

LYRIC OPERA

KANSAS CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Explorations Series
Continues with
Arias and Barcarolles | The Bernstein Songbook

***New York Festival of Song
Creators of Last Year's Stunning Schubert | Beatles
Returns Oct. 14 @ 7:30p
at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral***

Kansas City, MO (Sept. 22, 2017) – General Director and CEO Deborah Sandler today announced ***Arias and Barcarolles | The Bernstein Songbook*** will continue the 2017-2018 ***Explorations Series***, Sat., Oct. 14 at 7:30 at the Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral (415 W. 13th St., Kansas City, MO 64105). The creators of last year's brilliant ***Schubert | Beatles*** program, the ***New York Festival of Song***, now bring us ***Arias and Barcarolles | The Bernstein Songbook***. The artists featured include **Katherine Pracht**, mezzo-soprano; **Matthew Worth**, baritone; **Michael Barrett** and **Steven Blier**, piano. This special second collaboration focuses on the remarkable musical output of the iconic Maestro, Leonard Bernstein, in celebration of the centennial of his birth. New York Festival of Song bios can be found at [New York Festival of Song](#). High res headshots can be found at [Lyric Opera of Kansas City](#).

The program will include Bernstein's final song cycle, *Arias and Barcarolles*, along with other Bernstein favorites and rarities written for the stage, and will bring fascinating insights into one of the 20th Century's American musical legends. *A's and B's*, as it is known, has neither arias nor barcarolles. The title comes from a comment Dwight D. Eisenhower made after Lenny had conducted a concert: "You know, I liked that last piece you played. It's got a theme. I like music with a theme, not all them arias and barcarolles." *A's and B's* embraces many styles, from Broadway pizzazz, to Copland-y Americana, to one of the most sensuously beautiful twelve-tone songs in the rep. Bernstein's theme is the family, which he paints with his unique blend of humor and complexity. The work has become a classic since NYFOS gave the American premiere in 1989. Their subsequent recording with Judy Kaye and Bill Sharp won a Grammy in 1991. The remainder of the program will feature other songs by Bernstein from his musical theater, opera and concert works with **Lyric Opera Resident Artists Marlen Nahhas, Lauren Ange, Martin Luther Clark** and **Tim Murray** joining Blier, Barrett, Pracht and Worth.

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The **Explorations Series** will feature adventurous programming that crosses musical borders, experiments with a wider range of genres, and illuminates the intersection of classical music with various streams of popular music. “This programming diversity allows us to touch audiences in new and personal ways, while expanding the range of our offerings,” said General Director Deborah Sandler. “We believe the intimacy of our **Explorations** performances will create a new kind of experience for audiences. This series will also continue to showcase the extremely talented singers in our Resident Artist Program, along with other guest artists from around the world.”

Explorations Series season sponsored by Virginia & Charles Clark and Spencer Fane, LLP. Additional Support from The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation and The Estate of Richard Hill, Charter Sponsor of the Resident Artists Program. *Arias and Barcarolles* | *The Bernstein Songbook* is underwritten by Virginia & Charles Clark.

***Arias and Barcarolles* | *The Bernstein Songbook* with New York Festival of Song**

October 14, 2017, 7:30pm
Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

Tickets: \$25.

Subscribers may add an Explorations subscription to their mainstage subscription for \$60.

To purchase tickets, call Ticketing & Patron Services (816) 471-7344. Patrons can purchase and print their tickets at home by visiting www.kcopera.org. Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, 90 minutes before the performances, with a valid student ID.

About the Lyric Opera Resident Artists

Lebanese-Mexican soprano **Marlen Nahhas** has been an apprentice artist at Central City Opera for the last two summers where she was awarded the coveted young artist scholarship. The year prior, she was a festival artist at Utah Festival Opera where she won first place in the Michael Ballam International Opera Competition. Ms. Nahhas has been a two-time regional finalist in the Midwest region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions. She received her Bachelors of Music in vocal performance and musical theatre at Oklahoma City University and her Masters and Performance diploma from Indiana University under the tutelage of Carol Vaness. Recent roles include the title role in *Tosca*, Cio-Cio San in *Madama butterfly*, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Mimi in *La bohème*.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Ms. Nahhas will perform the roles of The Page in *Rigoletto* and Berta in *The Barber of Seville*.

Lauren Auge, mezzo-soprano, is described as “offering something transformative to the audience” in her work on the stage. Most recently, Ms. Auge was seen as Jennie in Kurt Weill’s *Down in the Valley* and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. Making her mark on the competition scene, Ms. Auge was a semi-finalist in the 2015 Bel Canto Foundation competition, the 2014 winner of Sinfonietta Bel Canto Voice Competition, a finalist in the Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition and a first place winner in the 2013 Pantazelos Performing Artists Foundation Vocal Competition. Recently Ms. Auge was also a Danis Wilson Apprentice Artist at the Sugar Creek Symphony and Song Festival. Previous operatic roles have included Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zita in

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Gianni Schicchi, The Duchess in Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operetta *The Gondoliers*, Thelma in *Cold Sassy Tree* and The Wife in Darius Milhaud's dark opera *Le pauvre matelot*.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Ms. Auge will perform the role of Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*.

Tenor **Martin Luther Clark** is an alumnus at the University of North Texas holding a Graduate Artist Certificate and Bachelor of Music degree, both in Vocal Performance. While at UNT, Mr. Clark studied voice with Dr. Stephen F. Austin and Professor William Joyner. He recently made his Charlottesville Opera debut as a Young Artist singing the role of Borsa (*Rigoletto*) and covering Curly (*Oklahoma!*). In May of 2017, he covered the role of Arjuna (*Arjuna's Dilemma*) with the Dallas Opera. For the 2016 season, Mr. Clark performed roles including Tonio (*La fille du regiment*) with Opera North, Bastien (*Bastien and Bastienne*) with the Dallas Opera Outreach, Mozart (*Mozart and Salieri*) with Opera in Concert, and several others. Also in 2016, he was selected as a semi-finalist in the Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition where he was the youngest competitor by two years. Throughout his college career at UNT, he performed numerous roles including Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Count Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Camille (*The Merry Widow*), and Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*) to name a few. Making his debut at Wolf Trap Opera, he sang the role of Le Fils (*Les mamelles des Tirésias*) as a Studio Artist.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Mr. Clark will perform the roles of The Peasant in *Eugene Onegin* and Borsa in *Rigoletto*.

Lauded for his "...consistent, attractive baritone" (Opera News) and "...firm, flexible baritone" (The New York Times), Wisconsin-born baritone **Tim Murray** makes his Lyric Opera of Kansas City debut this season as a member of the 2017-2018 Resident Artist Program. Mr. Murray's 2016-2017 season included a return to the Oratorio Society of New York to cover the baritone soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*, a short-notice Silvio in *I pagliacci* with Cedar Rapids Opera, Dandini in *La Cenerentola* with ARE Opera, NYC, and Moralès in *Carmen* and Ananias in Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* with Central City Opera as a member of the Apprentice Artist program. Previous credits include the baritone soloist in both Berlioz's *Lélio* with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Mahler's *8th Symphony* with the Oratorio Society of New York. While a student at Manhattan School of Music, Mr. Murray recorded the role of Le Vicomte de Valmont in Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* with Albany Records.

As a Resident Artist for the 2017- 2018 season, Mr. Murray will perform the roles of Zaretsky/Captain in *Eugene Onegin*, Guy Cotter in *Everest*, Marullo in *Rigoletto* and The Officer in *The Barber of Seville*.

About New York Festival of Song

Now celebrating its 30th season, New York Festival of Song (NYFOS) is dedicated to creating intimate song concerts of great beauty and originality. Weaving music, poetry, history and humor into evenings of compelling theater, NYFOS fosters community among artists and audiences. Founded by pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier in 1988, NYFOS continues to produce NYFOS MAINSTAGE, its flagship series of thematic song programs, drawing together rarely-

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heard songs of all kinds, overriding traditional distinctions between classical and popular performance genres, and exploring the character and language of other cultures.

Since its founding, NYFOS has particularly celebrated American song. Among the many highlights is the double bill of one-act comic operas, *Bastianello and Lucrezia*, by John Musto and William Bolcom, both with libretti by Mark Campbell, commissioned and premiered by NYFOS in 2008 and recorded on Bridge Records. In addition to *Bastianello and Lucrezia* and the 2008 Bridge Records release of *Spanish Love Songs* with Joseph Kaiser and the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, NYFOS has produced five recordings on the Koch label, including a Grammy Award-winning disc of Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*, and the Grammy-nominated recording of Ned Rorem's *Evidence of Things Not Seen* (also a NYFOS commission) on New World Records. And in 2014, *Canción Amorosa*, a CD of Spanish song-Basque, Catalan, Castilian, and Sephardic-was released on the GPR label, with soprano Corinne Winters accompanied by Steven Blier.

In 2010, NYFOS launched NYFOS NEXT, a concert series for new songs, hosted by guest composers in intimate venues including OPERA America's National Opera Center, National Sawdust, and the DiMenna Center for Classical Music. With an emphasis on spontaneity, novelty, and collaboration, NYFOS Next offers today's song composers a forum to create a program of their work alongside that of their peers, students, and mentors.

NYFOS is passionate about nurturing the artistry and careers of young artists and through its NYFOS EMERGING ARTISTS program has developed professional training residencies around the country, including The Juilliard School's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts (13th season); Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts (10th season); NYFOS@North Fork in Orient, NY (5th season); Glimmerglass Opera (2008-2010); and San Francisco Opera Center (multiple visits over the last 18 seasons). These intensive programs train young artists in programming and translation, presentation and production, and research and musical style.

NYFOS's concert series, touring programs, radio broadcasts, recordings, and educational activities continue to spark new interest in the creative possibilities of the song program, and have inspired the creation of thematic vocal series around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.nyfos.org/>.

2017-2018 Season at a Glance:

* Lyric Opera debut

NEW PRODUCTION

Eugene Onegin

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 1897

Sung in Russian with English subtitles

Saturday, September 30, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, October 4, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Friday, October 6, 2017	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 8, 2017	2:00 p.m.

Director: Tomer Zvulun

Conductor: Ari Peltó*

Scenery Designer: Erhard Rom

Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel

Onegin: Morgan Smith *

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Tatyana: Raquel González*
Olga: Megan Marino
Lensky: Jonathan Johnson
Gremin: Paul Whelan *
Filipyevna: Jane Bunnell
Monsieur Triquet: Steven Cole
Zaretsky/Captain: Tim Murray*
Peasant: Martin Luther Clark *

KANSAS CITY PREMIERE

Everest

Composer: Joby Talbot, 2015
Librettist: Gene Scheer
Sung in English with English subtitles

Saturday, November 11, 2017 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 15, 2017 7:30 p.m.
Friday, November 17, 2017 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 19, 2017 2:00 p.m.

Director: Leonard Foglia *
Conductor: Nicole Paiement *
Beck Weathers: Michael Mayes *
Jan Arnold: Sarah Larsen *
Rob Hall: Andrew Bidlack *
Doug Hansen: Craig Verm *
Mike Groom: Mark McCrory
Guy Cotter: Tim Murray

Rigoletto

Giuseppe Verdi, 1851
Sung in Italian with English subtitles

Saturday, March 3, 2018 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 7, 2018 7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 9, 2018 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 11, 2018 2:00 p.m.

Director: David Gately
Conductor: David Charles Abell
Rigoletto: Leo An *
Gilda: Nicole Haslett *
Count Monterone: Andrew Gangestad
Duke: Scott Quinn
Maddalena: Zanda Švēde
Sparafucile: Peixin Chen *
Marullo: Tim Murray
Giovanna: Alice Chung
Countess Ceprano: Lauren Auge*
Page: Marlen Nahhas*
Usher: Armando Contreras

REIMAGINED PRODUCTION

The Barber of Seville

Gioachino Rossini, 1816
Sung in Italian with English subtitles

Saturday, April 28, 2018 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 2, 2018 7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 4, 2018 7:30 p.m.

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Sunday, May 6, 2018

2:00 p.m.

Director: Michael Shell *

Conductor: Leonardo Vordoni

Lighting Designer: Kendall Smith

Almaviva: Jack Swanson *

Rosina: Cassandra Zoe Velasco *

Figaro: Jarett Ott *

Don Basilio: Brian Banion

Don Bartolo: Matthew Burns *

Berta: Marlen Nahhas

Fiorello: Armando Contreras

Officer: Tim Murray

About Lyric Opera of Kansas City

Lyric Opera of Kansas City was founded in 1958; it is one of the nation's premier regional opera companies and brings high quality live operatic performances to the people of the Kansas City area and a five-state region. Repertoire choices encompass original language performances of standard repertory as well as contemporary and American operas. The Company mounts productions that enrich the community it serves, as well as reflect the highest artistic standards of the profession. Lyric Opera offers innovative and award-winning programs designed to further music and arts education both in schools and in the community, and serves more than 18,000 students and educators each year.

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