

Press release
For immediate release

**World premiere of the opera
« BACKSTAGE AT CARNEGIE HALL »**

**An opera about racism and the electric guitar
Music by TIM BRADY, libretto by Audrey DWYER**

Montréal, August 2022 - **Bradyworks**, in co-presentation with **Chants libres** and **Le Vivier**, announce the world premiere of ***Backstage at Carnegie Hall*** : an opera about racism and the electric guitar. The music is by Tim Brady and the libretto is by Audrey Dwyer. The performances will take place on September 23 and 24, 2022 at the Centaur Theatre.

Backstage at Carnegie Hall is an audacious, multiracial work that explores racism as seen through the eyes of legendary jazz guitarist Charlie Christian (1916 – 1942). The opera brings us back to December 1939, backstage at Carnegie Hall, just minutes before the revolutionary performance of Charlie with the Benny Goodman Sextet. For the first time, a Black guitarist and a white clarinetist share the stage.

At that very moment, Charlie suffers an anxiety attack that starts him on a journey of time travel. He confronts racism in the USA and Canada. He encounters historical figures such as opera singer Marian Anderson, guitar maker Orville Gibson and iconic Montreal club owner Rufus Rockhead.

“This opera is part of an ambitious 4-part cycle of chamber operas. With these new operas, I want to tackle critical social issues such as racism, information control, abortion rights, the colonisation of space, climate change and artificial intelligence”, says Tim Brady, artistic director of Bradyworks.

The work was developed in collaboration with Montreal’s Black Theatre Workshop and features five outstanding Canadian singers: **Ruben Brutus, Frédérica Petit-Homme, Christopher Parker, Alicia Ault** and **Clayton Kennedy**.

The deeply moving libretto, by Canadian playwright Audrey Dwyer, explores both the individual and social cost of racism. The entire history of the electric guitar is referenced in the score. The music, written in Brady’s trademark hybrid style, is scored for a chamber group of keyboard, electric guitar, violin and bass clarinet. The stage director for the production is Cherissa Richards, and Véronique Lussier is the music director.

The entire cycle of 4 operas, entitled *Hope (and the Dark Matter of History)*, will be presented in stages from 2022 to 2026. The next opera, entitled *Information*, is set in Oct. 1970 in Montreal, features a libretto by Mishka Lavigne and will premiere in April 2024. The cycle is completed by *The Mars Project* (libretto by Alexis Diamond) and *Sophia* (libretto by Yvette Nolan), operas currently in development.

Backstage at Carnegie Hall

World premiere September 23 and 24 at the Centaur Theatre

In English, with surtitle in English and French

Music: Tim Brady

Libretto : Audrey Dwyer

Produced by Bradyworks, with co-presentation by Le Vivier and Chants libres

CAST

Ruben Brutus, ténor - *Charlie Christian*

Alicia Ault, soprano - *Time Traveler*

Fredericka Petit-Homme, soprano - *Marian Anderson, woman protestor*

Clayton Kennedy, baryton - *Benny Goodman, Orville Gibson, Cop*

Christopher Parker, baryton - *Rufus Rockhead, Clarence Christian, male protestor*

Cherissa Richards – stage direction

Véronique Lussier – musical direction

Tim Brady – electric guitar

Pamela Reimer - keyboard

Ryan Truby - violin

Charlotte Layec – bass clarinet

Nalo Soyini Bruce – costume and decor

David Perreault Ninacs – lighting

Tickets : \$25 /\$40 plus service fees and taxes, on sale ferom August 23rd 2022

<https://centaurtheatre.com/fr/billetterie/billets/>