

For Immediate Release

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Opera Baltimore presents 'Opera on the Avenue' a free festival and ticketed evening concert celebrating the musical legacy of West Baltimore on October 8th

MD - September 16, 2022 - Opera Baltimore, with their partners the Arch Social Community Network, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Black Arts District, and the No Boundaries Youth Organizers, will be hosting a free daytime festival on the 600 Block of Cumberland Street and the Pennsylvania Ave Branch of the Pratt Library on Saturday, October 8th from 10:30-2:30pm and a ticketed concert at 7:30pm at University Baptist Church later the same evening. This will be the culmination of the first phase of an 18-month project that seeks to bring diverse communities together using music as the bridge, fulfilling Opera Baltimore's overarching vision to 'Build Community through Opera.'

Both the free daytime festival and the ticketed evening concert are a celebration of the musical legacy of Old West Baltimore, highlighting the famous African-American soprano Anne Wiggins Brown who was born and raised in the neighborhood, and who created the role of Bess in Gershwin's iconic American opera *Porgy and Bess*. The free daytime festival will feature an immersive exhibit at the Pennsylvania Avenue Branch of the Pratt Library, live musical performances of all kinds, food, community vendors, and activities for kids. Emmy-winning soprano, writer, and educator Adrienne Danrich is the lead creative on the project whose speciality is inviting the audience to listen, feel, and be inspired. Featured artists at the daytime festival will also include Kendrick "Dj 5Starr" Tilghman, Like Water, Lady Brion, Christian Simmons, Victoria Davis, and Ka Nyoung Yoo. These performances will take place outdoors on the 600 block of Cumberland Street (just off Pennsylvania Ave.) and at the Pennsylvania Avenue Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1531 W North Ave. The evening concert will take place at 7:30pm at University Baptist Church, at 3501 N. Charles St. This evening concert will feature the above mentioned artists, as well as the addition of Deontay Gray (dancer), Gene Alestock (bassist) and Evander McClean (drummer). Ms. Danrich has created an extraordinary program celebrating Old West Baltimore and Anne Wiggins Brown featuring opera, spoken word poetry, and dance. Tickets (\$39) are available at

OperaBaltimore.org. Details of the full festival are available at <https://www.operabaltimore.org/octa-oct8>,

Free Daytime Festival (10:30am-2:30pm)

600 Block of Cumberland Street, Baltimore (performances/street vendors)
Pennsylvania Avenue Branch of the Enoch Pratt Library (performances/exhibit)
1531 W North Ave, Baltimore, MD 21217

Ticketed Evening Concert (7:30pm)

University Baptist Church, 3501 N. Charles St. (parking adjacent)

This all-day series of events is sponsored by a generous Civic Practice Grant from OPERAAMERICA, T. Rowe Price Foundation, and through funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior that are managed by the Baltimore National Heritage Area. Opera on the Avenue's event media sponsor is WYPR.

***Opera Baltimore** was originally founded in 2009 as Baltimore Concert Opera. Our commitment to strong organizational structure and artistic excellence set the stage for both continued success and smart growth. Opera Baltimore is an Artist-in-Residence at the stunning Garrett-Jacobs Mansion in Baltimore's arts district of Mount Vernon. We strive to invigorate both our audiences and artists through a balance of classic and innovative programming. In a typical season we produce one fully-staged opera with orchestra, two concert operas, two audience-building highlights concerts paired with wine, beer or cocktail tastings, as well as a full complement of education offerings and free outreach events.*

Opera Baltimore is committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across all of the communities we serve, including artists, audiences, donors, staff, board members, key stakeholders and community members near and far. We believe that our focus on DEI creates both a healthy and safe working environment for our staff and artists, as well as offering a consistently welcoming place for all of our constituents. Dedicated to building a culturally diverse, wider audience in our vibrant, richly varied community of Baltimore, we actively seek and cultivate new relationships to further connect us to our city and to help us be better stewards of the gifts we have to share. Every decision Opera Baltimore leadership makes, whether artistic, financial or operational, is rooted in our values: Inclusivity, Integrity, Innovation, Excellence, and Responsibility; each of which is directly rooted in our commitment to DEI.