



For Immediate Release

Contact: Rachel Will
Rwill@operacolumbus.org
Phone Number: 614-499-6340

Crane Directing Fellowship at Opera Columbus has been announced, Sarah Dahnke will join the Company for its 2022-23 season

Opera Columbus is proud to announce that **Sarah Dahnke** will join the company for the 2022-2023 season as its second Crane Directing Fellow.



The Crane Directing Fellowship, inaugurated for the 2021-2022 season, was created explicitly to advance the careers of BIPOC stage directors by creating early-career opportunities to gain hands-on experience assisting and directing mainstage productions. “As the opera industry continues to work toward greater equity and diversity, we at Opera Columbus knew that our greatest potential for impact was to create direct opportunities to support and train BIPOC stage directors,” says Julia Noulin-Mérat, General Director + CEO of Opera Columbus. “This fellowship provides a paid opportunity for these artists to gain direct experience working on mainstage productions, and we couldn’t be more fortunate in our second year than to welcome the brilliant Sarah Dahnke to the company.”

An experienced choreographer, Dahnke is eager to observe and assist in the operatic process as an emerging director. “I’m viewing this as a very immersive experience, and really value the opportunity to witness others’ creative processes. I’m looking forward to calling on my background as a choreographer and using movement to tell stories to help inform the work happening in the room as these productions are staged.”

“We want to make sure that as we provide opportunities for artists of color,” continued Noulin-Mérat, “we aren’t limiting the work they’re offered solely based on their identities.” An Arab-American transracial adoptee, Dahnke has experienced that same push to interpret stories that would rely on her bringing cultural context to the process. “Talking about our ethnicity or our cultural heritage are not the only stories we have, and the assumption sometimes is that those are the only stories we should be telling. We all contain multitudes and

are more expansive as humans and artists than what someone might assume based on our appearance or heritage.”

The Crane Directing Fellowship, sponsored by The Crane Group, seeks 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. This season, Dahnke will assist on mainstage productions *La Cenerentola* (October 28 & 30, The Southern Theatre), *Maria de Buenos Aires* (February 24 & 26, The Southern Theatre), and *Rigoletto* (March 31 & April 1, The Ohio Theatre), and direct the education tour. Dahnke will return to Opera Columbus in the 2023-2024 season to helm a mainstage production.

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About Program History

Opera Columbus launched its inaugural Crane Directing Fellowship in the 2021-22 season during the celebration of its 40th Anniversary. The Directing Fellowship, designed specifically to create early career opportunities for BIPOC stage directors welcomed Luther Lewis III, a multidisciplinary artist, singer, teacher, and director. Lewis’ residency included assistant directing for the 2021-2022 season’s mainstage productions of *Tosca* and *Fellow Travelers*, staging OC’s touring education productions with the OCCU Resident Artists, and closing the season as the stage director for *Vanqui*. Following the Opera Columbus residency, Lewis joined Opera Saratoga as the assistant director for *Sweeney Todd*. Lewis continues his artistic development, beginning a new directing residency at Lyric Opera of Chicago’s, Ryan Opera Center as part of the 2022-2023 Ensemble.

About Sarah Dahnke



Sarah Dahnke is a choreographer, dance artist and arts educator deeply committed to empowering communities to use movement to reclaim narratives stripped away by colonialism. She's a MAP Fund awardee, an NEA Our Town-funded resident artist, and a former awardee of fellowships from Gibney’s Moving Toward Justice, Target Margin Institute, New Victory LabWorks, and Culture Push. Dahnke has received commissions from PEN America and A Studio in the Woods and has been in residence at Abrons Arts Center and Brooklyn Studios for Dance. As a practitioner, Dahnke specializes in devised performance and site-specific dance film. Her dance film work has been screened through the Dance Films Association, Tiny Dance Film Festival, DanceBarn Collective, BRIC, and Movies By Movers. Dahnke is the artistic director of *Dances for Solidarity*, a project that co-creates choreography with people who are incarcerated in solitary confinement and creates live performances as

advocacy toward prison abolition.

About Crane Group



Focused on building companies and growing investments, Crane Group is a private, family-owned holding and management company based in Columbus, Ohio. Crane Group partners with businesses and investors that demonstrate sustainable growth and an exciting vision for the future. The investment philosophy is centered around providing patient capital and adopting a long-term approach.

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.

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For more information, visit www.OperaColumbus.org, Instagram: @Opera.Columbus or Facebook & Twitter: @OperaColumbus Join the conversation by using #CinderellaOC #MariaOC #RigolettoOC #StirOC #CooperBing #MakeItYours #OperaCbus

Opera Columbus is additionally grateful for the support of Cardinal Health, The Columbus Foundation, Cult Marketing, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Nationwide, Ohio Arts Council, and The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center-Voice Center.

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