

A wide-angle photograph of the interior of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Orchestra Hall. The view is from the side of the auditorium, looking towards the stage. The seats are upholstered in red velvet and are arranged in a semi-circular pattern. The walls are ornate, featuring gold leaf decorations, murals, and large red curtains. The ceiling is also highly decorated with gold leaf and intricate patterns. The lighting is warm and focused on the stage area.

Lyric

OPERA OF
CHICAGO

2020 | 21 IMPACT REPORT

From the Chair

“When the pandemic shut-down swept through Chicago...and closed the doors of theaters and concert halls alike with a ruthless if egalitarian suddenness, you could make the argument that no major Chicago cultural institution felt the blow more than the Lyric Opera of Chicago. A Wagnerian hammer-sized blow.”

These were the words of Doug George of the *Chicago Tribune* last year when Lyric was forced to cancel not just our season, but our own production of the *Ring*, opera’s most ambitious undertaking, while in final rehearsals.

In the pages of this impact report, however, you will find the miraculous story of how Lyric responded and evolved to realize the remarkable, innovative, successful undertaking that the 2020/21 Season was, against all odds. With the backdrop of a global pandemic that disrupted our entire world and held deeply felt, personal challenges for all of us, Lyric Opera of Chicago proved itself a model for opera in the 21st century: flexible, innovative, resilient, and determined to bring great performances to an audience who needed music and art in their lives more than ever.

During the 2020/21 reimagined season, Lyric invested nearly \$3 million in creative works and wide-ranging alternative programming. Our new website became our stage, and our iPhones, iPads, computers, and TV screens provided a virtual front row seat for more than 300,000 views—still growing every day. Lyric experimented, learned, and grew, becoming more nuanced in producing each exhilarating program. We commissioned and workshopped *The Factotum*, a new work referencing *The Barber of Seville* set in a South Side Chicago barbershop, and produced a full, Hollywood-style film of *Pagliacci*.

By spring, our incomparable General Director Anthony Freud figured out how to bring us safely back to live opera as we snaked through the Millennium Park Garage into a surreal world of *Twilight: Gods*, paying homage to our canceled *Ring* with an extraordinarily creative, forever memorable production, and then brought our children and grandchildren to a reimagined *Hansel and Gretel* in the forest, in our first collaboration with the Chicago Park District.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible and generous support of our donor and patron community. From the Heroes Fund, which you so generously supported as we canceled the *Ring* cycle, to the Carpe Diem Fund, which supported our alternative programming, there are not enough words to express our immense gratitude.

This year presented unprecedented and constantly-changing challenges. I have boundless admiration and gratitude for our remarkable team. I particularly want to acknowledge the sacrifices of our staff, artists, technicians and musicians, and to pay tribute to their exceptional, tireless, and passionate work. I also want to praise the Ryan Opera Center for their extraordinary efforts keeping Lyric on stage virtually throughout Chicago and the world. And finally, I want to thank the dynamic Enrique Mazzola, whose dedication and artistry infused our productions with exceptional creativity.



Sylvia Neil

SYLVIA NEIL
Chair

Lyric has returned to live performances, but the lessons learned during this unusual time continue to help us to break down barriers to participation and better serve our audience. As we enter what will doubtless be a long COVID recovery period, we thank you for being a part of this journey, and for making Lyric Opera a part of your life, in both good times and bad.

Opera forever, Lyric forever!

From the General Director

They say that necessity is the mother of invention, and never have those of us in the performing arts world needed to be more consistently inventive than we have since the spring of 2020. At Lyric, we work in an industry where we are always prepared for the unexpected – that’s the thrill of live theater. As we were forced to navigate the realities of a public health pandemic, however, we found ourselves in truly uncharted territory.

Together with the staunch support of our Board of Directors led passionately by our new Chair Sylvia Neil, we knew with certainty that having a “dark” season was not an option. We wanted to find imaginative new ways to reach our audiences, to build new audiences, and continue to produce exceptional and exciting art with a keen eye on the safety of our artists and our staff. We worked to stay in close touch with our Lyric family through frequent communications, and to make all of the digital programming that we created free and completely without barriers at a time when people needed the solace and joy of music.

As we have weathered these challenges, we’ve been deeply moved by the groundswell of kindness we’ve felt from our community. Our audience has consistently expressed gratitude for our work, concern for our wonderful artists and staff, and steadfast faith in the enduring power of the arts to lift us up, carry us through times of crisis, and bring us together.

We could not be more grateful for the extraordinary support that we’ve received during this unprecedented time. Our generous, compassionate community of donors, time after time, has committed unflinching and unwavering support to the work that we have done, whether we’ve been producing full-scale broadcast concert events for our audience and public, taking Wagner to a parking garage and Humperdinck to a public park, or ensuring that we could continue our Lyric Unlimited work through streaming past operas in Chicago Public Schools or collaborating with the Chicago Urban League for our *EmpowerYouth!* program.

While we are still in a recovery period that will continue for several seasons, the creative and imaginative energy and drive that permeated every area of our company during this past year is continuing to propel us forward with momentum as we return to live opera. We are grateful to you for being a part of our Lyric family—we are here because of you, and for you, and we could not do our work without you. Thank you.

Sincerely,




ANTHONY FREUD, OBE

*President, General Director & CEO
The Women’s Board Endowed Chair*

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LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO
FINANCIAL STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES	2021	2020
Operating Revenue		
Ticket Sales	\$ 42,375	\$ 15,483,046
Spending Draw Supporting Operations	14,408,333	16,037,524
Other Revenue	429,751	4,511,240
Total Operating Revenue	14,880,459	36,031,810
Fundraising Support, net	25,327,795	35,774,140
Total Revenue	40,208,254	71,805,950
Operating Expenses		
Artistic, Production and Promotional	29,280,987	59,811,753
Administration	6,706,465	7,297,337
Development	4,220,802	4,696,860
Total Expenses	40,208,254	71,805,950
Net Operating Income	\$ -	\$ -
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
Assets		
Total Current Assets	\$ 23,054,838	\$ 30,227,543
Long-Term Investments	227,939,616	179,197,843
Property and Equipment, net	40,646,379	37,783,075
All Other Long-Term Assets	20,278,337	22,429,889
Total Assets	\$ 311,919,170	\$ 269,638,350
Liabilities		
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 15,361,896	\$ 14,902,373
Debt Payable, net	65,293,900	65,212,171
Forgivable Paycheck Protection Program Loan	5,650,445	-
All Other Long-Term Liabilities	11,229,808	13,958,482
Total Liabilities	97,536,049	94,073,026
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	112,363,494	87,066,225
With Donor Restrictions	102,019,627	88,499,099
Total Net Assets	214,383,121	175,565,324
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 311,919,170	\$ 269,638,350

The full report can be found at: lyricopera.org/financialstatements

The 2020/21 Season: On demand, and in demand

When the reality of COVID-19 forced the cancellation of the planned, live 2020/21 Season, Lyric's leadership created a bold new vision for a reimagined season of digital offerings.

With flexible and responsive programming moves, the company—with the cooperation of artists and with a sharp eye on safety—was ready to broadcast its first virtual concert by July 2020. *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The*

Next Chapter, Celebrating the Depth and Breadth of Black Artistry was a sequel to a successful in-person event that had been held at Lyric Opera House the previous season. Working closely with the celebrated tenor Lawrence Brownlee, a favorite at Lyric, the company curated a concert of music composed and performed by Black artists, all current or former Ryan Opera Center members. Since its premiere, the concert has received more than 20,000 views.



The finale of the *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The Next Chapter* concert broadcast event, featuring (l-r, top to bottom) Leroy Davis, J'Nai Bridges, Martin Luther Clark, Whitney Morrison, Lawrence Brownlee, Lunga Eric Hallam, Will Liverman, and Craig Terry, piano.



Tenor Lawrence Brownlee performs with Craig Terry.

Lyric Opera of Chicago

The special projects and innovations during this reimagined season would not have been possible without the generosity of all our donors. Lyric would like to extend a special thank you to the following patrons who enthusiastically supported our creativity.

The entire reimagined season was supported by **Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel, Patricia A. Kenney & Gregory J. O'Leary, Susan & Robert Morrison, an Anonymous Donor, and Virginia Tobiason.**

Breaking Down the Score: Attila with Maestro Enrique Mazzola was generously made possible by **NIB Foundation and Julie & Roger Baskes.**

Master Classes with Sir Andrew Davis were generously made possible by an **Anonymous Donor** and the **Eisen Family Foundation.**

Attila Highlights in Concert: Explore More with Enrique Mazzola was generously made possible by the **NIB Foundation and Julie & Roger Baskes.**

Creating The Factotum was generously made possible by Lead Sponsor **Roberta L. & Robert J. Washlow** with additional support from the **Eisen Family Foundation** and **Laurel Appell Lipkin.**

Twilight: Gods was generously made possible by **Julie & Roger Baskes, Ethel & William Gofen, and Donald & Anne Edwards.** Production space generously provided by Millennium Garages - Millennium Lakeside Parking Garage.

Sole e Amore was generously presented by **Lyric's Guild Board of Directors** in cooperation with an **Anonymous Donor, Mr. & Mrs. Robert S. & Sandra Marjan, Busey Bank, Stephen Dunbar, David Marshall & Dr. Maija Freimans, Ilene Simmons, William Blair,** along with Guild Board member **Marc Lacher,** and **Ropes & Gray LLP,** along with Partner and Guild Board member **Timothy Farrell.** Additional support for *Sole e Amore* is provided by the **Eisen Family Foundation.**

The Great Verdi Chorus Showdown was generously made possible by **Mary Patricia Gannon.**

Celebrating Sir Andrew Davis, from Mozart to Stravinsky was generously made possible by **Randy L. & Melvin R. Berlin, Allan & Elaine Muchin, Donna Van Eekeren, President & CEO of Springboard Arts Chicago, Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel, Richard O. Ryan,** and the **Rhoda & Henry Frank Family Foundation.**

The New Classics: Songs from the New Golden Age of Musical Theater was generously made possible by **Shure Incorporated, Crowe LLP,** and **The Parr Family.**

Major support for Lyric family programming and *Hansel and Gretel in the Park* was provided by **Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performances Fund.**

Lyric Audio Streaming was made possible through a generous gift from **Robert F. Finke in Memory of Carol Keenan.**



For the Love of Lyric performance by Renée Fleming with Robert Ainsley on the piano.

Scott Suchman



For the Love of Lyric performance by Ailyn Pérez with Doug Peck on the piano.

Todd Rosenberg



For the Love of Lyric performance by Heather Headley.

Todd Rosenberg



For the Love of Lyric performance by Soloman Howard with Doug Peck on the piano.

Todd Rosenberg

Assembling the first concert would provide a blueprint of sorts—to navigating a world of programming choices and digital music rights; to finding sets, lighting, and costumes that looked good on screen; and to understanding all of the other choices that come with filming and broadcasting a digital performance, such as release timing and platform, closed captioning, and digital program books, among other issues.

Fall of 2020 saw Lyric's traditional annual gala go exclusively online with *For the Love of Lyric*, a concert filmed on the stage of the opera house and in locations around the world, featuring opera stars Renée Fleming, J'Nai Bridges, Ailyn Pérez, and Soloman Howard, and Broadway star Heather Headley. Loyal Lyric supporters enjoyed the concert virtually, while Zoom provided an opportunity for donors to connect with the singers and

each other before the performance. Beyond its fundraising component, the concert was made available to the public, garnering nearly 20,000 views.

One of the benefits of Lyric's digital programming has been an opportunity to highlight the company's formidable artistic forces. Many of the programs featured members of Lyric's Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, providing these emerging artists with invaluable opportunities to showcase their talents and hone their skills for the digital demands of today's art form. Programs like *Pasión Latina* in December 2020 offered the opportunity for current and past Ryan Opera Center members to work alongside star and host Ana María Martínez in an intimate setting that showcased music of the Spanish-speaking world.



Denis Vélez and Ana María Martínez perform in *Pasión Latina* with Craig Terry at the piano.

Kyle Tubacker



David Portillo performs in *Pasión Latina*.

Kyle Tubacker



Soprano Ana María Martínez (above) starred in *Pasión Latina*, a celebration of music from the Spanish-speaking world, with Ryan Opera Center Music Director Craig Terry (below) accompanying and helping to curate the concert.

Enrique Mazzola conducts *The Great Verdi Chorus Showdown* which was shown on Lyric's YouTube and Facebook channels.



Lyric Music Director Designate Enrique Mazzola conceived a number of exciting programs that showcased the esteemed Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus. The Orchestra took center stage in a serialized program of Rossini string sonatas, *The Sonata Sessions*, while the Chorus starred in *The Great Verdi Chorus Showdown*, a popular digital series featuring some of Verdi's greatest choruses. (Spoiler alert—audiences voted “Va, pensiero” from *Nabucco* as “The Greatest”.) Maestro Mazzola even took to the piano himself in the Ryan Opera Center showcase *Sole e Amore*, which featured lesser-known musical gems by beloved Italian opera composers.



Sole e Amore performances by Denis Véléz (above) and Lunga Eric Hallam (right) with Enrique Mazzola at the piano.





Kathleen Felty (left) and Ricardo José Rivera perform with Enrique Mazzola at the piano for *Sole e Amore*.



Sir Andrew Davis leads a master class.



Enrique Mazzola gave audiences a deep dive into *Attila* with his engaging video series *Breaking Down the Score*.



Enrique Mazzola with members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra as they record Rossini's sonatas for *The Sonata Sessions* onstage at the Lyric Opera House.



Enrique Mazzola with pianists William C. Billingham and Jerad Mosbey as they record *Attila Highlights in Concert: Explore More with Enrique Mazzola*.

Kyle Flubacker



Kyle Flubacker



Kyle Flubacker



Kyle Flubacker

Tamara Wilson, Quinn Kelsey and Christian Van Horn perform in *Attila Highlights in Concert*.

Lyric's 2020/21 Season was to include *Attila*, a continuation of the company's series of early operas by Giuseppe Verdi. Rather than abandon the title altogether, Lyric presented a digital recital of excerpts from the opera, conducted by Maestro Mazzola and featuring four extraordinary American singers: Tamara Wilson and three alumni of the Ryan Opera Center—Matthew Polenzani, Christian Van Horn, and Quinn

Kelsey—accompanied by pianists William C. Billingham and Jerad Mosbey. Mazzola also wrote, produced, shot, and edited an online original series, *Breaking Down the Score: Attila with Maestro Enrique Mazzola*, in which he walked audiences through an entertaining and enlightening look at the 12 main “chapters” of *Attila*, all from the unique perspective of the conductor.



With every program that came together, Lyric's production team had to spring into action to design a unique look for our stage, from *Celebrating Sir Andrew Davis: From Mozart to Stravinsky*, which celebrated the final year of Lyric's beloved and long-tenured music director with selections from *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Rake's Progress*, to *The New Classics*, a Broadway song extravaganza that took audiences backstage to an intimate cabaret space. Lyric's talented production team made every production look great for the cameras.



Clockwise from upper left: Nikki Renée Daniels with David Chase at the piano, Gavin Creel, and Norm Lewis perform in *The New Classics: Songs from the New Golden Age of Musical Theater*. Left: Matthew Polenzani and Janai Brugger perform with Sir Andrew Davis and members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra while recording *Celebrating Sir Andrew Davis: From Mozart to Stravinsky*.



Ailyn Pérez and
Russell Thomas
in Lyric's *Pagliacci* film.

Kyle Flinnaker

Just as plans for a return to live grand opera were being finalized, the company marshaled its considerable musical forces for a capstone to its all-digital season: an innovative production of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, filmed live in the Lyric Opera House. Music Director Enrique Mazzola conducted a powerhouse cast including Russell Thomas, Ailyn Pérez, Lucas Meachem, Quinn Kelsey, and Eric Ferring alongside members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus. The *Pagliacci* film, like most of Lyric's filmed programs from the season, remains available for viewing by a global audience.

From *Twilight: Gods* to *Sonata Sessions*, Lyric met its audiences online with an incredible and diverse lineup of digital programming. The results speak for themselves.

Lyric's online programming created during 2020/21 has garnered more digital views than Lyric's typical total season ticket sales. Lyric drew viewers from all 50 states in the U.S. and more than 50 countries. *Creating The Factotum*, a documentary about the making of a new opera that will be produced in a future Lyric season, was particularly popular.

350,000

Total Digital Views

350,000
TOTAL VIEWS

71,070

Creating The Factotum
Documentary Views

71,070
FACTOTUM

151,008

Total number of listens of Lyric audio on Spotify and other platforms

62%

62%

of listens came from outside the U.S.



Ailyn Pérez and
Lucas Meachem
in Lyric's *Pagliacci* film.

Kyle Flinnaker



Lyric's technical team designed individual recording booths for the singers and creative team to work together safely in *The Factotum* workshop.

Lyric Opera of Chicago



Will Liverman and K. Rico, the creators of *The Factotum*, listen in on a section of their workshop.

Lyric Opera of Chicago

Among the projects that emerged front and center during this reimagined year was Lyric's commission of *The Factotum*, conceived and composed by Ryan Opera Center alumnus and star baritone Will Liverman and his friend and collaborator K. Rico. This joyful and vibrant reimagining of *The Barber of Seville* in a Black barbershop on Chicago's South Side received its first workshop at the end of 2020 and the documentary that was created from the process has garnered more than 70,000 views. Lyric committed to producing the entire work as part of a future season.

Beyond the numerous video projects that Lyric released during 2020/21, the company also released the first full-length audio streams of more than 15 of the most popular opera titles of recent seasons. The broadcasts may be streamed in their entirety from Lyric's website, as well as external platforms Soundcloud, Spotify, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, and Deezer, making the perfect soundtrack for every opera lover's day.

While everyone at Lyric has been incredibly excited about the return to live performances, the company's commitment to producing and distributing unique digital content continues. Stay tuned to learn more about how Lyric will continue to include pioneering digital programming in its vision for artistic excellence, audience building, and community outreach.

For your own look back at Lyric's digital programming that you may have missed, visit lyricopera.org/ondemand.



Ryan Opera Center Music Director Craig Terry works at the piano with K. Rico and Will Liverman while creating *The Factotum*.

Lyric Opera of Chicago

Live performances... like never before

The moment that Lyric started to envision what a newly imagined season could look like, General Director Anthony Freud reached out to celebrated director Yuval Sharon, who signed on as Lyric's creative catalyst. Given that Lyric had just suffered the heartbreaking cancellation of the *Ring* cycle, the conversation focused around how to safely conceive a *Ring*-inspired experience. Lyric Opera of Chicago and Michigan Opera Theatre, where Sharon is now Artistic Director, became co-producers of *Twilight: Gods*, a unique take on the final chapter of the *Ring*, Wagner's formidable *Götterdämmerung*.

By spring of 2021, with vaccines rolling out across the country, Lyric invited audiences to the Millennium Park Lakeside Garage for this innovative drive-through experience. Yuval Sharon wrote the new English texts, and the work featured poetic transitions written and performed by Chicago

interdisciplinary artist Avery R. Young. The starry cast had many Lyric favorites, including Christine Goerke as Brünnhilde. A film of the experiential production was released to reach audiences beyond the four sold-out performance dates.

In June 2021, Lyric partnered with the Chicago Park District for a delightful outdoor production of Humperdinck's classic *Hansel and Gretel*, which performed to sold-out audiences at North Park Village Nature Center. As music lovers wandered through the distinct scenes of the opera, each set up in a different, enchanting location within the nature center, a small chamber ensemble from the Lyric Opera Orchestra and members of the Lyric Opera Chorus performed the beloved story, with eye-popping and imaginative sets. This performance was also captured on video and shared with school audiences through Lyric Unlimited.



Soprano Christine Goerke in Lyric's production of *Twilight: Gods*, performed in Chicago's Millennium Park Lakeside Garage.

Right: Avery Young in Lyric Opera's production of *Twilight: Gods*.

Below left: Desirée Hassler (left, Gretel) and Corinne Wallace-Crane (right, Hansel) in Lyric Opera's production of *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*.

Below right: The cast of *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*.



Kyle Enbuecker



Robert Kusel



Robert Kusel



Robert Kusel

Hoss Brock as the Witch in Lyric's *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*, performed at North Park Village Nature Center.

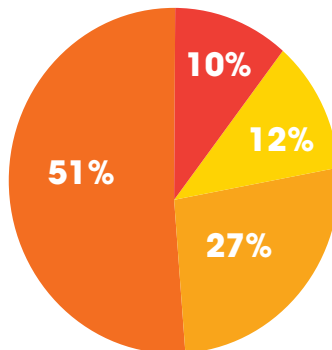
Lyric Unlimited

Lyric Unlimited is the company's arts education and community engagement division. Through a continuum of programming that engages participants of all ages and backgrounds, Lyric Unlimited provides exceptional and enriching arts education and engagement opportunities to children, families, and lifelong learners and is a fundamental part of Lyric's mission.

In the 2020/21 Season, more than 30,500 students were reached during the school year despite the loss of in-person instruction and live performances. Lyric Unlimited tailored its programming in dialogue with teachers and stakeholders to best address the needs of the community during the pandemic, providing classroom resources and performing arts access to students.

Schools that streamed our productions

- 51%** Chicago Public Schools
- 27%** Public Suburban Schools
- 12%** Home Schooled
- 10%** Private Schools



"I like that they teach us how to act and get into character and how they taught us how to be very brave. I just love it so much."

5th grader, Sawyer Elementary School



Lyric teaching artist Elise LaBarge teaches "pass the clap" during a residency at Coleman School in Chicago that took place prior to the pandemic.

CPS teaching partners attending a day-long professional development workshop in Fall 2019.



EmpowerYouth! dance mentor Tanji Harper teaches a dance combination to the participants.



Highlights of last season's programming included:

- **Opera Streaming for Students:** Chicago-area schools viewed free streaming of archival recordings specifically created for children: *Earth to Kenzie*, *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina (The Past is Never Finished)*, and *Jason and the Argonauts*.
- **EmpowerYouth!** This partnership with the Chicago Urban League focused on engaging Black youth in telling personal stories through the performing arts culminated in a Zoom performance of their newly created work.
- **Youth Opera Council:** Chicagoland high school students from a broad range of backgrounds encouraged participation in the arts through student-led activities.
- **Opera Residency for Schools** (Elementary and High School): A partnership with Chicago Public Schools, Opera Residencies supported schools with limited or no arts/music programming. Lyric teaching artists engaged with students virtually, focusing on multi-disciplinary arts learning and storytelling through music at the elementary level and vocal instruction at the high school level.

“Students have felt the impact of remote learning. This residency program was an awesome creative break for students who were in-person as well as remote. The students were excited to have a break from the monotony of remote learning and this gave them time to explore their own creativity as an artist and as a public speaker. Students understood the importance of practicing in order to prepare for their final production. The students have been so happy which is important for their social and emotional well being. They did NOT want this program to end.”

Teacher comment about the Opera Residency for Schools program



Kyle Flubacker



EmpowerYouth! participants share ideas during the journaling portion of the session.

Kyle Flubacker



Renée Fleming in Lyric Opera's *For the Love of Lyric* gala performance.

Women's Board

For The Love of Lyric

In the fall of 2019, after 65 years, Lyric celebrated the end of an era with our final Opera Ball at the Hilton. When the pandemic waylaid our plans to move this special evening into the opera house, the Women's Board imaginatively pivoted to create an intimate and elegant at-home evening called *For the Love of Lyric*. The evening featured a beautiful concert led by the incomparable Renée Fleming and performed by a variety of opera and musical theater stars from Chicago. Those attending the gala virtually had the opportunity for dinner and wine to be delivered directly to their homes to enjoy the virtual concert. Chair Mimi Mitchell, with support from past president Nancy Searle, current president Caroline Huebner, and the entire Women's Board created an incredibly memorable evening that was also the most financially successful opening night gala in Lyric's history, raising \$1.2 million. Following the exclusive sponsor viewing of the concert, *For the Love of Lyric* was then shared in a free public broadcast, thanks to the support of the event sponsors. Nearly 20,000 people enjoyed the concert online, which also led to an additional \$50,000 generously donated by those who enjoyed the free concert.



Heather Headley with Doug Peck at the piano in Lyric Opera's *For the Love of Lyric* gala performance.

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Passing the baton: Celebrating Sir Andrew Davis

The 2020/21 Season was Sir Andrew Davis's final season as Music Director for Lyric Opera of Chicago. It was meant to be a tour-de-force capstone of his distinguished, 21-year tenure, finishing the previous season with a much-anticipated *Ring* cycle, then leading three unique and contrasting works at the podium during 2020/21. The exciting American premiere of George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence* was the first of the titles, followed in the spring by a collaboration with director Barbara Gaines for *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the return of *The Rake's Progress*—one of Sir Andrew's favorite pieces—after more than a quarter-century. A joyous concert performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus, with an opening choral piece commissioned from Sir Andrew's son and gifted composer Ed Frazier Davis, would have marked the end of the season. The Beethoven concert, dedicated to the memory of Lady Gianna Rolandi Davis, has now been rescheduled for April 1, 2022.

As a result of the pandemic, Lyric audiences missed the opportunity to enjoy a season that showcased Sir Andrew's astounding versatility. Instead, as with all things during 2020/21, new creative programs were born for a digital world, and Sir Andrew—along with Lyric's artists and behind-the-scenes forces—got to work.

In fall of 2020, Sir Andrew produced a series of inspiring master classes coaching members of The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center on selections from *The Marriage of Figaro*, sharing artistic insights on the piece that was his Lyric Opera debut in 1987. In spring of 2021, he curated and presented a thrilling, full-scale concert broadcast from the stage of the Lyric Opera House. *Celebrating Sir Andrew Davis: From Mozart to Stravinsky* featured the Lyric Opera Orchestra, and star soloists Janai Brugger, Amanda Majeski, Kayleigh Decker, Matthew Polenzani, and Kyle Ketelsen.



Lyric Opera of Chicago owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Sir Andrew Davis for his leadership and his artistry. Throughout his long tenure—which saw him conduct an astounding 700 performances of 61 operas by 21 composers—Sir Andrew has been an incredible asset and advocate. His consummate musicianship and esteemed relationships with the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus and the foremost artists of our time cannot be overstated—just as his easy laugh, his fascinating tales from the podium, and the warmth that has always made Lyric feel like a family to both company and visiting artists alike have been hallmarks of his time here.

Together, we celebrate Lyric's 2020/21 Season as Sir Andrew's final season as music director and look forward to welcoming him back to the podium for years to come.

As Sir Andrew's tenure concluded, Lyric audiences welcomed Enrique Mazzola as only the third person in Lyric's 67-year history to serve as music director. The Spanish-born, Italian-trained conductor has already won the hearts of Chicagoans with his previous performances at Lyric, as he ushers in a new era for the company.

Anthony Freud: 10 years at the helm

Lyric's reimagined 2020/21 Season was Anthony Freud's 10th as general director. His first decade has seen exciting evolution and advancement for the company, guided by Anthony's vision for our future.

With the collaboration of Sir Andrew Davis and Renée Fleming, Anthony has produced one enormously successful season after another, bringing audiences the greatest artists and creative teams from the international operatic scene while expanding and enhancing what Lyric Opera of Chicago means to our community and to the world.

As we reflect on Anthony's impact on our company, it's easy to see the meaningful growth at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

- Countless new and new-to-Chicago productions from the world's most celebrated directors, including Sir David McVicar's *Rusalka*, *Elektra*, and *Wozzeck*, Tim Albery's *Les Troyens*, Robert Falls's *Don Giovanni*, Barbara Gaines's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Richard Jones's *Ariodante* and *The Queen of Spades*, Michael Grandage's *Madama Butterfly*, Susan Stroman's *The Merry Widow*, Arin Arbus's *La traviata*, John Caird's *Parsifal*, Neil Armfield's *The Magic Flute*, Rob Ashford's *The Barber of Seville*, and Sir David Pountney's epic *Ring* cycle, with the first three operas realized and receiving rave reviews.
- Innovative and important premieres, from the world premiere of Lopez's *Bel Canto* to the company premiere of Weinberg's *The Passenger*, and so many more.
- The addition of an annual musical theater work on a grand, Lyric scale. The musicals have sold nearly a half-million tickets and brought countless new audiences to the Lyric Opera House.
- The creation of Lyric Unlimited, the company's hub for learning and creative engagement, which has opened new entry points for those interested in opera, resulted in many partnerships with other cultural, educational and community organizations throughout the city, and served hundreds of thousands of students in Chicago's public schools and neighborhoods.
- Two compelling mariachi operas: *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, and *El Pasado Nunca se Termina*, a Lyric world premiere.
- Exciting collaborative programs like *EmpowerYouth!* with the Chicago Urban League, and *Chicago Voices*, a series of programs celebrating the many musical genres alive in our great city.

- A strong and thriving partnership with The Joffrey Ballet, now a resident company at the Lyric Opera House.
- The reimagined 2020/21 Season, with its vibrant digital concerts, the innovative *Twilight: Gods* production that took opera to a parking garage, and *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*.
- Developed a wide-ranging IDEA (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Access) strategy, working to embed the principles of IDEA into every aspect of our operation.

It has been a truly thrilling and inspiring time for all who love this great company, and we find ourselves with a Lyric Opera of Chicago that is stronger, fitter-for-purpose, and poised to thrive in the years ahead. Congratulations, Anthony - and we join you in toasting a bright future for Lyric Opera of Chicago!



Ryan Opera Center

The 2020/21 Ensemble of The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center played an indispensable role in Lyric's reimagined season. While participating in a wide range of projects, the Ensemble continued to receive specialized and unique training and performance opportunities as well as national visibility central to the program, giving the emerging artists the experience and preparation needed to launch international careers in an increasingly demanding field. The exceptional work of the Ryan Opera Center Ensemble in the 2020/21 Season was crucial in engaging both loyal patrons and new audiences.

Ensemble artists Katherine Beck (mezzo-soprano), Martin Luther Clark (tenor), Leroy Davis (baritone), Katherine DeYoung (mezzo-soprano), Mathilda Edge (soprano), Kathleen Felty (mezzo-soprano), Lunga Eric Hallam (tenor), Maria Novella Malfatti (soprano), Anthony Reed (bass), Chris Reynolds (piano), Ricardo José Rivera (baritone), Denis Vélez (soprano), and David Weigel (bass-baritone) provided outstanding performances in virtual concerts and other productions such as:

- **Lawrence Brownlee & Friends: The Next Chapter:** A concert celebrating the depth and breadth of Black artistry
- **Pasión Latina:** A concert celebrating the music of the Spanish-speaking world with Ana María Martínez
- **Master Classes with Sir Andrew Davis:** A five-part series of one-on-one master classes featuring members of the Ensemble working with Sir Andrew Davis on Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*
- **The Ryan Opera Center At Work:** A series of moving arias and fun classics shared on social media and in emails to Lyric's patrons, lifting spirits and reminding audiences that music was far from gone
- **Sole e Amore (Sun and Love):** A virtual concert of lesser-known musical gems by beloved Italian opera composers hosted and accompanied by Enrique Mazzola
- **Creating The Factotum:** A documentary following the development of a new opera that transcends the limits of traditional repertoire



**The 2020/21
Ryan Opera Center
Ensemble**

Sopranos
Mathilda Edge
Maria Novella Malfatti
Denis Vélez

Mezzo-sopranos
Katherine Beck
Katherine DeYoung
Kathleen Felty

Tenors
Martin Luther Clark
Lunga Eric Hallam

Baritones
Leroy Davis
Ricardo José Rivera

Bass-baritone
David Weigel

Bass
Anthony Reed

Pianist
Chris Reynolds



Kyle Fluhacker



Kyle Fluhacker

Ryan Opera Center Ensemble members were busy during the 2020/21 Season bringing live and virtual performances to Lyric's audiences.

Clockwise from top left:

Katherine DeYoung and Anthony Reed perform together in *Rising Stars in Concert*; tenor Martin Luther Clark performs in *Magical Music Around the World*, the Ryan Opera Center virtual gala; mezzo-soprano Kathleen Felty (pictured here), along with soprano Maria Novella Malfatti and mezzo-soprano Katherine Beck sang the roles of the Rhinemaidens in *Twilight: Gods*; David Weigel sings in *Sole e Amore*; soprano Maria Novella Malfatti is coached by Music Director Sir Andrew Davis on an aria from *The Marriage of Figaro* for the master class series, along with other members of the Ensemble, which was released for broadcast.

- **Magical Music Around the World:**

A virtual gala program of popular and operatic music performed by Ensemble artists, also featuring alumni from around the world sharing how they have benefited from the world-class training received at the Ryan Opera Center

- **Twilight: Gods:** Members of the Ryan Opera Center sang key roles in this sold-out reimagining of the final chapter of Wagner's *Ring* cycle that took place in the Millennium Park Lakeside Garage.

- **Rising Stars in Concert:** An annual showcase celebrating the artistic growth and achievement of each Ryan Opera Center artist over the last year with accompaniment by a chamber ensemble of Lyric Opera Orchestra members

The generosity of every single Ryan Opera Center supporter ensures a bright future for opera—at Lyric and around the world.



Kyle Fluhacker



Kyle Fluhacker



Kyle Fluhacker

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Inclusion. Diversity. Equity. Access.

IDEA encompasses these four key elements which are at the center of reflection and work that we've been doing at Lyric Opera of Chicago. We draw strength from diversity, and we stand against racism. The company exists to connect people to art, music, storytelling, and the human voice, and to reflect the Chicago community that we serve. We believe that art has the power to speak truths and unite us all. Yet we also recognize that our company has significant and serious work to do if we are to become the fully inclusive organization that we aspire to be.

Lyric has established four core areas that represent and describe our work in IDEA. These core areas, or pillars, are: Leadership, Artistic, Culture, and Communication & Engagement.

These four pillars frame our work, which is being undertaken at every level of our organization. This includes:

- Lyric's Executive Leadership Team, which owns and leads the company's IDEA priorities, with the participation of an external consultant.
- A cross-departmental, volunteer IDEA working group composed of members of the administrative staff, the company's backstage and creative forces, and artists.
- A Board of Directors IDEA steering committee

Lyric Opera of Chicago is fully engaged and we have pledged to share evidence of our ongoing commitment to moving IDEA principles forward throughout our organization.

We publish quarterly reports to share our progress and illustrate change, over time, in our commitment to IDEA. We invite you to learn more by visiting: lyricopera.org/IDEA.

Lyric Opera of Chicago welcomes all...

abilities
ages
appearances
countries of origin
cultures
gender identities
languages
races and ethnicities
religions
sexual orientations

Lyric is for everyone.
Welcome.

Lyric

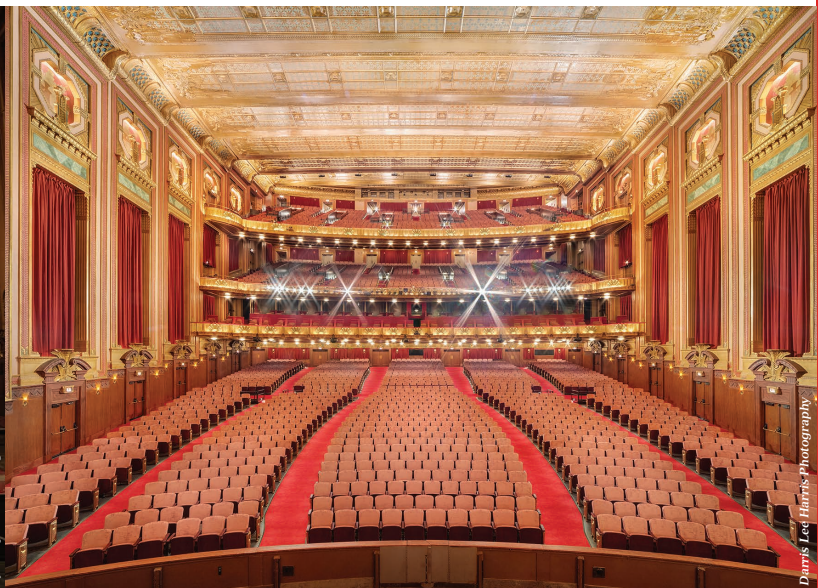
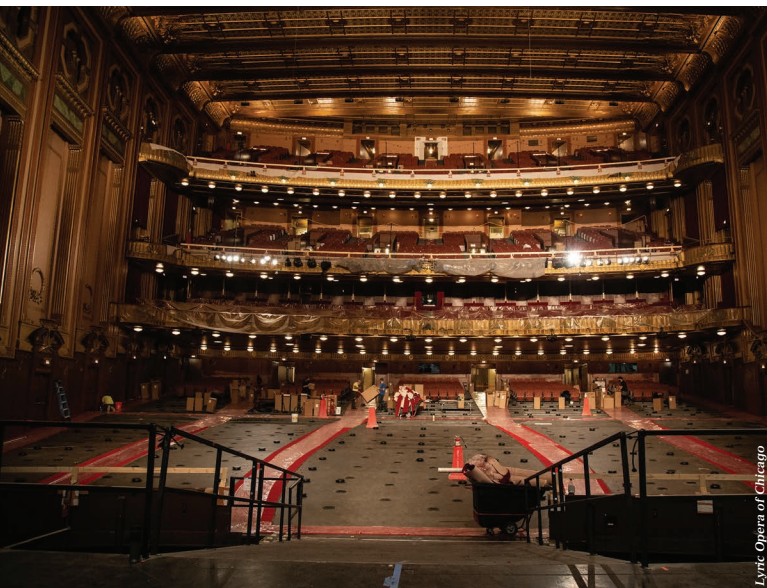
A more accessible and comfortable Lyric Opera House

Though nobody wished for a season without live performances, there was much work to be done at the Lyric Opera House during the 2020/21 Season, and under the strictest of health and safety protocols, it soldiered on during the pandemic. Thanks to a generous gift from an Anonymous Donor in support of Lyric's Patron Accessibility Initiative, brand new seats were installed in the beautiful Ardis Krainik Theatre renovation in 2020.

The configuration of the theater is now more accessible than ever before. Wider aisles on the Main Floor allow more room for all patrons to move around the house and facilitate improved entrance and egress, and an increased number of wheelchair accessible seats are featured, with the ability to remove additional seats to provide more wheelchair seating as needed.

Patrons are enjoying the new, state-of the art seats throughout every level of the house, boasting pleasing and more comfortable ergonomic design and soft-close technology. Main Floor seating is now staggered and offset for better views that parallel the graduated views offered on upper floors.

Lyric Opera of Chicago is incredibly grateful to our Anonymous Donor who made this project possible, increasing the accessibility of our theater so that one of our city's most beautiful landmarks can also be a welcoming and inviting space for Chicago's faithful audiences.





Lyric Opera of Chicago

Stewarding the Lyric Opera House

In addition to the significant work around the seating project, the Lyric Opera House received additional essential upgrades during the 2020/21 Season:

- Installation of touchless fixtures in every restroom, including faucets, toilets, and paper towel dispensers.
- Hand sanitizing stations installed throughout the building.
- HVAC upgrades, complete with installation of new air filters to increase fresh air exchange. Lyric Opera's HVAC systems now exceed CDC recommendations.
- Hospital-grade cleaning practices, including sanitizing backpacks used to clean the seats and carpet after every show.
- Refurbished front of house elevators, replacing hardware that had been created when the opera house was built in 1929.
- Renovation of the back-of-house passenger and freight elevators used daily by Lyric artists and creative teams.
- Renovation of the architectural vaults below the sidewalk level and waterproofing of sidewalks to help protect the vaults in the future.

Here's to a Lyric Opera House that supports the future of live opera, an art form that is just as timeless as the building in which it lives.



Dan Lee Harris Photography



Dan Lee Harris Photography

Gift planning at Lyric

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