



MEDIA RELEASE

Cincinnati Opera and CCM to Workshop *Lincoln in the Bardo*, a new opera by Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek, through Opera Fusion: New Works Partnership

Based on George Saunders's award-winning novel, the work has been commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and is a co-production of the Metropolitan Opera and Los Angeles Opera.

The Opera Fusion: New Works workshop of *Lincoln in the Bardo* culminates in a free, public presentation of excerpts on Sunday, November 12.

CINCINNATI (October 19, 2023)—Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) have announced the next workshop in their groundbreaking joint program, Opera Fusion: New Works.

In collaboration with the Metropolitan Opera, the Cincinnati partners will host a workshop in November 2023 for the new opera *Lincoln in the Bardo*, with music by Missy Mazzoli and libretto by Royce Vavrek, based on the celebrated novel by George Saunders. Commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and a co-production of the Metropolitan Opera and Los Angeles Opera, *Lincoln in the Bardo* is slated to receive its world premiere in 2026.



Missy Mazzoli
Composer



Royce Vavrek
Librettist

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 works-in-progress. During the November workshop, Mazzoli and Vavrek will work alongside conductor Steven Osgood, stage director Lileana Blain-Cruz, dramaturg Paul Cremo, and a cast of singers including renowned soprano Christine Goerke, to take the opera to its next creative stage.

The OF:NW workshop for *Lincoln in the Bardo* will culminate in a public performance of excerpts on Sunday, November 12, 2023, at 2 p.m. (ET) at Cincinnati Opera's Corbett Opera Center at Music Hall (1243 Elm Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202). The performance will be followed by a conversation about the opera with Mazzoli, Vavrek, Saunders, Osgood, Cremo, Goerke, and the cast, moderated by Guarino and Mirageas. Admission to the performance and post-performance conversation is free, though seating is limited and reservations are required. Tickets become available on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 12 p.m. (ET) and can be reserved at cincinnatiopera.org or by calling 513-241-2742.

Opera Fusion: New Works is generously funded by the Mellon Foundation.

About Lincoln in the Bardo

Lincoln in the Bardo is a new opera by composer Missy Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek based on the Booker Prize-winning novel by George Saunders, which spins a fantastical and supernatural tale inspired by a true historical event. In the early days of the Civil War, President Lincoln's beloved 11-year-old son, Willie, dies unexpectedly and is laid to rest at Georgetown Cemetery. A grief-stricken Lincoln returns several times to the crypt to hold his son's body. Meanwhile, Willie finds himself in a strange purgatory where ghosts mingle, gripe, commiserate, quarrel, and enact bizarre acts of penance. Within this transitional state—called, in the Tibetan tradition, the bardo—a monumental struggle erupts over Willie's soul. As in the novel, the opera employs a kaleidoscopic panorama of voices to ask a timeless, profound question: How do we live and love when we know that everything we love must end? (Description adapted from Penguin Random House.)

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.

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. Cincinnati Opera also receives general season support from the Ohio Arts Council, 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.

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. To learn more, visit ccm.uc.edu.

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RESOURCES:

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