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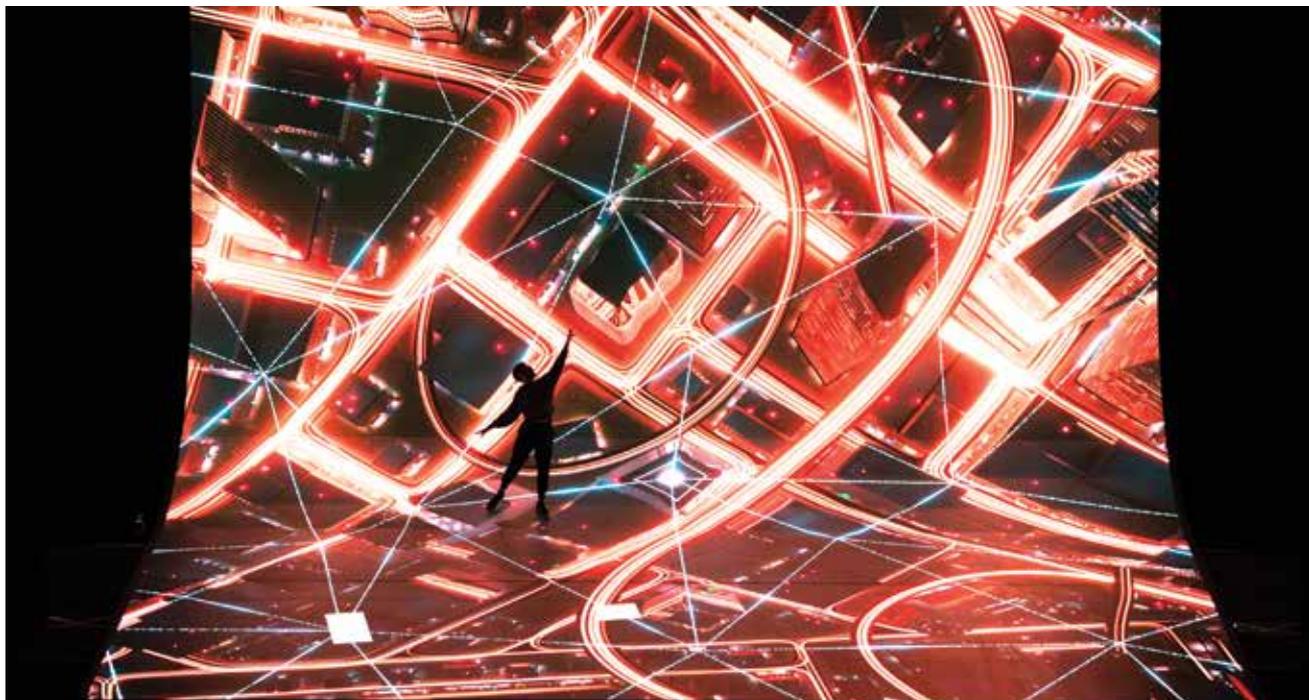
PROXIMITY

A TRIO OF NEW AMERICAN OPERAS



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In this issue



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Four Portraits

On the cover: Original artwork created by Jake Freund
All *Proximity* photos by Kyle Flubacker

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Anthony Freud
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President & CEO*

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Lyric

Welcome to your Lyric

From the Chair and the General Director

Dear Lyric Community,

It is a special pleasure to welcome you to the Lyric Opera House for *Proximity*, the second world premiere commissioned by Lyric in our 2022/23 Season. This project brings together some of the most exciting talents working anywhere today. Our three outstanding creative teams have worked closely with director Yuval Sharon and conductor Kazem Abdullah to explore three issues that are of fundamental importance to all of us—the challenge of human connection in a digital world, the profound effects of gun violence on our communities, and the urgency of protecting our planet.

“These are not topics outside of us,” Sharon noted in a recent interview for *Opera News*. “That’s the notion of proximity. It’s the unifying thread for the whole evening. These are problems that all of us need to grapple with and tackle, and we’re trying to create an artistic experience that really inspires the audience to lean in.”

At Lyric, we are passionately committed to deepening the relevance of opera as an art form—diversifying the range of both the stories we tell and the storytellers of all artistic disciplines whom we invite to tell them. We want our work to encompass subjects that are of profound importance to our society, our city, and ourselves. We are particularly proud that the subjects of both this season’s world premieres, *Proximity* and the recently premiered *The Factotum*, are centered on Chicago—placing our city and our company at the heart of our rapidly evolving art form. *Proximity* would not have been possible without the support of you, our audience.

Thank you for joining us.



Sylvia Neil

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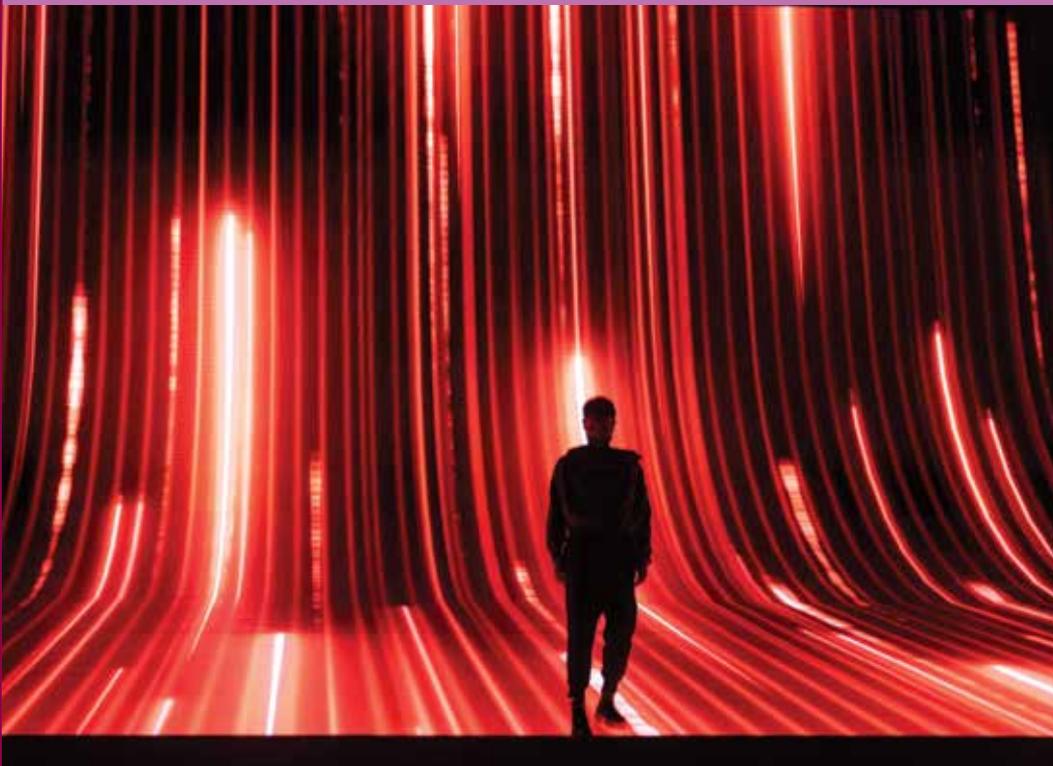
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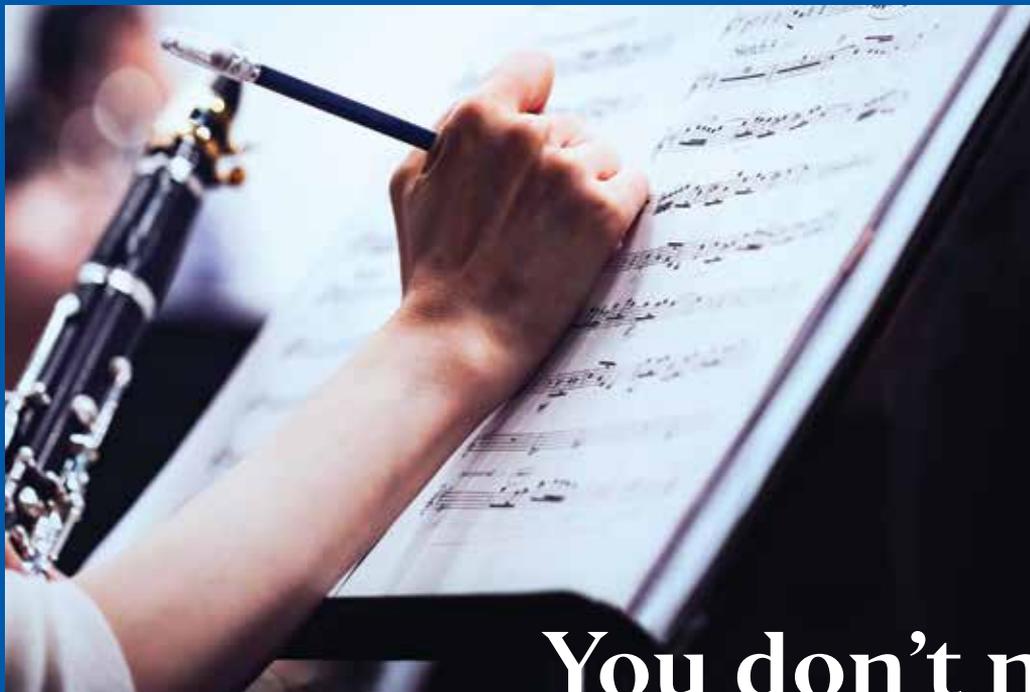
Proximity is a gripping, powerful trio of new works that confronts some of the challenges we all share in today's society: yearning for connection in a world driven by technology; the devastating impact of gun violence on cities and neighborhoods; and the need to respect and protect our natural resources. This new Lyric commission, bringing together a complement of some of the most important creative minds of our time, promises a riveting, provocative, and inspiring opera experience.

Welcome to the world premiere of *Proximity*.



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Proximity



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Proximity

World Premiere

A trio of new American operas

The Walkers, Four Portraits, and Night

Curated by Renée Fleming & Yuval Sharon

THE WALKERS

Music by **Daniel Bernard Roumain**

Libretto by **Anna Deavere Smith**

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Curtis Toler
Arne Duncan
Preacher Man
Chief's Son #1
Chief's Son #2
Very Loud Girl
Chief's Daughter #2
Chief's Daughter #1
Bilal
Lil' Bunchy Bates
Yasmine Miller
Passenger 1
Passenger 2
Passenger 3
Passenger 4
Passenger 5
Passenger 6
Passenger 7
Passenger 8
Thomas Gaston
Uniting Voices Chicago

Issachah Savage⁺
Jeff Parker⁺
Gordon Hawkins
Ron Dukes[•]
Kamari Saxon
Lindsey Reynolds[•]
Zoie Reams
Kearstin Piper Brown⁺
Norman Garrett
Jamion Cotten⁺
Whitney Morrison^{••}
Kathryn Henry^{••}
Lindsey Reynolds[•]
Stephanie Sanchez⁺
Kathleen Felty^{••}
Cornelius Johnson⁺
Alejandro Luévanos[•]
Darren Drone⁺
Ron Dukes[•]
Darren Drone⁺

FOUR PORTRAITS

Music by **Caroline Shaw**

Libretto by **Caroline Shaw
& Jocelyn Clarke**

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

A
B
Passenger 1
Passenger 2
Passenger 3
Passenger 4
Passenger 5
Passenger 6
Passenger 7
Passenger 8
GPS

John Holiday⁺
Lucia Lucas⁺
Kathryn Henry^{••}
Lindsey Reynolds[•]
Stephanie Sanchez⁺
Kathleen Felty^{••}
Cornelius Johnson⁺
Alejandro Luévanos[•]
Darren Drone⁺
Ron Dukes[•]
Corinne Wallace-Crane

NIGHT

Music by **John Luther Adams**

Libretto by **John Haines**

CAST

Sibyl

Zoie Reams

Proximity

A trio of new American operas

Conductor
Director
Production Designers

Costume Designer
Sound Designer
Chorus Master
Children's Chorus Master
Choreographer
Associate Choreographer
Wigmaster &
Makeup Designer
Associate Director
Assistant Director
Stage Manager
Musical Preparation

Fight Director
Projected English Titles
Projection Programmer
Front of House
Sound Engineer

Kazem Abdullah⁺
Yuval Sharon
Jason H. Thompson
Kaitlyn Pietras
Carlos J. Soto⁺
Jody Elff⁺
Michael Black
Josephine Lee
Rena Butler⁺
Adam McGaw⁺
Sarah Hatten

Alexander Gedeon
Katrina Bachus
Rachel A. Tobias
William C. Billingham
Noah Lindquist
Chris Reynolds[•]
Michelle Rofrano⁺
Samantha Kaufman
Colin Ure
Troy Fujimura
Stephanie Farina



Night

Thank you to all the individuals from Chicago CRED and Choose to Change (C2C) who generously shared their experiences and provided the foundational interviews for *The Walkers*.

Special project consultants for *Proximity*:
Curtis Toler and Quodesia (Quo) Johnson

First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on March 24, 2023.

- ⁺ Lyric debut
- [•] Member, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center
- ^{••} Alumna, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

Lyric

Synopsis

TIME | 21st century

PLACE | Chicago

ACT I

SCENE 1

The Walkers, “History”

Where indicated, words spoken or sung come from interviews. Curtis, Arne, and Preacher Man discuss how Chicago’s gang structure has become exponentially more fractured and chaotic over the decades. As counselors and spiritual advisors, they walk with and support those who are trying to escape the cycle of violence. Bilal, a hero for the youth, is expected home from prison. All hope that he will be able to bring peace to some of Chicago’s blocks.

SCENE 2

Four Portraits, “The Phone”

A couple—A and B—tries to connect by phone among the network of voices in the air. B, alone in her room, misses her partner.

SCENE 3

The Walkers, “Collaboratin”

Two rival gangs of boys, led by Chief’s Son 1 and Chief’s Son 2, quickly patch together an armistice as Bilal is expected to return. An all-female gang suddenly appears on the scene, led by Chief’s Daughter 1, Chief’s Daughter 2, and Very Loud Girl, to greet the returning Bilal. Chief’s Daughter 1 explains how violence becomes habituated in childhood. Bilal returns and shares the wisdom he has gained in prison. He warns the group about cycles of incarceration, and the related human cost. As he leaves, a mysterious delivery of a box of guns riles up the group. In a flagrant provocation, Chief’s Daughter 1 attempts to bribe Lil’ Bunchy Bates, the cousin of Chief’s Son 2, to join her gang. Lil’ Bunchy Bates runs away, but the precarious peace is now broken, and the armed gangs go separate ways threatening each other.

SCENE 4

Four Portraits, “The Train”

B takes the “L” train and thinks of A, surrounded by the thoughts and voices of her fellow passengers and the city around her.

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APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Act 1	1 hour 5 minutes
Intermission	25 minutes
Act 2	40 minutes
Total	2 hours 10 minutes

Lyric

Synopsis

continued

SCENE 5

The Walkers, “The Murder of Nine-Year-Old Lil’ Bunchy Bates”

Walking down the street, Lil’ Bunchy Bates is shot by an unknown assailant. Preacher Man attempts to lead his funeral—until another unknown assailant shoots out the funeral, aiming at Chief’s Daughter #1 who is in attendance. She believes it is a retaliation for Lil’ Bunchy Bates—yet she swears she did not kill him. Curtis, Arne, Bilal, and Preacher Man lament the never ending cycle.

SCENE 6

Night

A Sibyl wakes from her sleep with prophetic visions.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

SCENE 7

Four Portraits, “The Car”

B drives in a lonely reverie, accompanied by the voice of her GPS.

SCENE 8

The Walkers, “Retaliation and Other Spoils”

Chief’s Daughter 1, begging to be cleared of the accusation that she killed Lil’ Bunchy, and perhaps to prove her innocence, sends her gang out to find who killed Lil’ Bunchy Bates.

SCENE 9

Four Portraits, “The Forest”

A and B reunite in a forest, where A reads his beloved a ghost story.

SCENE 10

The Walkers, “The Story of Sincere—For Black Folks, Hope Must Be Resurrected Every Day”

Based on an interview of a Chicago young mother, Yasmine Miller. Yasmine shares how she copes with having lost her 20-month-old baby, Sincere, to a random bullet. Like so many other children whose lives have been cut short by gun violence, Sincere’s murderer has never been found. 

Speaking of the present

by Matthew Ozawa, Chief Artistic Administration Officer

The great opera houses of the world have fostered new work for as long as the art form has existed—taking risks and making investments, cultivating emerging talent and expanding audiences. Our treasured repertory did not exist until a risk was taken to commission a work, thereby unlocking and unearthing the creative talents of librettist and composer. At Lyric, it is our great honor and, we believe, our duty to participate in this vital tradition. This season, for the first time in the company's 68-year history, we are presenting two commissioned world premieres on the heels of one another: *The Factotum* and *Proximity*. While they differ in musical style and dramatic form, they share a profoundly contemporary viewpoint, centered in Chicago and on urgent issues of our time. One can't help but feel history in the making as we witness these new operas take shape and come to life. The invisible is becoming visible.

Proximity brings together a collaborative complement of some of the most creative minds of our time—winners of the Pulitzer Prize, Grammy Awards, and Emmy Awards, as well as MacArthur "Genius" Grant winner Yuval Sharon, here making his mainstage directorial debut, after having brought us the shimmering *Twilight: Gods* during the darkest days of the pandemic. The trio of operas could each stand on its own, but Sharon has fused the three works together, creating a wholly new experience. This opera explores themes of yearning for connection in a world driven by technology, the devastating impact of gun violence on cities and communities, and the need to respect and protect our natural resources. Innovative in form, creative process, style, and casting, the work's title highlights the proximal nature of these societal issues to our everyday lives.



Four Portraits

The Walkers, composed by Emmy-award winner Daniel Bernard Roumain with a libretto by acclaimed playwright and actress Anna Deavere Smith, is an impactful work in all its aspects. For the past several decades, Smith has created "documentary theater" works derived from the recorded words of living people. This libretto, created at the invitation of Lyric's Special Projects Advisor Renée Fleming, is the result of an extensive series of interviews facilitated by Chicago CRED (Create Real Economic Destiny), an organization focused on reducing gun violence in Chicago that was founded by Arne Duncan, a former U.S. Secretary of Education, and Laurene Powell Jobs. Several of the characters in this opera (some of them composites) are based on real people whose lives and work have been profoundly affected by gun violence. Their language, harvested from interviews with Smith, became the bedrock of much of *The Walkers'* sung text, all artistically curated by Smith. We are grateful for the partnership with Chicago CRED and for the candid words from members of our community.

Composer John Luther Adams lit up the cultural world a decade ago with the premiere of his orchestral composition *Become Ocean*, which went on to win the 2014 Pulitzer Prize. This work, *Night*, set to a poem by his longtime friend the late poet John Haines, takes on a kind of oratorio form, with a soloist and chorus leading us through meditations on the cosmos and our fragile Earth's place within it.

Caroline Shaw is one of the most innovative composers of our time, the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Music and a prolific collaborator with many other kinds of artists. *Four Portraits*, with a libretto by the versatile dramaturg Jocelyn Clarke, current Theatre Advisor to the Arts Council of Ireland, features music that not only brings the contemporary world to life onstage, but incorporates innovative musical techniques to depict a GPS system and cell phone calls. The result is a meditation on how technology both unites and separates us.

We are all united at this performance, hearing this world premiere for the very first time. As Sharon's intertwining of the works demonstrates, the value of human connection and how we engage with others is the core theme of *Proximity*. Human connection is one of the main functions of great art—and one of our main responsibilities at Lyric. Through innovative storytelling coupled with musical diversification, I believe we open the door to possibility. By speaking directly to our current experiences, we give voice to so many stories that haven't been heard or seen on an opera stage, thereby reaching an even broader array of humanity. At Lyric Opera of Chicago, we are evolving the art form. We are pushing the boundaries of what opera can be. **L**

Director's note

by Yuval Sharon

The ultimate irony in working on a project called *Proximity* is that most of it was made in the era of “social distance.”

We chose the name *Proximity* because it succinctly captures one of this performance's fundamental ideas: We are closer to our fellow human than we are often made to feel. And yet, work on these three distinct pieces had to be carried out like all other forms of collectivity during the pandemic: virtual and touch-free. So Anna Deavere Smith's process of field work and interviews all took place on Zoom, and the singers of each cast worked masked with their respective composers. Art always finds a way into existence, despite the most insurmountable-seeming obstacles—but infused with an intense longing for performers and spectators to once again share the same oxygen, our sense of mutual responsibility for each other took on a different kind of urgency.

The concept for this project, of course, pre-dates any inkling of what was to come. When Renée Fleming and Anthony Freud asked me to direct an as-yet-untitled project in 2019, the impetus was for American artists to tell new and vital stories for an American audience. How these independent works could be woven together was, at that time, unclear. I suppose the conventional approach would be to present these pieces one after the other, like Puccini's *Il trittico*. Although the individual works can certainly stand on their own, the notion of that clear distinction of one piece from another felt like it would doom the project to becoming a mere showcase of brilliant music and literary talent. An antithetical spirit of competition would surely creep into the work, instead of offering what opera creates best: a field of interconnected ideas much larger than the sum of its parts.

I introduced the notion of the “shuffle” into our process: the three works would start and stop and seem to interrupt and overlap with each other. I also imagined that as the evening continued, you felt the presence of one ensemble of performers, rather than discrete and divided presentations. Instead of isolation, we would create connection; rather than apposition, we would build a network of intersecting ideas. And instead of considering some stories easy to fence off, to be experienced at arm's length, with distance and a far-sightedness more like the gaze through opera glasses, these various strands begin to feel as inextricable as the kind of relation we should feel with each person who crossed our path on the way to the theater.

Opera is an engine of empathy and awe, and every production aspires to engender both. Creating one visual environment for the nesting worlds that make up *Proximity* involved an emphasis on fluidity and potentiality, rather than a too-fixed reality. Caroline Shaw and Jocelyn Clarke's *Four Portraits* zooms into the smallest human social unit—a couple—alienated by but also connected through technology. There is a graceful ambiguity in the piece's depiction of a couple absent from each other—and potentially physically lost to each other. (As one of them asks the other towards the end, “Is this a ghost story?”) The curve in time offered by the arc of LED screens lets this private story live organically in and among the real stories told by Anna in collaboration with Daniel Bernard Roumain, where the seemingly intractable cycle of violence brought about by guns and gangs threatens to

overwhelm innocent bystanders like Yasmine Miller. But their work also benefits from a more abstracted theatricality, rather than the closed circuit of realistic re-creation. To present these real stories on an epic scale opens up what we need most in our encounter with issues that can drive us to despair: a sense of possibility, and (most importantly) the possibility for connection. At any moment, like Arne Duncan or Curtis Toler or any of the humans that walk alongside the suffering and the bereaved, we can choose to answer the call of becoming “our brother's keeper.”

At the most “zoomed out” perspective of the three, John Luther Adams set a haunting poem by John Haines that portrays a lonely Sibyl, disquieted by her view of humanity out of balance but also in tune with the universal hum of the cosmos. Meditative and enigmatic, reminiscent of Brahms's *Alt-Rhapsodie* or Mahler's setting of Nietzsche in the Third Symphony, *Night* lets us look at the turbulence of this world from a great height—the better to connect more deeply upon descending.

Of the many meanings and interpretations that might arise from putting these works together, the one that matters most is the one that speaks to you. My hope is you will accept our invitation to resist a conventional mode of watching and listening: not to judge which piece you like best, or to look for the “moral of the story” that follows a single line from start to finish. Instead, I invite you to experience with an open heart and an open mind a musical and visual depiction of our interwoven humanity. ■

“To present these real stories on an epic scale opens up what we need most: the possibility for connection.”

—Yuval Sharon

Notes on *The Walkers*

by Daniel Bernard Roumain

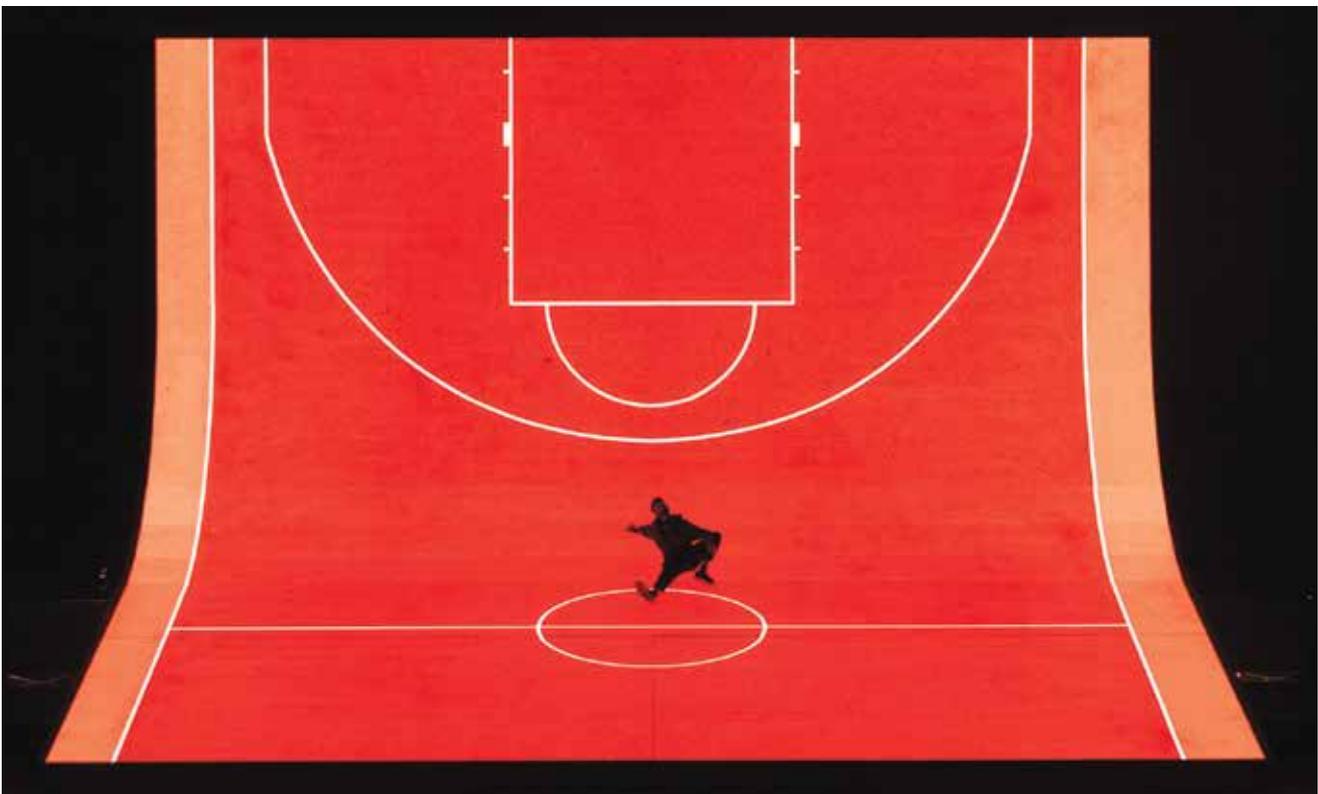
Upon a suggestion from the director, Yuval Sharon, and an invitation from the singer, Renée Fleming, I was asked to compose the music for a new opera, which was to be a part of a trilogy. My work began during the summer of 2020, just after the start of the pandemic, as we were all faced with new realities and consequences for our work and actions. I had met the actor and writer Anna Deavere Smith earlier in New York City, and our conversations were broad and wide and brimming with ideas centered on storytelling, community, and a longing for understanding and change.

The libretto for *The Walkers* is a brilliantly complex story whose text oscillates between transcribed interviews of real people in Chicago and the voices of Anna's composite characters. It's a potent mix of history, humor, poetry, and hope—all cast on a quest for freedom. For me, great words always suggest great music, and the music was always there in the rhythm of Anna's words and magical ability to report and inquire and conjure up an array of feelings that allowed for a musical score that's big and raucous at times, and soft and intimate in an instant.

The music was also responding to the innovative design ideas of Yuval, where he was always in search of new ways of telling stories that allowed for inquiry and empathy, and that demanded as much from the score. Without Yuval and Anna challenging me to match and marry their ideas with my music, it's clear that this score would have been something far less appealing. I remain in their debt.

Any operatic work is an investment. It's an act of trust. It's quite literally a show of faith. Collaborating with Lyric Opera of Chicago—the staff, production crew, musicians, artistic leadership, and, of course, the audience—has profoundly changed me as a human being and as a Black, Haitian-American composer. The work they are doing, and their commitment to the creative canon of past, present, and future work, is peerless in an industry slow to change and sometimes reluctant to embrace it. Not here!

I was born in Skokie, Illinois, just miles from this opera house. I feel at home here. I feel welcomed and seen and heard and safe, and most of all, loved here. I was able to find a creative freedom that allowed me to be my full, creative self. I didn't have to compromise. I didn't have to hold back. I was held forward. 



The Walkers takes place in current-day Chicago.

Notes on *The Walkers*

by Anna Deavere Smith

For several decades now, I've been creating theater based on verbatim excerpts of interviews from real people about social issues—sometimes hundreds of interviews. Out of these excerpts I wrote one-person shows in which I played all the parts. At the time this work hit the scene, it was considered *sui generis*, and I was credited with creating a new form of theater. And now I have switched gears to work in other forms. Renée Fleming saw the last play that I created and performed in that style, *Notes From The Field*. That play focused on the school-to-prison pipeline. To write it, I interviewed 250 people in schools, juvenile halls, courthouses, on the Yurok Reservation in Northern California, and in beat-up city neighborhoods. We even went up and down “the corridor of shame” in South Carolina, so called because the schools are so bad. Having seen that play, Ms. Fleming invited me to write a libretto about gun violence in Chicago.

In fact, among the first people I interviewed for *Notes From The Field* was Arne Duncan, then the U. S. Secretary of Education under President Obama. During the course of considering who in Chicago I would interview, I thought of Arne's bold move—to radically reduce gun violence by working with the shooters themselves. He founded Chicago CRED (Create Real Economic Destiny), which provides wraparound services to support individuals who want to give it a go towards changing their lives. CRED provides jobs, counseling, educational support, job training, mental health therapy—and the many different kinds of things that the participants and their families need. I contacted Arne, and he opened the doors of his organization, providing a liaison who found individuals I could interview. Those

doors turned out to be virtual; due to the pandemic, I was unable to travel to Chicago as planned, and the interviews were conducted on Zoom.

Arne told me that people praise him for giving these kids a second chance. He reminds us that in fact CRED is the first chance because many of the participants really did not have a choice to begin with.

I spoke with several participants, some of whom had been incarcerated because they were involved in gun violence. Those moments when an individual first leaves prison or juvenile hall are precarious. I was struck by the dedication and positive outlook of the counselors, staff, and outreach workers I interviewed. Some were people who had “status” in the community because of things they themselves had been through or because of the status held by their parents or family members—for example being the child of a former gang “chief.” I met a wide variety of people and heard many stories, some of which are represented in the libretto that I eventually wrote.

Some, like the character of Preacher Man, are composites. I am especially grateful to Yasmine Miller, a mother whose infant was killed by a bullet that seared the back window of her car, as she was heading to the laundromat—a tragedy that many Chicagoans will remember. As a departure from years of writing plays based on interviews, a lot of the language in the libretto I created from scratch out of my imagination.

The title, *The Walkers*, refers to the people who walk beside people who are struggling without giving up on them, no matter how dire the circumstances. To actually walk with those who are struggling without giving up requires extraordinary compassion and will. As Arne

says, “you cannot do this work from downtown.” He calmly acknowledges that personal safety can be at stake. Arne was in a neighborhood where that was in fact the case when a young man approached and asked, “Man, what are you doing here?” Arne's answer: “I'm here because you're here.” That is a powerful idea, and it takes me to the philosopher, Martin Buber. Buber suggests that we have a choice as human beings, to have an “I-Thou” relationship with fellow humans, or “I-It” relationships. I-Thou relationships allow us to be human to human. I-It relegates one of us to the status of a thing. *The Walkers* is a call for an extra dose of “I-Thou-ness” in society. **17**



Notes on *Four Portraits*

by Caroline Shaw and Jocelyn Clarke



First the Music.

The two central figures A and B appear in four different frames. The music reflects and refracts humor, yearning, and frustration with the sounds of the particular environment of each scene. The glitch of an ever-disrupted phone connection becomes scrambled woodwinds and fragmented vocals. The commuter train’s “doors open” announcement, the screech as it veers around a bend, and the chattering inner worlds of passengers. Alone in a car, the GPS’s electronic presence hovers over a pattern of rising chords. And in the forest, the murmuring choir shimmers like the leaves of an aspen, the distant echoes of familiar voices just beyond reach. The musical structures are inspired both by organic material (mycelial fibers, the phloem of trees) and the architecture of our digital lives.

Then This.

“Loneliness is a subjective sense of being disconnected from others, and not having close and supportive relationships with people. This feeling of being alone is distinct from social isolation, which measures the amount of time a person actually spends alone, meaning that a person can be

surrounded by people and still experience loneliness.”

Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection, John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick

Professor John T. Cacioppo, founder of the University of Chicago Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, has studied loneliness for two decades. He has discovered that loneliness is contagious and heritable, and that one in four people regularly feel lonely. It increases the odds of an early death by 20%.

“I can remember exactly the year eye contact stopped.”

Cacioppo and Patrick

Cacioppo believed loneliness is also treatable, like any other human condition, and pioneered several treatments before his death in 2018. One of his treatments is retraining people in reciprocity in communication—how do they read voices, how do they read eyes, how do they read posture—and then teaching them to analyze and develop different ways of (re)building strong relationships with those around them.

That.

"If you look at roadside embankments, you might be able to see how trees connect with each other through their root systems. On these slopes, rain often washes away the soil, leaving the underground networks exposed. Scientists in the Harz mountains in Germany have discovered that this really is a case of interdependence, and most individual trees of the same species growing in the same stand are connected to each other through their root systems. It appears that nutrient exchange and helping neighbors in times of need is the rule, and this leads to the conclusion that forests are superorganisms with interconnections much like ant colonies."

The Hidden Life of Trees, Peter Wohlleben

The Other.

In an article published in 1970, Japanese professor of robotics Masahiro Mori hypothesizes that the more a robot resembles an actual human, the more empathetic and positive the emotional response of the observer becomes—until the resemblance reaches a certain point. At this point, the observer's positive and empathetic emotional responses quickly turn into uncanny or strangely familiar feelings of uneasiness and revulsion. But as the robot's appearance continues to become even more human, the positive emotions return, and the level of empathy between observer and robot approaches the level seen in

interactions between human beings. Mori identifies this cognitive phenomenon as 不気味の谷, which was translated into English in 1978 as the "uncanny valley" in the book *Robots: Fact, Fiction, and Prediction* by Jasia Reichardt. The "valley" denotes a dip in the human observer's affinity for the replica, a relation that otherwise increases with the replica's human likeness.

Charles Darwin has a similar experience when he encounters an unusual snake in his own uncanny valley in 1839:

"The extremity of the tail of this snake is terminated by a point, which is very slightly enlarged; and as the animal glides along, it constantly vibrates the last inch.[...] As often as the animal was irritated or surprised, its tail was shaken; and the vibrations were extremely rapid. Even as long as the body retained its irritability, a tendency to this habitual movement was evident.[...] The expression of this snake's face was hideous and fierce; the pupil consisted of a vertical slit in a mottled and coppery iris; the jaws were broad at the base, and the nose terminated in a triangular projection. I do not think I ever saw anything more ugly, excepting, perhaps, some of the vampire bats. I imagine this repulsive aspect originates from the features being placed in positions, with respect to each other, somewhat proportional to those of the human face; and thus we obtain a scale of hideousness."

The Voyage of the Beagle, Charles Darwin L



Notes on *Night*

by John Luther Adams and John Haines

"It is the time of earth-changes..."

For three decades John Haines and I were close friends, artistic partners, and neighbors in Alaska. When I was not yet 30 years old, John and I collaborated on the choral-orchestral work *Forest without Leaves*, and over the years I've composed a number of songs based on his poems.

As John worked on *Night* (over the course of seven years) he shared numerous drafts with me. But although I recognized from the start that this was a profound poem, it took me many years to understand it more fully, and to imagine how I might approach setting it to music.

Night is written in the voice of the ancient Greek Sibyl, the oracle who lives in a cave and writes her prophecies in leaves. Inevitably, the wind rises and scatters the leaves, making it even more difficult to understand what she is trying to tell us. But it's clear that the news isn't good.

The Sibyl speaks to us across the centuries, reminding us of where our present moment stands in the longer, older story of humanity, of how we got here, and of our uncertain future amid the night that seems to be falling all around us. Even as the oceans rise, and superstorms and wildfires grow fiercer and more widespread, we continue to accelerate the changes we are making to the climate of the earth. As we do, we face ever-growing economic injustice, massive refugee crises, increasing social and political violence, and, ultimately, the threat of our own disappearance as a species.

In my setting of *Night*, the solo mezzo-soprano is the Sibyl. The chorus is humanity, trying to understand what she is telling us, hoping she may help us find our way through this darkness of our own making.

The words of the Sibyl are a prophecy of warning. Yet the vision she gives to us is not without hope. Toward the end of the poem, in the moment of deepest darkness, she expresses the possibility of a new day to come, when she sings: "...to the sun that has set, whose dawn I cannot see..."

It is the promise of that sunrise, and my faith in the next generations, that keeps me going. As an artist I feel that I'm working toward a new culture that I will not live to inhabit.

In Western Apache storytelling, as important as *what* happens in a story is *where* it happens. Every now and then it's good to step back from the stories we are telling and hearing—to remember where we are, who we are, how we aspire to live. Within the story of *Proximity*, that moment is *Night*. It's the long, slow zoom shot, up and out, reminding us that we are here—in the city of Chicago, the continent of North America, the planet Earth, and the galaxy beyond.

Night is one scene from a larger opera that I will probably never compose. So, I'm pleased and honored that it's part of *Proximity*—a work that is so deeply connected to the community in which it's being born. The need to imagine and create healthier communities seems more urgent now than at any time in recent history. And it may

be that *Proximity* can serve a model for opera that arises from and speaks to community.

Yet as deeply engaged as I am with the issues of our times, I'm also somewhat skeptical of the notion of art as activism. I am two men. One man is the lifelong activist, who was marching in civil rights and antiwar demonstrations before he was able to vote, and who was a full-time environmental activist until he was in his mid-30s. The other man is the artist, who believes that music is his best gift to our troubled world. These two men don't fully understand one another. Yet even as they struggle to balance their apparent contradictions, they share a sense of responsibility to and faith in the next generations.

As a citizen of humanity, I want to voice my grief and demonstrate my outrage. I feel compelled to act. But I am an artist, and in spite of the best intentions of artists, art is rarely effective as political action. My hope is that the music I compose may somehow be of use to someone who truly will change the world. The change that we need will come about only through the combined actions of many people, working in every realm of human endeavor. Yet everything begins in the solitary human heart.

Today we are all asking ourselves: *What can I do to change the world?* The answers to this question will be different for each one of us. Inspired by the young people who are rising up all around the world, I continue my work in the belief that music has a special power to plumb the depths within us, and to elevate those places where courage and compassion are born.

—John Luther Adams

"Do not wake me..."



The poem is spoken in the voice of a Sibyl, or oracle, as represented perhaps most notably by Michelangelo's immense reclining female figure of *Night* in the Medici Chapel in Florence. Into the base of the sculpture are carved both a tragic

mask and the figure of an owl. Asked once what his figure of *Night* might say if she could speak, Michelangelo replied that she would say, "Wake me not..."

Reference in the poem is also made to an incident in the life of C.G. Jung who, when once on the point of death, had a dream in which he found himself stationed far in interstellar space from which he could look down on the earth and its human events, completely detached. A return to life and consciousness plunged him into a deep depression.

—John Haines ¹

Artist profiles

CREATORS



DANIEL BERNARD ROUMAIN | COMPOSER | *THE WALKERS*

Lyric debut

Known for his signature violin sounds infused with myriad electronic, urban, and African-American music influences, the acclaimed composer, performer, educator, and activist has written numerous solo, chamber, orchestral, and operatic works, and has composed an array of film, theater, and dance scores. He composed music for the film *Ailey* (Sundance official selection); was the first Music Director and Principal Composer with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company; released and appeared on 30 album recordings; and has published over 300 works. He has made numerous television appearances and collaborated with the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Kennedy Center, and Sydney Opera House. He was Artist-in-Residence and Creative Chair at the Flynn in Burlington, Vermont. Currently, he is the first Artistic Ambassador with Firstworks; the first Artist Activist-in-Residence at Longy School of Music; and the first Resident Artistic Catalyst with the New Jersey Symphony. Roumain is an Atlantic Center Master Artist, a Creative Capital Grantee, and a Hermitage Artist Retreat Fellow. He has won the American Academy in Rome Goddard Lieberston Fellowship; a Civitella Ranieri Music Fellowship Award; an Emmy Award for *The New Look of Classical Music*; National Sawdust Disruptor Award; and the Sphinx Organization Arthur L. Johnson Award. Roumain graduated from Vanderbilt University and earned his doctorate in music composition from the University of Michigan. He is currently a tenured Associate and Institute Professor at Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.



ANNA DEAVERE SMITH | LIBRETTIST | *THE WALKERS*

Lyric debut

The actress, playwright, teacher, and author's numerous works for theater and film include *Fires in the Mirror* (runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize) and *Twilight: Los Angeles* (nominated for two Tony Awards), both of which dealt with volatile race events in the 1990s; *Let Me Down Easy*, about the US health care system; and *Notes From The Field*, which focused on the school-to-prison pipeline and was nominated for a Critics' Choice Award. HBO premiered the film version in February 2018. Smith is also a television and film actress. Credits include such shows as *Inventing Anna*, ABC's series *For the People*, and *Black-ish*. She co-starred on Showtime's *Nurse Jackie* and was featured on the long-running series, *The West Wing*. Films include *Philadelphia*, *The American President*, *Rachel Getting*

Married, and *Here Today*. In 2012, President Obama awarded Smith the National Endowment for the Humanities Medal. She is a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, several Obie awards, and two Drama Desk awards. Other awards include the prestigious 2013 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize for achievement in the arts, the George Polk Career Award in Journalism, and the Ridenhour Courage Award.



CAROLINE SHAW | COMPOSER & CO-LIBRETTIST | *FOUR PORTRAITS*

Lyric debut

Shaw is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. This year's projects include the score to the film *Fleishman is in Trouble* (FX/Hulu), vocal work with Rosalía (MOTOMAMI), the score to Josephine Decker's film *The Sky Is Everywhere* (A24/Apple), music for the National Theatre's production of *The Crucible*, Justin Peck's *Partita* with New York City Ballet, a new stage work *LIFE* (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust), the premiere of *Microfictions Vol. 3* for New York Philharmonic and Roomful of Teeth, a live orchestral score for Wu Tsang's silent film *Moby Dick*, co-composed with Andrew Yee, two albums on Nonesuch (*Evergreen* and *The Blue Hour*), the score for Helen Simoneau's dance work *Delicate Power*, tours of *Graveyards & Gardens* (co-created immersive theatrical work with Vanessa Goodman), and tours with So Percussion featuring songs from *Let The Soil Play Its Simple Part* (Nonesuch), amid occasional chamber music appearances as violist (Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, La Jolla Music Society). Shaw has written more than 100 works in the last decade, for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, LA Phil, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, The Crossing, Dover Quartet, Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Miro Quartet, I Giardini, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Ariadne Greif, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Britt Festival, and the Vail Dance Festival. *Caroline Shaw is sponsored by the Julian Family Foundation in support of female leadership in the arts.*



JOCELYN CLARKE | CO-LIBRETTIST | *FOUR PORTRAITS*

Lyric debut

Clarke is a dramaturg and writer for stage and screen. He is Senior Dramaturg at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. He was Theatre Advisor to the Arts Council of Ireland for ten years, and Literary Manager of the Abbey, Ireland's national theatre. As a dramaturg, Clarke has worked with

writers such as Katori Hall, Taylor Mac, Lydia Diamond, Abhishek Majumdar, Eduardo Machado, Lisa Kron, Seamus Heaney, Craig Lucas, Tazewell Thompson, Carl Hancock Rux, Kenneth Lin, Mary Kathryn Nagle, Tanya Saracho, and Karen Zacarias. He has written several plays for Anne Bogart and the SITI Company—including *Bob*, *Room*, *Score*, *Chess Match No. 5*, and *Trojan Women*. He is a founding member of the Collective Theatre in Dublin and is an Associate Artist with Theater Mitu and The Civilians in New York. His new adaptation of Elizabeth Swados’s musical *Beautiful Lady* will be directed by Anne Bogart at La Mama Theatre in New York in May. Clarke has worked on several Irish films, including *Young Offenders*, and he is executive story editor of the BBC/RTE TV series of the same name. He is a writer/producer on the third season of *P-Valley*, Katori Hall’s acclaimed TV series for Starz.



JOHN LUTHER ADAMS |
COMPOSER | NIGHT
Lyric debut

In the 1970’s and into the ‘80s, Adams worked full time as an environmental activist. But the time came when he felt compelled to dedicate himself entirely to music. He made this choice with the belief that, ultimately, music can do more than politics to change the world. Since that time, he has become one of the most widely admired composers in the world. His orchestral work *Become Ocean* was awarded the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Music, and in 2015 the piece was awarded a Grammy for the Best Contemporary Classical Composition. He was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His work, which endeavors to bring the sense of wonder that we feel outdoors into the concert hall, has garnered numerous other honors, including the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, the Heinz Award, and awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. A deep concern for the state of the earth and the future of humanity drives Adams to continue composing.



JOHN HAINES | LIBRETTIST |
NIGHT
Lyric debut (posthumous)

The late American writer spent more than 20 years homesteading in Alaska, a major factor in his unique poetic voice. He was named a Fellow by the Academy of American Poets, and published numerous poetry collections including *Winter News* (1966); *The Stone Harp* (1971); *Cicada* (1977); *News from the Glacier: Selected Poems 1960-1980* (1982); *New Poems 1980-1988* (1990), which received the Lenore Marshall Poetry Award and the Western States Book Award; *The Owl in the Mask of the Dreamer: Collected Poems* (1993); and *For the Century’s End: Poems 1990-1999* (2001), among others. Notable among his many essay collections are *Living Off the Country* (1981), *The Stars, the Snow, the Fire* (1989), *Fables and Distances: New and Selected Essays* (1996), and *Descent* (2010). Haines taught at Ohio University, George Washington University, and

the University of Cincinnati. Other honors included the Alaska Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts, two Guggenheim Fellowships, an Amy Lowell Traveling Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Library of Congress.



RENÉE FLEMING | CURATOR

World-renowned, five-time Grammy-winning American soprano Renée Fleming became Lyric Opera’s first-ever creative consultant in December 2010. At that time she was elected to the Board of Directors as a vice president, and three years later she was named Adviser to the Ryan Opera Center. Among Fleming’s most significant projects at Lyric have been: serving as curator of Jimmy López’s *Bel Canto*, Lyric’s tenth new-opera commission, premiered in 2015; leading the creation of the virtual *For the Love of Lyric* concert in September 2020, a central event in Lyric’s response to the coronavirus pandemic; spearheading *Chicago Voices*, a groundbreaking Lyric Unlimited initiative during 2016 and 2017 that engaged audiences through participatory arts experiences and dynamic cross-genre programming, including a concert which was broadcast on PBS *Great Performances* and earned three Chicago/Midwest Emmy Awards; and initiating the relationship between Lyric and The Second City, a collaboration that resulted in two cabaret productions, *The Second City Guide to the Opera* and *Longer! Louder! Wagner!* Throughout her tenure, Fleming has been instrumental in expanding Lyric’s education and community-engagement activities. These include a joint program with several key community music organizations. The Vocal Partnership Program, devoted to finding and nurturing young, talented singers in the Chicago area, has involved children and young adults at the Merit School of Music, ChiARTS, Gallery 37 Advanced Arts Education Program, and Chicago Academy for the Arts. Fleming championed the expansion of arts education in the Chicago Public School system as National Cultural Ambassador for the Chicago Public Schools Arts Education Plan. Her most recent appearance on the Lyric stage was for *The Brightness of Light* (2022/23).

PRINCIPALS



JOHN HOLIDAY | A | FOUR
PORTRAITS
Lyric debut

The renowned countertenor began his 2022/23 season as a featured artist with the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles. He returned to the Metropolitan Opera as the Man Under Arch and Hotel Clerk roles in Kevin Puts’s *The Hours*, and will join Pittsburgh Opera as John Blue in *We Shall Not Be Moved*, directed and choreographed by Bill T. Jones. Last season, Holiday made his debut at the Hollywood Bowl under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel in an all-Gershwin program with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and at the Metropolitan Opera in Matthew Aucoin’s *Eurydice* as Orpheus’s Double, a role he

originated in its world premiere at the LA Opera. He also debuted with the New York Philharmonic in Handel's *Messiah* and at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Barrie Kosky's production of *Agrippina* in the role of Nerone. Other recent highlights include reprising his signature role of the Refugee in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with Utah Opera and The Dallas Opera. Holiday toured with Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, sang the Sorceress in Kosky's production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with LA Opera, and appeared in the world premiere of Daniel Bernard Roumain's *We Shall Not Be Moved* with Opera Philadelphia and Dutch National Opera. He sang the title role in *Xerxes* at the Glimmerglass Festival and Caesar in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* at Wolf Trap Opera.



LUCIA LUCAS | B | FOUR PORTRAITS

Lyric debut

The baritone recently made her role debut as Wotan in *Die Walküre* with Theater Magdeburg, and debuted in the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Tulsa Opera. This season she returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Gretch in the new production of *Fedora*, as well as to English National Opera for *Tosca* in the role of Sacristan. She continues to tour with the Ragazze Quartet as the solo lead artist in the chamber opera *The World's Wife*. Last season, Lucas made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Angelotti in *Tosca* and performed the role of Hannah Before in *As One* with Atlanta Opera. In addition, she sang *Entwurf einem Rheinlandschaft* with Monheim Musikfestival and *Aria di Potenza*, an unconventional synthesis of opera, fashion, and politics which premiered with Kunstfest Weimar. In the 2020/21 season, Lucas filmed performances as Satan in Martinů's *Les armes du couteau* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, as well as *Die Neuen Todsünden (The New Deadly Sins)* with the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and appeared as the title role of *Rigoletto* with Theater Magdeburg. Lucas made her debut with English National Opera as Public Opinion in a new production of Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, performed the baritone soloist in Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2* with Wuppertal Oper, and made an appearance on Houston Grand Opera's serial web opera entitled *Star Cross'd*. Operatic engagements have also included Hagen in the world premiere of *Surrogate/Götterdämmerung*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Tchelio in *Love of Three Oranges*, Komtur in *Don Giovanni*, and the Four Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, all with Oper Wuppertal; Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Lyric Opera of Dublin; and Escamillo in *Carmen* with Staatstheater Karlsruhe.

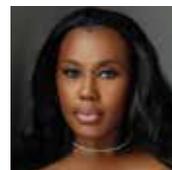


WHITNEY MORRISON | YASMINE MILLER | THE WALKERS

Previously at Lyric: Five roles since 2017/18, most recently Billie/*Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (2021/22) and Sister Rose/*Dead Man Walking* (2019/20).

The soprano, a Chicago native and a Ryan Opera Center alumna, received a 2023 Grammy nomination for Boston Modern Orchestra

Project's recording of *X, The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, in which she sang the role of Louise/Betty. In 2022, she made her debut with Detroit Opera in the same role and reprised it with Opera Omaha and Odyssey Opera, before going on to record it with BMOP. This season also includes performances with Chicago Opera Theater as Lady Billows in the winter production of *Albert Herring*. Morrison recently debuted at Munich's Bavarian State Opera in the world premiere of Marina Abramovic's *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* as Floria Tosca. At Lyric in 2018/19, she sang First Cretan Woman/*Idomeneo*. Other recent highlights include the Harris Theater's *Beyond the Aria* series; Miss Pinkerton/*The Old Maid and the Thief* at the Grant Park Music Festival; an appearance at the Rochester Institute of Technology's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy; a debut at Rochester's Kodak Hall with the Eastman Wind Ensemble; and Donna Anna/*Don Giovanni* with Chicago's Floating Opera Company. A graduate of Alabama's Oakwood University, Morrison completed her training at the Eastman School of Music (master's degree), Germany's Neil Semer Vocal Institute, and Italy's Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto. Competition successes include top prizes in the National Classical Singer University Competition, the R. Nathaniel Dett Club NANM Scholarship Competition, and the Musicians Club of Women Competition.



KEARSTIN PIPER BROWN | CHIEF'S DAUGHTER #1 | THE WALKERS

Lyric debut

This season the soprano sings Wendy Torrance in *The Shining* by Paul Moravec, first with Opera Parallèle and subsequently with Atlanta Opera. Last season she resumed performances in the lead role of Esther in Ricky Ian Gordon's opera *Intimate Apparel* with Lincoln Center Theater (as part of the joint Metropolitan Opera's New Works Program), for which she won several awards, including the World Theater Award for "Outstanding Debut Performance in an Off-Broadway Production." Other recent highlights include Musetta and Bess, both with New Orleans Opera, Dorothy Jean Hamer in Chandler Carter's *This Little Light of Mine* with Santa Fe Opera, and Clara in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* with San Francisco Opera, as well as performances with the Rochester Philharmonic, the Dallas Symphony, the National Philharmonic, Steven Blier's New York Festival of Song, the Berkshire Opera Festival, and the Cecilia Chorus of New York at Carnegie Hall. Next season, she will make her debut with Florida Grand Opera as Nedda, return to perform with the Rochester Philharmonic and the Atlanta Symphony, and make her debut with the Oregon Symphony.



ZOIE REAMS | CHIEF'S DAUGHTER #2 | THE WALKERS SIBYL | NIGHT

Previously at Lyric: Ragonde/*Le Comte Ory* (2022/23) and Flora Bervoix/*La traviata* (2018/19).

Recent engagements for the American mezzo-soprano include Mandane/*Idaspe* at Quantum Theatre, Beggar Woman/*Sweeney*

Todd at Austin Opera, and soloist in *Messiah* at Washington National Cathedral. Other recent highlights include Lily in the Metropolitan Opera's *Porgy and Bess*, Jane in Cincinnati Opera's *Castor and Patience*, the title role/*Carmen* (Opéra Louisiane), Margret/*Wozzeck* (Des Moines Metro Opera), and Bernstein's Symphony No. 1: Jeremiah (Staatstheater Cottbus Philharmonic Orchestra). She has also been heard as Maddalena/*Rigoletto* (Wolf Trap Opera), in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (National Symphony Orchestra), and in Handel's *Messiah* (Las Vegas Philharmonic). An alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Reams has been heard in HGO productions of *La traviata*, *Elektra*, *West Side Story*, *Nixon in China*, and in world premieres of Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* and Laura Kaminsky's *Some Light Emerges*. Other notable appearances include the leading role of Clarice/*La pietra del paragone* (Wolf Trap Opera), Tituba/Robert Ward's *The Crucible* (The Glimmerglass Festival), the Sandman/*Hansel and Gretel* (Opéra Louisiane), and on the concert stage, Bruckner's *Te Deum* (Houston Symphony Orchestra). Her awards include second place at Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition (2016), first place in the Emerging Artist division of the Classical Singer Competition (2015), and second place of the Gulf Coast Region of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (2016).



GORDON HAWKINS | PREACHER MAN | THE WALKERS

Previously at Lyric: Three roles since 2008/09, most recently George Benton/*Dead Man Walking* (2019/20) and Amonasro/*Aida* (2011/12).

Recent highlights for the American baritone include Alberich/*Ring* cycle (Deutsche Oper Berlin, San Francisco Opera), Telramund/*Lohengrin* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), Alberich/*Siegfried* and Kaspar/*Der Freischütz* (Seville's Teatro de la Maestranza), the Villains/*Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Tokyo), the title role/*Simon Boccanegra* (New Zealand Festival), Amonasro/*Aida* (Houston, Cincinnati), George/*Of Mice and Men* (Houston), Porgy/*Porgy and Bess* (Dallas, Seattle, Houston, Washington, Detroit, San Francisco), Reverend/*Blue* (Glimmerglass Festival, Detroit Opera, Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera), Thoas/*Iphigénie en Tauride* (Metropolitan Opera), and Renato/*Un ballo in maschera* (New Orleans, Montreal), and more than 200 performances as Rigoletto. He debuted at Lyric in 2008/09 as Porgy/*Porgy and Bess*. Hawkins has also appeared in Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* (Kennedy Center), Jake Heggie's *A Great Hope Fell* (EOS Orchestra of New York, world premiere), Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (St. Louis Symphony), and concert selections from American musicals (Deutsche Welle WDR 4, Cologne); with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall; and with the major orchestras of Chicago, Washington, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Prague, and Vienna.



ISSACHAH SAVAGE | CURTIS TOLER | THE WALKERS
Lyric debut

This season, the tenor will return to the Metropolitan Opera for *Idomeneo* (High Priest) and will make concert debuts with The Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, and the National Symphony Orchestra. He will return to the New York Philharmonic for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Jaap van Zweden. Last season, he sang the title role in *Tannhäuser* at LA Opera, and on the concert stage he sang Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Savage also joined Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Rotterdam Philharmonic for concert performances of *Das Rheingold* (Froh) in Rotterdam, Paris, Dortmund, and Baden-Baden. Additional engagements include the title role in *Otello* at Austin Opera. He made his European debut as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, sang in *Die Walküre* (Siegmund) with Opéra National de Bordeaux, and made his Chicago Symphony debut with Riccardo Muti in concert performances of *Aida* (Messenger). Savage made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *Ernani* (Don Riccardo), sang in *Die Walküre* (Siegmund) at the Canadian Opera Company, and made his mainstage debut in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Bacchus) at Seattle Opera. He made his role debut as the title role in Wagner's *Rienzi* with the National Philharmonic at Strathmore Hall, debuted at Houston Grand Opera and Austin Opera in *Aida* (Radames), and performed *Il trovatore* (Manrico) with the San Antonio Symphony.



NORMAN GARRETT | BILAL | THE WALKERS

Previously at Lyric: Three roles since 2014/15, most recently Garby/*The Factotum* (2022/23) and Foreman and Adult James/*Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (2021/22).

This season, the baritone made his LA Opera debut as Abdul in *Omar* and will sing Ned in a new edition of *Treemonisha* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In concert, he sang Vaughan-Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and *Messiah* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Ontario. Last season, he made his debut at Seattle Opera as the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*. At the Metropolitan Opera, he appeared as the Foreman/Adult James in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and as Jim in *Porgy and Bess*. He sang Jake in *Porgy and Bess* with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, and on tour at both the Lucerne Festival and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival with conductor Alan Gilbert. In the 2020/21 season, Garrett made his house debut at Theater an der Wien as Crown in *Porgy and Bess*, made his role debut as the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Dayton Opera, and sang Escamillo in *Carmen* at Opera Orlando. He has appeared at Houston Grand Opera (*Ríolobo/Florencia en el Amazonas*), Washington National Opera

(Lieutenant Gordon/*Silent Night*), and the Bayerische Staatsoper (Larkens/*La fanciulla del West*), and made his Lyric debut as Jake/*Porgy and Bess* (2014/15).



KAMARI SAXON |
CHIEF'S SON #2 | THE WALKERS

Previously at Lyric: Young Robert/*Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (2021/22).

Saxton attended The Theatre School at DePaul University for Acting. He recently starred in *The Queen of Infinite Space* as Thomas Digges with Proboscis Theatre Company and in *We Are Proud to Present* as Actor 4 at Butler University. At DePaul, he played Father Tuyeshame in *Our Lady of Kibeho* (2019) as well as Oedipus in *King Oedipus* (2018).



RON DUKES |
CHIEF'S SON #1 | THE WALKERS
PASSENGER 8 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Previously at Lyric: Sam/*The Factotum* and Jago/*Ernani* (both 2022/23).

A first-year Ryan Opera Center member, the bass 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 start-up opera companies in Bloomington, 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/*The Magic Flute*. *Ron Dukes* is sponsored by **The Thierer Family Foundation**.



KATHRYN HENRY |
PASSENGER 1 | FOUR PORTRAITS
Lyric debut

An Ensemble member of the Ryan Opera Center, the soprano began the season performing in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric* at Millennium Park. Also this season, she reprised the role of Lucy Harker/*The Lord of Cries* for the East Coast premiere performance and world premiere studio recording of the cast album through the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Odyssey Opera, and Pentatone Records. She also presented a recital of women composers with the Green Lake Festival of Music. This summer she joins the Aspen Music Festival as a Renée Fleming Artist, where she will sing Roxane Coss/*Bel Canto*. Last season, she worked with Fleming in Carnegie Hall's SongStudio. Other recent highlights

include Micaëla/*La tragédie de Carmen* and the title role in Viardot's *Cendrillon* with Florentine Opera Company. Henry made debuts with Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera (*Norma*), Walla Walla Symphony (Beethoven 9), and Racine Symphony Orchestra (Fauré *Requiem*). In the summer of 2021, she joined the Santa Fe Opera as Lucy Harker in the world premiere of John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's *The Lord of Cries*. Henry was a finalist in the 2015 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, the 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers at Houston Grand Opera, the 2021 Jensen Foundation Vocal Competition, the 2021 National Opera Association Carolyn Bailey and Dominic Argento Vocal Competition, and the 2022 Vincerò World Singing Competition. *Kathryn Henry* is sponsored by **Patricia A. Kenney and Gregory J. O'Leary and Karen Pettite**.



LINDSEY REYNOLDS |
VERY LOUD GIRL | THE WALKERS
PASSENGER 2 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Previously at Lyric: Alice/*Le Comte Ory* and Voice from Above/*Don Carlos* (both 2022/23).

A first-year member of the Ryan Opera Center Ensemble, in 2021/22 the New Orleans native portrayed Despina/*Così fan tutte* and Betty/Marc Blitzstein's *Triple-Sec* (a film adaptation) with Curtis Opera Theatre. She was also an Emerging Artist with Opera Philadelphia, where she sang the Page/*Rigoletto*. The soprano's repertoire includes Zerlina/*Don Giovanni*, Adina/*The Elixir of Love*, Giulietta/*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Miss Wordsworth/*Albert Herring*, and Monica/*The Medium*. She has appeared in concert with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin and with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stéphane Denève. Reynolds has been awarded first place in many competitions, among them the Camille Coloratura Awards, James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, Young Patronesses of the Opera/Florida Grand Opera Competition, Hal Leonard Art Song Competition, and National Association of Negro Musicians Competition. She is also the recipient of an Emerging Artist Award from Opera Index, and this summer debuts with the Grant Park Music Festival. *Lindsey Reynolds* is sponsored by an **Anonymous Donor, Fred & Phoebe Boelter, and Donna Van Eekeren & Dale Connelly**.



KATHLEEN FELTY |
PASSENGER 4 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Previously at Lyric: Third Lady/*The Magic Flute* (2021/22) and Laura/Luisa Miller (2019/20).

A Ryan Opera Center alumna from Lubbock, Texas, Felty's repertoire includes 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 Santa Fe Opera apprentice artist, and also has participated in Ravinia's Steans Music Institute and the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto fellowship program. She recently appeared in the Harris

Theater's *Beyond the Aria* series, in concert with North Carolina Opera as Clotilde/*Norma*, and made her Dayton Opera debut in the role of Maddalena/*Rigoletto*. She is a four-time district winner of the Metropolitan Opera's Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. In Lyric's 2020/21 season, Felty sang in *Sole e Amore*, *Magical Music Around the World*, and *Rising Stars in Concert*.



**STEPHANIE SANCHEZ | PASSENGER 3
| FOUR PORTRAITS**

Lyric debut

This season, the mezzo-soprano returns to Arizona Opera as Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at Intermountain Opera. Her debuts this season include performances as Carlotta in *Zorro* at Opera Southwest and the Commanding Officer's Wife in *The Knock* at Cincinnati Opera. Sanchez's 2021/22 highlights included performances as Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; the Mother in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Coraline* with West Edge Opera; and Mercédès/*Carmen* at Opera San José. At the 2021 Glimmerglass Festival, Sanchez sang the role of Ines in Francesca Zambello's adaptation of *Il trovatore* and was a featured artist in an all-Wagner concert conducted by Maestro Joseph Colaneri. That same season, she also made her house debut with Austin Opera in a solo recital highlighting works by Mexican and LatinX composers. Sanchez has been the recipient of several awards, recently taking home the Audience Choice Award at the 2021 Jensen Foundation competition. Other notable engagements include Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Azucena in *Il trovatore*, all with Opera San José; Gertrude in *Hansel and Gretel* with Brava Opera Theater; Olga in *Eugene Onegin* with Intermountain Opera; and Baroness Nica in *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* and Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold*, both with Arizona Opera.



CORNELIUS JOHNSON | PASSENGER 5 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Lyric debut

The Chicago native has performed with Chautauqua Opera, Connecticut Opera, Chamber Opera Chicago, Elgin Opera, Lake George Opera Festival, Opera Memphis, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, South Shore Opera Company of Chicago, Shreveport Opera, Teatro Real in Madrid, the Ravinia Music Festival, and with Lyric's *Opera In The Neighborhoods* program. He made his company debut with Chicago Opera Theater as Jerome Mitchell in the world premiere of Dan Shore's *Freedom Ride*. Other roles include Don José in *Carmen*, Camille in *The Merry Widow*, and Spoletta in *Tosca*. He made his professional operatic debut as Peter the Honeyman in Houston Grand Opera's production of *Porgy and Bess*, which then toured to the Opéra Bastille in Paris, La Scala in Milan, and the Bunkamura Theater with the Tokyo Philharmonic. He has also performed the role with the Sydney Symphony (Australia), the Jacksonville Symphony, and Toledo Opera. Johnson's numerous concert appearances include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Allegro Chorale and Orchestra; Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's

Requiem, and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with the Elmhurst Choral Union; and *Messiah* with Indiana University South Bend Chorus and Orchestra, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, and the Michigan City Community Orchestra. Johnson sang in a program of arias and duets on the opening weekend of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park.



ALEJANDRO LUÉVANOS | PASSENGER 6 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Previously at Lyric: Three roles, most recently Lillas Pastia/*Carmen* and A Royal Herald/*Don Carlos* (both 2022/23).

Born in Durango, Mexico, the first-year member of the Ryan Opera Center Ensemble made his debut this season as Riccardo/*Ernani*. His appearances in Mexico include Don José/*Carmen* (Toluca Philharmonic Orchestra); Borsa/*Rigoletto*, Count Almaviva/*The Barber of Seville*, and scenes from *Il trovatore* (Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México); and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and *Petite Messe Solennelle*, as well as an opera gala with Ramón Vargas (all at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes). Luévanos was previously a two-year member of the Opera Studio at the Bellas Artes, where he is scheduled to return to appear in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. A former participant in the International Summer Program in Sankt Goar, Germany, he is also a 2021 and 2022 winner of the Mexico District in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. *Alejandro Luévanos is sponsored by an Anonymous Donor.*



DARREN DRONE | PASSENGER 7 | FOUR PORTRAITS

Lyric debut

This season, the baritone makes debuts with Seattle Opera as Baron Douphol in *La traviata*, Portland Opera as Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Opera San José in the title role of Verdi's *Falstaff*. He also participated in a workshop of Nmon Ford's *House of Orfeus*, performed in a concert of operatic favorites with the Santa Fe Symphony. This summer Drone will debut at The Glimmerglass Festival as Marcello in *La bohème* and Grégorio in *Roméo et Juliette*. During the 2021/22 season, he was a featured soloist in *Porgy and Bess* at the Metropolitan Opera and made his Opera Memphis debut as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. In the summer of 2022, he sang Moralès in *Carmen* at Santa Fe. During the 2023/24 season Drone will make debuts with Houston Grand Opera and Dallas Opera while also returning to Portland Opera in a leading role.



CORINNE WALLACE-CRANE | GPS | FOUR PORTRAITS

Previously at Lyric: Lyric Chorus since 2010/11.

At Lyric, Wallace-Crane has taken the roles of Shaindel/*Fiddler on the Roof* (2022/23), 3rd Knaben/*The Magic Flute* (2021/22), Sister Lillianne/*Dead Man Walking* (2019/20), Sprite/*Cendrillon* (2018/19), and Night Maid/*My Fair Lady* (2016/17). She was featured with the Grant Park Music Festival as the alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria* in 2021 and

Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* in 2017. This summer she will return to the festival in Mendelssohn's *The First Walpurgis Night*. Wallace-Crane trained as a young artist at the Natchez Opera Festival, Central City Opera, and Sarasota Opera.



**JEFF PARKER | ARNE DUNCAN |
THE WALKERS**

Lyric debut

The Chicago-based actor has appeared at most of Chicago's major theaters, including the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Writers, Court, Northlight, Victory Gardens, Drury Lane, Marriott, Porchlight, and many others. Regional appearances include work with Manhattan Theatre Club (New York), Huntington Theatre (Boston), American Conservatory Theatre and Magic Theatre (San Francisco), Asolo Repertory Theatre (Sarasota), Clarence Brown Theatre (Knoxville), Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, and the Kennedy Center. Parker received a Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Best Actor in a musical for his performance of Guido in the musical *Nine* for Porchlight Music Theatre. He was also a part of the Jeff Award winning ensemble of Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays* directed by Tina Landau at Steppenwolf. Recent appearances include the national tour of *The King's Speech* at the National Theatre in Washington D.C. and the Beatles-infused musical version of *As You Like It* at Chicago Shakespeare and Milwaukee Rep. Television and film appearances include *The Big Leap*, *Prison Break*, *Empire*, *NeXt*, *Proven Innocent* (Fox), *Chicago P.D.*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med* (NBC), *Soundtrack* (Netflix), and *Christmas is Canceled* (Lionsgate/Amazon Prime).



**JAMION COTTEN | LIL' BUNCHY
BATES | THE WALKERS**

Lyric debut

The 13-year-old honor student was born and raised on the West Side of Chicago. He appeared at Lyric in *Dead Man Walking* (2019/20). A member of Uniting Voices Chicago (formerly the Chicago Children's Choir) since 2018, Cotten performed with Chance the Rapper at the 2020 NBA All-Star halftime show, and sang in Bernstein's *Mass* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* at Ravinia. At age 11, Cotten wrote and recorded the song "Just a Dream" with the Uniting Voices Choir (formerly Chicago Children's Choir).



UNITING VOICES CHICAGO

Previously at Lyric: 16 productions since 2000/01, most recently *Carmen* and *Hansel and Gretel* (both 2022/23).

Uniting Voices Chicago (Josephine Lee, president and artistic director), formerly Chicago Children's Choir, is the nation's preeminent youth choral organization, serving 5,200 students across the city of Chicago. Founded in Hyde Park

in direct response to the Civil Rights Movement in 1956, UVC has grown from one choir into a vast network of in-school and after-school programs driven by one mission: to inspire and change lives through music. UVC has impacted the lives of more than 50,000 diverse youth throughout its 62-year history. Since its founding, UVC has focused on building programs that reflect the racial and economic diversity of Chicago. Eighty percent of youth served are from low-moderate income homes, with over 4,000 students annually participating completely free of charge. All singers in UVC programs receive some level of subsidy. High school seniors enrolled in UVC have a 100% graduation and college acceptance rate, becoming global ambassadors who carry on UVC's core values in a wide array of professional fields.



KAZEM ABDULLAH | CONDUCTOR

Lyric debut

The American conductor was Music and Artistic Director of the City of Aachen, Germany from 2012 to 2017. During his tenure, he performed more than 25 operas and collaborated with musicians such as Johannes Moser, Lise de la Salle, Angela Gheorghiu, Augustin Haedelich, and Midori. Among his recent orchestral credits are the symphony orchestras of Oregon, Indianapolis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati. In addition to his symphony engagements, he recently conducted an opera gala for the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the American premiere of Charles Wuorinen's opera *Brokeback Mountain* with New York City Opera, and Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* for Cape Town Opera. He led the Orquestra de São Paulo on its third United States coast-to-coast tour, conducted the New World Symphony's 2009 Ives In-Context Festival, and on short notice conducted the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in collaboration with the Mark Morris Dance Group. Abdullah has guest conducted such esteemed companies as the Atlanta Opera (*Così fan tutte*) and the Théâtre du Châtelet de Paris, where he led performances of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2009 conducting Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. As a clarinetist, Abdullah has performed extensively as an orchestral musician, chamber musician, and soloist, and spent two seasons as a member of the New World Symphony.



**YUVAL SHARON | DIRECTOR &
CURATOR**

Previously at Lyric: *Twilight: Gods* (2020/21).

Sharon is founder and co-Artistic Director of The Industry in Los Angeles and the Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of Detroit Opera, where he made his debut in 2020 with *Twilight: Gods*, an adaptation of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* that then came to Lyric, performed in the Millennium Park garage. In the 2021/22 season at Detroit Opera, he led new productions of Ragnar Kjartansson's *Bliss*, staged in the historic Michigan Building Theatre, and *La bohème*,

presented in reverse order in the Detroit Opera House. He also reprised his production of *Die Zauberflöte* with the Berlin State Opera. With The Industry, Sharon has directed and produced new operas in moving vehicles, operating train stations, Hollywood sound stages, and various “non-spaces” such as warehouses, parking lots, and escalator corridors. From 2016 to 2019, Sharon was the first Artist-Collaborator at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, creating nine projects that included newly commissioned works, site-specific installations, and performances outside the hall. His residency culminated in a major revival of Meredith Monk’s opera *ATLAS*. The first American ever invited to direct at Bayreuth, Sharon directed *Lohengrin* there in 2018. He is the recipient of the 2014 Götz Friedrich Prize in Germany for his production of John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, originally produced at the Staatstheater Karlsruhe and later presented in Seville’s Teatro de la Maestranza. He directed John Cage’s *Song Books* at the San Francisco Symphony and Carnegie Hall with Joan La Barbara, Meredith Monk, and Jessye Norman. His production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, originally produced at the Cleveland Orchestra, was the first fully-staged opera ever presented in Vienna’s Musikverein in October 2017. That year, Sharon was honored with a MacArthur Fellowship and a Foundation for Contemporary Art grant for theater.



JASON H. THOMPSON | PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Previously at Lyric: *Twilight: Gods* (2020/21).

The versatile designer recently received an LA Drama Critics Circle Award for *Vietgone*. He has also been awarded The Kinetic Lighting Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatrical Design, and received two Ovation Awards for *Chavez Ravine* (Projection Design) and *Venice* [Projection Design]. Select international credits include: *Lost Highway* (Oper Frankfurt), *Die Walküre* (Karlsruhe, Germany), *Tri Sestri* (Vienna State Opera), *Tarza* and *Frozen Sing A-Long* (Shanghai Disneyland). Broadway credits include *Baby, It’s You!*. Other key projects include *Twilight: Gods* (Detroit Opera), *A Trip to the Moon* and *Young Caesar* (LA Phil), *Hopscotch* and *Invisible Cities* (The Industry), *Cage Songbooks* (Carnegie Hall), *Chavez Ravine*, *The Steward of Christendom*, *Venice*, *This Beautiful City*, *Palomino*, *Throw Me from the Burnpile* and *Light Me Up* (Center Theatre Group), *Behavior of Broadus* (Sacred Fools), *Venice* and *The Great Immensity* (Public Theatre), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Cleveland Orchestra), and *Wingman* (Ars Nova). Thompson has worked at a number of regional theaters including The Guthrie, KC Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Signature Theatre in D.C., Geffen Playhouse, and South Coast Repertory Theatre, and has created four video installations for the Petersen Auto Museum in Los Angeles.



KAITLYN PIETRAS | PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Previously at Lyric: *Twilight: Gods* (2020/21).

Pietras is a visual artist with a background in architecture and scenic design. She has received three LA Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Revenge Song*, *Vietgone*, and *RII*. Pietras’s design for *Mojada* was featured in the US Exhibit for the Prague Quadrennial in 2019. Select opera credits include: *The Valkyries* (LA Phil, Detroit Opera), *Twilight: Gods* (Detroit Opera), *Lost Highway* (Oper Frankfurt), and *A Trip to the Moon* and *Young Caesar* (LA Phil). Other key projects include *Gun & Powder* (Signature Theatre), *unseen*, *How to Catch Creation*, *Mother Road*, *Unison*, and *Mojada* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and *Revenge Song*, *Key Largo*, and *Mysterious Circumstances* (Geffen Playhouse).



CARLOS J. SOTO | COSTUME DESIGNER

Lyric debut

The New York-based designer and creative director’s credits include *Tristan und Isolde* (Santa Fe Opera, with Zack Winokur); *Only An Octave Apart* with Justin Vivian Bond and Anthony Roth Costanzo (St. Ann’s Warehouse, Wilton’s Music Hall); *The No One’s Rose* by composer Matthew Aucoin and choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith (Stanford Live); and *The Black Clown* with Davóne Tines (ART, Lincoln Center, 2018/19). Other recent highlights include *Passage* with Solange Knowles & Wu Tsang (International Woolmark Prize 2021), *In Past Pupils* and *Smiles* with Knowles (Venice Biennale, 2019), *Witness!* (Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg and Sydney Opera House, 2019/20), and *When I Get Home* (film and concert tour 2019). Costumes and scenography credits include Wagner’s *The Valkyries* by Yuval Sharon (Detroit Opera). Soto has collaborated closely with Robert Wilson since 1997, most recently on *Bach 6 Solo*, *Der Messias*, and *I was sitting on my patio this guy appeared I thought I was hallucinating*.



JODY ELFF | SOUND DESIGNER

Lyric debut

The Grammy Award-winning audio engineer, sound artist, and designer has mixed countless televised concert events including several MTV Video Music Awards, Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga’s *One Last Time* at Radio City Music Hall, the *South Park* 25th Anniversary concert, and Metallica’s *All Within My Hands* benefit. Elff’s recording work includes the Yo-Yo Ma/Silk Road Ensemble album *Sing Me Home*, and Chris Thile’s *Laysongs*. His has provided sound design for LA Phil, Lincoln Center Festival, The Industry, and numerous others. His fine art sound works have been presented at museums and galleries internationally, including collaborations with David Lang and Diller Scofidio + Renfro on *Musings on a Glass Box* at Foundation Cartier in Paris

and The Mile Long Opera. Elff has developed patented audio technologies for real-time mixing of high-channel-count music events over distance.



MICHAEL BLACK | CHORUS MASTER

The Australian chorus master 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 two seasons. He has served as chorus master 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. Stotler Chorus Master Endowed Chair.*



JOSEPHINE LEE | CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTER

Previously at Lyric: 16 productions since 2000/01, most recently *Carmen* and *Hansel and Gretel* (both 2022/23).

As the president and artistic director of Uniting Voices Chicago (UVC, formerly the Chicago Children's Choir), Josephine Lee has revolutionized youth music education, infusing their experience with cutting-edge performances of diverse repertoire, ongoing partnerships with leading cultural institutions such as Lyric, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Ravinia Festival, and extensive national and international tours. For her work on the documentary *Songs on the Road to Freedom* (2008), Lee was honored with an Emmy Award. Among Lee's recent projects are two world premiere theatrical pieces (*Long Way Home* with the Q Brothers Collective and *Sita Ram* with David Kersnar of Lookingglass Theatre), several collaborations with Chance the Rapper (including 2016's Grammy Award-winning project, *Coloring Book*), and an original piano and cello composition, *Ascension*, with choreographer Frank Chaves for Ballet Chicago in 2017. Lee earned a Grammy Award nomination as a soloist in the world premiere of Ted Hearne's *Place* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Next Wave Festival (2018). In 2019, she conducted Lisa Fischer and members of the National Philharmonic at Strathmore. Lee founded Vocality in 2015, a festival chorus comprising young vocal artists from a wide array of communities in the city of Chicago. Among her current projects is a new theatrical work by David Kersnar, J. Nicole Brooks, and UVC composer-in-residence Mitchell Owens III.



RENA BUTLER | CHOREOGRAPHER

Lyric debut

The Chicago native began her studies at The Chicago Academy for the Arts, studied overseas at Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan, and received her BFA from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance. This season, in addition to creating an evening length work for Norrdans in Sweden and choreographing *Orpheus and Eurydice* for San Francisco Opera, Butler will create her first work for The National Ballet of Canada, celebrating the music of composer John Adams for his 75th birthday. Butler has danced with companies including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (where she was a choreographic fellow), AIM by Kyle Abraham, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, David Dorfman Dance, Manuel Vignouille/M-Motions, The Kevin Wynn Collection, and Pasos Con Sabor Salsa Dance Company, among many others. She recently danced with Gibney Company and was their inaugural Choreographic Associate. Butler is a recipient of the prestigious 2019 Princess Grace Foundation Award for Choreography and created works for BalletX, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, GroundWorks DanceTheater, Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Summer Program, Parsons, Charlotte Ballet, the Juilliard School, Boston Dance Theater, The New Orleans Museum of Modern Art in collaboration with composer Terrence Blanchard, and a film short in collaboration with Third Coast Percussion x Devonté Hynes/Blood Orange. Butler has taught dance and choreographic workshops at L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille in France, The Macau Cultural Center in China, Ailey Camp Chicago, and SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance.



ADAM MCGAW | ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER

Lyric debut

The Detroit native received his Bachelors of Fine Arts Degree in Dance at Wayne State University. He joined Hubbard Street Dance Chicago full time in 2019 and spent three seasons dancing with the company. He has performed work by influential choreographers including Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin, William Forsythe, Kyle Abraham, Aszure Barton, Johannes Weiland, Fernando Melo, Maxine Doyle, Nacho Duato, Lar Lubovitch, Jermaine Spivey, Spenser Theberge, Rena Butler, and Jonathan Fredrickson, among others. Additional training includes Springboard Danse Montreal, b12 Festival (Berlin) and Gaga Winter Intensive (Tel Aviv, Israel). Adam currently works as a freelance artist/choreographer.



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.***



ALEXANDER GEDEON | ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR

Previously at Lyric: *Twilight: Gods* (2020/21).

The Los Angeles native is a deviser, director, and multi-disciplinary performer whose work takes an intersectional lens to classical aesthetics. Over the past seven years, Alexander has developed and directed new opera and concert-theater works including: *Everything Rises* featuring Jennifer Koh and Davóne Tines at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); *Sanctuaries* (Portland's Memorial Coliseum), a jazz chamber opera about gentrification; *Concerto for Having Fun with Elvis on Stage* (the REDCAT); *The Double* (Synchromy); Olivier Messiaen's *Apparition de l'église éternelle* (Royce Hall); Georges Bizet/Peter Brook's *La tragédie de Carmen* (San Diego Opera) and Julius Eastman's *Stay On It* (San Francisco Conservatory of Music). Previously, Alexander associate directed for Yuval Sharon at Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. As a stage actor he has performed nationally at venues such as New York's HERE Arts Center, the REDCAT, and The Ford Theater with the Grammy-winning Billy Childs Jazz Chamber Ensemble and Lyris Quartet. In the early 2000s, Alexander led the New York based band Trick & the Heartstrings and signed to Warner Bros UK with Grammy-winning producer Paul Epworth (Adele, Florence + the Machine). Alexander is a graduate of New York University's Experimental Theater Wing, and trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. [L](#)

Orchestra & Chorus

MUSIC STAFF

William C. Billingham
Susan Miller Hult
Keun-A Lee
Noah Lindquist
Francesco Milioto
Lee Mills⁺
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ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*
Mrs. R. Robert Funderburg
Endowed Chair
John Macfarlane, *Acting*
Assistant Concertmaster
Alexander Belavsky
Kathleen Brauer
Bing Jing Yu
Laura Miller
Rika Seko^{**}
Liba Shacht
Heather Wittels

Violin II

Yin Shen, *Principal*
John Macfarlane, *Assistant*
Principal
Diane Duraffourg-Robinson
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Viola

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Dionne Jackson, *Assistant Principal*
Rachel Blumenthal^{**}
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Piccorno

Rachel Blumenthal^{**}
Alyce Johnson^{*}

Oboe

Paul Lueders^{**},
Acting Principal
Judith Zunamon Lewis,
Acting Assistant Principal

English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

Clarinet

Susan Warner,
Acting Principal
Danny Mui^{**},
Acting Assistant Principal

Bass Clarinet

Danny Mui^{**}

Bassoon

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

Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

Horn

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

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Acting Assistant Principal

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Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*
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Mark Fry^{**}

Bass Trombone

Mark Fry^{**}

Tuba

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* On leave, 2022/23 Season

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Yvette Smith
Marie Sokolova
Emma Sorenson
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Pamela Williams
Michelle K. Wrighte

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Timothy Bradley
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Joseph A. Fosselman
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Thomas L. Potter

Bass

David DuBois
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Robert Morrissey
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Craig Springer
Vince Wallace
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CORE SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS**Soprano**

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Emily Mwila
Carla Janzen

Mezzo-Soprano

Christina G. Adams
Cara Collins

Tenor

Jared V. Esguerra
Joe Shadday

Bass

David Govertsen
Nicolai Janitzky

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Katelyn Lee
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Leah Rockweit
Diana Stoic

Mezzo-Soprano

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Marissa Simmons

Tenor

Matthew Daniel
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Darell Haynes
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Bass

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Standing L-R: Kathryn Henry, Donald Lee III, Ian Rucker, Ron Dukes, Katherine DeYoung, Alejandro Luévanos, Denis Vález
Sitting L-R: Lunga Eric Hallam, Laureano Quani, Ryan Capozzo, Martin Luther Clark, Lindsey Reynolds, Wm. Clay Thompson, Chris Reynolds
Front L-R: Luther H. Lewis III, Tess Naval

Lyric

Ryan Opera Center

The 2022/23 Ryan Opera Center Ensemble

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Kathryn Henry
Lindsey Reynolds
Denis Véléz

Mezzo-soprano

Katherine DeYoung

Tenors

Ryan Capozzo
Martin Luther Clark
Lunga Eric Hallam
Alejandro Luévanos

Baritones

Laureano Quant
Ian Rucker

Basses

Ron Dukes
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Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

MARIO ANTONIO MARRA

This season: Head of Music at Minnesota Opera

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Mario Antonio Marra conducts a selection for *Rising Stars in Concert* in 2017.

THIS SEASON



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Chicago Opera Theater

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Joseph Lim

Stuck Elevator
Nashville Opera

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Chicago

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FRIDAY, MAY 12

Featured Vintner Tasting Reception held in the Grand Foyer of the Lyric Opera House.

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Special thanks to all of our Featured Vintners who are so generously supporting this year's auction. A complete list is available on our website.

For more information, visit lyricopera.org/wineauction or email lyricwineauction@lyricopera.org



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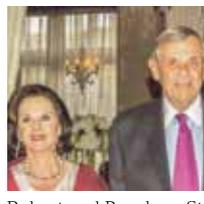
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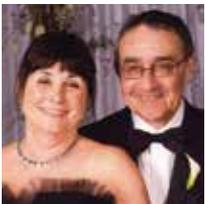
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Conductors



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE HERE AT LYRIC, AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THE POSITION?

I am the Manager, Orchestra and Assistant Conductors, a member of the Music Administration team here at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and I took this role in July 2021.

WHAT KEEPS YOU COMMITTED TO THE WORK YOU DO?

Regular opportunities to help produce historic moments for this art form keep me committed to my work. This season includes two world premiere productions that prominently depict the Black experience in America, *The Factotum* and *Proximity*, true testaments to the progress that opera as an art form has made. My position is one of many at Lyric that has made it possible for these productions to be workshopped, rehearsed, and ultimately performed. That has helped me push through the more challenging aspects of my role.

WHAT LED YOU TO WORK AT LYRIC?

When I was at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, one of my bosses oversaw Artistic Planning for the ASO and Cincinnati Opera. His career inspired me to achieve the same versatility in my career. This opening at Lyric has given me the chance to apply my orchestra management experience to a major American opera house.

WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR JOB THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW?

My title may seem self-explanatory, but it does not explain the many aspects of my role. I mainly assist with the contracting and compensation of our Orchestra and Assistant Conductors. I plan internal and national auditions for vacancies that may arise in either of these groups. I assist with the negotiation and interpretation of collective bargaining agreements between Lyric Opera and the Chicago Federation of Musicians. I also administer Lyric's instrument insurance policy and facilitate the procurement of instruments we need for our productions, when they are not in our inventory. And there's more where that came from!

A FAVORITE LYRIC MOMENT?

Meeting Terence Blanchard! Lyric produced *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* last season. Terence composed the score, and Kasi Lemmons wrote the libretto. I'm a huge film music nerd, and Terence Blanchard has been one of my favorite film composers since I was a child. He composed the score for Kasi Lemmons's *Eve's Bayou*, an iconic movie from the 90s that I consider a must-see! I only shook Terence's hand and spoke to him for a second, but it was such an exciting moment for me.

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

Much like many of my colleagues who work in nonprofit performing arts, I have a hard time maintaining a firm line between work and life. When your livelihood is centered on your passion, it is very easy to forget that you are, in fact, working. Couple that with the "show must go on" culture that is so prominent in this industry, and the challenge becomes clearer. Even when you do a decent job of maintaining healthy boundaries, doing so takes a considerable amount of energy.

BEYOND OPERA, WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER PASSIONS?

I am a book, music, and movie nerd! Sci-fi/fantasy is my favorite genre of books and movies. I can listen to almost any genre of music, but my favorites are alt-rock (grunge, garage, indie, folk), hip-hop, and R&B. And I create all of these in my spare time. 🎧