

Lyric

**AN OPERA BY TERENCE BLANCHARD
BASED ON THE BOOK BY CHARLES M. BLOW
LIBRETTO BY KASI LEMMONS**

FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES

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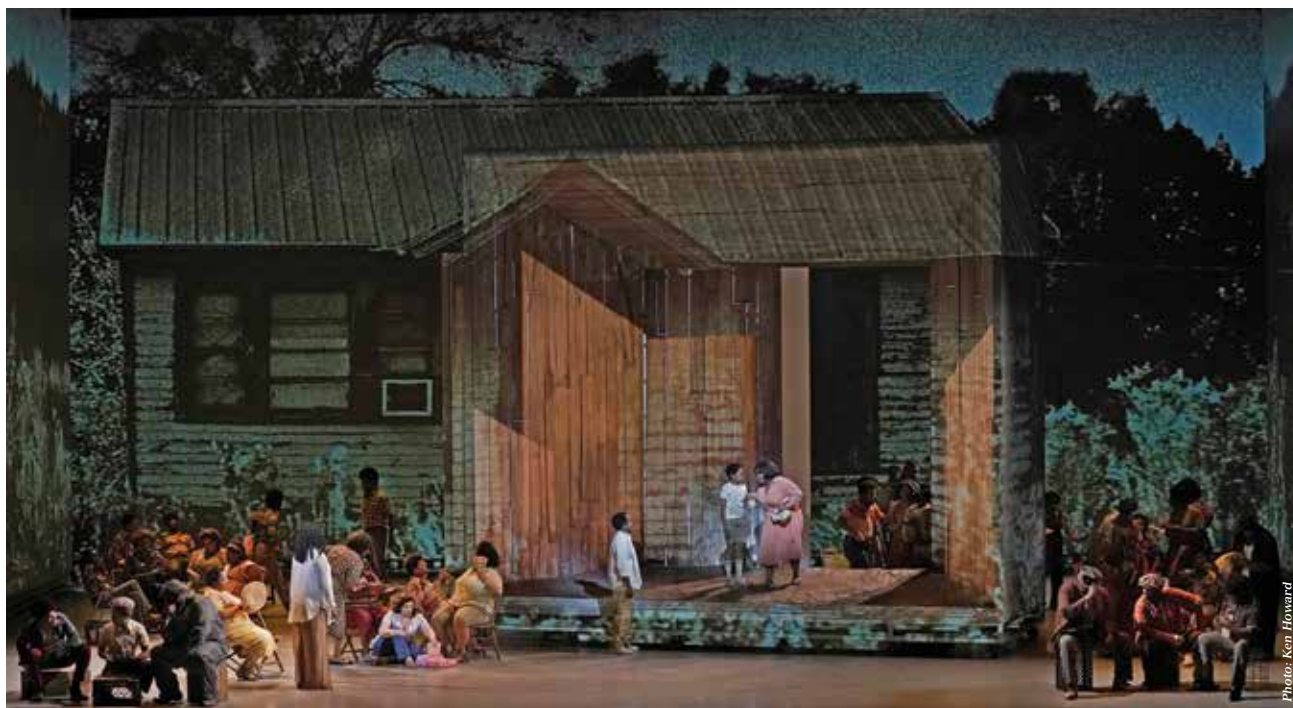


Photo: Ken Howard

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A scene from *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. (The Metropolitan Opera)

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Photo: Dead Man Walking / Ken Howard

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Lyric

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.



Photo: Kyle Fitzhacker

Anthony Freud
*General Director,
President & CEO*
Enrique Mazzola
Music Director

Lyric

Welcome to your Lyric

From the Chair and the General Director

Welcome to the Chicago premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*.

When this important new work—based on the memoir by *The New York Times* columnist Charles M. Blow—debuted at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2019, many of us were there to see it come alive. We are proud to bring this moving, poignant, powerful, and deeply affecting new American opera from jazz luminary and composer Terence Blanchard and celebrated director, screenwriter, and librettist Kasi Lemmons to Chicago audiences.

Lyric has a renewed commitment to new and contemporary works that will be seen over many seasons to come. New work gives us the opportunity to share important untold stories that reflect our shared humanity, to engage some of the most exciting and diverse creative minds of our time, and to affirm the future of opera itself by rooting it in our relevant, contemporary world.

In upcoming seasons, Lyric will present:

- The world premiere of *The Factotum*, by Will Liverman—Ryan Opera Center alumnus and star of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*—and dynamic DJ/producer King Rico. *The Factotum*, inspired by *The Barber of Seville*, is a completely original work set in a Black barbershop on Chicago’s South Side. An irresistibly upbeat marriage of gospel, funk, rap, hip-hop, R&B and more, it redefines everything opera can be.
- *Proximity*, a trio of works commissioned by Lyric, directed by Yuval Sharon, and curated by our Special Projects Advisor Renée Fleming from three sets of composer/librettist teams. This gripping new work zooms in and out on issues that face us today as individuals, as communities, and as global citizens, in a single, thought-provoking performance experience.
- *Omar*, co-composed by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels with a libretto by Giddens. Based on the life and the remarkable 1831 autobiography of Omar ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim-African man, *Omar* will weave distinctive West African traditions with classic opera instrumentation in this powerful story of unimaginable adversity and faith.
- Two operas by the celebrated team of composer Missy Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek: the North American premiere of *The Listeners*, based on the Jordan Tannahill novel about how far individuals will go to find a sense of place and purpose; and *Proving Up*, a powerfully supernatural story of Nebraska homesteaders in the 1870s, in a production by James Darrah that was originally to be presented in Lyric’s 2021/22 Season.

As we look forward to these new works with great anticipation, we remember that every time-honored masterpiece that we love today was originally brand new to audiences. How exciting it is to be a part of the creation of works that will live on and tell the stories of our times, our struggles, and our triumphs for opera audiences to experience for generations to come. Thank you for being with us on this journey.

Opera Forever! Lyric Forever!



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Sylvia Neil

SYLVIA NEIL
Chair



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Anthony Freud Obe

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Lyric

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2022 | 23 SEASON

Ernani
Fiddler on the Roof
Don Carlos
Le Comte Ory
Hansel and Gretel
The Factotum
Carmen
Proximity
West Side Story
Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry in Concert

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Lyric



Seeing Ourselves: New Work at Lyric

by Graham Meyer

Bel Canto

Photo: Lyric Opera of Chicago

Compared with most of the operatic canon, filled as it is with centuries-old compositions from old Europe, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* is a mere toddler. But the work emblemizes a movement in the opera world, a fast shift toward bringing the new inside the grandest houses and onto the biggest stages.

That's especially true here in the home of Lyric Opera of Chicago, where *Fire* takes its place in a growing line of young operas Lyric has helped bring to audiences. Prominent in that cadre is of course the grandly scaled *Bel Canto*, a Lyric commission whose 2015 premiere garnered international notice. *Dead Man Walking* was a riveting highlight of the pre-pandemic season, and today there are numerous projects actively in development. Lyric is recognizing the urgent nowness of our artistic moment, a time when the stories and issues confronting people outside the opera house should undeniably be let in.

"I believe opera is for everyone," says Anthony Freud, Lyric's General Director, President & CEO. "Lyric has an unwavering commitment to exploring the great works of the operatic repertoire, mining their power and relevance. But I understand that the heritage repertoire may not have obvious appeal to everyone. I want us to find and create new works that will both thrill the existing opera lover and intrigue and excite people who have never been in the building before."

Chicago, a city always building, matches the impulse for new opera like train wheels fit their tracks, says Lyric's Music Director, Enrique Mazzola. "It is part of Chicago's DNA to advocate for the new," he says. "Modern and contemporary art of every type has long been a vibrant part of the city—I find that unique in the world."



Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Bel Canto

Beginning with the 2019/20 season, Freud announced a bold initiative: to stage a contemporary, English-language opera on the mainstage every season. *Dead Man Walking* (2000), an adaptation of Sister Helen Prejean's account of one man's passage through death row, was the first. George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence* (2018) succumbed to pandemic cancellations, making *Fire* the second installment to reach the stage.

Audiences see their worlds echoed in the new work. "I want the subject matters of operas in this series to resonate powerfully with contemporary communities," Freud said during the run-up to the Lyric performances of *Dead Man Walking*. Just as Mozart's contemporaries would see as relevant and topical the anti-aristocracy revolutionary attitudes underpinning *The Marriage of Figaro*, so too do we see the death penalty, the abuse of political power, or issues of sexuality today.

Behind the jazz, choreography, and flashbacks in *Fire* resides the classic operatic framework of the *Bildungsroman*—a story dealing with one person's identity and development. *Fire* depicts recognizably modern-day characters, traveling through lives close to our own in time and space. The main character is based not only on a recognizable person, but one who is also still alive: Charles M. Blow, *The New York Times* columnist whose memoir provided the source material for the opera. "How often do we get a chance as performers to tell stories about people who are still with us?" says Will Liverman, the baritone who plays Charles.



Photo: Ken Howard

Dead Man Walking



Charles M. Blow with Will Liverman

Photo: Malike Stalbe for The New Yorker

Indeed the dynamic between character and living man led to some uncanny moments. Liverman and Blow met at a photo shoot to promote the opera, giving Liverman the rare opportunity to interact with and examine the inspiration for his character. He observed him to be a careful observer, appropriately enough.

Then the personas switched. “We did a talkback where I actually had to sing in front of him—Charles’s aria—which is so surreal to live in a character, and there is the person, right there,” Liverman says. “After the opening, one of his kids came up to me and said, ‘You did a great job portraying my father.’ When do we hear that after a show?”

In another opportunity available when a piece’s creator is still alive, *Fire* composer Terence Blanchard made changes to the score after the show’s premiere in St. Louis to adapt it to the new casts and larger houses it would see at Lyric and the Met. The work can still live and breathe with the principals available to adapt it, expanding or contracting according to the needs of the performers and the venues.

Liverman, an alumnus of Lyric’s Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, brings more new work to Lyric in the 2022/23 Season, as co-creator of *The Factotum*, a “soul opera” set in a South Side barbershop, based loosely on opera’s most famous barber, Figaro from *The Barber of Seville*. The DJ and producer King Rico is collaborating with Liverman to develop an upbeat show embracing wide-ranging musical styles, from R&B, rap, and gospel to traditional barbershop.



The Factotum

Photo: Lyric Opera of Chicago

The approaching 2022/23 mainstage season also features a ground-breaking, tripartite project titled *Proximity*, putting on display some of the most important artists of our time: composer Daniel Bernard Roumain working with acclaimed playwright and actress Anna Deavere Smith as librettist, for *Git Here*; Caroline Shaw, as composer and co-librettist with Jocelyn Clarke for *Four Portraits*; and John Luther Adams, setting a text by the late poet John Haines for *Night*. Yuval Sharon oversees the project as director, his first with Lyric since the *Götterdämmerung*-in-a-parking-garage pandemic fantasy *Twilight: Gods*. Renée Fleming, Lyric’s Special Projects Advisor and a prime force behind the *Bel Canto* premiere, curated *Proximity*.

Lyric has also announced several other contemporary works in the production pipeline. *Omar* tells the story of Omar ibn Said, a real-life Islamic scholar from West Africa who was captured and enslaved in the United States in the early 19th century. The opera’s creative forces include Michael Abels, the film composer behind *Get Out* and *Us*, and the versatile musician and performer Rhiannon Giddens, founder of the Carolina Chocolate Drops and the recipient of a MacArthur “genius” grant.

And two works by Missy Mazzoli, a former Chicago Symphony Orchestra composer-in-residence, await their Lyric productions. *Proving Up*, a supernatural examination of the American dream (turned nightmare) among homesteaders in 19th-century Nebraska, would have premiered this past January but was postponed. Lyric plans to return to it in a future season. The other, *The Listeners*, concerns a community of people who can hear a hum in their hometown and are swept up by a charismatic, cult-like leader. Both works feature a libretto by Mazzoli’s frequent collaborator Royce Vavrek.

All of which adds up to a lot of art that Chicago hasn’t seen before—except, of course, in the parts of the new operas that mirror our modern lives. The new works may not have the no-need-to-read-the-synopsis familiarity of the old guard, but the odds are that some of them will populate the next generation of that canon. **L**



Proving Up

Photo: James Matthew Daniel



Proximity



GIT HERE

Composer:
Daniel Bernard Roumain
Libretto by:
Anna Deavere Smith

FOUR PORTRAITS

Composer:
Caroline Shaw
Libretto by:
Caroline Shaw & Jocelyn Clarke

NIGHT

Composer:
John Luther Adams
Libretto by:
John Haines

The New York Times columnist *Charles M. Blow's* widely acclaimed memoir is the source for this extremely moving story of his traumatic youth in Louisiana. What an amazing collection of talent — composer *Terence Blanchard*, one of the most influential figures in American jazz; librettist *Kasi Lemmons*, director of such remarkable films as *Harriet* and *Eve's Bayou*; and a topflight cast including many of America's most brilliant singing actors. *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* is an opera for today, revealing the Black experience in this country as few other operas have done.

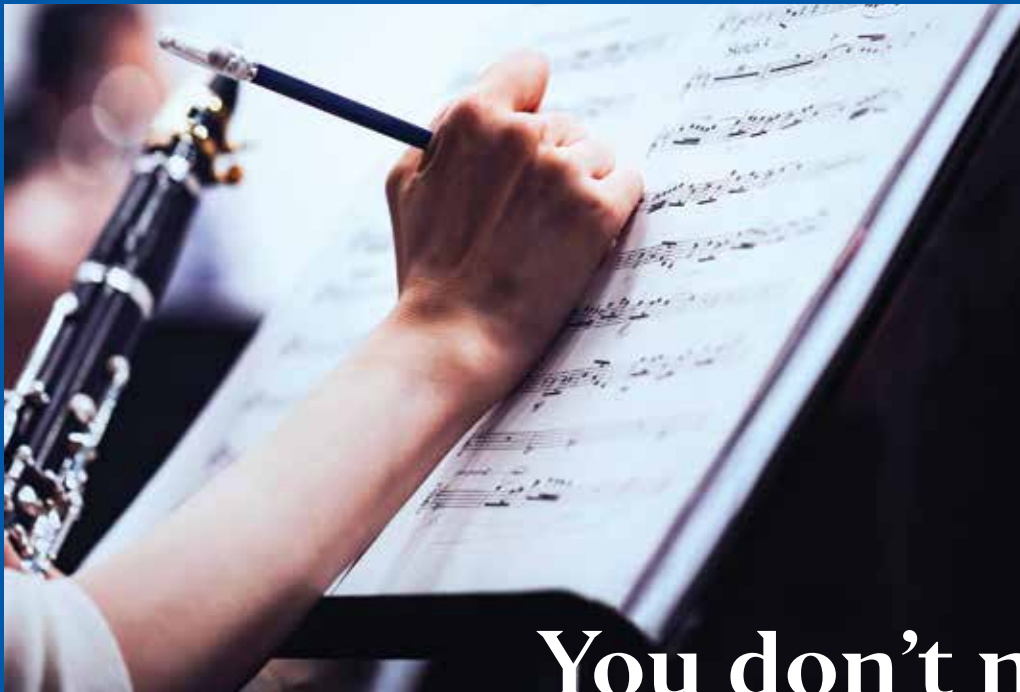


Photo: Ken Howard

Fire Shut Up in My Bones
(The Metropolitan Opera)

Lyric

Fire Shut Up in My Bones



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Fire Shut Up in My Bones

New Co-Production | Opera in three acts in English

Music by **Terence Blanchard**

Libretto by **Kasi Lemmons** based on the memoir by **Charles M. Blow**

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Charles
Destiny/Loneliness/Greta
Billie
Char'es-Baby
Young William
Young Nathan
Young James
Young Robert
Uncle Paul
Foreman/Adult James
Chicken Plucker
Adult William
Ruby/Sinner
Spinner
Verna
Young Lovely
Chester
Bertha
Pastor/Kaboom
Adult Robert
Adult Nathan
Evelyn
A Pledge
Nash

Will Liverman^{••}
Brittany Renee⁺
Latonia Moore⁺
Benjamin Preacely⁺
Charles-Curtis⁺
Oleode Oshotse⁺
Ejiro Ogodo⁺
Kenneth La'Ron Hamilton⁺
Reginald Smith, Jr.
Norman Garrett
Martin Luther Clark[•]

Rehanna Thelwell⁺
Chauncey Packer⁺
Joelle Lamarre
Marguerite Jones⁺
Chris Kenney^{••}
Leah Dexter⁺
Leroy Davis[•]
Calvin Griffin⁺
Lunga Eric Hallam[•]
Emily Mwila⁺
William Powell III
Darell Haynes⁺

Conductor
Co-Directors

Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Projection Designer
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Original Choreographer
Revival Choreographer
Ballet Mistress
Wigmaster and
Makeup Designer
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Intimacy Coordinator
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Daniela Candillari
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Camille A. Brown⁺
Allen Moyer⁺
Paul Tazewell
Christopher Akerlind
Greg Emetaz
Michael Black
Camille A. Brown⁺
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William Billingham
Noah Lindquist
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Eric Weimer
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The Metropolitan Opera

Dancers

Darius Barnes⁺, **Christian Paris Blue**⁺, **Rhaamell Burke-Missouri**⁺, **Mikhail Calliste**⁺, **Marcus Hardy**⁺,
Christopher Figaro Jackson⁺, **Olivier Medus**⁺, **Mickey Nix**⁺, **Eric Parra**⁺, **Jude M. Perry-Evans**⁺,
Voltaire Wade-Greene⁺, **Marcus Williams**⁺

Actors

Royce Jade⁺, **Kevin Ray Johnson**⁺, **Joshua Moaney**,
Nolan Fizoires Robinson II⁺, **Tristien Marcellous Winfree**⁺

A co-production of Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera, and Los Angeles Opera. Commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera. Originally commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, co-commissioned by Jazz Saint Louis.

First performed by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis on June 15, 2019.
First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on March 24, 2022.

⁺ Lyric debut

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

^{••} Alumnus, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center

Synopsis

Act one

Charles Blow, age 20, drives down a Louisiana backroad with a gun in the passenger seat. Destiny sings to him, calling him back to his childhood home. He begins reliving memories from his childhood.

Charles's seven-year-old self, Char'es-Baby, talks to his mother, Billie. He is desperate for affection, but Billie is too frazzled to give him the validation that he craves. They are dirt poor. Billie works in a chicken factory, but she dreams of Char'es-Baby getting a good education and escaping their town. Her husband, Spinner, is a womanizing spendthrift. When she hears that he's flirting with other women, she confronts him at gunpoint. Billie doesn't shoot, but she tosses Spinner out. Billie and her five sons move in with Uncle Paul. Char'es-Baby dreams of a different life, collecting "treasure" from the junkyard while Loneliness sings to him. One day, his cousin Chester comes to visit. When Chester sexually abuses him, he is too horrified and ashamed to say anything.

Adult Charles begins to weep as he recoils from these memories, while Destiny reminds him that there is no escape.

INTERMISSION

Act two

As Charles grows into a teenager, he is full of confusion and rage, and tormented by phantom terrors. He attends a church service in which the pastor is baptizing people, promising that God can wipe all sins clean. Charles decides to get baptized, but it fails to free him of his inner demons. Charles tries to talk to his brothers, but they refuse to engage in any "soft talk." Loneliness reappears, promising to be his lifelong companion. Evelyn, a beautiful young girl, interrupts Charles's reverie. Their chemistry is clear. Charles feels a new sense of independence and is finally ready to strike out on his own; Grambling State University has offered him a full scholarship. Billie is left alone to reflect on all that she has sacrificed for her family and wonders what might lie ahead.

Act three

At his college, Charles rushes a fraternity, where the brothers lead an elaborate and energetic step dance. Charles and the other pledges are hazed, but he stoically takes each indignity in stride: Pain is nothing new for him. Later, he goes to a frat party and meets an attractive young woman, Greta. They begin a passionate love affair. Charles eventually shares his awful secret with Greta, only to find out that she's still seeing someone else. Charles is left alone again. He calls home, desperate to hear his mother's voice. To his shock, Billie tells him that Chester has come back to visit. Charles instantly decides to return home to confront Chester, gun in hand.

Charles sits in his car on the dark road, contemplating the choice lying before him. Destiny starts to sing to him once again, seductively promising to stand by him through to the bloody end. As Charles reaches his childhood home, Char'es-Baby appears, urging him to leave his bitterness behind. Charles must decide whether to exact his revenge or begin his life anew.

Synopsis reprinted courtesy of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

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the Whitaker Foundation, The Andrew
W. Mellon Foundation, the National
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APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Act 1	75 minutes
Intermission	30 minutes
Acts 2 & 3	85 minutes
Total	3 hours, 10 minutes

Lyric

Artist profiles



TERENCE BLANCHARD | COMPOSER

Lyric debut

The celebrated American composer's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* premiered at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2019 and was staged at the Metropolitan Opera in 2021, the first production by a Black composer in the company's 136-year history. From his expansive work composing the scores for Spike Lee films ranging from the documentary *4 Little Girls* to the epic *Malcolm X*, as well as his own discography of recordings such as *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)*, the 2018 USA Fellow and six-time Grammy-winning trumpeter/composer has been a consistent artistic force for making powerful musical statements concerning painful American tragedies—past and present. A brilliant trumpeter, Blanchard started his career in 1982 as a member of the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, then The Jazz Messengers. He has composed more than 40 film scores and performed on more than fifty. He has been nominated for two Academy Awards and has won six Grammy Awards from 14 nominations. In 2019 he was named Endowed Chair in Jazz Studies at UCLA.



KASI LEMMONS | LIBRETTIST

Lyric debut

A St. Louis native, renowned as both actress and film director, Lemmons made her acting debut in the television movie *11th Victim* (1979). She has appeared extensively on television, and in such films as *School Daze*, *Vampire's Kiss*, and *The Silence of the Lambs*. In 1997, Lemmons wrote and directed the award-winning *Eve's Bayou*, the highest-grossing independent film in 1997. In 2002 she conceived and helmed the tribute to Sidney Poitier for the 74th annual Academy Awards show. In 2007, she directed *Talk to Me*, with Don Cheadle, receiving the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Directing in a Motion Picture. Lemmons adapted the Broadway musical *Black Nativity* and filmed it in 2013. Her 2019 film *Harriet*, a biographical film about Harriet Tubman, starring Cynthia Erivo, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. For the past 14 years Lemmons has been a board member of Film Independent and has contributed to Film Independent's Filmmaker Labs as a speaker and moderator.



LATONIA MOORE | BILLIE

Lyric debut

The American soprano sang the role of Billie in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Fire Shut in My Bones*. She previously starred as *Tosca* at Washington National Opera, Austin Opera, Opera Australia, and the Opéra de Rouen. She made a triumphant Metropolitan Opera debut in March 2012 as *Aida*, and has subsequently sung that role with 12 other companies (among them London's Royal Opera House, the Zurich Opera House, and Opera Australia), as well as with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia. She returned to the Met in 2019/20, as *Serena/Porgy and Bess* (HD transmission), which she has also sung at English National Opera and the Dutch National Opera. Additional operatic highlights include the title role/*Madama Butterfly* (Met, Hamburg State Opera), *Liù/Turandot* (Royal Opera House), *Elisabetta/Don Carlo* (Opera Australia), and *Desdemona/Otello* (Bergen National Opera). She has also been featured with Opera Orchestra of New York in *L'arlesiana* and *Edgar*, and she has sung Gershwin's *Bess* with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle. Moore can be heard on CD as *Lady Macbeth/Macbeth* and in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*.



BRITTANY RENEE | DESTINY, LONELINESS, GRETA

Lyric debut

The soprano made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Evelyn in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. She appeared as Annie in the Met's *Porgy & Bess*, which won Best Opera Recording at the 63rd annual Grammy Awards, and made her Carnegie Hall debut as the soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Musica Sacra Chorus & Orchestra. She has appeared at Opera Orlando (*Micaëla/Carmen*) and Teatro Regio Torino (*Bess/Porgy & Bess*). She has performed with Opera San Jose, Knoxville Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Salt Marsh Opera, Piedmont Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Crested Butte Music Festival, The Handel Choir of Baltimore, Opera Theatre of the Rockies, and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. International debuts have included performances at the Semperoper Dresden; The Charles Bronfman Auditorium in Tel Aviv, Israel; the Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari, Italy; The Magnetic Opera Festival in Elba, Italy; and Opera on the Avalon in Canada.


WILL LIVERMAN | CHARLES

Previously at Lyric: Nine roles since 2012/13, most recently Dizzy Gillespie/*Charlie Parker's Yardbird* (2016/17); Lawyer Frazier/*Porgy and Bess* (2014/15).

The baritone, a Ryan Opera Center alumnus, starred in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* in fall 2021, in addition to reprising Horemhab/*Akhnaten* and Papageno/*The Magic Flute* during the Met's 2021/22 season. Liverman's new opera, *The Factotum*, written together with DJ/recording artist King Rico, will premiere in Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2022/23 season. In addition to Malcolm Fleet/Nico Muhly's *Marnie* at the Met, other recent engagements include productions with the major companies of Philadelphia, Santa Fe, Dallas, Denver, and Tulsa. Liverman created Dizzy Gillespie/*Charlie Parker's Yardbird* with Opera Philadelphia, reprised with English National Opera, Lyric, Madison Opera, and at New York's Apollo Theater. He has earned great acclaim, including a Grammy nomination, for the release of his first CD, *Dreams of a New Day—Songs by Black Composers*. Liverman has received the Marian Anderson Vocal Award, a Richard Tucker Career Grant, and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. *Will Liverman* is sponsored by **Mary Stowell**.


BENJAMIN PREACELY | CHAR'ES-BABY

Lyric debut

Preacely is a fifth grade vocal major at the School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCAPA) in Lexington, Kentucky, where he lives with his parents and two brothers. Recent credits include *Matilda* (Bruce), *Once on This Island* (Daniel's son), and the University of Kentucky Department of Opera productions of *Grand Night for Singing* (featured soloist), *Show Boat* (child), *Suor Angelica* (child), and *Bounce: The Basketball Opera* (child). In 2022, Benjamin received the Distinguished Award for Elementary Solo Voice in the Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) performance assessment, and was also selected as a 2022 KMEA All-State Musician & Vocalist.


CHAUNCEY PACKER | SPINNER

Lyric debut

The American tenor, a native of southern Alabama, sang the role of Spinner in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. His first performances there came during the 2019/20 season, when he appeared in *Porgy and Bess* as Sportin' Life, Robbins, and the Crab Man. He has also recently appeared as tenor soloist in the Mozart Requiem with the Colour of Music Festival; sung in concert with the Saint-George International Music Festival and the Harrisburg Symphony; reprised Sportin' Life with New York Harlem's *Porgy and Bess* at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Italy; and appeared at Soo Theatre Project in Michigan (*Pinkerton/Madama Butterfly*) and Chautauqua Opera (*Cavaradossi/Tosca*, *Jo the Loiterer/The Mother of Us All*). His portrayal of Sportin' Life has earned acclaim at La Scala, Paris's Opéra Comique, and in Tulsa, Atlanta, Birmingham, and San Francisco (released on DVD). Packer has also appeared with the major companies of Nashville, Grand Rapids, Des Moines, and New Orleans, among many others.


CHRIS KENNEY | CHESTER

Previously at Lyric: Five roles since 2018/19, most recently Official Registrar/*Madama Butterfly* and Motorcycle Cop/*Dead Man Walking* (both 2019/20).

The American baritone, a Ryan Opera Center alumnus, sang the role of Chester in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. He debuted with Michigan Opera Theatre in 2019/20 as Silvio/*Pagliacci* and made his New York City concert debut singing Bach cantatas with Leonard Slatkin and the American Symphony Orchestra at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. He has also appeared with the Seattle Symphony as the Guide/Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*, and as Bob/Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* with the Grant Park Music Festival. He presented a series of songs with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I. Kenney is a former member of the Washington National Opera's young-artist program. While there, he portrayed Figaro/*The Barber of Seville* and also appeared in *The Little Prince* and Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* (world premiere) for WNO's mainstage season at the Kennedy Center. He was also a featured soloist in Bernstein's *Songfest* with the National Symphony Orchestra.



**REGINALD SMITH, JR. |
UNCLE PAUL**

Previously at Lyric: Senator Charles Potter, General Arlie, Bartender/*Fellow Travelers* (2017/18).

The baritone, a native of Atlanta, Ga., makes debuts this season with the San Diego Opera (*Don Alfonso/Così fan tutte*) and with Charleston’s Holy City Arts and Lyric Opera (*Germont/La traviata*). Recent appearances include the Atlanta Opera (*Tonio/Pagliacci*), Cincinnati Opera (*Don Bartolo/Il barbiere di Siviglia*), the Metropolitan Opera (*Jim/Porgy and Bess*), and Houston Grand Opera (*Amonasro/Aida*). Smith, Jr. has appeared as Jake in *Porgy and Bess* with Cincinnati Opera, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Opera Memphis, Amonasro in *Aida* with Opera Idaho, and as Amonasro in *Aida* with Opera Hong Kong. He made his Lincoln Center debut as the bass soloist for Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* with the National Chorale.



**MARTIN LUTHER CLARK | CHICKEN
PLUCKER / ADULT WILLIAM**

Previously at Lyric: First Armored Man/*The Magic Flute*, Sunday in the Park with Lyric’s Rising Stars (both 2021/22).

Second-year Ryan Opera Center tenor Martin Luther Clark recently completed his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, receiving a master’s degree in opera. His performances there included the roles of First Sailor/*Dido and Aeneas*, Tobias Ragg/*Sweeney Todd*, and Don Ottavio/*Don Giovanni*. Also on the East Coast he sang in concert with Russian Opera Workshop both *Vaudemont/Iolanta* and *King Charles/The Maid of Orleans* during their 2019 summer season. A year earlier, he was heard as an Apprentice Artist at Central City Opera and as tenor soloist at the Library of Congress, where he sang both published and unpublished works of Leonard Bernstein as part of the composer’s centennial celebration. Other appearances include Lyric Opera of Kansas City as a Resident Artist, University of North Texas Opera in numerous roles and galas, The Dallas Opera, Charlottesville Opera, Opera in Concert, Opera North, and Wolf Trap Opera. *Martin Luther Clark is sponsored by the Robert and Isabelle Bass Foundation, Inc., David and Janet Fox, and Richard O. Ryan.*



**LUNGA ERIC HALLAM |
ADULT NATHAN**

Previously at Lyric: Sunday in the Park with Lyric’s Rising Stars (2021/22).

Second-year Ryan Opera Center tenor Lunga Eric Hallam is from Khayelitsha, South Africa. There, he founded a nonprofit organization called Phenomenal Opera Voices. He received his diploma and postgraduate (with honors) degrees in music training from the University of Cape Town College of Music. Recent engagements as a Young Artist at Cape Town Opera include *Tebaldo/I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Edgardo/Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Roberto/Maria Stuarda*, as well as *Ramiro/La Cenerentola* at Cape Town Conservatory. He was featured as part of the 2017 Harare International Festival of the Arts in Zimbabwe. Hallam competed as a semifinalist in the 2019 Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition and the 2019 Voice of South Africa International Singing Competition. Chicago appearances include the Harris Theater’s *Beyond the Aria* series alongside Joyce DiDonato. *Lunga Eric Hallam is sponsored by The Ford, Mages, and Boykins Families; Richard W. Shepro and Lindsay E. Roberts; and Ms. Gay K. Stanek.*



**NORMAN GARRETT |
FOREMAN / ADULT JAMES**

Previously at Lyric: Jake/*Porgy and Bess* (2014/15).

In the 2021/22 season, the baritone makes his debut at Seattle Opera as the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*. At the Metropolitan Opera, he appeared as the Foreman/Adult James in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and as Jim in *Porgy and Bess*. He sang Jake in *Porgy and Bess* with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, on tour at both the Lucerne Festival and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, with conductor Alan Gilbert. In the 2020/21 season, Garrett made his house debut at Theater an der Wien as Crown in *Porgy and Bess*, made his role debut as the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Dayton Opera, and sang Escamillo in *Carmen* at Opera Orlando. He has appeared at Houston Grand Opera (*Riolobo/Florencia en el Amazonas*), Washington National Opera (*Lieutenant Gordon/Silent Night*) and the Bayerische Staatsoper (*Larkens/La fanciulla del West*).

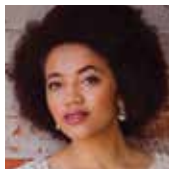

CALVIN GRIFFIN | ADULT ROBERT
Lyric debut

The bass-baritone made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Adult Robert in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. Also this season, Griffin returns to Wolf Trap Opera (*Death/Sāvitrī*) and Opera Columbus (Tommy/*Fellow Travelers*), and will debut with Spoleto Festival as Colline in *La bohème*. In the 2020/21 season, he returned to The Atlanta Opera as Dancaïro in *Carmen*, and made his Opera Theatre of Saint Louis debut as Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* and the Narrator in *On the Battlefield of Broken Hearts*. His 2019/20 season included the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Florentine Opera, and Brühlmann in *Werther* in his Metropolitan Opera debut. He has appeared also with Florida Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Opera Birmingham. In 2017, Griffin returned to the Glimmerglass Festival as Elviro in *Xerxes* and the Undertaker in *Porgy and Bess*.


LEROY DAVIS | PASTOR / KABOOM

Previously at Lyric: Jailer/*Tosca*, and Sunday in the Park with Lyric's Rising Stars (both 2021/22)

Baritone Leroy Davis is a second-year member of the Ryan Opera Center. Recent company debuts include Lincoln Center Theater as George Armstrong in the world premiere of *Intimate Apparel*; Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Pastor, Layabout Man, James, Kaboom/*Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (world premiere) as a Gerdine Young Artist; the Phoenicia Festival as Belcore/*The Elixir of Love*; Boston Opera Collaborative as Leporello/*Don Giovanni*; and Odyssey Opera as Ernesto Malcom/*Maria, regina d'Inghilterra*. Davis was also seen as the Forester/*The Cunning Little Vixen*, Hannah Before/*As One*, Joe St. George/*Dolores Claiborne*, and Pablo Picasso/*After Life* at Boston University's Opera Institute. Other credits include Maximilian/*Candide* as an Apprentice Artist with Chautauqua Opera; Aeneas and Adonis/*Dido and Aeneas*, Papageno/*The Magic Flute*, Fiorello/*The Barber of Seville*, and Maitre D' and Farley/*Sister Carrie* (world premiere and recording) as a Studio Artist at Florentine Opera; the Mandarin and Ping/*Turandot* with Shreveport Opera; and bass soloist for Bruckner's Te Deum with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. *Leroy Davis is sponsored by the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation.*


EMILY MWILA | EVELYN
Lyric debut

The soprano recently completed her graduate studies at Mannes School of Music in New York, receiving a Master of Music and Professional Studies Diploma in Voice. In 2021, she appeared in the chorus of *Porgy and Bess* at The Metropolitan Opera. She made her operatic debut in New Zealand at Eternity Opera (*Zerlina/Don Giovanni*), and other roles include Susanna/*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mae Jones/*Street Scene*, and Euridice/*Orfeo ed Euridice*. Later this season she will perform in the ensemble with Detroit Opera and Omaha Opera for productions of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* by Anthony Davis.


REHANNA THELWELL | RUBY / SINNER
Lyric debut

In 2019, Thelwell appeared at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Giovanna in *Rigoletto* and Ruby in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. The New Jersey native returned to the Cafritz Young Artist program of Washington National Opera for their 2020/21 season, where she had previously appeared as Third Lady in the Young Artist production of *The Magic Flute* as well as Conchetta in the American Opera Initiative new work, *Night Trip*. She has appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, and Madison Opera, and made her her mainstage debut with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Aunt Lou in *Highway 1, U.S.A.*


OLEDEDE OSHOTSE | YOUNG NATHAN
Lyric debut

The Houston, Texas, native appeared as Young Nathan in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera. He has appeared in productions at Stages Repertory Theatre, at Houston's The Queensbury Theatre, and at The Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia. At The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, he recently appeared in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.



**CHARLES-CURTIS |
YOUNG WILLIAM**

Lyric debut

The Michigan-born performer's TV credits include *The First* on YouTube and *True Powers* on BET. Theater credits include *Ruined* and *The Brother Size*. He received his BFA from Western Michigan University.



**EJIRO OGODO |
YOUNG JAMES**

Lyric debut

The Brooklyn-based performer started acting in the 5th grade, where he appeared as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*. He has trained at Broadway for All's Summer Youth Conservatory for several years, and has been studying at the Susan Batson Studio while attending college. His credits include shows at Playwrights Horizon, Joe's Pub, and The Sheen Center as well as the Metropolitan Opera.



**KENNETH LA'RON HAMILTON |
YOUNG ROBERT**

Lyric debut

Kenny is originally from the greater Cincinnati area and studied theater at the University of Kentucky. He has performed with the American Shakespeare Center, American Players Theatre, the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company and Nashville Shakespeare Festival.



DARIUS BARNES | DANCER

Lyric debut

The dancer appeared in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera, and has six Broadway credits including *Mean Girls* and the 2019 revival of *Kiss Me, Kate*. A former member of New York City Ballet, he has danced with the Suzanne Farrell Ballet and The Dance Theatre of Harlem. Darius produced the inaugural Antonio Awards on YouTube in collaboration with Broadway Black and the Black Theatre Society. He is the Associate Choreographer of *Kimberly Akimbo* at the Atlantic Theater and was Assistant Choreographer for *MJ the Musical*.



CHRISTIAN PARIS BLUE | DANCER

Lyric debut

Blue appeared at The Metropolitan Opera in *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*. His other performance credits include *Nascimento*, *Boiling Point*, *The 4 Temperaments*, *Na Floresta*, *Esplanade*, *Clytemnestra*, and *Megalopolis*. He earned his BFA at the University of Arizona School of Dance in his home state.



**RHAAMELL BURKE-MISSOURI |
DANCER**

Lyric debut

Burke-Missouri appeared at the Metropolitan Opera in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. Their Broadway credits include *King Kong* at Foresight Theatrical, and they appeared in the national tour of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Work Light Productions). Other musical theater credits include *The Wiz* (The Muny), *Annie* (The Muny), *My Fair Lady* (New Bedford Festival Theatre), *Pippin* (The Woodstock Playhouse) and *Guys and Dolls* (The Woodstock Playhouse).



MIKHAIL CALLISTE | DANCER

Lyric debut

The dancer, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, began his training in New York and received a BFA in Dance in 2018 from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He appeared in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (2021), and was a solo artist with the Seattle Opera for its production of *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* (2020). From 2018 to 2021, he was a company member with Spectrum Dance Theater.



MARCUS HARDY | DANCER

Lyric debut

After receiving his BFA in Dance Performance from East Carolina University, Hardy joined the Inaside Chicago Dance company, where he spent five years. He has performed as a guest artist with SueMo Dance Company, Waterstreet Dance Company, and Chicago Dance Crash.



**CHRISTOPHER FIGARO JACKSON |
DANCER**

Lyric debut

The Maywood, Illinois native's recent credits include *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera, where he also danced in and served as assistant choreographer for *Porgy & Bess*. He will appear in the Met's forthcoming *X*, *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. His dance credits include Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Elisa Monte, River North Dance Chicago, New Jersey Dance Theater, and the Victory Dance Project. Jackson is an Adjunct Professor of Dance at NYU and has taught at Spelman College, Montclair State University, Roosevelt University, The Ailey School, Dance Theatre of Harlem, American Ballet Theatre (JKO school), The Joffrey School, Harlem School of the Arts, Ballet Tech, and the American Dance Academy.


OLIVIER MEDUS | DANCER
Lyric debut

In 2019, Medus made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the company's production of *Porgy and Bess*. He began his dance training at the Conservatory of Music, Dance and Theatre of French Guiana, and later trained at The Ailey School in New York City. He began his career as a member of Ailey II, with whom he toured nationally and internationally. He was among the dancers chosen to perform with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater during their New York seasons at Lincoln Center and City Center. He is a full-time instructor for the professional and junior division faculty at The Ailey School.


MICKEY NIX | DANCER
Lyric debut

The dancer's regional credits include *Dreamgirls*, *Aida*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Ruined*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Mahalia the Musical*, *After Midnight*, *The Wiz* and *Saturday Night Fever*. Mickey's film and television credits include *Get On Up* and *Complexions*.


ERIC PARRA | DANCER
Lyric debut

Parra's recent performances include *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera and *Awaited* at the Arnoff Center for the Arts. He has danced for Limón Dance Company, Carolyn Dorfman Dance, Earl Mosley's Diversity of Dance, Von Howard Project, and Doug Elkins Choreography. Most recently he has served as a teaching artist for the José Limón Dance Foundation, NJPAC, and Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts. In 2020, he and his cousin Erica Kika Parra co-founded Parra La Gente, a project company designed to celebrate Afro-Colombian heritage through music and dance. Eric is currently in his first season with Camille A. Brown & Dancers.


JUDE M. PERRY-EVANS | DANCER
Lyric: debut

Perry-Evans was featured in Harlem Opera Theater's 100th Anniversary Presentation of *Shuffle Along*. He is a featured dancer in the *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance* documentary and *Hal King The Musical* and was featured as the principal dancer in the Queens College Opera production of *The Image Maker*. Perry-Evans has also 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 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, Balance Dance Theatre, and was a founding member of Urban Souls Dance Theater in Houston. He is currently on faculty for both the Dance and Musical Theater departments at The Harlem School of the Arts (HSA).


VOLTAIRE WADE-GREENE | DANCER
Lyric debut

Voltaire Wade-Greene appeared recently at the Metropolitan Opera in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *The Magic Flute*. The California native's Broadway credits include *Hamilton*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and he appeared in *The Wiz* (The Muny) and *Hairspray* (Dallas Theater Center). He also served as the resident choreographer for the first national tour of *Hamilton* and supervisor for *Hamilton* in Chicago. Regional performances include *In the Heights*, *A Chorus Line*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *Some Like It Hot*.


MARCUS WILLIAMS | DANCER
Lyric debut

The dancer is a previous company member with Ailey II, Philadelphia Dance Company (Philadanco), *The Phantom of the Opera* World Tour (Asia), and *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera. He was part of the Emmy-winning production *The Let Go* at the Park Avenue Armory in 2018, and has performed in Debbie Allen's *Hot Chocolate Nutcracker*. He has taught at Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ailey Extension, I.M. Terrell Academy, UArts (Philadelphia), Ailey II, and IABD (International Association of Blacks in Dance). Also a choreographer, Mr. Williams has choreographed works for Lincoln Center, Ailey II, and Global Harmony (The Ailey School).



DANIELA CANDILLARI | CONDUCTOR

Previously at Lyric: *An American Dream* (2018/19); *Fellow Travelers* (2017/18)

The much-acclaimed conductor made her Metropolitan Opera debut earlier this season conducting a performance of *Eurydice* by Matthew Aucoin. Her 2019/20 season featured several important debuts, including the world premiere of Hannah Lash’s *Desire* at New York City’s Miller Theatre; her New York Philharmonic debut conducting Thomson’s *The Mother of us All* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and her mainstage debut at Arizona Opera in November conducting *Fellow Travelers*, which she led previously at Lyric and The Minnesota Opera. Following her acclaimed performances of *Acquanetta* with the PROTOTYPE Festival, Candillari returned for *Rev. 23*. She spent the summer of 2019 conducting the West Coast premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s *Cold Mountain* at the Music Academy of the West and returned to the Manhattan School of Music in April for performances of *Martha*. Recent engagements include her debut with Opera Philadelphia in a new production of Rene Orth’s *Empty the House*; her Boston conducting debut in the world premiere of *PermaDeath*; and her Asian debut in Hong Kong conducting Du Yun’s Pulitzer-Prize-winning opera *Angel’s Bone*.



JAMES ROBINSON | CO-DIRECTOR
Lyric debut

In 2009 the American director became Artistic Director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has directed such productions as *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *Street Scene*, *Miss Havisham’s Fire*, *The Golden Ticket*, *La traviata*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Champion*, and “27”. He directed the world premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the production of it at the Metropolitan Opera which Lyric has coproduced. He has created new productions for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, and the major houses of Seattle, Houston, San Diego, San Francisco, Dallas, and Santa Fe, as well as for the Baltimore Symphony, Hollywood Bowl, and Minnesota Orchestra. Internationally, he has mounted new productions for the Canadian Opera Company, Royal Swedish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Australia, the Wexford Festival, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Recent productions include *Porgy and Bess* (Met), *Champion* (Washington National Opera), *Vanessa* (The Santa Fe Opera), *Dolores Claiborne* (San Francisco Opera, world premiere), *Nixon in China* (San Diego Opera), *Eugene Onegin* (Seoul Arts Center), and *Dr. Sun Yat-sen* (The Santa Fe Opera, American premiere).



CAMILLE A. BROWN | CO-DIRECTOR AND ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHER

Lyric debut

The choreographer, Artistic Director of Camille A. Brown & Dancers, was co-director of the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. She is reclaiming the cultural narratives of African American identity by tapping into both ancestral stories and contemporary cultures. Among her numerous honors are a Guggenheim Award, a Bessie Award, a *Dance Magazine* award, and Tony, Drama Desk, and Lucille Lortel Award nominations. Broadway, Off-Broadway, and television credits include *Choir Boy*, *Once On This Island*, *Jesus Christ Superstar Live on NBC*, Broadway’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, among many other productions. Brown, who choreographed the Metropolitan Opera’s *Porgy and Bess*, made her feature-film debut in *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (Netflix). She will direct the Broadway revival of *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, and *Ain’t Misbehavin’* at Westport Country Playhouse.



ALLEN MOYER | SET DESIGNER

Lyric debut

Among the distinguished designer’s recent Broadway credits are *The Lyons*, *Lysistrata Jones*, *After Miss Julie*, *Grey Gardens* (Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations, Henry Hewes Award), *Thurgood*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *The Constant Wife*, and *Twelve Angry Men*. He has designed many off-Broadway productions and both *Carousel* and *Show Boat* for the New York Philharmonic. Moyer has also been resident scenic designer for the Encores! series at New York City Center since 2017, and has designed for every major regional theater nationwide. His extensive opera credits include productions for the Metropolitan Opera, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York City Opera, and the major companies of Houston, Dallas, Toronto, St. Louis, Washington, Seattle, and Santa Fe, as well as London’s English National Opera and the Tanglewood, Wexford, and Glimmerglass Festivals, among many other companies. His work in dance includes productions for San Francisco Ballet and the Mark Morris Dance Group. He received an Obie Award for sustained excellence in 2006.



**PAUL TAZEWELL |
COSTUME DESIGNER**

Previously at Lyric: *Porgy and Bess* (2014/15, 2008/09); *Show Boat* (2011/12).

The renowned costume designer began his Broadway career with the groundbreaking musical, *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. Most recently, he is known for his work with Lin-Manuel Miranda's Tony-winning original Broadway productions of *Hamilton* (Tony Award) and *In the Heights*. Other Broadway credits include *Ain't Too Proud*, *The Color Purple*, *Doctor Zhivago*, *Memphis*, *Caroline, or Change*, *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*, Russell Simmons's *Def Poetry Jam*, *Lombardi*, and *Magic/Bird*. Revival work includes *Side Show*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Guys and Dolls*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *On the Town*. Tazewell has designed for the Metropolitan Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Kennedy Center, Public Theater, Guthrie Theatre, and Arena Stage, the Bolshoi Ballet, English National Opera, and Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet. Film credits include Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* and *Harriet*. TV credits include *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* starring Oprah Winfrey, and both *The Wiz! Live* (Emmy Award) and *Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert* for NBC. *Paul Tazewell is supported by the Richard P. and Susan Kiphart Costume Designer Endowed Chair.*



**CHRISTOPHER AKERLIND |
LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Previously at Lyric: *The Abduction from the Scraglio* (2008/09).

The distinguished designer's achievements on Broadway include Tony Awards for *The Light in the Piazza* (also Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Award) and *Indecent* (Drama Desk Award); Tony nominations for *Rocky the Musical*, *Porgy and Bess*, *110 in the Shade*, *Awake and Sing*, and *Seven Guitars*; and productions of *Time and the Conways*, *Superior Donuts*, *Top Girls*, *Talk Radio*, *Shining City*, *Well*, *Rabbit Hole*, *In My Life*, *Reckless*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, and *The Piano Lesson* among others. His extensive credits in opera include productions for the Metropolitan Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, the Glimmerglass and Wexford festivals, and the major opera companies of Boston, Dallas, Houston, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and Washington, as well as more than 60 productions for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he was resident lighting designer for twelve years. He is the recipient of an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Lighting Design, and the Chicago area's Michael Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration. *Christopher Akerlind is supported by the Mary-Louise and James S. Aagard Lighting Director Endowed Chair.*



**GREG EMETAZ |
PROJECTION DESIGNER**

Previously at Lyric: *Bel Canto* (2015/16).

Greg Emetaz is a filmmaker and projection designer. In addition to *Bel Canto* at Lyric, his projection design work includes many other important opera world premieres, including *Dolores Claiborne* at San Francisco Opera, *Enemies: a Love Story* at Palm Beach Opera, and *Shalimar the Clown*, "27", *Champion*, and *The Golden Ticket* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Emetaz is the director of the feature film *Camp Wedding*; short films including *Spell Claire*, *Bowes Academy* (NC Gay + Lesbian Film Fest Jury award), *Get the F K Outta Paris!*, and *Death by Omelette* (SNCF Prix du Polar Finalist & Hong Kong Mobile Film Awards Silver Medalist); and music videos including *Eating 4 Two* and *Butt Drunk* (Friars Club Comedy Film Festival special Jury Award, iTVfest Best Director Award, co-directed with Amanda DeSimone). Emetaz has also created the behind-scenes documentaries for Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*, Broadway musical *Spider-Man Turn off the Dark*, and numerous productions at New York City Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.



**MICHAEL BLACK |
CHORUS MASTER**

The Australian chorus master 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), 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 at the Grant Park Music Festival, where he has worked for two seasons. As one of Australia's most prominent vocal accompanists, Black has regularly performed for broadcasts and recordings. He has served as chorus master on four continents, and his work has been recorded and/or aired on ABC, BBC, PBS, for many HD productions in movie theaters, and on television. *Michael Black is supported by the Howard A. Stotler Chorus Master Endowed Chair.*



**JAY STATEN |
REVIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER**

Lyric debut

In 2021, the Washington, D.C. native made his associate choreographer debut for *Toni Stone* (Arena Stage). His credits include *After Midnight* (Soloist, Broadway), *Shuffle Along* (Workshops, Off-Broadway), *Cabin in the Sky* (New York City Center), and *New York Spring Spectacular* (Radio City Music Hall). His film and TV credits include *Smash* (NBC), *A Capitol Fourth* (PBS), and *Amici* (Canale 5/Italy). Staten is affiliated with the Camille A. Brown & Dancers and Philadanco companies. His dance company for African American youth has served more than 200 children and secured over \$3.2 million in college scholarships.



AUGUST TYE | BALLET MISTRESS

Previously at Lyric: 42 productions since 1993/94 as dancer, choreographer, or ballet mistress, most recently *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni* (both 2019/20).

The American dancer and choreographer’s operatic credits include remounting the choreography of Lyric’s *Iphigène 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*. She is a past recipient of Regional Dance America’s Best Young Choreographer Award (at age 15) and a two-time recipient of the Monticello Young Choreographer’s Award; the latter garnered her invitations to choreograph throughout America. 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, 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 Beider Wigmaster and Makeup Designer Endowed Chair.***

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Photo: Will Liverman and King Rico at a workshop for *The Factotum*, a new opera which will have its world premiere with Lyric in 2023.

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Alyce Johnson

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Judith Zunamon Lewis

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Co-Assistant Principal
Susan Warner,
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Linda A. Baker

Bassoon

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Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

Horn

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Stephani Springer
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Mezzo

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Colleen Lovinello
Yvette Smith
Marie Sokolova
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Maia Surace
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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.

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 Kelsea Webb

Mezzo

Katie Ruth Bieber

Tenor

Jared V. Esguerra

Bass

Nicolai Janitzky
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 Rosalind Lee
 Emily Mwila
 Amanda Noelle Neal
 Marlaina Owens
 Leah Rockweit
 Rachel Ann Spund
 Diana Stoic
 Cheryl Warfield
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Mezzo

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 Veena Akama-Makia
 La'Shelle Q. Allen
 Jihanna Charlton-Davis
 Leah Dexter
 Christine Ebeling
 Rachel Ann Girty
 Kimberly Eileen Jones
 Marguerite Mariah Jones
 Megan Magsarili
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 Emily Price
 Marissa Simmons
 Heidi Elizabeth Vanderford

Tenor

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 Klaus Georg
 Alex Guerrero
 Darell Haynes
 Jianghai Ho
 Ernest C. Jackson, Jr
 Christopher T. Martin
 Taiwan L. Norris
 Steven Michael Patrick
 Tshombe Selby
 Edward Washington
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Blaze of Glory

by Naomi André

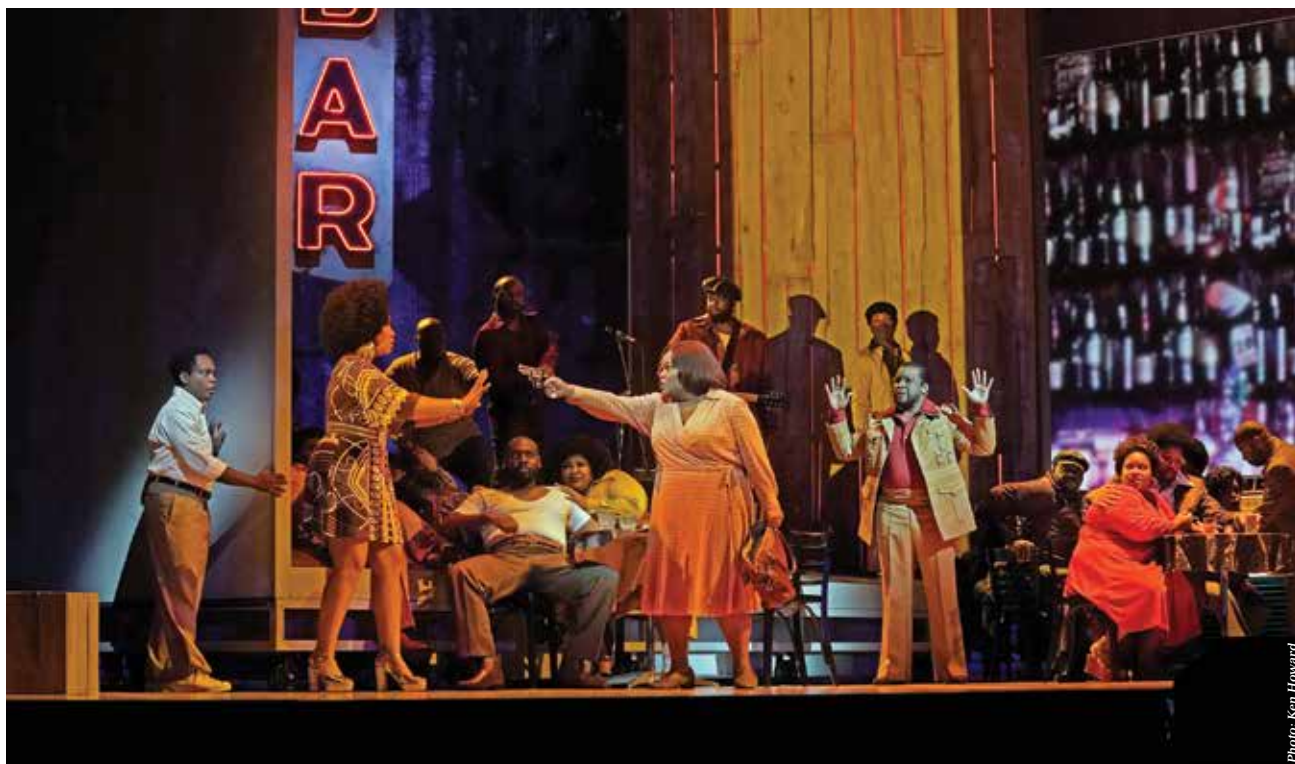


Photo: Ken Howard

Will Liverman as Charles (left) remembers when his mother Billie, performed by Latonia Moore (center), confronted one of his father's lovers, in a scene from the Metropolitan Opera's production.

Lyric Opera's presentation of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*—an expanded version co-commissioned with the Metropolitan Opera and LA Opera—takes its place in the rich history of vernacular popular, religious, and classical art music traditions in Chicago. Based on *The New York Times* columnist Charles M. Blow's 2014 memoir of the same title, this is the second opera by a Black compositional team that has appeared at Lyric. The first took place in 1997, with the premiere of Anthony Davis's Lyric commission *Amistad* (with libretto by Thulani Davis), an opera based on historical events about the African diaspora and the middle passage slave trade across the Atlantic. As with *Amistad*, *Fire* brings several major Black artists

to Lyric in their debuts: leading singers Latonia Moore, Brittany Renee, Chauncey Packer, and co-director/choreographer Camille A. Brown. This production also celebrates two Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center alums: Will Liverman (in the central role) and Chris Kenney (Chester).

Fire Shut Up in My Bones is part of a much longer trajectory of operatic contributions by Black composers, librettists, singers, and collaborating artists. From the 19th century's Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield and Sissieretta Jones (two of the best-known Black opera singers of their time) and the composers Henry Lawrence Freeman, Scott Joplin, William Grant Still, and many others, Black artists had been creating and singing opera long before

Marian Anderson's historic debut as Ulrica in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* at the Metropolitan Opera on January 7, 1955. That performance became a symbolic desegregation of opera, as houses in the U.S. and Europe thereafter began to let Black singers onto their stages. Just five years after its founding, Lyric welcomed Leontyne Price on its stage in 1959 as Liù in Puccini's *Turandot* and in the title role in Massenet's *Thaïs*.

Over the past several decades, works of Black opera composers—notably Davis's *X*, *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (1986)—have ushered in a new generation to which Blanchard belongs. In addition to *Amistad* at Lyric in 1997, Davis's many operas include the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Central Park Five* (2019). Recent years have brought the premieres of many more important operas by Black composers, including Nkeiru Okoye's *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom* (2014), George Lewis's *Afterword* (2015), about the founding of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, and Daniel Bernard Roumain's *We Shall Not Be Moved* (2017).

While Blanchard is no stranger to opera, he is better known as a celebrated jazz trumpeter and film score composer, winning Grammy Awards for his jazz recordings and collaborating frequently with film director Spike Lee—as a trumpet player in Lee's early movies and as the film score composer for many others. (He was nominated for an Academy Award last year for his score to Lee's *Da 5 Bloods*.) He has worked with other film directors over the years and created the music for two recent films that have trenchantly documented important Black historical figures and experiences: *One Night in Miami...* (2020) and *Harriet* (2019), the latter a collaboration with Lemmons, who directed the award-winning movie. "With *Harriet*, there was no other composer I could imagine," Lemmons says. "I wanted a big American sound and a lush, full, heroic score." But their partnership goes back even further, beginning with Lemmons's first film, *Eve's Bayou* (1997) and continuing with several of her other movies. Bringing her experience as an actress, screenwriter, film director, and opera lover to her work on *Fire*, Lemmons's

libretto—her first—breathes a penetrating drama into this nuanced story. Here, as in all her films, Lemmons shows her mastery at weaving together sophisticated community scenes and intimate hidden stories.

Fire is Blanchard's second opera and the second commissioned from him by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where James Robinson is Artistic Director (also making his debut at Lyric, as co-director). Blanchard's first, *Champion* (2013), which he calls an "opera in jazz," was about the boxer Emile Griffith (1938-2013), who was haunted both by his bisexuality and his brutal knockout of Benny Paret in 1962, which put Paret in a coma and led to his death ten days later. "*Champion* was such a success that on opening night we immediately asked Terence to write another opera for us," Robinson says. "It took a while to land on a subject that really inspired Terence, but then one day his wife and I both read an article in *The New York Times* by Charles Blow that previewed his forthcoming memoir. We thought Charles's story would make a wonderful opera, and Terence immediately responded to the idea."

When Blow met with Blanchard to discuss the idea of an opera, Blow remembers, "Terence and I just talked. I knew his work. We're both from Louisiana and the whole thing. My thought was, as

long as it ends properly, go for it." The opera condenses the book and embraces the texture and rhythms of young Charles's life growing up in the small town of Gibsland, Louisiana—the love of his mother and siblings, the secret of his sexual abuse at the hands of two extended family members, and his path through recognizing the trauma and finding a way forward.

A theme that links Blanchard's two operas is their portrayal of Black men in the public eye whose bisexuality leads to bullying, shame, trauma, and inner turmoil. Both operas involve the past and the present coming together as their protagonists age, and use different singers to represent the boy and the mature man.

"The role of Charles is so intense, so raw. It just grabs you immediately," says Liverman, who headlines the production. "It's the journey of finding a way to



Will Liverman as Charles (right) shares a moment with his younger self, Charles-Baby, in the Metropolitan Opera's production.

Photo: Ken Howard



Photo: Ken Howard

Charles-Baby and the company of dancers in the Metropolitan Opera's production.

stand, two feet planted on the ground, and say, 'This is who I am.' A way of living with that truth and not being afraid to display it."

In working out how best to portray Charles's complicated inner life in her libretto, Lemmons took inspiration from a conversation with Robinson, who she says opened her mind to the freedom and possibilities available in opera. "One of the things he said that really sank in was that, in opera, anything can sing," she remembers. "I really embraced that. So first I thought that the trees could sing, and then I took that a step further and thought, well, maybe his loneliness can sing." In the end, one of the two principal female roles (sung by soprano Brittany Renee) encompasses three characters: Greta, a love interest of Charles's, and the forces of Destiny and Loneliness. The other primary female role is Charles's mother, Billie, portrayed by soprano Latonia Moore.

Another important part of Charles's journey takes place during his time at Grambling State, a historically Black university, where he joins a Black fraternity known for its step shows. Given the college scenes in Act III, co-director and choreographer Brown knew that she wanted to include a step dance—bringing that tradition into a context where, even during the lifetimes of some members in today's audiences, Black people were not even allowed on the stage. "I thought it was especially important," she says. "We are talking about a step that comes from the rich history of the African diaspora."

When Blanchard was growing up in New Orleans, his father—a singer who loved classical music—wanted his son to be involved with opera. "He was an amateur baritone, and he really wanted to be an opera singer," Blanchard says. "When he was a younger kid in the 1930s and 1940s, you know, he wasn't given opportunities to do that." When James Robinson asked Blanchard to write his first opera, Blanchard was moved to tears. "Right then, I could see my dad up in heaven going, 'I told you. I told you!'" he says. "I kept thinking about how this is really the life he wanted."

Fire Shut Up in My Bones is an opera that encompasses multitudes. Blanchard's style of bringing jazz, gospel, and blues together creates a dynamic but lyrical operatic world that both propels the drama and allows it to bloom. The story has painful and tender moments, spanning the last third of the 20th century and into the present day, a period during which the United States has witnessed rapid yet uneven changes in attitudes about manhood, sexuality, and their intersections with race. Brown sums up the nature and importance of the story by describing it as "a Black experience. And people need to see as many Black experiences as possible."

Yet power and violence around sexual encounters are, tragically, everyone's experiences in some way, whether through bullying, harassment, and assault directly, or as a bystander, friend, or loved one

BEING MOVED: Black Music in Chicago

It is no surprise that Chicago, among the main destinations of the Great Migration (when African Americans in vast numbers moved north after Reconstruction), has long been an important vortex for Black music production. The city is well known for its own Blues iterations, early Jazz at the start of the 20th century, and the 1960s modern jazz style developed in the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (the AACM is still active today). Also renowned is the celebrated birth of gospel at Thomas Dorsey's Pilgrim Baptist Church on the South Side.

In the traditional concert hall, Chicago has nurtured the talents of several significant Black women composers. In 1933 the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered Florence Price's *Symphony 1 in E minor* (the first major orchestra to perform a work by a Black woman composer). Margaret Bonds (Price's student and colleague), Betty Jackson King, and Regina Harris Baiocchi (still working) are among the best known, and bring this legacy up to the present. In 2004 Chicago was the only city in the US to host Opera Africa with the performance of *Princess Magogo kaDinizulu* by South Africa's leading classical composer, Mzilikazi Khumalo (presented by the Ravinia Festival).

witnessing the damage and struggle for healing. "It's a very human, very relatable piece," Robinson says. "There's a lot of societal pressure that Charles deals with, and even if someone hasn't been the victim of abuse, they can understand what it's like to be different, to be an outsider, and all the trials that go along with that."

"I think that there's a space for everybody to walk away feeling some kind of universal theme, within this very specific story," Brown adds.

Blanchard also sees a larger message within the particular contours of Blow's memoir. "Anybody who comes to see this will understand what Charles persevered through, and we know he's still working and he's still productive," he says. "The story's not finished—this is just one chapter." The powerful new

stories of contemporary Black operas bring together individual private experiences that communicate the shared humanity in all of us and provide a charge for the future of the art form. Seeing a work like *Fire* on the great opera stages of the world "is something that can help propel some other little kids forward into wanting to become composers," Blanchard says. "And that's my hope. That's my dream."

Naomi André is a professor at the University of Michigan and the author of Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement. [L](#)

Adapted from an article commissioned and published by the Metropolitan Opera, 2021.



Librettist Kasi Lemmons and composer Terence Blanchard take their bows at the Metropolitan Opera's opening-night curtain call, September 27, 2021.

Photo: Rose Callahan

Co-director's note



James Robinson

When I became artistic director at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2009, among my first priorities was to embark on a wide-ranging commissioning initiative called *New Works, Bold Voices*. The objective was to create new operas and to provide opportunities for composers to take a second look at operas they had already premiered. One of the first composers I contacted was jazz trumpeter Terence Blanchard. I was well acquainted with Terence's music from his powerful film scores, and I still consider his haunting album *A Tale of God's Will* one of the best things in my personal music library. After our first meeting, Terence agreed to create an "opera in jazz," and in 2013, we premiered *Champion*, based on the life of bisexual boxing champ Emile Griffith. The success of Terence's opera was tremendous, so I immediately asked him to follow it up with another. *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* was premiered in 2019 in St. Louis, opened the season for the Met in 2021 and, yet again, it was met with great enthusiasm.

Both of Terence's operas deal fearlessly with Black men struggling with their identity and sexuality, in addition to confronting some very difficult and often painful subjects. The story of Emile Griffith is told through the fog of pugilistic dementia and confronts the athlete's search to embrace his love of other men. As Emile sings in the opera (after being haunted by the death of an opponent he killed during a bout): "I kill a man, and the world forgives me. I love a man, and the world wants to kill me." Charles M. Blow's elegant and gripping memoir *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* reveals a man haunted by the abuse he suffered at the hands of an older cousin and how coming to terms with his own sexuality became a lifelong journey. And while not everyone has experienced

the reality of growing up poor in rural Louisiana, Blow's memoir touches on universal themes that are both resonant and relevant. In both operas, an honest light is shone on taboos, social norms, and stereotypes. And what I find particularly moving is how Terence uses music to give these characters compelling voices.

In the opera, Charles is faced with a brutal choice and looks back on his life to understand what has led him to a potentially life-ruining crossroads. He questions his role in certain traumatic events and wonders how he could have changed the course of his own personal history. His is a journey of self-loathing, self-discovery, and eventually self-forgiveness. Charles states that he is a "stranger in my hometown," and I find this idea deeply affecting, for many of us have felt the loneliness of not fitting in or not belonging, even in an environment that should be comforting and familiar.

While preparing *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, one of the challenges was how to adapt Kasi Lemmons's gorgeously cinematic libretto to the stage. Early on, Kasi and I talked about how a memoir is like a collection of old photographs. With that in mind, the creative team and I—now joined by co-director and choreographer Camille A. Brown—set out to create a fluid, multi-layered, almost collage-like production. I cannot say enough about how thrilled I am to be involved in this historic production and to work with this extraordinary composer, librettist, and cast.

—James Robinson

Reprinted courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera. 

Co-director's note



Camille A. Brown

Contributing my voice to Terence Blanchard's beautiful and haunting music, creating movement language for Kasi Lemmons's libretto, sharing the story of celebrated writer Charles M. Blow, and co-directing with James Robinson has been a dream. It has also been uniquely challenging, because I joined the *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* project at the height of the pandemic, five years after work began on the original production. Not only did I have to choreograph, I had to find my directorial voice, among a team that had been collaborating for years. It was daunting, thrilling, and overwhelming to play catch-up. I started with what I know—dance—and approached the piece the same way I approach all of my creative work—asking questions, investigating, and listening. How could I make sure that the gestures and movements stayed true to the intentions of the composer? How could my direction amplify the voice and the heart of this piece?

In the director's seat, I wanted to play with abstraction and time travel, capturing the psyche of Charles, his inner turmoil, and his tussles with Destiny and Loneliness. We treated each scene as though it were one of those aged Polaroid pictures—static in time, with the only breath being Charles, walking us through his journey, the pictures shapeshifting as we follow him along. Isolated both spiritually and physically, it was important to show Charles's struggles, his longing for peace, and his search for a savior—only to realize that his savior was himself, the younger version of himself, giving him grace and resolve.

Two phrases within the show resonate with me: "Sometimes you gotta' just leave it in the road" and "I bend, I don't break, I sway."

They speak to the specificity of the Black experience but also call upon a universal theme of determination and the need for personal resolution. Charles experienced a traumatic childhood event, which changed his life. He ultimately finds the strength and motivation to "leave it in the road." Past traumas can either haunt us or heal us. Charles's story empowers us with the understanding that

the devastation of the past does not have to define our futures. We too can give ourselves the grace to let go. *Fire* also illuminates themes of perseverance and resilience—both hallmarks of the Black experience. We don't break, we sway. We never give in. Our light will never go out. To honor this, I wanted to find a way—amid the struggle—to elevate the stuff of the Black experience that celebrates us. That heals us. That shows us off.

Terence has created a percussive score that is complex and nuanced, and I have tried to add to that my original artistic expression in movement, bringing to bear the many influences and elements that make up my individual style. What I found so thrilling was that I could use step to embody triumph, pain, and the joy of life, and create a rhythmical score for this powerful "opera in jazz." Step is a social dance rooted in African American history and culture, tracing back more than 200 years to West Africa, transformed by enslaved people throughout the Americas. Stepping is energetic, visceral, urgent, and powerful. It is also embedded in the fabric of Black fraternities and sororities, which were intentionally created as safe spaces when white Greek-letter organizations would not let Black men and women join them. It has always been historically important for Black people to create safe spaces for themselves. What has emerged from that has been extraordinary: Black people creating community for themselves everywhere—in the Church, at the jook joint, and at historically Black colleges and universities. In these safe spaces, we converge to share all that is messy and radiant in our lives, in our relationships, and in our humanity.

I am humbled and honored to be a part of this show that is inviting audiences into a vulnerable and poignant story.

At one point in history, Black people were not allowed to perform on stages like this one and, even more so, were not able to authentically portray our own narratives. The full spectrum of our real lives were unseen. But we did not break.

Once invisible, now beautifully and vibrantly visible. Past, present, and future, we sway.

—Camille A. Brown

Reprinted courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera 

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.



The Magic Victrola

Photo: Todd Rosenberg

Lyric

Beyond the stage

The Magic Victrola

This April 24th, audiences will be delighted by *The Magic Victrola*, a charming story that brings some of opera's most beloved arias to life for audiences of all ages in this one-afternoon-only special performance.



Photo: Todd Rosenberg


This fully-staged production made its premiere a few seasons ago to critical and audience acclaim. Its recently announced revival demonstrates Lyric's commitment to engaging music lovers of all ages. Designed for patrons 5 to 10 years old—and, of course, their grown escorts—*The Magic Victrola* has a broad and dazzling appeal. "The audience loved it all," wrote the *Chicago Sun-Times* of the premiere. "The future of this magical and multifaceted art form had another great boost."

The Magic Victrola adventure begins when Gracie and Sam are dropped off at their Grandpa's place for summer vacation. While at first the kids are less than excited to be without their modern comforts, things get much more interesting when they discover their grandfather's old victrola, and his prized collection of opera records suddenly come to life! With the help of the mysterious birdman, Papageno, Gracie and Sam are off on a musical adventure through some of opera's most delightful hits.

Lyric is eager to welcome the Chicago community to experience the magic of live opera performance on Sunday, April 24. "This will be an introduction to the world of opera for many of our youngest audience members, so we want to make it as accessible and enjoyable as possible. The vibrant sets and costumes bring the opera stories to life. *The Magic Victrola* is our opportunity to open the doors of Lyric and invite audiences of all ages to experience the excitement of the art form," says Vice President of Lyric Unlimited Robert C. Goodwin. "Lyric is always seeking opportunities to engage new audiences in Chicago and to offer unique artistic experiences."

The *Chicago Tribune* noted that the premiere had "a sizable audience of kids and their elders giggling and applauding in merry discovery." It's a thrilling afternoon, re-discovering old favorites with those who are hearing some of opera's glories for the very first time.

The Magic Victrola features highlights and excerpts from some of the repertoire's most beloved works, including *The Magic Flute*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Delibes's Lakmé*, *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Carmen* among others. Casting will feature some of the extraordinary artists from Lyric's Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center—stars in the making—along with members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and other performers.

This special presentation of *The Magic Victrola* also features affordably priced tickets. At \$5 for children and \$10 for adults, it is, quite literally, affordable family fun. 

Lyric prioritizes the health and safety of our audiences and artists. All audience members will need to show proof of fully vaccinated status and remain masked at all times within the opera house. We regret that children not yet eligible for vaccination will not be able to attend this production.

We look forward to welcoming you, your family, and friends to this special performance of *The Magic Victrola*.

To learn more about *The Magic Victrola* and purchase your tickets today, visit lyricopera.org/magicvictrola.

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: Leroy Davis, Kathleen Felty, Lunga Eric Hallam, Katherine Beck, Martin Luther Clark, Katherine DeYoung, Anthony Reed, Mathilda Edge
Seated: Donald Lee III, Rivers Hawkins, Maria Novella Malfatti, Chris Reynolds, Denis Vélez

Lyric

Ryan Opera Center

The 2021 /22 Ryan Opera Center Ensemble

Sopranos

Mathilda Edge
Maria Novella Malfatti
Denis Vélez

Mezzo-sopranos

Katherine Beck
Katherine DeYoung
Kathleen Felty

Tenors

Martin Luther Clark
Lunga Eric Hallam

Baritone

Leroy Davis

Basses

Rivers Hawkins
Anthony Reed

Conductor/Pianist

Donald Lee III

Pianist

Chris Reynolds

Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

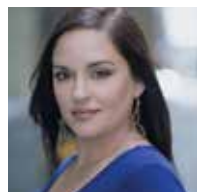
CHRIS KENNEY

At Lyric this season: Chester/*Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. Previously with Lyric: Five roles since 2018/19, most recently Official Registrar/*Madama Butterfly* and Motorcycle Cop/*Dead Man Walking* (both 2019/20). Also this season: Figaro/*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Cincinnati Opera; Young Emile/*Champion*, Boston Lyric Opera.

The Ryan Opera Center was one of the most formative and beneficial experiences in my life as an opera singer. The lessons I learned and the people I met helped propel me into the highest ranks of the field—and gave me a deep appreciation for detail, dedication, and artistry. Being able to work with master artists like Renée Fleming and Patricia Racette especially opened for me the unbounded artistic ideas to be explored. I cherish my time in Chicago, and I'm truly grateful to have been a part of an institution with such a storied history as Lyric and the Ryan Opera Center.



THIS SEASON



Ann Toomey
Tosca
Sarasota Opera



Jonathan Johnson
Harvey Milk
Opera Theatre of
Saint Louis



Emily Pogorelc
Le nozze di Figaro
Glyndebourne
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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT LYRIC, AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU HELD THIS POSITION?

I am the Director of Group Sales in the Marketing Department, and this May will mark my five-year anniversary with the company.

WHAT LED YOU TO WORK AT LYRIC?

Prior to working at Lyric, I was the Senior Manager for Tourism Marketing at Macy's. When the company went through a restructure in 2017, my only option was to move to New York City, and since I had recently bought my first home and had my first baby, a move wasn't ideal. I took a risk, left the company, and started my search. When I heard about an opening to manage group sales for Lyric, I honestly thought that sounded like a long shot. Unlike so many of my Lyric colleagues, I did not have a background in the arts or non-profits and definitely was not a singer or musician. I was a retail marketing professional in corporate spaces and never thought Lyric would even look at my resume. But they did! Oftentimes as professionals we get boxed into a category based on our previous jobs and to have this opportunity to learn a completely new industry has been amazing.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL DAY LIKE FOR YOU?

Every day is different, especially since the pandemic. I service groups of 10 or more, which includes seniors, schools, alumni organizations, friends & family. My priority is to provide the best

customer service whether I am answering an inquiry or finalizing order details. I also create marketing and outreach plans, and I am always strategizing ways to bring in new audiences through grassroots outreach. In addition to the day to day, I often attend educational networking events and trade shows with colleagues. I also travel to sales trade shows where I meet with prospective tour planners coming to Chicago and encourage them to bring their groups to Lyric. Once my day job ends, I then start my most challenging job, as a mom. Homework, dinner, activities, and the list goes on!

WHAT'S THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE?

The pandemic has brought such a range of challenges. The key demographics I work with are seniors and students, both of whom have been impacted tremendously. My goal when working with these groups is to keep them up to date with Lyric's current policies to keep them safe when attending a performance.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES AND HOW YOU CULTIVATE THOSE RELATIONSHIPS.

I had the honor of working with many international tour operators when we were planning Lyric's new *Ring* Cycle for the spring of 2020. I researched presentations of Wagner's *Ring* all over the world and in 2017 worked with my partners at Choose Chicago to prospect potential groups. International groups plan travel for large events like this at least 18 months before a performance, so when we went on sale with tickets in 2018 about a dozen operators ranging from Canada, New Zealand, the U.K., and Australia all reserved large group orders that totaled almost half a million dollars. The level of detail and customer service was absolutely key and to say it was a heartbreak to cancel this highly anticipated event is an understatement.


WHAT'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW?

West Side Story was a tremendous success for our company, and people may not realize that between myself and my coordinator at the time we sold and serviced 600 group leaders and almost 19,000 tickets over the course of the four-week run.

A FAVORITE LYRIC MOMENT?

Jesus Christ Superstar in 2018 was phenomenal. I loved seeing a diverse cast of young singers and dancers.

BEYOND OPERA, WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER PASSIONS?

Yoga, food, travel, and, most importantly, my family, especially my three kids who always keep me busy. 

With the generous support of individuals and organizations, Lyric is leading the advancement of opera in America—continually advancing artistic excellence, increasing relevance and reach for both traditional and new audiences, engaging our diverse communities through signature learning and exploration initiatives, and expanding our role as a cultural cornerstone in Chicago. You are our partners in this important shared enterprise—and we sincerely thank you.



Lyric

**Thank you for
your support**

Bravissimi

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This concert is dedicated to the memory of Lady Gianna Rolandi Davis, with our love and admiration.



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⁺ **Future Planned Gift** These donors have named Lyric in their will, trust, or IRA to establish an endowment fund in their name to support Lyric, its programs, and positions forever.

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Allen Frantzen & George Paterson

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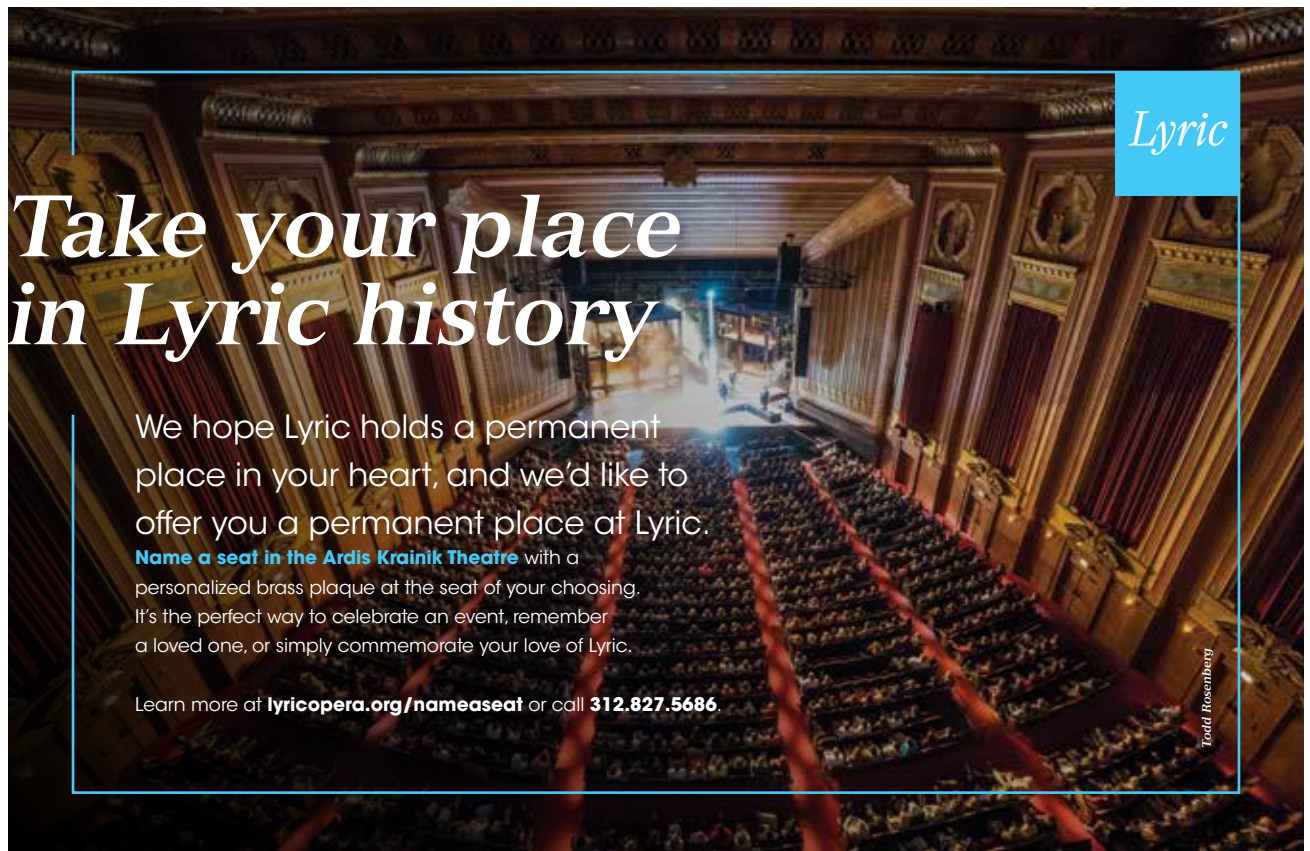
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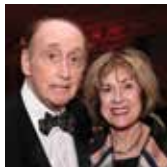
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Brittany Renée Robinson
Ann Toomey
Talise Trevigne
Denis Vélez
Boya Wei

MEZZO-SOPRANOS

Katherine Beck
Katherine DeYoung
Kathleen Felty
Deborah Nansteel
Stephanie Sanchez
Taylor Raven
Annie Rosen

TENORS

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Mario Chang
Dominick Chenes
Martin Luther Clark
Joshua Guerrero
Lunga Eric Hallam
Dylan Morrongiello

Miles Mykkanen
Chauncey Packer
Pavel Petrov
Mario Rojas
Rodell Rosel
Brenton Ryan
Russell Thomas
Matthew Vickers

BARITONES

Justin Austin
Leroy Davis
Norman Garrett
Levi Hernandez
Joshua Hopkins
Christopher Kenney
Steven LaBrie
Will Liverman
Zachary Nelson
Edward Parks
Huw Montague Rendall
Daniel Scofield
Reginald Smith, Jr.
Fabián Veloz
Ethan Vincent
Grant Youngblood

BASS-BARITONES

Craig Colclough
Calvin Griffin
Alan Higgs
Kyle Ketelsen
Christian Van Horn

BASSES

Raymond Aceto
Andrew Harris
Rivers Hawkins
Tareq Nazmi
Anthony Reed

CONDUCTORS

Daniela Candillari
Sir Andrew Davis
Jordan de Souza
Karen Kamensek
Eun Sun Kim
Enrique Mazzola

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James Darrah
Barrie Kosky
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Francesca Zambello

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CHORUS MASTER

Michael Black

CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTER

Josephine Lee

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Tim Claydon
Eric Sean Fogel
Andrew George
Jay Staten

BALLET MISTRESS

August Tye

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Nick Sandys



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.