

HEART
BEAT
OPERA

May 2021

Saturday the 15th at 7pm Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center

Heartbeat Opera Presents

BREATHING FREE

a visual album

*featuring excerpts from Beethoven's Fidelio, Negro
Spirituals, and songs by Harry T. Burleigh, Florence Price,
Langston Hughes, Anthony Davis, and Thulani Davis*

BREATHING FREE

In 2018, Heartbeat collaborated with 100 incarcerated singers in six prison choirs to create a contemporary American Fidelio told through the lens of Black Lives Matter. In 2020 — the year of George Floyd's murder, a pandemic which ravages our prison population, and the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth — we curate a song cycle, brought to life in vivid music videos, mingling excerpts from Fidelio with Negro Spirituals and songs by Black composers and lyricists, which together manifest a dream of justice, equity... and breathing free.

**Oh what joy, in open air,
freely to breathe again!**

—The Prisoners, *Fidelio*



CONTENTS

NOTE FROM DIRECTOR ETHAN HEARD

NOTE FROM FILMMAKER ANAIS CISCO

NOTE FROM CREATIVE PRODUCER RAS DIA

EDUCATION PROGRAM

REPERTOIRE

COMPOSERS & LYRICISTS

CREDITS

LIBRETTO

FIDELIO SYNOPSIS

DISCUSSION PANELS

BIOS

LOCATIONS

SUPPORT

SPECIAL THANKS

COMING NEXT: THE EXTINCTIONIST



FROM DIRECTOR ETHAN HEARD



Breathing Free began with a series of questions: How do we make opera that sings and embodies “Black Lives Matter”? What if we collaged works by Black composers and lyricists with excerpts from *Fidelio* and called it a virtual-theatrical song cycle? Or, even better, a visual album? How do we meld opera-making and film-making? And during a pandemic? What if there were panel discussions?

Breathing Free has blossomed out of tough questions and challenging times. A devoted team of more than 30 artists has come together to ask these questions of each other, of our history, of our art forms, and about our future. We have wrestled with Zoom, recorded in closets, waited in line for COVID tests...and we have drawn nourishment and purpose from a shared mission: to uplift Black artists and to celebrate opera during dark times.

Creating this work over the past two months has been humbling. Making music and building trust are challenging projects when you’re collaborating on Zoom. Not to mention during a pandemic and a frightening election. But this community of artists kept showing up, kept digging deep, kept striving for beauty and truth.

Breathing Free is our protest. It is the imperfect and often painful work of taking anti-racist action. It is our artistic fight for survival. And it is an offering — a gift — for you. We share this virtual experiment with love and with hope that you will find inspiration in these songs, this film, these questions and conversations. The work continues. Thank you for joining us.

—ETHAN HEARD



FROM FILMMAKER ANAIS CISCO

In preparing for the production of *Breathing Free*, the approach for filming this piece was unclear. We began strategizing whether we would send camera kits to performers or film on-location. Filmmaking while in the midst of a pandemic has totally transformed how we produce media. With limited time, resources, and performers dispersed throughout the country, we were able to go beyond the frame of a Zoom meeting, cultivating an intimate and socially distant on-location production experience. Adapting the creative directions from movement and music, I prepared a look book and began to carefully plan each shot with two talented cinematographers, Kathryn Boyd-Batstone and Jacob Mallin.

When we began developing the visual look for this piece, I knew I wanted this performance to offer a cinematic experience, fusing operatic and cinematic styles. In my attempt to subvert conventions of classical arts, I hoped to create a cohesive cinematic landscape linking all performers through time, space, and genre. Filmed over the course of four production days, beginning in LA, we took a series of COVID tests, piled up in my car, and continued to film

throughout Chicago and NYC. Over a dozen film locations later, we crafted this beautiful visual album. During post-production with just two weeks to edit a 45min film, I became extremely intimate with the music and images, establishing a visual rhythm that compliments the musical composition. While this project would not be possible without the entire team, I am deeply appreciative of Ras Dia (Creative Producer), Mar Cox (Assistant Director), and Jessica Emmanus (Stage Manager) for their intentional and careful insights during rehearsals, feedback on rough cuts, and affirming notes.

—ANAIS CISCO

FROM CREATIVE PRODUCER RAS DIA

An articulation of Blackness and humanity, *Breathing Free* is a reckoning and a grace in the midst of the health and racial crises of 2020. As I consider the rage and guilt made manifest by a national conversation on the “reality” of race, I’m drawn to the working version of our libretto which is filled with notes on empowering Black folx through the representation of their *labor, silence, sensuality, fluidity,* and beautifully *radical simplicity*.

As a creative team, we drew from our own skills, hopes, and ignorance, sometimes clumsily, stepping on toes and assumptions, making every effort to voice these *realities*. And, with every trust in the transformational vision of our filmmaker Anaiis, we sought to honor the work and spirit of our cast and crew, wielding beyond the



technical limits of this pandemic, a visual album that is an entry point to the experiences and communities represented in it.

The soul of this work is to be an access point, an opportunity to consider something familiar or untold, so I sought to frame each part of our series launch as a different dialogue built around the perspectives of artists, scholars, activists, and community-builders to unearth larger truths as a mirror to who we are, and who we believe ourselves to be.

—RAS DIA

EDUCATION PROGRAM

In our *Breathing Free* education program, students have been led by a multidisciplinary team of teaching artists to engage with three major artistic areas represented within the production. Through a student-centered approach, our teaching artist teams have invited students to think socially, collaboratively, and creatively in an experiential exploration of *Breathing Free* through movement, music, theater and film. Our residencies have been delivered to our partner campuses virtually, with each residency culminating in a virtual “field trip” to not only view the performance of *Breathing Free* but also experience an artist talkback with performers featured in the film.

Throughout the entire process, we have invited students to make their own artistic choices and inferences in exploring the questions of “What is Opera?” and “What can it be?” I’ve personally enjoyed seeing how students connect their own personal and contemporary tastes in art to their exploration of *Breathing Free*. Our students have really reminded us of the often universal expressive nature of art across both disciplines and genres while really helping us to keep thinking about what the word “opera” means for the world we live in today.

—ASHLEY RENÉE WATKINS
Breathing Free Director of Education

MS/HS 223 (Bronx, NY)

Teachers: Ms. Courtney Summer and Ms. Jenefer Rosado
Students: 7th Grade ELA (english language arts) class

Wilson High School (Long Beach, CA)

Teacher: Curtis Heard
Students: Chamber Singers (mixed grades)

East Thibodaux Middle School (Thibodaux, LA)

Teacher: Ms. Valencia Pleasant
Students: School Chorus (mixed grades)



REPERTOIRE

“Euch werde Lohn” (Act II Trio from *FIDELIO*)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven
Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner & Georg Friedrich Sonnleithner
arr. Daniel Schlosberg
Performed by Curtis Bannister, Kelly Griffin, Derrell Acon, and the BREATHING FREE Band

Lovely Dark and Lonely One

Music by Harry T. Burleigh
Words by Langston Hughes
Performed by Curtis Bannister and Jason Thomas

“Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?” (Leonore’s aria from *FIDELIO*)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven
Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner & Georg Friedrich Sonnleithner
arr. Daniel Schlosberg
Performed by Kelly Griffin and the BREATHING FREE Band

“Gott! Welch Dunkel hier!” (Florestan’s aria from *FIDELIO*)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven
Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner & Georg Friedrich Sonnleithner
arr. Daniel Schlosberg
Performed by Curtis Bannister and the BREATHING FREE Band

I would not tell you what I know

from *X (THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X)*

Music by Anthony Davis

Libretto by Thulani Davis

Story by Christopher Davis

arr. Sean Mayes

Performed by Derrell Acon and the BREATHING FREE Band

Copyright © 1987 by G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP)

This arrangement © 2020 by G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP) International Copyright Secured.

All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

Traditional

Performed by Kelly Griffin

“O welche Lust” (Prisoners’ Chorus from *FIDELIO*)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven

Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner & Georg Friedrich Sonnleithner

arr. Daniel Schlosberg

Performed by Heartbeat Opera’s *FIDELIO* Chorus & Band (2018)

Song to the Dark Virgin

Music by Florence Price

Words by Langston Hughes

Performed by Derrell Acon and Jason Thomas

Balm in Gilead

Traditional

arr. Sean Mayes

Performed by Kelly Griffin, Derrell Acon, and Curtis Bannister

Pre- and Post-Show Music:

“Gut, Kindchen, gut” (Act I Trio from *FIDELIO*)

“Mir ist so wunderbar” (Act I Quartet from *FIDELIO*)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner & Georg Friedrich Sonnleithner

arr. Daniel Schlosberg

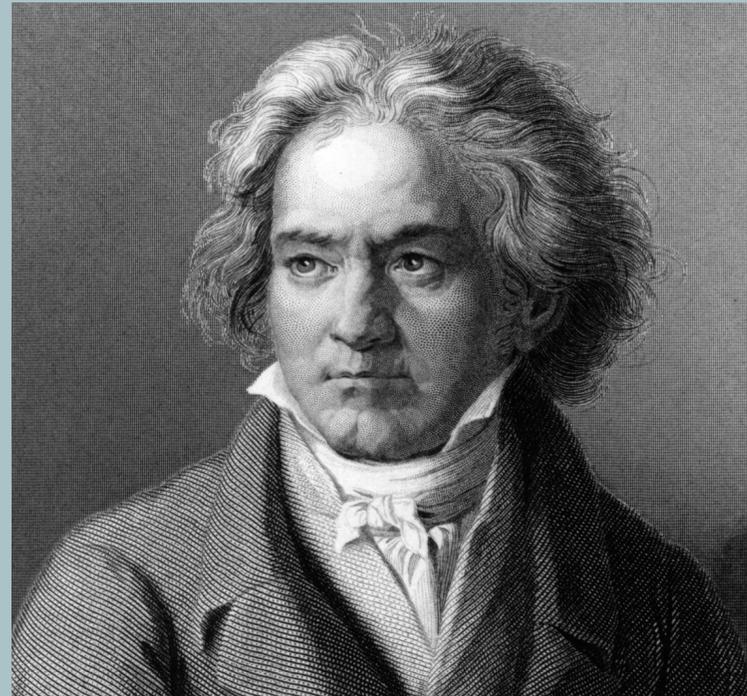
Performed by Kelly Griffin, Derrell Acon, Malorie Casimir, and

Heartbeat Opera’s *FIDELIO* Band (2018)

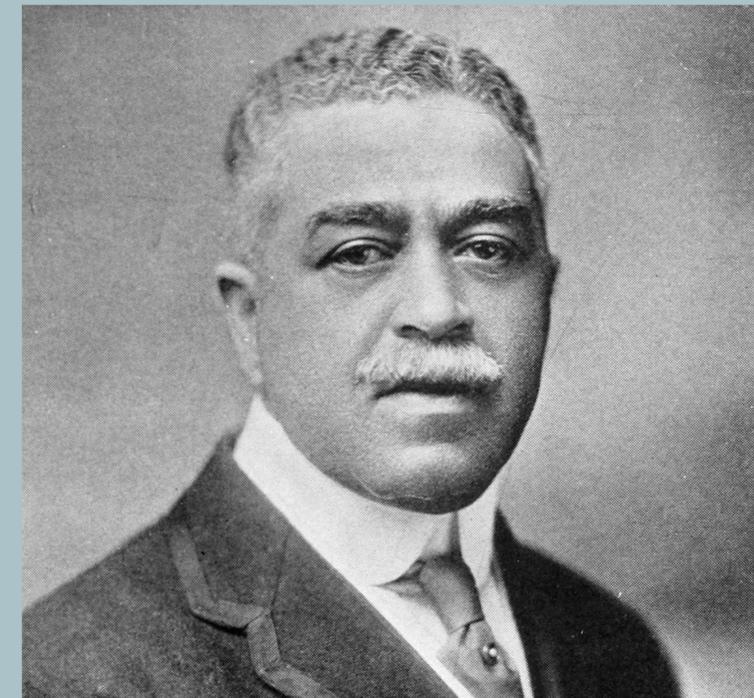
COMPOSERS & LYRICISTS

FROM CO-MUSIC DIRECTOR JACOB ASHWORTH

In his prolific and powerful career, **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) wrote only one opera. He wrote it, though, three times: first in 1804 as *Leonore*, a long-winded love story; then revised in 1805; and finally resurrected as a tight drama of political machinations and the search for justice, complete with a new title — *Fidelio* — in 1815. Beethoven's genius and his influence came not only from his brilliance with a quill, but from his unflinching dedication to charging his works with what was at the time a radical, new concept — liberty and justice for all. The arias and trio from *Fidelio* featured in this film tell the story of a woman trying to free her husband, who has been disappeared by a corrupt prison warden and plunged into solitary confinement. Hope is what unites them, even at their moments of greatest despair. Then, in the crowning moment of the opera, Beethoven gives the stage over not to this courageous couple, but to the invisible protagonists around them: the incarcerated. Their moment of breathing free — Beethoven's famous Prisoners' Chorus — is a thesis statement from a composer who believed in the fight for equality, and inspired us to remake this story as a contemporary account of a Black couple seeking justice.



Harry T Burleigh (1866-1949) lived a remarkable life breaking racial barriers in classical music and becoming one of the most celebrated singers in New York. As a student, he was awarded a scholarship to the New York Conservatory — but still had to clean the halls at night to pay his way. It was while singing spirituals in the halls that he met the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, whose most famous work, *The New World Symphony*, was based on what Burleigh taught him about Black American music. Burleigh went on to have a 50-year career as a star vocalist in New York. He became the first black singer at the all-white St. George's Church, a color line he crossed only when J.P. Morgan cast the deciding vote in his favor. He coached both Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson. His Palm Sunday performances were broadcast every year on the radio as a popular favorite.



Burleigh's arrangements of spirituals are considered classic, but his catalogue of art songs is what inspired us when creating this film. "Lovely, Dark, and Lonely One" is a jewel. Burleigh caresses Hughes' poetry, giving light and space to each word, packing an enormous journey into a brief moment of a song.

A titan of 20th century poetry, **Langston Hughes** (1901-1967) inspired so many Black composers with his texts and libretti: not only Harry Burleigh and Florence Price, but Margaret Bonds, Dorothy Rudd Moore, James P. Johnson, Undine Smith Moore, and more. He put words to the diverse nature of Black experiences, meeting the universal with the specific, anchoring unspoken emotions to paper. Working on this film, we were in awe at how nearly a hundred years ago he was describing, with arresting accuracy and concision, the same battles that exist in Black bodies today. In “Lovely, Dark, and Lonely One” he conjures a private moment full of tenderness and ferocity. “Songs to the Dark Virgin” is a wrenching cry that sets up an awful paradox — that the utmost expression of love would be “to annihilate thy body, thou dark one.”



When **Anthony Davis** (b. 1951) won the Pulitzer Prize last year for his *Central Park Five* (starring, among others, Derrell Acon), it was a high point in a decades-long career of creating some of the most important and politically striking operas in the US. His works map our greatest social issues onto the grandest of art forms, harnessing every tool opera has to offer. Davis mixes every musical style — he is himself a virtuoso pianist comfortable in classical, jazz, and non-Western



music — to create his own vocabulary and grammar. But what he speaks is decidedly opera.

His breakout opera, *X (The Life and Times of Malcolm X)*, written with his cousin and frequent librettist **Thulani Davis** (b. 1949) and premiered by New York City Opera in 1986, is told on the epic scale. A huge cast embodies the many voices teeming and swirling around Malcolm and influencing him throughout his life. In the aria in our film, Malcolm has just been arrested, he lets fly the full force of his rhetorical power for the first time. With soaring vocal lines, obsessive repeated figures in the band, and cutting words, Anthony and Thulani Davis conjure a Malcolm who is brimming with rage and dignity.



In 2018, when the publisher G. Schirmer announced that they had acquired the worldwide publishing rights to Florence Price’s catalog and that her music had been re-discovered, many people felt that they had struck the wrong tone. **Florence Price** (1887-1953) had one of the most distinguished careers of any Black composer in history, and her works were far from forgotten. Price was notable for achieving critical success on a larger stage during her lifetime in genres that were, at the time, off-limits to her Black peers; in 1933 the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered her *Symphony No. 1* in



E minor. Flip to any page of her work and you can see a combination of exquisite skill and a desire to be heard above the fray. “Song to the Dark Virgin” is a terrific example, in miniature, of her style. She takes some of the most devastating words of Langston Hughes and sets them with an undulating, billowing piano part and soaring vocal lines. There is a consciousness to the lofty, classic beauty in both the words and music of the song, which makes its images of shattered jewels and annihilated bodies that much more heartbreaking.

When we began putting together the program for Breathing Free, our soprano Kelly Griffin told me that as the pandemic crept on, she found herself, somewhat to her own surprise, singing spirituals to herself at home. **Spirituals** offer a unique kind of comfort. They are instant gatherers of community, a call that cannot go unanswered. Even when the texts explicitly form themselves around a Christian God, there is a universality to the sentiments, the words, and the melodies that have been passed down through the generations. Spirituals are the music of oppressed people. A genre born in the fields of this country, by those who were enslaved here.

This year, Kelly co-founded the Liberation Music Museum, honoring the extraordinary musical contributions of those who have suffered extreme oppression (look out for her panel discussion Dec 12th). Speaking about what makes these songs so magnetic, Kelly told me, “Spirituals are *Verismo*” — referring to the full-throated emotion and drama that opera composers like Puccini gave to realistic, everyday characters a century ago. Whether sung alone or together, in a church, in the fields, or by a professional singer, the words and melodies of spirituals can give anyone a platform for opera-sized expression. The two spirituals in the film, *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child* and *Balm in Gilead*, balance the feelings of solitude and despair with the tender hope of a better world to come.



CAST

VOCALISTS

DERRELL ACON
CURTIS BANNISTER
KELLY GRIFFIN

DANCERS

RANDY CASTILLO
TAMRIN GOLDBERG
BRIAN HALLOWDREAMZ HENRY

FEATURING THE VOICES OF MORE THAN 100 INCARCERATED SINGERS AND 70 VOLUNTEERS FROM SIX PRISON CHOIRS:
OAKDALE COMMUNITY CHOIR, KUJI MEN'S CHORUS, UBUNTU MEN'S CHORUS, HOPE THRU HARMONY WOMEN'S CHOIR, EAST HILL SINGERS, AND VOICES OF HOPE

BAND

PIANO & CONDUCTOR (Beethoven) **DANIEL SCHLOSBERG**
VIOLIN & CONDUCTOR (Davis) **JACOB ASHWORTH**
CELLO **MARIKA HUGHES**
HORN **KYRA SIMS**
PERCUSSION **BRITTON-RENÉ COLLINS**
TRUMPETS **MIKI SASAKI**
GUITARS **THOMAS FLIPPIN**
PIANO (SOLO) **JASON THOMAS**

TEAM

DIRECTOR **ETHAN HEARD**
FILMMAKER **ANAIS CISCO**
CREATIVE PRODUCER **RAS DIA**
CO-MUSIC DIRECTORS **DANIEL SCHLOSBERG & JACOB ASHWORTH**
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR **EMMA JASTER**
NEW ARRANGEMENTS **DANIEL SCHLOSBERG & SEAN MAYES**

LOS ANGELES
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **KATHRYN BOYD BATSTONE**
FIRST AC/GAFFER **CELINE LAYOUS**

NEW YORK & CHICAGO
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **JACOB MALLIN**
FIRST AC/GAFFER **MATT IACONO**

COLORIST **SAGE VELASTEGUI**
ASSOCIATE MUSIC DIRECTOR **SEAN MAYES**
ASSOCIATE MOVEMENT DIRECTOR **TAMRIN GOLDBERG**
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **MAR COX**
STAGE MANAGER **JESSICA EMMANUS**
SOUND EDITOR **GLEB KANASEVICH**
SOUND MIXER **SAM TORRES**
MUSIC ASSISTANT & ORCHESTRA MANAGER **MONA SEYED-BOLORFOROSH**

LIVE SWITCHER & TECHNICAL DIRECTOR **MAX SILVERMAN**
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS FOR FIDELIO **NICHOLAS BETSON**
FILM EDITOR OF PRISONERS CHORUS **KATHY WITTMAN**
ORIGINAL SOUND EDITING OF PRISONERS CHORUS **KATE MARVIN**
CINEMATOGRAPHER FOR PRISONERS CHORUS **ETHAN HEARD**
HOPE THROUGH HARMONY VIDEOGRAPHER **BECCA SCHALL**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION **ASHLEY RENÉE WATKINS**
REPERTOIRE CONSULTANT **ANTHONY MCGLAUN**

2018 FIDELIO CHORUS

Oakdale Community Choir, Iowa Medical and Classification Center

Director & Founder: Mary L. Cohen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Iowa

Accompanist: Paul Soderdahl

Assistant Director: Laura Kastens

Sound Engineer: Peter Nothnagle

Inside Singers:

Christopher Anderson, Christopher Atchison, Mitchell Barta, Bertrum Burkett, Sammy Clayton, Joel Conrad, Steven Dahlstrom, Michael Davis-Carson, Tim Dickerson, Brandon Feighner, Michael Fleming, David Frazier, Daniel Hicks, Wyatt Johnson, Shane Kendrick, Daniel King, Carlos Latorre-Flores, Joshua Lusch, John Lusk, Nathan Matiyabo, Ryan McKelvey, Dallas Miller, Kai Miller, Joshua Morales, Ron Nielsen, Tim Parker, Dustin Perry, Bruce Pollard, John Schondelmeyer, William Slack, Daniel Stanton, Christopher Stickfort, Efrain Umana, Richard Winemiller, Shaylan Yeager, Joel Zamora, James Effler, Rodrigo Estrada, James Hahn, Bill Hildebrand, Nelson Ramirez, Phil Yeoman

Outside Singers:

Liz Bonnet, Peg Bouska, Richard Bushby, Samuel Cacciatore, Jeanne Cadoret, Chad Clark, Andy Douglas, Steve Dunham, Barbara Eckstein, Simone Frierson, Lynn Gingerich, Nancy Halder, Colleen Higgins, Laura Kastens, Cinnamon Kleeman, Donneta Knarr, Willis J Knight, Marilyn Knight, Tricia Knox, Margaret Koenig, Pete Kollasch, Kevin Kummer, Maria Ortega Kummer, Kirsten Kumpf Baele, Kayla Lyftogt, Ramona Miller, Morgan Dunham, Anna Mary Mueller, Connie Peterson, Anna Schmall, Katie Seybert, Paul Soderdahl, Devin Tracey, Dorothy Whiston, Anna Wilcox, Joseph Wyse, Mitch Yoon

KUJI Men's Chorus, Marion Correctional Institution, Ohio

Director: Catherine Roma

Tenors: Charles Banks III, Guy Banks, Marcelus Bibbs, Winston Blythe, John Cleggett, Kevin Collier, Roosevelt Gray, Ilyas S. Mumin, Raymel Robinson

Basses: Alrenzo Blandin, Kerron Brantley, Ernest Croft, Michael Powell, William F. Strange, Herman Weaver, Al Wertsch

HOPE Thru Harmony Women's Choir, Dayton Correctional Institution, Ohio

Director: Catherine Roma

Accompanist: Rachel Kramer

(Inside & Outside singers combined)

Soprano I: Danielle Heckathorn, Raylin Holloway, Ashley Jessup, Em Joy, Camilia Terry, Valerie Blackwell Truitt

Soprano II: Dawnetta Cargle, Angie Denov, Maria Kitsinis, Heather Lerch, Andrea Mitchell, Connie Ramirez, Carol Simmons, Jasmyne Tennant, Pandora Zan

Alto I: Tasha Carr, Denitra Cox, Taniya Froe, Farrin Moss, Diana Porter, Pam Schall, Dorothy Smith

Alto II: Barb Brooks, Roxanne Buck, Jonelle Crockett, Kelli Garrett, Linda Koylu, Maggie Morrison, Gwendolyn Shackelford, Donna Tramell

UBUNTU Men's Chorus, London Correctional Institution, Ohio

Director: Catherine Roma

Tenor I: Brandon Bozeman, Chris Charles, Jeffrey Hodge, Anthony McKinney, Chris Nelloms, Nehemiah Williams

Tenor II: Zantika Burton, Kevin Coleman, Julian Gorman, Marquell Madaris, Jesse Morrison, Jared Moseley, Cory Pickett, Rubin Pratts, Salig Singleton, Jeff Smith

Baritones: Carols Crispin, Gregory Johnson, Eddie Robertson, Ernest Sims, Randy Wallen

Basses: Doug Elliott, Bennie Humphrey, James Smith, Mark Springer, Jan Tucker

East Hill Singers, Lansing Correctional Facility, Kansas

a program of Arts in Prison

Conductor: Kirk Carson

Executive Director: Leigh A. Lynch

Thanks to the Kansas Department of Corrections

(Inside & Outside singers combined)

Greg Baacke, Mike Barnes, Roger Beason, Rick Blinn, Scotty Button, Jeff Campbell, Souksavnh Chamnongchith, Gabe Combs, Robert Coppage, Dylan Day, Gary Duncan, Phil Eatherton, Duane Graber, Louis Hamel, Mike Hegge, Christopher Herring, Charles Hise, Clif Hostetler, David Jones, David Joslyn, Johnny King, John Kingsley, Duane Krehbiel, Bob LeVeau, Sam Loughmiller, Kenneth Mallett, Duane Manis, Jim Marshall, Jay McKell, George Melby, Nathaniel Murken, Cameron Norwood, Danny Pickerill, Ron Post, Paul Priefert, Daniel Ramos, Ken Ratzlaff, Frank Robertson, Randy Schmidt, Wendell Selzer, Marc Showalter, Darrell Spoon, William Stephens, Larry Swinson, Tim Thomas, Cliff Van Blarcom, Bob Walsh, Shawn Wyckoff

Voices of Hope, Minnesota Correctional Facility, Shakopee, Minnesota

Conductor: Amanda Weber

Accompanist: Mary Trotter

Inside Singers: Anonymous (20)

Outside Singers: Katelyn Belden, Emma Bergman, Siri Caltvedt, Emily Geiger, Bronwyn Redvers-Lee, Rebekah Shuholm, Nancy Swanson, Haruka Yukiokar

2018 FIDELIO BAND

PIANO 1 & CONDUCTOR **DANIEL SCHLOSBERG**

PIANO 2 **EUNTAEK KIM**

HORN 1 **LAURA WEINER**

HORN 2 **NICOLEE KUESTER**

CELLO 1 **CLARE MONFREDO**

CELLO 2 **DANIEL HASS**

PERCUSSION **BEN CORNAVACA**

LIBRETTO

EUCH WERDE LOHN ACT II TRIO FROM *FIDELIO*

STAN
You will be repaid in a better world.
Heaven sent you to me.
Thank you for this relief!
I can't ever repay you.

LEAH
I pray for your freedom.

ROC
Your suffering often moved me,
But I was forbidden to help.
I hate to see such cruelty.

LEAH
This is more than I can bear.
You can still help him!

STAN
I can't repay your kindness!

LEAH
My heart is pounding with joy and pain.
The hour of truth is at hand.

ROC
Poor man!
I hate to see such cruelty.

LOVELY, DARK, AND LONELY ONE

Lovely, dark, and lonely one,
Bare your bosom to the sun.
Do not be afraid of light,
You who are a child of night.

Open wide your arms to life,
Whirl in the wind of pain and strife,
Face the wall with the dark closed gate,
Beat with bare, brown fists—
And wait.

ABSCHUELICHER! WO EILST DU HIN? LEONORE'S ARIA FROM *FIDELIO*

Monster! Where are you going?
What are you planning in your wild fury?
The cry of pity ... the voice of humanity ...
Do they no longer move your predator mind?
While there is a hurricane
Of rage within your soul ...
For me a rainbow shines
Above the darkening clouds.
It looks down quietly, peacefully,
Mirroring the joy of better days.
And my blood flows calmly again.
Come, Hope, do not let
the last star of the weary fade.
Come, light my goal,
however far it may be ...
Love will get me there.
Come, Hope ...
Do not let the last star of the weary fade.
Light my goal,
However far it may be ...
Love will get me there
I follow my inner desire,

And do not waver.
I draw strength from my husband's love for me
And my love for my husband.
You, for whom I'd do anything ...
Could I but reach the place
Where hate put you in chains ...
... And bring you comfort!
You, for whom I'd do anything ...
Could I but reach the spot
Where hate cast you into chains!
I follow my inner desire,
And do not waver.
I draw strength from my husband's love for me
And my love for my husband.



**GOTT! WELCH DUNKEL HIER!
FLORESTAN'S ARIA FROM FIDELIO**

God!
What darkness.
What horrible stillness.
Emptiness surrounds me.
Nothing else lives here.
Oh, painful trial.
But God's will is just!
I will not complain:
My suffering is in Your hands.
In the spring of my life,
Happiness flew away.
I dared to speak the truth,
And chains are my reward.
I endure this pain willingly,
And end my life in disgrace.
But I have one consolation:
I have done my duty!
Do I feel a gentle breeze?
And is my grave brightening?
I see an angel in a golden haze
Coming to my side to comfort me ...
... An angel, so like Leah, my wife,
Leading me to freedom...
In heaven.

**I WOULD NOT TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW
FROM X (THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X)**

I would not tell you what I know,
you wouldn't hear my truth.
You want the story but you don't want to know.
My truth is you've been on me, a very long time,
longer than I can say.
As long as I've been living,
you've had your foot on me,

always pressing.
My truth is white men,
killed my old man,
drove my mother mad.
My truth is rough,
my truth could kill,
my truth is fury.
They always told me, "You don't have a chance.
You're a n***** after all.
You can jitterbug and prance
but you'll never run the ball."
My truth told me, quit before you start.
My truth told me, stayin' alive is all you've got.
I've shined your shoes, I've sold your dope,
hailed your bootleg, played with hustler's hope.
But the crime is mine.
I'll do your time so you can sleep.
I won't be out to get you on the street at night,
but I won't forget any evil that's white.
My truth is a hammer coming from the back.
It will beat you down when you least expect.
I would not tell you what I know.
You want the truth
You want the truth
But you don't want to know.

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long ways from home, a long ways from home
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
And a long, long ways from home, a long ways from home
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long ways from home, a long ways from home



O WELCHE LUST PRISONERS CHORUS FROM *FIDELIO*

What joy! In open air
We can breathe, we can sing.

Here, here is life.
Prison is a tomb.
With God's help
We will grow strong.

Hope whispers softly:
We will be free, we will find peace.
O Heaven! Salvation! What joy!
O Freedom, will you return?

Speak softly! Be careful!
We're being watched and listened to.
What joy! In open air
We can breathe, we can sing.

Here, here is life.
Speak softly! Be on guard!
We're being watched and listened to.

SONG TO THE DARK VIRGIN

Would
That I were a jewel,
A shattered jewel,
That all my shining brilliants
Might fall at thy feet,
Thou dark one.

Would
That I were a garment,
A shimmering, silken garment,
That all my folds
Might wrap about thy body,
Absorb thy body,
Hold and hide thy body,
Thou dark one.

Would
That I were a flame,
But one sharp, leaping flame
To annihilate thy body,
Thou dark one.

BALM IN GILEAD

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.

Some times I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again.

If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,

Go home and tell your neighbor
He died to save us all.

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.

Are we whole? / Make us whole. / We'll be whole.





FIDELIO SYNOPSIS

In Heartbeat Opera's adaptation of *Fidelio*, Stan, a Black Lives Matter activist, has been wrongfully incarcerated by a corrupt prison warden, Donnie Pizarro. Leah, Stan's wife, disguises herself as a correctional officer to infiltrate the facility where she believes her husband is being held. Roc is the Deputy Major at the prison.

Breathing Free features four excerpts from *Fidelio*. They are described here in the order in which they appear in the full opera. *Breathing Free* features them in a different order.

Leah's Aria: Leah has just overheard Pizarro plotting to murder Stan. She curses the warden and digs deep for the hope and faith she needs to rescue her husband.

Prisoners' Chorus: Leah arranges for the prisoners, who have been on lockdown, to have 30 minutes of "outdoor rec in the yard." The incarcerated people yearn for freedom.

Stan's Aria: In solitary confinement, Stan draws comfort from knowing he spoke truth to power. He imagines an angel — his wife Leah — visiting him.

Stan, Leah, and Roc's Trio: In Stan's prison cell for the first time, Leah has just given Stan bread and water. He does not recognize her. Roc looks on, deeply moved.

CAST



CURTIS BANNISTER
Tenor

Described by TimeOut Magazine as “radiating with slowly simmering energy”, Curtis Bannister is establishing himself as one of the most dynamic, multi-genre performing artists of his generation. Remaining 2020/2021 engagements include Curtis joining the second season of the Apple TV+ program DICKINSON, as Marquis, his return to Chicago Opera Theatre as Cura in IL POSTINO after debuting the role of Hotel Manager in THE TRANSFORMATION OF JANE DOE. Previous

highlights include two seasons as Reimers on NBC’s CHICAGO FIRE, Ragotski in Bernstein’s CANDIDE with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Celebrant in Bernstein’s MASS with Marin Alsop, and the title role in Verdi’s Otello for Utah Festival Opera. www.thecurtisbannister.com, Instagram: @thee_cb, Twitter: @theecb



KELLY GRIFFIN
Soprano

Kelly Griffin returned to Heartbeat Opera in 2019 as “Leah” in Fidelio, and was the featured soprano in Songs from the Spirit with MetLiveArts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ms. Griffin recently had role debuts as Leonora in La Forza del Destino with New Amsterdam Opera and Amelia in Un Ballo in Maschera with Opera in the Heights. She has also performed the title role of Aida, and Lady Macbeth in Verdi’s Macbeth. Her latest concert work includes Rachmaninov’s The Bells and Mahler’s Songs of a Wayfarer.



DERRELL ACON
Bass-Baritone

Bass-baritone Derrell Acon is a dynamic performer, administrator, and activist. He is a Fulbright scholar, Mellon Foundation grantee, and doctor of 19th-Century Opera History and Performance. Dr. Acon’s work in Blacktivism and Verdian opera has been presented throughout the country and abroad in Europe and Africa. Prominent operatic roles include Leporello in Don Giovanni, Escamillo in Carmen, and the title role in Don Bucefalo. He recently made debuts at National Opera

Center in NYC, Kalihu and Palace Theaters on Hawai’i, Semperoper Dresden, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Deutsches Theater München, Kölner Philharmonie, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Tel-Aviv Bronfman Hall, Teatro Petruzzelli di Bari, and La Compagnia del BelCanto di Milano. He performed as Antron in the world-premiere of Anthony Davis’ The Central Park Five with Long Beach Opera, and with Heartbeat Opera as Roc in Fidelio and Caspar in Der Freischütz.



RANDY CASTILLO
Dancer

Randy Castillo is thrilled to be apart of Breathing Free. Previous credits include An American in Paris (National Tour), Mighty Real: A Fabulous Sylvester Musical (Off-Broadway), and West Side Story (Houston Grand Opera). Select regional credits include: In the Heights (Westport Country Playhouse), The Wiz, Guys and Dolls, Oklahoma, Shrek the Musical ,and The Drowsy Chaperone (Broadway at Music Circus). TV: “Dispatches from Elsewhere.” Juilliard grad.



TAMRIN GOLDBERG
Dancer

Tamrin Goldberg, originally from Seattle, is a Brooklyn-based performer and choreographer. She is a recipient of the New York Innovative Theatre Award for Outstanding Choreography, and was a winner of Opera America's most recent Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase. With Heartbeat Opera, Tamrin served as associate movement director of the recent production of La Susanna. Performance highlights include: Ashley Fure's Filament at the NY Philharmonic, The First National

Tour of SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical, and productions with Broadway Sacramento, Goodspeed Opera House, The Alliance Theatre, and Opera Carolina. She holds a B.A. in Dance and Philosophy from Barnard College.



BRIAN HALLOWDREAMZ HENRY
Dancer

Brian HallowDreamz Henry, the New York Krump King from Bed-Stuy Brooklyn N.Y. known for his Tedx titled "Krump is Language" and playing a major role in building the New York Krump community. Founding member of the dance trio The Nuu Knynez. He calls his personal Krump style BROOKLYN BUCK. Brian started Krumping in 2004. Inspired by Mijo and Tight Eyez "The creators", Brian has been pushing the Krump movement relentlessly with great passion. In 2008 Brian joined E.S.K.

(East Street Kingdom) a branch of the group STREET

KINGDOM founded by Tight Eyez and honed his skills further. Brian has taught at EXPG, Broadway Dance Center, PMT, House of Duende, Alvin Ailey, Brick House, Coupe, Joffrey's Ballet, Layla's dance and drum, and many more studios/locations. Also, with experience in street dance, all style competitions, Ballet, Modern, contemporary, and African he has become one of the most sought after krump/dance teachers and performer. Brian has worked with some amazing creatives such as Madonna, Asap Ferg, Bill T Jones, John Grant, Spike Lee, Oshun, Lous and the Yakuza, and etc.

BAND



DANIEL SCHLOSBERG
Piano/Co-Music Director/Arranger

Daniel Schlosberg's music has been performed by the Dover Quartet, Minnesota Orchestra, Choir of Trinity Wall Street, and Lorelei Ensemble, at venues including Carnegie Hall, (le) poisson rouge, and David Lynch's Festival of Disruption. Daniel received the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and two ASCAP Morton Gould Awards. Current projects include The Extinctionist, a new opera he is composing for Heartbeat Opera. Daniel has collaborated

with such luminaries as David Shifrin and the Imani Winds, and last spring, he was the pianist for Steven Spielberg's upcoming film West Side Story. Daniel's work has been described as "richly detailed yet delicate" (New York Times) and "ingenious" (Wall Street Journal). www.danschlosberg.com



JACOB ASHWORTH
Violin/Co-Music Director

Jacob Ashworth is the "impressive Artistic Director" (New York Times) of Heartbeat's sister company Cantata Profana, and has been Co-Music Director of Heartbeat Opera since the beginning. As a violinist and conductor, Jacob has gained a reputation from early baroque to contemporary music as a consummate stylist and curator of music, receiving the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming in 2016 for his work with Cantata Profana. A "lithe and nimble" (NYTimes) baroque

violinist, an "exacting and sensitive" (Boston Globe) new music player, and a "richly detailed" (NYTimes) conductor, Jacob has made a specialty with Heartbeat of leading operas from the violin, "doing powerful work from the music stand" (Opernwelt).



KYRA SIMS
Horn

Kyra Sims is a performing artist and writer living in NYC. She has worked as a backing musician for notable artists such as Lizzo, Jon Batiste, Carole King, and Frank Ocean, and has performed the world over as both a soloist and a collaborative musician. She works actively as a Broadway sub, and has held chairs on the Off-Broadway shows Carmen Jones, Superhero, and Soft Power. Sims also writes, directs, and performs with experimental theatre company The New York Neo-Futurists; her sound design has earned her a nomination for a NY Innovative Theatre Award.



MARIKA HUGHES
Cello

Marika Hughes is a native New Yorker, a cellist, singer, a storyteller on The Moth. She grew up in a musical family - Marika's grandfather was the great cellist Emanuel Feuermann, and her parents owned a jazz club, Burgundy, on the Upper West Side. As children, she and her younger brother were both regulars on Sesame Street, and attended the beloved Manhattan Country School. Marika continued her education in the double degree program at Barnard College and the

Juilliard School, graduating with BAs in political science and cello performance, respectively.

Marika has worked with Whitney Houston, Lou Reed, Anthony Braxton, David Byrne, Adele, Henry Threadgill, D'Angelo, Idina Menzel, Nels Cline, Somi and Taylor Mac, among many others. She was a founding member of the Bay Area-based bands 2 Foot Yard (Two Foot Yard, Tzadik 2003 & Borrowed Arms, Yard Work, 2008) and Red Pocket (Thick, Tzadik 2004). She is a master teacher and director for Young Arts and a teaching-artist at Carnegie Hall's Lullaby Project. She currently holds the cello chair at the Broadway show, Hometown. Marika has self-released three albums: The Simplest Thing (2011), Afterlife Music Radio (2011) and New York Nostalgia (2016). She happily leads her bands Bottom Heavy and The New String Quartet and is the co-founder and co-director of Looking Glass Arts, an artist residency and youth education program in

upstate New York. With a commitment to a sliding scale fee structure, LGA is democratizing access to the space, time and natural beauty critical to artistic and educational growth. Marika lives in the countryside of Kings County.



BRITTON-RENÉ COLLINS
Percussion

As a young emerging soloist, Toronto-based percussionist Britton-René Collins finds passion in the art of contemporary percussion performance. She is dedicated to contributing to the growth of modern percussion repertoire, and her current projects include composing and commissioning new works for multi-percussion and marimba. She recently launched a blog on her website, in which she discusses her experiences in facing challenges as a minority

musician.

Career highlights include attending soundSCAPE festival, advancing in the 2020 CAG Victor Elmaleh Competition, and being selected to appear as a soloist in upcoming concerto performances with symphony orchestras in the United States and Canada.



MIKIO SASAKI
Trumpet

Mikio Sasaki is a member of Saint Louis Brass and an adjunct lecturer at Texas Lutheran University. Currently based in Austin, TX, where he is pursuing a doctorate of musical arts at the University of Texas, Mikio was previously in New York City as an active freelance musician and adjunct lecturer at Brooklyn College. He has performed with a wide range of groups such as San Antonio Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Talea Ensemble, American Composers Orchestra, Paragon

Ragtime Orchestra, Chamber Music Northwest, yMusic, and Broadway's Matilda. Mikio earned degrees from the Juilliard School and the Yale School of Music with teachers Raymond Mase, Mark Gould, and Allan Dean.

CREATIVE TEAM



THOMAS FLIPPIN
Guitar

Thomas Flippin is a versatile guitarist and advocate for the creation of new works and equality in classical music. His recent album, *Night Triptych*, featured new works entirely by women composers and was named one of the Best Classical Music albums of 2018 by both *All Music* and *I Care if You Listen*. Flippin has performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and frequently collaborates with Porgy and Bess national tour star Alicia Hall Moran, MacArthur Fellow Jason Moran, and the

American Repertory Theater production *The Black Clown*. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Music.



JASON THOMAS
Piano

Jason is a New York City-based classical pianist. His performances have been televised throughout the world, including on the 3 Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN). Throughout his career, Jason has received many awards and prizes. Jason has also had an extensive collaboration career that has led to several recording projects being formed.

Jason has a long list of piano teachers, which include Nina Svetlanova, Emanuel Krasovsky, Erik T. Tawaststjerna, and Lauri Väinmaa. Jason has also performed in masterclasses with accomplished musicians such as Seymour Bernstein and Barry Snyder. Jason is currently finishing his doctorate studies at Manhattan School of Music.



ETHAN HEARD
Director/Adaptor

As Founding Co-Artistic Director & Producer of Heartbeat Opera, Ethan Heard adapted, directed, and co-wrote new English dialogue for *Fidelio* (“urgent, powerful, and poignant” -*The New York Times*). Other Heartbeat productions include *Lady M* (created during quarantine), *La Susanna* (Kennedy Center and BAM), *Butterfly*, *Dido & Aeneas*, *Kafka-Fragments*, six *Drag Extravaganzas*, and the first opera performance on the High Line. Other opera includes *Truth & Reconciliation* (Opera America),

Empty the House (Curtis), *Sisyphus* (Experiments in Opera), *L’Orfeo* (Yale), and *Poppea* (Princeton). Musical theater includes *Little Shop of Horrors* and *A Little Night Music* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Sunday in the Park with George* (Yale), and *Into the Woods* (Princeton); he also served as Resident Director of *The Secret in Beijing* and *Shanghai*. He received his BA and MFA from Yale and now teaches at Yale School of Drama and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. ethanheard.com



ANAIIIS CISCO
Filmmaker

Anaiis Cisco is a filmmaker and assistant professor of moving image production in film and media studies at Smith College. She received a Masters of Fine Arts in cinema from San Francisco State University, where she was awarded a 2018 Princess Grace Award (Louis D. Srybnik Film Award) for her graduate thesis film, *Drip Like Coffee*. Cisco’s work focuses on the experiences of underrepresented racial, ethnic, queer, and gendered identities. Her short films have screened at dozens of

film festivals such as *Outfest*, *NewFest*, and *Raindance*, while also broadcasting on networks like *REVOLT TV’s Short & Fresh* and *KQED’s Film School Shorts* programs. Her body of work also includes a series of short videos produced for the 20th Anniversary of *Who is Jill Scott World Tour*.

Cisco teaches digital video production courses as she develops media that explores the emotional and internal journeys of Black characters, confronting intimate moments of violence and trauma in diverse story worlds.



RAS DIA
Creative Producer

Ras Dia is an arts administrator who specializes in multi-disciplinary programming. He is the Assistant Producer of the Metropolitan Opera's Peabody- and Emmy-award winning Live in HD series, Programming Director of Thresh, and most recently served as Associate Producer for MTT25: An American Icon, a virtual tribute presented by the San Francisco Symphony.

He is the former Managing Director of the New York City Master Chorale, and has worked with the National Children's Chorus, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Carnegie Hall, and National Sawdust, where he produced the Artists-in-Residence program, and co-created SAUCE, a community-based series of artist sessions.



EMMA JASTER
Movement Director

Hailed a "splendid mover" (The Washington Post) and "a master of her craft" (Baratunde Thurston), Emma has spent her life in the study and practice of physical expression. She works internationally as performer, director, choreographer and educator in theater, opera, film, and other with the purpose of building cross-cultural relationships and cultivating peace. She studied with her mime father, Mark Jaster and attended the Lecoq school for physical theatre in Paris. She is the Founder

and Director of international artist residency @mamaismaker and Program Manager at the Lab for Global Performance and Politics. @notapapercrane
www.emmajaster.com



JACOB MALLIN
Director of Photography (New York & Chicago)

Jacob Mallin is a NYC-based cinematographer with a background in narrative and documentary filmmaking. His work has been screened at a variety of film festivals in the US and internationally. More info can be found at www.jacobmallindp.com



CELINE LAYOUS
1st AC/Gaffer (Los Angeles)

Celine Layous is a cinematographer from Lebanon. She is a graduate of USJ-IESAV Beirut, with a BA in Performing Arts and an MFA graduate of the American Film Institute Conservatory. Since 2012, she worked as a cinematographer and camera operator on various formats in the MENA region. She is now based in Los Angeles and pursues a career in the visual arts.



SEAN MAYES
Arranger/Associate Music Director

Sean Mayes is a New York & Toronto based music director. He is an active member of the Broadway music community as an MD, vocal coach, accompanist and orchestrator-arranger. As an orchestrator & arranger, Sean's work has been played by and written for numerous ensembles and performers of multiple musical genres across North America and in Europe.

Additionally, as an author, Sean has published on the role of Black music directors on Broadway (Reframing the Musical, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), and the retracing of Black practitioners through musical theatre history (An Inconvenient Black History of British Musical Theatre, Bloomsbury, 2021).



MAR COX
Assistant Director

This is Mar’s first production with Heartbeat Opera. They are thrilled to work alongside the brilliant and talented cast and creative team behind Breathing Free. Mar most recently directed George C Wolfe’s The Colored Museum at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Current projects include The Black Stories Matter Project, an ethnographic documentary anthology focused on the perspective of Black Lives Matter protestors during May-July 2020. They are also pursuing a certificate through NYU Tisch School of the Arts. They would like to thank Ethan for the opportunity and their partner Cindy for her support.



JESSICA EMMANUS
Stage Manager

Jessica Emmanus is a New York City freelance stage manager. Her credits include: Tina: The Tina Turner Musical, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, The Cher Show. Off Broadway: Notes from the Field (Second Stage). NYC: Between the Lines, Love, Loss, and What I Wore (92nd Street Y), Protest (Cherry Lane Theatre) Regional: Seared, Dangerous House, Buffalo Bill (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Education: MFA, Columbia University. Thanks to her parents and her friends for always being supportive of the journey.



GLEB KANASEVICH
Sound Editor

Gleb is a clarinetist, composer, and noise/drone musician. He has been a featured artist at various institutions and festivals, such as Dark Music Days (Iceland), Spoleto Festival USA (Charleston, SC), New Music Gathering (Baltimore, MD), Sonic Circuits Festival (Washington, DC), University of Oxford, Peabody Conservatory, soundSCAPE Festival 2015/16/17 (Italy),



SAM TORRES
Sound Mixer

Sam Torres is a Troy, NY based musician and audio engineer. His music has been performed in concert halls and coffee shops from Baltimore to South Africa. Audio engineering has allowed Sam to work with groups like the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center, Talea Ensemble, the World Bank/IMF, Boulanger Initiative, and many others. In 2019, he co-founded the ensemble, concert presenting, and musical-community-building collective called Organ Colossal with frequent collaborator and pianist Sophia

Subbayya Vastek.



MONA SEYED-BOLORFOROSH
Music Assistant/Orchestra Manager/Copyist

Mona Seyed-Bolorforosh is a Music Director, Conductor and Pianist working in musical theatre and classical music. Recent theatre credits include OFF-BROADWAY: Heather Christian’s Oratorio for All Living Things NATIONAL TOUR: Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella (Keys 3), as well as sub credits on a Broadway show. Credits in Opera, Film, and Orchestral music include Heartbeat Opera (Music Assistant) and Harry Potter Soundtrack Orchestra (Former music director, conductor). She is an alumna of Berklee College of Music, where she studied composition and conducting.



MAX SILVERMAN
Live Switcher & Technical Director

Max Silverman is a NYC based Composer, Sound Designer and Online Technical Director. NYC credits include Atlantic Theatre Co., MCC Theatre, Inproximity Theatre Co, Theatre For a New Audience, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York Deaf Theatre, American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Columbia University, 5th Floor Theatre Co, Encores! Off-Center and Juilliard. Regional credits include Williamstown Theatre Festival, MA, Quintessence Theatre, PA, Trinity Rep., RI, Hartford Stage, MA, Penguin Rep., NY, Cara Mía Theatre Co., TX, Princeton University, NJ, Local Theater Co., CO, Hoodoo Berlin and CLB Berlin. Max has also written music for several podcasts, short films and promo videos. max-silverman.com



KATHY WITTMAN
Film Editor of Prisoners Chorus

Kathy Wittman has designed video projections for opera and theatre companies including the Florentine Opera, Heartbeat Opera, and Queer Soup Theatre. She is the founder and principle artist at Ball Square Films, a video production company specializing in documentary photo and video for the performing arts. Recent projects include 'Looking back at Orpheus' with the Boston Early Music Festival and 'To Gather Apart' a new digital play by Nael Nacer and the Suffolk University Theatre.



ASHLEY RENÉE WATKINS
Director of Education

Ashley Renee Watkins is a classically trained multi-genre vocalist, songwriter, mentor and teaching artist facilitator. As an artist, she is a skilled music maker and performer influenced by Opera, R&B, Jazz, and Soul. The New Orleans born artist has been based in New York City since 2014 – the year she appeared on NBC's America's Got Talent with her opera and multi-genre duo ACTE II. Ashley Renee released her first EP project "Roux"

under her artist name A. Renee in the fall of 2019. She currently serves on the teaching artist faculty of Lincoln Center Education as well as consults in arts education and equitable practices within cultural institutions throughout the United States. She developed and manages The Marguerite Watson National Teaching Artist Cohort, an online program dedicated to career development for new and emerging teaching artists. Ashley holds a master's degree in voice & operatic performance from the University of Oklahoma.



ANTHONY P. MCGLAUN
Repertoire Consultant

Anthony P. McGlaun is noted for his clarity of tone, musicality and expressive delivery of text. He has a BA from Morehouse College and MM from UNI. He has also made role debuts with both Lyric Opera of Chicago in Porgy and Bess and Showboat San Francisco Opera, Spoleto Music Festival, New Orleans Opera and this fall will be at the Metropolitan Opera in Porgy and Bess. Mr. McGlaun is a much sought after soloist, recitalist, lecturer. He specializes in the Negro Spiritual and work of African-American composers of Art Songs and uses them for social justice.

African-American composers of Art Songs and uses them for social justice.

HEARTBEAT OPERA STAFF



LOUISA PROSKE
Co-Artistic Director

Louisa Proske brings her talent for creating vivid theatrical worlds, her raw passion and attention to detail to productions in opera, classical theatre and contemporary drama. She is a Princess Grace Award winner, a Musical America New Artist of the Month, the subject of a recent feature in Opernwelt, and the proud Founding Co-Artistic Director of Heartbeat Opera. She is also the designated Associate Artistic Director and Resident Director at Oper Halle, Germany.

Opera productions include The Mother of Us All (a historic collabora-

tion between New York Philharmonic, Juilliard, Metropolitan Museum), Agrippina (Lincoln Center), La Bohème (Pittsburgh Festival Opera), Così fan tutte (LoftOpera), Rinaldo (Glimmerglass Festival Debut, postponed due to COVID-19) and many productions with Heartbeat: Der Freischütz (NYTimes Critic's Pick), Don Giovanni, Carmen (featured in NYTimes 'That Decisive Moment'), Lucia di Lammermoor, Daphnis & Chloé.

Theatre productions include The White Devil (Red Bull Theater - NYTimes Critic's Pick), peerless (nominated for a Berkshire Theatre Award for Outstanding Direction), Gaslight, Engagements (Barrington Stage Company).

Upcoming projects: The Extinctionist (Heartbeat Opera), Rigoletto (Oper Halle, Germany)



ANNIE MIDDLETON
Managing Director

Annie Middleton is a Brooklyn-based producer with extensive experience in theater management and fundraising. She is drawn to work that centers social issues relevant to the world we live in today, and she has a great passion for live music and performance - and for these reasons, she is very excited to join Heartbeat Opera! Annie has worked as a producing partner to a number of individual artists and companies, and as a fundraising consultant with ADH & Associates. She

previously served as Managing Director of Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in the West Village. Annie is a graduate of Yale School of Drama's Theater Management MFA program. At Yale, she served as Managing Director of Yale Cabaret, Company Manager for Yale Repertory Theatre, and General Manager for the Dwight/Edgewood Project.



PENNY PUN
Associate Producer

Penny Pun is a New York-based playwright, dramaturg and administrator who was born and raised in Hong Kong. She is a Founding Member of Theatre Producer of Color (TPOC). She has also worked at Manhattan Theatre Club, Theatre Communications Group, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Dramatists Guild of America. Her writing has been published by major trade magazines, including American Theatre and The Dramatist. Her plays have been developed and by Pan Asian Rep and Rising Circle Theater Collective. Penny graduated Valedictorian from Marymount Manhattan College, and holds an MA in English & Comparative Literature (specializing in performance and disability studies) from Columbia University.



ALEBA GARTNER
Press Representative

Aleba & Co. is a New York City-based boutique public relations firm that specializes in adventurous arts and music programming. Since 1997 we have represented the full spectrum of classical, world and new music—artists, institutions and curators who both define and defy their categories.

HEARTBEAT OPERA BOARD

SONJA BERGGREN
CHRISTOPHER EARL



THÉRÈSE ESPERDY
ROBERT FITZPATRICK, CHAIR
STEPHEN M. FOSTER
JILL STEINBERG

LOCATIONS

LOS ANGELES

Dorothy Collins Brown Amphitheater

NEW YORK

The Africa Center Plaza

West 79th Street Boat Basin, Riverside Park

Graffiti Hall of Fame, Park Avenue

Foley Square, Centre Street

Franklin Street Station, Tribeca

Church of St. John the Divine

Riverside Church

General Grant National Memorial (U.S. National Park Service)

Sakura Park

St. Clair Place / Arches of Harlem

West Harlem Piers

CHICAGO

Lake View Lutheran Church

Lake Michigan at Belmont Harbor



SUPPORT HEARTBEAT OPERA

Heartbeat Opera is a community. We rely on your support to create meaningful, visceral art. If you're able, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution and standing with the ever-growing family of supporters who make our work possible.

Visit heartbeatopera.org/support to learn more or contact us at: Heartbeat Opera, 37 W. 20th St. #703, New York, NY 10011, or by emailing our Managing Director Annie Middleton at annie@heartbeatopera.org. Heartbeat Opera is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your contribution is tax deductible to the extent that the law allows.

A copy of our most recently filed financial report is available from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General's website (www.charitiesnys.com) or, upon request, by contacting us at 37 West 20th Street, Suite 703, New York, NY 10011. You also may obtain information on charitable organizations from the New York State Office of the Attorney General at www.charitiesnys.com or (212) 416-8816.

DONORS

(7/1/20-11/24/20)

Anonymous
Michael Adams
Nina Adams and
Moreson Kaplan
Jessica Armstrong
Page Ashley

Stanley J. and Jan
Bahorek
Sonja Berggren and
Patrick Seaver
Ruthie Birger
Ilene Bliwise

Sabine Brocher
Donald Brown
Kelly Burdick
Charles Casler
Theresa Cerezola
Hung-Kuan Chen

Jaye Chen and Peter
Brown
JoAnne Chernow
Holiday Collins
Dan Cooperman
Margaret and Greg Craig
Meredith Crandell
Martina Crocker
Lynda Dautenhahn
Michelle DeTemple
Patrick Diamond
Carol Domina
Taryn Dubois
Christopher Earl
Thérèse Marie Esperdy
and Robert George
Neborak
Susan Finch
Margaret and Mike
Finnell
Bob and Sylvie
Fitzpatrick
Fixed Earth Enterprises
Inc.
Stephen Foster
Michael Friedmann
Maryellen Fullerton
Nora Garry
Jane Gay
Dorothy Hancock
Edward Harsh
Lane Heard and
Margaret Bauer
Peregrine Heard
Sophia Herman

Achim and Dunja Höfner
Kurt A Howard
Jo-Anne Hyun
Ella Jolly
Darren Katz
Nancie Kennedy
Corey Kinger
Thomas Laqueur
Nicole Lewis
Sandra Liotta and Carl
Osterman
Meg Loughran
Jennifer Low
Elizabeth Manchester
Richard Massey
Christine McKinnon
Daniel Mitura
Susan Morissey
Bethany Morrow
Brian Mountford
Alan Muraoka
Tiffany Olson
John O'Neil
Miranda Orcutt
Thomas Palumbo
Cynthia Paskos
Twila Perry
Michael and Laurie
Pollock
Malaya Press
Thomas Proske
Ruth Rainero
Jennifer Rivera
Sue Rooney
Jamie Saakvitne and

Daniel Chow
Val Schaffner
Jeremy and Cathy
Schlosberg
Karen Schlosberg
Marjorie Schlosberg
Betsy Seifter
Anne Seiwerath
Rachel Sheinkin
Melanie and Joseph
Shugart
Fay Simpson
Howard & Sarah
Solomon Foundation
Cathy Spencer
Raymond and Marie-Mo-
nique Steckel
Jill and Bill Steinberg
R Lee Stump
Seng Thanakone
William Thurston
Kenneth White
Robert Wierzel
Ayana Wilson
Shen Yang
Edward Yim
Kathleen Yoh
Catherine Yu

SPECIAL THANKS

Dr. Derrell Acon
Curtis Bannister
Anthony Davis
Dr. Jessie Glover
Kelly Griffin
Marti Newland
Dr. Catherine Roma

Malorie Casimir, Nelson Ebo, Daniel Klein, and other members of the original company of Heartbeat Opera's FIDELIO

Our family members, roommates, neighbors, and loved ones who accommodated this creative process

The Africa Center
www.TheAfricaCenter.org

BREATHING FREE is made possible with generous support from The Eric H. Holder Jr. Initiative for Civil and Political Rights at Columbia University.

Dedicated to the memory of John Cleggett (1998-2020)
Former member of KUJI Men's Chorus, Marion Correctional Institution



COMING NEXT: THE EXTINCTIONIST

A World Premiere One Act Opera

Music by **Daniel Schlosberg**

Libretto by **Amanda Quaid**, based on her play

Directed, Conceived, and Developed by **Louisa Proske**

Music Directed by **Jacob Ashworth**

Heartbeat has commissioned its first new opera! The Extinctionist will be workshopped this May at PS21 in Chatham, NY, and two semi-staged presentations will be live-streamed on May 29 and 30.

A young couple is trying to have a baby. Ice caps are melting. Brooklyn will soon be underwater. Upcycling is the new recycling. The Woman wonders: What if the only way to protect her future daughter was to not have her? What if she could save the planet from unspeakable future destruction by sterilizing herself ... by becoming the very first "Extinctionist"? In this dark comedy, a Woman's body becomes the battlefield of our political anguish, conflicting desires, and individual responsibility.

This project is made possible with generous support by Sonja Berggren and Patrick Seaver.

