



*Lyric*

*Cherubini*

# Medea

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Michael Cooper / Canadian Opera Company

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**John Mangum**  
*General Director,  
President & CEO*  
**Enrique Mazzola**  
*Music Director*

*Lyric*

# Welcome to your Lyric

# From the Chair and the General Director

Welcome to Lyric Opera of Chicago!

The opening of the opera season is always a celebratory time — but it's fair to say that we are even more excited than usual this year, as we present Sir David McVicar's riveting production of Luigi Cherubini's *Medea*, the first time this late-18th century masterpiece has been seen on our stage. A Lyric coproduction with the Canadian Opera Company, Greek National Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera, McVicar's bold take makes its long-awaited debut here after thrilling audiences in those other houses.

A company like Lyric only revives a work like *Medea* when we have the right protagonist leading the cast. Cherubini could have composed the work for international superstar and Chicago native Sondra Radvanovsky — it's that great a fit. Long a favorite with Lyric audiences, she returns to our stage after her triumph in *The Puccini Heroines* last season; a recording of that performance is slated for release on



Pentatone early next year. Her *Medea* adds to the list of legendary assumptions here at Lyric, among them *Aïda* (2011/12), *Anna Bolena* (2014/15), *Norma* (2016/17), and *Lady Macbeth* (2021/22).

Her *Giasone* is the great tenor Matthew Polenzani, an esteemed alumnus of The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, with a much-lauded international career. He has sung 15 roles at Lyric since 1995/96, most recently the title role in *Idomeneo* (2018/19) and *Nadir* in *The Pearl Fishers* (2017/18); he was heard here last as soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under Sir Andrew Davis.

Our Music Director, Maestro Enrique Mazzola, will lead our superb Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Lyric Opera

Chorus, directed by Michael Black. Mazzola, now entering his fifth season as the company's music director (just the third in our history), returns to the Lyric stage after a summer that included important debuts at the Grand Teton and Aspen Music Festivals, as well as performances of Massenet's *Werther* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

This gathering of forces is made possible by you, our beloved Lyric family. Opera is thriving here in Chicago, as we bring beloved classics to the stage this season alongside experiences featuring voices new to opera. We also can present a work such as *Medea*, on McVicar's grand scale and with a cast that would be the envy of any opera house in the world, thanks to you being here and supporting us. We trust you'll enjoy the performance, and we hope it is just the first of many transporting times we will spend together this season.

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**JOHN MANGUM**  
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# A Rare Gift

Patrons seated on the main floor of the Lyric Opera House will henceforward find themselves on what is now called the Steiner Parquet — a new moniker in honor of an extraordinary \$25 million gift from the Robert and Penelope Steiner Family Foundation. Here, a conversation with the force behind that transformational donation, Penelope Steiner — chair of the Enrique Circle, longtime subscriber, philanthropist, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, and, perhaps above all, a true opera aficionado.



Enrique Mazzola, Penelope Steiner, Sylvia Neil, and John Mangum celebrate onstage, with the Steiner Parquet in the background.



**You've spoken before about falling in love with opera when you were in Rome as a college student. How did that come about?**

I was at Mundelein College, which eventually became part of Loyola. I had been accepted at other colleges that I couldn't afford, so I went to a city school so I could work and save money. I had decided when I was about 11 or 12 years old — and nobody did it at that time — that I wanted to go to school in Europe. That was my fantasy, but achievable; at the conclusion of my freshman year, I applied and was accepted at the Sorbonne. In Paris, I would have had to live with a family. That was not part of my plan; with further research I discovered that Loyola University had just opened a student program in Rome where attendees lived in a dormitory.

**That's rather bold for the '60s, isn't it?**

I had worked hard, going to summer school, and was academically a year ahead of myself; in Rome, the unknown beckoned. I thought, *I'm free. I'm going to savor everything Italian.* I took history of art and studied its iconic masters — Michelangelo, da Vinci, Titian; my love of literature (especially Shakespeare) led to other literary giants — Primo Levi, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Umberto Eco. Opera, an unknown entity, but sung by every taxi driver, had to be tasted, with a group of friends, sitting in the highest rafters of the Rome Opera House. I went, and it changed my life.

**And that was *La Bohème*.**

My first opera. My friend [and Lyric Board chair] Sylvia Neil and I talk about it. She saw Pavarotti as Rodolfo. I haven't the faintest idea who sang the role for me. There were no titles, just pure unadulterated glory. I thought, *This is the greatest art form, bar none.* I still feel that way.

**And you have been trying to pass that along.**

My children don't have much interest. I do have a little bit of hope because my youngest grandson, who turned two in September, came to *Explore Your Lyric* day back in April. He was on his mom's lap watching *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World*. He sat there, transfixed. He did not want to leave. So I thought, *Maybe... maybe it skipped a generation.*



**But — and this is putting it mildly — you're very interested in the future of the art form.**

Well, this is part of the reason for my gift. My donation will last longer than I will. A few years ago, I hosted a dinner with Enrique Mazzola and the leadership of Lyric. As we were all talking, I had an epiphany. I thought, *We have the perfect concoction. We have everything that we need to be the greatest opera house in the world — except for money.* Wouldn't it be wonderful if these people could actualize their dreams without worrying about a budget or cutting things down or whatever? The next day, I called Enrique, and I gave a major contribution. Nothing like I did recently, but I still feel this way. I'm very happy with what's been happening at Lyric. It's a wonderful family. We've been at the forefront of breaking down the barriers; to me it's been monumental.

***Bohème* makes for a good start, clearly. Did you become a Puccini fan?**

I love Puccini. I love Verdi, too, and because of Enrique, have a deeper appreciation of Verdi's prodigiousness. I love Wagner. I love Beethoven's one opera, and [Lyric Chief Artistic Officer] Matthew Ozawa's *Fidelio* was completely brilliant, and his *Butterfly* defies conventions. Donizetti's operas —

they're easy on the ear. But I am totally non-discriminatory. When I came back to Chicago and was still in school, a friend who is Italian and I subscribed, at the lowest level, to Lyric; I have never missed a season since the late '70s.

**You really like everything?**

I recently got back from a trip to Aix-en-Provence, for their opera festival, and we saw five operas, including an edgy *Don Giovanni* which I admired. A couple of them I know I will never, ever see again. But we also saw Ian Rucker, a recent graduate of the Ryan Opera Center, starring in a new *Billy Budd*. Benjamin Britten must have conjured Ian as the ultimate Billy Budd. Ian was thrilled with his fans from the Ryan Opera Center, cheering his overwhelming and powerful interpretation.

**So there are high points always mixed in.**

I have to say, I often like the operas where everyone else has left. I like anything that's innovative and different. I never leave, even when others have exited; my addiction is certifiable!



**At Lyric's 2024 gala, Penelope Steiner hit the dance floor with daughter Nicole Steiner, daughter-in-law Sara Anstoetter, and son Robert Steiner. Right: Penelope and Robert on their wedding day.**

### **You have other passions too, like movie reviewing.**

I've been reviewing films on my website Peneflix for almost 20 years, and it requires a tremendous amount of work and thought. Not just going to the movies but writing about them. I realized with my extra commitments, not only to the opera, that I was spreading myself too thin, so I am on sabbatical until the commencement of the Chicago International Film Festival in October. Like Lyric, film touches everyone; the genre is embraceive of all cultures and broadens horizons.

### **What are some of your other major activities?**

For 25 years, I gave museum tours, first at the Art Institute, and then at the Museum of Contemporary Art. I have a traditional art history background — and I relish the Art Institute of Chicago, but the MCA focuses on the contemporary, the tools used by the young to create their works. I was head of the volunteers the last year the MCA was on Ontario, and the first year in the new building. The Newberry Library is also a passion.

My husband, Robert, was a very poor boy, a Damon Runyon character. He was an entrepreneur at five years old; he ran a library lending his comic books. He won a myriad of scholarships. He was so ahead of his time. We were true partners, respecting our individual passions. We felt that to whom much is given, much is expected. His number one charity, which of course is one of mine, was



the Posse Foundation, which finds promising high school students and gives full-tuition scholarships for college.

### **The Foundation's gift to Lyric is really an extraordinary legacy for both of you.**

I would love for someone to give more than I. And I've got some people in mind! I would be their number one cheerleader. I have had my "15 minutes;" I'm dying for someone to knock me off the pedestal. I did it because opera speaks to my soul. It's personal. I like the whole drama, and the catharsis that goes with every opera. Lyric holds the major real estate in my heart. [L](#)

*Euripides's millennia-old tragedy of infidelity and revenge comes to life — and gruesome death — in this presentation of acclaimed director Sir David McVicar's iconic, grand-scale production.*

*Featuring Lyric's own Music Director Enrique Mazzola on the podium, this intense spectacle stars international powerhouse soprano Sondra Radvanovsky in one of the fiercest, most demanding roles ever written. She shares the stage with equally formidable tenor — and Lyric favorite — Matthew Polenzani.*

*Medea dials the drama up to 11, bringing new meaning to “blood and thunder” as it tantalizes hardcore opera lovers and leaves new audiences glued to the edge of their seats.*



Marty Sohl / Metropolitan Opera

Sondra Radvanovsky and  
Matthew Polenzani in *Medea*  
at the Metropolitan Opera.

*Lyric*

# Medea





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# Medea

**Lyric premiere and new coproduction**

Music by **Luigi Cherubini** | Opera in three acts in Italian

Libretto by **François-Benoît Hoffman** | Italian translation by **Carlo Zangarini**

Based on Euripides's *Medea* and Pierre Corneille's play *Médée*.

October 11, 14, 17, 20, 23<sup>M</sup> and 26<sup>M</sup>, 2025

## CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Glauce	<b>Elena Villalón<sup>+</sup></b>
Giasone	<b>Matthew Polenzani<sup>••</sup></b>
Creonte	<b>Alfred Walker</b>
Captain of the Guard	<b>Christopher Humbert, Jr.<sup>•</sup></b>
First Handmaiden	<b>Emily Richter<sup>•</sup></b>
Second Handmaiden	<b>Camille Robles<sup>•</sup></b>
Medea	<b>Sondra Radvanovsky</b>
Neris	<b>Zoie Reams</b>

### Actors

**Niaimani Cooper-Parker, Mikala Curless, Jackson Dougherty, Emerson Elias, Adam Fane, Lizzy Lewis, Kirk Osgood, Zac Richey, Alex Rodriguez, Bob Romy, Brett Sweeney, Michael Saubert**

### Children Actors

**Lydia Sokolova, Helena Sokolova, Rita Murtagh**

Conductor  
Director & Set Designer  
Costume Designer  
Original Lighting Designer  
Revival Lighting Designers

Projection Designer  
Assistant Set Designer  
Chorus Director  
Movement Director  
Wig & Makeup Designer  
Associate Director  
Assistant Director  
Stage Manager  
Stage Band Conductor  
Musical Preparation

Prompter  
Revival Fight Director  
Fight & Intimacy Director  
Projected English Titles

**Enrique Mazzola**  
**Sir David McVicar**  
**Doey Lüthi<sup>+</sup>**  
**Paule Constable**  
**Clare O'Donoghue<sup>+</sup>**  
**Chris Maravich**  
**S. Katy Tucker**  
**Hannah Postlethwaite<sup>+</sup>**  
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**Susan Hult Miller**  
**Jerad Mosbey**  
**Marika Yasuda**  
**Susan Hult Miller**  
**Sean Michael Chin**  
**Andrew Rathgeber**  
**Christopher Bergen**

First performed at the Théâtre Feydeau, Paris on March 13, 1797.  
First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on October 11, 2025.

- <sup>+</sup> Lyric debut
- <sup>•</sup> Current Member, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center
- <sup>••</sup> Alumnus, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

# Synopsis

## TIME AND PLACE | **Ancient Corinth**

To regain his birthright, the kingdom of Iolcus, stolen from him by his half brother, Pelias, the hero Jason has sailed in his ship, the Argo, to the distant land of Colchos in search of the fabled Golden Fleece. There he met and fell in love with Medea, daughter of King Aeetes and a sorceress. She betrays her family and helps him to steal the fleece. To stall the pursuit of Aeetes and his army, she has killed her own brother, and she and Jason have sailed for Iolcus. During the long journey, Jason has married Medea and she has borne him two sons. Pelias has refused to relinquish the throne and Medea has used her magic arts to kill him. Pursued by Pelias' son Acastus, they have fled in the Argo for Corinth — but Jason has abandoned Medea on the journey. Arriving in Corinth with his sons, Jason has fallen in love with Glauce, daughter of King Creon. In return for the fleece, Creon has arranged the marriage of Jason and Glauce.

### **ACT I, The Palace of Creon**

Glauce is being prepared for her wedding but is tortured by fear of Medea's vengeance. Jason and Creon try to calm her, and Jason orders his crew of Argonauts to lay the Golden Fleece at her feet as a token of his love and protection. The sight of it frightens her even more and she senses Medea's approach. As the court celebrates the wedding, a stranger arrives at the gates. It is Medea, who has found her way to Corinth. She claims Jason and threatens Glauce. Creon orders her to leave his kingdom and the court rushes away. Medea pleads with Jason to return to her but he refuses. Medea swears revenge.

### **ACT II, Outside the City Gates**

Neris, Medea's confidant, warns her that a mob is baying for her blood. Creon arrives with his soldiers to force her to leave Corinth but Medea begs for one single day more. Against his will Creon agrees but warns her she will die if she stays beyond this time. Neris weeps over Medea's bitter fate. Jason arrives and Medea asks him to let her see her children one more time before she leaves. He is moved by her entreaties and agrees. Medea orders Neris to send a golden robe and a diadem as a wedding gift to Glauce, but at that moment they hear praying inside the temple as the marriage is celebrated. Medea prays to the dark gods to aid her revenge.

## **INTERMISSION**

### **ACT III, Outside the Temple**

As a thunderstorm breaks, Neris delivers Medea's gifts to Glauce. Medea plans to kill her two sons but when Neris returns with the children, she is unable to raise the dagger, embracing her sons in tears. She tells Neris that the gifts for Glauce are cursed with powerful magic and will kill her the moment she puts the robe and diadem on. Neris begs her to be satisfied with this act of vengeance and to spare her children. Medea agrees and orders Neris to take her sons into the temple for their own protection. Left alone, Medea is torn between her love for her sons and her desire to punish Jason. She hears sounds of lamentation inside the palace as Glauce dies an agonizing death, poisoned by Medea's gifts. The sorceress is now determined to complete her vengeance and goes into the temple, knife in hand. A crowd gathers outside, demanding Medea's death. Jason rushes in, desperately searching for his sons. Neris runs from the temple and warns him of Medea's murderous intent. The doors of the temple open and Medea emerges to confront him, covered in her children's blood. Jason falls to the ground in despair as the temple goes up in flames. **L**

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**English titles by Christopher Bergen,  
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## **APPROXIMATE TIMINGS**

**This production will be performed  
with one intermission.**

Acts I & II	1 hour 40 minutes
Intermission	30 minutes
Act III	35 minutes
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 hours 45 minutes</b>



Sondra Radvanovsky as Medea

Jake Friend

# Medea and Jason: Operatic Fire and Fury

Taking on the roles of this ill-fated duo requires full dramatic commitment and utterly world-class talent.

*By Dr. Justin Vickers*



**The operatic canon abounds** with character pairings who fascinate aficionado and newcomer alike: Alfredo and Violetta. Edgardo and Lucia. Lucrezia and Gennaro. Mimi and Rodolfo. Pollione and Norma. Tristan and Isolde.

Luigi Cherubini's *Medea* (*Médée*), first performed in Paris in 1797, offers another blazing example: Medea and Jason.

At its premiere, audiences encountered a work of startling dramatic ambition: an ancient Greek tragedy recast for the Revolutionary era, with a heroine whose betrayal, fury, and vengeance burn at a white-hot pitch. At the center stand two roles that demand extraordinary voices and actors capable of matching one another in emotional intensity and psychological depth. *Medea* occupies a singular place in the operatic canon: a work at once steeped in 18th-century formalism and charged with proto-Romantic intensity. The drama demands that Medea and Jason embody one of antiquity's most unsettling myths — the betrayed sorceress who turns her wrath against her unfaithful lover by murdering their children. For performers, these roles are as much emotional crucibles as they are vocal tests.

Cherubini could not have imagined that the opera would wait more than a century and a half before reentering the repertoire in earnest. It came into modern prominence in the 20th century largely through the force of Maria Callas, whose searing portrayals from Florence in 1953 onward redefined the tragic heroine. Callas's Jason was often sung by Canadian tenor Jon Vickers, whose virile instrument and intense stage presence made him an ideal foil. Together, they created a harrowing balance: Callas embodying Medea's volcanic emotional extremes, Vickers projecting Jason's flawed heroism and brittle authority. Their partnership demonstrated that these roles require not only vocal stamina but also dramatic parity, since the opera hinges on the confrontation of two formidable personalities.

### **The Soprano's Crucible: Medea**

The role of Medea is among the most punishing in the soprano repertoire. It demands sheer vocal power to cut through Cherubini's dense orchestration, flexibility to manage abrupt changes of mood, and stamina for an evening that rarely allows the heroine to leave the stage. Cherubini's writing oscillates between long, declamatory passages — where the soprano must sustain dramatic momentum without the relief of florid melody — and moments of searing lyricism that require a *bel canto* sense of line.

The challenge is not only technical. Medea must embody a staggering range of emotions: the grief of betrayal, the humiliation of abandonment, the cunning



Matthew Polenzani

Fox Fox

of a sorceress plotting revenge, and the unimaginable horror of filicide. The singer must command the stage as a tragic actress while never letting the vocal line falter. This dual demand — vocally heroic and theatrically devastating — explains why Medea has been associated with only a handful of truly legendary sopranos.

Callas remains the touchstone. Beginning with her 1953 Florence performances under Vittorio Gui, Callas fused her incisive declamation and penetrating timbre with an unparalleled dramatic instinct. She transformed Medea from an antiquarian curiosity into a modern psychological drama, capable of electrifying post-war audiences. For Callas, the role became a signature, and her portrayals with conductors such as Leonard Bernstein and colleagues such as Jon Vickers demonstrated the role's potential to devastate and enthrall in equal measure.

But Callas was not alone. Magda Olivero, famed for her longevity and incandescent theatricality, brought Medea an Italianate warmth that made the character's anguish almost unbearable in its humanity. Montserrat Caballé, with her seamless legato and gleaming top, reimagined Medea less as a raw tragedienne than as a noble figure undone by betrayal, her purity of tone making her final acts of vengeance all the more chilling. Later interpreters such as Anna Caterina Antonacci and Jennifer Larmore have stressed the role's dramatic immediacy, balancing declamation with vocal clarity, each finding ways to harness Cherubini's difficult *tessitura* for modern audiences.

For Maria Callas,  
the role became  
a signature...

### Jason: A Tenor's Test of Authority

If Medea is the opera's flaming center, Jason can never be merely her shadow. His role, though often underestimated, requires both noble phrasing and heroic projection, along with the ability to reveal weakness and duplicity. The *tessitura* lies high, demanding brilliance at the top and weight in the middle voice. Dramatically, Jason is no cardboard villain but a flawed hero whose betrayal precipitates catastrophe.

Historically, Jason has been most successful when embodied by a tenor of commanding presence. Jon Vickers, opposite Callas, offered a Jason of granite — vocally stentorian, dramatically unyielding. His very severity amplified the inevitability of Medea's revenge. Mario del Monaco, in Italian productions, brought raw power and a heroic timbre that matched sopranos like Olivero in sheer vocal amplitude. Giuseppe Giacomini, a frequent partner to Caballé, found dignity and lyricism in Jason's lines, offering a balance between grandeur and pathos. More recently, Roberto Alagna has offered Jason as a man seduced by political advantage, his elegant French style tempering the character's brutality.

Jason, then, is not a passive counterpart. The tenor who sings the role must provide a genuine obstacle to Medea's domination of the stage. Only when Jason is sung with equal conviction does Cherubini's tragedy become a true confrontation of wills, rather than a soprano star vehicle.

### The Alchemy of Partnership

Cherubini's opera rises or falls on the chemistry between its soprano and tenor. *Medea* is not merely the story of a woman's descent into vengeance; it is the story of a couple's collapse, played out with

shattering consequences. The most memorable productions have been those in which Medea and Jason are evenly matched — two singers capable of igniting sparks in every confrontation.



Maria Callas and Jon Vickers in *Medea*.

Jon Vickers  
offered a Jason  
of granite...

The Callas–Vickers partnership is often remembered as definitive because it captured this volatile balance: Callas's sorcery set against Vickers's uncompromising strength. Olivero and del Monaco embodied verismo intensity, their voices clashing with visceral impact. Caballé and Giacomini, by contrast, found nobility and grandeur, shaping the opera into a more dignified, almost classical tragedy. Each partnership reveals how the opera can be tilted toward psychological realism, verismo fire, or neoclassical restraint.

### Now Playing — at Lyric

Into this storied lineage step Sondra Radvanovsky and Matthew Polenzani.

Radvanovsky has long been celebrated for her expansive Verdi portrayals and for her command of roles that demand both vocal brilliance and emotional depth. Her voice combines radiant upper registers with a

# The **2025 | 26** Season

*Cherubini*

## **Medea**

October 11 - 26, 2025

*Movie Nights at Lyric*

## **Coco in Concert Live to Film**

October 16 & 18, 2025

*Mascagni / Leoncavallo*

## **Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci**

November 1 - 23, 2025

*Black Leadership Arts Collective*

## **Echoes of Excellence: Celebrating the Legacy of Chicago's Black Voices**

November 8, 2025

*Orff*

## **Carmina Burana**

November 14, 16, 18, 2025

*Billy Corgan*

## **A Night of Mellon Collie and Infinite Sadness**

November 21 - 30, 2025

*Richard Strauss*

## **Salome**

January 25 - February 14, 2026

*Renée Fleming in Recital*

## **Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene**

February 5, 2026

*Mozart*

## **Così fan tutte**

February 1 - 15, 2026

*Puccini*

## **Madama Butterfly**

March 14 - April 12, 2026

*Gabriela Lena Frank & Nilo Cruz*

## **El último sueño de Frida y Diego**

March 14 - April 12, 2026

*Movie Nights at Lyric*

## **Mary Poppins in Concert Live to Film**

April 10 & 11, 2026

*avery r. young*

## **safronia**

April 17 & 18, 2026

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Photo: John Shaw/Big Foot Media



**Left: Montserrat Caballé as Medea, in the Roman Theatre of Merida in 1989.**

**Right: Roberto Alagna brought an elegance to the role of Jason.**



strong dramatic core, enabling her to sustain Cherubini's declamation without strain while still offering moments of ravishing lyricism. She brings to Medea not only technical stamina but also a rare ability to inhabit a character's psyche, to reveal both the wounded humanity and the terrifying extremity of a woman driven to unimaginable revenge.

Polenzani, one of the most admired American tenors of his generation, has built his reputation on elegance, clarity, and dramatic sincerity in repertory from Mozart to French grand opera. In recent years he has expanded into roles of greater heft, his timbre acquiring a heroic ring that never loses its lyric beauty. As Jason, he brings both dignity and vulnerability, making the character more than a foil for Medea's rage. His Jason is capable of grandeur, but also of the moral weakness that makes Cherubini's tragedy so devastating.

Together, Radvanovsky and Polenzani promise a partnership that will balance fire and nobility, rage and lyricism. Their collaboration situates Lyric's *Medea* firmly within the historical continuum of great soprano-tenor pairings, while offering something uniquely their own: two American singers, each at the height of an international career, uniting to take on one of opera's most formidable challenges.

### The Tragic Confrontation

*Medea* endures as one of opera's most unflinching examinations of betrayal and revenge. At its core is not only the story of an abandoned woman, but the story of a partnership destroyed, a bond corrupted by ambition and faithlessness. Cherubini's score leaves no room for compromise: the soprano must embody the searing extremes of Medea's character, the tenor must hold his ground as Jason, and together they must ignite the fatal spark.

From Callas and Vickers to Radvanovsky and Polenzani, singers who undertake these roles enter a crucible where vocal technique, dramatic instinct, and emotional truth are tested at the highest level. For audiences at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the result will be an encounter not only with Cherubini's ravishing music, but with the timeless human drama it conveys: the perilous collision of love, betrayal, and vengeance between two voices locked in an operatic wildfire. <sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Justin Vickers is Distinguished Professor of Music at Illinois State University. As editor of the forthcoming Childhood and the Operatic Imaginary since 1900 (Oxford University Press, 2026), Vickers writes about Benjamin Britten's children's operas.*



A man with a shaved head and red-rimmed glasses, wearing a blue pinstriped suit, white shirt, and red patterned tie. He is holding a baton in his right hand, pointing it upwards. The background is a blurred orchestra pit with warm lights.

*Lyric in Concert*

*Lyric*  
OPERA OF  
CHICAGO

# Carmina Burana

**Nov. 14, 16, 18**

Experience the thrill of this  
complete work with the Lyric  
Opera Orchestra & Chorus.

[lyricopera.org/carmina](https://lyricopera.org/carmina)

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Lyric's presentation of Orff's *Carmina Burana* is generously made possible by Irene D. Pritzker in honor of Michael Black.  
Lyric Opera of Chicago thanks its Official Airline, United Airlines, and acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

Photo: John Shaw/Lyric Opera of Chicago

*Billy Corgan*

*Lyric*  
OPERA OF  
CHICAGO

# A Night of Mellon Collie and Infinite Sadness

**Nov. 21 - 30**

An alt-rock  
masterpiece, reborn.

[lyricopera.org/mellon](https://lyricopera.org/mellon)

ROBERT AND PENELOPE  
STEINER FAMILY FOUNDATION  
2025/26 Presenting Season Sponsor

Lyric's presentation of Billy Corgan's *A Night of Mellon Collie and Infinite Sadness* is generously made possible by Abbott.  
Lyric Opera of Chicago thanks its Official Airline, United Airlines, and acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

Photo: John Shaw/Lyric Opera of Chicago

# Artist profiles



## **SONDRA RADVANOVSKY MEDEA**

**Previously at Lyric:** Nine roles since 2002/03, most recently Lady Macbeth/*Macbeth* (2021/22) and Lisa/*The Queen of Spades* (2019/20).

Highlights this season for the renowned soprano include the title role in *Tosca* at Teatro di San Carlo, the Opéra National de Paris, and Slovenia's Ljubljana Festival, and *Turandot* at the Bayerische Staatsoper. In concert, she joins the American Symphony Orchestra for a *Christmas Night Opera Gala* at Carnegie Hall, and appears alongside tenor Freddie De Tommaso at the Teatro di San Carlo for a program of works by Verdi, Puccini, and Mascagni. She will also perform songs and arias in recital at the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, accompanied by pianist Vincenzo Scalerà. Highlights from last season include *Tosca* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Metropolitan Opera, Odabella in *Attila* in concert at the Teatro Real, Maddalena di Coigny in *Andrea Chenier* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the title role in *Turandot* at London's Royal Ballet and Opera. She also embarked on a ten-city European concert tour with tenor Piotr Beczala, singing arias and duets from various operas. Last season at Lyric, she sang *The Puccini Heroines*, a program slated for release next year on Pentatone Records, which also recorded her 2019/20 program at Lyric featuring Donizetti's "Three Queens:" *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, and Elisabetta in *Roberto Devereux*. Radvanovsky's debut album *Verdi Arias* was released in 2010 on the Delos label, followed in 2011 by a CD of Verdi opera scenes with her frequent artistic partner, the late Dmitri Hvorostovsky. Recent highlights of her discography include the release of Warner Classics's new recording of *Turandot*, accompanied by the Orchestra and Chorus of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under the baton of Antonio Pappano.

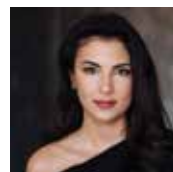


## **MATTHEW POLENZANI GIASONE**

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

This season, the distinguished American tenor and Ryan Opera Center alumnus returns to the Metropolitan Opera for two productions, in the role of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and as Don José in *Carmen*, a role he reprises later this season at Teatro alla Scala. Among other highlights at Lyric, he sang Duke/*Rigoletto* (2017/18) and Tamino/*The Magic Flute* (2016/17). Polenzani begins the new year in Budapest, with performances of Verdi's *Requiem* at MUPA, followed by his role debut as Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera* at the Opéra Bastille. He will

appear in *Werther* at Barcelona's Gran Teatro del Liceu, before appearing as Florestan in *Fidelio* at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Highlights of last season include a series of favored title roles: Werther at the Wiener Staatsoper, and Mozart's Idomeneo in a new San Francisco Opera production directed by Lindy Hume. He sang Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Teatro Real de Madrid and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Gran Teatro del Liceu. He returned to the Met as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, and he joined Gianandrea Noseda and the National Symphony Orchestra as Anatol in Barber's *Vanessa*. His season also included recital appearances with pianist Julius Drake at the Hungarian State Opera and Oper Frankfurt, as well as a concert debut of Schubert's *Schwanengesang* with the Chamber Music Society. Polenzani was the recipient of the 2004 Richard Tucker Award, the Metropolitan Opera's 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, and a 2017 Opera News Award, among numerous other accolades.



## **ELENA VILLALÓN GLAUCE**

**Lyric debut**

This season, the Cuban American soprano makes a series of company debuts including Dalinda in *Ariodante* at the Royal Opera House, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Opéra de Bordeaux, and Fiorilla in *Il turco in Italia* at the Glyndebourne Festival. On the concert platform, she joins the Los Angeles Philharmonic for concerts of Beethoven's *Egmont* arias under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel and Mozart *Requiem* at the Hollywood Bowl lead by James Gaffigan. Other concert highlights include Haydn's *Paukenmesse* at the Wiener Konzerthaus. Recent highlights include a solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall with pianist Craig Terry, returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Nuria in the premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* and to Santa Fe Opera as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, a role debut as Almirena/*Rinaldo* at Detroit Opera, and title role in *Rodelinda*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, all at Oper Frankfurt. Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and several prizes at the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition, Villalón's other recent engagements include house and role debuts at The Dallas Opera as Tina/*Flight* and Gretel/*Hansel und Gretel*, at Austin Opera as Susanna/*Le nozze di Figaro*, and Nannetta/*Falstaff* with the Santa Fe Opera, as well as continued collaborations with Houston Grand Opera, where she performed Susanna, created the role of Amy in the world premiere of *The Snowy Day*, and debuted the role of Juliette/*Roméo et Juliette*.



### ZOIE REAMS NERIS

**Previously at Lyric:** Five roles since 2018/19, most recently The Mother/*Blue* and Maddalena/*Rigoletto* (both 2024/25).

This season's engagements for the American mezzo-soprano include Maddalena/*Rigoletto* at the Canadian Opera Company, Siegrune/*Die Walküre* Act III with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Boston Symphony. Other recent engagements include Neris/*Medea* at Canadian Opera Company, Solange Knowles's *El Dorado Ballroom* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Erika/*Vanessa* at Spoleto Festival USA, Dinah/*Trouble in Tahiti* and Autumn/*Service Provider* at Minnesota Opera, and her debut at the Salzburg Festival as Doubtful Old Lady/Sergei Prokofiev's *The Gambler*. Other recent highlights include Mandane/*Idaspe* at Quantum Theatre, Beggar Woman/*Sweeney Todd* at Austin Opera, Lily in the Metropolitan Opera's *Porgy and Bess*, Jane in Cincinnati Opera's *Castor and Patience*, the title role/*Carmen* (Opéra Louisiane, Minnesota Opera), Margret/*Wozzeck* (Des Moines Metro Opera), Bruckner's *Te Deum* (Houston Symphony Orchestra) and Bernstein's *Symphony No. 1: Jeremiah* (Staatstheater Cottbus Philharmonic Orchestra). She has also been heard as Maddalena/*Rigoletto* (Wolf Trap Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Theater Basel), in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (National Symphony Orchestra), and in Handel's *Messiah* (Las Vegas Philharmonic, Washington National Cathedral). An alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Reams appeared 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*.



### ALFRED WALKER CREONTE

**Previously at Lyric:** Don Fernando/*Fidelio* (2024/25), Father/*Hansel and Gretel* (2022/23).

This season, the bass-baritone returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*. He also sings Scarpia in *Tosca* with both Glyndebourne Opera and Florentine Opera, and sings Jochanaan in *Salome* with Cincinnati Opera. Last season he joined the Met for further performances of Enobarbus in Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*, New Orleans Opera for the High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila*, joined Bard Summerscape for the King in Smetana's *Dalibor* and the Man in a Helmet in *Julietta*. He joined the Philadelphia Orchestra for Verdi's *Requiem*, and sang Porgy in the suite from *Porgy and Bess* with the Cologne Philharmonie. He recently sang Enobarbus in the European premiere of John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra* with Gran Teatre del Liceu and Orest in *Elektra* with Dallas Opera, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera for Frère Laurant in *Roméo et Juliette* and Rambaldo in *La rondine*. Other recent highlights include San Francisco Opera as Enobarbus in the world premiere of John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Metropolitan Opera as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Detroit Opera for Amonasro in *Aida*, and a return to Bard Summerscape for the title role in Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII*. He also sang Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the LA Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel, and joined the Boston Philharmonic for Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*.



### EMILY RICHTER FIRST HANDMAIDEN

**Previously at Lyric:** First Peasant Girl/*The Marriage of Figaro* (2024/25).

The second-year Ryan Opera Center soprano from Arlington, Virginia, was a national winner of the 2024 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. In the summer of 2025, she was in residence at the Aix-en-Provence Festival Académie. She recently completed two years as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera. Role highlights during her tenure include the title role/*Iphigénie en Tauride*, Countess/*Le nozze di Figaro*, Ma/*Proving Up*, and Ginevra/*Ariodante*. In the 2023/24 Season, she made her *Messiah* debut with the Seattle Symphony and her Verdi *Requiem* debut with the Westmoreland Symphony. Richter has spent her summers as an apprentice artist at Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, and the Seagle Festival. She holds a Master's Degree from McGill's Schulich School of Music and a Bachelor's of Music in Vocal Performance from Lawrence University. Future engagements include her debut with Opéra National de Paris. *Emily Richter is sponsored by Lead Sponsor The C.G. Pinnell Family and cosponsors Amy & Paul Carbone and Susan M. Miller.*



### CAMILLE ROBLES SECOND HANDMAIDEN

**Lyric debut**

A first-year Ryan Opera Center member, the mezzo-soprano from San Juan, Puerto Rico, was a Jan Miller Studio Artist at Pensacola Opera for the 2024/25 Season. While there, she covered the role of Cherubino/*Le nozze di Figaro* and performed the Dolphin in the world premiere of *Mato and the Bear Who Couldn't Fish*. This season at Lyric, she will appear also in *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* and *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*. Previously, she was invited to the Aspen Music Festival as a Fellowship Artist for two summers and appeared as the Sandman/*Hansel and Gretel* and in scenes from *Carmen*, *Werther*, *La Favorita*, and *Die Walküre*. Robles recently received a Gulf Coast Region Encouragement Award in the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition. Following undergraduate studies at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, she earned her Master of Music degree from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, where she appeared as Olga/*Eugene Onegin*. *Camille Robles is sponsored by Heidi Heufel Bohn.*



### CHRISTOPHER HUMBERT, JR. CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

**Previously at Lyric:** Three roles since 2024 most recently 2nd Prisoner/*Fidelio* and Ceprano/*Rigoletto* (both 2024/25).

Originally from Akron, Ohio, the third-year Ryan Opera Center bass-baritone will appear at Lyric also this season in *Salome* and *Madama Butterfly*. In 2024/25 he also sang 3rd Policeman/*Blue*. Humbert has performed widely throughout his home state, including appearances with Opera Columbus, Mid-Ohio Opera, and Nightingale Opera Theatre. Other engagements include Boston Lyric Opera, Detroit



Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, the Seagle Festival, Utah Festival Opera, and Annapolis Opera. Humbert was invited for the 2025 Young Singers Project at the Salzburg Festival and is a former participant in the artist-development programs at Palm Beach Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Concert appearances include Carnegie Hall (debut as baritone soloist in Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem*) and the Erie Philharmonic. Recipient of a 2025 Luminarts Cultural Foundation Men's Voice Fellowship and a 2024 American Opera Society of Chicago Scholarship Award, Humbert holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, and a Master of Music degree from Boston Conservatory. *Christopher Humbert, Jr. is sponsored by Lead Sponsor Patricia Frank and cosponsors Maria C. Green & Oswald G. Lewis, Mary Houston, in loving memory of James Houston, and the Bill & Orli Staley Foundation.*



### ENRIQUE MAZZOLA CONDUCTOR

Lyric's Music Director — the third in the company's history — is internationally renowned as an interpreter and champion of *bel canto* opera and as a specialist in French repertoire and the works of Verdi. Mazzola's recently completed tenure as Principal Guest Conductor at Deutsche Oper Berlin included recordings of *Dinorah* and *Herodiade* and performances of *Le prophète*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Werther*, *Falstaff*, *Vepres Siciliennes*, and *Les contes d'Hoffmann*. He served as Conductor in Residence for the Bregenz Festival from 2021 to 2024, where he conducted a new production of *Rigoletto* and recorded DVDs of *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Freischütz*, *Ernani*, and *Mosè in Egitto*. He served as Artistic and Music Director of the Orchestre National d'Île de France from 2012 to 2019, and in 2018 was named a Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Mazzola made his debut at Lyric with *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 2016/17, and conducted Bellini's *I puritani* in 2017/18. During 2019/20, he led Verdi's *Luisa Miller* to launch the company's Early Verdi Series and, in his first performances as Music Director, opened Lyric's 2021/22 season with Sir David McVicar's new production of *Macbeth*. An accomplished interpreter of contemporary music, Mazzola recently conducted Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *The Listeners* (2024/25) and Terence Blanchard's *Champion* (2022/23) at Lyric. He has conducted at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the major houses of Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Zurich, Moscow, and Tokyo, as well as a historic Meyerbeer cycle with Deutsche Oper Berlin. Past major European festivals have included Glyndebourne (including DVD releases of *Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and *Poliuto*), Salzburg (*Orphée aux Enfers*), Pesaro (Rossini Opera Festival), Venice, Aix-en-Provence, and Bregenz. Symphonic highlights include the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Vienna Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Brussels Philharmonic. Mazzola was born in Barcelona, Spain, into a musical family, and grew up in Milan, where he studied violin and piano, earning diplomas in composition and orchestral conducting at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi of Milan. *Enrique Mazzola is supported by the John D. and Alexandra C. Nichols Endowed Chair.*



### DAVID McVICAR DIRECTOR & SET DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** Seven productions since 2001/02, most recently *Macbeth* (2021/22) and *Elektra* (2018/19).

The renowned Scottish director's productions are seen annually in major houses worldwide, with recent highlights including new productions of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Roberto Devereux* (both at the Metropolitan Opera, the latter a company premiere), *Médée* (Geneva's Grand Théâtre), and *I masnadieri* (La Scala). Previously at Lyric, he directed *Il trovatore* (2018/19, 2014/15, 2006/07), *Wozzeck* (2015/16), and *La clemenza di Tito* (2013/14). McVicar has created nine new productions for the Royal Ballet & Opera and seven for the Met, where he recently directed a new *Don Carlos*. He has also directed at La Scala (*Les Troyens*), Opera Australia (*Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*), the Vienna Staatsoper (*Tristan und Isolde*, *Falstaff*), English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Opera North, Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Salzburg Festival, and the Mariinsky Theatre, and many other major companies. Among his awards is the 2011 Grand Prix de la Musique du Syndicat de la Critique. In 2012 he received a knighthood and was made a Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres.



### DOEY LÜTHI COSTUME DESIGNER

**Lyric debut**

Highlights for the designer include *Elektra* (West End); *Nobodaddy* (Téac Damsa); *Les Oiseaux*, *Die Vögel*, and *El Amor Brujo* (Opéra national du Rhin); *Macbeth* and *Madama Butterfly* (Oper Frankfurt); *La Calisto* (Teatro alla Scala); *L'Italiana in Londra* (Oper Frankfurt); *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier, Det Kongelige Teater Copenhagen); *Tamerlano* (Oper Frankfurt); *Greek Passion* (Opera North); *Tri Sestry* (Ural Opera Ballet Theatre); *Lost Highway* (Oper Frankfurt); *Surrogate Cities*, *The Love For Three Oranges*, and *The Tales of Hoffman* (Wuppertaler Bühnen); *The Flying Dutchman* (Staatstheater Hannover); *Shadowlands* (Göteborgs Operans Danskompani); *The Rake's Progress* (Staatstheater Braunschweig); *Macbeth* (Saarländisches Staatstheater); and *Un ballo in maschera* and *Peter Grimes* (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe). She has designed costumes for *Petrushka* (Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre and Sadler's Wells London), *Julius Caesar* (English National Opera), *Rian* (Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Opéra National de Bordeaux), *Methusalem-Projekt* (Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar), *Phaeton* and *Sakontala* (Saarländisches Staatstheater), *La finta giardiniera* (Theater an der Wien), *Don Pasquale* (Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar), *Orfeo* (Den Norske Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and Opera North), *Aida* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Theater Basel), *Imeneo* (Glimmerglass Opera), *Carmen* (Nationaltheater Mannheim), and *Otello* (Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin). Doey won the Premio Abbiati award for Best Costume Design in 2021 and Best Opera Production at the 2020 Golden Mask Awards (*Tri Sestry* at Ural



Opera Ballet Theatre). *Costume Designers* are supported by the **Richard P. and Susan Kiphart Costume Designer endowment.**



### PAULE CONSTABLE ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** Six productions since 2007/08, most recently *Die lustige Witwe* and *Wozzeck* (both 2015/16).

An Associate for Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Constable has won six Olivier Awards and two Tony Awards, and was the first recipient of the Opera Award for Lighting at the International Opera Awards (2013). Highlights at the Royal Ballet & Opera include *Rusalka*, *The Return of Ulysses*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Faust*, *Rigoletto*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Other credits include *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Billy Budd*, *Rusalka*, *Così fan tutte*, *La bohème*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Carmen* (Glyndebourne), *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Salzburg Festival), *Wagner's Ring* (Strasbourg), *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Paris), *Medea*, *Così fan tutte*, *Norma*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Don Giovanni*, *Satyagraha*, and *Anna Bolena* (Metropolitan Opera), and *A Handmaid's Tale* and *Satyagraha* (ENO). Recent theatre projects include *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Oliver!* (Chichester Festival Theatre, West End), *Ballet Shoes*, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, *Angels in America* and *The Normal Heart* (National Theatre), *Drive your Plow over the Bones of the Dead* (Complicite), and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night and Warhorse* (National Theatre, West End, and Broadway). *Lighting designers* are supported by the **Mary-Louise and James S. Aagaard endowment in honor of Duane Schuler.**



### CLARE O'DONOGHUE REVIVAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Lyric debut**

The UK-based lighting designer has worked across the globe in opera, contemporary dance, and theater. A former Deputy Lighting Manager at Glyndebourne, O'Donoghue has worked with a wide range of companies including The Royal Ballet & Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Scottish Opera, and many West End productions. Career highlights include lighting design for *Medee* (Polish National Opera), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Norwegian National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera), *La Rondine* (Daegu Opera House), *Carmen* (Dallas Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Bergen National Opera, Auditorio de Tenerife), *La traviata* (Teatro Lirico di Cagliari), *Simon Boccanegra* (National Opera House of Portugal), *Giselle* (Royal Ballet), *The Bartered Bride* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), *Just Between Ourselves* (London Classic Theatre), *Candide* (Scottish Opera), *Blu* and *The Magic Web* (Truестory Theatre), *Dido & Aeneas* (Royal Academy Of Music), *Frankenstein/Great Expectations* (National Youth Theatre), and *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Glyndebourne Touring Opera). *Lighting designers* are supported by the **Mary-Louise and James S. Aagaard endowment in honor of Duane Schuler.**



### CHRIS MARAVICH REVIVAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

Lyric's lighting director served in the same position from 2006 to 2012 at San Francisco Opera, where he created lighting for many productions including *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, *Così fan tutte*, *Turandot*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Il trittico*, *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Don Giovanni*, *Nixon in China*, and *Attila*. He has collaborated on the lighting designs for *Wozzeck* (Finnish National Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève), *Doktor Faust* at Staatsoper Stuttgart, *Tannhäuser* for Greek National Opera, and *La fanciulla del West*, *The Makropulos Case*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Il trovatore*, *Samson et Dalila*, and *Macbeth* for San Francisco Opera. Maravich has also designed lighting for LA Opera, Opera Colorado, San Diego Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Florida Grand Opera, Madison Opera, Cal Performances, and Opera San José. He currently serves as lighting supervisor for The Joffrey Ballet. **Chris Maravich is supported by the Mary-Louise and James S. Aagaard Lighting Director Endowed Chair.**



### S. KATY TUCKER PROJECTION DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** *Florencia en el Amazonas* (2021/22).

Tucker's work has been seen on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, New York City Ballet, Carnegie Hall, Park Avenue Armory, BAM, San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dutch National Opera, Sydney Opera House, and the Canadian Opera Company, among others. Future engagements include a *Ring Cycle* (La Scala) and *Initiative* (The Public Theater). Tucker has worked in television and on events for Drew Findley Productions, including The Emmy Awards, Netflix's *Rhythm + Flow 2*, the American Music Awards, The Soul Train Awards, and BlizzCon. She was nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for *Letters from Max*, a *Ritual*. Other recent highlights include *Smash* on Broadway with director Susan Stroman, *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried*, and *Die Walküre* with Sir David McVicar (La Scala), *Tannhäuser* (Houston Grand Opera), *Florencia en el Amazonas*, *Eurydice*, *Peter Grimes*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and *Prince Igor* (Metropolitan Opera), *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Houston Grand Opera and Washington National Opera), *Rebecca Das Musical* (Vereinigte Bühnen Wien), *Klangwolke 23* (Brucknerhaus), and *Turandot*, *Macbeth*, *Fidelio*, *Elektra*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Samson and Delilah* (Washington National Opera).



### MICHAEL BLACK CHORUS DIRECTOR

The Australian chorus director joined Lyric full time in the 2012/13 Season, after having served as interim director the season before. He was named Head of Music at Lyric, a new position, in the 2023/24 Season. Black was Chorus Director at Opera Australia in Sydney from 2001

to 2013, and has worked in this capacity for such distinguished organizations as the Edinburgh International Festival and Opera Holland Park (London), and, in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Choir, Motet Choir, the Cantillation chamber choir, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In Chicago, Black became the first chorus director to work with the choruses of Lyric, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Grant Park Music Festival, where he served for six seasons, including preparation of *The Damnation of Faust* chorus and Haydn's *Creation*. He has lectured or given masterclasses at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and in 2025 will work with the Young Artists at Opera Australia and the apprentice singers at the Santa Fe Opera. Black has served as chorus director 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 Director Endowed Chair.*



**JO MEREDITH**  
**MOVEMENT DIRECTOR**  
*Lyric debut*

Highlights among Meredith's numerous credits include: *Medea* (Canadian Opera Company, Greek National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera), *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Holland Park), *Norma* (Teatro Real), *La Calisto* (Teatro alla Scala), *La Bohème* (Copenhagen Opera Festival), *I Masnadieri* (Teatro alla Scala), *Drot Og Marsk* (Royal Danish Opera), *Tosca* (Icelandic Opera), *Rigoletto* (Savonlinna Opera), *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (Alte Munze), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (UK tour), three *Jette Parker Young Artist Summer Performances* (Royal Ballet & Opera), *La Scala Di Seta* and *The Lighthouse* (Royal Ballet & Opera Linbury Studio Theatre), *Macbeth*, *A Fairy Queen*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Iford Arts), *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* (Longborough Festival Opera), *Don Giovanni* and *La Calisto* (English Touring Opera). She re-staged Leah Hausman's movement for David McVicar's production of *Rigoletto* at Teatro Real and at the Royal Ballet & Opera. For Youth Music Theatre UK she directed and choreographed *More in Common*, and directed the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus in a work inspired by Windrush which was performed at Tilbury Docks. She is associate lecturer in choreography at London Studio Centre.



**JOHN METZNER**  
**WIG AND MAKEUP DESIGNER**

The versatile designer first joined the staff of Lyric for the 2022/23 Season. He has previously collaborated with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Lookingglass Theatre, and Court Theatre. He served for nine years as Head of Wig and Makeup for Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts, and designed hair and makeup for more than 50 performances at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Other regional credits include work at The Muny, Great River Shakespeare Festival, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he designed for *The Pirates of Penzance*, among many other productions. His advanced training includes wig styling at the Wig Room Training Academy and London School of Wig Making. *John Metzner is supported by The Marlys A. Beider Wigmaster and Makeup Designer Endowed Chair.*



**JONATHON LOY**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**  
*Lyric debut*

Loy is the Director of Production and Co-Founder of Berkshire Opera Festival (BOF), which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary season. His new productions at BOF have included *La Traviata*, *Faust*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *Rigoletto*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Madama Butterfly*, among numerous others. BOF will feature a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 2026. This season marks Loy's 16th as a Guest Stage Director at the Metropolitan Opera, where he has directed revivals of *La Traviata*, *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Faust*. He recently made his directing debuts at Canadian Opera Company and Greek National Opera. As a 2002 OPERA America Fellowship winner, he completed residencies at New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Memphis, and Cincinnati Opera. Loy is the former General Director of Center City Opera Theater in Philadelphia (2003-2007) where he was the first person to produce fully-staged opera in the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Perelman Theater. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, during his time there he worked at Pittsburgh Opera for four years. [L](#)



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Photo: John Shaw/Big Foot Media

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# Orchestra & Chorus

## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Enrique Mazzola  
*The John D. and Alexandra  
 C. Nichols Endowed Chair*

## MUSIC STAFF

Michael Banwarth  
 Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad  
 William C. Billingham  
 Aaron Breid  
 Kyle Dickson  
 Levi Hammer  
 Susan Miller Hult  
 Tess Jackson  
 Keun-A Lee  
 Chi-Yuan Lin<sup>^^</sup>  
 Noah Lindquist<sup>\*</sup>  
 Francesco Milioto  
 Jerad Mosbey  
 Jacob Niemann<sup>^</sup>  
 Stefano Sarzani  
 Madeline Slettedahl  
 Morgan Stevenson  
 Marika Yasuda

## ORCHESTRA

### Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster,*  
*Mrs. R. Robert Funderburg*  
*Endowed Chair*  
 Emily Nebel,  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
 Eleanor Bartsch  
 Alexander Belavsky  
 Kathleen Brauer  
 Renée-Paule Gauthier  
 Laura Miller  
 Liba Shacht  
 Heather Wittels  
 Bing Jing Yu

### Violin II

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

### Viola

Carol Cook, *Principal*  
 Terri Van Valkinburgh,  
*Assistant Principal*  
 Patrick Brennan  
 Amy Hess  
 Melissa Trier Kirk  
 Rebecca Swan

### Cello

Calum Cook, *Principal*  
 Ana Kim, *Assistant Principal*  
 Mark Brandfonbrener  
 William H. Cernota  
 Walter Preucil

### String Bass

Samuel Shuhan,  
*Acting Principal*  
 Andrew L. W. Anderson,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*  
 Jeremy Attanaseo<sup>\*\*</sup>  
 Gregory Sarchet  
 Collins R. Trier

### Flute

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

### Piccolo

Alyce Johnson

### Oboe

Paul Lueders, *Principal*  
 Judith Zunamon Lewis,  
*Assistant Principal*

### English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

### Clarinet

Heesoo Kim, *Principal*  
 Susan Warner,  
*Assistant Principal*

### Bass Clarinet

Susan Warner,  
*Acting*

### Bassoon

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

### Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

### Horn

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

### Trumpet

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

### Trombone

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

### Bass Trombone

Will Baker

### Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

### Timpani

Edward Harrison, *Principal*

### Percussion

Douglas Waddell,  
*Acting Principal*  
 Eric Millstein,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*

### Harp

Lynn Williams, *Principal*

### Librarian

John Rosenkrans, *Principal*

### Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

## EXTRA MUSICIANS

Cristina Bučiu, *violin*  
 Jennifer Cappelli, *violin*  
 Injoo Choi, *violin*  
 Karin Andreasen Gambell,  
*violin*  
 Michael Gurevich, *viola*  
 Paula Kosower, *cello*  
 Mara McClain, *cello*  
 Amy Barwan, *oboe*  
 Trevor O'Riordan, *clarinet*

## STAGEBAND MUSICIANS

John Thorne, *flute*  
 Jungah Yoon, *flute*  
 Adèle-Marie Buis, *oboe*  
 Sam Waring, *oboe*  
 Wagner Campos, *clarinet*  
 Nora Shaffer, *clarinet*  
 Hanna Sterba, *bassoon*  
 Vincent Karamanov, *bassoon*  
 Adam Unsworth, *horn*  
 Brian Goodwin, *horn*

<sup>\*</sup> On leave, 2025/26 Season

<sup>\*\*</sup> Season Substitute

<sup>^</sup> Solti Foundation U.S. Opera Residency

<sup>^^</sup> Ryan Opera Center Conductor

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



## CHORUS DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF MUSIC

Michael Black

*The Howard A. Stotler  
Endowed Chair*

## REGULAR CHORUS

### Soprano

Angela De Venuto  
Cathleen Dunn  
Desirée Hassler  
Rachael Holzhausen  
Kimberly McCord  
Heidi Spoor  
Stephani Springer  
Sherry Watkins  
Kelsea Webb  
Tara Wheeler

### Mezzo-Soprano

Marianna Kulikova  
Ola Rafalo  
Yvette Smith  
Marie Sokolova  
Maia Surace  
Corinne Wallace-Crane  
Pamela Williams  
Michelle K. Wright

### Tenor

Geoffrey Agpalo  
Timothy Bradley  
Hoss Brock  
William M. Combs  
John J. Concepción  
Kenneth Donovan  
Jared V. Esguerra  
Joseph A. Fosselman  
Cullen Gandy  
Cameo T. Humes  
Tyler Samuel Lee  
Joseph Shadday

### Bass

David DuBois  
Christopher Filipowicz  
Robert Morrissey  
Rafael W. Porto  
Craig Springer  
Nicholas Ward  
Ronald Watkins  
Nikolas Wenzel  
Jonathan Wilson  
Max Wier

## CORE SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS

### Soprano

Cara Collins  
Megan Fleischmann  
Emily Mwila

### Mezzo-Soprano

Christina G. Adams  
Carla Janzen  
Emily Price

### Tenor

Joshua Benevento  
Ace Gangoso

### Bass

Michael Cavalieri  
David Govertsen  
Nicolai Janitzky  
Ian R. Prichard

## SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS

### Soprano

Nicole Besa  
Alexandra Burch  
Regina Ceragioli  
Anna Donnelly  
Elizabeth Fisher  
Hayley Fox  
Julia Frodyma  
Elise Hurwitz  
Mackenzie Jacquemin  
Alexandra Kassouf  
Courtney San Martin  
Taylor See  
Emlynn Shoemaker  
Alannah Spencer  
Diana Stoic  
Ariana Strahl

### Mezzo-Soprano

Emily Amesquita  
Robin G. Bradley  
Leah Dexter  
Elizabeth Frey  
Miya Higashiyama  
Georgia Jacobson  
Samantha McGonigal  
Quinn Middleman  
Sarah Ponder  
Marissa Simmons

### Tenor

Jerek Fernández  
Klaus Georg  
Jianghai Ho  
Ernest C. Jackson Jr  
Nathan Oakes  
Steven Michael Patrick  
Brett Potts  
Brian Skoog  
Ryan Townsend Strand  
Tristan Tournaud

### Bass

Evan Bravos  
Chris DiMarco  
Dimitri German  
Stephen Hobe  
Brian Hupp  
Joseph Lodato  
Dorian McCall  
Wilbur Pauley  
William Powell III  
Dan Richardson  
Aaron Wardell

## SUPERNUMERARIES

Gus Franchere  
Neil Geistlinger  
Paul Hamilton  
Irene Lo  
Eric Marshall  
Vanessa Passini  
Miles Trudo  
Chris Vaughn

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Todd Rosenberg

*Lyric*

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## Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci

Josef & Margot Lakonishok  
Sonia Florian°  
Alice & John Butler<sup>+</sup>  
H. Gael Neeson<sup>+</sup>  
Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel<sup>+</sup>  
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## Madama Butterfly

Lisbeth Stiffel  
Randy L. & Melvin R.° Berlin  
Marion A. Cameron-Gray



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Irene D. Pritzker in honor of Michael Black  
Alice & John Butler<sup>+</sup>  
H. Gael Neeson<sup>+</sup>  
Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel<sup>+</sup>  
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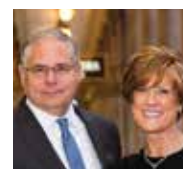
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*The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center identifies exceptionally talented emerging artists from around the world and provides them with comprehensive training and performance opportunities. On the world's stages, the Center's impressive roster of alumni continually proves the value of training at Lyric.*



**The 2025/26 Ryan Opera Center Ensemble**

**Sopranos**

Adia Evans  
Emily Richter

**Mezzo-sopranos**

Alexis Pearl  
Camille Robles

**Tenors**

Daniel Luis Espinal  
Travon D. Walker

**Baritones**

Sankara Harouna  
Sihao Hu  
Finn Sagal

**Bass-baritones**

Christopher Humbert, Jr.  
Benjamin R. Sokol

**Conductor**

Chi-Yuan Lin

**Pianist**

Michael Banwarth

**Stage Director**

Marinette Gomez

**Stage Manager**

Gemma DeCetra

Kyle Flubacker

Front row, l to r: Emily Richter, Chi-Yuan Lin, Marinette Gomez, Gemma DeCetra, Adia Evans, Michael Banwarth, Finn Sagal, Alexis Pearl

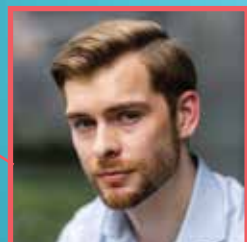
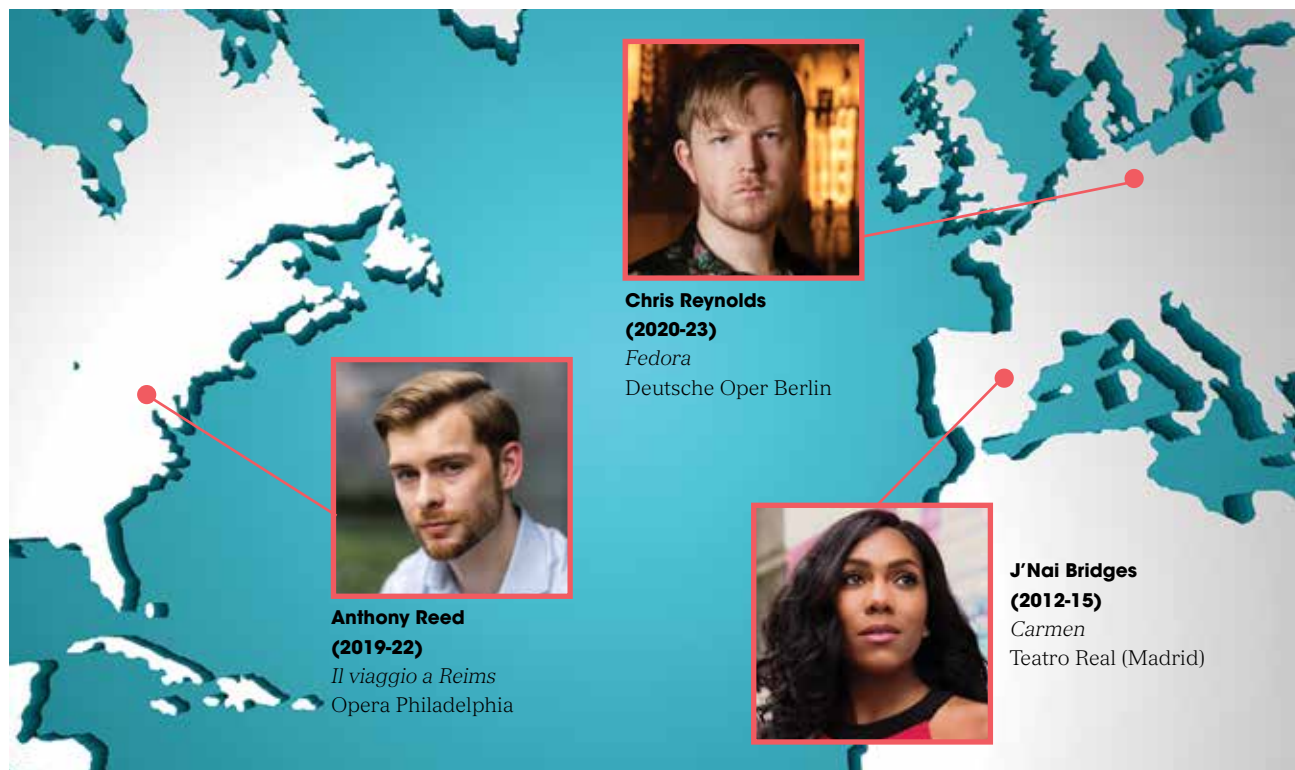
Back row, l to r: Camille Robles, Travon D. Walker, Benjamin R. Sokol, Christopher Humbert, Jr., Sihao Hu, Daniel Luis Espinal, Sankara Harouna

*Lyric*

# Ryan Opera Center

# Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

## THIS SEASON



**Anthony Reed**  
(2019-22)  
*Il viaggio a Reims*  
Opera Philadelphia



**Chris Reynolds**  
(2020-23)  
*Fedora*  
Deutsche Oper Berlin



**J'Nai Bridges**  
(2012-15)  
*Carmen*  
Teatro Real (Madrid)

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Photo: Kyle Flubacker

*Beyond the stage, and beyond the boundaries that often define opera companies, Lyric is igniting creativity across Chicago. Through innovative learning opportunities, creative exploration, and artist and scholar residencies, Lyric, with your support, encourages students, educators, families, audiences, and Chicagoans from neighborhoods across the city to share their voices and embrace the power of opera as a catalyst for growth and change.*



Field trips to Lyric's free *Student Dress Rehearsals* make for educational adventures.

*Lyric*

# Lyric Unlimited: Learning and Civic Engagement



# From Classroom to Curtain Call

Lyric Unlimited's free *Student Dress Rehearsals* program brings young audiences to the opera house

By Janie Ragsdale

**"I never tire of watching** students walk into the opera house for the first time. Their eyes widen, they pause for photos, they laugh, and they smile," says Elise LaBarge, Learning Programs Manager for Lyric Unlimited, the company's learning and creative engagement division. One way Lyric Unlimited shares the magic of opera with young audiences is through the *Student Dress Rehearsals* program.

The program offers free tickets for Lyric dress rehearsals to all students grades 6-12, inviting young people to experience the magic of opera as they watch Lyric's extraordinary artists prepare for an exciting run during a fully orchestrated and staged performance.

These field trips are also an immersive way for students to learn about the art form and see firsthand how opera comes together. From watching the tech table set up during a show, to learning that singers may choose not to use full voice, or the possibility of a start and stop, students have the opportunity to experience all the intricacies of a working professional dress rehearsal.

During the 2025/26 Season, middle and high school students (grades 6-12) are invited to experience *Così fan tutte*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*. This season's dress rehearsals for *Medea*, *Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci*, and *Salome* are recommended for high schoolers (grades 9-12), due to their mature content and themes.



Kyle Flubacker

Attending a dress rehearsal can spark a lifelong love of the performing arts.





Bob Kusel

Comedies are especially popular with the younger set.

Organizers at Lyric also ensure the program aligns with curricular goals. *Student Dress Rehearsals* includes *Behind the Curtain*, a complimentary in-school experience for classes who plan on attending a dress rehearsal. Prior to visiting the opera, the classrooms receive a visit from a professional Lyric teaching artist who leads an engaging 45-minute session, where students are introduced to the storyline, key themes, musical highlights, and other elements of the production. By offering students an introduction to opera before they arrive, the program minimizes any intimidating aspects of attending opera for the first time, and helps students feel comfortable and welcome as they step into the splendor of the Lyric Opera House, ready to enjoy, understand, process, and discuss opera on a deeper level.


**The learning does not stop** when students leave the opera house. Beyond introducing students to a new art form, attending dress rehearsals allows students to see a part of themselves in the art onstage. Lyric Unlimited provides educators with reflection questions to facilitate post-show discussion with students, which can spark important conversations, from exploring love and jealousy in *Cavalleria rusticana* & *Pagliacci*, to examining gender roles in *Così fan tutte*, to reckoning with cultural stereotypes in *Madama Butterfly*, and much more.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to experience live performance and discover the magic of opera. Lyric believes this is especially important for young people, and is dedicated to equitable access to the *Student Dress Rehearsals* program by providing bus scholarships to CPS and Big Shoulders schools across the city.

“This program matters — not only to the students, but to the future of opera itself,” notes John Mangum, Lyric’s General Director, President & CEO. “When we open our doors to young audiences, we are not just filling seats. We are planting seeds. Seeds of creativity, of cultural awareness, of deep listening and feeling. Seeds that will grow into tomorrow’s performers, patrons, and passionate advocates for the opera.”

**In the 2024/25 Season**, Lyric welcomed more than 1,733 students from 23 schools and also provided 35 bus scholarships to offset transportation costs. Lyric plans to expand the program in the 2025/26 Season, with a goal of doubling the number of students who participate in the *Student Dress Rehearsals* program.

As students take their seats at dress rehearsals this season, the future of the art form — and of Lyric — fills the opera house. As the curtain raises and the performance begins, students experience a moment of wonder that opens them up to a world of possibilities they may have never experienced otherwise.

LaBarge has seen the program’s impact on students firsthand, noticing not just first-timers in the opera house this past season, but more returning students. “These students are just as excited, but they walk through the lobby with a sense of familiarity. During intermission, they compare last year’s opera to this year’s opera,” she shares. “My hope is that they are growing in their sense of belonging in Chicago’s broader cultural community, and that they know that this is, indeed, *their* opera house.” 

# People of Lyric

A behind-the-scenes conversation



Todd Rosenberg

## Lawrence DelPilar Senior Director of Development

### When did you start at Lyric?

1990 to 1999, returned in 2012.

### First opera you saw live?

*Madama Butterfly*, during a student matinee at Lyric.

### Favorite performer?

Can't pick one! Currently: Asmik Grigorian, in a transcendent production of *Suor Angelica* in Salzburg; and Lisette Oropesa in Lyric's *Daughter of the Regiment*. Both are the full package: gifted vocal artistry with fierce acting chops — they bare their souls (or in Lisette's case — her comedy).

### Favorite Chicago spot?

Simon's in Andersonville. One of the best dive bars.

### What is your role here at Lyric — and what do you like about it?

I raise significant funds for mainstage productions and special projects (like the theatre seat renovation and the Crowe Glass Curtain). The exciting part is nurturing deep relationships with extraordinarily interesting and generous patrons of the arts — and connecting them with the wild world of opera.

### What was your path to working at Lyric?

Unexpected — especially since I come from a family of Chicago police (dad, uncle, and four cousins). But I have been in the development field for more than 30 years. I started at Lyric in my 20s — under the leadership of Ardis Krainik — as the Telefund Director, which was invaluable for learning the fundamentals of fundraising. I've always been very upfront about this: I'm attracted to organizations going through change. When I heard the Grant Park Music Festival was moving to the new Pritzker Pavilion, I left to lead that shop. Then I ran a capital campaign for a new building at Sacred Heart Schools, and then came a call out of the blue from my first boss at Lyric, who had landed at the Art Institute of Chicago; the museum was building the brand new Modern Wing. That work was really intellectually rewarding; I needed to be able to talk about art across the centuries. After some time, I began to see Renée Fleming's face all over the city. I had continued going to the opera here and there, but I noticed a renewed energy at Lyric. An opportunity arose and I came back, starting my second tour of duty working closely with the Ryan Opera Center. Will Liverman and J'nai Bridges were in the Ensemble then — one of the many examples of *I knew them when*. I loved it.

### What do you like about working in the arts?

I was the kid chosen last in gym in grammar school (I'm smart, but I can't throw a ball) and found my little corner of the universe in the arts, namely theater. I was a brilliant Hamlet in 6th grade. At Lyric, I'm able to be close to the magic and the awe-inspiring artists — onstage, offstage, in the pit — that make it all happen, and earn a living on the admin side. I continue to be deeply grateful to have a career in the arts.

### Have you had a favorite moment at Lyric?

Renée Fleming's 1993 Lyric debut in *Susannah*. I will never forget her climbing a ladder to sit on a rooftop to sing "Ain't it a pretty night" in a field of stars.

### Is there a Lyric production that you are particularly proud of?

The 1991/92 Season's world premiere of David Hockney's *Turandot*. It's a grand spectacle in bold, vibrant colors with glorious music, and I remember being proud working for the company that made it.

### Beyond opera, what are your other passions?

I've been a huge theatre fan for over 40 years — from storefront Chicago to Broadway and beyond. I have a badge of honor for having seen Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* at Lincoln Center. The entire experience was 12 hours long — it's like doing the *Ring*. Highlights include Bette Midler in *Hello, Dolly!* and Glenda Jackson in *Three Tall Women* on Broadway. Here in Chicago, a great Chicago actress, Mary Beth Fisher. I've been following her forever. And, spending time with my labradoodle. Dogs are very special gifts from God. **L**