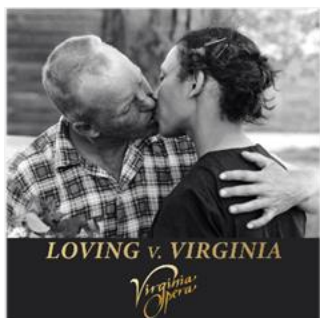


Black Opera Research Network

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The Courthouse in the Opera House: Commissioning *Loving v Virginia*

Co-commissioned by the Virginia Opera and the Richmond Symphony, [Loving v Virginia](#) will premiere in Norfolk, Virginia in 2025. The creative team includes: composer Damien Geter,

librettist Jessica Murphy Moo, and famed mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves as the director.

This opera tells the story of Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple who married in Washington, D.C. in 1958. Due to racial segregation laws, their marriage was illegal in their home state of Virginia. In 1959, the state convicted the couple of marrying illegally and banished them from living in Virginia. The Lovings fought for their right to remain legally married and to return home. The *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court case of 1967 ruled that banning interracial marriage was unconstitutional.

Geter says that telling the story of the Lovings through opera both honors the Lovings' legacy as it also ensures the future of opera as an art form.

This production will also have premieres in Richmond, Virginia and Fairfax, Virginia in 2025.



Upcoming Events

26–29 October 2023

The Cape Town Opera and Opera UCT will present *La Traviata* by Verdi. For more information see [here](#).

5 November 2023

Boston-based *Castle of Our Skins* will kick off its 2023–24 season with a workshop and concert centered on the questions “What does it mean to belong to a person, to a place, to yourself?” led and curated by the Shirley Graham du Bois Creative in Residence Jenny Oliver. See [here](#) for more information.

10 and 24 November 2023

South African singers Sunnyboy Dladla (Count Almaviva) and Luvuyo Mbundu (Figaro) will head the cast of the Staatsoper Hannover production of *The Barber of Seville*. For more information see [here](#).

Announcement

South African soprano, Golda Schultz, is on the short list to win a 2023 International Opera Award in the category of Female Singer. The award ceremony will be held at the Polish National Opera in Warsaw on 9 November 2023.

Community News

Working Team Member **Joy Calico** has joined the faculty of the Herb Alpert School of Music at the University of California, Los Angeles as Professor and Vice Chair of Musicology.

Affiliate **Neo Muyanga's** "After Tears" was featured in *Requiem: Journey of the Soul* performed 12–14 October 2023. A collaboration with Cape Town Opera, the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, and Phoenix Dance Theatre, the production included music by Muyanga and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart with choreography by Dane Hurst.

Affiliate **Antonio Cuyler** co-authored a report with Evan Linett, Karen Yair, and James McCain for the League of American Orchestras called *Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field in 2023*. See [here](#) for a copy of the report.

Working Team Member **Wayne Muller** has published his book, *Opera in Cape Town: The Critic's Voice* with African Sun Media. His book traces the development of opera in postapartheid South Africa through and with the discourse of critical opinion.

Affiliate **Nicholas Newton** will premiere the role of Henry in [Intelligence](#), a new opera commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera. With music by Jake Heggie and libretto by Gene Scheer, this opera relates the true story of two women, Elizabeth Van Lew and Mary Jane Bowser, who ran a pro-Union spy ring during the American Civil War.

Working Team Members **Naomi André, Mia Pistorius, and Joy Calico** as well as Affiliates **Joshua Tolulope David, Ryan Ebright, Isi Miranda, and Megan Steigerwald Ille** will present at the American Musicological Society's annual conference in Denver, Colorado on 9–12 November.



Upcoming Events

5–21 November 2023

The San Francisco Opera will perform the Pulitzer Prize winning opera, *Omar* by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels. Working Team Member, **Michael Mohammed** will deliver pre-concert talks for the performances. See more [here](#)

18–24 November 2023

The Manitoba Opera will present the world premiere of *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* by Suzanne Steele (libretto) and Alex Kusturok and Neil Weisensel (music). It is the first Indigenous-led opera presented on a Canadian mainstage. More information [here](#).

19 January–4 February 2024

Black American tenor Russell Thomas will star in the title role of the Houston Grand Opera's production of *Parsifal*. See more [here](#).