

Lyric

BIZET

CARMEN



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Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

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HOLLY H. GILSON
Senior Director, Communications

DAVID ZIVAN
Program Book Editor

CATHY KIEPURA
Program Book Design

JESSICA M. PEDROZA, PMP
Project Manager

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

SAMETZ BLACKSTONE ASSOCIATES
Visual Direction

PMGMA, Inc.

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

Gail McGrath
Publisher & President

Sheldon Levin
Finance

Rand Brichta
Arnie Hoffman
Michael Hedge
Account Managers

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In Memoriam



Lyric Opera of Chicago dedicates these performances of *Carmen* to Nancy W. Knowles in honor of her extraordinary lifetime generosity and her service as a member of the Board of Directors as well as the Guild Board. The single most generous individual donor in Lyric's history, Mrs. Knowles supported multiple campaigns during her lifetime and remembered Lyric with a generous bequest. Her legacy is commemorated through the Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performances Fund and the Nancy W. Knowles Lobby which now houses her portrait. Please join us in remembering and honoring Mrs. Knowles each time you enter our beloved Lyric Opera House.

At Lyric, you'll be amazed, replenished, and inspired with must-see, must-hear live experiences. Through the timeless power of voice, acting that brings characters to life in triumph and tragedy, the splendor of a great orchestra and chorus—coupled with theater, dance, design, and truly magical stagecraft—Lyric is devoted to immersing audiences in worlds both familiar and unexpected, creating shared experiences that resonate long after the curtain comes down.



Anthony Freud
*General Director,
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Enrique Mazzola
Music Director

Lyric

Welcome to your Lyric

From the Chair and the General Director

Dear Lyric Family,

What a thrill it is to welcome you into our magnificent Lyric Opera House for this exciting and enduring masterpiece: *Carmen* has been called a perfect opera and is one of the most popular of all masterworks in the repertoire. Despite the scandalized critics who denounced the piece at its premiere, the work was praised by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner, among other luminaries.

Classics become classics with good reason—and Bizet’s opera is an outstanding example. It features riveting drama, irresistible melodies, and vivid and magnificent writing for chorus and orchestra. And, of course, it has an indelible, free-spirited heroine. As University of Chicago scholar Martha C. Nussbaum describes in her program note, the character Carmen has for generations eluded our complete understanding. Nussbaum concludes that it is in part because this character is a fully formed human being, subject to the passions and foibles that all of us share.

The essential element needed to bring such a character to life is of course a world class portrayal of the title role. We’re fortunate to have with us again both J’Nai Bridges—a Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center alumna who is enjoying a dazzling global career, including recent debuts at the Metropolitan Opera, Dutch National Opera, and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona—and our Don José, Charles Castronovo, who charmed us all last season in *The Elixir of Love*.

You, our audience, are an essential partner in the broad collaboration at the heart of producing opera. Thank you for joining us at *Carmen*. Please enjoy the show!

Yours truly,



Sylvia Neil

SYLVIA NEIL
Chair



Anthony Freud Obe

ANTHONY FREUD OBE
President, General Director & CEO
The Women’s Board Endowed Chair

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Reaching higher

By David Zivan

Daniel Fischel, Board Chair Sylvia Neil, President, General Director & CEO Anthony Freud, and Music Director Enrique Mazzola

Sylvia Neil became Chair of the Board at Lyric—the first woman ever to hold that position—just before the pandemic began. In the face of those daunting challenges, she got to work. And now she’s helping lead Lyric to new levels of inclusivity and excellence.

SO HOW DOES ONE BECOME BOARD CHAIR?

I was sitting next to our wonderful former Chair, David Ormesher, at a Lyric gala. He turned to me and said, “You’d be a perfect Board Chair.” I thought that was just a nice compliment. But then he took me to lunch and said he was serious. And here I am!

AND THEN THE BOARD VOTED YOU IN—THE FIRST WOMAN IN THAT ROLE.

Yes, I’m the first Chair who is a woman. We should recall, however, that women have had very powerful roles in Lyric’s history—co-founder Carol Fox, and longtime General Director Ardis Krainik, for instance. They established Lyric as one of the great opera companies in the world. Theirs are amazing footsteps to follow.

YOU WERE ALSO THE FIRST DESIGNATED CHAIR— A NEW POSITION FOR LYRIC.

My year as designated chair turned out to be a critical time in the history of Lyric, indeed in the history of the world—it was when COVID hit. Indeed there were many functional and financial questions—major business decisions that had to be made right away. My first public act was to join David and our General Director, President & CEO Anthony Freud on stage when we cancelled Lyric's new production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle while in rehearsal. It was heartbreaking, especially for our beloved Sir Andrew Davis, whose tenure with Lyric was to culminate with this marvelous achievement.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A PROFOUNDLY DIFFICULT TIME TO START.

It was! There was no learning curve. You might say I has thrown headfirst into the deep end of the pool. But as the saying goes, never let a crisis go to waste. And we at Lyric took that advice to heart. As an immediate intervention, my husband Dan Fischel and I created the Heroes Fund. We became sponsors of the *Ring* after it was cancelled and we asked for others to follow suit. Folks really stepped up, from donating their tickets to making brand new major gifts. Each and every sponsor of our cancelled productions contributed their donations to sustain the future of our company. That effort has grown into our current COVID recovery campaign which, due to our donors' extraordinary generosity, has allowed Lyric to not just survive, but to thrive.

IT'S REMARKABLE IN PART BECAUSE THERE WAS REALLY NO PLAYBOOK.

We made a decision: Rather than close our doors and go dark, we embarked on what became an extraordinary alternative season. It turned out to be a time of much experimentation and great creativity due to the brilliance of both our inimitable General Director Anthony Freud and our dynamic new Maestro Enrique Mazzola, together with the extraordinary dedication of our committed staff and artistic partners. We implemented a lot of things we'd always wanted to do online, attracting hundreds of thousands of followers from around the world. To mention just a couple of our achievements: Our cancelled *Pagliacci* was transformed into a cinematic version of the opera, set and filmed in our opera house (and it won a Midwest Emmy, by the way); *Twilight: Gods*, the total reimagining of *Gotterdammerung*, the final *Ring* opera, was unbelievably staged as a drive-through experience in the Millennium Park parking garage. I don't think anybody who experienced that

production will ever forget it, with the audience in cars snaking through spooky candlelit aisles to performance pods, culminating with Christine Goerke as Brünnhilde riding away in a red Mustang convertible. As opposed to just saying, it's too bad we can't perform, we figured out a way to be Lyric in new and exciting ways—all the while with strict safety protocols protecting our artists, staff, and audiences.

NOW THAT WE HAVE A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE, WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF ALL THAT?

The reach we achieved with people in other parts of the country and all over the world, and also in this city, is remarkable. A sort of transformation took place in that we reached hipper, newer audiences. This was actually an acceleration of trends that were already happening in opera, by the way. The reality is that opera is no longer like a closed club. People are much more open to new kinds of productions. And we reached a younger audience. And that all came about because we made a very conscious decision to say we're going to throw ourselves at it as opposed to just withdrawing.

I HAVE TO ASK: WILL WE EVER SEE THAT WAGNER?

It's ours. It is our own, brand new production, not something that we were renting from Europe or from someplace else in the United States. So yes, but it'll be a bit of a long arc. We're still very much in COVID recovery, like every performing arts group, and opera gets planned out years in advance.

HOW ARE THINGS TRENDING FOR LYRIC?

Lyric is trending positive in an extraordinary way. It still is a bumpy road, but we have confidence in a bright future. Opera in general, but Lyric in particular, has been experiencing a renewal. We've done much better than expected with our ticket sales, and the purchasers are often folks who are new to us, often just plain new to opera! We are lucky to have the talents of a new marketing guru, Paul Gunning, who brings new strategies and metrics from the private sector to opera. But I think it is mostly because we've stayed ahead on programming new productions. We see folks coming in great numbers to innovative new productions like *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. This year we have two new world premieres produced by Lyric—*The Factotum* and *Proximity*. Both have been attracting national attention. Also, thanks to Anthony and Enrique, our traditional operas are done with creative distinction, from our own production of *Macbeth* to our creatively tweaked traditional productions such as *Tosca* and

Carmen—there’s depth and complexity in the acting, in the dancing, in the whole way the staging and the stage setting itself are communicating.

DOES THE BOARD CHAIR PLAY A ROLE IN THESE AREAS?

My role is to work very closely with the executive team to support their vision, to act as a sounding board and to be a conduit to involve the board, thereby moving the creative agenda forward. To this end, I created a so-called blue ribbon Production Advocacy Committee, chaired by Susan Morrison. I really endeavor to bring people into the process of understanding why something on the stage is so exciting, which results not just in support, but with contagion for opera!

SPEAKING OF EXCITING—TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST *LA BOHÈME* AT LYRIC.

It was my first opera ever. I had just turned 21 and arrived in Chicago to go to law school. The father of my then boyfriend was an opera buff who gifted me a ticket to *La bohème* at Lyric. I still have the image in my head of sitting in the audience and just being overwhelmed by the voices, by the setting. I remember the snow falling like magic on the stage. It was so compelling—the story, the singing—you’re just taken into your own imagination and emotions in a very profound way. And guess who the star was of the production—Luciano Pavarotti!

PAVAROTTI IS A PRETTY GOOD WAY TO START.

He was an unbelievable performer. As wonderful as other tenors have been and still are, there was just something unique about him. Magnificent.

I’D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF YOUR OTHER BOARD ACTIVITIES. YOU’RE ON THE INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS (IDEA) COMMITTEE, FOR INSTANCE.

I think what Lyric has done in this area is one of our most profoundly important accomplishments. If you look at last year, if you look at what our productions were, who our artists were, who our conductors were, if you look at our Board and our staff and compare them to the past, we can be very proud of our recent achievements in IDEA. I don’t mean we can rest on our laurels. But I’m a great believer that you can’t move forward unless you feel proud of what you’ve already accomplished, and remain aggressive in your commitment to achieve much more.

EVEN IF IT ISN’T ALWAYS EASY TO QUANTIFY.

Accomplishment doesn’t happen in a straight line up. The Tetons, where my family spends a lot of time, are mountains that go straight up from the valley floor. But that’s why they’re a national park, because that is very rare. Our progress is more like ever increasing foothills leading to mountain peaks; while there are ups and downs, they are gradually getting higher and higher and higher. For example, look at our paid internship program, funded by the Elizabeth Morse Genius Trust, that will help develop the diverse opera artists, staffs, and aficionados of the future; look at the work we do with the Chicago Urban League with Chicago youth. You cannot quantify the effects of those programs for many years—they are seeds that will grow.

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU’RE SAYING OUR COMPASS IS POINTING IN A GOOD DIRECTION.

Our compass is pointing in a good direction because there’s a deep commitment to keep pointing in that direction. As seen with productions like *Fire* and *Factotum*, opera is moving beyond its white European roots to include whole new populations of artists and audiences. Which does not mean to say that our historic repertoire is losing its relevance. Look at the success of last year’s traditional *Tosca*, a production that featured two black artists in the leading roles. Read the program notes written by the great philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum about feminism and



Carmen. Whether in thought or deed, whether with traditional or new productions, whether with artists or staff, or vendors, we are focused on inclusion. And that is progress.

YOU SEEM TO BE TALKING ABOUT A LARGE-SCALE TRANSFORMATION.

We are looking at every single component of our organization—every aspect, from behind the stage to the audience, to the staff, to the board, to the artists, to the conductors, to the librettists, to the composers, to the conductors, to whom we are training at the Ryan Opera Center. Even vendors—it’s everything from cleaning services to investment companies. It is developing new orbits of customers and communities. Initial strides are often the hardest. With the leadership of our past and present IDEA board committee chairs, Jane Pigott, Eric Smith, and now Brenda Robinson, we’re developing a deeper understanding of how inclusion is accomplished. And we’re committed. Because that is the future. **L**

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Todd Rosenberg

Carmen is irresistible from the first note of the electrifying prelude right to the end of the devastating finale. The immortal tale of the restless, free-spirited heroine and Don José, the soldier who's drawn to her in a truly "fatal attraction," *Carmen* has long been one of the world's favorite operas. It returns this season in the company's vividly colorful, powerfully dramatic production with dynamic Ryan Opera Center alumna J'Nai Bridges, who is now enjoying a dazzling career internationally, in the title role. Partnering with her is Charles Castronovo, one of the world's most acclaimed tenors. You'll be drawn to the drama like moth to flame as this alluring opera brings you along to its edge-of-your-seat ending.



Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

J'Nai Bridges returns in one of her signature roles.

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Carmen



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Carmen

Opera in four acts in French

Music by **Georges Bizet**

Libretto by **Henri Meilhac** and **Ludovic Halévy**

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Moralès
Micaëla
Don José
Zuniga
Carmen
Frasquita
Mercédès
Escamillo
Lillas Pastia
Dancaïre
Remendado

Uniting Voices Chicago

Dancers

Ian Rucker⁺
Golda Schultz⁺
Charles Castronovo
Wm. Clay Thompson[•]
J'Nai Bridges^{••}
Denis Vélez[•]
Katherine DeYoung[•]
Andrei Kymach⁺
Alejandro Luévanos[•]
Laureano Quant⁺
Ryan Capozzo^{••}

Chase Buntrock⁺
Zachary Gonder⁺
Vernon Gooden⁺
Kara Hunsinger⁺
Noelle Kayser⁺
Brian Josiah Martinez⁺
Morgan Reed McDaniel⁺
Jude M. Perry-Evans
Amanda Sachs⁺
Taylor Yocum⁺

Conductor
Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Chorus Master
Children's Chorus Master
Choreographer
Assistant Choreographer
Ballet Mistress
Wigmaster &
Makeup Designer
Assistant Directors
Stage Manager
Stage Band Conductor
Musical Preparation

Ballet Accompanist
Prompter
Fight Director
Intimacy Director
Projected English Titles

Henrik Nánási
Marie Lambert-Le Bihan
Robin Don
Robert Perdziola
Chris Maravich
Michael Black
Josephine Lee
Stephanie Martinez⁺⁺
Noelle Kayser⁺
August Tye
Sarah Hatten

Jordan Lee Braun
Sandra Zamora
Stefano Sarzani
Susan Miller Hult
Keun-A Lee
Noah Lindquist
Jerad Mosbey
Stefano Sarzani
Greg Smith
Susan Miller Hult
Nick Sandys
Samantha Kaufman
Scott A. Heumann
Paul Hopper
Roger Pines
(spoken dialogue)

First performed by National Theater of the Opéra Comique, Paris, France on March 3, 1875.

First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on November 16, 1954.

+ Lyric debut

++ Lyric Choreographer Debut

• Member, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

•• Alumna, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

Synopsis

TIME | **Around 1820**

PLACE | **Seville**

ACT I

In a town square in Seville, Spain, soldiers guarding the cigarette factory idly watch the passersby. Micaëla, a young country girl, enters the square in search of one of the soldiers, Don José. Led by an officer, Moralès, the soldiers surround her and try to detain her, but Micaëla flees.

Afterwards, José's military unit arrives. At noon, the young men of the town gather to watch the women as they come out of the cigarette factory on a break from work. One of the women, the Roma woman Carmen, tells her friends that love is "a wild bird that cannot be imprisoned." Before returning to work, she flirtatiously tosses a flower at Don José. Micaëla returns, this time with a letter from José's mother. José resolves to honor his mother's wishes by marrying Micaëla.

Suddenly, screams are heard from the factory: Carmen has been involved in a fight and has slashed another woman's face. While Lieutenant Zuniga drafts the order for her imprisonment, she is put into José's custody. Carmen persuades him to let her escape by promising a future rendezvous.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

At Lillas Pastia's inn, Carmen and two friends, Frasquita and Mercédès, sing of the life of the Roma people. Lieutenant Zuniga tells Carmen that José was thrown in prison for allowing her to escape, but that he has just been released. The bullfighter Escamillo arrives with his entourage and asks Carmen if she will ever love him. Dancaire and Remendado, two revolutionaries, try to convince Carmen and her friends to accompany them on their next mission, but Carmen refuses, saying she is in love with José and is awaiting his return.

When José arrives, Carmen sings and dances for him, but a distant bugle sounds, and he says he must return to the barracks immediately. She invites him to desert the army and join the

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Lyric Opera of Chicago thanks its Official Airline, American Airlines.

Additional costumes provided by Seams Unlimited, Laura Whitlock, Tricorne Inc., Ken Zhang, Tailor.

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Act 1	55 minutes
Intermission	25 minutes
Act 2	40 minutes
Intermission	20 minutes
Acts 3 & 4	65 minutes
Total	3 hours 25 minutes

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Synopsis

continued

revolutionaries, but he refuses, and Carmen mocks his cowardice. As he is leaving, José encounters Zuniga, who has come in hopes of seeing Carmen. The jealous José strikes his superior officer. Now an outlaw, he has no choice but to desert the army and join Carmen and her friends.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

The revolutionaries are busy moving their shipment of rifles through the dangerous hillside. Carmen, now tired of José's jealousy, reads her fortune in the playing cards. She draws the death card.

When the revolutionaries head down the mountain to bribe the customs officer, José is left as a lookout. On her way up the mountain to find José, Micaëla hears a rifle shot and takes cover. José has fired a warning shot at Escamillo, who has come in search of Carmen. Escamillo tells José he is in love with Carmen, and they start to fight but are separated by the returning gang. Remendado then discovers Micaëla, who has come to beg José to return home to his dying mother. Carmen urges him to leave; José is convinced she wants to be rid of him in order to take up with Escamillo. José leaves with Micaëla, warning Carmen that he will come back.

ACT IV

An excited crowd gathers for the bullfight. Outside the ring, Frasquita and Mercédès pull Carmen aside and tell her to be careful because José has been seen in the crowd. Carmen, however, ignores their warnings and bravely remains for a final encounter. José pleads desperately with her to come back to him. As she tells him she can never love him again, the crowd is heard cheering Escamillo's victory in the ring. Realizing that he can never possess Carmen, José stabs her to death.

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Carmen's freedom

Is the heroine a victim of a judgmental society or a feminist icon? Or something far more complex?

By Martha C. Nussbaum

Katharine Goeldner (center, in red) played Carmen in Lyric's 2010/11 revival, joined (left to right) by then-current Ryan Opera Center members Paul Scholten, René Barbera, Emily Fons, and Jennifer Jakob.

In any list of the most-performed operas, Georges Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) ranks at or near the top. It has even been called a "perfect opera," and this seems justified. The work has everything: daring, melodically and harmonically complex music, with superb orchestration and intricate ensembles; local color and a vivid sense of place and time; and, perhaps above all, compelling characters who have fascinated audiences for many decades—ever since its disastrous first night, when it was denounced on all sides for immorality. It has won the admiration of composers as diverse as Brahms (who saw it 20 times), Tchaikovsky, Massenet, and even Wagner, who exclaimed, "Here at last for a change is someone with ideas!" The philosopher Nietzsche, meanwhile, thought it the best antidote to what he took to be Wagner's otherworldly pieties about love. Unfortunately its creator died before he could see the success his wonderful creation attained, after the initial shock it delivered to a conservative Paris music world.

Carmen got its start when Bizet, a musical prodigy and defiant anti-conservative, along with his librettists, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy (nephew of the composer Fromental Halévy, who had been Bizet's teacher), proposed to the directors of the Opéra Comique an opera based on Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen*

(1845). One director approved, but his more conservative partner objected. Halévy placated him (so he reported 30 years later) by promising a "softer, tamer" heroine, and the inclusion of a virtuous young girl, not in the *Mérimée*, as a counterpoise to the shameless *Carmen*. He also promised that *Carmen's* death would be "glossed over" by a noisy public celebration. Whether he was insincere, or whether Bizet successfully fought with them for his own ideas, neither of these promises was kept. The death of *Carmen* is searing, its effect only heightened by the contrasting offstage music of the bull ring. And, as we shall see, *Micaëla's* character and function are more complicated than the librettist revealed, or, perhaps, knew.

In many respects, the opera followed its source, emphasizing *Carmen's* transgressive insistence on freedom, though with significant changes that heighten the allure of its heroine and weaken the character of Don José. In *Mérimée*, we learn the story of *Carmen* and Don José through a male narrator, a detached intellectual who is doing research on the history of the Roman Civil Wars. He meets up with a band of Roma people, and eventually hears from Don José himself the story of his tragic obsession, as the outlaw lies in prison after having killed

Don Rest

Carmen. Thus, the story is mediated through two layers of male narration. In the opera, by contrast, we are confronted by the characters with no filter, and we respond to their immediacy with our own complicated emotions. Carmen becomes more dangerous, her insistence on freedom more threatening. She certainly does not seem “softer, tamer.” Indeed, the libretto removes some details that serve to soften her (her skill as a healer, her impressive fluency in many different languages), leaving the accent squarely on her outlaw daring and her transgressive sexuality. Don José is altered too: He is not Mérimée’s Satanic master-brigand; he is a naïve soldier from the country who never chooses the life of crime, but is led helplessly, pathetically, into dishonor by an overwhelming passion.

Micaëla is indeed an addition, but in Bizet’s hands she becomes far more interesting than the “virtuous girl” promised by Halévy. First of all, she exemplifies courage and autonomy as much as Carmen does. Pursuing her attachment to both José and his mother, she ventures into extremely hostile terrain not once but twice. She searches for José at the soldiers’ barracks, where they rudely taunt her and seem bent on sexual assault; later she braves the mountain haunt of the smugglers all alone (with only an employed guide). So although she is a conventional woman, exemplifying bourgeois virtues, she is an unconventionally strong and daring conventional woman, and her soaring lyricism is as memorable as Carmen’s much more radical and daring music. Second,

her presence in the opera shows us something significant about Don José—namely, that he is at home in her bourgeois world and not at all at home in the world of the outsiders. (Mérimée’s Don José, by contrast, is a natural brigand, who quickly rises to the head of the criminal gang.) From the moment they sing together, we hear how easily he slides into the phrases of her bourgeois lyricism—whereas the “Flower Song” that he addresses to Carmen, overheated and slightly crazy, shows us a man driven by some alien force to be what he cannot manage to sustain. He loves Carmen because she is not Micaëla, but he keeps trying to turn her into a bourgeois wife. We see, then, the tragic misfit in his passion.

One more character has been added: Escamillo, who replaces Mérimée’s young picador, Lucas, as Carmen’s lover. He is depicted as vain, bombastic, and highly conventional, and Bizet gave him music that he himself despised, though he knew full well that the public would embrace it. (“If they want trash,” he said, “I’ll give them trash.”) In the score, Escamillo’s signature aria is even marked *avec fatuité* (conceitedly). In an important sense he is Micaëla’s counterpart, the man suited for Carmen. He understands her need for sexual freedom, which suits him perfectly, since he has no capacity for deep passion. He is glad to tell everyone that each of Carmen’s loves lasts only six months. Meanwhile he will enjoy her and show her off. Such a lover perfectly fits Carmen’s own desire to avoid deep love and its vulnerabilities.



From left: Giulietta Simonato as Carmen in 1954; Grace Bumbry took the title role in 1964; Mark S. Doss as Escamillo in Lyric’s 1999/2000 production.





Dan Rest

In the 2005/06 Season, Denyce Graves took the title role with Sir Andrew Davis at the podium.

But we must now introduce one further source. In 1827, the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin published a long narrative/dramatic poem, *The Gypsies*, which was clearly a source for Mérimée, who translated it into French in 1852. We know that Meilhac and Halévy had that translation and used it, but there are decisive reasons to believe that Bizet read it too. Bizet was utterly dissatisfied with the libretto text of the Habanera, and completely rewrote it, again and again, with the help of his Carmen, the singer Galli-Marié, until he was finally satisfied. It was during these rewrites that the phrase “un oiseau rebelle” (a rebellious bird) was introduced. This phrase does not occur in the Mérimée novel. But the bird is in Pushkin, as an image of the restless freedom of the Roma world. So: Bizet knew Pushkin.

Pushkin is important because his poem contains insights about freedom and the bonds of passion that are not present in Mérimée, but prove central, I believe, to Bizet’s opera. The poem, dramatic in form, tells the story of a young man from the city who is drawn to the Roma world and forms a liaison with the beautiful Zemfira. He does not understand the relaxed and tolerant mores of the Roma people, called by Pushkin “children of a humble freedom,” and is determined to possess Zemfira, despite her own preference for freedom. When she has an affair with a man

from her own community, he kills her—and is immediately dismissed from the Roma world, since, as the Roma elder says, his people cannot live with murderers: “Not for freedom were you born,/ You want it for yourself alone.”

The poem clearly prefers the Roma world to the urban bourgeois culture that teaches young men to dominate women: “We are shy and good at heart,” says the elder. This might suggest that these outsiders are immune to the darker passions. But in the end the poet doesn’t agree. As the poem concludes, he tells us that there is no lasting happiness in that “innocent” world either. Even there, violent emotions surge up in dreams and presage disaster: “Catastrophe in hiding waits,/Dark passions everywhere run deep,/There is no refuge from the Fates.”

Bizet’s message, I think, is Pushkin’s. The opera sympathizes with Carmen and her demand for life on her own terms. It characterizes Don José’s possessiveness as both ugly and pathetic, part of a culture of misogyny that is also suffused with racialized “othering” of the Roma, who simply want to live on their own terms. To that extent, the political stance of the opera is diametrically opposed to that of the conservative critics who assailed it for immorality and lawlessness, and to those who continue to see in the opera’s tragic ending the just punishment of a woman who defies society’s rules. But its message is not



At left, Katharine Goeldner with Kyle Ketelsen as the Toreador in 2010/11. Above, Ekaterina Gubanova with Joseph Calleja as Don José in 2016/17.

the inverse of that message either, as some recent feminist critics have alleged, portraying Carmen as a feminist icon. These critics, on the whole, see the ending either as Carmen's defeat at the hands of a world order that cannot comprehend her, or else insist that she has triumphed after all, by living her life with integrity and refusing to yield, right up until the end.

There is a different possibility, suggested by Pushkin: We may see Carmen as fettered, so to speak, by human life and the vulnerability that is inexorably part of it. What both the victory-of-patriarchy critics and the feminist critics omit is the great unanswered question of the opera: Why does Carmen meet José outside the bull-ring, and stay there until he kills her? She has a happy new relationship, but she walks away from her new lover's big moment in the ring to meet an ex-lover whom she has dismissed and does not love. This makes no sense for a feminist Carmen: She should have gone her own way and ignored him. She could have left town, as Frasquita advises, or, more likely, sought the shelter of the crowd and Escamillo's victory. Instead she waits for him, not attempting to leave until it is clear he is going to kill her. Why? She does not love José. But there is something about him that draws her fatally (for she is a fatalist). Isn't it the sheer gaping vulnerability of his huge passion, his sheer willingness to give his whole life for love?

Perhaps, then, it is a desire for passion, for being bound and vulnerable, that makes her compromise her freedom? (As Janis Joplin said to my hippie/rebel generation, with its own rejection of the bonds of love, "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose.") Carmen longs, in the end, to be human—so death is what she seeks, and gets.

Interpretations that speak of fatal passion, as mine does, are accused by some recent critics of "depoliticizing" the opera. But opera characters are not simply abstract templates for political positions; they are complex human beings, and that is why they move us (and why opera moves us). Even though *Carmen* invites many reflections about race and class and gender—clearly solicited by Bizet, an atheist and a rebel—the opera also shows its people as searching for something deep about their condition, something that they try to grasp, even at their peril. **L**

Andrew Biondo provided research assistance for this essay.

Martha C. Nussbaum is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, appointed in the Law School and the Philosophy Department. Her most recent book is Justice for Animals: Our Collective Responsibility (2023).

Artist profiles



J'NAI BRIDGES | CARMEN

Previously at Lyric: 10 roles since 2012/13, most recently Carmen/*Bel Canto* (2015/16) and Inez/*Il trovatore* (2014/15).

The Grammy Award-winning American mezzo-soprano is an alumna of the Ryan Opera Center. This season she has sung Carmen, one of her signature roles, in debut engagements at the Arena di Verona and the Canadian Opera Company and in a return to Dutch National Opera. She recently made her Seattle Opera debut in a concert performance of *Samson et Delilah* as Delilah. Additional concerts include Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* with the Detroit Symphony, and a world premiere by Carlos Simon this spring with the National Symphony Orchestra. Recital engagements this season include a world premiere by Jimmy López Bellido at 92NY, and continue at Washington University, Thomasville Center for the Arts, The Cliburn, Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, San Francisco Performances, and the Mondavi Center. Last season included numerous world premiere engagements as a guest artist in The Kennedy Center's 50th Anniversary Season, in addition to performances with the National Philharmonic Orchestra in the world premiere of Adolphus Hailstork's *A Knee on the Neck* and in Mozart's *Requiem*. She also had her first performance of the Verdi *Requiem* with the Cathedral Choral Society. Bridges appeared with the Amarillo Symphony in a world premiere by Chris Rogerson entitled *Sacred Earth*, and gave a solo recital at the McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton. Last summer, she performed Lieberon's *Neruda Songs* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel as part of the *Power to the People!* festival, followed by her debut with the San Francisco Symphony singing Jocasta in Peter Sellars's production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen.



CHARLES CASTRONOVO | DON JOSÉ

Previously at Lyric: Three roles since 2011/12, most recently Nemorino/*The Elixir of Love* (2021/22) and Lensky/*Eugene Onegin* (2016/17).

The tenor has appeared at many of the world's leading opera houses, including the Opéra National de Paris, London's Royal Opera House, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Wienerstaats Oper, Teatro Real Madrid, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Gran Teatre del Liceu, and San Francisco Opera. Recent engagements include *Werther* in Zürich; Carlo/*I Masnadieri* and Admète/*Alceste* in Munich; Alfredo/*La traviata* in London, Munich, and Vienna; Rodolfo/*La bohème* in London; Gabriele Adorno/*Simon Boccanegra* in Salzburg; and

Ruggero/*La rondine* in Berlin. Castronovo made his role and house debut as Rodolfo/*Luisa Miller* at Glyndebourne and returned to Salzburg in the title role/*La damnation de Faust*. Born in New York and raised in California, the tenor began his career as a resident artist at the LA Opera. He was then invited to join the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and in the autumn of 1999 he made his house debut there as Beppe in the opening-night performance of *Pagliacci*, opposite Plácido Domingo. He debuted at Lyric as Tamino/*The Magic Flute* (2011/12).



GOLDA SCHULTZ | MICAËLA

Lyric debut

The South African soprano recently made her role and house debuts at Opéra National de Paris as Micaëla. Elsewhere this season she has appeared as Adina/*Elixir of Love* at the Metropolitan Opera where last season she sang Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress*. Other recent highlights include a role debut as Agathe in Weber's *Der Freischütz* at Bayerische Staatsoper, Clara in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* at San Francisco Opera, Sophie/*Der Rosenkavalier* and Vitellia/*La clemenza di Tito* at Salzburger Festspiele, Susanna/*Le nozze di Figaro* at Teatro alla Scala, Pamina/*Die Zauberflöte*, Nanetta/*Falstaff*, and Clara/*Porgy and Bess* at the Metropolitan Opera, and Contessa Almaviva at Wiener Staatsoper, Opernhaus Zürich, and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She returns to the 2023 Glyndebourne Festival as Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. In concert, Schultz opened the season with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler and Sibelius's *Luonnotar* and with the Tonkünstler Orchester Zürich in Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten*, and she joins the Boston Symphony Orchestra in further performances of *Luonnotar* at both Boston Symphony Hall and New York's Carnegie Hall. In 2022, Schultz released her debut solo album on Alpha Classics: *This Be Her Verse* explores the world and inspirations of female composers from the Romantic era to the present day.



ANDREI KYMACH | ESCAMILLO

Lyric debut

This season Kymach has sung Germont/*La traviata* at Houston Grand Opera and the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Opera Australia. Last season the Ukrainian baritone sang the title role in *Sadko* at the Bolshoi Theatre, appeared at the Bayerische Staatsoper in *La bohème*, sang the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Welsh National Opera, and debuted at the Savonlinna Festival as Escamillo/*Carmen*. Other recent highlights include house and role debuts at the Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona) as Sir Riccardo Forth/*I puritani* and at the Auditorio de Tenerife as Lord Enrico Ashton/

Lucia di Lammermoor. He sang the title role/*Don Giovanni* at Opéra de Nice and Théâtre d'Antibes and gave a concert performance of Rubinstein's *The Demon* (title role) at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. Kymach was the First Prize winner of the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2019 and graduated from the Bolshoi Young Artist Program, where he made his role debut as Don Carlos in Dargomyzhsky's *The Stone Guest* in 2018.



DENIS VÉLEZ | FRASQUITA

Previously at Lyric: Eight roles since 2020/21, most recently Sandman & Dew Fairy/*Hansel and Gretel* and Thibault/*Don Carlos* (both 2022/23).

The soprano, a third-year Ryan Opera Center member from Puebla, Mexico, sang Papagena in Lyric's *The Magic Flute* (2021/22), and appeared in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric* in August 2022. She was a national winner of the Metropolitan Opera's 2020 Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. In Mexico's most important platform for rising talent, the National Singing Contest Carlo Morelli, her performance earned her the First Prize, the French Opera award, and the Francisco Araiza Special Award. In spring 2021, she sang in the Harris Theater's *Beyond the Aria* series alongside Joyce DiDonato, and previously appeared in Lyric's 2020/21 virtual programs *Pasión Latina*, *Sole e Amore*, *Magical Music Around the World*, and *Rising Stars in Concert*. Denis Vélez is sponsored by **The C.G. Pinnell Family**.



KATHERINE DEYOUNG | MERCÉDÈS

Previously at Lyric: Three roles since 2020/21, most recently Giovanna/*Ernani* (2022/23) and Second Lady/*The Magic Flute* (2021/22).

A native of Traverse City, Michigan, the third-year Ryan Opera Center mezzo-soprano appeared last fall in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric Rising Stars*. As a member of the 2019/20 Detroit Opera Studio, she was heard as the Sandman/*Hansel and Gretel*, the Old Lady/*Candide*, the Mother/*Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and Mae/*The Grapes of Wrath*. In 2018 and 2019 she participated in The Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Singer program. Competition successes include National Semi-Finalist in the 2020 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, Finalist and Online Viewers' Choice Award winner in Houston Grand Opera's 31st Eleanor McCollum Competition, and participant in the internationally celebrated Neue Stimmen Competition in Gütersloh, Germany. Following studies at Michigan State University, DeYoung received a master's degree in voice performance from the University of Houston, where she portrayed Isabella/*L'italiana in Algeri*, Fidalma/*The Secret Marriage*, Gertrude/*Romeo and Juliet*, Elizabeth Proctor/*The Crucible*, and Lady Sneerwell/Robert Nelson's *The School for Scandal* (world premiere). Katherine DeYoung is sponsored by Lead Sponsors **Dr. and Mrs. Mark F. Kozloff** and co-sponsors **Cynthia Vahlkamp & Robert Kenyon**.



RYAN CAPOZZO | REMENDADO

Lyric debut

The tenor, a first-year member of the Ryan Opera Center, received a Master of Musical Arts degree from Yale School of Music, where he was awarded the Phyllis Curtin Career Entry Prize and was heard with the Yale Opera as Arcadio/Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* and Tamino/*The Magic Flute* (partial role, Spring Opera Showcase). Previously, Capozzo earned Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Purchase College Conservatory of Music. At Purchase Opera he was featured as Rinuccio/*Gianni Schicchi*, Reverend Samuel Parris/Robert Ward's *The Crucible*, Don Ottavio/*Don Giovanni*, Nero/*L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Lysander/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The tenor sang Tamino at the Berlin Opera Academy, and was the 2022 Second Place winner in the Southeast Region of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. *Ryan Capozzo is sponsored by the H. Earl and Miriam U. Hoover Endowment Fund*.



LAUREANO QUANT | DANCAÏRE

Previously at Lyric: Count of Lerma/*Don Carlos* (2022/23).

A first-year Ensemble member of the Ryan Opera Center and native of Colombia, Quant's repertoire includes Belcore/*The Elixir of Love*, Guglielmo/*Così fan tutte*, Figaro/Saverio Mercadante's *I due Figaro*, Maguire/Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*, Zurga/*The Pearl Fishers*, Vittorio and The Boarder/Nino Rota's *I due timidi*, Demetrius/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Captain and Prince Ragotsky/*Candide*. The baritone was awarded Second Place in both the Western (2022) and Southeastern (2020) Regions in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. He has also won the Online Audience Award in Houston Grand Opera's Concert of Arias (2020), First Prize in the Premio de Canto Ciudad de Bogotá (2018), and Second Prize in the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra's National Voice Competition (2016).



WM. CLAY THOMPSON | ZUNIGA

Previously at Lyric: Second Courtier/*Le Comte Ory* (2022/23).

The American bass is a first-year Ryan Opera Center member and a two-time District winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. He recently debuted at Arizona Opera (*Zuniga/Carmen*) and the Metropolitan Opera (Octet Singer/Brett Dean's *Hamlet*). Thompson is a former participant in the Santa Fe Opera and Wolf Trap Opera young-artist programs. From 2017 to 2019, he was a Resident Artist at Minnesota Opera, performing in operas of Mozart, Verdi, Massenet, Puccini, Jake Heggie, Kevin Puts, and Joel Puckett (*The Fix*, a world premiere). Among other companies, Thompson has been featured at the Château de Versailles Spectacles (Suleyman Pasha/*The Ghosts of Versailles*), The Glimmerglass Festival (*The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Silent Night*, *West Side Story*, *Noye's Fludde*, *The Ghosts of Versailles*),

and *La traviata*), and Fort Worth Opera (Zuniga/*Carmen* and Raymond Buck/David T. Little's *JFK*, in a world premiere).

Wm. Clay Thompson is sponsored by the **J. Thomas Hurvis**

Endowment.



IAN RUCKER | MORALÈS

Previously at Lyric: Raimbaud/*Le Comte Ory* (2022/23).

The baritone is a first-year Ensemble member with the Ryan Opera Center. Formerly an apprentice artist with Palm Beach Opera, Rucker recently spent a summer as a Renée Fleming Artist at the Aspen Summer Music Festival. He holds a Master's degree in Vocal Performance from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, where he sang Count Almaviva/*The Marriage of Figaro*, Figaro/*The Barber of Seville*, and Papageno/*The Magic Flute*. Rucker received an Encouragement Award for the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in two districts, took 1st place in the James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, and placed 2nd in the Opera Mississippi John Alexander National Vocal Competition. *Ian Rucker* is sponsored by **Pat & Jerry Frank**.



ALEJANDRO LUÉVANOS | LILLAS PASTIA

Previously at Lyric: A Royal Herald/*Don Carlos* and Riccardo/*Ernani* (both 2022/23).

Born in Durango, Mexico, the tenor is a first-year member of the Ryan Opera Center Ensemble. He will appear at Lyric later this season in *Proximity*. His appearances in Mexico include Don José/*Carmen* (Toluca Philharmonic Orchestra); Borsari/*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**.



UNITING VOICES CHICAGO

Previously at Lyric: 15 productions since 2000/01, most recently *Hansel and Gretel* (2022/23) and *Tosca* (2021/22).

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.



CHASE BUNTROCK | DANCER

Lyric debut

After attending Chicago Academy for the Arts, Buntrock received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from The Juilliard School. He then joined Ballet BC under the direction of Emily Molnar in Vancouver, BC. He has performed works on international stages by Crystal Pite, Sharon Eyal, Merce Cunningham, Roy Assaf, and more. He has collaborated with the PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, Ballare Carmel located in Carmel-by-the-Sea, and the Bay Area's Post:Ballet. Apart from dance, Buntrock is a stylist and movement director spanning multiple mediums. Most recently, he assisted movement direction for the critically praised Wiederhoeft fashion show at NYFW. This spring, Buntrock will debut a work commissioned by Montréal based circus performer Madi Ward for her digital art gallery *Amphibious Duality*.



ZACHARY GONDER | DANCER

Lyric debut

Gonder began his training at the Chicago Academy for the Arts under the tutelage of Randy Duncan, and graduated from The Juilliard School in 2018 where he performed works by Austin McCormick, Aszure Barton, Pam Tanowitz, Richard Alston, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, and Crystal Pite. He has recently performed with Pam Tanowitz Dance, Brian Brooks Moving Company, and PARA.MAR Dance Theatre. He has also danced for M3.Beyond - the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and Studio 189, among others.



VERNON GOODEN | DANCER

Lyric debut

The Chicago-based choreographer, performer, and teacher is a graduate of the acclaimed Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Visual Arts, and in 2001 was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Gooden later trained at The Juilliard School under the direction of the late Benjamin Harkarvy and Larry Rhodes. He has performed with the Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theatre, Joel Hall Dancers, Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre, Winifred Haun & Dancers, and Chicago Repertory

Ballet. He has performed works by Paul Taylor, Katherine Dunham, Donald McKayle, Bill T. Jones, Milton Myers, Cleo Parker Robinson, Nai-Ni Chen, Adam Houghland, Jessica Lang, Christopher Huggins, Kevin Iega Jeff, Winifred Haun, and Wade Schaaf, among others.



KARA HUNSINGER | DANCER

Lyric debut

The California native graduated with a BFA in Dance from the University of Arizona, where she performed works by George Balanchine, Nacho Duato, Tamara Dyke-Compton, Autumn Eckman, Alexei Ratmanský, and Christopher Wheeldon. Hunsinger has danced with Hawkinsdance, Visceral Dance Chicago, DanceWorks Chicago, and Boykin Dance Project, and has also trained with Alonzo King LINES Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet West, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Ate9, Share Dance Intensive, and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance.



NOELLE KAYSER | DANCER & ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER

Lyric debut

The Chicago-based performer, choreographer, and educator has performed with numerous companies including PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, LED Boise, Open Space Dance, NW Dance Project, Visceral Dance Chicago, The Cambrians, Fly on a Wall, gloATL, and Luna Negra Dance Theater. Past and upcoming choreographic commissions include DanceWorks Chicago, Ballare Carmel, SALT Dance LINK Choreography Festival, Visceral Dance Chicago Trainees, Chicago Dance Crash, Boykin Dance Project, COMMON Conservatory, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theater, Kit Modus, and Moonwater Dance Project. Kayser has taught at PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, NW Dance Project, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, among others, and she is the rehearsal director for PARA.MAR Dance Theatre. She has performed in theater productions with The Alliance Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, 7 Stages, Theater for the Stars, and Scrap Theater Group.



BRIAN JOSIAH MARTINEZ | DANCER

Lyric debut

Martinez received his BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography from The University of Southern Mississippi, where he also performed as a guest artist with Hub Dance Collective. He continued his training with Hubbard Street's Professional Program, under the direction of Alexandra Wells. He has danced with PARA.MAR Dance Theatre in *kiss.* and *Dos Ladós*, and in Robyn Mineko Williams' *Empty Orchestra*. He created the films *Next to the Portrait of a Red Haired Lady* for Chicago's New Dances and *Breaking Mundane* for New York's Future Dance Festival. His work *Shadow & Light* was

performed by Kinetics Dance Company and The University of Southern Mississippi's Dance Department. Martinez is Artistic Director of Boykin Dance Project, a new contemporary dance company.



MORGAN REED McDANIEL | DANCER

Lyric debut

The dancer graduated from the Ailey/Fordham BFA program, where she worked with esteemed choreographers including Jae Man Joo, Francesca Harper, Elizabeth Roxas-Dobrich, and Tina Bush and performed with the Metropolitan Opera in their production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. She joined South Chicago Dance Theatre as an emerging artist, and she spent a season with Visceral Dance Chicago. McDaniel had a residency with Ballare Carmel in Monterey, California, where she performed work by Noelle Kayser, Jennifer Archibald, and Ihsan Rustem.



JUDE M. PERRY-EVANS | DANCER

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

The New York-based artist was recently featured in Harlem Opera Theater's 100th anniversary presentation of *Shuffle Along* and in the Queens College Opera production of *The Image Maker*. He is a featured dancer in the *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance* documentary and the *Hal King The Musical* film. Perry-Evans has appeared in such productions as *Dance Africa* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and *Voices of Congo Square* in his hometown of New Orleans. He has performed with Phoenix Danse, De La Soul Dance Company, Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, Long Island Ballet Theater, Sekou Miller Dance Company, Alpha Omega Theatrical Dance Company, The Workshop Theater, and Balance Dance Theatre, and was a founding member of Urban Souls Dance Theater in Houston.



AMANDA SACHS | DANCER

Lyric debut

The New Jersey native trained in San Francisco with the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program. In 2014, Sachs joined The Francesca Harper Project in NYC, and in 2017 joined TU Dance in Minneapolis, where she performed Alvin Ailey's solo *Witness and Night Creature*, *Walking with Pearl: Africa Diaries* by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and numerous other works. She is an original member of *Come Through*, produced by Liquid Music in collaboration with Grammy-winning musician Bon Iver and TU Dance. Sachs joined NW Dance Project in Portland in 2021, where she performed works by Ihsan Rustem, Yin Yue, Joseph Hernandez, Sarah Slipper, and Luca Veggetti. She is featured in Bon Iver's *Naeem* and *We* lyric videos, and has performed at the Bonnaroo and Eaux Claires music

festivals. Sachs recently premiered in Ashwini Ramaswamy's *Invisible Cities* as well as *Cold Air Rises* by Ben Frost as part of The Great Northern Festival in Minnesota and will be joining PARA.MAR for their Spring Series in Chicago.



TAYLOR YOCUM | DANCER

Lyric debut

Yocum began her dance career studying ballet at Spokane Ballet Studio under the direction of Sara Donnelly. She attended SUNY Purchase and danced at the Beijing Dance Academy during a year abroad. In 2020 she moved to Chicago to attend COMMON Conservatory. She has performed in original works choreographed by Micaela Taylor, Rena Butler, Roderick George, Robyn Mineko-Williams, and Franco Nieto, among others. She is currently performing with South Chicago Dance Theatre as a guest artist and with PARA.MAR Dance Theatre as a supporting ensemble member. Yocum was chosen as a choreographer for Thodos Dance Chicago and Danceworks Chicago's New Dances in 2022 and is currently setting a new work for COMMON Conservatory.



HENRIK NÁNÁSI | CONDUCTOR

Previously at Lyric: *Madama Butterfly* (2019/20) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (2015/16).

As General Music Director of the Komische Oper Berlin from 2012 to 2017, Nánási conducted new productions of *Mazeppa*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *La Belle Hélène*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, *The Fiery Angel*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Cendrillon*, and *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*, as well as revivals of *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Rusalka*, and *Rigoletto*, among others. Highlights of the current season include *Falstaff* at the Komische Oper Berlin, *Tosca* at Gran Teatre del Liceu, a house debut at Teatro Petruzzelli with Verdi's *Attila*, and a return to the Bayerische Staatsoper with Dvořák's *Rusalka*. The conductor has regularly appeared at the Metropolitan Opera (*Iolanta*, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*), Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*Turandot*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Salome*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Jenůfa*—Olivier Award 2022 as Best New Opera Production), Teatro alla Scala (*Elektra*), San Francisco Opera (*Elektra*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*), Bayerische Staatsoper (*La traviata*), Opéra National de Paris (*Die Zauberflöte*), Gran Teatre del Liceu (*Die Zauberflöte*, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*), Opernhaus Zürich (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (*La bohème*, *Die Zauberflöte*), Arena di Verona (*Carmen*), Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia (*Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, *Macbeth*, *Werther*, *Iolanta*), Hamburgische Staatsoper (*Otello*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La traviata*), Oper Frankfurt (*La bohème*, *I Masnadieri*, *L'Étoile*, *La Gazza Ladra*, *Otello*), Semperoper Dresden (*L'Italiana in Algeri*, *La bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La traviata*, *La Cenerentola*), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (*Roméo et Juliette*), ABAO Bilbao Opera (*Madama Butterfly*), and Opéra de Monte-Carlo (*Werther*).



MARIE LAMBERT-LE BIHAN | DIRECTOR

Previously at Lyric: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (2013/14) and *La clemenza di Tito* (2012/13).

The director and lighting designer recently directed *Eden* for Joyce DiDonato with Il Pomo d'Oro. This season she will direct *Dialogues des Carmélites* at Opéra Royal de Wallonie. Other recent credits include direction and lighting for *Le Villi* (Halle aux grains-Toulouse), *La Fille du Régiment* (Opéra Royal de Wallonie), and lighting for *La Casa di Bernarda Alba* (Tenerife). She staged acclaimed productions of Leoncavallo's *Zazà* (Opera Holland Park) and *La voix humaine* (Buxton Festival), and was the associate director for *Madama Butterfly* (La Monnaie) and *La Cenerentola* (Opéra National de Paris). Lambert-Le Bihan revived *La traviata* (Liceu, Madrid, Scottish Opera), *La clemenza di Tito* (Toulouse, Marseille, Chicago, Liceu), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Chicago, San Francisco), *Carmen* (Glyndebourne, Gothenburg), and *Andrea Chénier* (Liceu, Covent Garden). Her work has been seen also at La Scala, Wiener Staatsoper, Châtelet, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Strasbourg, Lille, Tokyo, Maggio Musicale, Ravenna Festival, Bologna, Parma, Turin, Genoa, Montpellier, Bari, Palermo, Rouen, and Welsh National Opera. Future engagements include a Schönberg project at the Paris Philharmonie, collaborations with Opéra Comique, and a world premiere in Toulouse.



ROBIN DON | SET DESIGNER

Previously at Lyric: *Carmen* (2010/11, 2005/06, 1999/2000).

For Scottish Opera, Don designed the world premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots* and at the Royal Opera House, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bellini's *Norma*, and Simon Callow's *Inside Wagner's Head*. He designed countless productions around the European operatic circuit including *Tamerlano* at Opéra de Lyon and *The Magic Flute* at Goteborg and Iceland Opera, as well as several productions for Opera Australia at Sydney Opera House, including *Carmen*, *Force of Destiny*, and *Peter Grimes*. He designed the American premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* for San Francisco Opera and *Don Quixote* for New York City Opera, and in 2016 he co-designed the world premiere of Elena Langer's *Figaro Gets A Divorce* for Welsh National Opera with libretto by Sir David Pountney. He was production designer on the movie *The Winter Guest* starring Emma Thompson directed by Alan Rickman. He designed *The Rocky Horror Show* which ran at London's Piccadilly Theatre for 10 years. Don has received numerous awards, among them the Golden Troika Trophy at the Prague Quadrennial.



ROBERT PERDZIOLA | COSTUME DESIGNER

Previously at Lyric: Four productions since 1998/99, most recently *Così fan tutte* (2017/18) and *Capriccio* (2014/15).

In recent seasons the American designer's work has been seen in a diverse range of repertoire including *Giulio Cesare* (Fort Worth Opera), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Garsington Opera), *Beatrice and Benedict* (Opera Boston), *Falstaff* (Performing Arts Centre, Matsumoto), and *Tosca* (Cincinnati Opera). At Lyric, he designed for *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2011/12, 1998/99, also revivals at San Francisco Opera and Houston Grand Opera) and *Carmen* (2010/11, 2005/06, 1999/2000), as well as the company's 2006/07 revival of *Così fan tutte* (also seen at San Francisco Opera and the Opéra de Monte-Carlo). Perdziola has designed for the Metropolitan Opera (*Il pirata*), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (*Il re pastore*, *Faust*), Santa Fe Opera (*Arabella*), Garsington Opera (*Così fan tutte*), Hannover's Niedersächsische Staatstheater (*Faust*), and Opera Australia (*Arabella*, winner of five Helpmann Awards). His designs for ballet include *Giselle* (Bolshoi Theatre), *Harlequinade* (American Ballet Theatre, Australian Ballet), and *The Nutcracker* (Boston Ballet). *Robert Perdziola is supported by the Richard P. and Susan Kiphart Endowed Chair.*



CHRIS MARAVICH | 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.*



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, and 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: 15 productions since 2000/01, most recently *Hansel and Gretel* (2022/23) and *Tosca* (2021/22).

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.



STEPHANIE MARTINEZ | CHOREOGRAPHER

Lyric Opera Choreographer Debut

The Chicago-based choreographer has created for Joffrey Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, Luna Negra Dance Theater, Milwaukee Ballet, Charlotte Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Bruce Wood Dance, Nashville Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, BalletX, Canada's Alberta Ballet as well as for Chicago Shakespeare and the National Choreographers Initiative, among others. She has created more than 60 ballets for companies and collegiate programs across the country. In 2010, Martinez assisted Broadway legend Ann Reinking in setting the *Fosse Trilogy*, and in 2015 was awarded Joffrey Ballet's "Winning

Works: Choreographers of Color” commission and the Chicago 3Arts Award in recognition for her work as a female artist of color. More recently, Martinez was awarded an NEA grant for her premiere *Bliss!* at Joffrey Ballet. She is the founder and artistic director of PARA.MAR Dance Theatre in Chicago. *Stephanie Martinez’s work at Lyric is funded by Elizabeth B. Yntema and Mark Ferguson in support of female creative leadership in the performing arts.*

AUGUST TYE | BALLET MISTRESS




The American dancer, choreographer, and ballet mistress has worked on nearly 50 productions at Lyric since 1993/94. She remounted the choreography of Lyric’s *Iphigénie en Tauride* at San Francisco Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. She has presented a 20-year retrospective of her work at Chicago’s Vittum Theater and Ruth Page Dance Center, as well as in her hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. A graduate of Western Michigan University, Tye performed with the Kalamazoo Ballet, dancing leading roles in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *The Nutcracker*. In addition to Lyric

and Joel Hall Dancers, she has performed in Chicago with Salt Creek Ballet, Second City Ballet, and Chicago Folks Operetta. Tye is Artistic Director at the Hyde Park School of Dance, which she founded in 1993. Four years later she founded Tyego Dance Project, which has performed at Steppenwolf, the Athenaeum, and throughout America in a revival of Spike Jones’s *Nutcracker*.



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.* 



UNITING VOICES
CHICAGO

★ FORMERLY CHICAGO CHILDREN’S CHOIR ★
SINCE 1956

CELEBRATING OUR
DECADES-LONG PARTNERSHIP
WITH LYRIC OPERA

2022-23 SEASON

Fiddler on the Roof
Hansel and Gretel
Carmen
Proximity



Learn more about our accessible, culturally empowering choral music education programs that serve thousands of youth from every zip code of Chicago.

Photo by Cory Weaver, Lyric Opera of Chicago

Orchestra & Chorus

MUSIC STAFF

William C. Billingham
Susan Miller Hult
Keun-A Lee
Noah Lindquist
Francesco Milioto
Lee Mills⁺
Jerad Mosbey
Chris Reynolds
Michelle Rofrano
Brett Rowe
Stefano Sarzani
Madeline Slettedahl
Eric Weimer
Zoe Zeniodi

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

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

Violin II

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

Viola

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

Cello

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

String Bass

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

Flute

Marie Tachouet, *Principal*
Dionne Jackson, *Assistant Principal*
Rachel Blumenthal^{**}
Alyce Johnson^{*}

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

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

Trumpet

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

Trombone

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

Bass Trombone

Mark Fry^{**}

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*
Crozet Duplantier^{**}, *Acting*
Principal

Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

STAGE BAND MUSICIANS

Dave Immon, *trumpet*
David Gauger, *trumpet*
Adam Moen, *trombone*
Sean Keenan, *trombone*
David Becker, *bass trombone*

EXTRA MUSICIANS

Cristina Buciu, *violin*
Jennifer Cappelli, *violin*
Kate Carter, *violin*
Injoo Choi, *violin*
Christine Chon, *violin*
Lisa Fako, *violin*
Renee Gauthier, *violin*
Carmen Kassinger, *violin*
Erik Liljenberg, *violin*
Janis Sakai, *violin*
Karl Davies, *viola*
Davis Perez, *viola*
Rebecca Swan, *viola*
Bruno Vaz da Silva, *viola*
Jaime An, *cello*
Hannah Colins, *cello*
Robyn Neidhold, *cello*
Jake Platt, *string bass*
Tim Shaffer, *string bass*
Trevor O'Riordan, *clarinet*
Reed Capshaw, *trombone*
Rich Janicki, *timpani*
Joel Cohen, *percussion*

^{*} On leave, 2022/23 Season

^{**} Season Substitute

⁺ Soliti Foundation U.S. Opera Residency

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 MASTER

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

REGULAR CHORUS**Soprano**

Elisa Billey Becker
Sharon Garvey Cohen
Cathleen Dunn
Desirée Hassler
Rachael Holzhausen
Lauren Janeczek-Wysocki
Kimberly McCord
Heidi Spoor
Stephani Springer
Sherry Watkins
Tara Wheeler

Mezzo-Soprano

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

Tenor

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

Bass

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

CORE SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS**Soprano**

Joelle Lamarre
Emily Mwila
Carla Janzen

Mezzo-Soprano

Christina G. Adams
Cara Collins

Tenor

Jared V. Esguerra
Joe Shadday

Bass

David Goversen
Nicolai Janitzky

SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS**Soprano**

Elise Hurwitz
Katelyn Lee
Rosalind Lee
Leah Rockweit
Diana Stoic

Mezzo-Soprano

Leah Dexter
Christine Ebeling
Elizabeth Frey
Sarah Ponder
Emily Price
Marissa Simmons

Tenor

Matthew Daniel
Klaus Georg
Darell Haynes
Jianghai Ho
Ernest C. Jackson Jr
Nathan Oakes
Steven Michael Patrick
Edward Washington

Bass

Evan Bravos
Matthew Carroll
Michael Cavaliere
Dimitri German
Kirk Greiner
Stephen Hobe
Brian Hupp
Dorian McCall
De’Ron McDaniel
Wilbur Pauley
Douglas Peters
William Powell III
Ian R. Prichard
William Roberts III
Sean Stanton

SUPERNUMERARIES

Floriana Bivona
James Edward Dauphin
Kyle Eckert
Mary Anthony Flint
Katlin Foster⁺
Marianna Gallegos⁺
Steffen Diem Garcia
Paul Levin
Hayley Nystrom⁺
William (Doc) Syverson
Christopher Vaughn
Roger Warner

CHILDREN'S CHORUS**Members of Uniting Voices
Chicago (formerly Chicago
Children's Choir)**

Sofia Abshire
Marta Allesina
Thea Black
Liam Brandfonbrener
Shalom Burr Briggs
Elisabeth Cami
Gianna Chumil
Thomas Cunningham
Ellis Curry
Mayumi Felder
Parker Felker
Ellie Haro
Everell Hill
Hanna Hlavacek
Penelope Hoffman
Maude Hovey-Bradshaw
Raiva Lessing
Isabel Loza
Vivienne Lynch
Elizabeth Neveu
Zoey Obregon
Charlotte Oldham
Grace Parisi
Morgan Parker
Mia Pensinger-Sok
Ehlery Petersen
Paulina Saucedo
Rebecca Saucedo
Ximena Arriaga Torres
Jane Wiltrout

Josephine Lee

President

Elisabeth Baker

Conductor

Jackie Johnson

Citywide Program Director

⁺ Lyric debut

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 artistic creation and collaboration, Lyric, with your support, encourages students, educators, families, audiences, and Chicagoans from neighborhoods across the city to share their voices and embrace the power and relevance of opera as a catalyst for growth and change.



Trevor Nicholas, Director of Vocal Ensembles at Senn High School, has been with Lyric's High School Choral Residency program since its inception in 2016.

Lyric

Beyond the stage

Partnership power

How a Lyric Unlimited program helped one high school choir teacher garner two Grammy nominations

Lyric's Learning & Creative Engagement division, Lyric Unlimited, is dedicated to creating educational and community partnerships and programs that engage learners and audiences of all ages across Chicago. The High School Choir Residency, for instance, supports vocal instruction in high school choir programs by providing regular, year-round assistance from a Lyric professional teaching artist. Teaching artists work collaboratively with choir teachers to deliver student instruction and foster artistic growth.

And in one recent instance, the partnership contributed to an astonishing achievement.

Trevor Nicholas, Director of Vocal Ensembles at Senn Arts at Senn High School, has been with the Residency program since its inception in 2016, working with longtime Lyric teaching artist Heather Aranyi. For the past two years, Nicholas has been nominated for the Music Educator Award, presented by the Recording Academy. This honor—essentially a Grammy for teachers—recognizes educators from around the country who have made a significant contribution to the music education field.

“Lyric has not only changed the lives of my students and opened up new possibilities and enhanced their

performing ability, but it also has helped me in profound ways as an educator and artist,” says Nicholas. “Heather’s brilliant mentorship in branding and entrepreneurship has ushered me into new realms of leadership, and she gives me the courage to innovate artistically for my students. Lyric’s deep partnership has been an anchor throughout the many storms of the past seven years, and Heather’s constant encouragement has kept me afloat.”

“I am so proud of Trevor, and have been encouraging him throughout the nomination process. Our strengths compliment each other incredibly well as educators, allowing us to bring our whole skill sets in our whole selves, to innovate artistically,” Aranyi says. “This partnership between us not only elevates the Senn High School community, but it also elevates Chicagoland to get these amazing honors and opportunities.”

Aranyi, who attends Nicholas’s classes once a week, views Nicholas as being a master innovator, combining multiple disciplines to create outstanding works of art that reflect students’ lived experiences. Aranyi not only focuses on vocal technique in the classroom, but aims for a more holistic



Left: Trevor Nicholas and Heather Aranyi wait with their students to sing the National Anthem at Wrigley Field in 2019. Right: Senn High School choir members back up Will Liverman during Lyric's *Empower* (2018).



Aranyi, at left, joined Nicholas and his students for the dress rehearsal of *The Factotum* at the Harris Theater.

experience, guiding students on how to lead a creative life through personal branding and entrepreneurship.

The pandemic made partnerships like this feel even more urgent. Moving classes online disrupted music and the arts in tremendous ways. With many students struggling with mental health and attending virtual classes, Nicholas and his student teacher, Colin Cosgrove, sought to engage students with community and purpose. Thus was born “Who Will Carry Me?”, an original song composed by Nicholas in response to COVID-19, growing sentiment toward anti-Blackness, and the trauma of isolation. Once the song was finalized, students and local professional artists (including Aranyi) contributed their vocal, dance, and instrumental abilities, recording videos that became part of the final music video, edited by Nicholas. This stunning piece garnered national attention, receiving praise from Yo-Yo Ma, and opening the doors even further for the students.


“Our school experienced many traumas leading up to the lockdown,” says Trevor. “Using music to respond in a thoughtful way while validating and addressing their emotions is extremely important to me, and COVID added a whole new layer to that. This project was all for my students, and I never expected it to reach so far beyond that—ultimately leading to my first nomination.”

Most high schoolers cannot say that they have performed on numerous of Chicago’s very best stages.

Thanks to the partnership with Lyric Unlimited, in 2018 Nicholas’ students had the opportunity to sing on the Lyric Opera of Chicago stage for *Empower*, the culmination of *EmpowerYouth!: Igniting Creativity through the Arts*, a community-based program that guides Chicago high school students in creating an original opera. Additionally, they have sung at the Chicago Symphony Center, Millennium Park, the Harris Theater, Wrigley Field, and Ravinia Festival.

In addition to the regular, ongoing music education support in the choral classroom, the Residency program features an embedded Opera Discovery Project, a unit of study that includes a field trip to the Lyric Opera House for a final dress rehearsal as well as special guest artist in-school visits. Recently, a group of Senn High School music students had the opportunity to attend the dress rehearsal of the world premiere of *The Factotum*. The show, based on Chicago’s South Side and rich with themes that celebrate community, truly made for a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Senn students.

“As an educator, Trevor continually grows and is trying the next big thing, all to improve his classroom and better his students,” said Aranyi. “Any role that Lyric and I can play in helping him pioneer and maximize his work as a creative innovator and an entrepreneur, the greater the impact is for those students.”

Learn more about the High School Choir Residency and other Lyric Unlimited programming by visiting www.lyricopera.org/learn-engage/ 

To keep opera a must-see, must-hear experience, the art form needs outstanding artists who can convey through singing and acting the emotional range and engaging storytelling that are opera's hallmarks. Lyric, through 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.



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

Sopranos

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
Wm. Clay Thompson

Conductor/Pianist

Donald Lee III

Pianist

Chris Reynolds

Stage Director

Luther H. Lewis III

Stage Manager

Tess Naval

Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

J'NAI BRIDGES

Other appearances this season: *Delilah/Samson and Delilah*, Seattle Opera; title role/*Carmen*, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, Amsterdam, and Toronto.

“The three years I was in the Ryan Opera Center (2012-2015) were some of the most transformative of my life, both artistically and personally. There were many moments of work in the studio, rehearsals backstage, and performances in the Ardis Krainik Theatre and elsewhere that informed my career and have stayed with me to this day. I’m very proud to be a Ryan Opera Center alumna, and I’m tremendously grateful to everyone with the program and at Lyric for your never-ending support.”



J'Nai Bridges as Delilah in Seattle Opera's *Samson and Delilah*.

THIS SEASON



Paul Corona

Der Rosenkavalier
The Metropolitan Opera

Ensemble member
2007-2010



Emily Pogorelc

Dialogues des Carmélites
Bayerische Staatsoper

Ensemble member
2018-2020



Emmett O'Hanlon

Die tote Stadt
Deutsche Oper am Rhein

Ensemble member
2016-2018

PROGRAM STAFF

Administration

Dan Novak
Director, The Ryan Opera Center
Board Endowed Chair

Craig Terry
Music Director
The Jannotta Family Endowed Chair

Julia Faulkner
Director of Vocal Studies
Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation

Renée Fleming
Advisor

Susanna McNatt
Manager

Annika Donnen
Associate Librarian

Faculty

Julia Faulkner
Vocal Instruction
Robert and Ellen Marks Ryan Opera Center Vocal Studies
Program Endowment

Deborah Birnbaum
Sir Andrew Davis
Renée Fleming
Enrique Mazzola
Gerald Martin Moore
Patricia Racette
Anne Sophie von Otter
Guest Master Artists

William C. Billingham
Alan Darling
Laurann Gilley
Jonathan Gmeinder

Noah Lindquist
Celeste Rue
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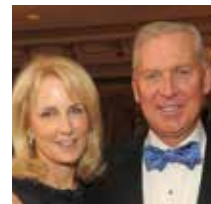
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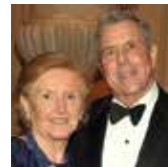
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The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO (AGMA), is the union that represents the singers, dancers, actors, and staging personnel at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

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Alaina Bartkowiak
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Sandra Moore
Stage Managers
Katrina Bachus
Kristen Barrett
Alaina Bartkowiak
Gina Hays
Sandra Moore
Daniel Sokalski
Peggy Stenger
Amy C. Thompson
Bill Walters
Assistant Stage Managers

People of Lyric

Jennifer E. Boyd
Vice President, People & Culture



Andrea Guerrero/After School Matters

TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE HERE AT LYRIC—AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?

I started in October 2022. I see my role as being the lead architect for the design and optimization of scalable, world-class people and talent systems, and a strategic partner in guiding the People & Culture department to support our organizational priorities. A system by which the people, the humans who do the work, feel a sense of belonging, are motivated to show up every day and bring their talent and their best self, and also to feel a sense of commitment. We are uniquely centered in that our product is performing artists. To me, performance art is a way to energize and engage society in ways that bring joy, contentment, and fulfillment. So in a lot of ways, I think our people—sometimes without even knowing it—are a catalyst for social good.

WHAT KEEPS YOU COMMITTED TO THE WORK YOU DO?

I enjoy seeing people thrive—and that looks different for everyone. Whether it's someone on the administrative side or the artistic side, I think creating a sense of community and allowing people to thrive in their individual way is what keeps me motivated and showing up every day. We're so passionate about what we do, and along the way, we find our sense of purpose and our connection points. I want to help everyone connect to those powerful, meaningful moments and really cement what it means to be a member of this organization.

WHAT LED YOU TO WORK AT LYRIC?

I'm a nurturer by heart, so naturally it was nice when I found my calling. I started out in for-profit and while that was a great learning experience, I just didn't connect to the cause of those institutions. I was intentional about pursuing organizations that contributed back to social good and humanity. I've been in the nonprofit space for more than 15 years. An executive search firm reached out to me. I wasn't looking, but then they said, "Lyric." To me, there has never been a better time to be in the performing arts. We're treading into innovative new spaces as an organization. Looking at the new titles, at our world premieres, and at the level of talent that we attract and retain, I wanted to be part of this emergence of change at a critical time. To continue and elevate the amazing foundational work that has been happening.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB?

There isn't a lot of information out there particular to our industry about how to tackle some of the challenging aspects of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility. There's no playbook. But I think we as an institution are uniquely positioned because we've intentionally carved out resources dedicated to supporting the IDEA work. That allows us to kind of be the pioneers, thought leaders in some respects, just even taking for example some of the stories that will be told on our stage.

BEYOND OPERA, WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER PASSIONS?

I'm a bit of a foodie. I enjoy going anywhere good, from small family-owned places, up to the big Michelin star restaurants. There's nothing that I'm allergic to or won't try. I love food, I love wine. I'm really looking forward to Lyric's Wine Auction in May.

A FAVORITE LYRIC MOMENT?

I know this is a bit unusual, but for me it was powerful. Just one week into my new role, we were faced with a tough challenge as an organization, with the loss of Deborah Hare, a longtime and significant member of our Development division. After I had walked around the building, talking with colleagues and learning about who she was, and as I reflected on her impact, I thought, I only hope to be half as remarkable as her. For me, that was a defining moment of, I'm at the right place. This is a place that values people, values individuality. I'm walking into an institution that cares. [L](#)