



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / JULY 2020

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WHAT: **#RepresentationMatters Initiative**
Black Artists | Black Stories Series LAUNCH

WHERE: **ONLINE**
Access via the **Opera Orlando Facebook Page**
www.facebook.com/OperaOrlando/

WHEN: Sunday | July 26, 2020 at 2 p.m.

MORE INFO: <https://www.facebook.com/operaorlando/live>

Given the turbulence and general divisiveness pervading the country sparked by continued racial injustice and inequity, **Opera Orlando** has launched a new initiative of positivity and inclusion: **#RepresentationMatters**. "As a company, we feel it is important not to be silent and for our artists, volunteers, patrons, and audience members to know that we do not condone racism, violence, or marginalization of any kind," states executive director **Gabriel Preisser**. "Great art is born from diverse perspectives and experience. We believe that the best ideas, decision-making, and, ultimately, service to our art form lie in challenging ourselves as a company to be inclusive, actively seek diversity on all levels of our organization, and share stories on our stage that represent the varied landscape of people that makes up our great city, Orlando."

#RepresentationMatters is a platform that builds on **Opera Orlando**'s already strong community focus and pledge to meet and condemn violence with music and acceptance for all. This ethos drove the 2016 **One Voice Orlando** concert, which was a benefit for the LGBTQ+ and LatinX communities in response to the Pulse shootings. It now takes on a broader meaning to lift up and focus on the Black community with a series of interviews, panel discussions, and reflections entitled **Black Artists | Black Stories**.

#RepresentationMatters: Black Artists | Black Stories is free and livestreamed via **Opera Orlando**'s [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/OperaOrlando/), **Sundays at 2 p.m.** Tune in as **Opera Orlando** features Black

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artists and their experience in the opera world, both on and offstage. The talk-show style format allows for meaningful discussion, storytelling, and conversation about inclusivity and how that will lead to our growth as a company and a community. It is an opportunity to acknowledge and discuss the past while providing a means to educate ourselves and our community towards a better future.

The series premiere will be **Sunday, July 26 at 2 p.m.**, hosted by **Opera Orlando** board member **Chevalier Lovett**. **Mr. Lovett** is a native of Winter Park and has spent the past ten+ years working in the nonprofit sector. Currently, he is the senior vice president and managing director for **Organize Florida**. **Mr. Lovett** will be joined in this pilot episode by campaign committee members **Nathan Granner** and **Brittany Renee**. **Mr. Granner** is a Metropolitan Opera National Council winner and founding member of the Sony Masterworks recording group, The American Tenor. He will be featured this season in Orlando as a soloist for **Opera on Park**, as well as making his MainStage debut as Don José in **Carmen**. **Ms. Renee** is a mainstay of **Opera Orlando**, having last been seen as the stunning Countess in the 2019 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. She returns this season as Michaela in **Carmen**. They will discuss this initiative, its development, and preview what is to come throughout the 2020-21 season.

The **Black Artists | Black Stories** series is one component of **Opera Orlando**'s larger and ongoing **#RepresentationMatters** campaign, which includes the Company's community efforts, its casting and hiring processes, and the works presented onstage. "Like" **Opera Orlando**'s [Facebook page](#) for the series schedule and updates, then subscribe to **Opera Orlando**'s [YouTube Channel](#) for all archived episodes of the series.

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About Opera Orlando:

Celebrating, expanding, and sharing the world's greatest art form, in 2020-21 **Opera Orlando** will be celebrating its fifth anniversary season of producing high-quality operatic entertainment and educational programs that engage Central Florida audiences. Stay up to date with all things **Opera Orlando** online at www.operaorlando.org, and as always, **Opera Orlando** looks forward to seeing **YOU** at the Opera!

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