

# Black Opera Research Network

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## BORN in South Africa

With support from the University of Michigan and Vanderbilt University, all of the members of the Working Team gathered in South Africa between October 8 and 16. Because BORN formed during the pandemic, the working team members had never been met in person before. After an intense week of meetings at the Mangwa Valley Game Lodge outside of Johannesburg (with breaks for a few game drives), the working team has developed a strategic plan for the next ten years. We have big plans to encourage all things Black opera! Watch this space for more information!



## Announcements

After undergoing some much-needed updates, BORN's website is back online. Check out our new design [here](#).



## Upcoming Events

*Omar* by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abel based on the Omar Ibn Said's 1831 autobiography premiered in May 2022. New productions are scheduled in February 2023 in Chapel Hill, NC and in Boston in May 2023

## Pretty Yende in San Francisco

South African soprano Pretty Yende made her debut with the San Francisco Opera as Violetta in *La Traviata* in November 2022. Eun Sun Kim directed the production.



Affiliate **Bongani Ndodana-Breen** has accepted a position as professor for Music Theory and Composition at the University of Cape Town.

Soprano Rachel Duckett and tenor Thando Mjandana have won the Voice of Black Opera Competition, organized by the Black British Classical Foundation and the Welsh National Opera. Learn more about this competition [here](#).

## Community Highlights

Working Team members **Joy Calico** and **Naomi André**, and affiliates **Nina Sun Eidsheim**, **Allison M. Lewis**, **Isadora Miranda**, and **Bode Omojola** presented papers and chaired sessions at the joint meeting of the American Musicological Society, the Society for Music Theory and the Society for Ethnomusicology in New Orleans in November 2022.

Affiliate **Kira Thurman** has won the Judy Tsou Critical Race Studies Award from the American Musicological Society for her book *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms*. The monograph has won six other awards from other academic societies and organizations.

The Cape Town Opera's event, One in Three, featured excerpts from three works: affiliate **Sibusiso Njeza's** opera, *Amagokra*, George Gershwin's opera, *Porgy and Bess*, and Marlene van Niekerk's play, *Kortstondige Rakelwe van Anastasia W* with music by Braam du Toit. The event was meant to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against South African women and children. The event was performed in both Cape Town and Stellenbosch in November and December of 2022.

Working Team member, **Mia Pistorius**, presented at Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Music Studies' (EDIMS) open forum event on Equality in Opera in December of 2022.

## The Revival of *Treemonisha*

**May 20 – June 24, 2023**

Opera Theatre of Saint Louis will stage a new production of *Treemonisha* (1911) by Scott Joplin. This production contains a new prologue and epilogue with music by Damien Sneed and libretto by Karen Chilton. Read more [here](#).

**June 6–17, 2023**

A new production of *Treemonisha* will be presented by the Luminato Festival Toronto and TO Live Present. Working Team member **Michael Mohammed** is the assistant stage director for the production. Find out more [here](#).

**June 2023**

BORN will host an online panel about *Treemonisha*. We will announce the panelists and exact date soon.