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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NASHVILLE OPERA COMMISSIONS NEW WORK HIGHLIGHTING THE EFFORTS OF FRANKIE PIERCE AND DIANE NASH IN CIVIL AND VOTING RIGHTS

Nashville, TN—Nashville Opera announces the commissioning of a new work, **ONE VOTE WON**, which highlights the stories of suffragist Frankie Pierce and Civil Rights activist Diane Nash through the lens of the ongoing struggle for equal rights in voting. This work is being created in observance of the Suffrage Centennial and in order to lift up the stories of Black women who continued to fight for the right to vote through the 20th century. Nashville-based composer **Dave Ragland** and librettist **Mary McCallum** are collaborating to create the 30-minute work, which will receive its digital world premiere in September 2020. This is Nashville Opera’s first mainstage commission.

Nashville Opera is also partnering with the [MTSU Center for Historic Preservation](#) to create a comprehensive study guide which meets Tennessee standards for US History. The study guide and on-demand opera will be made available to high school students both in Nashville and across Tennessee.



Dave Ragland, composer, and Mary McCallum, librettist

Mary McCallum remarked, “I am very excited for the opportunity to tell this story with Nashville Opera and celebrate two amazing women. With so much happening in the world today, hopefully it will strike a chord with someone who may be on the fence about voting. The bravery, tenacity, sacrifice, and strength demonstrated by Frankie Pierce and Diane Nash, along with many others, must not be forgotten and serves as a reminder that voting is an important component of fighting for change.”

Dave Ragland said, “I am both humbled and honored to have been asked to compose this work. I am excited to create a work that both encourages people to vote and celebrates pioneers Frankie Pierce and Diane Nash. Furthermore, I appreciate that Nashville Opera is highlighting the significance of Nashville in Women’s Suffrage and Civil Rights Movements.”

“We are proud to collaborate with librettist Mary McCallum and composer Dave Ragland to create this original and important work, **ONE VOTE WON**,” said Nashville Opera CEO and Artistic Director John Hoopes. “This original opera brings together the Women’s Suffrage Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the disenfranchisement of modern day voters to tell a story of personal liberty and the hard-earned right to make change by casting your vote. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, and with this work we want to remember those who vigilantly fought so that every citizen can now exercise the special freedom our country grants us – the right to vote.”

Full casting and schedule details will be included in Nashville Opera’s 20.21 season announcement on July 24, 2020. **ONE VOTE WON** is funded in part by generous support from the **Tennessee Arts Commission** and **Vanderbilt University**.

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About Nashville Opera

Nashville Opera, Tennessee's largest professional opera company, creates artistic experiences that elevate our world. Among the most successful regional companies in the country, Nashville Opera has presented three different world premiere operas since its inception in 1981. Mainstage performances are presented at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center and the Noah Liff Opera Center, playing to over 10,000 people annually. Each year, Nashville Opera's extensive education and outreach touring program reaches approximately 25,000 students throughout Middle Tennessee. Visit nashvilleopera.org for more information.

About Mary McCallum

Mary McCallum received her B.S. and M.B.A. from Vanderbilt University. She is the founder of [SistaStyle Productions](#). Her theatre acting credits include THE MOUNTAINTOP, FLY, GIRL!, THE FACE OF EMMETT TILL, NEVER BEEN HOME, WAITIN' 2 END HELL, A RAISIN IN THE SUN, THE STORY, LYSISTRATA, THE DESIRE, PRETTY FIRE, LONG TIME SINCE YESTERDAY, LOUIE & OPHELIA, HUNGER IN PARADISE, and THE DANCE ON WIDOW'S ROW. She has also appeared in several films & T.V. One's FATAL ATTRACTION. Writing highlights: Her play SINGLEVILLE was a winner of the D.C. Black Theatre Festival One Act Battle and was a mainstage selection for the National Black Theatre Festival. Her play "SIX TRIPLE EIGHT took top prize at the Atlanta Black Theatre Festival and Tampa Bay Theatre Festival. The movie version of SINGLEVILLE (writer, co-director, actress) won several awards in 2018 including Best Feature at the Twin Cities Black Film festival and the International Black Film Festival. CHASING JEREMY was a screenplay winner at the British Urban Film Festival and a finalist at the Urban World Film Festival. In 2019, she was a winner of the "Women Who Rock Nashville" award for the arts.

About Dave Ragland

Dave Ragland is a two-time EMMY nominated composer, vocalist, pianist, and conductor. Hailed as "Über-talented" by The Nashville Scene, Dave received an EMMY nomination for composition and music direction for Frist Art Museum's NICK CAVE FEAT. NASHVILLE. Dave Ragland received a second EMMY nomination for his musical collaboration with Nashville Ballet's Gerald Watson and violinist Chandler Custer. Dave was nominated for Best Director of a Musical by First Night Honors for Wildcard Productions' run of "LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL.

Dave, in collaboration with Inversion Vocal Ensemble, shackled feet DANCE, and Diaspora Orchestra, is slated to debut his opera STEAL AWAY as Artist-in-Residence for OZ Arts in its upcoming season. Additional compositional credits including Nashville Symphony, Nashville Ballet, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and Intersection Contemporary Ensemble, along with GRAMMY-nominated ALIAS Chamber Ensemble this season. For the past two seasons, Dave has served as Chorusmaster for Nashville Symphony's LET FREEDOM SING. Dave Ragland is the 2020 GRADY-RAYAM Negro Spirituals Foundation Composer-in-Residence.

Dave is the Artistic Director of Inversion Vocal Ensemble, a regionally touring vocal collective that has performed with Brandi Carlile, GRAMMY-nominee Ruby Amanfu, Marcus Hummon, Levi Hummon. Inversion has also shared the stage with Rivers Rutherford, The Fairfield Four, and Tanya Tucker. Previous engagements with Inversion include The National Civil Rights Museum, The National Museum of African-American Music, The Ryman Auditorium, Tennessee Arts Academy, Cheekwood, Nashville Symphony's Free Day of Music and LET FREEDOM SING in 2019.

Dave is a Composer Mentor for 91Classical's inaugural Student Composer Fellowship, and instructor at Creative Soul Music Academy. Dave also enjoys performing with emerging jazz artists, Queen Victoria & The Kingsmen. Previous performance experience includes William Warfield, Louise Mandrell, and the Kennedy Center Honors with Jennifer Hudson. Dave is currently serves on the board of American Choral Directors Association, Tennessee Chapter. Dave is a proud member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. For more information, please visit daveragland.com