

DRIVING WHILE
BLACK

BY SUSAN KANDER

OCTOBER 12 2024
OLD CITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
111 STATE STREET · KNOXVILLE, TN 37902

A Letter from our Founding Executive Artistic Director

Thank you so much for joining us for the Tennessee premiere of *Driving While Black* by Susan Kander and Roberta Gumbel. I discovered this opera during the pandemic in a new works forum presented by OPERA America. Brandon Gibson and I were both in attendance and immediately gravitated toward this powerful piece. In the last several months as I researched more about it,

I was struck by the story of how this opera came into creation. Ms. Gumbel, a soprano, had never written a libretto for an opera, but took on this very personal story telling not only because of the friendship, collaboration and encouragement from Ms. Kander, but also because of the importance and relevance of this story. This opera is an important new work that explores a relevant and timely story in an exciting and powerful way that expands the idea of what opera is. Thank you for attending our production. Your support is extremely meaningful to us and we appreciate you being here. I look forward to seeing you throughout the season as we explore more one-woman operas and end with the classic, *Pagliacci*.



Kathryn Frady

Founder & Executive Artistic Director

Synopsis

dwb (driving while black) is a one-act, one-woman opera that was composed in 2018 by Susan Kander with a libretto by Roberta Gumbel. The main character is a mother contemplating the dangerous world beyond a parent's control as her son reaches driving age.

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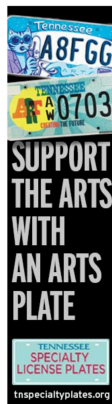


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MARBLE CITY OPERA PRESENTS

THE TENNESSEE PREMIERE

Driving While Black

BY SUSAN KANDER & ROBERTA GUMBEL

Executive Artistic Director

Stage Director

Lighting Designer

Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Percussion Coordinator

Kathryn Frady

Ivan Griffin

Bailey Boisclair

Whitney Wells

Jamey Owen

Leah Disney

Mother

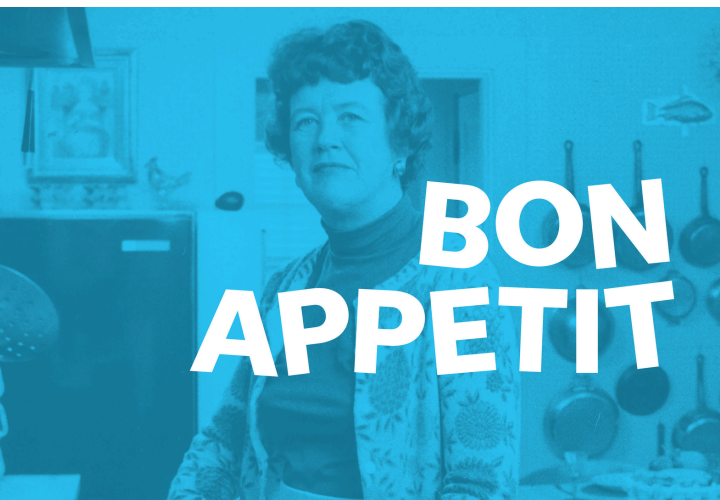
Cello

Percussion

Allison Sanders

Cremaine Booker

David Verin



Marble City Opera

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NOVEMBER 14
THE 2024
CUTTING
EDGE
CLASSROOM

ARTISTS



Susan Kander

composer

The music of Susan Kander has been heard throughout the United States and in cities around the world, including London, Paris, Mexico City, Lima, Birmingham, Vancouver, Cape Town, St. Petersburg, and Guangzhou. In 2019, she teamed up again with co-librettist Roberta Gumbel to begin work on *Carry My Own Suitcase*, a chamber opera about a young man with autism and his family.



Roberta Gumbel

librettist

Gumbel has performed in opera, concert, and musical theater. After completing her bachelor and master's of music at Indiana University in Bloomington, she made her professional debut with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. In addition, she has performed with Michigan Opera Theater, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Memphis, and Philadelphia Opera.



Ivan Griffin

stage director

Ivan has delighted audiences in the United States, Europe and South Africa in both concert, operatic, and musical theater performances.

During the 2022-23 season Ivan made his Assistant Director debut in Opera Louisiane's double-bill productions of *Rocking Horse Winner* and *Approaching Ali*. In December 2023 he directed Marble City Opera's production of *The Christmas Spider* by Clint Borzoni and John De Los Santos.

ARTISTS



Allison Sanders

Mother

Allison Sanders, a Birmingham native, studied at the Curtis Institute of Music where she earned her Bachelors and Masters degrees in Music. While studying she performed roles such as Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Elettra (*Idomeneo*), Marguerite (*Faust*) and Cleopatra (*Antony and Cleopatra*). She also performed numerous roles with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, some of which include, Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Clotilde (*Norma*), Bianca (*The Rape of Lucretia*), and Flora (*La Traviata*). She performed the title role in Joplin's *Treemonisha* with New York City Opera, and performed in the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Opera Memphis. Recently, Ms. Sanders performed the role of Ruth (*Pirates of Penzance*) with Opera Birmingham. She performed in the one woman opera, *dwb (driving while black)*, with Opera Birmingham.



Cremaine Booker

Cellist/Music Director

Nashville based cellist, Cremaine Booker, also known as "ThatCelloGuy" has performed extensively in the United States in addition to being a highly accomplished studio cellist. He currently serves as cellist in the Iris Collective and is formerly principal cellist of the Nashville Philharmonic Orchestra and The Jackson Symphony. He has made solo appearances with the Opera Birmingham, Des Moines Metropolitan Opera, Trevecca Symphony, Sewanee Symphony, and Roy "Futureman" Wooten's Black Mozart Ensemble.



David Verin

Percussion

David Verin discovered a passion for performing in high school, shortly after which, going on to study music at Howard University under William Richards and the mentorship of Dr. James Weldon Norris. Upon receiving his Bachelors degree, he went on to continue his development at the University of Alabama at Birmingham under Dr. Gene Fambrough.

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