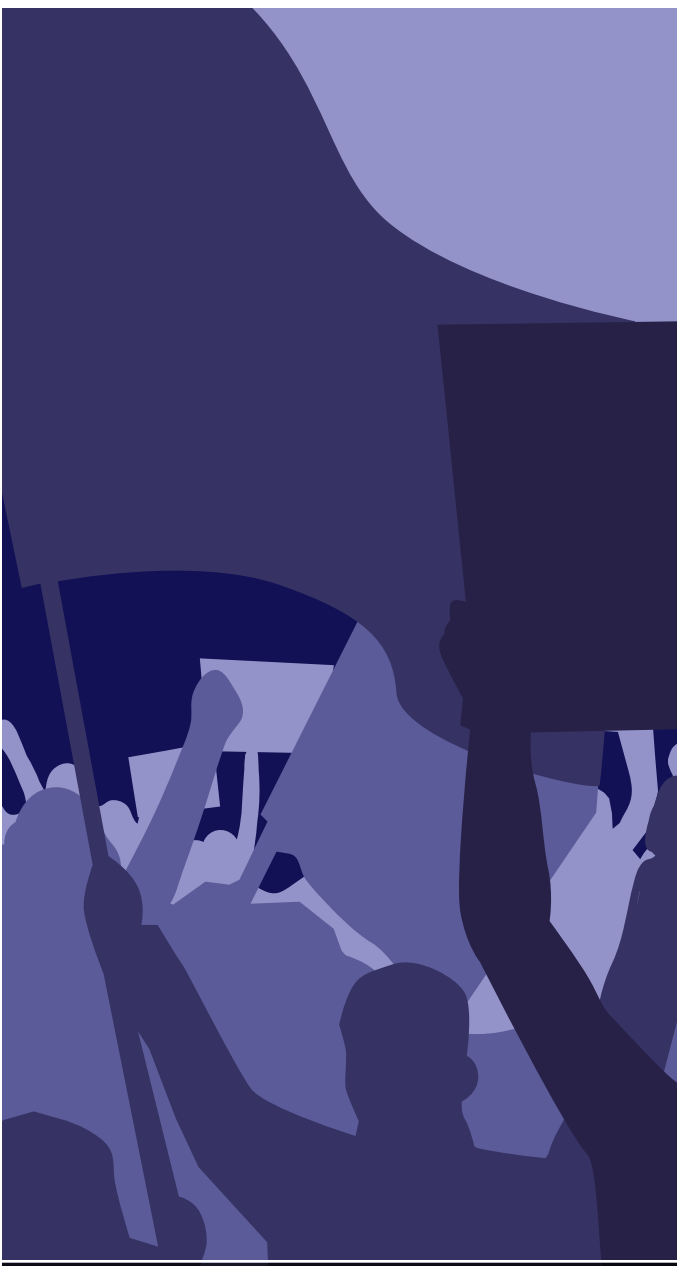


University of Maryland School of Music's
Maryland Opera Studio Presents

SUNDER

Music by Naitiah Nombeko

Libretto by Alicia Haymer



August 27, 2021
DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL
at The Clarice



SCHOOL OF
MUSIC



Welcome to the annual Maryland Opera Studio (MOS) New Work Reading. Commitment to new work has always been an integral part of MOS's identity thanks to MOS founder, Leon Major. I'm particularly interested in creating opportunities to foster new work that connect composers and librettists to our singers throughout the creative process and allows our audience to witness and take part in its creation. This past year, we partnered with the Annapolis Opera to create a work that focused on the complex social issues that have come to light over the last year. Little did we know that this work's premiere, originally planned for February 2021, would need to be delayed until August 2021 due to safety protocols related to COVID-19.

This opera features both current students and alumni of the Maryland Opera Studio and was composed with these specific singers in mind. Composer, Nailah Nombeko and librettist, Alicia Haymer have worked tirelessly to create this powerful work and met with these singers over the last year, studying the libretto and discussing character development and the musical language of the work.

Maryland Opera Studio's dedication to new work is our own response to the growing need to create opportunities for composers and libettists to explore their creative voices, for our singers to create roles, and for our audiences to experience works for the first time. We're honored to bring these works to life, sharing new compositional voices with our community and introducing new work to the greater opera world!

–Craig Kier

Director of Maryland Opera Studio, UMD School of Music
Artistic and Music Director, Annapolis Opera

MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO FACULTY AND STAFF

Carmen Balthrop, *Opera Repertory* ~ Jennifer Casey Cabot, *English Diction* ~ Amanda Consol, *Director of Acting* ~ Mark Jaster, *Mime* ~ Naomi Jacobson, *Improvisation*
Craig Kier, *Director of Maryland Opera Studio, Conductor and Coach*
Marsha LeBeouf, *Costume and Period Clothing Instruction* ~ Justina Lee, *Principal Coach*
David Lefkowich, *Mask* ~ Jenny Male, *Stage Combat* ~ Ashley Pollard, *Studio Manager* ~ Lori Şen, *Vocal Pedagogy* ~ Kevin Short, *Italian Diction* ~ Rita Sloan, *Director of Collaborative Piano* ~ Gran Wilson, *French Diction* ~ Delores Ziegler, *German Diction*

UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC VOICE FACULTY

Diba Alvi, *Diction* ~ Carmen Balthrop, *Soprano* ~ Jennifer Casey Cabot, *Soprano*
Edward Maclary, *Director of Choral Activities* ~ Kevin Short, *Bass-Baritone*
Gran Wilson, *Tenor (Division Coordinator)* ~ Delores Ziegler, *Mezzo-Soprano*

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

SUNDER

Music by Nailah Nombeko

Libretto by Alicia Haymer

Performed in English with English titles

CAST

Officer Jones VaShawn McIlwain-Lightfoot*

Bev Jones Jazmine Olwalia*

Nomi Jones Zyda Culpepper*

Aaron Matthew Payne

Jake..... Henrique Carvalho

Michelle Connor Locke

Stacey Clare Lillig

Lynn Francesca Napolitano

Samantha Rhiannon Vaughn

Terrance..... Michael Butler

Joy Morgan Paige

Officer Smith Casey Germain

Music Director & Pianist: Jonathan King

Stage Director: Amanda Consol

*Alumni of the Maryland Opera Studio

Performance is approximately 90 minutes

We invite you to stay for a brief, on-stage conversation following the performance with the creative team.

Sunder is a co-production between the University of Maryland's School of Music and Annapolis Opera.

Whenever I've created anything, the characters/cast always sort of came to me as I wrote. Writing a commissioned piece for a specific group of people presented a new, and exciting challenge for me. The creation of *Sunder* gave me the opportunity to stretch myself as a writer, and create an authentic story that would resonate for the students that would be involved. This story was birthed out of real-life events- real people that wanted change. Sometimes when we are fighting for something, we can be confused, we can be selfish, we can be scared. All feelings that are represented from the protestors in *Sunder*. In the end, these characters, like many Americans, learned what can happen when you fight against a stubborn system that wants to keep things as is, no matter how evident it is that it's time to take a step forward. Maybe you'll see yourself, or someone you know in these characters. Maybe you'll learn something about yourself as well. Either way, my hope is that *Sunder* makes you think, and offers a different perspective to consider, as all art should.

- Alicia Haymer



NAILAH NOMBEKO, a native of New York, comes from a musical family. She attended the Preparatory Division of Manhattan School of Music, LaGuardia High School (music and art) and she received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Mannes College of Music with additional studies in orchestration at The Juilliard School. Her compositions were performed by many top performers such as: Blair McMillan, Curtis Macomber, Tiffany DuMouchelle and the Orfeo Duo

among others. Her most recent projects were with international opera star Karen Slack for Sparks and Wiry Cries where she was commissioned to write a piece. Another large-scale project was a commission from the Ethel Quartet. They premiered her string quartet entitled "Multifarious Aggressions" in December 2019 at National Sawdust.



ALICIA HAYMER, a Nashville native and Fisk alum, has been a part of the Nashville arts scene for 20+ years. She last performed in Nashville Rep's 2019 season, in their production of *Pipeline*. She was in the middle of directing *Colored Museum* when Covid forced the arts shutdown. Haymer developed her first full length play, *Heavy* in the Nashville Rep's Writing Room. Her short play, *Power to the People*, made its debut in New York, New York, in the fall of 2017, as

part of the *My America* plays workshop. Her latest full-length play *Free and Public Citizen* was written in 2019, as part of the Tennessee Playwright's Studio. She's also written commissioned work for the Nashville Children's Theatre. Whether it be acting, directing or writing, Haymer is always grateful for any opportunity to express herself with creative authenticity.



JONATHAN KING *music director*, is an active pianist and conductor who currently serves as Associate Music Director at Church of the Resurrection in Lutherville, MD, and Choral Activities Graduate Assistant at the UMD School of Music, where he has directed the University Chorale and has served as Assistant Conductor, Chorus Master and Junior Lecturer with Maryland Opera Studio. He has prepared choirs for eminent conductors including Leonard Slatkin,

Marin Alsop and Gianandrea Noseda, and has assisted conductor John Nelson in several performances with the Chicago Bach Project, Orchestre de chambre de Paris and the MasterWorks Festival in Winona Lake, IN. As a pianist, King has served as répétiteur at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Oregon Bach Festival, and has collaborated with celebrated singers including Nicole Cabell, J'nai Bridges and Will Liverman. As a duo, King and Liverman have recorded with Odradek Records and Deutsche Grammophon. King is currently completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting at UMD, and his musical mentors include Edward Maclary, Craig Kier, Justina Lee, Jerry Blackstone, Martin Katz and Julius Drake.



AMANDA CONSOL *stage director*. Consol's productions include *Cendrillon* (Viardot) and *Savitri* at Wolf Trap Opera, *The Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* at the Bushwick Starr in Brooklyn and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *The Rape of Lucretia* at The Maryland Opera Studio (MOS) where she serves on faculty as the Director of Acting. Consol works frequently on new American opera, directing the American Opera Initiative 20-minute operas with Washington National Opera, and the yearly New Work Reading with MOS. Additional work with young artists includes frequent work with the Cafritz Young Artists at WNO and coaching and scenes programs with companies including CoOPERative, Central City Opera and the Castleton Festival. As an assistant director, she has collaborated often with directors including Francesca Zambello, James Darrah and Anne Bogart. Credits in this capacity include *Norma* at LAOpera, *Götterdämmerung* at Washington National Opera and the world premiere of *Breaking the Waves* at Opera Philadelphia.



MICHAEL BUTLER (Bowie, MD), *Terrance*, is a first-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. He earned his B.F.A. in Vocal Performance from the University of Maryland School of Music. Recent engagements include featured soloist in New York City Opera's *Starry Night Concert of Arias* (2020), Prince Sou-Chong in Lehár's *Das Land des Lächelns* (2019) with Washington Opera Society as well as Messenger in Verdi's *Aida* (2019) and Dancaire in Bizet's *Carmen* (2018) with WOS, Ivan Lykov in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Czar's Bride* (2018), Mario in *Briscola the Magician* and Borsa in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (2019) with Belcantanti Opera Company. In March 2022, he will perform the title role of Gounod's *Faust* with WOS. He has sung the title role of Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* with Chicago Summer Opera, and has just completed an Apprentice Artist Residency with Des Moines Metro Opera. Butler is a student of Kevin Short.



HENRIQUE CARVALHO (São Paulo, Brazil), *Jake*, is a first-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. He earned his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Maryland School of Music. Carvalho's most recent roles include the title role in Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso* with the University of Maryland's student-run opera company OperaTerps (2020) and Officer Harry Murphy in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* with the Maryland Opera Studio (2019). Carvalho is a student of Kevin Short.



Black American soprano **ZYDA CULPEPPER**, *Nomi Jones*, looks forward to returning to MOS and making her Annapolis Opera debut in the world premiere of *Sunder*. As a featured artist with Indictus Project, she made the first known recording of George Bridgetower's only extant vocal work, "Henry, A Ballad". As a recent alumna of the Maryland Opera Studio (M.M. 2019), she was in mainstage performances as Greta Fiorentino in *Street Scene*, Jessie in *Mahagonny Songspiel* and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* where she was praised for

“demonstrating both the charm and hardness required for the contrivances at court.” She also originated the role of Sarah Palmer in the world premiere of E.M. Lewis and Theo Popov’s *Town Hall*. In January 2022, Culpepper will be going on a recital tour, featuring all BIPOC women composers, with Classical Uncorked and Pacific MusicWorks.



CASEY GERMAIN (Kalamazoo, MI), *Officer Smith*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. Germain graduated in 2020 from the New England Conservatory with a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance. Roles at NEC included Colline in *La bohème*, Raphael in *Die Schöpfung*, King Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Littore in *L’incoronazione di Poppea*. Additionally, prepared partial roles include Alidoro in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, and Guglielmo in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. Germain studies with Kevin Short.



CLARE LILLIG (Naperville, IL), *Stacey*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate of Anderson University, where she earned dual degrees in voice performance and dance. Her roles there included Monica in Menotti’s *The Medium*, Susanna in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Miss Pinkerton in Menotti’s *The Old Maid and the Thief*. She performed the role of Juliska in Kalman’s *The Csárdás Princess* with Chicago Folks Operetta and was a chorus member with Indianapolis Opera in their Chorus in Concert performance. Lillig had the opportunity to study and perform scenes for the roles of Marzelline from Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, and Hannah from Lehar’s *Die Lustige Witwe* at the young artist program Musiktheater Bavaria in Oberaudorf, Germany. In the upcoming 2021/22 season, Lillig will be performing Pamina in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* and Ruth Baldwin in Musto’s *Later the Same Evening*. Lillig is a student of Jennifer Casey-Cabot.



CONNOR LOCKE (Kansas City, MO), *Michelle*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate of DePauw University, where she earned bachelor’s degree in Vocal Performance and German, magna cum laude. During her time at DePauw University, she performed Hänsel in Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel* (2020), the title role in Massenet’s *Cendrillon* (2019), Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2018) and Jenny in Kurt Weil’s *Street Scene* (2017). Locke was also involved with DePauw University’s musical theater productions where she performed Sibella in Robert L. Freedman’s *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* (2019) and Inga in Mel Brook’s *Young Frankenstein* (2017). This past summer, she performed as the title role in Rossini’s *La cenerentola* with La musica lirica. Locke is a student of Delores Ziegler.



VASHAWN MCILWAIN-LIGHTFOOT, *Officer Jones*, is a graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts, holds a B.M. from the University of Northern Iowa, an M.M. from the University of Maryland, College Park and is currently a McNair Fellow in the University of Maryland, College Park's D.M.A. Vocal Performance Program. His national credits include Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Morales in Bizet's *Carmen* and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. International credits include Jake and Jim in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. His concert works include Ysaye Barnwell's *Fortune's Bones*, Handel's *Messiah*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio* and Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. His theatrical credits include Thomas Rutling in Tazewell Thompson's *Jubilee*, the titular role in *Sweeney Todd* by Stephen Sondheim and Joe in Kern & Hammerstein's *Show Boat*.



FRANCESCA NAPOLITANO (Danvers, MA), *Lynn*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She earned her bachelor's degree in Voice Performance from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. Napolitano's most recent roles include Morgana in Handel's *Alcina* (2019) and Barbarina in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (2018) with the University of Michigan Opera Theatre, and Berginella in Offenbach's *La Périchole* and Kate in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* with College Light Opera Company (2018). Recent musical theatre roles include Fraulein Kost in *Cabaret* and Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn in *The Music Man* with College Light Opera Company (2018). Napolitano is a student of Carmen Balthrop.



JAZMINE OLWALIA, *Bev Jones*, is a Texas mezzo-soprano who has been described as a "powerhouse", bringing "humor and spunk" to her roles. This past summer, she returned to Wolf Trap for her second year as a studio artist, performing in their productions of a double bill of *Cendrillion/Savitri* and concert version of *Sweeney Todd*, in which she covered the role of Mrs. Lovett. In the spring of 2021, she was named a semi-finalist for the 2021 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. In her 2021 season, Olwalia will be joining the ensemble of *Porgy and Bess* at the Metropolitan Opera House and will be making her Portland Opera debut as Sharonne Salaam in the new production of *The Central Park Five* by Anthony Davis. She recently graduated with her M.M. from the Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland and received her B.M. in Vocal Performance from the University of Houston. Olwalia studies with Delores Ziegler.



MORGAN PAIGE (Los Angeles, CA), *Joy*, is a first-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate from the University of Oregon, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance, cum laude, and is a recipient of the undergraduate voice achievement award. Paige's most recent roles include Olympia in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (2019) as well as Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2018) with the University of Oregon

Opera Ensemble. She recently attended the young artist program Musiktheater Bavaria, where she performed various opera scenes for the roles of Marzelline in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and the Sandman in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* in Oberaudorf, Germany (2019). In the upcoming 2021/22 season, Paige looks forward to playing the role of The Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Valentina Scarcella/Rose Segal in Mustos *Later the Same Evening*. Paige is a student of Kevin Short.



MATTHEW PAYNE (Skaneateles, NY), *Aaron*, is a second-year student in the Maryland Opera Studio. He is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Voice Performance & in Biology. Payne most recently was a young artist at Central City Opera (2021), where he sang Marullo and covered Monterone in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. During his 2021/22 season, Payne will be performing Papageno in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and

Joe Harland in John Musto's *Later the Same Evening*. Payne has previously been a fellow at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center, an artist at the Chautauqua Institute and Opera and a young artist with Opera Neo. As a soloist, Payne has performed in concerts with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Mikael Eliassen, the New Fromm Players, the Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra and the Oberlin Baroque Ensemble. Payne is a student of Kevin Short.



RHIANNON VAUGHN (Pittsburgh, PA), *Samantha*, recently finished her first year of studies in the Maryland Opera Studio. She is a graduate of New England Conservatory, where she earned a master's degree in Vocal Performance, and the University of Rochester, where she earned undergraduate degrees in both History and Music. Vaughn's most recent roles include Mrs. Julian in *Owen Wingrave* with MOS (2021), Bride 1 in the world premiere of *Brides and Mothers*

with the Forgotten Opera Company (2019), covering Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Queen Europa in *Die Liebe der Danae* with Pittsburgh Festival Opera (2019). In competition she was awarded second place in Advanced College Women at the national level for NATS (2019) and second place in the Eurasia Festival Competition (2019). Vaughn is a student of Jennifer Casey Cabot.

UPCOMING UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC PERFORMANCES

COPLAND'S APPALACHIAN SPRING

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FRI, OCT 8 • 8PM

TICKETS REQUIRED

The orchestra makes a joyous return to the stage to perform Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, Jessie Montgomery's *Banner*, Giuseppe Verdi's Overture to *Nabucco* and Joseph Bologne's Symphony No. 1 in G.

IMPRESSIONS OF...

UMD WIND ORCHESTRA

SAT, OCT 9 • 8PM

TICKETS REQUIRED

This evening of contemplative works by Ruth Gipps, Arnold Schoenberg, Shuying Li and Jules Strens will explore how outward impressions can influence inward feelings.

STRAVINSKY'S SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

UMD CONCERT CHOIR

FRI, NOV 12 • 8PM

TICKETS REQUIRED

Orchestra and choir join forces to present Stravinsky's intensely passionate *Symphony of Psalms*. This theme of faith will carry through the entire concert with Reena Esmail's *Vishwas* and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 5, known as "Reformation Symphony."

MOZART'S DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE

MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO

NOV 17, 18, 19 & 21

TICKETS REQUIRED

With an enduring love story at its heart, plus complex villains and an unforgettable comic sidekick, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) weaves an enchanting tale from start to finish.

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