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Virginia Opera Announces Addition of Renowned Baritone Will Liverman as Creative Partner & Advisor for 2021-2022

Announcement coincides with contract extension for Artistic Director Adam Turner, solidifying artistic team while emphasizing community engagement

Hampton Roads, Richmond, Fairfax, VA (September 22, 2021)— Virginia Opera is pleased to announce Will Liverman as its Creative Partner & Advisor for the 2021-2022 Season. Liverman, renowned baritone and Hampton Roads, Virginia native, joins General Director and CEO Peggy Kriha Dye and Artistic Director Adam Turner, to chart creative and community paths for Virginia Opera.

The newly created position of Creative Partner & Advisor will work closely with Virginia Opera’s Artistic and Civic Engagement teams to develop programming, activities, and community partnerships that align with the strategic initiatives currently being developed through a year-long Strategic Planning process. In addition to regular meetings with Virginia Opera staff, Liverman will travel to Virginia for appearances, residencies, and other community-based activities.

The addition of Liverman follows the extension of Artistic Director Adam Turner’s contract through Virginia Opera’s 50th Anniversary Season in 2024-2025. Turner, who also serves as Principal Conductor, has been Artistic Director since the 2018-2019 Season (following four seasons as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor) and with the company since the 2010-2011 Season. During his tenure, Turner has overseen the company premieres of several new works,
including Daniel Catán's *Il Postino*, Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, Jack Perla's *An American Dream*, in addition to a host of standard repertory new to Virginia Opera, including *Samson et Dalila*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Der Freischütz*.

**Peggy Kriha Dye, General Director and CEO of Virginia Opera:** “This is a major development for Virginia Opera as we focus on key long-term goals: audience development and diversity, community engagement, and partnerships. Will is an absolute tour-de-force in the opera world, and as a Virginia native, we feel he is uniquely positioned to contribute to our evolving mission. Will joins a team that is already brimming with talent, and we couldn’t be more pleased to have renewed our commitment to Adam as our Artistic Director. We look forward to the important work we will all do together.”

**Adam Turner, Artistic Director of Virginia Opera:** “Getting to know Will during our 2016/17 production of *The Barber of Seville*, and witnessing his profound ability to connect with audiences, it was clear we were featuring a major talent. As with many of Virginia Opera’s singers over the years, he has gone on to become one of the most sought-after baritones in the business, leading productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and all over the world. It is thrilling to have his talents come back to us, and to expand his reputation beyond that of an amazing performer—highlighting his creative abilities, and most importantly having his voice at the table for advising on casting, programming, and creative initiatives to shape the future of opera in the Commonwealth.”

**Will Liverman, Creative Partner & Advisor of Virginia Opera:** “Bringing opera to all communities is something I’m extremely passionate about. I’m excited to help introduce the artform of opera to new audiences, right here in my hometown—the place where I first discovered opera. I’m looking forward to joining the Virginia Opera team and furthering our goals of inclusivity, diversity and community engagement.”

Liverman assumed his position in September 2021 and will continue through the end of the season in June 2022. Liverman is a native of Hampton Roads, Virginia, and a graduate of the Governor’s School for the Arts in Norfolk, Virginia. The accomplished baritone has performed in many of the world’s top opera houses and will be headlining the Metropolitan Opera’s re-opening production (September 27, 2021), singing the leading role in the first work by a Black composer ever presented at the Met - Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*.

**About Virginia Opera**
Virginia Opera, the official opera company of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation and is the only company to perform regularly in three separate main stage venues: the Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, the Carpenter Theatre at the Dominion Energy Center in Richmond, and Center for the Arts at George Mason University in Fairfax. Organized in 1974, Virginia Opera is respected nationwide for the identification and presentation of the finest young artists, for the musical and dramatic integrity of its productions, and for the ingenuity and variety of its education and outreach programs.