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**Juan Diego Flórez cancels engagement
in Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE
Feb. 16 – Mar. 22
due to throat infection;
John Osborn will take over role of Count Almaviva
for all performances**

Peruvian tenor **Juan Diego Flórez** has been forced to cancel all performances in Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *The Barber of Seville* Feb. 16-Mar. 22 due to a throat infection caused by swallowing a fishbone, Lyric's general director William Mason announced today.

Doctors in Parma, Italy, have advised Flórez that he should not resume his professional obligations at least until mid-March.

American tenor **John Osborn** will replace Flórez in the role of Count Almaviva for the 12 scheduled performances of Rossini's comedy.

"We were dismayed to learn of Juan Diego's medical difficulty, especially knowing how much he was looking forward to returning to Lyric, and send all best wishes for his recovery," Mason said. "Fortunately, John Osborn, a major interpreter of the *bel canto* repertoire, is available on short notice. John has developed a remarkable international career since his 1998 Lyric debut as Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos*."

An Iowa native, John Osborn debuted at San Francisco in 2006 as Almaviva, opposite the Figaro of baritone Nathan Gunn, with whom the tenor will collaborate in Lyric's production. Having first sung Almaviva at Vancouver Opera, Osborn has since triumphed in the role at the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Vienna State Opera, Berlin State Opera, Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires, Teatro Municipal in Santiago, and on tour in Japan and China with Seiji Ozawa. The role brings him to Dresden's Semperoper later this season.

Osborn has consistently gained international acclaim since he won the 1994 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions at age 21 and as the First Place winner of the Operalia competition in

Bordeaux in 1996. Since then, he has been engaged to sing with leading theaters around the world.

In the summer of 2008 Osborn will make his debut at the Salzburg Festival as Romeo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* opposite Anna Netrebko. Future projects include *La Juive* for the Netherlands Opera, *L'Italiana in Algeri* for the Teatro Comunale in Florence and his first Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the Theatre Royale de la Monnaie in Brussels.

In the fall of 2007 Osborn sang his first performances of one of Rossini's most formidable roles, Arnold/*Guillaume Tell*, at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Antonio Pappano. Earlier in the fall Osborn was heard as Iopas/*Les Troyens* at Geneva's Grand Théâtre and as Ramiro/*La Cenerentola* opposite Cecilia Bartoli at the Zurich Opera. This season also includes Arturo/*I puritani* in Seattle.

Osborn's 2006/2007 season opened at the Netherlands Opera with performances of the Italian Singer/*Capriccio*. He returned to the Opéra National de Paris as Léopold/*La Juive* (new production), following that engagement with his debut at Lisbon's Teatro São Carlos as Lindoro/*L'italiana in Algeri*. He closed the season with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Riccardo in an English-language production of *I puritani*.

Bel canto repertoire is a central component of Osborn's career. In addition to Almaviva, Osborn is especially recognized for his portrayals of Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment*, and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*. He first sang Don Ramiro in Montreal and has since sung the role with the major companies of Dresden, Turin, Genoa, Santiago, and for his debut at the Opéra National de Paris (Palais Garnier). Recently the *Miami Herald* hailed his "thrilling singing" and "vibrant, robust exuberance" as Tonio/*La fille du regiment*. He also frequently appears as Nemorino/*L'elisir d'amore*, which he first sang at The Washington Opera (now Washington National Opera) at the age of only 25.

Osborn is also in demand for a wide range of roles that span from Rossini and Mozart to Verdi and Strauss. He regularly sings *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Die Zauberflöte*. He has sung Don Ottavio at the Metropolitan Opera, and among the major companies that have heard him in Mozart roles are those of Washington, Seattle, San Diego, Miami, and Bordeaux. His versatility onstage embraces such comedies as *Die Fledermaus* (San Diego Opera, Boston Lyric Opera) and *Gianni Schicchi* (New York City Opera).

The tenor is a native of Sioux City, Iowa. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Simpson College. He is the recipient of the 1994 Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, a 1995 winner of an Opera Index Award, and a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Young Artists Development Program.

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA (The Barber of Seville) / Gioachino Rossini – 12 performances – Feb. 16, 19, 22, 26, 29, Mar. 3, 6 (ma), 9 (ma), 12 (ma), 15, 19, 22. Sung in Italian with projected English titles.

Gioachino Rossini's comic masterpiece, which had its Lyric Opera premiere in 1954, has been heard in 11 subsequent seasons, most recently in 2000/01. Baritone **Nathan Gunn** assumes the title role of the wily Figaro. The opera centers on his machinations in uniting the lovely Rosina (mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato**, debut) with her beloved "Lindoro" (tenor **John Osborn**), who turns out to be the aristocratic Count Almaviva. Adding to the intrigue are Dr. Bartolo (baritones **Philip Kraus** Feb. 16-22, **Andrew Shore** Feb. 26-Mar. 22), Rosina's guardian, who would like to marry her himself; and Don Basilio (bass-baritone **Wayne Tigges**), Rosina's music teacher.

Donato Renzetti will conduct this beloved Magritte-inspired production by stage director **John Copley**, set and costume designer **John Conklin**, and lighting designer **Duane Schuler**. **Donald Nally** is chorus master. *Il barbiere di Siviglia* is **The Mr. and Mrs. Ben W. Heineman Production**. The revival is generously made possible by **Mr. & Mrs. Dietrich M. Gross**.

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