



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# LYRIC OPERA ADDS OPERA LEGENDS DENYCE GRAVES AND DALE TRAVIS TO THE CAST OF *THE MIKADO*

***Additional performance on Monday, April 22, 2013 added due to demand.***

**KANSAS CITY, MO. (October 11, 2012)** – The Lyric Opera of Kansas City today announced new casting information for its upcoming production of *The Mikado*, which will open April 20, 2013 in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets for the Company's second season at the Kauffman Center are on sale now.

"The Company's commitment to continue our artistic growth is evident in the casting we are announcing today," stated **Deborah Sandler**, the Company General Director and CEO. "I am thrilled that operatic superstar Denyce Graves will join the cast of *The Mikado*, singing the role of Katisha. Additionally, Dale Travis, one of the most sought after bass-baritones in opera today, will sing the title role."

"Casting these two remarkable voices is an artistic coup," exclaimed **Ward Holmquist**, Lyric Opera Artistic Director. "Dale Travis is highly regarded for his comedic roles, and his talent will fortify an already talented cast. Denyce Graves is making her debut with our Company, and I am thrilled to be able to welcome an artist of this renown to work in our community."

“In addition to singing with our Company on the Kauffman Center stage, Ms. Graves also will help us extend our reach into the community,” noted Ms. Sandler. Ms. Graves will lead a master class for Lyric Opera Apprentice Artists from the University of Kansas and University of Missouri – Kansas City. Members of the Ginger Frost High School Honors Artist Program and the UMKC Musical Bridges program also will participate.

Mezzo soprano **Denyce Graves** has been called “an operatic superstar” by *USA Today*. Ms. Graves’ signature portrayal of the title roles in *Carmen* and *Samson et Dalila* has been seen at The Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; San Francisco Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Opera National de Paris, and many others. Ms. Graves has sung at The White House on numerous occasions and has been the recipient of many awards, including the Grand Prix du Concours International de Chant de Paris. *The Mikado* marks her debut with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

**Dale Travis**, bass-baritone, also makes his Lyric Opera debut in *The Mikado*. Mr. Travis has sung more than 50 roles during his 25-year career, which has seen him sing for such opera companies as the Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, and Washington National Opera in the United States, and the Teatro Regio in Torino, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, and the Berlin Komische Oper, among others.

#### ***The Mikado* Principal Cast**

Nanki-Poo: Joshua Kohl\*  
Ko-Ko: Robert Gibby Brand  
Yum-Yum: Sarah Jane McMahon\*  
Katisha: Denyce Graves\*  
The Mikado: Dale Travis\*  
Poo-Bah: David Kravitz\*  
Pish-Tush: Chris Carr~  
Pitti-Sing: Elizabeth Tredent~  
Peep-Bo: Etta Fung+

\* Lyric Opera debut

~ UMKC Apprentice

+ KU Apprentice

#### **Artistic Staff**

Conductor: Mark Ferrell  
Director: William Theisen  
Scenic Designer: R. Keith Brumley  
Costume Designer: Kärin Kopischke

#### **About *The Mikado***

Widely regarded as the finest Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, *The Mikado* will captivate and delight audiences at every turn. Nanki-Poo, son of the Emperor of Japan, is desperately in love with Yum-Yum. But she is betrothed to Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner! Witty lyrics and brilliantly constructed plot twists make this tale of forbidden love, deception and beheadings a light-hearted favorite among opera-goers everywhere.

**Due to early ticket sales demand, an additional performance of *The Mikado* has been added on Monday, April 22, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.** *The Mikado* will be sung in English with English titles visible on personal monitors mounted on each audience member's seatback in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre. This production will be performed in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 1601 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64108.

**Performance dates are as follows:**

Saturday, April 20, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 22, 2013 - 7:30 p.m. – *added performance*

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 26, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 28, 2012 - 2:00 p.m.

Ticket availability varies by performance. **To purchase tickets, call Patron Services (816) 471-7344 or 1-800-OPERA KC (673-7252). Patrons can select their own seat and print their tickets at home by visiting [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org). Limited student rush tickets are available for \$15, cash only, one hour before the performances, with a valid student ID.**

**About Lyric Opera of Kansas City**

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

The Lyric Opera began performing in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in September, 2011 which was a critical and financial success for the Company. Lyric Opera productions were lauded by critics from *The Kansas City Star*, *The New Yorker*, *The Toronto Star*, and Paul Horsley of *The Independent* wrote, "With [*Turandot*] the Lyric Opera is entering a new epoch in its history, and future productions will doubtless be measured by the ambitions of this show." The subscriber base grew to more than 4,100, a 17 year high, and total ticket revenue increased by 73% from the previous season. Ninety percent of the available seats were sold and 75% of performances were sold out. The Company also grew its base of contributors, realizing an increase of the number of donors and establishing a new model to raise funds, which generated \$11,000 in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Company's nationally recognized education programs. The generosity and support of its patrons and donors allowed the Lyric Opera to end the fiscal year with a surplus.

**New Leadership at the Lyric Opera**

On July 1, 2012, Deborah Sandler began her tenure as new General Director and CEO of the Lyric Opera. Previously, Ms. Sandler served as General Director of Opera Festival of New Jersey, in Princeton, NJ for ten years and then as General Director of Kentucky Opera. During her tenure in each of these companies, Ms. Sandler developed institutional resources and capacities resulting in the growth and acclaim of each company. Ms. Sandler has a commitment to deepening community connections through the creation of programs which involve and engage audiences of diverse ages. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ms. Sandler received her Bachelors of Arts in Music from Temple University and a Master's degree in Musicology from New York University.

Ms. Sandler also has studied at the Mandel Center for Nonprofits at Case Western Reserve and at the Fundraising School at Indiana University.

### **Building for the Future**

On July 5, 2012, the Lyric Opera moved from its temporary home to the new Opera Center campus located at 1725 Holmes.

The Lyric Opera Richard J. Stern Center consists of two buildings: the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts building and the Beth Ingram Administrative building. The Production Arts building includes a rehearsal space that matches the footprint of the stage of the Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The Production Arts building houses a full wig, costume, and set construction shop, and facilities for educational and community outreach programs. Such an integrated and dedicated production facility did not exist until now in Kansas City; the Company envisions the Production Arts building becoming a resource for other local performing arts companies.

The second building on the property is adjacent to the Production Arts building. It provides the Company with set rental inventory storage, parking lots, outside green spaces for the Opera Center, and houses the administrative staff.

### **About the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, a major new center for music, opera, theater, and dance designed by Moshe Safdie opened September 2011. The Kauffman Center presents vibrant performances and will advance the role of the performing arts as a catalyst for Kansas City's civic, economic, and educational vitality.

Three of the region's leading performing arts organizations—Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City—are in residence at the Kauffman Center. The Kauffman Center's two performance venues, the 1,800-seat Muriel Kauffman Theatre and the 1,600-seat Helzberg Hall, offer audiences engaging and intimate experiences, while at the same time providing resident companies with dramatically enhanced performance capabilities.

Serving as a cultural cornerstone for Kansas City's dynamic downtown, the Kauffman Center brings a new spotlight to the region's performing arts community while simultaneously attracting some of the world's most talented performers and entertainers, further establishing Kansas City as a major cultural destination.

More information on the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, including a downloadable media kit, is available at [kauffmancenter.org](http://kauffmancenter.org).

The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is fully accessible and provides assistive listening devices plus Braille and large print programs. Service animals are welcome with advance notice. All dates, operas and artists are subject to change.

### **The Lyric Opera Guild**

The Lyric Opera Guild is a social and support group for men and women of all ages who attend the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The Guild supports the Company by presenting adult education programs including *At Ease with Opera* and *Opera Previews*.

- *At Ease with Opera* is an award-winning program featuring speakers who appear at local venues in four series of presentations a year, two in the spring and two in the fall. The programs sometimes revolve around a particular upcoming production, but more often deal with a general topic in the field of opera. For more information visit the events calendar at [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org).
- *Opera Previews* are presented for each performance one hour before curtain. The previews are entertaining, informational presentations about the history and context of the opera, composer, etc. For more information visit the events calendar at [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org).

The Guild also supports the Company financially through proceeds generated from their trips, boutique and membership dues. For more information visit [www.kcopera.org](http://www.kcopera.org).

### **The Bohemians: Young Friends of the Lyric Opera**

The Bohemians is the Lyric Opera organization for young professionals (ages 21-40). The Bohemians offer great opportunities to get involved in the community, meet other young adults and learn a little something about opera, too! Bohemians enjoy discounted tickets, monthly *Third Friday Happy Hour* gatherings at local hot spots and special invitations to exclusive events. In addition to attending the Saturday night performances, the Bohemians gather for dinner prior to the performance of each opera at the [restaurant partners](#) of the Lyric Opera where members receive discounted meals. To learn more, email [bohemians@kcopera.org](mailto:bohemians@kcopera.org).

The Lyric Opera of Kansas City is a member of OPERA America, and this season is made possible with funding from Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, Hall Family Foundation, Lyric Opera of Kansas City Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Missouri Arts Council and the Arts KC Fund.

Opera lovers can be fans of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City on Facebook or follow us @kcopera on Twitter.

**Please direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052.  
For Tickets: [kcopera.org](http://kcopera.org) or 816.471.7344**

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