

A photograph of Sir Andrew Davis, a man with a grey beard, wearing a black tuxedo and a white bow tie. He is standing behind a dark podium, gesturing with his right hand raised and his left hand partially visible. The background is a blurred view of an opera house with ornate architecture and warm lighting.

Lyric

Sir Andrew Davis conducts Beethoven 9

Featuring the Lyric Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

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Lyric



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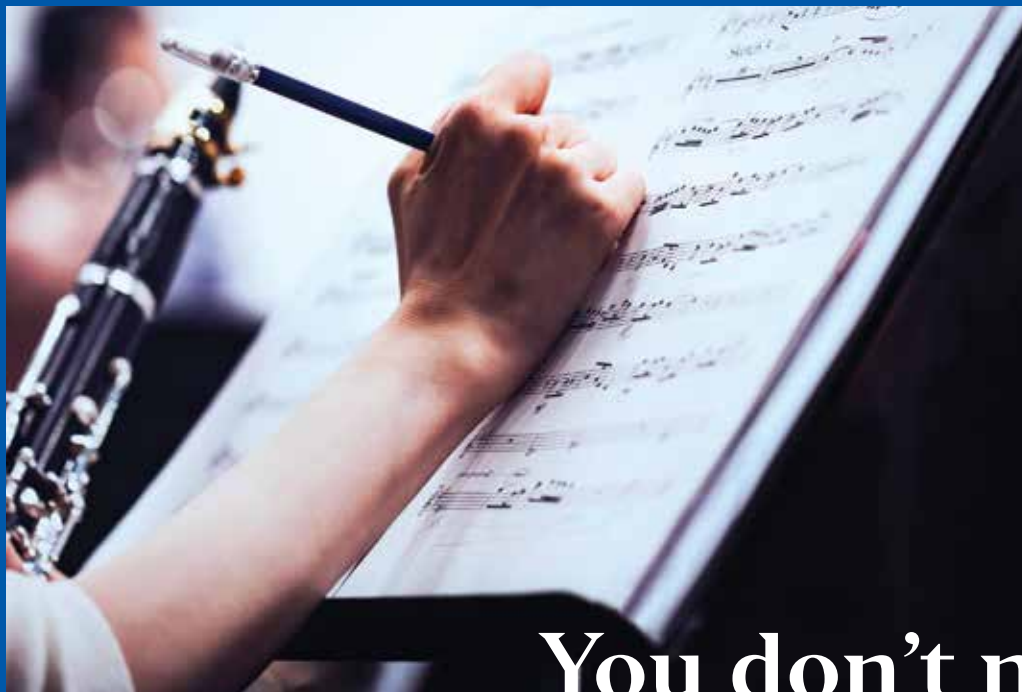
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Lyric

Sir Andrew Davis conducts Beethoven 9

An evening dedicated to the memory of Lady Gianna Rolandi Davis

Program

Friday, April 1, 2022, 7 p.m.

Sir Andrew Davis, *Conductor*

Mathilda Edge, *Soprano*

Kathleen Felty, *Mezzo-Soprano*

Matthew Polenzani, *Tenor*

Eric Owens, *Bass-Baritone*

Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Michael Black, *Chorus Master*

PROGRAM

Ed Frazier Davis
(b. 1989)

A Seed of Joy (World Premiere)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral"

I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

II. Molto vivace

III. Adagio molto e cantabile

IV. Finale

APPROXIMATE TIMING

90 minutes
with no Intermission

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Katrina Bachus
Sandra Zamora

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Lyric

Artist profiles



SIR ANDREW DAVIS | CONDUCTOR

Sir Andrew Davis, one of the world's most acclaimed conductors, served as music director of Lyric Opera of Chicago from 2000 through the 2020/21 Season. Since his debut engagement at Lyric in the 1987/88 Season, he has conducted nearly 700 opera performances here, plus numerous special concerts, including the majority of Lyric's free concerts in Millennium Park. The vast repertoire he has led at Lyric encompasses operas by Berg, Berlioz, Bizet, Britten, Dvořák, Gilbert and Sullivan, Gounod, Janáček, Lehár, López, Massenet, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Poulenc, Puccini, Rossini, Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Wagner, and Weinberg. Sir Andrew will return to Lyric in the 2022/23 season for a revival of the company's iconic production of Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. The special performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 marks the first time the work has been performed on the Lyric stage.

During the 2019/20 Season, Sir Andrew conducted *The Barber of Seville* and *The Queen of Spades* at Lyric. Other recent highlights included appearances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (numerous works including most prominently Massenet's *Thaïs*), Washington's National Symphony Orchestra (Handel's *Messiah* in Sir Andrew's own orchestration), and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Tippett and Beethoven). Sir Andrew returns to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra this spring for the world premiere of Emilie LeBel's *the sediments* and works of Strauss and Beethoven.

From 2013 to 2019 Maestro Davis served as principal conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Since December 2019 he has continued his artistic role there as conductor laureate. Among his major achievements in the 2018/19 Season were performances of *Idomeneo*, a new production of *Siegfried*, and the company premiere of *Cendrillon* at Lyric; Duruflé's *Requiem* with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic; *Götterdämmerung* at the Edinburgh International Festival; and Elgar's *The Music Makers* at the BBC Proms.

Maestro Davis's career spans nearly five decades, during which he has been the artistic leader at several of the world's most distinguished opera and symphonic institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate and chief conductor, 1991-2004, the longest tenure since that of BBCSO founder Sir Adrian Boult); Glyndebourne Festival Opera (music director, 1988-2000); and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate and principal conductor, 1975-1988), where he served as interim artistic director through 2020. In addition, he holds the honorary title of conductor emeritus at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sir Andrew has led performances at many of the world's most important opera houses, among them the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, London's Royal Opera House, the Bayreuth

Festival, and the major companies of Munich, Paris, San Francisco, and Santa Fe. In addition to those ensembles, he has appeared with virtually every other internationally prominent orchestra, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, and all the major British orchestras.

In 1992, Maestro Davis was created a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1999 he was designated a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.



ED FRAZIER DAVIS | COMPOSER

The English-American composer, baritone, and conductor is the founder and artistic director of Vox Venti, a semi-professional chorus which focuses largely on works by living composers. His compositions have been commissioned and performed by Access Contemporary Music, the ACDA National Convention, the Aspen Music Festival, the BBC Singers, The Crossing, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, PLEXUS, and the Toronto Children's Chorus. As a singer, he has performed with ensembles including Bella Voce, the Chicago Choral Artists, the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus.



CHARLES ANTHONY SILVESTRI | POET

The poet, author, and composer specializes in creating texts for specific artistic needs. He has provided custom choral texts, opera libretti, and other writing for composers including Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo, Kim Arnesen, and Dan Forrest, and for ensembles including the Houston Grand Opera, the King's Singers, and the Tallis Scholars. He teaches History at Washburn University in Kansas.



MATHILDA EDGE | SOPRANO

Previously at Lyric: Four roles since 2019/20, most recently First Lady/*The Magic Flute* and Lady in Waiting/*Macbeth* (both 2021/22).

Soprano Mathilda Edge, originally from Chandlerville, Illinois, is a third-year member of the Ryan Opera Center and an alumna of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, where she earned her master's degree in Vocal Performance. In Lyric's 2019/20 Season, Edge sang Berta/*The Barber of Seville*. She is the recipient of a 2019 Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation. She has also won or placed in the Washington International Competition for Voice; National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Award Competition; Indiana District and Central Region Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition; Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition; and Opera Columbus' Cooper-Bing Competition. Edge has sung in concert with The City Choir of Washington, New Dominion Chorale, and the Bel Canto Chorus. She has performed as Fiordiligi/

Così fan tutte, First Lady/*Die Zauberflöte*, Sandman/*Hansel and Gretel*, Romilda/*Xerxes*, The Milliner/*Der Rosenkavalier*, and Cio Cio San/*Madama Butterfly*. As a member of the Merola Opera Program, Edge sang an extended scene as the title role/*Thaïs* for the Schwabacher Summer Concert, as well as a selection from *I vespri siciliani* in the Merola Grand Finale. A Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Artist in 2018, the soprano covered the title role/*Ariadne auf Naxos* that summer. *Mathilda Edge is sponsored by Maurice J. and Patricia Frank.*



KATHLEEN FELTY | MEZZO-SOPRANO

Previously at Lyric: Four roles since 2019/20, most recently Third Lady/*The Magic Flute* and Sunday in the Park with Lyric's Rising Stars (both 2021/22).

Mezzo-soprano Kathleen Felty, from Lubbock, Texas, is a third-year member of the Ryan Opera Center. She holds Bachelor Degrees in Music and Business Administration from Texas Tech University and a Master of Music from the AJ Fletcher Opera Institute at the North Carolina School of the Arts. Her Fletcher performances include Charlotte/*Werther*, Angelina/*La Cenerentola*, Unulfo/*Rodelinda*, Miss Jessell/*Turn of the Screw*, Geneviève/*Impressions de Pelléas*, Dinah/*Trouble in Tahiti*, Komponist/*Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Paula/*Florencia en el Amazonas*. Felty is a former Apprentice Artist of The Santa Fe Opera, where she received the Katharine Mayer Award and covered Composer/*Ariadne auf Naxos*. She also participated in Ravinia's Steans Music Institute Program for Singers and, more recently, the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto fellowship program in Italy. Felty made her North Carolina Opera concert debut as Clotilde/*Norma* and her Dayton Opera debut in the role of Maddalena/*Rigoletto*. In Chicago she recently performed for the Harris Theater's Beyond the Aria series. The mezzo is a four-time District Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition and a winner of the Charlotte Opera Guild Vocal Competition (2018) and the Heafner Williams Vocal Competition (2019). *Kathleen Felty is sponsored by Heidi Heutel Bohn, Lawrence O. Corry, and Mrs. J. W. Van Gorkom.*



MATTHEW POLENZANI | TENOR

Previously at Lyric: 15 roles since 1995/96, most recently the title role/*Idomeneo* (2018/19); Nadir/*The Pearl Fishers* (2017/18).

The Evanston native, one of today's most admired tenors, most recently took the title role in The Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Don Carlos*. At the Met, he has sung more than 400 performances of 40 roles, including the Italian Singer/*Der Rosenkavalier*, Rodolfo/*La bohème*, Macduff/*Macbeth*, Tito/*La clemenza di Tito*, and the title role in *Idomeneo*. This season, the Ryan Opera Center alumnus portrays Tamino/*The Magic Flute* at the Met, Nemorino/*L'elisir d'amore* at the Paris Opera, Alfredo/*La traviata* at the Canadian Opera Company, and Cavaradossi/*Tosca* at the Savonlinna Opera Festival. He has sung Puccini's Rodolfo at Palermo's Teatro Massimo, Vaudémont/

Iolanta at the Met, and Don José/*Carmen* at San Francisco Opera. Polenzani has triumphed in recent seasons at the Met in the title role/*Roberto Devereux* and Nemorino/*L'elisir d'amore*. The tenor stars regularly at the Salzburg Festival, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, the Vienna State Opera, and the Zurich Opera House (where he made a much-acclaimed role debut in 2018 as Rodolfo/*Luisa Miller*). Polenzani is a past recipient of the Richard Tucker Award (2004), the Metropolitan Opera's Beverly Sills Artist Award (2008), and an Opera News Award (2017).



ERIC OWENS | BASS-BARITONE

Previously at Lyric: Seven roles since 2007/08, most recently The Wanderer (Wotan)/*Siegfried* (2018/19); Wotan/*Die Walküre* (2017/18).

The celebrated American bass-baritone most recently appeared at the Metropolitan Opera as Philippe II in a new production of *Don Carlos*. Owens has had successes in numerous Wagner roles including the Dutchman (Washington) and Alberich (Metropolitan Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin). In recent seasons Owens has triumphed at the Met in three other roles: Vodník/*Rusalka* (new production), Jaufré/ Kaija Saariaho's *L'amour de loin* (new production, company premiere), and Orest/*Elektra* (new production). Recent highlights also include Méphistophélès/*The Damnation of Faust* with the New Zealand Symphony and Orest at the Verbier Festival; Philip II/*Don Carlo* (Opera Philadelphia); and bass soloist/Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (Berlin Philharmonic). Owens has frequently premiered contemporary works, such as Goldenthal's *Grendel* (Los Angeles), John Adams's *A Flowering Tree* (Vienna's New Crowned Hope Festival, CD) and *Doctor Atomic* (San Francisco, DVD, CD). Owens's operatic versatility encompasses *The Magic Flute* (Paris); *Norma* (Covent Garden); *Rigoletto* and *Il trovatore* (Los Angeles); and *Macbeth*, *Lost in the Stars*, and *The Rape of Lucretia* (Glimmerglass Festival, where Owens has been artistic adviser since 2017).



MICHAEL BLACK | CHORUS MASTER

The Australian chorus master 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), 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 at the Grant Park Music Festival, where he has worked for two seasons. As one of Australia's most prominent vocal accompanists, Black has regularly performed for broadcasts and recordings. He has served as chorus master 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. Stotler Chorus Master Endowed Chair.* 

Orchestra and Chorus

MUSIC STAFF

Elizabeth Askren
William C. Billingham
Susan Miller Hult
Noah Lindquist
Francesco Milioto
Jerad Mosbey
Matthew Piatt
Chris Reynolds
Stefano Sarzani
Eric Weimer

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*
Heather Wittels, *Acting*
Assistant Concertmaster
Alexander Belavsky
Kathleen Brauer
Bing Jing Yu
Laura Miller
Liba Shacht

Violin II

Yin Shen, *Principal*
John Macfarlane,
Assistant Principal
Diane Duraffourg-Robinson
Ann Palen
Irene Radetzky*
John D. Robinson
David Volfe
Albert Wang

Viola

Carol Cook, *Principal*
Terri Van Valkinburgh,
Assistant Principal
Frank W. Babbitt
Patrick Brennan
Amy Hess
Melissa Trier Kirk

Cello

Calum Cook, *Principal*
Paul Dwyer*, *Assistant Principal*
Walter Preucil, *Acting Assistant*
Principal
Mark Brandfonbrener
William H. Cernota

String Bass

Ian Hallas, *Principal*
Samuel Shuhan,
Assistant Principal
Andrew L. W. Anderson*
Gregory Bryan Sarchet
Collins R. Trier

Flute

Marie Tachouet, *Principal*
Dionne Jackson,
Assistant Principal
Alyce Johnson

Piccolo

Alyce Johnson

Oboe

Judith Kulb, *Principal*
Judith Zunamon Lewis,
Acting Assistant Principal

English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

Clarinet

Linda A. Baker,
Acting Co-Principal,
Co-Assistant Principal
Susan Warner,
Acting Co-Principal,
Co-Assistant Principal

Bass Clarinet

Linda A. Baker

Bassoon

Preman Tilson, *Principal*
Lewis Kirk, *Assistant Principal*

Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

Horn

Jonathan Boen, *Principal*
Fritz Foss, *Assistant Principal/*
Utility
Robert E. Johnson, *Third Horn*
Samuel Hamzem
Neil Kimel

Trumpet

William Denton, *Principal*
Rebecca Oliverio,
Acting Assistant Principal

Trombone

Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*
Mark Fisher, *Assistant Principal*

Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

Timpani

Edward Harrison, *Principal*

Percussion

Douglas Waddell,
Acting Principal
Eric Millstein
Acting Assistant Principal

Harp

Lynn Williams*, *Principal*

Librarian

John Rosenkrans, *Principal*

Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

EXTRA MUSICIANS

Cristina Buciu, *violin*
Jennifer Cappelli, *violin*
Kate Carter, *violin*
Christine Chon, *violin*
Lisa Fako, *violin*
Renee Gauthier, *violin*
John Heffernan, *violin*
Kiju Joh, *violin*
Carmen Kassinger, *violin*
Rika Seko, *violin*
Rose Armbrust Griffin, *viola*
Aurelien Fort Pederzoli, *viola*
Rebecca Swan, *viola*
Chloe Thimonet, *viola*
Ethan Brown, *cello*
Paula Kosower, *cello*
Mara McClain, *cello*
Hope Shepherd, *cello*
Jeremy Attanaseo, *bass*
Teddy Gabrielides, *bass*
Hanna Sterba, *bassoon*
Mark Fry, *bass trombone*
Rich Janicki, *percussion*

CHORUS MASTER

Michael Black,
Chorus Master,
The Howard A. Stotler
Endowed Chair

REGULAR CHORUS

Soprano

Elisa Billey Becker*
Sharon Garvey Cohen
Cathleen Dunn
Desirée Hassler
Rachael Holzhausen*
Laureen Janeczek-Wysocki
Carla Janzen
Suzanne M. Kszastowski
Kimberly McCord
Heidi Spoor
Stephani Springer
Sherry Watkins

*On leave, 2021/22 Season

The Lyric Opera Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the front desk change seats systematically and are listed alphabetically in the roster above.

Mezzo

Marianna Kulikova
Colleen Lovinello
Yvette Smith
Marie Sokolova
Emma Sorenson
Maia Surace
Corinne Wallace-Crane
Pamela Williams
Michelle K. Wrighte

Tenor

Geoffrey Agpalo
Timothy Bradley
Hoss Brock
William M. Combs
John J. Concepcion
Kenneth Donovan
Joseph A. Fosselman
Cullen Gandy
Cameo T. Humes
Tyler Samuel Lee
Thomas L. Potter
Joe Shadday

Bass

David DuBois
David Govertsen
Robert Morrissey
Kenneth Nichols*
Craig Springer
Nicholas Ward
Ronald Watkins
Nikolas Wenzel
Max Wier
Jonathan Wilson

CORE SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS**Soprano**

Katelyn Lee
Kelsea Webb

Mezzo

Katie Ruth Bieber

Tenor

Jared V. Esguerra

Bass

Nicolai Janitzky
Vince Wallace

SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS**Soprano**

Lynnesha Crump
Cassandra Douglas
Elise Hurwitz
Joelle Lamarre
Rosalind Lee
Emily Mwila
Amanda Noelle Neal
Marlaina Owens
Leah Rockweit
Rachel Ann Spund
Diana Stoic
Cheryl Warfield
Tara Wheeler

Mezzo

Christina G. Adams
Veena Akama-Makia
La'Shelle Q. Allen
Jihanna Charlton-Davis
Leah Dexter
Christine Ebeling
Rachel Ann Girty
Kimberly Eileen Jones
Marguerite Mariah Jones
Megan Magsarili
Morgan Middleton
Emily Price
Marissa Simmons
Heidi Elizabeth Vanderford

Tenor

Matthew Daniel
Klaus Georg
Alex Guerrero
Darell Haynes
Jianghai Ho
Ernest C. Jackson, Jr
Christopher T. Martin
Taiwan L. Norris
Steven Michael Patrick
Tshombe Selby
Edward Washington
Charles Williamson

Bass

Wayne Arthur
Evan Bravos
Matthew Carroll
Michael Cavalieri
Christopher Filipowicz
Kirk Greiner
Stephen Hobe
Brian Hupp
Jarrod Lee
De'Ron McDaniel
Caleb Morgan
Michael Parham
William Pauley
Douglas Peters
William Powell III
Aaron Reeder
William Roberts
Rocky Eugenio Sellers

Lyric

HOLLY H. GILSON

Senior Director, Communications

DAVID ZIVAN

Program Book Editor

CATHY KIEPURA

Program Book Design

JESSICA M. PEDROZA, PMP

Project Manager

Administrative Offices
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 860
Chicago, Illinois 60606
lyricopera.org

SAMETZ BLACKSTONE ASSOCIATES

Visual Direction

PMGMA, Inc.

PMGMA, Inc.
340 Anthony Trail
Northbrook, IL 60062
pmgma.com

Gail McGrath
Publisher & President

Sheldon Levin
Finance

Account Managers:
Rand Brichta
Arnie Hoffman
Michael Hedge

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Ode to the Maestro

By John von Rhein

Over more than two decades, former music director Sir Andrew Davis thrilled audiences at Lyric with illuminating interpretations across all the repertoire. And don't worry—he'll be back often.

When Sir Andrew Davis conducts the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus, and vocal soloists, this evening in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, that iconic celebration of universal brotherhood will celebrate something else as well: Sir Andrew's extraordinary legacy of musical achievement during his 21 years as Lyric's beloved former music director and principal conductor.

Bear in mind that this is not a valediction, but a commemoration—of a special artistic relationship that has profoundly shaped Lyric's present eminence on the world operatic stage.

The numbers speak for themselves. The Davis directorship brought an astonishing 700 performances of 61 operas by 21 different composers under his baton, plus numerous special concerts—a record unmatched in scope by all but a handful of resident opera conductors anywhere, anytime. Yet the numbers cannot explain the imprimatur that Britain's podium gift to Chicago has left so indelibly on Lyric's artistic development and, indeed, on the musical life of the city in general.

Davis' versatility, musical depth, and unerring ability to draw great performances from his colleagues all factor into the equation, according to Anthony Freud.

"I don't know of another conductor who has such facility with such a wide range of musical styles and at the same time has the ability to avoid any performance seeming generic," Lyric's general director, president and CEO observes.

Freud should know, having closely followed his colleague's brilliant career ascent from 1988, when Davis became music director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera, continuing with his appointment three years later as chief conductor of the BBC Symphony. Without question his experience and honing of skills at those British musical institutions and elsewhere impacted directly on his work at Lyric.

Since 2000, when Davis succeeded the late Bruno Bartoletti as Lyric music director, he has raised the orchestra's technical and musical standards to a remarkable degree, making it one of the finest, most flexible ensembles of its kind in the world. The chemistry, everyone agrees, was there from the start.

Singers also hold the hearty Englishman in the highest esteem, not least because he gives them the rock-solid yet flexible support they need to do their best work on stage. Davis' personal charm and avuncular manner, in fact, go a long way towards maintaining a deep sense of collegiality with musical colleagues, administrative staff and board members, and audiences.

Freud recalls "the first serious meeting" he had with Davis prior to his own official arrival at Lyric in October 2011.

"Ken Pigott [Lyric's late former board president and CEO] invited us to his office," Freud says. "He put us in his conference room and left us to get on with it. Two hours later we emerged having found this instant rapport, partly because I think we were so energized at the thought of what we dreamt of Lyric achieving—two Brits sharing a sense of humor and many common reference points and memories that allowed the rapport to click, really, from the first moment.

"Very quickly it became clear we would have a very productive, cordial, rewarding artistic partnership. And, indeed, that's how the decade of our working together turned out to be."

In my role as the longtime critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, I often had a close-up listen to the conductor's work. Looking back at my reviews of his performances over the years, I am struck by the consistently high quality he maintained, regardless of repertoire, cast, or production. With him, there was never a hint of the slapdash, nothing routine, nothing overdone or underdone, no significant musical detail overlooked.

In 1987, 13 years before Davis took over as music director, he made his Lyric podium debut, conducting inspired performances of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Chicago audiences soon found that the operatic Mozart was like mother's milk to him, and each of his Mozartean assumptions—including the Mozart-da Ponte operas *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, as well as *Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Magic Flute*, *Idomeneo* and *La clemenza di Tito*—revealed a deeply engaged symbiosis between pit and stage that unveiled the emotional truths at the heart of these imperishable masterpieces.

Operagoers and critics everywhere praise Davis' Richard Strauss performances, each with its own *tinta*, its own warmly idiomatic sound, style, and feeling. Few conductors this side of Vienna or Munich are better equipped by talent or temperament to bring this repertoire alive on stage in a truly meaningful way. Small wonder his Chicago performances of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Capriccio*, *Elektra*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Salome* remain so memorable.

One of the great Wagner conductors of our time, Davis favored Lyric audiences with his first *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle in 2005 and partially realized his and Freud's dream of mounting a new staging of the tetralogy, beginning with *Das Rheingold* in 2016/17 and culminating in three complete cycles in April-May 2020. The latter fell victim to the pandemic, along with *Götterdämmerung*, the concluding (and unveiled) segment of director Sir David Pountney's imaginative staging. Despite those regrettable losses, the fact remains that Chicago heard many magisterial Wagner performances from Davis during his tenure, when he presided over all the mature Wagner music dramas, from *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* to the *Ring*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Parsifal*.

Another monumental project was Lyric's first-ever production of Berlioz's *The Trojans* during the 2016/17 season, the realization of another long-cherished dream of both Davis and Freud. The performances turned out to be a triumph for all concerned.

And while one may shed a furtive tear that scheduling and other priorities prevented Sir Andrew from demonstrating his affinity for an even wider range of 20th century operas, any conductor who can lead Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, and Leoš Janáček's *Jenůfa* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* with such idiomatic flair has nothing to apologize for.



Photo: Kyle Flitbacker

As for new operas, Davis helped enormously to guide the evolution of Lyric's world-premiere performances of Jimmy López's *Bel Canto* (based on Ann Patchett's novel) from page to stage, giving the composer invaluable advice as to structure, orchestration, balance, and much more. "He was endlessly supportive of Jimmy without in any way interfering," Freud says.

So keen is Sir Andrew's musical curiosity about unfamiliar operas that he eagerly agreed to conduct the Lyric premiere of Mieczysław Weinberg's powerful Holocaust-themed opera *The Passenger* here in 2014/15, Freud says. In so doing, Davis lent cachet to an important 20th century stage work Chicago audiences needed to hear.

Mind you, those are but highlights from a wide-ranging track record of Davis performances at Lyric that included operas by Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Bizet, Dvořák, Gounod, Lehár, Massenet, Mussorgsky and Poulenc—not to mention the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas *Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance* in which Davis proved himself a Savoyard to the manner born.

So let us raise a glass to the beginning of a new phase in the longstanding love affair between Lyric Opera and Sir Andrew Davis. At 78, he does not look, sound, or behave like a maestro who's going gentle into that good night of retirement. He continues to fill engagements worldwide and will return to Lyric as honored guest in January, when he is scheduled to lead performances of one of his favorite operas, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

And so, *bravissimo*, Sir Andrew—and *grazie mille!* 

Composer's note

By Ed Frazier Davis

Whenever I compose a choral work, I always start with the text. To search exhaustively through books of poetry and the vast resources of the web to find a text “worthy” of being set to music has become something of a pastime for me over the years. But when I was first approached by Lyric with this unique opportunity—to compose something that would act as a “prelude” to Beethoven’s legendary 9th Symphony, in honor of my father’s final season as music director—I must admit that I was intimidated. For days I wondered, how could I possibly find a text that would do justice to such a prestigious commission?

Thankfully my fears were assuaged when, after searching in vain for several weeks, I decided to approach poet Charles Anthony (Tony) Silvestri, whose specialty is words intended to be set to music (aficionados of choral music might recognize him as the librettist for several of Eric Whitacre’s better-known compositions). Tony crafted a sublime text, full of simple yet beautiful imagery depicting the boundless joy my father’s music-making has brought to countless people. I got to work straight away, and before long, *A Seed of Joy* was born.

The piece begins with the same sonority as does Beethoven’s symphony: a perfect fifth—an “open” harmony, neither major nor minor—on the notes

A and E, produced in this instance by the tenors and basses. From this fifth, depicting “the depths of the human heart,” melodic and harmonic material emerges and blossoms, illustrating the titular seed’s growth and transformation, first into a flower and then into a garden. The music builds gradually in harmonic and rhythmic intensity until, following a virtuosic, dancelike section depicting “the flower [opening] in the light of the sun,” the choir arrives at its largest climax on the words “the world is singing.” There are two sections in the piece where Tony’s poem—specifically its third and seventh stanzas—briefly follows the rhyme scheme of Schiller’s original *Ode to Joy*, and both of these sections are marked by a quotation of Beethoven’s famous melody in the sopranos, albeit harmonized in a language quite unlike Beethoven’s.

As the poem ends with a question, “who shall be her voice?” (a reference to the passing of the baton from my father to Maestro Mazzola), so does *A Seed of Joy* conclude with a musical question mark of sorts: an unstable chord without a satisfying “resolution.” However, the resolution does indeed arrive when, just a brief moment after the choir stops singing, Beethoven’s symphony begins with its own aforementioned perfect fifth, creating a seamless transition between the two works.

A Seed of Joy

by Charles Anthony (Tony) Silvestri

Out of the depths of the human heart
There grows a delicate seed,
A seed of purest joy.

This joy, rising from shadow,
A light seeking light,
Opens like a flower.

Growing stronger, joy, divining,
Finding home in fertile ground,
Shining, stirs the sound.

To live one’s life in service of this joy,
An honor truly great;
To share this joy, a blessing.

The flower opens in the light of the sun,
Steels herself, and bursting forth,
Becomes a garden.

This joy, taken up by another heart,
By another, and another,
Until the world is singing,

Rising up inside each spirit,
Songs of joy resound anew;
Hear it, calling true.

Who, inspired, shall take her up,
This joy, this gift of brotherhood:
Who shall be her voice?

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