

*Lyric + The Second City*



**LONGER**

**LOUDER**

**WAGNER**

THE SECOND CITY WAGNER COMPANION

*Lyric*  
Unlimited



Written by TIM SNIFFEN  
Original Music by JESSE CASE

Cast:

<i>Valerie</i>	TRACY CANTIN
<i>Richard Wagner</i>	JESSE CASE
<i>Dirk</i>	RANDALL HARR
<i>Margueritte</i>	SAYJAL JOSHI
<i>Fred Wagner</i>	TIM RYDER
<i>Karen</i>	ALICE STANLEY JR.
<i>Gunther</i>	TRAVIS TURNER
<i>Morgan</i>	JONAH D. WINSTON
<i>Director</i>	ANNELIESE TOFT
<i>Musical Director and Sound Designer</i>	JESSE CASE
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	HEATHER SPARLING
<i>Dramaturg</i>	STUART CARDEN
<i>Stage Manager</i>	PEGGY STENGER
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	MEGAN WHEELER

*For Lyric Opera of Chicago:*

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<i>Music Director</i>	SIR ANDREW DAVIS
<i>Creative Consultant</i>	RENÉE FLEMING
<i>Director, Lyric Unlimited</i>	CAYENNE HARRIS
<i>Producer of Classical and Crossover Programming</i>	SARAH GENERES
<i>Production Manager, Lyric Unlimited</i>	MADELEINE BORG

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Longer! Louder! Wagner! – The Second City Wagner Companion  
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## A Word from the Writer: Tim Sniffen on Creating *Longer! Louder! Wagner!*

**Wagner's Ring cycle is one of the most massive projects an opera company can undertake. As a writer, how did you approach topics of such epic scale as the Ring and Wagner's colorful life?**

I think of Anne Lamott's book *Bird by Bird*, which teaches how to begin an enormous project and not panic. In my case it was CD by CD for the 18 CDs in my *Ring* recording. I began by listening to Wagner's work and reading about his life, absorbing as much as I could, writing down everything odd or memorable. "Father put on puppet shows after dinner" — written down. "Tried to elope with the wife of a benefactor" — definitely written down. I also asked lots of people about their thoughts on Wagner, since the show's not just about the man himself, but what he means to all of us. Finally, Lyric was instrumental in offering materials and suggesting areas for research.

**Following the huge success of the Second City Guide to the Opera, what makes you excited about L! L! W!?! What should audiences look forward to? What's different about this project?**

I was part of the first SC/Lyric collaboration, and I am *thrilled* to be back! I've basically been biding my time, waiting for Lyric's call. That show covered a little bit of everything: as stated in the title, a guide to all things opera. This time, we zero in on a single topic — an enormous, timeless, hugely influential topic — and dig deeper. (It turns out, there's plenty there.) Also, working with Lyric's vastly talented singers was so much fun the first time that we've tried to incorporate them even more into the show. Finally, while our first show was a series of songs and sketches, our signature style, this show has a more connected story to tell.

**Wagner was complicated, and people have strong opinions about him. What draws you to him?**

Strong opinions are good. Writing about someone who most people describe with "Eh, he's fine..." is harder. Larger-than-life personalities fascinate me because some of their worst traits are similar to our own flaws, amplified a little. We've all had moments of feeling overlooked, but only Wagner, feeling the same way at a dinner party, struck a high note and held it until everyone stopped talking and paid attention to him. (Really.)

**While writing L! L! W!!, what has been the most surprising thing you've learned about Wagner?**

I will admit, I thought Wagner was more celebrated during his lifetime. I had no idea he had it so rough — always running out of money, often denied the critical acclaim he clearly wanted. I was surprised to learn about his political life — Wagner played a role in the revolution in Dresden. But of course, it's Wagner: when it looked like the uprising wouldn't be successful, he basically said, "Okay, I'm gonna skip town now — good luck going to jail and everything!" I think Wagner made a lot of people angry in his life.

**Wagner began composing the Ring cycle more than 150 years ago. What makes it relevant today?**

In its essence the *Ring* is a story about power, corruption, impossible quests, bravery, betrayal, love, and sacrifice. It will be around as long as people are. (And as our life spans increase, devoting four days to a single masterwork will feel like less and less of an imposition.)

**What do you want audiences to know before they walk into L! L! W!?! What do you want them to know by the end of the show?**

Nothing you don't already know. A comedy show shouldn't require homework! Your current level of Wagner knowledge is perfectly sufficient. But I would like you to ask this question:

What if Wagner had a long-lost great-grandson...  
who founded an opera company of his own...  
in Schaumburg?

## ARTIST PROFILES



**TRACY CANTIN** (*Valerie*), a recent alumna of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, earned critical acclaim at Lyric as Berta/*The Barber of Seville* (new production). The soprano has also appeared in the company's *Elektra*, *Rigoletto*, *Parsifal*, and most recently *Anna Bolena*. Among the highlights of her concert appearances (which have included Ravinia, the Grant Park Music Festival, the Oregon Symphony, the Illinois Philharmonic, and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago), is Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* for her Australian debut with Bryn Terfel, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and Sir Andrew Davis. She will make her Canadian debut with Edmonton Opera in 2017. Among her numerous honors are a Sullivan Foundation Award and a Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award.



**JESSE CASE** (*Richard Wagner, Original Music, Musical Director, Sound Designer*) is thrilled to be making his Chicago acting debut. At The Second City, he's served as musical director for five original revues on both e.t.c. and Mainstage. His numerous theatrical productions there include composing and co-writing *The Second City Guide to the Opera*, the first collaboration with Lyric in 2013. He's made music and sound for a wide variety of plays, short films, pilots, web series, and documentaries. His production credits include a bloated, over-indulgent rap album by T.J. Miller for Comedy Central Records.



**RANDALL HARR** (*Dirk*) has been working with The Second City as an actor, writer, and communications facilitator since 2003. He also spent two years in Amsterdam performing with the comedy theater Boom Chicago! Some of Randall's Second City credits include *Who's yer Baghdadi?* and *No Shirt, No Shoes, No WMDs* (Second City Cleveland), *American Mixed Tape* (Denver's Garner Galleria Theatre), *Sex and the Second City* (national tour), *Rod Blagojevich Superstar* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Peach, Drop, Stop and Roll* (Atlanta's Alliance Theatre), and *#DateMe* (UP Comedy Club). You can also see Randall performing with the Improvised Shakespeare Company at the iO Theater.



**SAYJAL JOSHI** (*Marguerite*) hails from North Carolina, where she earned her B. A. in theater from UNC Greensboro and cofounded Greensboro's first improv comedy club, The Idiot Box. For 15 years she has been writing, performing, and teaching theater, sketch, improv, video, guitar comedy, and stand-up all over the universe. Credits include The Kennedy Center, The Goodman, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Zanie's Comedy Club, The Laugh Factory, The Second City Touring Company, The Annoyance Theatre, iO Theater, ComedySportz, Laugh Out Loud Theater, and the critically acclaimed Asian-American sketch ensemble, Stir-Friday Night!



**TIM RYDER** (*Fred Wagner*) was previously seen in *Apes of Wrath* and *Soul Brother, Where Art Thou?* on The Second City e.t.c. Stage. An alumnus of The Second City Touring Company, he has performed in *The Second City Guide to the Opera* at Lyric, *The Second City Improv All-Stars*, *Baby Wants Candy*, *The Beatbox*, and in shows at iO Chicago (The Improvised Shakespeare Company, *Chaos Theory*, *The Deltones*) and ComedySportz. You might have seen him in videos for *The Onion*, the webseries *Game Bros*, or on *Chicago Fire* and *Sirens*. He also voices the Elvish archer DQ in the popular podcast *Hello From the Magic Tavern*.



**ALICE STANLEY JR.** (*Karen*) is a proud South Side native. Her plays have been performed in eight states and counting – including with Alaska’s Last Frontier Theatre Conference and at The Goodman as a winner of Chicago Dramatists’ New Play Bake-Off. Previous comedy credits include the Chicago Funny Women’s Fest, Chicago Sketchfest, CHIMIF, ImprovAcadia, iO Theater, and Second City Boat Co.



**TRAVIS TURNER** (*Gunther*) returns to The Second City, having previously appeared in revues at Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, La Jolla Playhouse, and the Hubbard Street Dance collaboration, *The Art of Falling*. He also understudied the role of Puck in Lyric’s 2010 production of Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Other recent Chicago credits include *The Flick* at Steppenwolf Theatre and *Thaddeus and Slocum* at Lookingglass Theatre.



**JONAH D. WINSTON** (*Morgan*) made his Lyric debut last season as the Maître D’/The Merry Widow. The Indianapolis native recently appeared as Judge Luca Van Deelsteldonk/Leo Fall’s *The Girl on the Train* with Chicago Folks Operetta. He has performed with numerous theater companies in the Indianapolis area, including the Sapphire Theatre Company (*Lysistrata*), the Indiana Repertory Theatre (*Wild Horses*), and the Beef and Boards Dinner Theatre (*Oklahoma!, Camelot, A Christmas Carol*). Among his numerous Chicago credits is Antonio/*Twelfth Night* (First Folio Theatre). He will appear in the Goodman Theatre’s production of *A Christmas Carol* this winter. Jonah is a graduate of Flinders University Drama and Film Center in Adelaide, South Australia, and Indiana’s Butler University.



**TIM SNIFFEN** (*Writer*) has worked with The Second City since 2006, traveling with The Second City Touring Company; co-writing *The Second City Guide To The Opera* in collaboration with Lyric; co-writing *Realish Housewives: A Parody*, which recently toured the U.S.; and writing *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf*, which premiered at Writers Theatre in Glencoe, Illinois, earlier this year. Find him on Twitter at @MisterSniffen. Barrels of love to his husband, John, who graciously endured many months of an apartment filled with the sounds of Wagner.



**ANNELIESE TOFT** (*Director*) is the director of The Second City’s *Fast, Loud, and Funny* (currently running in the Up Comedy Club) and often directs for The Second City aboard Norwegian Cruise Line. She also directs sketch comedy in venues all over Chicago including the Annoyance Theatre, Theater Wit, Stage 773, The Public House Theatre, and iO Theater. Anneliese has also directed dozens of plays, including the critically-acclaimed world premiere of *Tammy: a Coming of Age Story About a Girl Who is Part T-Rex* (now published by Playscripts, Inc).



**HEATHER SPARLING** (*Lighting Designer*), is in her fourth season as assistant lighting designer for Lyric Opera of Chicago. Before Lyric, she was lighting supervisor at Florida Grand Opera. Heather has collaborated with several Chicago theater companies including The New Colony, First Floor Theater, Solo Chicago, and Greenhouse Theater. Most recently she had the pleasure of lighting “The Fly Honey Show” with The Inconvenience. Heather also lights the annual “Labapalooza” puppetry festival at St. Ann’s Warehouse in New York. She is a proud alumna of Boston University.



**STUART CARDEN** (*Dramaturg*) is a Chicago-based director specializing in new plays, ensemble generated projects and music driven theater. Most recently with writer Tim Sniffen he helped develop and co-directed the world premiere of *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf* at Writers Theatre. Recent projects featuring music include: *The Old Man and The Old Moon* by PigPen Theatre Co. (New Victory Theatre, ArtsEmerson, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Writers Theatre); the world premiere of *Frederick: The Musical* based on Leo

Lionni's beloved children's book and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, based on Kate DiCamillo's young-adult novel (Chicago Children's Theatre). In December at Writers Theatre he co-directs the world premiere of PigPen Theatre Co.'s folk tale with music, *The Hunter and the Bear*.

**PEGGY STENGER** (*Stage Manager*) is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. The 2016-17 season is her fourteenth as a stage manager and assistant stage manager at Lyric Opera. Prior to relocating to Chicago, she was a stage manager for numerous highly regarded American companies, including Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Anchorage Opera. She was also production stage manager for Greater Miami (now Florida Grand) Opera, The Dallas Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

**MEGAN WHEELER** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) was production administrator at Ravinia for the past three seasons, having begun at the festival as a production assistant in 2012. She has served in the same capacity at the Bank of America Theatre for *Gotta Dance* and for the Ryder Cup. Megan has also worked in production management at the Goodman Theatre, as an assistant stage manager at the Next Theatre Company, and in event coordination with Development Specialists, Inc. She is an alumna of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

**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 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. Visit [www.lyricopera.org](http://www.lyricopera.org) for more information.



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](http://lyricopera.org/lyricunlimited).



Second City Theatricals produces an eclectic array of entertainment in venues worldwide. Recent productions include The Second City's *Almost Accurate Guide to America*, a customized show for The Kennedy Center; *The Art of Falling*, a critically acclaimed collaboration with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (Ahmanson Theater, Los Angeles); *Let Them Eat Chaos* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre); *#DateMe*, an original comedy in partnership with OK Cupid; *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf* with Writers Theatre; and *Unelectable You*, a political show in partnership with SLATE Magazine. The Second City Theatricals is the exclusive provider of sketch and improv comedy for Norwegian Cruise Line.

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