

## Summary—Opera and Race in the U.S., Week 2

### Reviewing a few Tuesday Concepts:

- Different **budget tiers** of opera companies
- breakdown of opera companies by region
- lots of opera companies formed in the 1980s
- different approaches to programming by opera companies—do you start with the canon and then shift away? Do you always have a definite profile as a company?
- sometimes have a larger budget almost seems to work **against** innovation? (as in smaller companies doing more innovative works/programming)
- who decides on season (power of producer, director, etc)
- **site-specific opera**: more locally relevant, more accessible and removes stuffiness
- **co-commissioning** process

### Group Work #2

Small research dive into specific operas.

Questions:

- Who composed it?
- What year it was written and/or first performed?
- What opera company premiered it, and in what year?
- Other opera companies done it since then? Which ones?
- Any major gaps in performance history that you notice?

#### **Fire Shut Up in My Bones**

Terence Blanchard / 2019 / Opera Theatre of St. Louis / done since at the Met (2021) and Chicago Lyric (2022)

#### **Malcolm X**

Anthony Davis / 1986 / New York City Opera / Oakland then did it in 2006 / concert version by New York City Opera in 2010 / Detroit Opera in 2022

#### **Troubled Island**

William Grant Still / 1949 / New York City Opera / concert performance of excerpts in 2009 / South Shore Opera Company in 2013

#### **Treemonisha**

Scott Joplin / 1911 / first performed in 1972 by Morehouse College and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra / multiple performances since

#### **Blue**

Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson / 2019 / Glimmerglass Festival / many cancelled due to Covid / Michigan Opera Theatre, Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, and Toledo Opera in 2022

\* Things to consider:

- “one and done” issue—not helpful for change if only gets 1 performance
- major gaps in performance history, like the 36 years for *Malcolm X* or the 61 years before premiere of *Treemonisha*
- roles of companies such as New York City Opera being more innovative than the Met
- concert performances (cheaper, also less investment on the part of the opera company....)
- will works like *Blue* stay in the repertoire?

### Group Work #1

Small research dive into upcoming opera season (generally 2022-2023, or 2023) for each company.

Questions:

- what operas are being given?
- any world premieres?
- any concerts in the season?
- any musicals?
- any works written by women or composers of color?
- How many works written in the 20th century?
- How many by living composers?
- How many American composers?
- Are there new productions?

**Houston Grand Opera:** *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *La Traviata* (1853), *Werther* (1892), *Tosca* (1900), *Salome* (1905) / work by a woman composer—*The Wreckers* (1906) / work by a composer of color—*El Milagro del Recuerdo* (2019) / concerts—Spotlight Houston (mostly young artists)

**Santa Fe Opera:** *Orfeo* (1607), *The Flying Dutchman* (1843), *Tosca* (1900), *Rusalka* (1901), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) / apprentice scenes (young artists)

**Opera Theatre of St. Louis:** *Così fan tutte* (1790), *Tosca* (1900), *Susannah* (1955) / work by a composer of color—*Treemonisha* (1911) / concert—Center Stage (young artists)

**Seattle Opera:** *La Traviata* (1853), *Tristan & Isolde* (1865) / world premiere—*A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2023) / concert performance—*Samson & Delilah* (1877)

**Chicago Lyric Opera:** *Le Comte Ory* (1828), *Ernani* (1844), *Don Carlos* (1867), *Carmen* (1875), *Hansel and Gretel* (1893) / world premiere *Factotum* (2023) and *Proximity* (2023) / musicals—*Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *West Side Story* (1957) / concerts—Renee Fleming

**San Francisco Opera:** *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1762); *La Traviata* (1853), *Eugene Onegin* (1879), *Madame Butterfly* (1904); *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1917), *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (1957) / world premiere and opera by composer of color—*El último sueño de Frida y Diego* (2022); world premiere—*Antony and Cleopatra* (2023) / concerts—centennial celebration, Opera in the Park

**Los Angeles Opera:** *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *Otello* (1887), *Tosca* (1900); *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) / West Coast premieres of opera by a woman composer, *Mary Motorhead* (2019); opera by composer of color—*Omar* (2022) / media—*Frankenstein* with live orchestra / concert performance of *Solomon* / concerts—Isabel Leonard; Juan Diego Flórez, Russell Thomas, Renee Fleming