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**Lyric Opera of Chicago to offer
Free Pre-Opera Lectures
for all* performances during 2008/09 season
*except for Opening Night, Sept. 27**

**Experts from Lyric, 98.7WFMT, and University of Chicago
to give lively 30-minute talks before 79 performances**

Lyric Opera of Chicago will offer free pre-opera lectures for all eight operas being presented in the 2008-09 season. One hour before every performance (except Opening Night, Sept. 27) a lecturer will give a free 30-minute talk on the opera that follows.

All pre-opera lectures will take place on the main floor of the Ardis Krainik Theatre. Seating is unreserved, and while there is no charge for admission, an opera ticket for that specific performance is required. Doors open approximately 30 minutes before the start of the lectures, which begin an hour before the performance begins. Speakers may change without notice.

“The idea behind the free lectures is to give patrons a bit of added knowledge that will enhance their operagoing experience,” says Lyric Opera General Director **William Mason**, one of the lecturers. “Last season our lectures prior to performances of four operas were an enormous success, often with more than 800 ticket-holders in attendance. The response was so overwhelming that we decided to offer free lectures for all eight operas this season. It’s a great way for audience members to get a fuller understanding of what they are about to see and hear.”

The season’s operas and lecturers, in order, are:

MANON / Jules Massenet: Chicago-based baritone **Philip Kraus**, a frequent performer at Lyric, lecturer. Oct. 1, 4 (mat.), 7, 11, 15 (mat.), 18, 21, 24, 27, 31. Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

THE PEARL FISHERS / Georges Bizet: Lyric Opera Audience Education Manager **Jesse Gram**, lecturer. Oct. 6, 10, 13, 16 (mat.), 19 (mat.), 22, 25, Nov. 1, 4. Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

LULU / Alban Berg (new production): Lyric Dramaturg **Roger Pines**, lecturer. Nov. 7, 10, 15, 19, 22, 25, 30 (mat.). Due to the early evening curtain time of 7 p.m., evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:00 p.m.; matinee lecture begins at 1 p.m.

PORGY AND BESS / George Gershwin (Lyric premiere): Ethnomusicologist and University of Chicago Associate Professor of Music & the Humanities **Travis A. Jackson**, lecturer. Nov. 18, 21, 23 (mat.), 26 (mat.), 29, Dec. 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 (mat.), 19. Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

MADAMA BUTTERFLY / Giacomo Puccini: 98.7WFMT Radio Host **Carl Grapentine**, lecturer. Dec. 13, 17, 20, Jan. 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 (mat.), 21 (mat.), 24, 29 (mat.). Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE / Richard Wagner: Lyric Dramaturg **Roger Pines**, lecturer. Jan. 27, 31, Feb. 4, 8 (mat.), 12, 16, 20, 24, 28. Due to the early curtain times of 6:00 and 1:00, evening pre-opera lectures begin at 5:00 p.m. and matinee lecture begins at noon.

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA / Pietro Mascagni & PAGLIACCI / Ruggero Leoncavallo: 98.7WFMT Radio Host **Carl Grapentine**, lecturer. Feb. 14, 18, 22 (mat.), 25, March 4 (mat.), 9, 14, 17, 20, 23, 27. Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO / Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (new production): Lyric General Director **William Mason** and Lyric Director of Operations **Nicholas Ivor Martin**, lecturers. March 2, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19 (mat.), 22 (mat.), 25, 28. Evening pre-opera lectures begin at 6:30 p.m.; matinee lectures begin at 1 p.m.

Lyric's pre-opera lectures are generously sponsored by **Mr. and Mrs. Edward O. Boshell, Jr.** with matching funds provided by **Kip Kelley**.

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