

WEBVTT

1

00:00:00.290 --> 00:00:01.960
<v 0>Thank you all for joining us.</v>

2

00:00:01.961 --> 00:00:05.200
Welcome back to those who have been with us previously,

3

00:00:05.201 --> 00:00:07.000
either on day one or day three,

4

00:00:07.700 --> 00:00:11.920
and official welcome to those who are joining us for the very first time.

5

00:00:12.890 --> 00:00:17.120
Happy Saturday is this is the final day of opera.

6

00:00:17.470 --> 00:00:20.790
America's first ever racial justice opera, or,

7

00:00:21.650 --> 00:00:25.430
and of course in this space today, uh,

8

00:00:25.550 --> 00:00:29.830
I want us to be mindful of our creativity and all the wonderful things
that come

9

00:00:29.831 --> 00:00:30.790
with that. Uh,

10

00:00:30.850 --> 00:00:35.710
but also to express gratitude for all the hard work that has gone into
this.

11

00:00:35.770 --> 00:00:39.790
And then all the hard work that all of you are doing to engage in these

12

00:00:40.310 --> 00:00:43.180
challenging, but very meaningful experiences,

13

00:00:43.250 --> 00:00:47.710

conversations and activities. Uh, it's been an intense,

14

00:00:48.430 --> 00:00:52.390

challenging, but rewarding journey over the past five days, right?

15

00:00:52.391 --> 00:00:53.830

We're here at day five. Uh,

16

00:00:53.831 --> 00:00:57.550

we entered this final day from a place of truth telling we've spoken a lot of

17

00:00:57.551 --> 00:01:00.110

truth, a place of healing. We've worked on that as well.

18

00:01:00.670 --> 00:01:04.700

A place of agency accountability and stay for transformation.

19

00:01:05.540 --> 00:01:08.620

I will introduce myself. My name is quote DVE Johnson.

20

00:01:08.940 --> 00:01:12.740

I also go by quo when given the choice,

21

00:01:13.460 --> 00:01:15.820

I go by quo and give people the options to call me quote.

22

00:01:15.880 --> 00:01:17.740

So you may call me quote today. Of course,

23

00:01:18.200 --> 00:01:20.820

I'd like to introduce my amazing co-host.

24

00:01:21.170 --> 00:01:23.730

Adam will will be my co-host for today.

25

00:01:23.731 --> 00:01:27.490

It's been an honor to share space with a co-host each day.

26

00:01:27.550 --> 00:01:32.410

And today Adam is my co-host amazing artist and member of the

27

00:01:32.411 --> 00:01:36.170

Asian opera Alliance. So thank you for joining us today, Adam,

28

00:01:37.090 --> 00:01:41.010

I also want to give a special shout out to our opera America staff for assisting

29

00:01:41.011 --> 00:01:45.720

us today, both Jamele and Megan Noel has been assisting us recently.

30

00:01:45.770 --> 00:01:49.580

She's not with us today, but we heard you Noel. Uh,

31

00:01:49.640 --> 00:01:51.100

I'm gonna pass it over to Adam,

32

00:01:51.250 --> 00:01:54.420

just to kind of give us a reminder of the purpose of this form and the purpose

33

00:01:54.480 --> 00:01:58.020

of us all coming together in this space. Go for it, Adam.

34

00:02:00.110 --> 00:02:01.380

<v 1>Hello. Thank you all.</v>

35

00:02:01.890 --> 00:02:06.530

Welcome to bring the opera field together for a journey

36

00:02:06.710 --> 00:02:11.410

of intentional learning engagement and practical application for racial

37

00:02:11.520 --> 00:02:14.170

justice, work, our journey,

38

00:02:14.530 --> 00:02:19.210

an ongoing experience that will not end with absolute answers to a system that

39

00:02:19.211 --> 00:02:22.250

has been in place for centuries. Our learning,

40

00:02:22.840 --> 00:02:25.840

this is not about gay getting it right or being right.

41

00:02:26.110 --> 00:02:30.840

This is about prioritizing doing what is right through action and

42

00:02:30.841 --> 00:02:33.640

commitment. We all have things to learn.

43

00:02:34.050 --> 00:02:38.440

Daily tools are dangerous if you do not know how to use them.

44

00:02:40.040 --> 00:02:41.270

<v 0>Thank you for that, Adam.</v>

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00:02:42.010 --> 00:02:46.900

And of course we begin every single space as we have before or with a land

46

00:02:47.120 --> 00:02:48.740

and a people acknowledgement.

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00:02:49.330 --> 00:02:54.260

I've gotten a lot of requests for this particular land acknowledgement
land

48

00:02:54.340 --> 00:02:58.260

and people acknowledgement. I do want to share that this is a personal
practice.

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00:02:58.540 --> 00:03:03.120

I do encourage you to everyone do it. Uh, however, in this personal
practice,

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00:03:03.230 --> 00:03:07.760

this is a matter of honoring the history, honoring the truth.

51

00:03:07.990 --> 00:03:11.280

This is a matter of honoring the land in which we stand in the people who

52

00:03:11.281 --> 00:03:12.840
labored and cultivated the land.

53
00:03:13.700 --> 00:03:18.160
So for this in our particular land and people acknowledgement today,

54
00:03:18.240 --> 00:03:20.350
I also want to note that the people,

55
00:03:21.030 --> 00:03:25.470
addition of the acknowledgement is a practice that was created by Amber Sims,

56
00:03:25.690 --> 00:03:27.470
who is an activist in Dallas,

57
00:03:27.680 --> 00:03:30.790
which is the land of the cattle of the Wichita and the command chief sovereign

58
00:03:30.791 --> 00:03:35.630
nations. I want to begin by acknowledging that some people do not do land AC

59
00:03:35.631 --> 00:03:37.270
acknowledgements and that's completely okay.

60
00:03:37.610 --> 00:03:41.980
We want to honor that choice voice as well in a space for racial justice.

61
00:03:42.200 --> 00:03:46.700
It is important that we start with truth telling it is crucial that we begin

62
00:03:46.810 --> 00:03:49.900
with speaking the truth and the nature of this nation.

63
00:03:50.300 --> 00:03:55.220
Speaking the truth behind the impacts that we continue to experience because

64
00:03:55.221 --> 00:03:57.180

it is dangerous when we choose not to do so.

65

00:03:58.280 --> 00:04:01.970

So I do want to take the time to say that we are on stolen land.

66

00:04:02.120 --> 00:04:06.810

That has been cultivated since time I Memorial by hundreds of tribal nations and

67

00:04:06.811 --> 00:04:09.770

communities, communities of human beings who loved,

68

00:04:10.210 --> 00:04:14.530

who fought connected and created in their humanity, humanity,

69

00:04:14.560 --> 00:04:16.850

that was intentionally dismissed through policy,

70

00:04:17.130 --> 00:04:20.920

allowing for horrible conditions, erasure, genocide,

71

00:04:21.630 --> 00:04:25.560

communities, and nations that are here, and that will not be silenced.

72

00:04:25.820 --> 00:04:27.760

And we will not take part in silence in them.

73

00:04:28.140 --> 00:04:33.070

We will prioritize lifting these voices and we will ensure

74

00:04:33.071 --> 00:04:35.190

that they are never silenced in any space.

75

00:04:36.230 --> 00:04:39.870

I also acknowledge that people were stolen from their homes in Africa and

76

00:04:39.871 --> 00:04:44.700

brought to this O land dehumanized and forced into free and enslaved labor,

77

00:04:45.560 --> 00:04:49.180

the nation and the entire nation benefits from stolen land,

78

00:04:49.520 --> 00:04:51.340
stolen labor and stolen lives.

79

00:04:52.140 --> 00:04:56.950
This is a truth at the very foundation of our nation and a

80

00:04:56.951 --> 00:05:01.190
part of the conditions we have inherited. This is not just in the,

81

00:05:01.880 --> 00:05:05.260
as my last name is Johnson. Not because my ancestors' name is Johnson,

82

00:05:05.720 --> 00:05:07.900
but because I'm a descendant of those enslaved people,

83

00:05:08.960 --> 00:05:11.780
it is present before us every single day.

84

00:05:12.600 --> 00:05:14.420
We did not create these conditions.

85

00:05:14.880 --> 00:05:18.460
But along with this inheritance of the conditions comes the ability,

86

00:05:18.720 --> 00:05:20.180
the opportunity, the honor,

87

00:05:20.400 --> 00:05:25.010
and the responsibility to disrupt the systems of dehumanization so that we
may

88

00:05:25.011 --> 00:05:29.170
connect and heal the harm as we move forward in truth and community.

89

00:05:30.330 --> 00:05:33.330
I honor the ancestors who cared for and labored on this land,

90

00:05:33.700 --> 00:05:36.170
whose experiences continue to live with us.

91

00:05:37.010 --> 00:05:40.690

May we continue to work to build a better world and the path forward for our

92

00:05:40.691 --> 00:05:42.840

descendants, who will surely come out after us.

93

00:05:43.950 --> 00:05:47.300

Thank you for joining us for this land and people acknowledgement.

94

00:05:48.400 --> 00:05:53.220

I'm going to pass it over to Adam so that he can assist us

95

00:05:53.280 --> 00:05:55.660

in going over our group agreements.

96

00:06:06.450 --> 00:06:10.180

<v 1>Okay. This is so exciting guys. Thanks for all your effort.</v>

97

00:06:11.720 --> 00:06:16.700

The 2022 racial justice opera forum group agreements, center,

98

00:06:16.870 --> 00:06:18.100

truth and connection.

99

00:06:18.930 --> 00:06:23.430

Racial justice must be rooted in truth to disrupt the

100

00:06:23.431 --> 00:06:28.020

incomplete and falseness narratives that support the fallacy of racial human

101

00:06:28.021 --> 00:06:28.854

hierarchy.

102

00:06:29.820 --> 00:06:34.220

I will always center the truth with the goal of connecting to heal the harm and

103

00:06:34.221 --> 00:06:35.940

build a better world together.

104

00:06:39.540 --> 00:06:40.480

I'm sorry, it's.

105

00:06:41.680 --> 00:06:43.120

<v 0>Be explicit about race.</v>

106

00:06:43.830 --> 00:06:48.310

Race is often the most difficult conversation for many to have in the United

107

00:06:48.310 --> 00:06:52.430

States. I will always be explicit about race and racial justice work.

108

00:06:52.910 --> 00:06:56.750

I will not default to gender identities, sexual orientation, or preference,

109

00:06:57.230 --> 00:06:58.630

ability, nationality, et cetera,

110

00:06:58.940 --> 00:07:02.070

without being explicit about the impact of race and racism.

111

00:07:02.990 --> 00:07:06.150

I will be explicit about racial groups and always mindful that no,

112

00:07:06.500 --> 00:07:07.780

oh one group is a monolith.

113

00:07:10.010 --> 00:07:14.270

<v 1>Intent does not outweigh impact good intentions,</v>

114

00:07:14.370 --> 00:07:18.590

and a desire for change are important. Impact is most important.

115

00:07:19.470 --> 00:07:22.350

I will be accountable for the impact of my words and actions.

116

00:07:23.010 --> 00:07:27.070

If my impact does not align with my intention and cause harm,

117

00:07:28.180 --> 00:07:32.100

I will work to correct my impact without silencing those who might have

118

00:07:32.101 --> 00:07:33.300

inadvertently harmed.

119

00:07:35.540 --> 00:07:40.260

<v 0>Their space. Everyone is harmed by racism and a fallacy of racial hierarchy.</v>

120

00:07:40.940 --> 00:07:44.820

I acknowledge that some racial groups experience disproportionate harm under

121

00:07:44.821 --> 00:07:45.940

various circumstances.

122

00:07:46.430 --> 00:07:51.010

There is enough space for each of us to knowledge the harm and healing

123

00:07:51.240 --> 00:07:52.890

necessary to enact racial justice.

124

00:07:53.770 --> 00:07:58.050

I also acknowledge that this work requires all of us and that no one is entitled

125

00:07:58.051 --> 00:08:00.490

to intimate spaces amongst other racial groups.

126

00:08:03.330 --> 00:08:06.710

<v 1>Use eye statements. We all have experiences.</v>

127

00:08:06.960 --> 00:08:11.780

There is a power in taking ownership of my experiences and individual commitment

128

00:08:11.781 --> 00:08:12.614

to racial justice.

129

00:08:13.580 --> 00:08:18.540

I will use I statements and speak for my own personal experiences.

130

00:08:18.541 --> 00:08:20.100

When sharing in group discussion.

131

00:08:21.770 --> 00:08:26.010

<v 0>Practice, self care and collective care, racial justice work is hard.</v>

132

00:08:26.890 --> 00:08:29.330

I will be mindful of my own needs and the needs of others,

133

00:08:29.480 --> 00:08:32.050

including the need for truth and connection.

134

00:08:32.780 --> 00:08:35.080

We will be together for a limited amount of time.

135

00:08:35.410 --> 00:08:39.200

Collective care also means that I will actively move forward to speak when

136

00:08:39.201 --> 00:08:42.320

necessary and move back to allow others to speak.

137

00:08:45.620 --> 00:08:48.560

<v 1>Be fully present. This is your journey.</v>

138

00:08:49.520 --> 00:08:53.800

I am here by choice and agree to be fully present for the work and learning in

139

00:08:53.801 --> 00:08:57.920

this space. Progress can only take place when I do the work,

140

00:08:58.090 --> 00:09:00.160

which starts with my personal journey.

141

00:09:01.160 --> 00:09:04.960

I acknowledge that my progress is directly related to my effort and

142

00:09:04.961 --> 00:09:06.400
prioritization of this work.

143

00:09:08.050 --> 00:09:10.540
<v 0>Embrace discomfort and non closure.</v>

144

00:09:11.290 --> 00:09:13.260
This space will be uncomfortable.

145

00:09:13.820 --> 00:09:16.250
I will lean into my discomfort into challenge myself,

146

00:09:16.490 --> 00:09:20.810
to experience learning that does not prioritize my comfort with
discussions

147

00:09:20.820 --> 00:09:21.690
about race.

148

00:09:22.370 --> 00:09:27.210
I also acknowledge that I will not receive a package set of tools or
answers to

149

00:09:27.211 --> 00:09:30.090
solve a century's old problem. With any short amount of time,

150

00:09:30.470 --> 00:09:33.210
change cannot happen at the rate of my own comfort.

151

00:09:35.230 --> 00:09:38.670
<v 1>Turn to wonder or what all art should help us do.</v>

152

00:09:39.270 --> 00:09:41.590
I will suspend judgment during the forum.

153

00:09:42.230 --> 00:09:46.750
I will turn to wonder and consider what my own reactions are telling me.

154

00:09:46.980 --> 00:09:48.630
When I have an emotional response,

155

00:09:49.470 --> 00:09:54.430

I will work to explore those emotions and experiences on my own and in a

156

00:09:54.431 --> 00:09:58.140

healthy manner while remaining in community with the forum participants.

157

00:09:59.650 --> 00:10:03.950

<v 0>And of course, we establish this as a compassionate and a courageous space.</v>

158

00:10:04.830 --> 00:10:07.790

I will work with others to ensure a space of compassion,

159

00:10:07.980 --> 00:10:11.870

hearing the collective harm and healing. In our shared experiences.

160

00:10:12.470 --> 00:10:15.110

I will also work with others to ensure a space of courage,

161

00:10:15.770 --> 00:10:19.220

boldly disrupting the system of racial human hierarchy.

162

00:10:21.980 --> 00:10:26.160

And those are our group agreements for today. Please be mindful of those.

163

00:10:26.180 --> 00:10:30.720

We do expect and invite and encourage everyone to keep these agreements

164

00:10:30.721 --> 00:10:32.400

throughout the entire day. Today,

165

00:10:33.560 --> 00:10:38.360

I am going to pass it to Adam so that he can provide us with just a quick

166

00:10:38.600 --> 00:10:40.790

overview of today's skin. Adam,

167

00:10:40.810 --> 00:10:43.670

if you'll just let us know what we'll be doing before we get to lunch break,

168

00:10:44.030 --> 00:10:48.310

I like food. So what's happening before food is before.

169

00:10:48.390 --> 00:10:49.950

<v 1>We get to it's very important. Absolutely.</v>

170

00:10:51.290 --> 00:10:53.870

We bring all of our learning together in this final day of the forum,

171

00:10:54.530 --> 00:10:57.950

but don't worry. This work will continue well beyond our time together.

172

00:10:59.030 --> 00:11:03.300

<v 0>I would like to introduce our one wonderful panelists for this first panel</v>

173

00:11:03.301 --> 00:11:06.180

discussion for the last day of the forum.

174

00:11:06.850 --> 00:11:11.220

This particular panel will provide us with such beautiful

175

00:11:11.370 --> 00:11:14.500

insight into the work that is being done in the opera field.

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00:11:14.880 --> 00:11:18.620

We had questions about what are opera companies doing in transparency.

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00:11:19.140 --> 00:11:24.090

I intentionally did not provide any case studies because this work requires a

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00:11:24.091 --> 00:11:27.890

very personal journey first, which is why we've gone through these steps.

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00:11:27.910 --> 00:11:29.410

Before today,

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00:11:29.470 --> 00:11:32.690

we get to hear some of the things that other opera companies are doing.

181

00:11:33.490 --> 00:11:35.330
I would like to introduce Pam,

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00:11:36.870 --> 00:11:39.930
one of our amazing panelists. Hello, Pam.

183

00:11:40.730 --> 00:11:43.520
I would also like to introduce Tracy,

184

00:11:45.750 --> 00:11:48.690
who will be joining us for the panel discussion today.

185

00:11:50.560 --> 00:11:52.240
I would like to introduce Ian

186

00:11:55.750 --> 00:11:58.130
And I would like to introduce Renee.

187

00:12:01.710 --> 00:12:05.490
And these are our amazing panelists for today.

188

00:12:05.491 --> 00:12:08.250
Thank you all so very much for joining us.

189

00:12:09.080 --> 00:12:12.330
Today's discussion will include a Q and a, uh,

190

00:12:12.420 --> 00:12:14.490
especially as we've been going through these days.

191

00:12:14.550 --> 00:12:17.720
If we do not get to your question, please still put it in a chat.

192

00:12:17.721 --> 00:12:19.080
What we've been doing during the,

193

00:12:19.680 --> 00:12:22.160
the lunch break is answering some of those questions.

194

00:12:23.140 --> 00:12:24.800

So as we begin,

195

00:12:25.240 --> 00:12:28.800

I want to first thank everybody again for joining us for the final day of the

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00:12:28.960 --> 00:12:32.280

form, as we turn to our, our attention to the form.

197

00:12:32.340 --> 00:12:35.800

And as we turn our attention to what will happen after the form can,

198

00:12:36.230 --> 00:12:41.230

and each of you share your thoughts on being identified as activists

199

00:12:41.231 --> 00:12:46.230

or change agents. I identify each of you as change agents in this work.

200

00:12:47.030 --> 00:12:51.270

Uh, and then can you let us know whether or not leading change in your own way,

201

00:12:51.910 --> 00:12:56.270

uh, was an intentional decision or something that you prepared for? Uh,

202

00:12:56.740 --> 00:12:59.100

actually start with Renee, uh,

203

00:12:59.200 --> 00:13:02.420

in answering that question and then we'll go to Ian.

204

00:13:03.920 --> 00:13:06.460

<v 3>Lovely. Thank you so much for having me thank you to, uh,</v>

205

00:13:06.620 --> 00:13:11.180

for America and thank you to KDI and to the other hosts and panelists. Um,

206

00:13:11.250 --> 00:13:13.500

such a pleasure to be here. I,

207

00:13:14.100 --> 00:13:17.810

I feel like activism is in my blood as a person in, uh,

208

00:13:18.830 --> 00:13:22.130

who has Zambian ancestry and my family line.

209

00:13:22.710 --> 00:13:26.570

My grandfather was, uh, a nationalist.

210

00:13:27.090 --> 00:13:29.650

I feel like that's a more positive word when we talking about African

211

00:13:30.370 --> 00:13:31.890

nationalism. Um,

212

00:13:31.990 --> 00:13:36.530

so he was very instrumental in making sure that Zambia became his own nation and

213

00:13:36.531 --> 00:13:40.640

moved away from Northern. My grandmother was the first woman in Zambia to vote.

214

00:13:40.940 --> 00:13:43.600

So really like activism is a part of just my DNA.

215

00:13:44.460 --> 00:13:48.760

And I came coming here. My family went to a H B, C U in Jackson,

216

00:13:48.761 --> 00:13:49.960

Mississippi of all places,

217

00:13:50.860 --> 00:13:55.280

but Mississippi black people in Mississippi were doing some amazing work.

218

00:13:55.281 --> 00:13:59.790

And my grandfather really wanted his children to be involved in what it meant to

219

00:13:59.791 --> 00:14:03.590

have a black lifestyle. Um, cuz as, as I said earlier,

220

00:14:03.830 --> 00:14:08.150
Zambia wasn't a nation yet. So, um, apartheid was a part of the system.

221
00:14:08.151 --> 00:14:11.710
So they came to Mississippi. My uncle was a part of,

222
00:14:11.730 --> 00:14:14.950
he was a very big activist, especially in the civil rights movement.

223
00:14:14.951 --> 00:14:19.100
So it's just a part of who I am and what I know my aunt in the it up being like

224
00:14:19.101 --> 00:14:20.980
the first woman to run for president in Zambia.

225
00:14:20.981 --> 00:14:22.900
So it's just what I am and what I know.

226
00:14:22.901 --> 00:14:27.300
It's just really just a part of who I am. So when I was younger in high school,

227
00:14:27.660 --> 00:14:31.340
I was a part of the civil rights and civil liberties club where we learned about

228
00:14:31.341 --> 00:14:33.300
the civil rights movement. And then when I got to college,

229
00:14:33.380 --> 00:14:34.980
I started teaching civil rights history,

230
00:14:35.140 --> 00:14:38.580
specifically Mississippi civil rights history to high school students.

231
00:14:39.250 --> 00:14:42.890
So I've always wanted to really be involved in helping people understand history

232
00:14:42.891 --> 00:14:44.570
and how it impacts our pre our, uh,

233

00:14:44.571 --> 00:14:48.490

present day situation and how people can be instruments of change.

234

00:14:49.190 --> 00:14:50.770

And luckily with black women opera,

235

00:14:50.890 --> 00:14:54.640

I got to marry my love for opera and my love for encouraging and educating

236

00:14:54.641 --> 00:14:58.280

people, um, about that's different paths and opera,

237

00:14:58.281 --> 00:14:59.560

different opportunities in opera,

238

00:14:59.590 --> 00:15:03.480

letting people know that they're not the only black opera singer that there ever

239

00:15:03.620 --> 00:15:07.440

was, letting people know that there's more than Landine price. Um,

240

00:15:07.441 --> 00:15:09.600

there is more paths, there are more opportunities.

241

00:15:09.601 --> 00:15:11.150

There are more things that you can do in opera.

242

00:15:11.770 --> 00:15:15.510

And it really has given me a chance to just find my niche,

243

00:15:15.511 --> 00:15:19.350

which is basically making sure black opera singers feel loved.

244

00:15:19.530 --> 00:15:22.470

And they feel like they're encouraged to keep singing.

245

00:15:22.690 --> 00:15:25.950

That's really all that I'm doing at the end of the day.

246

00:15:25.990 --> 00:15:29.990

I wanna make sure that black opera singers feel loved and they feel encouraged

247

00:15:29.991 --> 00:15:34.020

to keep singing. It's not easy. First of all, opera's hard. Second of all,

248

00:15:34.520 --> 00:15:37.260

you are already black, so that's has its own challenges,

249

00:15:37.261 --> 00:15:41.340

but I want you to remember that your voice matters and you gotta keep singing.

250

00:15:41.490 --> 00:15:44.100

Like you have to keep singing. So that's always my goal.

251

00:15:45.660 --> 00:15:49.890

<v 0>Thank you so much for sharing. And then for, for providing us, uh,</v>

252

00:15:49.891 --> 00:15:53.040

with the perspective of how it is, is in your blood,

253

00:15:53.100 --> 00:15:55.760

as you say in your family background,

254

00:15:55.860 --> 00:15:58.280

but then your active choice to say,

255

00:15:58.440 --> 00:16:01.840

I need to let people know something your active choice to say this is

256

00:16:01.841 --> 00:16:05.040

information and people need it and how that has, uh,

257

00:16:05.130 --> 00:16:09.480

grown into the beautiful thing that is black women and IRA. Thank you. Next.

258

00:16:09.560 --> 00:16:13.110

I will ask Ian I, and I of course identify your, the training agent,

259

00:16:14.330 --> 00:16:17.670

not just cuz you're my boss, but because of the work, uh,

260

00:16:17.720 --> 00:16:22.350

being done with Dallas opera, can you share kind of your perspective,

261

00:16:23.070 --> 00:16:25.190

uh, and whether or not this is something for which you prepared,

262

00:16:25.410 --> 00:16:28.270

how did you come into this space and into this work?

263

00:16:30.260 --> 00:16:34.530

<v 4>Uh, well, thanks for inviting me to be a part of this today. Quote,
um, I,</v>

264

00:16:34.810 --> 00:16:39.530

I can't say that it was ever something that I, I, I looked at and I
thought I'm,

265

00:16:39.590 --> 00:16:43.610

I'm prepared for it. Uh, I, I absolutely, uh,

266

00:16:44.080 --> 00:16:46.290

knew that there were moments in life, uh,

267

00:16:46.500 --> 00:16:51.450

where you were confronted with problems and there were people that either,
uh,

268

00:16:51.600 --> 00:16:54.840

deal with the problems or around the problems.

269

00:16:55.380 --> 00:17:00.200

And I've always gravitated somehow some way to being a problem solver

270

00:17:00.300 --> 00:17:02.800

or, or at least attempting to be a problem solver.

271

00:17:03.460 --> 00:17:08.120

And so I think for, for me personally, uh,

272

00:17:08.760 --> 00:17:12.000

I saw a great need. Uh, I saw a great need, uh,

273

00:17:12.001 --> 00:17:16.110

within the walls of the Dallas opera and our own staff.

274

00:17:16.890 --> 00:17:21.350

And, uh, my initiative, I think, uh,

275

00:17:21.351 --> 00:17:24.430

really came out of trying to create, uh,

276

00:17:24.550 --> 00:17:28.310

a better environment for my staff and hope that that, uh,

277

00:17:28.311 --> 00:17:31.950

trickles into the other, uh, tentacles of the opera company as well.

278

00:17:34.570 --> 00:17:38.470

<v 0>Thank you. Thank you for sharing. Well, the dive deeper into that, uh,</v>

279

00:17:38.471 --> 00:17:42.670

as we get into the conversation, I will next ask Pam,

280

00:17:43.210 --> 00:17:45.550

can you let us know your,

281

00:17:46.230 --> 00:17:49.030

your route and your path into being a change agent?

282

00:17:50.590 --> 00:17:53.460

<v 5>Thank you quo. Um, happy to be here with everyone.</v>

283

00:17:54.180 --> 00:17:58.700

I actually have a couple of hats, uh, that bring me to you today. Um,

284

00:17:59.060 --> 00:18:00.060

I I'm, uh,

285

00:18:00.240 --> 00:18:04.860

was in the corporate structures of consulting,

286

00:18:05.740 --> 00:18:08.580

um, as a change agent and in organizational develop.

287

00:18:09.810 --> 00:18:14.170

So I have seen many organizations try to transform as well as their people.

288

00:18:15.290 --> 00:18:15.750

Um,

289

00:18:15.750 --> 00:18:19.450

but that's really just sort of the background and the foundation of my thinking.

290

00:18:20.070 --> 00:18:20.550

And,

291

00:18:20.550 --> 00:18:25.530

but I come today with a little bit more personal perspective of participating in

292

00:18:25.531 --> 00:18:28.850

the Dallas truth and racial healing and transformation, uh,

293

00:18:29.010 --> 00:18:33.960

co court of this past year. Um, you know, that I, yes, I was a,

294

00:18:34.040 --> 00:18:38.360

I am a change agent. Um, that was a planned, uh,

295

00:18:38.670 --> 00:18:43.520

situation we had applied. Uh, our organization had applied for, um,

296

00:18:44.190 --> 00:18:45.960

some, some people to attend.

297

00:18:46.660 --> 00:18:51.630

So I think we knew that we wanted to do this than to be part of the

298

00:18:51.631 --> 00:18:53.990

Dallas arts, uh, uh,

299

00:18:54.220 --> 00:18:58.630

organizations and so many of the other community organizations that participated

300

00:18:58.631 --> 00:18:59.790

with us. Uh,

301

00:18:59.791 --> 00:19:04.390

but I think I had no idea on what kind of personal impact, um,

302

00:19:04.391 --> 00:19:07.110

this would have on me and, you know,

303

00:19:07.670 --> 00:19:11.740

I should probably eat my own medicine as they say, you know, what,

304

00:19:12.100 --> 00:19:17.020

allowing others to change and bringing about change for other organizations

305

00:19:17.040 --> 00:19:21.700

and for people. And yet we all have to go through that before we,

306

00:19:21.840 --> 00:19:26.260

we actually can understand what it is that we are trying to, um,

307

00:19:27.130 --> 00:19:31.060

trying to bring impact to. And I think the biggest thing,

308

00:19:31.120 --> 00:19:34.020

and I like to see that in, in sort of your, uh,

309

00:19:34.021 --> 00:19:38.260

guidelines for today was that change cannot happen, uh,

310

00:19:38.440 --> 00:19:41.900
at the rate of my own comfort. And, you know, I,

311
00:19:42.220 --> 00:19:47.140
I just got so into so much of what I learned during the cohort and

312
00:19:47.141 --> 00:19:50.900
wanted to bring that back to our organization as I chaired the equity
diversity,

313
00:19:51.450 --> 00:19:53.410
an inclusion committee. Um,

314
00:19:53.790 --> 00:19:57.810
but there were a lot of people who were not ready for what I had to say.
Um,

315
00:19:57.950 --> 00:20:02.130
and I think that I personally week after week and month after month had to

316
00:20:02.131 --> 00:20:03.650
figure out, um,

317
00:20:03.870 --> 00:20:08.410
and we're still on this journey that we have to be able to digest and then

318
00:20:08.750 --> 00:20:12.960
to internalize that, and then we give that back to others,

319
00:20:13.180 --> 00:20:16.040
but in their own ways that they can understand it.

320
00:20:16.500 --> 00:20:19.120
So even though we have learned new vocabulary,

321
00:20:19.510 --> 00:20:24.320
that might not be the vocabulary that they understand. So that was one of
my,

322
00:20:24.600 --> 00:20:27.760
uh, my personal experiences. And I could go on.

323

00:20:29.210 --> 00:20:32.720

<v 0>Thank you for that fam we'll, uh, get to dive deeper into that as well.</v>

324

00:20:33.610 --> 00:20:37.350

Of course, uh, last, but certainly not least Ms. Tracy,

325

00:20:37.770 --> 00:20:42.750

can you let us know how you moved into this role of being identified as a change

326

00:20:42.760 --> 00:20:46.070

agent or someone who was brought about change in the opera field?

327

00:20:49.400 --> 00:20:54.400

You're on me, Tracy. It's okay. It's pandemic, right.

328

00:20:54.720 --> 00:20:54.860

Okay.

329

00:20:54.860 --> 00:20:55.693

<v 6>Can you hear me now?</v>

330

00:20:55.860 --> 00:20:56.693

<v 0>Yes, ma'am.</v>

331

00:20:57.070 --> 00:21:01.720

<v 6>Okay. So for me, uh, being a change agent,</v>

332

00:21:02.320 --> 00:21:06.000

uh, wasn't necessarily planned, but it was necessary. Uh, first of all,

333

00:21:06.001 --> 00:21:08.640

growing up as a young person, a young African,

334

00:21:08.990 --> 00:21:11.230

an American girl born with albinism.

335

00:21:11.890 --> 00:21:15.790

And so that brings on a life of differentness,

336

00:21:15.890 --> 00:21:18.990

but then to understand, and to be encouraged by my family,

337

00:21:19.010 --> 00:21:23.470

to understand that in spite of you are still just as good as

338

00:21:24.450 --> 00:21:26.790

if not better. Uh,

339

00:21:27.930 --> 00:21:32.380

so I've always been in, in a lifelong position of,

340

00:21:33.660 --> 00:21:36.900

uh, fighting for what's fair and what's right.

341

00:21:37.640 --> 00:21:40.060

And what I know I deserve,

342

00:21:40.420 --> 00:21:42.740

and other people like me meeting other people of color,

343

00:21:43.500 --> 00:21:46.780

other people with disabilities, whatever that that scenario is.

344

00:21:47.360 --> 00:21:52.130

And so in being the first in a lot of aspects in

345

00:21:52.131 --> 00:21:55.370

Cincinnati arts being the first African American, uh,

346

00:21:55.600 --> 00:22:00.330

arts administrator in, in any of the arts organizations in Cincinnati,

347

00:22:01.010 --> 00:22:04.090

um, uh, gave me the challenge,

348

00:22:04.110 --> 00:22:06.210

but also put me in a position to,

349

00:22:07.350 --> 00:22:10.680

to build a path for other young people like me,

350

00:22:10.740 --> 00:22:15.720

who either wanted to engage in the arts and didn't feel like they belonged, um,

351

00:22:16.420 --> 00:22:18.360

or helping, uh,

352

00:22:19.030 --> 00:22:23.640

arts leaders to understand that what they were missing out

353

00:22:23.980 --> 00:22:28.400

on by not engaging people like me, uh, in the,

354

00:22:28.620 --> 00:22:31.190

in the arts, uh, it's, it's been, um,

355

00:22:34.140 --> 00:22:37.190

it's been a journey, but it's been a passion of mine.

356

00:22:37.740 --> 00:22:41.270

It's been a passion of mine to show, uh,

357

00:22:41.400 --> 00:22:43.990

especially young black and brown children,

358

00:22:44.160 --> 00:22:48.910

especially what's possible and to, to be able to provide opportunities for,

359

00:22:49.050 --> 00:22:53.780

for them to see other people who look like them in the field of opera

360

00:22:54.280 --> 00:22:58.660

and whether it's singers, whether they're people on, on the production side,

361

00:22:58.760 --> 00:23:03.540

on the administration side to say, this is possible for you and this,

362

00:23:03.610 --> 00:23:06.900

this should not be a place, uh, a strange place for you to be,

363

00:23:06.901 --> 00:23:09.420

this should be a place that you should be able to be comfortable with,

364

00:23:09.920 --> 00:23:13.690

and that people should be able to accept you in those roles as well.

365

00:23:13.910 --> 00:23:18.050

So been doing it a long time. It's a long journey,

366

00:23:18.230 --> 00:23:19.690

but I'm going for the long haul.

367

00:23:21.420 --> 00:23:25.330

<v 0>Thank you very much for sharing Tracy. So, and thank you all for sharing.</v>

368

00:23:25.650 --> 00:23:25.970

And this,

369

00:23:25.970 --> 00:23:30.850

I hear that this is not something that people just necessarily planned as

370

00:23:30.851 --> 00:23:34.640

much as to make an active decision to say, I am going to do something

371

00:23:36.220 --> 00:23:40.440

by a show of hands who had a, a manual of this is what you need to do.

372

00:23:40.460 --> 00:23:42.000

And this is what you do on this day.

373

00:23:42.020 --> 00:23:44.480

And this is what you do at the end of the day, to know that you made it,

374

00:23:44.820 --> 00:23:47.360

who had a manual, no one, yes,

375

00:23:47.730 --> 00:23:50.240

there are no manuals to this work,

376

00:23:50.780 --> 00:23:53.680

but by show of hands who was able to,

377

00:23:54.260 --> 00:23:57.760

to be it or to create impact in a role because of community.

378

00:24:00.740 --> 00:24:02.700

Yeah. As we have community.

379

00:24:03.080 --> 00:24:07.130

And as we are mindful of the ways in which we can create change,

380

00:24:07.490 --> 00:24:11.490

I am excited to continue to share that journey. I also want to, uh,

381

00:24:11.620 --> 00:24:13.610

honor and pay tribute to you, Tracy,

382

00:24:13.750 --> 00:24:17.570

to be the first in your complete, uh,

383

00:24:17.571 --> 00:24:19.330

ecosystem within your environment.

384

00:24:19.710 --> 00:24:23.890

And I want to express gratitude for you to also be here for the first racial

385

00:24:23.891 --> 00:24:28.680

justice opera perform in the history of opera America. So I just wanted to pay,

386

00:24:28.780 --> 00:24:32.920

pay honor pay tribute to that. I'm gonna ask my question that Pam,

387

00:24:33.660 --> 00:24:37.960

can you elaborate a bit more, right. You're here as a board member,

388

00:24:38.060 --> 00:24:42.600

you are here as a change agent. You are here as a change management consultant.

389

00:24:42.760 --> 00:24:43.720

So you have all this experience.

390

00:24:44.340 --> 00:24:49.150

Can you elaborate a bit more on your own personal experiences

391

00:24:49.400 --> 00:24:51.430

concerning racial justice work?

392

00:24:51.930 --> 00:24:56.150

Can you let us know of one challenge and then can you let us know of one victory

393

00:24:56.530 --> 00:24:57.550

in those experiences?

394

00:25:00.110 --> 00:25:03.750

<v 5>Um, yeah, as I said before, this was very personal. You know,</v>

395

00:25:03.751 --> 00:25:08.700

we started this back in, uh, all of, uh, January of 2021. And,

396

00:25:09.100 --> 00:25:12.980

um, during that time it was a time of tremendous,

397

00:25:13.330 --> 00:25:18.060

much more than, than I have ever seen in my years of, of,

398

00:25:18.500 --> 00:25:21.660

uh, Asian American hate that was going on. Um,

399

00:25:22.000 --> 00:25:26.020

and I personally had some friends and family living.

400

00:25:26.260 --> 00:25:30.930

I grew up in New York city and, um, family who are afraid to walk the streets.

401

00:25:32.030 --> 00:25:36.390

Um, and I guess I had just never really realized, um,

402

00:25:36.391 --> 00:25:41.130

that that can happen to all of us. Um, and you know,

403

00:25:42.280 --> 00:25:46.560

it, it just hit home too to too close that there are other people

404

00:25:47.180 --> 00:25:49.910

who see me or my,

405

00:25:50.530 --> 00:25:54.710

my ethnicity and my race as being so bad

406

00:25:55.300 --> 00:25:59.510

because of all the things that were going on in the media with coronavirus and

407

00:25:59.511 --> 00:26:03.070

COVID, um, that they would take it out on others.

408

00:26:03.330 --> 00:26:05.950

And I realized then that, you know,

409

00:26:06.090 --> 00:26:11.020

it must be so hard for African American boy who are always being

410

00:26:11.021 --> 00:26:15.740

stopped on the street by the police. I mean, all of this started to internalize.

411

00:26:16.540 --> 00:26:20.940

Um, and, and I think I also realized personally that after all these years,

412

00:26:21.000 --> 00:26:24.660

and I'm retired now that, um,

413

00:26:24.920 --> 00:26:29.900

others just don't see, I take for granted that others don't see me for who,

414

00:26:30.250 --> 00:26:34.210

who I am or for who we Asian Americans are. Um,

415

00:26:34.390 --> 00:26:39.130

so that was probably one of the biggest learning, uh, factors for me personally.

416

00:26:39.970 --> 00:26:40.570

Um, but yes,

417

00:26:40.570 --> 00:26:45.440

I was there as a board member to understand how to bring racial equity,

418

00:26:46.360 --> 00:26:49.760

um, to the forefront of our board members. Um,

419

00:26:50.970 --> 00:26:55.950

and I think that I just got way to the challenges there still,

420

00:26:56.830 --> 00:27:01.170

um, you know, you, you try to prepare yourself for board meetings and to,

421

00:27:01.970 --> 00:27:04.200

uh, bring you up to date on what we're doing on the cohort.

422

00:27:04.540 --> 00:27:05.800

Let me tell you what we've learned.

423

00:27:06.260 --> 00:27:09.560

Let me tell you how we're going to apply this and how we're going to use it.

424

00:27:10.100 --> 00:27:14.920

And you get this feeling of passive aggressiveness of silence.

425

00:27:16.650 --> 00:27:20.930

You get the, I don't need to be here to listen to this. Um,

426

00:27:21.550 --> 00:27:26.000

you get the, uh, you know, I don't care. I'm here to talk about,

427

00:27:26.260 --> 00:27:28.720
you know, entertainment and, um,

428

00:27:29.460 --> 00:27:33.400
all of the things that we do in the Dallas arts district. And I'm like,
okay,

429

00:27:33.920 --> 00:27:36.920
uh, but you have to understand that this is going on around you.

430

00:27:37.390 --> 00:27:41.200
This is happening in your community. Um, you know,

431

00:27:41.260 --> 00:27:45.310
all the things that we heard about the truth from the deep T uh,

432

00:27:45.510 --> 00:27:50.190
R HT team with regard to where we live and

433

00:27:50.450 --> 00:27:53.790
all of the things that have happened in our past and in the history of
Dallas,

434

00:27:54.830 --> 00:27:59.390
um, you know, the lynchings, the, the, um, the removal of,

435

00:27:59.490 --> 00:28:04.480
of African American homes in fair park. Um, I mean, you know,

436

00:28:04.550 --> 00:28:07.590
just, just taking that tour is an,

437

00:28:07.870 --> 00:28:10.950
is an eye opener and I've lived here for 40 years. Um,

438

00:28:11.410 --> 00:28:15.990
so to bring some of that truth to the people that we,

439

00:28:16.340 --> 00:28:21.200
that we, um, are with and on our board, um,

440

00:28:21.460 --> 00:28:25.440

and also to incorporate that into our equity and diversity committee,

441

00:28:26.590 --> 00:28:30.540

um, as part of the work that we are trying to do, you know, that's,

442

00:28:30.600 --> 00:28:33.260

that's the work that those, that committee needs to work on,

443

00:28:33.290 --> 00:28:37.500

that doesn't apply to me that, that really, that, that repeating of,

444

00:28:38.060 --> 00:28:42.260

of feeling I didn't hear it, but I felt it that doesn't apply to me.

445

00:28:44.010 --> 00:28:45.970

Um, and so that's the challenge that we have ahead.

446

00:28:47.620 --> 00:28:52.170

<v 0>And you for sharing. And then thank you for bringing to light the, feeling,</v>

447

00:28:52.830 --> 00:28:55.090

the feeling. I feel it in this space,

448

00:28:55.150 --> 00:28:58.610

and a lot of times feelings are our interpretations of what is happening.

449

00:28:58.990 --> 00:29:01.130

And a lot of times that comes from experience.

450

00:29:02.040 --> 00:29:05.650

I've noticed that sometimes silence is people processing.

451

00:29:06.040 --> 00:29:10.800

Sometimes silence is people acted, believe going against and resisting,

452

00:29:11.380 --> 00:29:15.440

and the, the work necessary for people to continue to move through that.

453

00:29:15.860 --> 00:29:19.840

So thank you for sharing that this is an intentional space with these particular

454

00:29:19.920 --> 00:29:22.080

speakers, so that we see the challenges,

455

00:29:22.081 --> 00:29:25.280

but that we also see the ways that we work as community to meet those

456

00:29:25.281 --> 00:29:27.240

challenges. I would like.

457

00:29:28.040 --> 00:29:31.390

<v 5>Let me just add one, go for it, because I don't wanna, um,</v>

458

00:29:31.860 --> 00:29:35.630

misconstrue the staff is very, very open. Um,

459

00:29:36.050 --> 00:29:40.830

and I think that's wonderful. Um, but the difference is between staff, uh,

460

00:29:40.831 --> 00:29:44.640

what they see in here and feel are different than from board members.

461

00:29:47.350 --> 00:29:47.730

<v 0>Thank you.</v>

462

00:29:47.730 --> 00:29:49.030

<v 3>Can I say something about the feeling?</v>

463

00:29:49.650 --> 00:29:50.483

<v 0>Of course.</v>

464

00:29:51.070 --> 00:29:53.270

<v 3>You see a, I feel like I learned this from you,</v>

465

00:29:53.340 --> 00:29:55.510

that racism really just kills your intuition.

466

00:29:55.740 --> 00:29:58.580

Like the intuition that you have as a person,

467

00:29:59.660 --> 00:30:01.090

who's feeling racist them,

468

00:30:01.110 --> 00:30:03.690

who knows those passive aggressive microaggression things,

469

00:30:03.691 --> 00:30:07.330

racism really kills that intuition and they gas like you into thinking,
oh,

470

00:30:07.331 --> 00:30:11.810

that's not real because you felt it in, it's not like a tangible, uh,

471

00:30:11.870 --> 00:30:12.703

act of racism.

472

00:30:12.790 --> 00:30:16.610

So I definitely always talk about that when we talk about like feelings
and

473

00:30:16.611 --> 00:30:18.290

intuition and what we know to be true,

474

00:30:18.480 --> 00:30:23.160

sometimes I get racism actively like kills those, those signals in you.

475

00:30:24.740 --> 00:30:28.280

<v 0>And we've spoken this week, uh, we'll have the recordings available
everyone.</v>

476

00:30:28.281 --> 00:30:31.680

But this week we talked about the ways in which white supremacy culture,

477

00:30:32.540 --> 00:30:36.960

it removes our ability to think, to have emotional,

478

00:30:37.160 --> 00:30:40.760

critical thinking skills. Yes, we can have emotional intelligence.

479

00:30:40.860 --> 00:30:45.430

We know that plus one equals two. This is how this happens. But the,

480

00:30:45.870 --> 00:30:49.830

the understanding of the emotion behind this is what needs to be done.

481

00:30:49.850 --> 00:30:52.990

And this is what is happening to people. And if I were in that space,

482

00:30:52.991 --> 00:30:55.430

this is how it would feel. White supremacy,

483

00:30:55.431 --> 00:30:58.110

culture directly disrupts emotional,

484

00:30:58.270 --> 00:31:03.220

critical thinking skills to the point where you are needing to now qualify and

485

00:31:03.620 --> 00:31:07.460

quantify the very emotions that you have in a system that says that you should

486

00:31:07.580 --> 00:31:11.060

not be emotional in a system that says that you should be objective.

487

00:31:11.061 --> 00:31:12.620

You cannot bring your emotions to work.

488

00:31:12.621 --> 00:31:14.260

You cannot bring your emotions to the space.

489

00:31:14.680 --> 00:31:17.220

You cannot bring your emotions to this particular work.

490

00:31:17.640 --> 00:31:19.940

So thank you both for speaking on that.

491

00:31:21.020 --> 00:31:25.410

I am going to add actively, actually turn it back to you, Renee,

492

00:31:25.830 --> 00:31:28.370
in your work with black women in opera,

493

00:31:28.630 --> 00:31:33.330
you continue to inspire so many others to actively go and seek

494

00:31:33.331 --> 00:31:36.290
information to complete the narrative. On day one,

495

00:31:36.291 --> 00:31:39.730
we talked about in complete narratives to complete the narrative and to
provide

496

00:31:39.890 --> 00:31:44.800
a fuller picture of opera here in the United States of opera global global

497

00:31:44.801 --> 00:31:46.080
opera. Uh,

498

00:31:46.081 --> 00:31:50.800
do you have any advice for other artists such as yourself who are looking

499

00:31:50.940 --> 00:31:55.520
for this kind of path to speak truth and to, to share community with
others?

500

00:31:57.230 --> 00:31:59.380
<v 3>Every time I think about like the work that I do,</v>

501

00:31:59.420 --> 00:32:02.140
I think about Joseph Roach's book about performance.

502

00:32:02.260 --> 00:32:05.250
I forgot what the title was, but he talks about Jeanie I of performance.

503

00:32:05.990 --> 00:32:09.390
And he's specifically talking about like, um,

504

00:32:09.710 --> 00:32:13.110
houses of oppression have like a genealogy. It's not like today,

505

00:32:13.170 --> 00:32:14.710

I'm gonna call you the N word or today.

506

00:32:14.770 --> 00:32:16.470

I'm gonna make sure that you're excluded from this event.

507

00:32:16.471 --> 00:32:20.750

It's a genealogy of things that make these types of things okay. In our system.

508

00:32:20.770 --> 00:32:23.230

And then those types of events come from that genealogy.

509

00:32:23.490 --> 00:32:26.220

So what I try to do is to use it on the flip side,

510

00:32:26.221 --> 00:32:28.180

like talk about the genealogy of performance.

511

00:32:28.181 --> 00:32:30.580

Like if I'm talking about Marion Anderson,

512

00:32:30.640 --> 00:32:32.740

I'm thinking about other people who might have inspired her.

513

00:32:33.000 --> 00:32:35.860

So that brings me on another path to talk about other opera singers.

514

00:32:36.240 --> 00:32:39.440

If I'm talking about those other opera singers, what inspired them to,

515

00:32:39.800 --> 00:32:43.160

to wanna see who taught them, what groups were they in? Like,

516

00:32:43.440 --> 00:32:46.920

how did not go on a path of all this? And I think about the people,

517

00:32:47.400 --> 00:32:50.000

I was lucky because I grew up in Jackson, Mississippi,

518

00:32:50.570 --> 00:32:53.000

which is not like known as a opera town,

519

00:32:53.001 --> 00:32:55.960

but honestly it really was a opera town. So at Mississippi opera there,

520

00:32:56.220 --> 00:33:00.390

and we also had a black organization called opera, south and opera south was,

521

00:33:00.790 --> 00:33:04.060

um, uh, opera company for African Americans.

522

00:33:04.120 --> 00:33:06.460

And they were just performing operas and putting on operas.

523

00:33:06.970 --> 00:33:09.860

Luckily my high school teacher was a part of opera south.

524

00:33:10.040 --> 00:33:12.980

So he was a opera singer. He always talked about technique all the time.

525

00:33:13.240 --> 00:33:15.660

He was always doing his V flat as a baritone, and that was, you know,

526

00:33:15.700 --> 00:33:16.533

a big deal.

527

00:33:16.680 --> 00:33:20.250

So I was very lucky to grow up in the community where he was teaching us about

528

00:33:20.300 --> 00:33:23.050

opera as it relates to black community. And then,

529

00:33:23.640 --> 00:33:26.170

then I can think about opera in different ways as an artist.

530

00:33:26.310 --> 00:33:27.370

So then when I go to school,

531

00:33:27.850 --> 00:33:31.370

I meet the different people who are inspired by people who were in opera,
south,

532

00:33:31.750 --> 00:33:34.330

who are, who started a career because of opera south.

533

00:33:34.710 --> 00:33:36.370

So it just gives me a chance to like,

534

00:33:36.371 --> 00:33:38.610

think about other ways that people connect to opera.

535

00:33:39.010 --> 00:33:41.040

Cause I I'm connected to opera cuz of that teacher,

536

00:33:41.480 --> 00:33:42.800

cuz of my voice teaching and all that kinda stuff.

537

00:33:43.020 --> 00:33:46.160

So of course other people who are big stars are connected to opera for
other

538

00:33:46.161 --> 00:33:50.360

things. I was luckily lucky to do, to get a grant,

539

00:33:50.361 --> 00:33:54.160

to do a DC opera recital, just talking about opera in DC,

540

00:33:54.480 --> 00:33:57.640

the opera DC is like a big opera community gap community center in
Washington,

541

00:33:57.800 --> 00:33:58.260

national opera.

542

00:33:58.260 --> 00:34:01.790

But you also have like big in hopes from here and all that kind of stuff.

543

00:34:01.791 --> 00:34:04.870

So you also have the, that deep, deep black opera community.

544

00:34:05.210 --> 00:34:10.110

So you have opera stars like Denise grace, who's from DC. Um, Lilian Ivanti,

545

00:34:10.111 --> 00:34:12.590

who's from DC, who is friends with Alma Thomas,

546

00:34:12.770 --> 00:34:14.870

who is a painter who has her painting in the white house.

547

00:34:14.871 --> 00:34:18.110

So it's just like this DC has this rich culture of opera.

548

00:34:18.210 --> 00:34:22.500

So I wanna explore that and talk about that because you have people who are in

549

00:34:22.501 --> 00:34:26.580

the young artist program with Washington national opera, who need to know, okay,

550

00:34:26.640 --> 00:34:29.580

DC has this opera community and they have this strong place.

551

00:34:30.080 --> 00:34:33.220

And it keeps helps me to keep growing as an artist because I learned from people

552

00:34:33.240 --> 00:34:35.420

who learn from these great,

553

00:34:35.421 --> 00:34:38.100

great opera stars who ended up being coaches at the met and all that kind of

554

00:34:38.101 --> 00:34:40.980

stuff like that. So just helps me create a strong community.

555

00:34:41.570 --> 00:34:46.010

So my advice for other people is just follow black women opera a

556

00:34:46.850 --> 00:34:50.330
cause we do some of the work for you, but also just be like investigate,

557

00:34:50.790 --> 00:34:54.850
who inspires you, investigate things that you might see online.

558

00:34:54.950 --> 00:34:57.490
I'm always gonna watch something. I'm I find opera anywhere.

559

00:34:57.491 --> 00:35:00.530
I went to fields museum. I find an opera somewhere. I was in Chicago.

560

00:35:00.730 --> 00:35:02.000
I find black operas somewhere.

561

00:35:02.060 --> 00:35:04.040
I'm always gonna see it somewhere and think about, okay,

562

00:35:04.200 --> 00:35:06.520
let me research this name, lemme see what this person was talking about.

563

00:35:07.100 --> 00:35:11.040
And then creating that community around it is reaching to the sides of
you. Not,

564

00:35:11.041 --> 00:35:12.800
you know, not always up or down or anything,

565

00:35:12.801 --> 00:35:15.800
just reaching to the sides of you because I went to H B, C U.

566

00:35:15.801 --> 00:35:18.720
So I know people who are singing opera now who are like

567

00:35:20.690 --> 00:35:21.310
code good.

568

00:35:21.310 --> 00:35:24.800
So that helps me create the community cause they know more black opera
singers.

569

00:35:24.801 --> 00:35:27.000
So then we have an even stronger community.

570
00:35:28.640 --> 00:35:32.600
<v 6>I wanna you, I wanna tag in on that in talking about the
inspiration,</v>

571
00:35:32.601 --> 00:35:35.760
especially because in terms of the environment for me, you know,

572
00:35:36.360 --> 00:35:39.360
Kathleen Battle was my music teacher for two years in grade school, you
know,

573
00:35:39.361 --> 00:35:42.840
before she, right before she became a big opera star, you know,

574
00:35:43.280 --> 00:35:46.600
leonine price went to central state and you know, my uncle was a huge,

575
00:35:46.910 --> 00:35:51.800
huge opera fanatic. I mean he knew every black opera singer, but he,

576
00:35:51.801 --> 00:35:55.920
he knew the white ones, the Italians, he, I mean he was just, you know, a
huge,

577
00:35:56.030 --> 00:36:00.510
huge ch opera buck. But I do agree with you in terms of being able to, uh,

578
00:36:00.660 --> 00:36:05.230
have that network and then to be able to share that within your own
community to

579
00:36:05.390 --> 00:36:08.230
constantly have those references to say, Hey, you know,

580
00:36:08.740 --> 00:36:11.030
this person is doing this. Or just to be able to say, Hey,

581
00:36:11.220 --> 00:36:14.750
this person is performing here. You know, we should check this out.

582

00:36:15.130 --> 00:36:18.340

And my other thing is too espec i n, in my environment. I,

583

00:36:18.460 --> 00:36:19.820

I worked in an environment where the,

584

00:36:19.880 --> 00:36:24.460

the excuse was we can't find black a singers and that's ridiculous.

585

00:36:24.720 --> 00:36:27.060

That's ridiculous. Number one, you're not looking,

586

00:36:27.560 --> 00:36:30.500

you're not looking in the right places. You know, you have your limited.

587

00:36:30.680 --> 00:36:32.860

It used to be, you know, you either, uh,

588

00:36:33.070 --> 00:36:35.500

found people in New York or maybe Chicago,

589

00:36:35.610 --> 00:36:39.530

even in terms of auditioning you young artist, you know, but you know,

590

00:36:39.531 --> 00:36:43.370

like you said, you know, there are tons of opera singers and, and amazing,
uh,

591

00:36:43.371 --> 00:36:46.250

vocalists in HBCUs. You know, you know,

592

00:36:46.251 --> 00:36:51.090

people are just afraid to go and to expand their horizons in terms of how

593

00:36:51.091 --> 00:36:54.570

they're finding different opera singers or how they're communicating you.

594

00:36:54.571 --> 00:36:58.170

Can't just put an ad in the paper and local paper and expect that's the
VIN.

595

00:36:58.340 --> 00:37:01.960

You the, the, the way that everybody is gonna receive their information,

596

00:37:02.020 --> 00:37:05.440

you have to be creative in that and then be willing to go out on and make the

597

00:37:05.441 --> 00:37:07.960

investment. That's the other thing too, you know, I know,

598

00:37:08.080 --> 00:37:11.680

I understand where all arts organizations, we're all nonprofits, you know,

599

00:37:11.681 --> 00:37:15.320

the first thing is resources are tight. And so that gives people an excuse,

600

00:37:15.860 --> 00:37:19.710

not to expand and expand on finding

601

00:37:21.420 --> 00:37:25.610

nontraditional opera artist, you know, or you know,

602

00:37:25.720 --> 00:37:29.410

ones that they are white opera artists basically. So I, I,

603

00:37:29.930 --> 00:37:34.530

I totally agree with you there. You know, that that definitely is.

604

00:37:34.770 --> 00:37:35.603

It has to change.

605

00:37:36.500 --> 00:37:41.200

<v 0>Thank you for that. Both of you. I'd love to, to hold,</v>

606

00:37:41.460 --> 00:37:44.320

to, to work with everybody, to see the connections, Renee,

607

00:37:44.321 --> 00:37:46.040

you said that you looked at this one person,

608

00:37:46.420 --> 00:37:48.840

but you did not look at this person. That's just an opera singer.

609

00:37:48.860 --> 00:37:51.200

You looked at them as a human being is what I'm hearing,

610

00:37:51.620 --> 00:37:56.200

who was connected to other human beings and that their existence was not siloed

611

00:37:56.201 --> 00:38:00.830

just because of opera and opera itself is not siloed as this wonderful art form

612

00:38:00.831 --> 00:38:04.910

that other people just don't understand and don't want to engage with and need

613

00:38:04.911 --> 00:38:08.150

to be educated in order to appreciate the,

614

00:38:08.510 --> 00:38:12.390

the tenants of opera is a part of the community.

615

00:38:13.450 --> 00:38:16.190

And it has been for a very long time for many communities.

616

00:38:16.650 --> 00:38:21.300

And the narrative that we normally engage with is that, oh, there were not many,

617

00:38:21.880 --> 00:38:25.060

or we don't have a lot when in effect,

618

00:38:25.170 --> 00:38:27.100

it's a matter of completing the narrative.

619

00:38:27.520 --> 00:38:32.420

We don't have the full narrative of opera because we're not focusing on the full

620

00:38:32.421 --> 00:38:35.840

community. That is opera is what I am hearing.

621

00:38:36.500 --> 00:38:40.800

And I appreciate you Tracy, in saying that the, the investment,

622

00:38:41.620 --> 00:38:42.270

and again,

623

00:38:42.270 --> 00:38:46.080

it's to get to know people that we don't have a lot of administrators.

624

00:38:46.180 --> 00:38:49.640

We don't have a lot of opera singers. It's not just, you're not looking.

625

00:38:50.300 --> 00:38:54.360

It is a matter of whether or not you are engaging with people on a human.

626

00:38:54.810 --> 00:38:57.510

Do you expect people to come straight to you just because that's what people

627

00:38:57.710 --> 00:39:02.710

normally do. Do you have relationships with other communities as a human being?

628

00:39:02.770 --> 00:39:06.750

Do you have relationships with other communities as an organization that is

629

00:39:06.890 --> 00:39:10.030

valued and is a valued member of that community, right?

630

00:39:10.031 --> 00:39:13.790

Because otherwise I can offer anything to a stranger that doesn't mean they're

631

00:39:13.870 --> 00:39:17.340

gonna accept it as, especially if there's a history of distrust,

632

00:39:18.070 --> 00:39:22.300

especially if there's a history of abuse or as we said, tokenism,

633

00:39:22.480 --> 00:39:26.460

and we defined, I gave the definition, this is the quote definition of tokenism.

634

00:39:26.820 --> 00:39:30.540

And this is valid. Uh, tokenism is representation without agency.

635

00:39:31.040 --> 00:39:33.180

So when we are representing people and we say, Hey,

636

00:39:33.181 --> 00:39:35.420

I need you to go represent this group.

637

00:39:35.970 --> 00:39:37.650

You need to be the person to represent this group,

638

00:39:37.950 --> 00:39:42.170

but we don't provide them with agency or the opportunity and the ability to make

639

00:39:42.171 --> 00:39:46.570

change actual, real changes or to co-create an environment.

640

00:39:46.720 --> 00:39:51.650

Then it is just tokenism. And that is harmful. I want to turn it back to,

641

00:39:51.880 --> 00:39:56.880

well, actually, Ian I'll throw in there and then I'll to Tracy.

642

00:39:57.460 --> 00:40:02.280

Ian, do you have any thoughts on the ways that, uh, leaders, right,

643

00:40:02.281 --> 00:40:04.880

as a general director of a tier one opera company,

644

00:40:05.180 --> 00:40:09.440

do you have any thoughts on the ways that leaders can invest in this type of

645

00:40:09.450 --> 00:40:14.000
shift and in the, the culture necessary for us to change.

646
00:40:16.820 --> 00:40:21.710
<v 4>Well for, for us, for the Dallas opera and for me personally,</v>

647
00:40:22.190 --> 00:40:26.590
uh, it, like I said earlier, kind of started right within our own four walls.

648
00:40:27.570 --> 00:40:29.670
And, uh, to me, it,

649
00:40:29.780 --> 00:40:34.390
that is an important first step anywhere is to really understand where

650
00:40:34.940 --> 00:40:39.140
your strengths and weaknesses are are. Uh, and, and I,

651
00:40:39.980 --> 00:40:43.640
it didn't take long to realize that that when, you know,

652
00:40:44.260 --> 00:40:48.520
go back a year, year and a half, there was just so much fear and,

653
00:40:48.580 --> 00:40:52.280
and fear is one of those, those feelings that, that, uh,

654
00:40:53.630 --> 00:40:57.470
I think we've all talked about one, one way or another so far, uh, uh,

655
00:40:57.471 --> 00:41:02.260
whether it's fear of future or fear of being assaulted or fear of any

656
00:41:02.261 --> 00:41:06.460
number of things that have, have come up and, uh, the fear of a pandemic,

657
00:41:06.680 --> 00:41:11.020
all of it rolled together. There was so much fear that I wanted to,

658
00:41:11.120 --> 00:41:13.740

to make sure that we were in tune with where people,

659

00:41:14.000 --> 00:41:18.340

how they were mitigating their own fear, uh, as a, as a, on a personal level,

660

00:41:18.730 --> 00:41:23.050

a human and what that was translating to within our own company. And,

661

00:41:24.010 --> 00:41:24.710

uh, you know,

662

00:41:24.710 --> 00:41:29.610

we had some immense talent within our own four walls and some

663

00:41:29.640 --> 00:41:33.680

very brave individuals, uh, that were able to step up that we're able to,

664

00:41:33.780 --> 00:41:36.920

to have conversations with me directly, uh,

665

00:41:36.921 --> 00:41:40.360

with their own supervisors and to be able to say, um,

666

00:41:40.680 --> 00:41:45.220

I think we need to think about ways that we can change things. And,

667

00:41:46.020 --> 00:41:48.900

uh, as a leader, uh, you really,

668

00:41:49.720 --> 00:41:53.250

you really rely on your own intuition a lot of the time. Um,

669

00:41:53.990 --> 00:41:58.450

but you also rely on the bravery and the leadership of those that you're working

670

00:41:58.480 --> 00:42:02.890

with. And, uh, so it was about not only listening,

671

00:42:02.910 --> 00:42:05.650

but it was also feeling like along the way,

672

00:42:05.750 --> 00:42:08.810

I'm empowering the rest of the staff to be able to, uh,

673

00:42:09.000 --> 00:42:12.970

have their voices at the table and to make sure they're, they're heard and,

674

00:42:13.280 --> 00:42:15.880

and at the table and make room at the table. Um,

675

00:42:16.220 --> 00:42:20.960

all of those things come together. Um, not,

676

00:42:21.020 --> 00:42:24.800

not necessarily right along the same lines of that, but I, I, as,

677

00:42:24.940 --> 00:42:29.840

as I'm listening to, uh, Renee and Tracy, um, I'm, I'm just kind of,

678

00:42:30.280 --> 00:42:35.070

uh, wanted to share when I was growing up. I grew up in and the south and,

679

00:42:35.630 --> 00:42:40.430

uh, and wasn't, uh, involved in a small, uh, opera company, uh,

680

00:42:40.431 --> 00:42:45.110

that was at the time called Charlotte opera. Uh, now is opera Carolina. And,

681

00:42:45.710 --> 00:42:49.710

uh, my, my first experiences were as, uh, either a, a,

682

00:42:50.030 --> 00:42:54.070

a child super, or a child children's course or whatever. But I,

683

00:42:54.440 --> 00:42:57.860

it was the first time that I, I went to the opera company and,

684

00:42:58.180 --> 00:43:02.620

and my parents were in the chorus. Uh, and that's where I experienced diversity.

685

00:43:02.970 --> 00:43:04.420

Like I had never seen, I,

686

00:43:04.580 --> 00:43:09.500

I saw more non-white kids in the children's chorus than I had

687

00:43:09.501 --> 00:43:13.780

ever seen in my life. And I, I saw women, uh,

688

00:43:14.210 --> 00:43:16.410

that were, are running rehearsals.

689

00:43:16.730 --> 00:43:20.810

I'm in charge of everything in a way that I had not seen that before.

690

00:43:20.950 --> 00:43:25.010

So from my perspective, as a little kid growing up in, in Charlotte,

691

00:43:26.050 --> 00:43:29.810

uh, it was a place of, of infinite, uh, uh, diversity.

692

00:43:30.510 --> 00:43:34.050

And I, I have to hand it to Charlotte back in that time.

693

00:43:34.150 --> 00:43:37.920

I'm not saying it was perfect in any way, shape or form, but I mean, there were,

694

00:43:38.210 --> 00:43:42.640

there were so many wonderful singers that I, I think of. I, I will never forget,

695

00:43:43.040 --> 00:43:48.040

um, Wilhelmina Fernandez came and sang and Charlotte a long time ago. I,

696

00:43:48.160 --> 00:43:52.080

I just, I, I think I fell in love with her. Uh, it was, it was really,

697

00:43:52.760 --> 00:43:57.150
really quite amazing, but anyway, I'll go get off story lane.

698
00:43:58.270 --> 00:43:59.430
<v 0>Okay. Thank you for sharing.</v>

699
00:43:59.570 --> 00:44:03.550
And then thank you for acknowledging that while that was what you were

700
00:44:03.551 --> 00:44:06.270
experiencing and what you were seeing. There's nuance to.

701
00:44:06.271 --> 00:44:09.950
When we look up in a space and everybody, you know, we gather everybody's
there,

702
00:44:10.380 --> 00:44:14.590
that it's not perfect, uh, and that there's still work to be done,

703
00:44:14.610 --> 00:44:16.900
but that it's okay to acknowledge the,

704
00:44:17.180 --> 00:44:18.660
the beauty and the moment in the community,

705
00:44:19.400 --> 00:44:23.460
and to see it as the possibility of what we can continue to strive for.

706
00:44:23.680 --> 00:44:26.100
So I appreciate that I'll come back, uh,

707
00:44:26.101 --> 00:44:29.260
to ask more questions about your perspective, uh,

708
00:44:29.320 --> 00:44:31.880
as a role or at your perspective,

709
00:44:32.200 --> 00:44:36.920
and then the role of leadership you mentioned kind of not just empowering
staff,

710

00:44:37.020 --> 00:44:40.160
but trusting staff to do what they can do.

711
00:44:40.900 --> 00:44:43.800
I'd like to now turn my question to Tracy. Tracy,

712
00:44:43.900 --> 00:44:47.920
you have been identified by many, many, many, many everybody,

713
00:44:49.680 --> 00:44:52.550
uh, as one of the primary leaders in the shift,

714
00:44:52.730 --> 00:44:56.310
the very vivid shift for Cincinnati opera's approach to community,

715
00:44:56.770 --> 00:45:00.990
to the point where community engagement is just a part of the organization.

716
00:45:01.490 --> 00:45:05.030
The general director will color with a child, and don't,

717
00:45:05.031 --> 00:45:07.990
don't try to stop him because he wants to go out there and do this work.

718
00:45:08.810 --> 00:45:13.420
Can you share any advice for other staff members who

719
00:45:13.720 --> 00:45:16.940
are looking to enact change within their organizations?

720
00:45:18.410 --> 00:45:19.061
<v 6>Well, first of all,</v>

721
00:45:19.061 --> 00:45:23.740
I definitely think it's important that leadership be an active, um,

722
00:45:24.900 --> 00:45:28.980
uh, an active leader in this. And, you know, because otherwise,

723
00:45:28.981 --> 00:45:30.540

if it doesn't come from the top down,

724

00:45:30.740 --> 00:45:35.690

whether it's the board and if they're not actively engaged and then also

725

00:45:36.330 --> 00:45:40.530

encouraging the rest of the staff and also helping them providing, uh,

726

00:45:40.600 --> 00:45:43.970

some of the tools necessary for them too, because for a lot of folks,

727

00:45:44.160 --> 00:45:47.250

it's a new sphere, you know, they,

728

00:45:47.251 --> 00:45:51.010

they don't know what it means to go out into the community. I mean, some, some,

729

00:45:51.330 --> 00:45:54.200

some, it's just a matter of personality types. You know, for example,

730

00:45:54.780 --> 00:45:57.040

I'm always pushing that, yes,

731

00:45:57.300 --> 00:46:01.040

our production team is the team that's responsible for making sure we get the

732

00:46:01.200 --> 00:46:02.033

opera on stage,

733

00:46:02.620 --> 00:46:07.480

but they too have so much to offer and can still engage in the community in a

734

00:46:07.481 --> 00:46:12.240

way that, you know, promotes connectiveness, you know, um,

735

00:46:12.550 --> 00:46:14.550

they have stories to share as well, but they,

736

00:46:14.790 --> 00:46:16.190
there are things that they can learn as well.

737
00:46:16.470 --> 00:46:20.350
I think it's beneficial for them to be able to engage in the community and
to

738
00:46:20.351 --> 00:46:23.270
connect and get to know people and to understand, you know,

739
00:46:23.810 --> 00:46:25.390
what's happening in the, in the community,

740
00:46:25.540 --> 00:46:30.110
what the needs are in the community and how we can best serve our
community.

741
00:46:30.760 --> 00:46:35.180
We're all service organiz. Yes. You know,

742
00:46:35.200 --> 00:46:38.820
and I think sometimes with opera, it is such an elitist art form.

743
00:46:38.821 --> 00:46:41.420
There's this hierarchy or this, this mindset,

744
00:46:42.080 --> 00:46:44.580
but we're still a service organization.

745
00:46:45.160 --> 00:46:50.060
We are here to be an integral part of the community. Um,

746
00:46:50.880 --> 00:46:51.320
you know,

747
00:46:51.320 --> 00:46:54.690
and not just within the neighborhood that our organiz they should exist
in,

748
00:46:54.790 --> 00:46:59.130
but if we want to continue to grow and to thrive, uh,

749

00:46:59.630 --> 00:47:03.490

we need to be out there. We need to be going to communities,

750

00:47:03.491 --> 00:47:06.050

whether it's in the suburbs, whether it's in the hood,

751

00:47:06.051 --> 00:47:09.370

whether it's in the schools, wherever it is, you know, we,

752

00:47:09.371 --> 00:47:13.610

people should be talking about us as an arts organization as

753

00:47:14.300 --> 00:47:17.840

if, you know, we're the clerk at the corner store. They know us,

754

00:47:18.980 --> 00:47:21.160

we have a relationship, you know,

755

00:47:21.700 --> 00:47:26.080

we need to know what their needs and desires are just as much as they,

756

00:47:26.180 --> 00:47:29.960

we want them to know what we are providing as an arts organization.

757

00:47:30.100 --> 00:47:31.560

So we need to build that,

758

00:47:31.710 --> 00:47:36.080

that bond and relationship it's about relationship. It takes time,

759

00:47:36.620 --> 00:47:40.920

it takes patience. Uh, we have to go in without assumptions. We have to be,

760

00:47:41.020 --> 00:47:45.880

we have to go in willing to learn and listen and listen to

761

00:47:45.881 --> 00:47:47.960

what the needs are. I'll give you a prime example.

762

00:47:49.370 --> 00:47:52.590

We had a situation with one of our, when my fellow arts organizations,

763

00:47:52.591 --> 00:47:56.950

where they couldn't understand why the community that's right next door to us

764

00:47:57.050 --> 00:47:59.870

was not engaging with us. You know, we've offered to do this,

765

00:48:00.070 --> 00:48:02.030

or we offered to do a performance. Well,

766

00:48:02.031 --> 00:48:03.790

these folks are going through some things right now,

767

00:48:04.310 --> 00:48:08.510

their housing is being taken away to build a stadium. You know what I mean?

768

00:48:09.500 --> 00:48:13.540

They're, we're not their priority. So what can we do to help them? What can we,

769

00:48:13.541 --> 00:48:16.140

we do to help ease the stress for them? You know,

770

00:48:16.141 --> 00:48:19.620

what can we do for their children in the process? I mean, even with COVID,

771

00:48:19.720 --> 00:48:23.660

and I think I've mentioned this before, even with COVID one thing I will say,

772

00:48:23.661 --> 00:48:28.540

our CEO first priority was we can't perform the way we

773

00:48:28.700 --> 00:48:31.770

normally perform, but there's still a community out there with needs.

774

00:48:32.320 --> 00:48:36.130

What can we do to ease the stresses of what's happening with COVID?

775

00:48:36.790 --> 00:48:40.530

How can we engage? Whether it means we as a team, you know,

776

00:48:40.531 --> 00:48:44.930

provide lunch for healthcare workers, uh, whether it means,

777

00:48:45.350 --> 00:48:45.710

you know,

778

00:48:45.710 --> 00:48:49.970

the kids couldn't graduate inside and they had to do a drive by graduation.

779

00:48:50.140 --> 00:48:52.080

Can we do to enhance that experience?

780

00:48:52.370 --> 00:48:56.520

There are ways we can function as a company that don't always necessarily

781

00:48:56.870 --> 00:49:01.050

require performances, but just require us to be there,

782

00:49:01.910 --> 00:49:06.850

to be present, to be accessible. You know, someone calls us and says, Hey,

783

00:49:08.410 --> 00:49:12.340

is there any way you can provide voice lessons for my child?

784

00:49:12.370 --> 00:49:15.580

They really like to sing. We shouldn't turn around and say, well,

785

00:49:16.350 --> 00:49:19.500

we'll provide voice lessons. If you buy a ticket to this performance,

786

00:49:19.800 --> 00:49:23.580

or how much did you donate to Cincinnati opera this year? Shouldn't be that way.

787

00:49:24.030 --> 00:49:25.860

We're all part of the same community.

788

00:49:26.320 --> 00:49:30.660

We are all human beings that have different needs of different times. And man,

789

00:49:30.661 --> 00:49:32.690

isn't it night to just be able to say, you know,

790

00:49:33.310 --> 00:49:35.330

has nothing to do with what's on stage,

791

00:49:36.070 --> 00:49:38.850

but we're part of this community and we can help you.

792

00:49:42.110 --> 00:49:45.890

So that's my long version of my advice.

793

00:49:46.950 --> 00:49:47.930

<v 0>Yes, yes. And yes.</v>

794

00:49:48.210 --> 00:49:52.480

And thank you for pointing out that we are service organizations.

795

00:49:52.720 --> 00:49:56.120

For those of us who are nonprofit, right? Uh, art is not a charitable purpose.

796

00:49:57.020 --> 00:49:57.780

It is not.

797

00:49:57.780 --> 00:50:02.200

Art is not a named charitable purpose in the 5 0 1 C three requirements.

798

00:50:02.690 --> 00:50:06.920

We're identified as service organizations and through art, right?

799

00:50:06.921 --> 00:50:10.760

This is how we make sure that we provide service in many different ways.

800

00:50:11.620 --> 00:50:16.190

And it is a matter of, are we fulfilling, right?

801

00:50:16.250 --> 00:50:20.590

Our purpose in serving our communities, are we actually serving our communities?

802

00:50:20.790 --> 00:50:23.190

And the works that we present, if those works are harmful,

803

00:50:23.850 --> 00:50:28.520

are we making sure that we go through the,

804

00:50:29.000 --> 00:50:32.760

the tens and the things that are required in order to be in relationship with

805

00:50:32.761 --> 00:50:33.500

our communities?

806

00:50:33.500 --> 00:50:36.240

How can we know the needs of our communities if we don't talk to them?

807

00:50:36.820 --> 00:50:40.760

And if we don't take the role of a learner,

808

00:50:41.040 --> 00:50:44.000

I love that you said a learner and you have to learn.

809

00:50:45.040 --> 00:50:49.430

I would like actually pass this now back to Ian, Ian,

810

00:50:49.650 --> 00:50:54.350

as the general director, you're definitely the leader of the organization.

811

00:50:55.070 --> 00:50:58.910

Uh, but of course, in, in your identity, in your role,

812

00:50:58.911 --> 00:51:00.670

there's a lot of learning that has to happen.

813

00:51:01.410 --> 00:51:05.830

Can you share what that is like for you as a white male? Can you share,

814

00:51:05.831 --> 00:51:09.460

what is that is like you, as someone who's been an opera for,

815

00:51:09.680 --> 00:51:11.580

as you say for all your life, uh,

816

00:51:11.581 --> 00:51:15.020

but the things that you're noticing and then your own personal journey for

817

00:51:15.180 --> 00:51:16.013

learning.

818

00:51:18.110 --> 00:51:19.570

<v 4>So many thoughts. Um.</v>

819

00:51:20.450 --> 00:51:21.283

<v 0>I know.</v>

820

00:51:21.600 --> 00:51:26.150

<v 4>Yeah. Uh, I would, I would just go back to,</v>

821

00:51:26.790 --> 00:51:31.100

uh, the, the, of listening and,

822

00:51:31.900 --> 00:51:36.260

uh, as, as a leader, uh, I don't think it, you always think it's important,

823

00:51:36.320 --> 00:51:38.580

but I don't think it's ever been more important to,

824

00:51:38.720 --> 00:51:41.740

to listen more than you speak in a lot of ways. Um,

825

00:51:42.520 --> 00:51:46.540

and to make sure, uh, that what we're doing,

826

00:51:47.540 --> 00:51:52.290

uh, is, uh, discussion that isn't just at the table in my office.

827

00:51:52.510 --> 00:51:56.690

It isn't a discussion in the all staff meetings that we have, uh,

828

00:51:56.880 --> 00:52:01.010

because all of the work that we're doing within the company,

829

00:52:02.050 --> 00:52:06.810

uh, has to be visible to the outside world. It has to be, uh, a part of,

830

00:52:07.690 --> 00:52:12.240

uh, the board and trustees, uh, understanding and mission. And,

831

00:52:12.840 --> 00:52:16.640

uh, it's bringing all of those groups together. It has to be, uh,

832

00:52:16.720 --> 00:52:20.840

a collective part of the, the chorus, the orchestra,

833

00:52:21.460 --> 00:52:25.680

and it takes a long time to coordinate all of those parts,

834

00:52:25.700 --> 00:52:29.640

as you all know, opera is incredibly complex, uh,

835

00:52:29.780 --> 00:52:34.270

and it has such a reputation for moving at a glacial pace, uh,

836

00:52:34.690 --> 00:52:39.070

and that all of that still remains quite true. Um,

837

00:52:39.590 --> 00:52:44.550

I think we've found in the pandemic that there are ways now to, uh,

838

00:52:45.160 --> 00:52:50.030

facilitate change much more quickly, uh, through, through digital offerings,

839

00:52:50.031 --> 00:52:53.740

through these kinds of conversations, through being able to gather together in,

840

00:52:54.000 --> 00:52:58.140

in ways that we just didn't before. Um, but the,

841

00:52:58.320 --> 00:53:02.740

the reality is, is that all of those parts, all of the spokes of the wheel, uh,

842

00:53:02.810 --> 00:53:07.700

need to have an understanding of, of what it takes to, uh, change.

843

00:53:08.220 --> 00:53:12.530

And as far as making sure that the ultimate goal make sure that people feel like

844

00:53:12.531 --> 00:53:17.010

they belong. And if that is, that is not only, uh,

845

00:53:17.150 --> 00:53:20.610

as a member of the staff, it's a member of the course, it's a member of the,

846

00:53:20.890 --> 00:53:25.480

the principles, the stage hands, all of these groups that come in. And, uh,

847

00:53:25.580 --> 00:53:30.320

that's something that I think has become more clear to me as a leader is that,

848

00:53:30.800 --> 00:53:34.600

uh, you know, not everybody feels like they belong for whatever reason.

849

00:53:35.380 --> 00:53:38.760

And there are obstacles, uh, many of which, uh,

850

00:53:38.830 --> 00:53:40.440

existed far before I got here,

851

00:53:40.910 --> 00:53:44.910

some of which I'm sure I created myself and I even were away of,

852

00:53:45.450 --> 00:53:49.390
but those are the things that I rely on people to tell me, uh, the,

853

00:53:49.391 --> 00:53:53.430
these obstacles and, uh, that's, that's where the change happens.

854

00:53:53.650 --> 00:53:54.483
It really does.

855

00:53:57.360 --> 00:54:01.550
<v 0>Thank you for sharing. So in this, I'm very much hearing, uh,</v>

856

00:54:01.570 --> 00:54:06.230
the importance of leaders listening, and then the importance of staff members,

857

00:54:06.590 --> 00:54:08.180
community actually speaking up,

858

00:54:08.630 --> 00:54:13.540
there is a space in this work where distrust has already been in place,

859

00:54:13.920 --> 00:54:16.660
and you have to learn, you have to earn trust.

860

00:54:17.160 --> 00:54:21.940
And as we work to earn trust, when we as leaders, when Ian,

861

00:54:21.941 --> 00:54:25.380
as a leader, when Renee as a leader, when Pam, when any of us, as a leader,

862

00:54:26.200 --> 00:54:27.970
ask our staff members,

863

00:54:28.410 --> 00:54:31.210
ask our communities to be brave enough to tell the truth,

864

00:54:31.790 --> 00:54:35.450
we have to actually absorb that information. Yes.

865

00:54:36.170 --> 00:54:37.370
Defensiveness is going to come in. Yes,

866
00:54:37.371 --> 00:54:39.730
these white SRE culture characteristics they'll hop in,

867
00:54:40.030 --> 00:54:42.330
but we have to be able to absorb that information.

868
00:54:42.390 --> 00:54:46.370
We have to be committed to doing something about it just as Pam said,

869
00:54:46.430 --> 00:54:49.360
you never know, nobody do knows this work until you're in it.

870
00:54:49.510 --> 00:54:51.080
That is the absolute truth.

871
00:54:52.060 --> 00:54:56.440
The white supremacy characteristics of being qualified and being over

872
00:54:57.040 --> 00:55:00.360
prepared, and I'm ready. And I read this book and here I am.

873
00:55:00.440 --> 00:55:02.680
I know what to do will not serve you in this,

874
00:55:04.500 --> 00:55:06.940
this supremacy culture does not know community.

875
00:55:07.560 --> 00:55:10.410
It is direct designed to isolate.

876
00:55:10.790 --> 00:55:14.690
It is directly designed to create false or incomplete narratives.

877
00:55:14.691 --> 00:55:17.770
It is directly designed to break apart community.

878
00:55:18.430 --> 00:55:20.970
So we want to be mindful of that. Uh,

879

00:55:21.050 --> 00:55:24.970

I want to ask all of our panelists to share

880

00:55:26.270 --> 00:55:28.610

one thing or one word of encouragement to everybody,

881

00:55:28.890 --> 00:55:32.400

right about it's very difficult, but very meaningful work. Uh,

882

00:55:32.401 --> 00:55:35.400

what is one thing that keeps you going in this work?

883

00:55:35.660 --> 00:55:39.920

And then I'll open the floor for our questions. If you have questions,

884

00:55:39.940 --> 00:55:42.840

get ready for them, put them in the chat. Those that we do not answer,

885

00:55:43.060 --> 00:55:45.760

we will continue to answer during our working lunch break.

886

00:55:46.460 --> 00:55:49.360

I'm going to start with Pam. Oh, you got it, Pam, you want me to go for it?

887

00:55:51.870 --> 00:55:56.430

<v 5>Um, you know, it's just gonna take time. And I think that, uh,</v>

888

00:55:56.730 --> 00:56:00.190

the one thing that I, I fear the most is that,

889

00:56:01.260 --> 00:56:05.410

especially from a board perspective, if we try to water something down,

890

00:56:06.110 --> 00:56:10.580

we lose the impact and we can't lose the impact here. You know,

891

00:56:10.830 --> 00:56:11.510

our intent,

892

00:56:11.510 --> 00:56:16.010

our intent might be good to help people to understand in their own ways.

893

00:56:16.510 --> 00:56:21.330

And we can take that to the nth degree and actually have

894

00:56:21.390 --> 00:56:22.223

no impact.

895

00:56:23.050 --> 00:56:26.470

So it's that balance of really trying to listen,

896

00:56:27.420 --> 00:56:29.110

communicate, um,

897

00:56:29.320 --> 00:56:34.230

understand how people can really absorb and internalize,

898

00:56:35.150 --> 00:56:39.710

uh, what we need to do to achieve racial equity. Um, and you know,

899

00:56:39.910 --> 00:56:44.380

I never realized that it would really be, uh, for a small group of people,

900

00:56:45.500 --> 00:56:50.060

um, that I have to deal with, um, such a really major hill decline.

901

00:56:51.400 --> 00:56:52.500

So that's my challenge.

902

00:56:53.600 --> 00:56:56.420

<v 0>Yeah. Thank you for that. I'm gonna, Tracy,</v>

903

00:56:56.730 --> 00:56:58.820

what is something that kind of keeps you going?

904

00:56:59.050 --> 00:57:02.020

What can keep everybody else going? What should we be mindful of?

905

00:57:02.410 --> 00:57:03.770

<v 6>Well, first and for most,</v>

906

00:57:03.830 --> 00:57:08.050

for me is just the promise of God that keeps me strong

907

00:57:09.270 --> 00:57:13.540

and keeps me moving because it's a tough road.

908

00:57:13.850 --> 00:57:16.340

There's, there's no question about it. Um,

909

00:57:18.370 --> 00:57:22.090

patience is one for sure. Um,

910

00:57:23.230 --> 00:57:24.130

and you have to,

911

00:57:26.330 --> 00:57:30.440

there is not one solution to everything and you have to wait all sides,

912

00:57:31.580 --> 00:57:33.170

you know, and,

913

00:57:33.410 --> 00:57:37.050

and I understand not everyone can be clumped into the same category for any

914

00:57:37.080 --> 00:57:38.850

situation, any given situation,

915

00:57:39.710 --> 00:57:44.210

but I agree to be able to effectively listen

916

00:57:44.510 --> 00:57:46.720

and to be, uh, um,

917

00:57:47.170 --> 00:57:50.560

courageous enough to have those hard conversations,

918

00:57:51.190 --> 00:57:56.040

even when you don't agree and to understand why you

919

00:57:56.150 --> 00:57:59.140

fear what you fear, you know,

920

00:57:59.440 --> 00:58:02.060

why you fear a person of another race,

921

00:58:02.880 --> 00:58:07.570

why you fear the exposure of being supremacist,

922

00:58:08.230 --> 00:58:12.370

you know, why, and especially in the opera world, it's interesting.

923

00:58:12.380 --> 00:58:17.290

There is a fear that if you, for some that,

924

00:58:17.430 --> 00:58:20.250

if you move more towards diversity and inclusion,

925

00:58:20.840 --> 00:58:25.650

that takes away something from the people who are already in the opera

926

00:58:25.870 --> 00:58:30.430

mix. And that is like furthest from the truth,

927

00:58:30.890 --> 00:58:35.550

but why does that fear exist? Are you afraid you're gonna lose someone's money?

928

00:58:36.390 --> 00:58:39.810

You know, if you're gonna, are you gonna lose a major donor's Mo money?

929

00:58:40.390 --> 00:58:45.010

If you add more diversity to your, to your mix, you know,

930

00:58:45.190 --> 00:58:49.200

if you hire more people of color, if you put more people of color on stage,

931

00:58:49.680 --> 00:58:52.480

are you afraid you're gonna lose those people? What,

932

00:58:52.481 --> 00:58:54.720
what is that fear in identifying it,

933

00:58:55.650 --> 00:58:59.680
being honest about it and dealing with it, and, and what's important to
you,

934

00:59:00.350 --> 00:59:03.730
you know, and it's okay to be honest about, what's really important to
you.

935

00:59:03.731 --> 00:59:06.090
If you, if you feel like, you know,

936

00:59:07.050 --> 00:59:10.920
I really don't wanna go through this process of be honest about it.

937

00:59:13.000 --> 00:59:15.920
You know and let's let's move on, you know,

938

00:59:16.900 --> 00:59:21.040
so there's, there's so much to say there, but yeah, just.

939

00:59:22.510 --> 00:59:26.740
<v 0>Absolutely. Thank you. Uh, I'm going to go to Renee and then Ian,</v>

940

00:59:26.850 --> 00:59:29.180
what is something that keeps you going?

941

00:59:29.250 --> 00:59:31.260
What can keep everybody else going in this work?

942

00:59:32.980 --> 00:59:35.900
<v 3>Like, I don't even know what to say. Cuz girl, I'm gonna start
crying.</v>

943

00:59:36.420 --> 00:59:37.500
Cause it's hard. Okay.

944

00:59:37.620 --> 00:59:38.620

<v 0>Well hold face with you in this.</v>

945

00:59:41.230 --> 00:59:44.770

<v 3>Not so young artists trying to figure out what my place is in the world is a</v>

946

00:59:45.010 --> 00:59:47.770

pandemic people still dying at the hands of police every day.

947

00:59:47.950 --> 00:59:51.170

People you still seeing injustices, especially in the opera world,

948

00:59:51.230 --> 00:59:53.970

as it relates to racism, gender expression, sexuality.

949

00:59:54.310 --> 00:59:58.010

So it's overwhelming cuz you trying to figure out what am I doing and why does

950

00:59:58.011 --> 00:59:58.844

this matter?

951

00:59:59.030 --> 01:00:02.440

But we just celebrated our third anniversary as black woman in opera.

952

01:00:02.500 --> 01:00:06.800

And we highlighted this young singer, her name's Brittany Owen, Olivia Logan.

953

01:00:07.100 --> 01:00:10.320

And when we started black woman in opera, she was a senior in college.

954

01:00:11.180 --> 01:00:13.880

And now this young woman is a young artist at the met.

955

01:00:14.740 --> 01:00:19.000

So she specifically cite what we did with black women in opera to help her

956

01:00:19.001 --> 01:00:22.000

understand what opera means to her and why it's so important for her to keep

957

01:00:22.200 --> 01:00:25.430
seeing it. That is what matters to me.

958

01:00:26.180 --> 01:00:28.910
That is cuz when I was young, I didn't have that.

959

01:00:29.210 --> 01:00:31.270
And I want to create that for other young artists.

960

01:00:31.910 --> 01:00:34.110
I wanna make sure Keana Richardson is keep singing,

961

01:00:34.180 --> 01:00:37.390
keep posting on Instagram and now she's singing it for Orlando opera.

962

01:00:37.700 --> 01:00:39.270
That matters to me, Audrey dream,

963

01:00:39.490 --> 01:00:43.900
the voice Harris talking about her career as a classical VO, she sings down.

964

01:00:44.150 --> 01:00:45.620
She's not recognized in the opera community,

965

01:00:46.120 --> 01:00:49.780
but just to talk about her career in opera and what it means to be a classical

966

01:00:50.100 --> 01:00:53.500
voice classical vocalist that matters to me.

967

01:00:53.520 --> 01:00:57.260
And that's why I keep going. That's why, cause I wanna make sure they,

968

01:00:57.530 --> 01:01:00.900
they get remembered and that they remember why they keep singing.

969

01:01:02.780 --> 01:01:03.613
<v 0>Thank you for.</v>

970

01:01:07.450 --> 01:01:10.370

<v 4>Um, I just kind of want to go back to, uh,</v>

971

01:01:10.990 --> 01:01:15.530

the idea that that belonging is something that, um, is a process.

972

01:01:15.880 --> 01:01:20.730

It's a journey as, as we've all said. Uh, and to me that's,

973

01:01:21.030 --> 01:01:25.760

that's something, you know, opera companies can point to, uh, most,

974

01:01:25.910 --> 01:01:29.040

most readily, usually most visibly their, um, diversity,

975

01:01:29.440 --> 01:01:33.280

whatever they present on stage. Um, and it's, and it's wonderful.

976

01:01:33.281 --> 01:01:37.680

You hear the stories about young youngsters coming in and saying, you know, I,

977

01:01:37.800 --> 01:01:40.560

I, would've never envisioned myself being able to do X, Y or Z,

978

01:01:40.561 --> 01:01:44.640

but because I saw, uh, somebody else do that, that looked like me now,

979

01:01:44.680 --> 01:01:48.870

if like I can. Uh, but that's true. Uh, in the staff,

980

01:01:48.970 --> 01:01:53.630

that's true backstage. It's true in the orchestra pit. It's true in our board.

981

01:01:53.860 --> 01:01:57.630

It's true in the way that we engage in our communities. And um,

982

01:01:58.110 --> 01:02:01.990

I think that that's an important part of the message is just to know that take

983

01:02:01.991 --> 01:02:05.230

the successes that you have in one part of a, a company and, and try,

984

01:02:05.580 --> 01:02:06.860

try to implement them in the others.

985

01:02:09.310 --> 01:02:11.540

<v 0>Thank you all for sharing. Uh,</v>

986

01:02:11.560 --> 01:02:15.700

we have a few moments for questions. If you have a question,

987

01:02:15.720 --> 01:02:19.180

please officially raise your hand so that we can spotlight you so that we
can

988

01:02:19.181 --> 01:02:21.380

bring you into the conversations.