roles there included the Imperial Commissioner/*Madama Butterfly*, Benoît and Alcindoro/*La bohème*, the British Major/Kevin Puts's *Silent Night*, and the Mandarin/*Turandot*. His 2023 season included the role of the Duke in Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* with Opera San Antonio and he was the guest artist for the Southeast Regional Metropolitan Opera Competition, in which he was both a winner of the Southeast Region and a national semifinalist in 2017. His 2021/22 season included Monterone in *Rigoletto* with Florentine Opera and Colline in *La bohème* with Vero Beach Opera and Opera Birmingham. He spent two summers as an Apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera where he performed the Mayor in *Jenůfa* and Jose Castro in *Fanciulla del West*. In the 2019/20 season he made his debut with San Antonio Opera as Angelotti and Sciarrone in *Tosca*, sang Alidoro in *Cenerentola* with both Dayton Opera and the Atlanta Opera, and performed the Fifth Jew in *Salome* with The Atlanta Opera. Higgs has won numerous awards including an American Opera Society Scholarship and a Solti Foundation Scholarship.



JOY HERMALYN DUCHESS OF CRAKENTORP

Previously at Lyric: *Fiddler on the Roof* (2022/23).

Hermalyn's recent regional credits include a return to the role of Florence Foster Jenkins in *Souvenir*. She appeared on Broadway as Grandma Gellman in the Tony- and Grammy-nominated revival of *Caroline, or Change*. Other Broadway credits include *Fiddler on the Roof* (Fruma Yente), *Cyrano the Musical* (Chaperone), *Christmas Carol* (Mrs. Fezziwig), *Candide*, and Baz Luhrmann's *La bohème*. Regional appearances include *Cabaret*, *Souvenir*, *Gypsy*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Oliver!*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Hermalyn sang Minnie in *La fanciulla del West* in repertory with Abigail Adams/1776 at Utah Festival Opera. Other opera credits include *La fille du régiment*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trittico*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème* (Leoncavallo), *Faust*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, and *Hansel and Gretel*, and she has toured widely in the major Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. She was a featured performer in *Sound of Music Live!* on NBC and in *Sweeney Todd* with the New York Philharmonic for *Live from Lincoln Center* on PBS, and has sung at Avery Fisher, Carnegie, and the Royal Albert Halls.



RON DUKES CORPORAL

Previously at Lyric: Chief's Son #1 and Passenger 8/*Proximity* and Sam/*The Factotum* (both 2022/23).

Last season, the second-year Ryan Opera Center member sang Jago in Lyric's *Ernani* and was featured at Pittsburgh Opera in *We Shall Not Be Moved*. He completed his master's degree in opera at the Jacobs School of Music of Indiana University. While there, he served as Associate Instructor of Voice and performed numerous featured roles with IU Opera Theatre, among them Bartolo/*The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Basilio/*The Barber of Seville*, and Simone/*Gianni Schicchi*. He has extensive experience with local, start-up opera companies in Bloomington, Indiana, including Bloomington Chamber Opera, where he portrayed Sarastro/*The Magic Flute*, and A Little Knight Music Opera Company, where he was heard as Oroveso/*Norma*. Originally from Indianapolis, Dukes is a former Studio Artist at Wolf Trap Opera (Truffaldino/*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and the Glimmerglass Festival (Old Gypsy/*Il trovatore*, Second Priest and Second Armored Man/*The Magic Flute*). He recently concluded a residency with Pensacola Opera for the company's 39th season, singing Basilio/*The Barber of Seville* and Sarastro. Ron Dukes is sponsored by **Lead Sponsor Lois B. Siegel**®.



LAUREANO QUANT NOTARY

Previously at Lyric: Dancaire/*Carmen* and Count of Lerma/*Don Carlos* (both 2022/23).

A second-year member of the Ryan Opera Center Ensemble and a native of Barranquilla, Colombia, the baritone holds a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music and a Master of Musical Arts degree from Yale University. Highlights of his repertoire include Belcore/*The Elixir of Love*, Guglielmo/*Così fan tutte*, Figaro/Saverio Mercadante's *I due Figaro*, Maguire/Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*, Zurga/*The Pearl Fishers*, Vittorio and The Boarder/Nino Rota's *I due timidi*, Demetrius/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Captain and Prince Ragotsky/*Candide*. In the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, Quant was awarded Second Place in both the Western Region (2022) and the Southeastern Region (2020). He has also won the Luminarts Cultural Foundation Men's Voice Fellowship (2023), the Online Audience Award in Houston Grand Opera's Concert of Arias (2020), and First Prize in the Premio de Canto Ciudad de Bogotá (2018). Quant has participated in prestigious programs such as the Merola Opera Program and SongStudio, the latter led by Renée Fleming at Carnegie Hall, and has appeared in concert with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Laureano Quant is sponsored by **Lead Sponsor Peter Scheuermann**.



ERVIN DIX III
DANCER
Lyric debut

The Washington D.C. native received his BFA from University of the Arts's School of Dance and Drama, as well as an MA from Drexel University. Performance credits include Opera Philadelphia's *Carmen*, *Broadway Bares: Pleasure Park*, and Hershey Entertainment and Resorts. Dix was a featured dancer in the National Cherry Blossom Festival and performed on Holland America Line's main stage shows. He was a guest artist with Dancefusion and a company member with DanceSpora Contemporary Ballet.



TANNER GLOYSTEIN
DANCER
Lyric debut

A multidisciplinary artist from Kalamazoo, Michigan, Gloystein studied film at Columbia College Chicago and has worked with Hubbard Street and PARA.MAR Dance Theatre as a videographer. Tanner began dancing at the age of 21, and has trained at the Lou Conte Dance studio in Chicago and Tye Chua Dance in Kalamazoo.



VERNON GOODEN
DANCER
Previously at Lyric: Carmen (2022/23).

The Chicago-based choreographer, performer, and teacher is a graduate of the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and in 2001 was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Gooden later trained at The Juilliard School under the direction of the late Benjamin Harkavy and Larry Rhodes. He has performed with the Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theatre, Joel Hall Dancers, Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre, Winifred Haun & Dancers, and Chicago Repertory Ballet.



MARCUS HARDY
DANCER
Previously at Lyric: Fiddler on the Roof (2022/23), Fire Shut Up in My Bones (2021/22).

After receiving his BFA in Dance Performance from East Carolina University, Hardy joined the Inaside Chicago Dance company, where he spent five years. He has performed as a guest artist with SueMo Dance Company, Waterstreet Dance Company, and Chicago Dance Crash.



CHRISTOPHER KELLEY
DANCER
Previously at Lyric: Fiddler on the Roof (2022/23).

The Chicago-based artist's performance credits include the Paramount Theatre (*The Wizard of Oz*, *The Producers*, *Newsies*, *Beauty and The Beast*, *Kinky Boots*, *Cinderella* and *Rock of Ages*), the Marriott (*Gypsy*), the Muny (*Gypsy*), and Drury Lane (*A Chorus Line*). Kelley danced with Chicago Repertory Ballet from 2020 to 2023. His training includes Butler Ballet, Chicago Multicultural Dance Center, Visceral Dance Center, and the Joffrey Ballet, and he holds a BFA from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music in Music Theatre.



DREW LEWIS
DANCER
Previously at Lyric: Fiddler on the Roof (2022/23).

Originally from Oak Park, the performer, choreographer, composer, and educator graduated magna cum laude from Cornish College of the Arts. He performed extensively with Sidra Bell Dance New York from 2016 to 2019, during which time he guest lectured at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Additional credits include the Joel Hall Dancers, C-LS, Project 44, Attack Theatre, and projects by choreographers Erin Kilmurray and Lucy Riner. As a choreographer, Drew has created works for DanceWorks Chicago, Common Conservatory, Loyola University, Skidmore College, Hyde Park School of Dance, Thodos New Dances 2020, ChoreoLab, Oak Park and River Forest High School, and New Trier High School. In 2020, Lewis formed his own small ensemble, House of DOV.



ISAAC ALAN LINDY
DANCER
Lyric debut

The Philadelphia-based figure skater and contemporary dancer is currently working with Montreal-based contemporary skating company Le Patin Libre. He has danced with Opera Philadelphia, the Putty Dance Project, Anne-Marie Mulgrew and Dancers Co., Ruckus Dance, and at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. Professional skating highlights include *Holiday on Ice* European tours, soloist with Nathan Birch and Tim Murphy's *The Next Ice Age*, and site-specific work with IceLab Leipzig. Lindy holds a BA from Vassar College.



MICKEY NIXON
DANCER
Previously at Lyric: Fire Shut Up in My Bones (2021/22).

Dance credits include works by Camille A. Brown, Francesca Harper, Lloyd Culbreath, Luis Salgado, Angel Kaba, Elizabeth Corbett, Mark Allan Davis, Robin Sanders,

General Hambrick, Nijawwon Matthews and Jennifer Muller. The dancer's regional credits include *Dreamgirls*, *Aida*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Ruined*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Mahalia the Musical*, *After Midnight*, *The Wiz*, and *Saturday Night Fever*. Along with numerous theater credits, Nixon's film and television credits include *Get On Up* and *Complexions*.



NICK SCHRIER DANCER

Lyric debut

Schrier's previous opera credits include *Moby Dick* (Chicago Opera Theater) and *Dante's Inferno* (Notre Dame Opera). Theater credits include Goodman Theatre, Broadway in Chicago, Moonlight Stage Amphitheater, PVPA Los Angeles, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Music Theater Works, Metropolis PAC, and Seacoast Repertory Theater. He is a proud Oberlin graduate hailing from Muskegon, Michigan.



MATHEW SKORUPSKI DANCER

Lyric debut

A resident of Des Plaines, Illinois, Skorupski graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Northern Illinois University. He has danced at Madison Contemporary Dance Company, and is currently a dance instructor at Rockford University as well as a dance teacher at the Des Plaines Academy of Dance. He is a principal dancer with the Ardent Dance Company.



MALACHI SQUIRES DANCER

Previously at Lyric: *La Clemenza di Tito* (2013/14).

Squires recently appeared in *Day of the Gypsy* by Gordon Pierce Schmidt at the Harris Theater, *Brigadoon* with the Goodman Theatre, and RPM Productions' *La Journees de Tsiganes*, and *An American Portrait*. He has danced extensively with Les Ballets Grandiva and has appeared in numerous works with Fort Worth Dallas Ballet including *Four Last Songs* and *West Side Stories*. He has also danced with Paul Sanasardo, EZ Credit Dance Theater, and Lawrence Pech Dance Company. Guest engagements have included the Madison Ballet, Ballet Quad Cities, Chicago Civic Ballet, Hilton Head Dance Theater, Rochester Dance Company, and Marin Dance Theater. He has choreographed for Mesopotamia Night Chicago, Dance in the Parks Chicago, Bitterroot Dance Academy, Dance Drama Collaborative, 12 Min. Max Dance Festival, and the Houston Artist of the Year Awards.



SPERANZA SCAPPUCCI CONDUCTOR

Lyric debut

In 2022 Scappucci became the first Italian woman to conduct at Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Other recent house debuts include Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the State Opera in Berlin, and the Opéra national de Paris, where she opened the 2023/24 Season with Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, and the 2022/23 Season with Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. Later this season, Scappucci returns to the Berlin State Opera to conduct *La traviata*, and she will make her house debut at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo with *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Gianni Schicchi*. She will also return to the Metropolitan Opera with a production of Puccini's *La Rondine* and to Washington National Opera with Puccini's *Turandot*. Other recent highlights include Verdi's *Attila* at the Royal Opera House, *Rigoletto* at the Met, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at La Scala Milan and Opéra national de Paris, *Macbeth* at the Canadian Opera in Toronto, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *Simon Boccanegra* at Royal Opéra de Wallonie in Liège, *Le Villi* in Toulouse, *L'elisir d'amore* at Berlin State Opera, *La traviata* at Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New National Theatre in Tokyo and Opernhaus in Zürich, as well as Verdi's *Requiem* at Arena di Verona. From 2017 to 2022, Speranza del Scappucci held the position of Music Director at Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège. In the 2025/26 season, she will take the position of Principal Guest Conductor at the Royal Opera House in London. Conductor Speranza Scappucci is sponsored by **Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation**.



LAURENT PELLY ORIGINAL DIRECTOR AND COSTUME DESIGNER

Previously at Lyric: Director/Costume Designer/*Cendrillon* (2018/19).

French opera and theater director Laurent Pelly is sought after by the world's most prestigious houses. He designs the costumes for all his productions, as well as occasionally the sets. He was Co-Director of Théâtre national de Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées from 2008 to 2018. New productions this season include *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Teatro Real and *Le Chauve Souris* (in the original French) for Opéra de Lille. Recent new productions include *Il turco in Italia* at Teatro Real, *Eugene Onegin* at La Monnaie de Munt and Royal Danish Opera, *La pèrichole* at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, *Lakmé* at Opéra Comique and Opéra national du Rhin, Poulenc's *La voix humaine/Les mamelles de Tirésias* for the Glyndebourne Festival, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Lille, as well as *La Cenerentola* (Amsterdam, Geneva, Valencia, Los Angeles), *Falstaff* (Teatro Real, La Monnaie de Munt, Nikikai Opera Foundation Tokyo), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Santa Fe, Matsumoto Festival Japan). A renowned Offenbach specialist, Pelly has directed many titles, including *Barbe-bleue*, *Le roi Carotte*, *La vie parisienne*, *La belle Hélène*, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *Orphée aux Enfers*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, *La pèrichole*, and *Le voyage dans la lune*. Laurent Pelly is supported by the **Richard P. and Susan Kiphart Costume Designer Endowed Chair**.



CHRISTIAN RĂTH REVIVAL DIRECTOR

Lyric debut

A native of Hamburg, the director has worked in many of the world's leading opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra national de Paris, and the Royal Opera House. He directs a large and diverse repertoire, ranging from Wagner, Strauss, Janáček, Puccini, Verdi, Donizetti, Mozart, Britten, and Bartók to musicals and contemporary creations. Recent new productions include Strauss's *Die Schweigsame Frau* and Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane* at the Bard Summerscape Festival, *Der Freischütz* and *Macbeth* at the Wiener Staatsoper, *Le Baron Tzigane* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, *L'italiana in Algeri* in Portland, and the direction and design of *Kiss Me Kate* for the Haut école de musique de Genève, in collaboration with the Théâtre du Galpon. Future seasons will include the world premiere of *Woman with Eyes Closed* by Jennifer Higdon at Opera Philadelphia, and a return to Bard. Other opera stagings include Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and the direction and design of *Tristan und Isolde* for The Dallas Opera, Verdi's rarely-performed comic opera *Un Giorno di Regno* (King for a Day) for the Glimmerglass Festival, *Falstaff* at Washington National Opera, *Roméo et Juliette* at Houston Grand Opera, *Fidelio* and *Luisa Miller* at The Dallas Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* at Cairo Opera House, and *Carmen* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève.



CHANTAL THOMAS SET DESIGNER

Lyric debut

The French set designer studied at École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. She has worked regularly with Laurent Pelly on more than 60 productions for theater and opera. Their credits together include *Le roi Carotte*, *Viva la Mamma*, Offenbach's *Barbe-bleue* (Opéra de Lyon), *I Puritani*, *Giulio Cesare*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Platée* (Opéra national de Paris), *La fille du régiment*, *Manon*, *Robert le diable* (Royal Opera House and Met Opera), *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *La belle Hélène* (Théâtre du Châtelet), *Don Pasquale* (Santa Fe Opera, La Monnaie Bruxelles, Teatro Real Madrid), *L'étoile* and *The Love for Three Oranges* (National Opera Amsterdam), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Theater an der Wien), *La traviata* and *Candide* (Santa Fe Opera). Other recent highlights include *Le nozze di Figaro* (Santa Fe and Matsumoto Japan), *Così fan tutte*, *La Périochole* (Theatre des Champs-Élysées), and *Il Turco in Italia* (Teatro Real Madrid). Her work has also appeared at the Liceu Barcelona, the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, and Vienna State Opera.



JOËL ADAM LIGHTING DESIGNER

Lyric debut

Recent highlights for the designer include *Così fan tutte* at Pacific Opera and *Il Turco in Italia* at the Teatro Real Madrid in 2023. Adam is a longtime collaborator with Laurent Pelly, and worked with him on *Contes d'Hoffmann* (Lyon, San Francisco), *The Love for Three Oranges* (Amsterdam), *I Puritani* (Opéra national de Paris), and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* at the Matsumoto Festival in Japan. Other highlights include *Comte Ory* (Lyon, La Scala) and *L'étoile* (Amsterdam). Adam provided designs for *Hansel and Gretel* (Teatro Real Madrid, Seattle), the revival of *Platée* at the Opéra national de Paris, and *L'elisir d'amore* (Opéra national de Paris), *Le roi Carotte* (Lyon), *Le médecin malgré lui* (Geneva), *Le coq d'or* (Brussels, Opéra national de Lorraine, Teatro Real), *Viva la Mamma* (Lyon), and *The Barber of Seville* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées). His many theatrical collaborations include Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with Philippe Adrien at the Théâtre de la Tempête, Molière's *L'Avare* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* with Andrei Serban at the Comédie Française, Marivaux's *La mère confidente* at Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, and *Roméo and Juliette* at the Opera of Bordeaux with Sandrine Anglade. *Lighting designers are supported by the Mary-Louise and James S. Aagaard endowment in honor of Duane Schuler.*



MICHAEL BLACK CHORUS DIRECTOR

The Australian Chorus Director is in his 11th season at Lyric, having held this position at Opera Australia in Sydney from 2001 to 2013. Black has served in this capacity for such distinguished organizations as the Edinburgh International Festival, Opera Holland Park (London), the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and, in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Choir, Motet Choir, the Cantillation chamber choir, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Other activities include preparing *The Damnation of Faust* chorus and Haydn's *Creation* at the Grant Park Music Festival, where he has worked for five seasons. He has served as chorus director for close to 140 different operas on four continents, and his work has been recorded and/or aired on ABC, BBC, PBS, for many HD productions in movie theaters, and on television. *Michael Black is supported by the Howard A. Stoller Chorus Director Endowed Chair.*



LAURA SCOZZI ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHER

Previously at Lyric: Original choreographer/ *Cendrillon* (2018/19).

The choreographer, based in France, founded her company, Opinioni in Movimento, in 1994. As a guest choreographer, she created *Seven Deadly Sins* for the ballet of the Opéra national de Paris and *My Relationships With Men Were*

Lyric

Never Very Clear for the Junior Ballet de Cannes, and *La Dolce Vita* for the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève. Hip-hop creations include *Sol à sol avec poids*, *Quelque part par là*, and *Barbe Neige et les 7 petits cochons au bois dormant*, currently touring. Scozzi collaborates regularly with Laurent Pelly and has worked with many other major directors in opera, theater, and film, among them Jean-Louis Grinda, Emmanuelle Bastet, Coline Serreau, Jean-Michel Ribes, and Matthieu Poirot-Delpech. In 2008, Scozzi directed her first opera, *Benvenuto Cellini* (Nürnberg) followed by *The Magic Flute* (Nürnberg, Bordeaux), *Orpheus in the underworld* (Bern, Bordeaux), *Les Indes Galantes* (Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nuremberg), *Akhnaten* (Bonn), and *Il viaggio à Reims* (Dresden).



KARINE GIRARD **REVIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER**

Previously at Lyric: Revival choreographer/
Cendrillon (2018/19).

After completing her dance education at the Sorbonne, the French choreographer performed for several European dance companies and has also collaborated on several premieres with the Balafori and L4-L5 dance-theater companies. In 2003, she danced for the company directed by Laura Scozzi, Opinioni in *Movimento* and in the show *F.E.I.R. : desir-degout*. She has worked as Scozzi's artistic assistant in theater, movies, special events, and opera, in particular for Laurent Pelly's productions of *La Périhole* (Marseille, 2005 and on tour), *La fille du régiment* (San Francisco, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Seville), and *Cendrillon* (London, Brussels, Lille, Barcelona, New York). She has also collaborated with directors Jean-Louis Grinda (*Die Fledermaus*, Toulouse and on tour) and Emmanuelle Bastet (*L'étoile*, Nancy). Since 2009, she has danced for such companies as COD, collaborating with director/choreographer Olivier Dubois. She has choreographed for shows directed by Guy Freixe (*Après la pluie*), Laurence Sendrowicz (*Que d'espoir*), and Agathe Mélinand (*Eric Satie-Memoires d'un amnésique*). In 2016, she choreographed Christophe Gayral's production of *Idomeneo* for the Opéra national du Rhin, and staged and choreographed with Sandra Savin the show *Storm* for the students of ENACR (France's National School of Circus Arts).



AUGUST TYE **BALLET MISTRESS**

The American dancer, choreographer, and ballet mistress has worked on nearly 50 productions at Lyric since 1993/94. She remounted the choreography of Lyric's *Iphigénie en Tauride* at San Francisco Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. She has presented a 20-year retrospective of her work at Chicago's Vittum Theater and Ruth Page Dance Center, as well as in her hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. A graduate of Western

Michigan University, Tye performed with the Kalamazoo Ballet, dancing leading roles in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *The Nutcracker*. In addition to Lyric and Joel Hall Dancers, she has performed in Chicago with Salt Creek Ballet, Second City Ballet, and Chicago Folks Operetta. Tye is Artistic Director at the Hyde Park School of Dance, which she founded in 1993. Four years later she founded Tyego Dance Project, which has performed at Steppenwolf, the Athenaeum, and throughout America in a revival of Spike Jones's *Nutcracker*.



SARAH HATTEN **WIGMASTER & MAKEUP DESIGNER**

Lyric's wigmaster and makeup designer has worked in a wide repertoire at Des Moines Metro Opera, Detroit Opera (formerly Michigan Opera Theatre), Columbus Opera, Toledo Opera, the Cabrillo Music Festival, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She has also worked at the Glimmerglass Festival and the major opera companies of Los Angeles, Omaha, Cleveland, Sarasota, and Central City, as well as Wisconsin's American Players Theatre and, in Los Angeles, the Pantages Theatre and the Geffen Playhouse. *Sarah Hatten is supported by the Marlys A. Beider Wigmaster and Makeup Designer Endowed Chair.*



AGATHE MÉLINAND **NEW DIALOGUES AND DRAMATURG** **Lyric debut**

The director, dramaturg, and librettist was Co-Director with Laurent Pelly of the Théâtre national de Toulouse from 2008 to 2018. Mélinand has produced new dialogues and adaptations of numerous opera libretti. This season sees an adaptation of *Le Chauve Souris* in the original French for Opéra de Lille with Pelly. Other recent collaborations include *Lakmé* for Opéra Comique, *La Périhole* for the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Offenbach's *Le voyage dans la Lune* for Opéra Comique, Greek National Opera, and Volksoper Vienna). With Pelly, Mélinand has adapted numerous Offenbach works including *Barbe Bleue*, *Le roi Carotte*, *La vie parisienne*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, *La belle Hélène*, as well as dialogue adaptations for Donizetti's *La fille du régiment* (Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera), Chabrier's *L'étoile* (Dutch National Opera), and Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict* (Glyndebourne Festival). Also for Glyndebourne, Mélinand wrote additional texts (derived from Goethe's *Faust*) for Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* directed by Richard Jones. Recent theatre work theater includes the writing and realization of *Le Petit Livre d'Anna Magdalena Bach*, and new translations/adaptations of Mary Chase's *Harvey* and Goldoni's *L'Impresario de Smyrne*, directed by Pelly. **L**

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Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

MARK S. DOSS (1984-1986)

Appearances this season: Giorgio Germont/*La traviata*, Welsh National Opera; Zurga/*Les pêcheurs de perles*, Vlaamse Opera.

“My first mainstage role while in the Ryan Opera Center was the Herald in Handel’s *Rinaldo*, alongside Marilyn Horne and Sam Ramey, who sang Argante and was the inspiration for my own portrayal of the role at Teatro alla Scala (see photo), just after my debut there as Escamillo in *Carmen* (whose aria I first sang for Sherrill Milnes in an Opera Center master class). Also during my tenure, I agreed to take on an extra understudy assignment, and this led to my first contract with the Metropolitan Opera. Thanks to the marvelous opportunities presented to me by Lyric’s exceptional training program, I have been able to achieve great career successes—and for that, I am very thankful.”



Doss as Argante in Teatro alla Scala's *Rinaldo* (2005).

THIS SEASON



**Susanna Phillips
(2005–2007)**
Don Giovanni
Boston Baroque



**Craig Irvin
(2008–2011)**
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The Atlanta Opera



**Lauren Decker
(2016–2020)**
*Der fliegende
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Beyond the stage

Growing and Growing

Entering its seventh year, the **Empower Youth!** program continues to thrive—and a dance mentor helps lead the way

By David Zivan

When it comes to **Empower Youth!**, a program of Lyric Unlimited, the company's learning and creative engagement division, Tanji Harper has seen it all—quite literally. The Chicago-based choreographer, dancer, and educator has been a dance mentor with the program since it launched six years ago. From the first large-scale, student-driven productions, through the complex pivots necessitated by the pandemic, to today, Harper has been an energizing force for the initiative and its participants. Perhaps most remarkably, as the seventh year began this fall, Harper's enthusiasm was undiminished. "I've been here since the beginning, and it is my favorite job," she says. "It's really life changing for the young people who are involved."

The core mission of **Empower Youth!** is "to ignite creativity through the arts." In partnership with the Chicago Urban League, the program encourages and guides Black Chicago teens in the creation of an original production drawn from the stories of their lives and how they deal with issues pertinent to them. Participants work with professional artistic staff and facilitators to learn how principles of performance, the written word, theater, music, and dance can translate to their everyday lives—and also they see up-close how the arts offer numerous, sometimes unexpected career paths. The Urban League helps find the cohort through its partnerships with various schools around the city. More than a century old, the organization



Dance mentor Tanji Harper (at right) with students during January 2020 rehearsals.

extends its impact with the students outside the program as well, offering resources for post-secondary options and opportunities; alums of the **Empower Youth!** program are already an accomplished set.

Since returning to fully in-person programming following the worst of the pandemic, there has been a notable increase in both the number of participants and their commitment to the program. After 22 teens finished the program last year, applications for this year exceeded 30 well before the deadline. “I think that has a lot to do with [teens] being cooped up and not having many options to do live practice and to be around other like-minded individuals that they don’t necessarily see every single day,” Harper notes. “Another aspect of why this is so cool, and why it works, is because they get to meet different people from different schools. And they get to work with working professionals—a chance to bounce their ideas off of people who make art for a living.”

Harper’s deep ties to the community make her a truly effective artist partner for Lyric Opera of Chicago. A South Side native, Harper trained locally with the Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theatre, Joel Hall, and elsewhere, and graduated from The Chicago Academy of the Arts. She danced professionally on both coasts and toured with major national acts before returning to Chicago and starting a teaching career.

She currently teaches a class on hip-hop in all its facets at Harold Washington College, and for the past two decades has been the artistic director of The Happiness Club, a free performing arts education program for Chicago youths aged 8 to 18. The group has performed all over the city, including at Lollapalooza and at halftime during a Bulls game. “Happiness Club is sort of like the Mickey Mouse club,” Harper jokes. “They had stage performances and sang pop songs. They did covers. We don’t do covers, really. We create our own music and write our own songs and then we go around and perform them.”

Harper first connected with Lyric for its **Chicago Voices** project, where her troupe was selected to perform at the Harris Theater (“One of the craziest, most amazing things I’ve ever done,” she says), and then she was invited to be part of piloting EmpowerYouth!. Several cast members of Lyric’s world premiere last season of **The Factotum** had studied with Harper. Perhaps most notably, one former member of The Happiness Club, Zoie Reams, was one of the principal artists in Lyric’s other world premiere last season, **Proximity**.

Harper gave two well-received and highly personal pre-show talks for that opera. “That was a lovely, nerve-wracking thing,” she says. “It was a huge opportunity that they gave me, and I really appreciated it because it tested my limits. See, Lyric is one of those organizations that I just don’t say no to because every single time they ask me to do something, it always turns out great.”




Tanji Harper cheers on students during the final 2022 performance.

Empower Youth! seems to be one of those things—something created from the ground up that is poised for more growth. “Another reason this program continues to elevate and be successful is because we’re always looking at what we could have done better, or where we could have been more efficient,” Harper says. “Everybody involved on the Lyric staff just keeps working harder to make the program that much better for the young people. We all just keep showing up for each other, and it makes the job so easy. It does not feel like work.”

Indeed, improvements planned for this new session look unusually promising. While the total engagement time for the students has not changed significantly, the cadence has evolved to a series of Saturday sessions leading up to the finale that will provide more frequent interaction with the artist mentors.

This year, **Empower Youth!** has partnered with Kennedy-King College, which is expected to yield numerous benefits. Working in university environments goes a long way to getting students more comfortable and familiar with those settings. As much as the program is highly focused on process and collaboration, it always culminates in a performance, and this session’s schedule provides significantly more time in the university’s theater.

“It’s so much fun to expose young people to the possibilities of doing art in this way. To have the support of adults who know what they’re doing is all young people need,” Harper says. “They need a door, they need the resource, they need the mentor, they need the adult to care. That’s it. And once they have that, they’re unstoppable.” 

People of Lyric

A behind-the-scenes conversation



Kyle Flubacker

Tabitha Boorsma Artistic Operations Manager

Hometown

I have lived in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois. So really the Midwest.

Favorite local landmarks

I hang out at the Logan Square monument sometimes—bring a blanket and just read for a little while. In nice weather, it's a cool little community.

Outside interests

Competitive pinball. I'm in a league called Belles and Chimes.

Musical training

I was a Music Education major in college. Piano was my first instrument, but tuba is my principal instrument. It just came more naturally to me.

What is your role here at Lyric?

I work on anything that's in the Artistic department, but not Artistic itself. For instance, all the stuff that happens after somebody has been cast: What has to happen in order for them to get here? A majority of my job is dealing with contracts—creating them, moving them, making sure that Company Management has the information they need in order to track overtime and fittings and to arrange for flights. If an artist has never worked in the U.S. before, I take them to the Social Security office.

What was your path to working here?

Technically I started in February 2008, working in the ticketing department while I was at Columbia College. After I graduated, I had several other jobs, but I still kept coming back, doing evening and weekend performances. I did internships with the Development department, and one with the Ryan Opera Center, and then I was a tour manager for *Opera in the Neighborhoods* for a couple of seasons. And then this position became available, and I was glad I hadn't moved forward in those other departments. This is the best fit for me. Organizing things is not so fun for a lot of people, but I'm a person who would regularly take out all her CDs and decide I want to organize them a different way and do that.

What was your first opera?

My first week here, my supervisor found out that I'd never actually seen an opera, and she said, No—that's not acceptable. There was a *Carmen* performance that afternoon, and she said, Go watch. So *Carmen* in the Lyric Opera House was my very first opera experience. It kind of set a high bar.

Do you have a favorite now?

I know it's a weird one, but I saw *Lulu* three times when it was here. I know it's extremely long and the music is not everyone's cup of tea, but I think because I studied music and music theory, I have an appreciation for how it's structured. I really enjoy listening to it and following where it's going. So that is definitely my favorite drama. But *Die Fledermaus* always has a soft place in my heart because I think it's so funny. It just makes me laugh so much.

What else do you do for fun?

The other thing I spend a lot of time doing is I'm also a professional DJ. I don't DJ full time anymore, but I used to do 70 gigs a year, and that was my main source of income. I've slowed down a lot, but I still like to do events because it's a fun way to balance being here doing operational spreadsheets and database monitoring.

Any favorite Lyric moment?

When I was working on the tours with *Opera in the Neighborhoods*, we would sometimes have 15 kids for one show, and 1,500 for the next. Getting them in and out was a little bit crazy, but I always liked seeing these little third graders in their opera attire, all dressed up and so excited, and they would give me high fives. It was amazing to see a younger generation getting introduced to and getting excited about opera. Also: seeing *Twilight Gods* happen. It was something that nobody had ever done before. I feel that at Lyric, a tier one opera house, you get more experimentation than you would expect. **17**