

AN AFTERNOON
**CELEBRATING
BLACK
COMPOSERS**

STUDY GUIDE





James Allbritten
General Manager & Artistic Director

Piedmont Opera
636 Holly Avenue,
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Tickets: (336)725-7101
www.piedmontopera.org

STUDY GUIDE CREATED BY PIEDMONT OPERA

AN AFTERNOON CELEBRATING BLACK COMPOSERS

with Polina Khatsko, Piano

"Ride on King Jesus!"

Hall Johnson
(1888-1970)

Jemeesa Yarborough, Soprano

Night Songs

H. Leslie Adams
(1932)

1. Prayer

2. The Heart of a Woman

Andre Peele, Bass-Baritone

"Love Let the Wind Cry...How I Adore Thee"

Undine Smith Moore
(1887-1953)

"I Want to Die While You Love Me"

Lindsey Allen, Soprano

from *Treemonisha*

Scott Joplin
(1868-1917)

"The Sacred Tree"

Jemeesa Yarborough, Soprano

"Superstition"

Andre Peele, Bass-Baritone

"I Don't Feel No-Ways Tired"

H.T. Burleigh
(1866-1949)

Andre Peele, Bass-Baritone

Passionale

H.T. Burleigh
(1866-1949)

2. Your Lips are Wine

Lindsey Allen, Soprano

"I've Never Felt Such Love/What Wonderous Love is This"

Shawn E. Okpebholo
(1981)

"God is a God"

Andre Peele, Bass-Baritone

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hand"

Margaret Bonds
(1913-1972)

Lindsey Allen, Soprano

"Hold Fast to Dreams"

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

"My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord"

Jemeesa Yarborough, Soprano



**POLINA
KHATSKO**

PIANO

POLINA KHATSKO

PIANO

A native of Belarus, Polina Khatsko has established herself both as an active performer, coach and a dedicated teacher. Currently on staff at UNCSA and the Wake Forest University School of Music, she is also a pianist for the Sphinx Competition and a sought-after freelancer. Passionate about instrumental collaboration, she enjoys regular performances and recordings with fellow artists, encompassing a substantial repertoire for strings, woodwinds and brass.

Dr. Khatsko served on the piano faculty of the University of Northern Iowa, the University of Michigan preparatory department and Leipzig Summer Piano Institute. Her collaborative piano faculty appointments include the International Music Academy in Pilsen, Czech Republic, Cambridge International String Academy, England and the University of Michigan string department. Khatsko received her education from the Belarusian State Academy of Music and the University of Michigan, studying with Ariadna Guzhalovskaya, Vladimir Doulov, Elena Alekseeva and Arthur Greene.



**ANDRE
PEELE**

BASS-BARITONE

ANDRE PEELE

BASS - BARITONE

North Carolina native André Peele is an operatic Bass-baritone, and a recent graduate of the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute at the UNC School of the Arts. He has a Master's degree from Florida State University's College of Music as well as both a Bachelor's degree and HS diploma from the UNC School of the Arts. He has worked with many companies throughout the United States including Piedmont Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Peach State Opera, Virginia Opera, the Jackson Symphony and The Princeton Festival.

Andre Peele is heavily involved in bringing music education to the community. He premiered the role of Thomas in Glen Winter's *Deep River: The Marian Anderson Journey* that toured Virginia as a part of Virginia Opera's outreach program. He has performed in three seasons of the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute's educational outreach productions as well as Florida State University's outreach production of *Così fan tutte*.

As an educator, André has been an active voice teacher for K-12 students through college students, including being on faculty at the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, GA. His students have had many successes at vocal competitions and have gained admission to colleges throughout the US.



**JEMEESA
YARBOROUGH**

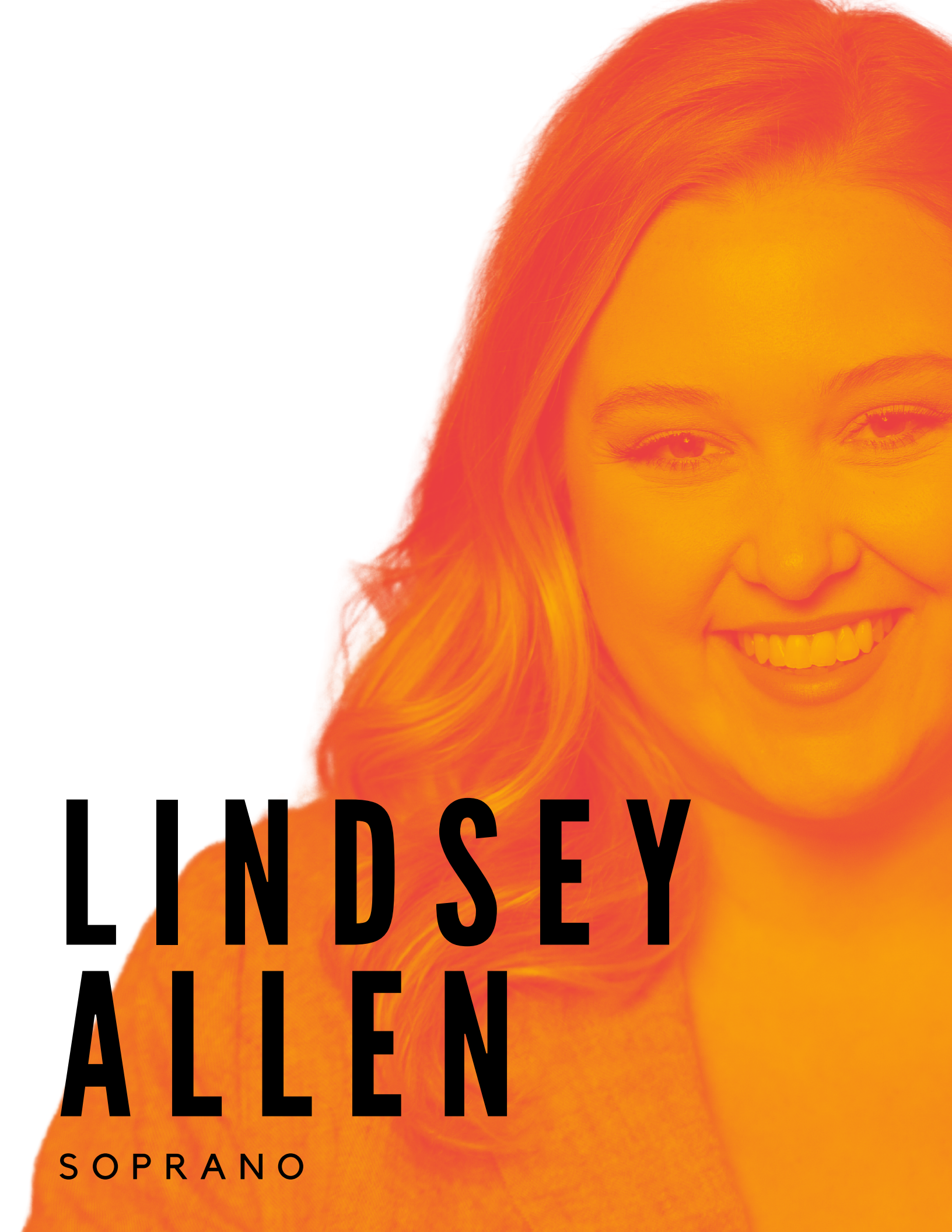
SOPRANO

JEMEESA YARBOROUGH

S O P R A N O

Soprano Jemeesa Yarborough, a native of Baltimore, Maryland, made her professional debut with Piedmont Opera in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. After completing her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, she entered the graduate music program at Florida State University where she completed her Master of Music degree. Yarborough has performed with Opera Wilmington, Opera Saratoga, and Savannah Voice Festival. In the 2014-2015 season, Yarborough made her European debut in the title role of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* at the Music Academy International.

Yarborough has been the recipient of four District awards from Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in Colorado 2020, North Carolina, in 2017 & 2019, South Carolina, in 2016. In 2019, Yarborough was the 1st recipient of the Stephen Prystowsky Award with the Durham Symphony Orchestra and 1st place winner of the Saltworks Opera Vocal Competition. In 2016, she was a semifinalist in Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Yarborough has received numerous other awards, including awards from the Euterpe Music Club of Greensboro, Senah C. and C.A. Kent Foundation Scholarship, and the Omega Psi Phi Music Competition.



**LINDSEY
ALLEN**

SOPRANO

LINDSEY ALLEN

SOPRANO

Soprano, Lindsey Allen, a native of Michigan, attended Indiana University for her Masters and Performers Diploma at the Jacobs School of music. Her most recent performance was as Flora in *La Traviata*. Past roles include Street Singer in Bernstein's *Mass*, Mrs. Thompson in the Collegiate premiere of Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*, and Mrs. Paroo in the *Music Man*.

In 2018 she was awarded the Georgina Joshi International Scholarship to perform with Opera Tel Aviv, where she sang Erste Dame in *The Magic Flute*. Other roles include Adrianna (*Adrianna Lecoucreur*), Magda Sorel (*The Consul*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Susanna Walcott (Piedmont Opera's *The Crucible*), Veronique (*Doctor Miracle*) Lia (*L'enfant prodigue*) and Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*). She was also performed with Kansas City Lyric Opera, Piedmont Opera, and the A.J. Fletcher Opera. She attended the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for her Bachelors in Music Performance.

Currently, Lindsey is the Director of Operations at Piedmont Opera. She has a passion for opera and looks forward to sharing her love of music and hospitality within the Winston-Salem community.

HALL JOHNSON

(1888-1970)

American composer and arranger African-American spiritual music, as well as a professional violinist and violist. He attended Knox Institute, Allen University, Atlanta University, Julliard, Hahn School of Music, and University of Pennsylvania.

In 1925, he formed the Hall Johnson Negro Choir, which eventually performed in over thirty Hollywood Films. These included Disney films like *Dumbo* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

He was a beloved coach to many opera singers including, Marian Anderson, Robert McFerrin, and Shirley Verrett.



SHAWN OKPEBHOLO

(1981)

Shawn E. Okpebholo is a critically-acclaimed and award-winning composer. Okpebholo's work as a composer and his music has been featured on PBS Newshour, and radio broadcasts all across the country, including NPR's All Things Considered, NPR's Morning Edition SiriusXM's "Living American" series on Symphony Hall Channel, and Chicago's WFMT.

Okpebholo maintains a dynamic career as a composer, including performances on five continents, over forty states, almost every major U.S. city, at some of the nation's most prestigious performance spaces, including Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, and the National Cathedral. He graduated from CCM (M.M and Ph.D Music) and Ashbury College (Bachelors).

Okpebholo, has won numerous awards including the American Prize in Composition, Flute New Music Consortium Composition Competition, Adams-Owens Composition Award, and the Accent06 International Composition Competition.



SCOTT JOPLIN

(1 8 6 8 - 1 9 1 7)

Hailed at the "King of Ragtime", Scott Joplin was an American Composer and pianist. He composed over 100 original Ragtime pieces, a ballet, and two operas.

Unfortunately, his first opera, *A Guest of Honor*, was confiscated and never recovered; while his second opera *Treemonisha*, was never fully staged during his lifetime.

His most widely known compositions include "Maple Leaf Rag" and "The Entertainer." Although after his time, his music was rediscovered and reappreciated in the 1970's , and he posthumously was award a Pulitzer Prize.

His compositions and success paved the way for black artists to reach American audiences of all races. He was a pioneer and his music inspired the development with other popular musical genres.



H. LESLIE ADAMS

(1 9 3 2)

American composer most known for his vocal works; including, choral music, art song, solo, and musical drama. He composes in the traditional western style of classical music with incorporated elements unique to African-American music.

He attended Oberlin College (BME), California State University, Long Beach (MM), and Ohio State University (Ph.D Music).

He studied with numerous teachers including Vittorio Giannini, who was the first President and visionary for Winston Salem's own North Carolina School of the Arts!



FLORENCE PRICE

(1887 - 1953)

African-American classical composer, pianist, organist, and music teacher. She attended the New England Conservatory of Music, and was the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer, and the first to have her composition played by a major orchestra. She composed over three hundred works, including symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choral works, and art songs.

Her composition style though traditional, incorporated music from the African-American church, as well as elements from African-American spirituals.

She was close friends with pianist, Margaret Bonds, and opera singer Marian Anderson. Both championed and performed Price's pieces frequently.

MARGARET BONDS

(1913 - 1972)

One of the first Black composers recognized in the United States, Margaret Bonds, was known as an American composer, pianist and arranger; as well as her successful arrangements of African-American spirituals and collaborations with poet Langston Hughes.

She earned her Bachelors and Masters of music a Northwestern University, for piano and composition.

She was the first black person to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (1933).

Her home was filled with talented musicians like opera singers, Abbie Mitchell, and Lillian Evanti, as well as composers Florence Price and Will Marion Cook.

Leontyne Price, famously commissioned and recorded Bonds' arrangements for spirituals.



UNDINE SMITH MOORE

(1904 - 1989)

The "Dean of Black Women Composers", Undine Moore was an American composer and professor of music. She attended Fisk University, and later went to Julliard on scholarship. She received her Master of Arts and Professional Diploma from Columbia University.

She composed a variety of music from spirituals, art songs, chamber music, and multimovement works for chorus, soloists, and instruments, although only twenty seven pieces were published.

She won numerous awards such as a Humanitarian award from Fisk University, Music Laureate of the State of Virginia, National Association of Negro Musicians named her Outstanding Educator, Candace Award, Virginia's Governor's Award in the Arts, and an Honorary Doctorate from Indiana University.



H.T. BURLEIGH

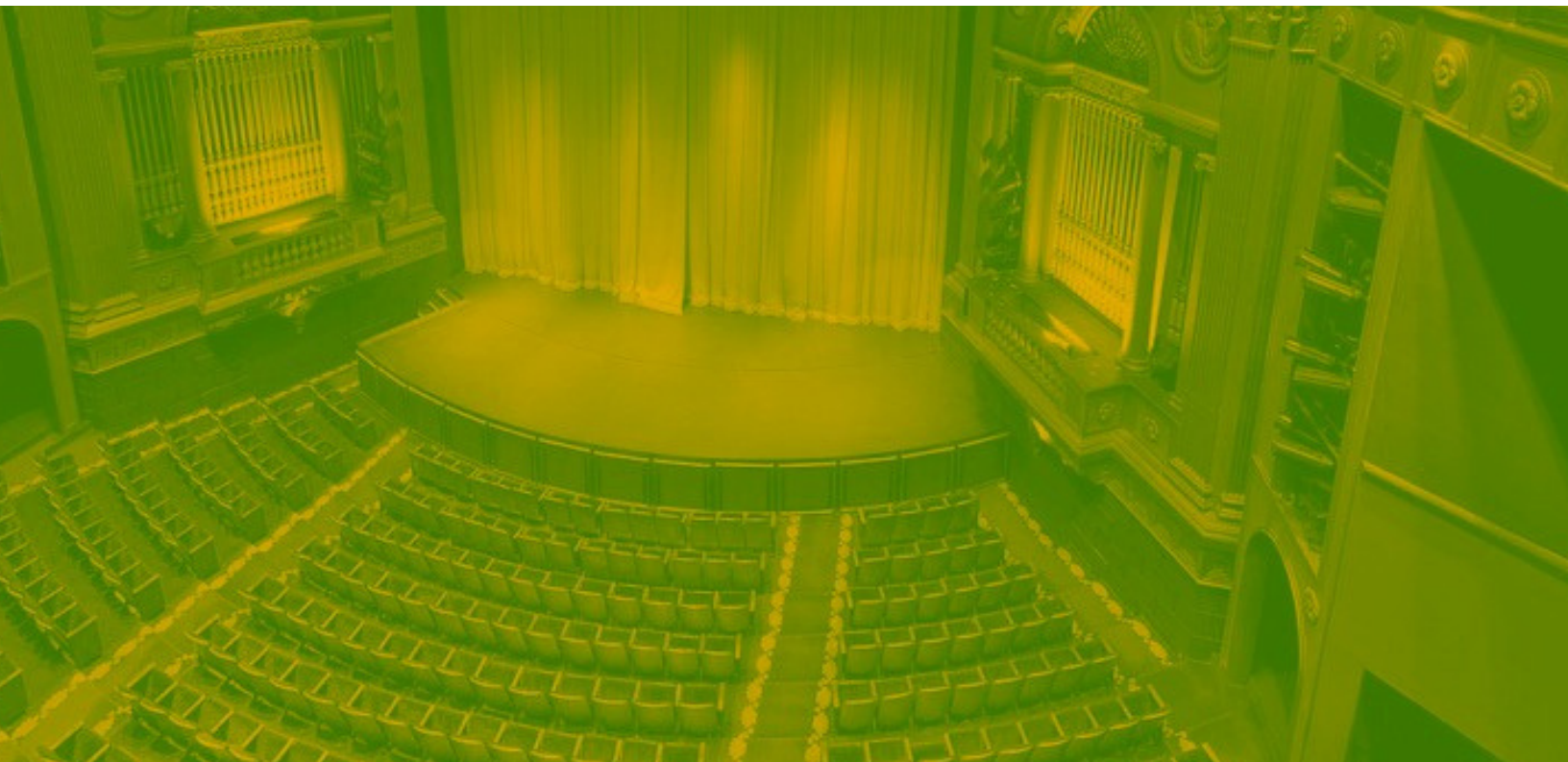
(1866 - 1949)

American classical composer, arranger and baritone singer. He made black music accessible for classically trained artists, and introduced spirituals and arrangements in a more classical form. He introduced Antonín Dvořák to Black American music, who was extremely influenced and later stated that Black music was the basis of American classical music.

He attended the prestigious National Conservatory of Music. He was a soloist for St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City, where some parishioners were hesitant due to his race. J.P. Morgan, a member of the church casted the deciding vote for Burleigh to be hired.

He began composing arrangements in the 1890's, composing his own songs in 1898. By 1910 he was one of America's best known composers of Art Songs. He was the founding member of the ASCAP.





After three years of planning, **Piedmont Opera** (previously known as Piedmont Opera Theatre) raised the curtain on its first production, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, in September 1978. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, this production and the four subsequent years were produced in conjunction with other regional opera companies. In 1983, **Piedmont Opera Theatre** was able to produce Puccini's *La boheme* on its own.

Founded by the late Norman Johnson (1928-1996), **Piedmont Opera** is now in its 44th year of continuous operation. The company strives to remain a nationally recognized and acclaimed regional opera company and a leader in the classical arts community.

Piedmont Opera produces the highest quality opera productions possible by using international, national, regional, and local professional singers and technicians. **Piedmont Opera** currently attracts patrons from 42 states and 11 countries.

In addition to two regularly scheduled productions each year, **Piedmont Opera** also conducts a wide variety of educational and outreach programs. As the second-largest opera company in the state of North Carolina, **Piedmont Opera** has a current operating budget of one million and operates with an administrative staff of five full-time positions.

James Allbritten
General Manager
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PIEDMONTOPERA

Connie Quinn
Director of Advancement
& Community Engagement

Andre Peele
Education and Outreach Manager

Mariedith Appanaitis
Director of Marketing

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