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## Opera Columbus welcomes Directing Fellow in brand new BIPOC program

*A fellowship designed to create early career opportunities for BIPOC stage directors*

(Columbus, OH) – Opera Columbus’ 2021-22 season will be a celebration of its 40th Anniversary, as well as the first year it welcomes a Directing Fellow. Under the vision of General Director + CEO, Julia Noulin-Mérat, Opera Columbus is redefining the very concept of regional opera with original productions that celebrate emerging talent, fresh perspectives, and modern technology, engaging a new, diverse audience for this most magnificent of art forms.

The **Directing Fellowship** is designed specifically to create early career opportunities for BIPOC stage directors to work on large-scale productions. The goal of the program is to increase the number of creative leaders from diverse backgrounds in the opera industry by advancing and supporting talented individuals who will have an impact beyond Opera Columbus. The fellowship provides professionals with the tools they will need to become successful, impactful creative leaders within the arts industry.

“This inaugural Directing Fellowship is the beginning of a new story and a new way of how we recognize BIPOC artists in Columbus and within our opera community,” said Julia Noulin-Mérat, General Director + CEO of Opera Columbus. “It will ensure that our arts ecosystem will be stronger, more creative and more resilient after the pandemic and far beyond.”

Directing Fellows will gain valuable experiences in directing and in production development in their first season, including the opportunity to assistant direct mainstage productions as well as direct projects. Successful fellows will be invited to return for a second season to direct a mainstage Opera Columbus production.

Beginning in mid-November, Opera Columbus will welcome their first directing fellow, **Luther Lewis III**. Lewis is a tenor, director, and visual artist with sights set on opera design and directing.

“We are so thrilled to have Luther join us at Opera Columbus. We were impressed and inspired by his application. He is a remarkable, multi-disciplinary artist and we cannot wait to collaborate and grow with him,” said Noulin-Mérat.

Lewis will assistant direct several mainstage productions during the upcoming season, including *Tosca* (December 18 + 19), *Fellow Travelers* (February 25 + 27), and the much-anticipated *40 Days of Opera* (May 4-June 12). He will also stage direct *Vanqui* (May 22) at the Lincoln Theatre. Additionally, Lewis will be involved in staging OC’s touring education productions with the OCCU Resident Artists.

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“I am honored to receive the Directing Fellowship with Opera Columbus. It will serve my desire to continue to foster the future of opera while utilizing my background in vocal and visual art,” said Luther Lewis III. “I am thrilled that Opera Columbus understands the importance of including diverse voices both on the stage and as a part of the creative process, and I hope to lend my artistic perspectives and experiences to further enrich the art form.”

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### **About Luther Lewis III**



Luther Lewis III is a multidisciplinary artist, singer, teacher and director within Classical Voice/Opera, Theater and Visual Art and is currently the Directing Fellow at Opera Columbus. He has appeared with several major Opera companies in supporting and chorus roles including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Cincinnati Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera de Montreal, as well as international tours in Austria, France, Germany, Israel, South America, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. In 2018, he presented an Art Gallery Concert featuring his illustrations of legendary African American Opera singers at the iconic Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Illinois in collaboration with Chicago Opera Theater. Luther has studied Vocal Performance at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the University of Kentucky as well as Visual Art Studio at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

### **About Opera Columbus**

Under the vision of General Director + CEO Julia Noulin-Mérat, Opera Columbus is redefining and reimagining the concept of regional opera with world-class productions that celebrate extraordinary talent and artistic partnerships, engaging a new, diverse audience for this most magnificent of art forms. From groundbreaking collaborations to innovative and breathtaking productions, Opera Columbus is passionate about creating artistic moments for each and every patron. Opera Columbus’s slogan, “Make It Yours,” demonstrates the company’s commitment to inclusivity, and invites everyone in the community to join with us.

For more information, visit [www.OperaColumbus.org](http://www.OperaColumbus.org), Facebook & Instagram: @Opera.Columbus or Twitter: @OperaColumbus

Join the conversation by using #ToscaOC #TraviataOC #FellowOC #StirOC #CooperBing #MakeItYours #OperaCbus #OCturns40

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