



FORT WORTH OPERA

NEWS RELEASE
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Fort Worth Opera Announces *A Night of Black Excellence: Past, Present, and Future*, a Star-Studded Virtual Benefit Concert to Celebrate Black History Month

Company's February event features internationally renowned opera singers Patrice P. Eaton, Nicole Heaston, Latonia Moore, Kenneth Overton, Karen Slack, Russell Thomas, Kevin Thompson, and many more phenomenal Black artists within and beyond the world of classical music.

Fort Worth Opera partners with the Tarrant County Pearls Chapter of The Society, Incorporated for Black History Month, and *A Night of Black Excellence: Past, Present, and Future*, and our Children's Opera Theatre 2021 season.

Fort Worth, Texas — Fort Worth Opera (FWO) is thrilled to announce today the extraordinary line-up of dynamic artists headlining *A Night of Black Excellence: Past, Present, and Future*, an all-star virtual benefit concert to celebrate Black History Month. FWO proudly honors the rich cultural legacy, inspiring contributions, and trailblazing talents of Black musicians, composers, and librettists. On Sunday, February 21, at 2:00 pm CST, the company will pay tribute to Black brilliance through music, dance, and spoken word poetry with performances by some of the greatest Black opera singers and artists of our generation. Produced by Charles W. Bush, Founder of Appointed Productions, and directed by Sheran Goodspeed Keyton, FWO Manager of Education & Community Engagement, FWO's virtual benefit concert will be one of the highlights of the 2021 season.

Hosted by WFAA Channel 8's Daybreak anchor Tashara Parker, this spectacular event will feature local and internationally renowned artists, including Patrice P. Eaton, Nicole Heaston, Cameo Humes, Keron Jackson, Latonia Moore, NaGuanda Nobles, Kenneth Overton, Chivonne Perkins, Adam Richardson, Audra Scott, Karen Slack, Takesha Meshé Kizart-Thomas, Russell Thomas, Darius Thomas, Kevin Thompson, and Jorell Williams. FWO's exhilarating event will also feature

performances by acclaimed spoken word poet and author **Leslie N. Polk** accompanied by **The Mondo Drummers**, Dallas-based **Bandan Koro African Drum and Dance Ensemble**, **Amphibian Stage: Tad-Poles Stilt Dancing Program**, dynamic sister duo **Tutt²**, Houston's genre-defying, original pop string quartet, **Amp'd Quartet**, presented by **DIVISI**, and Black History narratives by **Baldwin Brown** (Principal of Fort Worth's historic **I.M. Terrell Academy for STEM and VPA**). Audiences can stream this one-night-only concert exclusively through the company's digital platform, **FWO Green Room**, and all proceeds will go towards Fort Worth Opera's landmark 75th anniversary season in the fall of 2021.

"Our country was built on the backs of an enslaved people, my ancestors. When they stepped foot on this foreign land, they carried with them traditions of family, culture, food, movement and song, many of which we all enjoy today," says **FWO General Director Afton Battle**. "This celebration of Black History is more than a month. It's more than the 28/29 days in February, it is an expression. An expression of all things excellent about Black people and our culture."

"Fort Worth Opera's celebration of Black History Month is long overdue and appropriate in this time. We are overjoyed to have a line-up of A+, international Black classical and non-classical artists, living both locally in the DFW metroplex and throughout the county. It is my distinct joy and pleasure to introduce, many for the first time, this roster of Black Excellence to the city of Fort Worth."

Fort Worth Opera is also excited to announce the **Tarrant County Pearls Chapter of The Society, Incorporated** as a 2020/2021 Season Sponsor. This new alliance will feature a year-long partnership with FWO's **Children's Opera Theatre**, and the Chapter will serve as one of the official sponsors for ***A Night of Black Excellence: Past, Present, and Future*** and **Black History Month**. The Tarrant County Pearls Chapter and this remarkable non-profit national organization of women are dedicated to enhancing, exposing, and promoting youth in the arts to better our communities. Focusing on under-served children, they provide support for young literary, visual, and performing artists. Founded 37 years ago in Washington, D.C., The Society, Incorporated now has 27 chapters in 15 states across the United States. The Tarrant County Pearls Chapter became the organization's newest chartered Chapter on October 11, 2020.

Chapter President Kristin Vinson Wright says, "The Tarrant County Pearls are beyond excited to partner with the Fort Worth Opera as they continue a rich tradition of delivering the passion, excitement, and art of opera throughout Tarrant County with compelling cultural and educational programmatic activities."

A Night of Black Excellence: Past, Present, and Future

All-Star Virtual Benefit Concert

Sponsored by Tarrant County Pearls Chapter of The Society, Incorporated

February 21, 2021, at 2:00 pm CT

Available to stream live through the *FWO Green Room*

Join us for A Night of Black Excellence VIP Experience

Pre-show virtual reception, artist meet and great, and toast at 1:15 pm CST

Starring Patrice P. Eaton, Nicole Heaston, Cameo Humes, Keron Jackson, Latonia Moore, NaGuanda Nobles, Kenneth Overton, Chivonne Perkins, Adam Richardson, Audra Scott, Karen Slack, Takesha Meshé Kizart-Thomas, Russell Thomas, Darius Thomas, Kevin Thompson, and Jorell Williams.

Featuring spoken word poet and author Leslie N. Polk, Baldwin Brown accompanied by The Mondo Drummers, Koro African Drum and Dance Ensemble, Tutt², Amphibian Stage: Tad-Poles Stilt Dancing Program, and Amp'd Quartet, presented by DIVISI.

A Night of Black Excellence Production Team:

Sheran Goodspeed Keyton (FWO Manager of Education and Community Engagements)

- Virtual Producer and Director

Tyrinika Marie (FWO Development and Production Administrative Coordinator)

- Virtual Production Manager

Charles W. Bush (Founder of Appointed Productions)

- Video Production

\$25 Individual tickets for homes where only an individual will be viewing the recital.

\$40 Household tickets for households with more than one individual viewing this recital.

\$80 VIP tickets include recital and virtual reception, with an online artist meet & greet.

Tickets go on sale January 21, 2020, and can be purchased online at

<https://www.fwoopera.org/a-night-of-black-excellence> or by contacting Fort Worth Opera's box office at 817.731.0726, Monday-Friday, 9 am–5 pm CST

About Fort Worth Opera: Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is poised to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2021. For the last fifteen years, FWO has become one of the leading American companies dedicated to nurturing and performing new opera, in addition to producing traditional repertoire with rising American stars. Our acclaimed *Frontiers* program was held online this fall with our first digital Libretto Workshop.

The company's Children's Opera Theatre typically reaches about 60,000 students across North Texas each season with live, interactive performances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FWO has created online educational curriculum for local music students to supplement their in-school studies, and COT can also now serve entire families and communities beyond the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Fort Worth Opera is committed to celebrating all North Texans, and through our ongoing *Noches de Ópera* program, the company offers exciting community-driven events and powerful operas that represent the diverse cultures of all of the Americas.

Fort Worth Opera is sponsored in part by awards from The Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County, The City of Fort Worth, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and OPERA America. Additional Fort Worth Opera sponsors include: the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; The Burnett Foundation; the Amon G. Carter Foundation; the Sid W. Richardson Foundation; Visit Fort Worth; Adeline & George McQueen Foundation, J.P. Morgan, Trustee; Smallwood Foundation, J.P. Morgan, Trustee; Hattie Mae Lesley Foundation, Bank of America, Trustee; Virginia Hobbs Charitable Trust, Simmons Bank, Trustee; Garvey Texas Foundation; Mary Potishman Lard Trust; Fifth Avenue Foundation; The Thomas M. Helen McKee and John P. Ryan Foundation; R4 Foundation; Red Oak Foundation; The Rea Charitable Trust, Wells Fargo Trustee; Wells Fargo Foundation; and Autobahn.

A Night of Black Excellence, Black History Month, and Fort Worth Opera's Children's Opera Theatre are sponsored by Tarrant County Pearls Chapter of The Society, Incorporated.

The *FWO Green Room* is sponsored by Haltom's Jewelers, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, The Kimbell Art Museum, Kardaras Insurance Agency, UNT Health Science Center, and The Trew Barry Group.

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