

Heartbeat Opera's *Fidelio*

Fidelio art by Andy Boyle

Thursday, February 10 at 7 pm
Saturday, February 12 at 7 pm
Sunday, February 13 at 2 pm
The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

Heartbeat Opera's *Fidelio*
 Music by **Ludwig van Beethoven**
 Original libretto by **Joseph Sonnleithner** and **Georg Friedrich Treitschke**
 Adapted and directed by **Ethan Heard**
 Music arranged and directed by **Daniel Schlosberg**
 New English dialogue by **Marcus Scott** and **Ethan Heard**

Derrell Acon, ROC
Curtis Bannister, Stan
Kelly Griffin, Leah/Lee
Victoria Lawal, Marcy
Corey McKern, Pizarro

Please join us after the February 10 performance for an interactive panel discussion entitled *Radical Love as Resistance*. Social justice advocates **Donna Hylton, Charity Chandler-Cole, Lisette Bamenga, Michael Powell, and Dr. Derrell Acon** will discuss prison reform and the movement to dismantle and reimagine the current systems of incarceration through the abolitionist movement.

This conversation is made possible by the Eric H. Holder Jr. Initiative for Civil and Political Rights at Columbia University.

This program is made possible by the Adrienne Arsht Fund for Resilience through Art, the Frank and Lydia Bergen Foundation, The Howard & Sarah D. Solomon Foundation, Lulu C. and Anthony W. Wang, and Betsy and Edward Cohen / Areté Foundation.

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Notes on the Program

Director's Note

"We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated. An absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation. Fear and anger can make us vindictive and abusive, unjust and unfair, until we all suffer from the absence of mercy and we condemn ourselves as much as we victimize others. The closer we get to mass incarceration and extreme levels of punishment, the more I believe it's necessary to recognize that we all need mercy, we all need justice, and—perhaps—we all need some measure of unmerited grace."

—Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*

Carved in stone above the entrance to the London Correctional Institution in Ohio are the words, "He who enters here leaves not hope behind." Inside, on Tuesday mornings, the Ubuntu Men's Chorus rehearses. One of the singers has a portrait of Bach tattooed on his forearm. At the invitation of the choir's conductor Cathy Roma, Dan and I visited rehearsal on March 21, 2018.

The Ubuntu Men's Chorus is one of six prison choirs that are participating in this production. Overall, more than 100 "inside" (incarcerated) singers and 80 "outside" singers (volunteers who visit the prisons) are raising their voices with us.

Fidelio is about *hope in the face of despair*. In our adaptation, Leah's husband Stan, a Black Lives Matter activist, has been wrongfully incarcerated by a corrupt warden, but Leah still fiercely hopes she can free him. It is about *courage in the face of danger*: Leah disguises herself as a correctional officer to infiltrate the facility where she believes Stan is being kept. And *love in the face of hate*: despite the warden's racism, love is Leah's inspiration.

In the midst of great pain, Beethoven's music has the power to connect and uplift our spirits. *Fidelio* expresses the yearning for freedom and redemption in us all. Experiencing this music and this story nourishes and strengthens us in these dark times, reminding us of the beauty we, as human beings, are capable of.

In the Ubuntu Chorus rehearsal, Dan accompanied on keyboard, and I filmed. New T-shirts with the chorus logo had arrived, and the singers excitedly put them on over their uniforms. But after I explained in more detail how the footage I was shooting would be used in the production, one singer nicknamed Frederick Douglass, presumably for his white hair and noble profile, raised his hand, saying, "We should take off our t-shirts. We've got to represent *all men in blue*."

This production is dedicated to the men and women behind bars for whom we are responsible, and for the activists who hope, leading us in the fight for justice.

<i>Komm, Hoffnung, Lass den letzten Stern, der Muden nicht erbleinchen! O komm, erhell' mein Ziel, sei's noch so fern, Liebe, sie wird's erreichen.</i>	<i>Come, Hope, do not dim the last star of the weary! Light my goal: however far it may be Love will reach it.</i>
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—Ethan Heard, Heartbeat Opera Artistic Director & Co-Founder
 Text translation by Nicholas Betson

Sources: *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, *Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform* by John F. Pfaff, *Let's Get Free* by Paul Butler

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Artists

Cast

Derrell Acon, Roc
Curtis Bannister, Stan
Kelly Griffin, Leah/Lee
Victoria Lawal, Marcy
Corey McKern, Pizarro

Band

Daniel Schlosberg, piano 1, conductor
Euntaek Kim, piano 2
Nicolee Kuester, horn 1
Kyra Sims, horn 2
Clare Monfredo, cello 1
Nathaniel Taylor, cello 2
Brandon Ilaw, percussion

Production

Heartbeat Opera, producer
Ethan Heard, director/adaptor/co-book writer
Daniel Schlosberg, music director/arranger
Marcus Scott, co-book writer
Nigel Semaj, movement director and fight choreographer
Emma Crane Jaster, original movement director
Reid Thompson, set designer
Valérie Thérèse Bart, co-costume designer
Kara Branch, co-costume designer
Oliver Wason, lighting designer
Kate Marvin, production designer
Caite Hevner, sound effects designer
Intuitive Production Management, production management
Robert Signor, production manager
Scott Schneider, associate production manager
Dustin Z West, production stage manager
David S. Harewood, company manager
Shadi Ghaheri, associate director
Lucy Guillemette, assistant stage manager
Nyle Farmer, associate lighting designer/lighting supervisor
Nate Kroger, audio engineer
Rhys Roffey, props designer/wardrobe supervisor
Michelle Jones, carceral expert on original production
Nicholas Betson, translation and supertitles
Sydney Dye, assistant projections designer

Find artist bios and more info at heartbeatopera.org/fidelio-2022.

Additional Singers

This production of *Fidelio* also features the voices of more than [100 incarcerated singers](#) and [70 volunteers](#) from six prison choirs: **Oakdale Community Choir**, **Kuji Men's Chorus**, **Ubuntu Men's Chorus**, **Hope Thru Harmony Women's Choir**, **East Hill Singers**, and **Voices of Hope**.

Oakdale Community Choir, Iowa Medical and Classification Center
Director and Founder: Mary L. Cohen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Iowa
Accompanist: Paul Soderdahl
Assistant Director: Laura Kastens
Sound Engineer: Peter Nothnagle

Inside Singers
 Sammy Clayton, Christopher Atchison, Mitchell Barta, Bertrum Burkett, Shantay Anderson, Joel Conrad, Steven Dahlstrom, Michael Davis-Carson, Tim Dickerson, Brandon Feighner, Michael Fleming, David Frazier, Daniel Hicks, Wyatt Johnson, Shane Kendrick, Daniel King, Carlos Latorre-Flores, Joshua Lusch, John Lusk, Nathan Matiyabo, Ryan McKevey, Dallas Miller, Kai Miller, Joshua Morales, Ron Nielsen, Tim Parker, Dustin Perry, Bruce Pollard, John Schondelmeyer, William Slack, Daniel Stanton, Christopher Stickfort, Efrain Umana, Richard Winemiller, Shaylan Yeager, Joel Zamora, James Effer, Rodrigo Estrada, James Hahn, Bill Hildebrand, Nelson Ramirez, Phil Yeoman

Outside Singers
 Liz Bonnet, Peg Bouska, Richard Bushby, Samuel Cacciatore, Jeanne Cadoret, Chad Clark, Andy Douglas, Steve Dunham, Barbara Eckstein, Simone Emerson, Lynn Gingerich, Nancy Halder, Colleen Higgins, Laura Kastens, Cinnamon Kleeman, Donnetta Knarr, Willis J Knight, Marilyn Knight, Tricia Knox, Margaret Koenig, Pete Koflasch, Kevin Kummer, Maria Ortega Kummer, Kirsten Kumpf Baele, Kayla Lyftogt, Ramona Miller, Morgan Dunham, Anna Mary Mueller, Connie Peterson, Anna Schmall, Katie Seybert, Paul Soderdahl, Devin Tracey, Dorothy Whiston, Anna Wilcox, Joseph Wyse, Mitch Yoon

Kuji Men's Chorus, Marion Correctional Institution, Ohio
Director: Catherine Roma

Tenor
 Charles Banks III, Guy Banks, Marcelus Bibbs, Winston Blythe, John Cleggett, Kevin Collier, Roosevelt Gray, Ilyas S. Mumin, Raymel Robinson

Basses
 Alrenzo Blandin, Kerron Brantley, Ernest Croft, Michael Powell, William F. Strange, Herman Weaver, Al Wertsch

Hope Thru Harmony Women's Choir, Dayton Correctional Institution, Ohio
Director: Catherine Roma
Accompanist: Rachel Kramer

Inside and Outside Singers Combined

Soprano I
 Danielle Heckathorn, Raylin Holloway, Ashley Jessup, Em Joy, Camilia Terry, Valerie Blackwell Truitt

Soprano II
 Dawnetta Cargle, Angie Denov, Maria Kitsinis, Heather Lerch, Andrea Mitchell, Connie Ramirez, Carol Simmons, Jasmyne Tennant, Pandora Zan

Alto I
 Tasha Carr, Denitra Cox, Taniya Froe, Farrin Moss, Diana Porter, Pam Schall, Dorothy Smith

Alto II
 Barb Baack, Roxanne Buck, Jonelle Crockett, Kelli Garrett, Linda Koylu, Maggie Morrison, Gwendolyn Shackelford, Donna Trammell

Ubuntu Men's Chorus, London Correctional Institution, Ohio
Director: Catherine Roma

Tenor I
 Brandon Bozeman, Chris Charles, Jeffrey Hodge, Anthony McKinney, Chris Nelloms, Nehemiah Williams

Tenor II
 Zantika Burton, Kevin Coleman, Julian Gorman, Marquell Madaris, Jesse Morrison, Jared Moseley, Cory Pickett, Rubin Pratts, Saliq Singleton, Jeff Smith

Baritones
 Carols Crispin, Gregory Johnson, Eddie Robertson, Ernest Slyn, Randy Wallen

Basses
 Doug Elliott, Bennie Humphrey, James Smith, Mark Springer, Jan Tucker

East Hill Singers, Lansing Correctional Facility, Kansas
A program of Arts in Prison
Conductor: Kirk Carson
Executive Director: Leigh A. Lynch

Thanks to the Kansas Department of Corrections

Inside and Outside Singers Combined
 Greg Baacke, Mike Barnes, Roger Beason, Rick Blinn, Scotty Button, Jeff Campbell, Souksavanh Chamongchith, Gabe Combs, Robert Coppage, Dylan Day, Gary Duncan, Phil Eatherton, Duane Graber, Louis Hamel, Mike Hegge, Christopher Herring, Charles Hise, Cliff Hostetler, David Jones, David Joslyn, Johnny King, John Kingsley, Duane Krehbiel, Bob LeVeau, Sam Loughmiller, Kenneth Mallett, Duane Manis, Jim Marshall, Jay McKell, George Melby, Nathaniel Murken, Cameron Norwood, Danny Pickerrill, Ron Post, Paul Priefert, Daniel Ramos, Ken Ratzlaff, Frank Robertson, Randy Schmidt, Wendell Selzer, Marc Showalter, Darrell Spoon, William Stephens, Larry Swinson, Tim Thomas, Cliff Van Blarcom, Bob Walsh, Shawn Wyckoff

Voices of Hope, Minnesota Correctional Facility, Shakopee, Minnesota
Conductor: Amanda Weber
Accompanist: Mary Trotter

Inside Singers
 Anonymous (20)

Outside Singers
 Katelyn Belden, Emma Bergman, Siri Caltvedt, Emily Geiger, Bronwyn Redvers-Lee, Rebekah Shuholm, Nancy Swanson, Haruka Yukiokar

Heartbeat Opera Staff

Ethan Heard, artistic director and co-founder
Jacob Ashworth, co-music director
Daniel Schlosberg, co-music director
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Heartbeat Opera

Heartbeat Opera was founded by Ethan Heard (co-founder and artistic director) and Louisa Proske (co-founder and resident director) in 2014, after they graduated from Yale School of Drama's directing program, to create incisive adaptations and revelatory arrangements of classics, reimagining them for the here and now. "One of the most agile and dynamic companies on New York's indie opera scene" (*Opera News*), Heartbeat has established itself as a highly respected, innovative force in the opera world. Daniel Schlosberg and Jacob Ashworth joined the team as co-music directors from the first season. In the summer of 2021, Proske relocated to Germany, and Heartbeat welcomed Derrell Acon as Heartbeat's first associate artistic director. Annie Middleton is the company's managing director, and Lauren Hood is interim managing director.

In its first seven seasons, Heartbeat has presented twelve fully realized productions, often featuring new chamber arrangements and English translations. Heartbeat adaptations, which can be seen as world premieres of classics, speak to the moment. *Fidelio* featured a primarily Black cast and more than 100 incarcerated singers from six prison choirs. *Carmen* was set on the US/Mexico border and featured accordion, electric guitar, and saxophone. During the pandemic, Heartbeat took *Lady M*, its adaptation of Verdi's *Macbeth*, online and sold out 32 virtual soirées, reaching 74,000 households across five continents; it also created *Breathing Free*, a visual album, which screened at venues across the country and was nominated for the 2021 Drama League Award for Outstanding Digital Concert Production. Heartbeat has shared its work at the Kennedy Center, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Broad Stage, the Mondavi Center, Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, and Chamber Music North West. It staged the first-ever opera performance on The High Line and has mounted its immensely popular, annual, interdisciplinary Drag Extravaganza in iconic venues such as National Sawdust and Roulette.

Heartbeat has been hailed across the national and international press, including in four features in *The New York Times*, in stories on CNN and the BBC, and in an All Arts/WNET documentary: "Bracing—icy vodka shots of opera instead of ladles of cream sauce" (*New York Times*), "elegant and boisterous" (*New Yorker*), "fascinating and gorgeous" (*Observer*), "ingenious" (*Wall Street Journal*), "gripping and entertaining" (*Opernwelt*), "a flatout triumph" (*Opera News*).

Heartbeat has collaborated with organizations such as Atlas DIY and A BroaderWay to bring opera education to young people in New York City. It is represented by Orpus 3 Artists. Find Heartbeat on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#). More info at heartbeatopera.org.

"In Heartbeat's radical acts of transformation, no corner of the libretto or score is left unconsidered or unchanged."
 —*The New York Times*

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