

A close-up portrait of Plácido Domingo, an older man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression.

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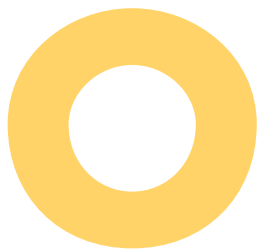
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CELEBRATING PLÁCIDO

Members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus

EUGENE KOHN, conductor

MICHAEL BLACK, chorus master

PROGRAM

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)	<i>La traviata</i> , Act Two	In order of vocal appearance: MICHAEL SPYRES (Alfredo Germont) LAUREN DECKER (Annina) AILYN PÉREZ (Violetta Valéry) ALEC CARLSON (Giuseppe) PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Giorgio Germont) EMMETT O'HANLON (Messenger) ANNIE ROSEN (Flora Bervoix) TAKAOKI ONISHI (Marquis d'Obigny) PATRICK GUETTI (Dr. Grenvil) MINGJIE LEI (Gastone de Letorières) BRADLEY SMOAK (Baron Douphol) MATTHEW CARROLL (Flora's Servant)
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Intermission

Verdi	<i>I vespri siciliani</i> , Overture	
Verdi	<i>Simon Boccanegra</i> , Act One, “Dinne perchè...Orfanella il tetto umile”	PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Simon Boccanegra) AILYN PÉREZ (Amelia)
Charles Gounod (1818-1893)	<i>Faust</i> , Act Three, “Salut, demeure”	MICHAEL SPYRES (Faust)
Umberto Giordano (1867-1948)	<i>Andrea Chénier</i> , Act Three, “Nemico della patria”	PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Carlo Gérard)
Francesco Cilea (1866-1950)	<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i> , Act One, “Io son l'umile ancella”	AILYN PÉREZ (Adriana)
Georges Bizet (1838-1875)	<i>Les pêcheurs de perles</i> , “Au fond du temple saint”	MICHAEL SPYRES (Nadir) PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Zurga)
Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i> , Act Two, “Zitti, zitti, piano, piano”	MICHAEL SPYRES (Count Almaviva) AILYN PÉREZ (Rosina) PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Figaro)

Director
 MATTHEW OZAWA

Musical Preparation
 FRANCESCO MILIOTO
 MATTHEW PIATT

Stage Manager
 JOHN W. COLEMAN

Assistant Stage Managers
 DANIEL SOKALSKI
 RACHEL HENNEBERRY
 AMY C. THOMPSON



**Plácido Domingo at
Lyric Opera of Chicago**

- 1968 Des Grieux/*Manon Lescaut*
- 1976 Title role/*Les contes d'Hoffmann*
- 1979 Title role/*Andrea Chénier*
- 1982 Mario Cavaradossi/*Tosca*
- 1984 Don José/*Carmen*
- 1985 Plácido Domingo in Concert
- Title role/*Otello*
- 1986-87 Edgardo/*Lucia di Lammermoor*
- 1989-90 Samson/*Samson et Dalila*
- 1990-91 Dick Johnson/*La fanciulla del West*
- 1992-93 Rodrigue/*Le Cid* (in concert)
- 1994-95 Count Loris Ipanov/*Fedora*
- 1996-97 Ardis Krainik Gala Celebration
- 1997-98 Title role/*Idomeneo*
- 2004-05 Siegmund/*Die Walküre*
- 2015-16 Concert with Ana María Martínez





Clockwise from opposite upper left: *Manon Lescaut* (with Renata Febaldi); *Les contes d'Hoffmann*; *Andrea Chénier*; *Carmen*; *Otello* (with Sherrill Milnes); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (with June Anderson); curtain call after *Samson et Dalila*; *La fanciulla del West* (with Marilyn Zschau); *Le Cid* in concert (with Isabelle Vernet); *Fedora* (with Mirella Freni); *Idomeneo*; *Die Walküre* (with Michelle DeYoung); concert (with Ana María Martínez).



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PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

(Giorgio Germont)

Previously at Lyric:

Concert with Ana María Martínez and Sir Andrew Davis (2015-16); 13 roles since 1968, most recently Siegmund/*Die Walküre* (2004-05); title role/*Idomeneo* (1997-98); Loris Ipanov/*Fedora* (1994-95).

A world-renowned, multifaceted artist, Plácido Domingo is recognized as one of the finest and most influential singing actors in the history of opera, as well as a conductor and a major force as an opera administrator in his role as Eli and Edythe Broad General Director of LA Opera. His repertoire encompasses 147 roles, a number unmatched by any other tenor, with nearly 3,700 career performances. His more than 100 recordings of complete operas, compilations of arias and duets and crossover discs have earned him 13 Grammy Awards, including four Latin Grammys, and he has made more than 50 music videos and won two Emmy Awards. In addition to three feature opera films – *Carmen*, *La traviata*, and *Otello* – he voiced the role of Monte in *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, played himself on *The Simpsons*, and his telecast of *Tosca* from Rome was seen by more than one billion people in 117 countries. In 1990, he and his colleagues, José Carreras and the late Luciano Pavarotti, formed The Three Tenors, triumphing worldwide and attracting millions of new fans to opera. Domingo has conducted more than 500 opera performances and symphonic concerts with the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, LA Opera, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, Montréal Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Berlin Philharmonic. In 2008, he appeared in the closing ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, performing for an estimated television audience of almost two billion people worldwide. That same year he celebrated the 40th anniversary of his debut at the Metropolitan Opera. He has opened the Met season a record-setting 21 times; in 1999 he surpassed Enrico Caruso’s record of 17 Met opening nights. This season, in addition to conducting several international opera performances, Domingo portrays the title role/*Macbeth* in Madrid, Berlin, Vienna, Los Angeles, and Beijing; Giorgio Germont/*La traviata* in New York, Munich, and Valencia; and Rodrigo/*Don Carlo* in Vienna.



AILYN PÉREZ

(Violetta Valery)

Lyric debut

An in-demand performer in major opera houses internationally, the American lyric soprano returns to the Metropolitan Opera this season as Mimì/*La bohème*, a role she has won acclaim for in Milan, Zurich, and Los Angeles. Other current season highlights are Giulietta/*I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at Ópera de Oviedo, and Violetta/*La traviata* at the Berlin State Opera and La Scala. Pérez previously made her triumphant debut at the Met as Micaëla/*Carmen*. In addition to portraying Verdi’s Violetta in Barcelona, London, San Francisco, Munich, and Hamburg, her extensive Italian repertoire includes Norina/*Don Pasquale* (Barcelona), Desdemona/*Otello* (Houston Grand Opera, debut), Adina/*L’elisir d’amore* (Vienna, Washington, DC), and Alice Ford/*Falstaff* (Glyndebourne). In 2015 she created the role of Tatyana Bakst/Jake Heggie’s *Great Scott* (world premiere) with the Dallas Opera before returning to Dallas to sing the title role/*Manon*. The winner of the 2016 Beverly Sills Award and the 2017 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Pérez is known to Chicago audiences for her portrayals of Mozart’s Countess Almaviva/*The Marriage of Figaro* and Pamina/*The Magic Flute* at Ravinia. She sang opposite Plácido Domingo in gala concerts at the Royal Opera House and in a concert performance of *La bohème* at the Salzburg Festival.



MICHAEL SPYRES

(Alfredo Germont)

Previously at Lyric:

Camille de Rosillon/*The Merry Widow* (2015-16); Alfred/*Die Fledermaus* (2013-14).

One of his generation’s most celebrated tenors internationally, the Missouri native appears this season in the title roles/*Les contes d’Hoffmann* (Munich Opera Festival), Haydn’s *Orlando paladino* (Zurich Opera House), and *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden). The latter role has previously earned Spyres acclaim at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (Brussels) and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. Other recent successes include the title role/*La damnation de Faust* (Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Opéra de Bordeaux, National Philharmonic of Warsaw), Rossini’s *Ermione*

(Paris, Lyon, La Coruña), Handel’s *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (Aix-en-Provence), and *Carmen* (Paris). Highly praised in many of the most demanding bel canto roles, Spyres has triumphed in rarely encountered works such as Bellini’s *Beatrice di Tenda* (Carnegie Hall), Auber’s *La muette de Portici* (Paris, Bari), Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots* (New York’s SummerScape Festival), and Berlioz’s *Benvenuto Cellini* (London’s English National Opera). Other important engagements in Rossini repertoire include *Guillaume Tell* (Bologna, Caramoor Festival, La Monnaie), *La Cenerentola* (Bologna), *La donna del lago* (La Scala, Covent Garden, Pesaro), and many more. Among the tenor’s recordings are *Les contes d’Hoffmann* (DVD, Barcelona), *Aureliano in Palmira* (DVD, Rossini Opera Festival), and a solo album, “A Fool For Love.”



ANNIE ROSEN

(Flora Bervoix)

Previously at Lyric:

Four roles since 2015-16, most recently Second Lady/*The Magic Flute*, Ascanius/*Les Troyens*, Wellgunde/*Das Rheingold* (all 2016-17).

The mezzo-soprano, a native of New Haven, Connecticut, is a second-year Ryan Opera Center member. She joined the Metropolitan Opera roster during the 2013-14 season for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* before returning to the apprentice program of The Santa Fe Opera. Rosen has appeared at the Caramoor Festival and as an emerging artist with the New York Festival of Song. The 2012 recipient of the Opera Foundation’s American Berlin Scholarship, she performed 12 roles at the Deutsche Oper Berlin (among them Mercédès/*Carmen* and Flora/*La traviata*). She holds awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, The Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, the Connecticut Opera Guild, and the Shoshana Foundation. *Annie Rosen is sponsored by Friends of Oliver Dragon.*



LAUREN DECKER

(Annina)

Previously at Lyric:

Third Lady/*The Magic Flute* (2016-17).

The contralto, a first-year Ryan Opera Center member, recently received the Encouragement Award at the Upper Midwest Regional Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Decker holds a B.F.A.

degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and has been heard in opera scenes with Milwaukee's Kalliope Vocal Arts and as Sally/Barber's *A Hand of Bridge* at the Up North Vocal Institute. She has trained at the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and at the American Wagner Project, Washington, D.C. Decker took third place in the Senior Women Division of the Wisconsin National Association of Teachers of Singing Competition (2011). *Lauren Decker is sponsored by an Anonymous Donor and the Thierer Family Foundation.*



MINGJIE LEI
(*Gastone de Letorières*)
Previously at Lyric:
Four roles since 2015-16, most recently Remendado/*Carmen*, Iopas/*Les Troyens* (both 2016-17); Benvolio/*Roméo et Juliette* (2015-16).

The Chinese tenor, a second-year Ryan Opera Center member, spent much of the summer participating in the Salzburg Festival's Young Singers Project. Lei is an alumnus of the Curtis Institute of Music and the Manhattan School of Music, and has appeared as tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* (Carnegie Hall) and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (Music Academy of the West), Jupiter/*Semele* (Schwabacher Summer Concert, San Francisco Opera's Merola Program), Don Ottavio/*Don Giovanni* (Banff Centre Opera), and Aeneas/*Dido and Aeneas* (Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music). He has received awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Opera Index, Inc., Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, Giulio Gari Foundation, and the Mario Lanza Institute. *Mingjie Lei is sponsored by Maurice J. and Patricia Frank.*



TAKAOKI ONISHI
(*Marquis d'Obigny*)
Previously at Lyric: Six roles since 2015-16, most recently Captain/*Eugene Onegin*, Moralès/*Carmen*, First Servant/*Don Quichotte* (all 2016-17).

A second-year Ryan Opera Center member, the Japanese baritone has received top awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Opera Index, Inc., the Licia Albanese-Puccini International Vocal Competition, the Giulio Gari Foundation, and the IFAC-Juilliard Prize Competition in Japan. At Juilliard,

Onishi's appearances included the title role/*Eugene Onegin*, Count Almaviva/*The Marriage of Figaro*, and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *Kommilitonen!* (U.S. premiere). In 2014 he created the role of The Man/Marty Regan's *The Memory Stone* world premiere (Houston Grand Opera's East+West program). Onishi has participated in the Aspen Music Festival and School, Saito Kinen Festival, and Internationale Meistersinger Akademie. *Takaoki Onishi is sponsored by the Renée Fleming Foundation and the International Foundation for Arts and Culture.*



BRADLEY SMOAK
(*Baron Douphol*)
Previously at Lyric:
Ten roles since 2014-15, most recently Zunigal/*Carmen*, Bandit Chief/*Don Quichotte*, Ghost of Hector/*Les Troyens* (all 2016-17).

A North Carolina native and a third-year Ryan Opera Center member, the bass-baritone has been heard with many companies nationwide, with particular success at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (Colline/*La bohème*, King of Hearts/Unsub Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* – U.S. premiere, Pirate King/*The Pirates of Penzance*, Masetto/*Don Giovanni*, Antonio/*The Marriage of Figaro*, Second Soldier/*Salome*). Smoak has appeared in concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*) and onstage with such companies as Boston Lyric Opera (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Palm Beach Opera (*Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*), Sarasota Opera (*La bohème*, *The Crucible*), and Opera Omaha (*Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *Fidelio*). *Bradley Smoak is sponsored by The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation.*



PATRICK GUETTI
(*Dr. Grenvil*)
Previously at Lyric: Four roles since 2015-16, most recently Zaretsky/*Eugene Onegin*, Second Armed Man/*The Magic Flute*, Greek Captain/*Les Troyens* (all 2016-17).

The second-year Ryan Opera Center bass and New Jersey native was first-place winner of the 2015 Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition and grand-prize winner of the 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Highlights of Guetti's recent

seasons include the Nightwatchman/*Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* (Glyndebourne), the Fifth Jew/*Salome* (The Dallas Opera), and José Tripaldi/Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* (Opera Philadelphia). Guetti is a former apprentice artist at The Santa Fe Opera, where he appeared in *Carmen*, *Fidelio*, and Theodore Morrison's *Oscar* (world premiere). His numerous awards include a 2014 Sara Tucker Grant and first prize in the Premio Verdi competition. *Patrick Guetti is sponsored by The C. G. Pinnell Family.*



ALEC CARLSON
(*Giuseppe*)
Previously at Lyric:
Four roles since 2015-16, most recently Lillas Pastia/*Carmen*, First Priest/*The Magic Flute*, Juan/*Don Quichotte* (all 2016-17).

The Red Oak, Iowa, native and second-year Ryan Opera Center member is an alumnus of University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he portrayed Ferrando/*Così fan tutte* and Ernesto/*Don Pasquale*, as well as the Royal Herald/*Don Carlos* (concert performance) and the tenor solos/Bach's *St. John Passion* (staged production). A 2014 apprentice artist at The Santa Fe Opera, Carlson has participated in Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy and the Wolf Trap Opera young artist program. He won the 2014 Seybold-Russell Award in the UCC-CM Opera Competition and received an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council District Auditions. *Alec Carlson is sponsored by Stepan Company.*



EMMETT O'HANLON
(*Messenger*)
Previously at Lyric:
Dancaïre/*Carmen*, Second Priest/*The Magic Flute*, Second Servant/*Don Quichotte* (all 2016-17).

The New York native, a first-year Ryan Opera Center member, earned a master of music degree from The Juilliard School and a bachelor of music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. In a workshop recently produced by the Metropolitan Opera, O'Hanlon sang the Soldier/Scott Wheeler's *The Sorrows of Frederick the Great*. His concert activities have included Bach cantatas and Fauré's *Requiem*, all with St. Thomas Episcopal Church

(Cincinnati). A prize-winner in the Altamura/Caruso, Gerda Lissner, Opera Index, Inc., Palm Beach Opera, and Dayton Opera competitions, O'Hanlon is also a principal vocalist with the internationally celebrated Irish singing group Celtic Thunder. *Emmett O'Hanlon is sponsored by Lois B. Siegel and Drs. Joan and Russ Zajtcuk.*



EUGENE KOHN
Lyric debut

Immersed in opera from an early age, the American conductor began by accompanying the vocal classes of Giovanni Martinelli and Maria Jeritza, quickly graduating to public performance as pianist for Renata Tebaldi, Giuseppe Di Stefano, Franco Corelli, Maria Callas, and the young Luciano Pavarotti. Kohn studied conducting with Fausto Cleva and Erich Leinsdorf, and debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in 1980 with *La Gioconda*. Several subsequent engagements there were followed by debuts in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Barcelona, Rome, and Paris. He served four years as principal guest conductor at the Bonn Opera, where he led productions of *The Flying Dutchman*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Fidelio*, among other works; and eight years as music director of the Puerto Rico Symphony. In recent seasons Kohn has performed hundreds of operatic concerts with many of today's top artists, including Renée Fleming, Bryn Terfel, Andrea Bocelli and Anna Netrebko. 2017 marks his 31st year as music director for concerts worldwide with Plácido Domingo, and their collaboration is well documented on numerous DVD and CD releases. Kohn has recorded for EMI, Decca, and Sony.

He also appears onscreen as an actor in Franco Zeffirelli's film *Callas Forever* (with Jeremy Irons and Fanny Ardant), in which he recreates his real-life role from years earlier as Callas's accompanist.



MATTHEW OZAWA
(Director)

Previously at Lyric:
Don Quichotte (2016-17);
Nabucco (2015-16).

The American director's most recent acclaimed productions include Florian Gassman's *L'Opera Seria* (Wolf Trap Opera, American premiere), Emmerich Kálmán's *Arizona Lady* (Arizona Opera, American premiere), Matthew Aucoin's *Second Nature* (Lyric Opera's Lyric Unlimited, world premiere), Somtow Sucharitkul's *The Snow Dragon* (Skylight Music Theatre world premiere, also Opera Siam), and *A Little Night Music*, David Hanlon's *After The Storm*, and Marty Regan's *The Memory Stone* (Houston Grand Opera, the latter two world premieres). *A Little Night Music* will mark Ozawa's Des Moines Metro Opera debut this summer. Other 2016-17 projects include *Romeo and Juliet* (The Minnesota Opera) and *Madama Butterfly* (Arizona Opera). In the fall of 2017, he makes his Opera Colorado debut in Puccini's iconic *La bohème*. Further directing credits include *Hand Eye* for eighth blackbird (Carnegie Hall/MCA), the world premiere of *Tsuru* (Houston Ballet), and a new production of *Les Mamelles de Tirésias/Le Pauvre Matelot* (Wolf Trap Opera). As an associate and assistant director, Ozawa has worked at the major opera companies of Toronto, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and St. Louis, as well as off-Broadway and at the Oregon Shakespeare and Macau International festivals. He made

his New York directorial debut writing, directing, choreographing, and producing *Bound Shadow*.



MICHAEL BLACK
(Chorus Master)

Previously at Lyric:
Chorus master since 2013-14; interim chorus master, 2011-12.

As chorus master from 2001 to 2013 at Opera Australia in Sydney, Black prepared the OA chorus for more than 90 operas and many concert works. He began at the company as a rehearsal pianist and progressed to assistant chorus master and children's chorus master, before his appointment as chorus master. He has served in that capacity for such distinguished organizations as the Edinburgh International Festival, Opera Holland Park (London), and, in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (including Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*, led by Vladimir Ashkenazy), and Philharmonia Choir, Motet Choir, and Cantillation chamber choir. His recent activities include preparing *The Damnation of Faust* chorus, continuing his association with the Grant Park Music Festival. As one of Australia's most prominent vocal accompanists, Black has regularly performed for broadcasts and recordings (he has been heard numerous times in Australian Broadcast Corporation programs), and has served as chorus master on four continents. His work has been recorded and/or aired on ABC, BBC, PBS, and for many HD productions in movie theaters as well as on television. He has also been a lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, of which he is an alumnus. Black holds a master's degree in musicology from the University of New South Wales. *Michael Black is the Howard A. Stotler Chorus Master Endowed Chair.*



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Giuseppe Verdi, *La traviata*, Act Two

La traviata (1853) is certainly the most romantic of Verdi's operas, and the most beloved by the public. Based on the play *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas the Younger, the opera premiered catastrophically in Venice. It very quickly caught on, however, stunning audiences with a contemporary realism very unusual for the time. It also rapidly earned the affection of sopranos everywhere, since Verdi created in Violetta Valéry probably the most enchanting, sympathetic, and multifaceted heroine in Italian opera.

A courtesan in fragile health, Violetta lives a life of lighthearted pleasure in Paris. At a party in her home she meets a young man from the provinces, Alfredo Germont, who has loved her from afar. He makes his feelings clear, leaving her wondering whether this is the true love she never thought would be hers.

In Act Two, having abandoned her Paris life, Violetta is living with Alfredo in the country. He is blissfully happy, but when he learns from the maid, Annina, that Violetta has been selling her property to pay their mounting debts, he rushes off to Paris to raise the necessary funds. Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, arrives, outraged by his son's liaison with Violetta. He insists that Violetta must give up Alfredo for the sake of his family, reminding her that she can easily find a new lover. Violetta agrees, knowing that leaving Alfredo will hasten her death. Germont urges her to live, since heaven will reward her sacrifice. After he departs, Violetta is writing a farewell note to Alfredo when he returns. She seems distracted but, when he questions her, she begs him simply to love her as much as she loves him and runs from the room.

A messenger delivers Violetta's note, and Alfredo reads only a few lines before despair overwhelms him. When his father appears, he urges Alfredo to return to the family for comfort. Noticing an invitation to a party at the Paris home of Violetta's friend, Flora Bervoix, Alfredo assumes she has returned to her former lover, Baron Douphol, and resolves to confront her.

In the second scene, everyone at the party is enjoying a Spanish dance. Arriving without Violetta, Alfredo wins handsomely at the gaming tables. A pale Violetta enters, escorted by Douphol. He challenges Alfredo, who continues to win. Before going in to supper, Violetta passes a note to Alfredo asking him to meet her. Once they are alone, she begs him to leave, since she fears Douphol's jealousy. He refuses, finally drawing from her a confession that she loves Douphol. Summoning the guests, Alfredo renounces Violetta and throws his winnings at her feet, announcing that he has now repaid her in full. Having followed his son to the party, Germont reproaches Alfredo for insulting a woman, even in anger. Douphol challenges Alfredo a duel, while Violetta laments that Alfredo will never understand the sacrifice she made for love.

Verdi, *I vespri siciliani*, Overture

The 1855 French-language premiere in Paris of Verdi's *Les vèpres siciliennes* (*The Sicilian Vespers*) was a great critical and popular success. The opera presents a fictionalized account of a 13th-century Sicilian rebellion against occupying French forces. Verdi later supervised an Italian translation but, due to political pressure, he removed the action from its Sicilian setting. In fact, it wasn't until after 1861, in Italy's post-unification era, that the opera regained the Italian title it is most commonly performed under today, though even that version remains a relative rarity on the stage. Nonetheless, Verdi's overture to *I vespri siciliani* is one of the most forceful and inventive in his *oeuvre*. As the overture begins to incorporate themes from the opera's key dramatic moments, the initially stormy mood yields to passages of both vigor and stirring lyricism.

Verdi, *Simon Boccanegra*, “Dinne perchè... Orfanella il tetto umile”

Based on a play by Antonio García Gutiérrez (the same playwright who inspired Verdi's 1853 opera, *Il trovatore*), *Simon Boccanegra* premiered at Venice's Teatro La Fenice in 1857 to lukewarm reviews. Twenty-three years later, Verdi's revised, much-improved version – what we most commonly hear today – opened at Milan's La Scala. The opera weaves a complicated story of power, intrigue, and vengeance in 14th-century Genoa. The prologue introduces Simon Boccanegra, a plebeian candidate for doge, who has had a secret affair with the daughter of Fiesco, an influential aristocrat, resulting in a lovechild. Boccanegra discovers that his lover has died and their daughter has vanished just as he's elected doge of Genoa.

In Act One, 25 years have passed and Boccanegra, still the doge, has exiled his enemies, including Fiesco, who lives in a palace outside the city under the assumed name, Andrea Grimaldi. There, he is guardian to an adopted young woman, Amelia. She is in love with Gabriele Adorno, who is conspiring with her father to overthrow Boccanegra, but their romance is impossible; Amelia is to be joined in a political marriage arranged by the doge. Boccanegra arrives and Amelia confesses to him her love for Gabriele and the story of her lowly birth. During the course of a lyrically sublime and deeply moving duet, Boccanegra produces a small locket with a picture of his lost love; this causes Amelia to show her own locket. The two are startled to discover the pictures in their lockets are identical, as they realize they are indeed a long-lost father and daughter reunited.

Gounod, *Faust*, “Salut, demeure”

Gounod's enormously popular *Faust*, a mainstay of the French repertoire ever since its premiere in 1859, adapts the well-known story of the aging scholar who, feeling his life's work will

amount to nothing, sells his soul to Méphistophélès in exchange for youth. The object of Faust's affection is Marguerite, the young maiden who symbolizes, for him, his fateful desire for eternal youth, beauty, and virtue. In a simple cavatina form – highlighting musically the idealized simplicity and perfection of the maiden – Faust celebrates the innocence of Marguerite and the idyllic house and garden where she lives. Musing poetically on Marguerite's physical beauty and spiritual chastity, Faust expresses gratitude to nature for making such an angelic woman.

Giordano, *Andrea Chénier*, “Nemico della patria”

Set amidst the political turmoil of the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, Umberto Giordano's beloved opera *Andrea Chénier* (1896) presents a story of love, sacrifice, and social upheaval. The opera's popular position in the repertoire has endured in part because of the rich and virtuosic array of music for the tenor in the title role.

A quintessential *verismo* opera, *Andrea Chénier* centers on the relationship between the title character, a poet, and Maddalena di Coigny, the young aristocratic woman he loves. Maddalena's servant, Carlo Gérard, also carries a secret passion for her and, as he joins the revolutionary movement with growing fervor, he uses his power to condemn Chénier to execution by guillotine. Midway in the opera, Gérard is preparing to write his indictment against the poet as an “enemy” of the nation. In a stirring monologue, he realizes the error of his ways and confesses his disillusionment with the ideals of the French Revolution.

Cilea, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, “Io son l'umile ancella”

Francesco Cilea composed five operas, but his fame rests solely on *Adriana Lecouvreur* (1901 premiere, La Scala). Arturo Colautti's libretto was based on a play of 1849 cowritten by two of France's best-known dramatists of the mid-19th century, Eugène Scribe and Ernest Legouvé. Their protagonist, Adrienne Lecouvreur, was a real-life figure (1692-1730) – in fact, the most celebrated French actress of her time. Adrienne brought to French theater a significantly more natural textual delivery than audiences had experienced previously. Her romance with an illustrious military hero, Maurice de Saxe, provided the heart of Cilea's opera. The real-life Adrienne's death remains forever a mystery, but it has always been rumored that she was poisoned by her rival for Maurice's affections. Colautti used the rumor for its dramatic power in the opera's *dénouement*, having his Adriana breathe in the scent of poisoned violets sent by the vicious Princesse de Bouillon.

Although the opera's tenor lead was created by Enrico Caruso, *Adriana Lecouvreur* has survived thanks to its title role, irresistible to sopranos possessing the requisite vocal and physical glamour. Prominent among the score's major highlights

is Adriana's fervent Act One aria. It finds her backstage at the Comédie Française, rehearsing her lines before making her entrance in a performance of Racine's *Bajazet*. When her admirers praise her artistry, she responds that she is simply the “humble handmaiden of creative genius.”

Bizet, *Les pêcheurs de perles*, “Au fond du temple saint”

In 1863 Bizet was just shy of 25 years old when *Les pêcheurs de perles* (*The Pearl Fishers*) premiered to generally antagonistic reviews at Paris's Théâtre Lyrique. Modern-day critics and audiences have a much more generous assessment of Bizet's early opera, seeing even in this effort the composer's considerable melodic gifts, as well as his emerging talent for creating evocative orchestral textures. Sung early in Act One, “Au fond du temple saint” has become one of the best-known of all opera duets. Nadir, a fisherman, returns to his native Ceylon after many years away and is reunited with his old friend, Zurga, who has recently been elected fisher king by the other pearl fishers. Though once their friendship was compromised by falling in love with the same woman – the Brahmin princess, Leïla – the two declare their loyalty to each other and their desire to remain steadfast friends.

Rossini, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, “Zitti, zitti, piano, piano”

Gioachino Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*) based, like Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, on Beaumarchais's 18th-century comedic trilogy – is celebrated worldwide for its unforgettable music, comic energy, and lovable characters. Its 1816 premiere in Rome's Teatro Argentina, however, was met with jeers and hisses from devotees of an older composer, Giovanni Paisiello, whose own operatic version of the story had been popular since 1782. But the opera became a resounding success for the 24-year-old Rossini, who later claimed to have written his stunning success in only twelve days.

Rosina, a gorgeous young woman with a sizeable inheritance, is kept in the house of Doctor Bartolo, her strict and curmudgeonly guardian, who intends to marry her. But she is also loved by Count Almaviva, a Spanish aristocrat. Unable to reach Rosina unnoticed, the count employs Figaro, a barber in Seville, to enter Bartolo's house in order to alert Rosina to the presence of her suitor, who serenades her disguised as a poor student. Once inside, the count reveals his true identity. But as the count and Rosina joyously sing of their romance, Figaro notices someone approaching who might discover the affair. In a delightful vocal and comedic tour de force, he urges the couple to escape, quickly and quietly, down a ladder from the window.

—Richie Hofmann
and Roger Pines

BMO Harris Bank: *Alexandra Dousmanis-Curtis*

“When I was five years old, I had to beg my father to let me take piano lessons. I had just returned from seeing *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in New York City with my mom, and I had decided that I wanted to be a musician. It was such a thrilling night. I’ll never forget the feeling of it, getting all dressed up, and the excitement of falling in love with music and performing. My father was not for it at first, but I eventually won the argument.”

Alex Dousmanis-Curtis is Group Head for U.S. Retail and Business Banking for BMO Harris Bank, the eighth-largest bank in North America. Alex is responsible for driving strategy, customer loyalty and customer relationships, and is honored to represent the bank’s longstanding partnership with Lyric by serving on Lyric’s Board of Directors and Investment Committee. “Being involved at Lyric keeps me personally connected with a lifelong passion: the music itself. I studied piano and oboe all through grade school, and I planned to become a concert pianist. In the end, life got in the way and I ended up in banking, which I also love, but I’ve always thought that when I retire I might like to take up the oboe again.”

After studying voice at Westminster Choir College, Alex’s professional career began at BMO Harris Bank, and aside from a jaunt to a competing bank in Canada, she’s been with the company ever since. “I ended up marrying a Canadian, so I’ve lived in Toronto my entire adult life. Even though my family stayed in Toronto after I was transferred here two years ago, Chicago is starting to feel like home now too. Lyric has been a big part of that for me. Not only has it allowed me to reconnect with music, but the people are fantastic. When you’re in a new city, it’s very helpful to have people who welcome you. Additionally, my banking background allows me to approach my time on the Investment Committee with an energy that is purposeful. I work to help keep Lyric strong, and I find real satisfaction in the professional dimension of my board service.”



*Alex Dousmanis-Curtis and Dave Curtis
with Lyric’s general director, Anthony Freud*

Alex’s involvement hasn’t only benefited her and Lyric – her husband Dave has caught the opera bug as well. “My husband knew nothing about opera. He never went with me in Canada; I would go with my girlfriends. But for opening night of *The Marriage of Figaro* last year, he got hold of the libretto and a few recordings, and learned every part. I’m not kidding, he was singing along to the music when I came home one night, and I thought, I can’t believe this has happened, I am so happy! He did the same thing with *Das Rheingold*. We were in the car with our guests on the way to the Opening Night Gala, and he was explaining the plot, when Wotan arrives, what this theme means, and so on. That has been my favorite side benefit of being involved with Lyric, that opera has a new fan.”

BMO Harris Bank’s tremendous support – and that of its predecessors – has spanned five decades, most recently as exclusive sponsor of Lyric’s annual star-studded, one-night-only concerts. Lang Lang, Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, and Ana María Martínez are among the featured soloists whose Lyric appearances have been made possible by BMO Harris Bank’s sponsorship, and the bank is the exclusive sponsor of Plácido Domingo’s

triumphant return this season for the second year in a row. “These concerts are really special for our clients. They love the ‘rock star’ moment of getting to spend time with big-name stars like Plácido. Sponsoring these concerts gives us an opportunity to thank them in a meaningful way.”

Alex also believes that star power is what keeps Lyric relevant to a broader audience. “When people who might not normally be interested in opera recognize Plácido’s name, it may enhance their perception of Lyric. I think that’s another reason why BMO likes the celebrity concerts. It creates a buzz that is contagious, and makes us feel proud that Lyric is admired as well by that kind of world-class talent.”

BMO Harris Bank delivers services across 600 branches in eight states, and has almost 14,300 employees. One of BMO’s core values is giving back to the communities in which it operates. To that end, Alex appreciates the diverse audiences Lyric is able to reach through a variety of programs, ranging in scope from newly-commissioned operas for children like *Jason and the Argonauts* to Lyric’s Backstage Tours. “Diversity is important to us as a bank, and Lyric brings all kinds of people together. Looking around in the audience, you see people you may have never been able to meet before. Innovative programming can touch children of all backgrounds and make them consider learning more about opera. Giving a peek behind the curtain demystifies the art form and invites participation. The key is exposure, and opera is the gift of a lifetime.

“BMO is coming up on a milestone in 2017 as we celebrate our bicentennial as a company. Two hundred years is a long time. We have learned a lot about who we are and what we stand for. Supporting the arts is part of our community commitment, and the BMO Harris Bank partnership with Lyric is an exciting example. We’re all stronger together, and we are thrilled to have Lyric by our side.”

—Meaghan Stainback

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Piccolo

Alyce Johnson

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Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

Horn

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

Trumpet

William Denton, *Principal*
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Co-Assistant Principal
Channing Philbrick,
Co-Assistant Principal

Trombone

Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*
Mark Fisher, *Assistant Principal*
David R. Becker**
John Schwalm*

Bass Trombone

David R. Becker**
John Schwalm*

Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

Harp

Marguerite Lynn Williams,
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Stageband Contractor

Christine Janicki

* On leave, 2016-17 season

** Season substitute

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Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*
Mrs. R. Robert Funderburg
Concertmaster Endowed Chair
Sharon Polifrone,
Assistant Concertmaster
Alexander Belavsky
Kathleen Brauer
Laura Park Chen**
Pauli Ewing
Bing Y. Grant
David Hildner
Ellen Hildner
Laura Miller
Liba Shacht
Heather Wittels

Chorus Master

Michael Black
Howard A. Stotler Chorus
Master Endowed Chair

Regular Chorus

Soprano

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Jillian Bonczek
Patricia A. Cook-Nicholson
Cathleen Dunn
Janet Marie Farr
Sharon Garvey Cohen
Desirée Hassler
Rachael Holzhausen
Laureen Janeczek-Wysocki
Kimberly McCord
Heidi Spoor
Stephani Springer
Elizabeth Anne Taylor
Sherry Watkins

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Claudia A. Kerski-Nienow
Marianna Kulikova

Colleen Lovinello
Lynn Lundgren
Yvette Smith
Marie Sokolova
Maia Surace
Laurie Seely Vassalli
Corinne Wallace-Crane
Pamela Williams

Tenor

Geoffrey Agpalo
Jason Balla
Timothy Bradley
Hoss Brock
William M. Combs
John J. Conception
Kenneth Donovan
Joseph A. Fosselman
Lawrence Montgomery
Mark Nienow
James Odom
Thomas L. Potter
Walton Westlake

Bass

Matthew Carroll
David DuBois

Robert Morrissey
Kenneth Nichols
Steven Pierce
Robert J. Prindle
Thomas Sillitti
Craig Springer
Jeffrey W. Taylor
Ronald Watkins
Nikolas Wenzel

Core Supplementary Chorus

Soprano

Jill Dewsnup
Carla Janzen
Suzanne M. Kszastowski
Kaileen Erin Miller

Mezzo

Sarah Ponder
Michelle K. Wrighte

Tenor

Jared V. Esguerra
Joe Shadday
Dane Thomas

Bass

Claude Cassion
Christopher Filipowicz
Nicolai Janitzky

Supplementary Chorus

Soprano

Elena Batman
Katy Compton
Joelle Lamarre
Katelyn Lee
Rosalind Lee
Susan Nelson
Brooklyn Snow
Christine Steyer
Kelsea Webb

Mezzo

Katie Ruth Bieber
Robin Bradley
Amy Anderson de Jong
Hillary Grobe
Adrienne Price
Emily Price
Amanda Runge
Carolyn J. Stein

Tenor

Curtis Bannister
Matthew Daniel
Joseph Diehl
Klaus Georg
Tyler Samuel Lee
Brett J. Potts
Peder Reiff
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