



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Cincinnati Opera and CCM to workshop *Lalovavi*, the new opera-in-progress by Kevin Day and Tifara Brown, featuring a free public performance of excerpts on May 13, 2024**

**The workshop precedes the world premiere of *Lalovavi* at Cincinnati Opera in 2025, the first work in the company's groundbreaking creative initiative, The Black Opera Project**

**CINCINNATI** (March 7, 2024)—Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) have announced the next opera to be workshopped through their joint program, Opera Fusion: New Works (OF:NW): *Lalovavi*, with music by Kevin Day, libretto by Tifara Brown, and stage direction and dramaturgy by Kimille Howard.

#### ***Lalovavi* Creative Team**



**Kevin Day**  
Composer



**Tifara Brown**  
Librettist



**Kimille Howard**  
Stage Director and Dramaturg

Commissioned by Cincinnati Opera and slated for a 2025 world premiere, *Lalovavi* is anticipated to be the first grand opera on an Afrofuturist theme. Set in the future, the opera follows the journey of

Persephone, the youngest teenage daughter of the Primus of Atlas, formerly the city of Atlanta. Currency and status in Atlas are determined based on the presence of Syndicus, a rare gene that promotes vitality and longevity. When Persephone is found to possess this gene, she is betrayed by her family and must run for her life. She is thrust into an epic adventure, uncovering a hidden past that leads her to discover love's true meaning and the power to determine her own destiny.

*Lalovavi* will be the first opera to be presented as part of The Black Opera Project, Cincinnati Opera's groundbreaking, three-opera commissioning initiative that engages Black creators to develop new works celebrating Black stories. The first program of its kind, The Black Opera Project seeks to illuminate the resilient spirit and vibrant heritage of the Black American experience.

Opera Fusion: New Works (OF:NW) is co-directed by Robin Guarino, professor of opera at CCM, and Evans Mirageas, The Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director of Cincinnati Opera, and provides composers and librettists the opportunity to collaborate with singers and creative personnel to refine their operas-in-progress. During the May workshop for *Lalovavi*, Day, Brown, and Howard will work alongside conductor Kevin Miller and a cast of singers to further develop the work.

A public performance of excerpts from *Lalovavi* will take place on Monday, May 13, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. (ET) at Cincinnati Music Hall's Wilks Studio (1241 Elm Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202). Admission to the public performance is free, though seating is limited and reservations are required. Reservations are available by calling 513-241-2742 or visiting [cincinnatiopera.org](http://cincinnatiopera.org).

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### **About Opera Fusion: New Works**

Funded through a generous gift from the Mellon Foundation, Opera Fusion: New Works (OF:NW) is a partnership between Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) dedicated to fostering the development of new American operas. This collaboration is jointly led by Robin Guarino, professor of opera at CCM, and Evans Mirageas, The Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director of Cincinnati Opera. OF:NW offers composers or composer/librettist teams the opportunity to workshop an opera during a residency in Cincinnati. Residencies utilize the facilities, personnel, and talent of both Cincinnati Opera and CCM. The workshops are cast with a combination of CCM students and professional artists, and each workshop concludes with a free public presentation of excerpts followed by an audience Q&A session. For more information, visit [ofnw.org](http://ofnw.org).

### **About CCM**

Nationally ranked and internationally renowned, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) is a preeminent institution for the performing and media arts. The school's educational roots date back to 1867, and a solid, visionary instruction has been at its core since that time. CCM offers nine degree types (BA, BM, BFA, MFA, MM, MA, AD, DMA, PhD) in nearly 120 possible majors, along with a wide variety of pre-collegiate and post-graduate programs.

Declared a top college vocal program by *Backstage Magazine* and described as "one of the continent's major music schools," by the *Toronto Star*, CCM's Departments of Opera and Voice provide one of the most comprehensive training programs for opera singers, coaches, and directors in the United States. CCM offers an international faculty of dedicated educators who are also celebrated professionals in their own right, widely and currently active in their respective fields. Several national opera companies hold auditions at the conservatory, and CCM students frequently advance to the final rounds of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. CCM graduates have performed on the stages of the world's greatest opera companies, including Cincinnati Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera (London), La Scala (Italy), and more. CCM Voice and Opera program support is provided by the Mellon Foundation for Opera Fusion: New Works, The Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund, and the Patricia A. Corbett Estate. Additional support for CCM's

undergraduate opera productions is provided by Rafael and Kimberly de Acha. To learn more, visit [ccm.uc.edu](http://ccm.uc.edu).

### **About Cincinnati Opera**

Cincinnati Opera's mission is to enrich and connect our community through diverse opera experiences. Founded in 1920 and the second-oldest opera company in the nation, Cincinnati Opera presents a thrilling season of grand opera every summer and engaging programs throughout the year. The company's repertoire includes beloved classics and contemporary masterworks brought to life by some of the world's most dynamic performers and creative artists.

Cincinnati Opera is supported by the generosity of tens of thousands of contributors to the ArtsWave Community Campaign. This project was supported in part by the Ohio Arts Council, which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. Opera Fusion: New Works and The Black Opera Project receive generous funding from the Mellon Foundation. Lead funder for *Lalovavi* is the David C. Herriman Fund of Greater Cincinnati Foundation. Cincinnati Opera also receives general season support from The Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund, Patricia A. Corbett Estate and Trust, and the Harry T. Wilks Family Foundation, along with general season and project support from many other generous individuals, corporations, and foundations. Cincinnati Opera is a proud member of OPERA America. Learn more at [cincinnatiopera.org](http://cincinnatiopera.org).

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### **RESOURCES:**

[High-resolution images are available for download here.](#)