

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

**April 4, 2023**

**Contact:**

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## Pittsburgh Opera presents two modern operas in May to coincide with international opera conference

Pittsburgh Opera is producing two different contemporary operas in May to coincide with [OPERA America's Opera Conference 2023](#).

- [Denis & Katya](#) will be performed at the Bitz Opera Factory, 2425 Liberty Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Strip District on May 6, 9, 12, 14, and 18.
- [We Shall Not Be Moved](#) will be performed at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center in downtown Pittsburgh on May 13, 16, 18, 19, and 21.

OPERA America's [Opera Conference 2023](#), May 17-20, is the largest assembly of opera administrators, artists, trustees, and associates in the world. Hosted by Pittsburgh Opera, hundreds of stakeholders will convene for discussions, networking, and performances that move opera forward.

### Overview of the operas

#### *Denis & Katya*



On November 14, 2016, fifteen-year-olds Denis Muravyov and Katya Vlasova died after a three-day standoff with Russian Special Forces. They live-streamed their last hours, leaving behind a trail of devastating video footage: drinking and smoking, cuddling and crying, and preparing to die.

Denis and Katya were two teenagers who lived every moment—including their last—online. What led to their violent deaths? Why did they choose to broadcast their final moments on social media? And what does it say about the voyeuristic society that watched, liked, and objectified them in real-time, transforming two kids into clickbait?

This visceral opera uses verbatim text to examine the vast public response to the events surrounding the tragedy of these two Russian runaways, exploring how stories are shaped and shared in our age of trolls, conspiracy theories, fake news,

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and 24/7 digital connection.

*The New York Times* called *Denis & Katya* "an intimate, haunting triumph", and *Musical America* called it " ... the most brilliantly original operatic work I've seen in a decade."

## ***We Shall Not Be Moved***



On the run after a series of tragic incidents, five North Philadelphia teens find refuge in an abandoned, condemned house in West Philadelphia at the exact location that served as headquarters of the MOVE organization, where a 1985 standoff with police infamously ended with a neighborhood destroyed and 11 people dead, including five children. This self-defined family is assuaged and even inspired by the ghosts who inhabit this home and begin to see their squatting as a matter of destiny and resistance rather than urgent fear.

Combining spoken word, contemporary movement, video projection, classical, R&B, and jazz singing, and a brooding, often joyful score filled with place, purpose, and possibility, *We Shall Not Be Moved* is a timely exploration of past and present struggles that suggests an alternate future through the eyes of its young protagonists.

Tony Award-winner and Kennedy Center Honoree [Bill T. Jones](#) directs and choreographs. [Viswa Subbaraman](#) conducts.

## **Dates/Times/Locations/Languages/Run Times**

### ***Denis & Katya***

**Where:** The Bitz Opera Factory (Pittsburgh Opera's headquarters), 2425 Liberty Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Strip District

#### **When:**

- Sat., May 6, 2023 \* 8:00 PM
- Tues., May 9, 2023 \* 7:00 PM
- Fri., May 12, 2023 \* 7:30 PM
- Sun., May 14, 2023 \* 2:00 PM
- Thurs., May 18, 2023 \* 6:00 PM

**Language:** *Denis & Katya* is sung in English and Russian with English supertitles projected above the stage

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**Run Time:** Approximately 65 mins. There is no intermission.

## ***We Shall Not Be Moved***

**Where:** [August Wilson African American Cultural Center](#), 980 Liberty Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh

### **When:**

- Sat., May 13, 2023 \* 8:00 PM
- Tues., May 16, 2023 \* 7:00 PM
- Thurs., May 18, 2023 \* 10:30 AM Community Matinee - details below
- Fri., May 19, 2023 \* 7:30 PM
- Sun., May 21, 2023 \* 2:00 PM

The May 18th performance of *We Shall Not Be Moved* is a special 10:30 AM matinee performance, with low-price tickets available for community groups. If you are interested in bringing your group to this performance please contact Wendy Parkulo, Manager of Group Sales and Community Initiatives, [via email](#) or at 412-281-0912 ext. 213 for more information.

**Language:** *We Shall Not Be Moved* is sung in English with English supertitles projected above the stage

**Run Time:** Approximately 2 hours, 5 minutes including one 20-minute intermission

## **Cast and Artistic Teams**

### ***Denis & Katya***

Mezzo soprano	<a href="#">Jazmine Olwalia</a> *
Baritone	<a href="#">Brandon Bell</a> *
Head of Music / Musical Preparation	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Revival Stage Director	<a href="#">Haley Stamats</a> *
Set Designer	Andrew Lieberman
Costume Designer	Millie Hiibel+
Sound Designer	Rob Kaplowitz+
Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Stage Manager	Hannah Nathan
Director of Musical Studies	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>
Original Production	Ted Huffman

Production co-produced by Opera Philadelphia, Music Theatre Wales, and Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier.

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## *We Shall Not Be Moved*

Un/Sung	<a href="#">Alexa Patrick</a> <sup>+</sup>
Glenda	<a href="#">Kirstin Chávez</a> <sup>+</sup>
John Blue	<a href="#">John Holiday</a> <sup>+</sup>
John Little	<a href="#">Chance Jonas-O'Toole</a> <sup>+</sup>
John Mack	<a href="#">Adam Richardson</a>
John Henry	<a href="#">Ron Dukes</a> <sup>+</sup>
OG	<a href="#">Indira Cunningham</a> <sup>+</sup>
OG	<a href="#">Simon Phillips</a> <sup>+</sup>
OG	<a href="#">Ethan Gwynn</a> <sup>+</sup>
OG	<a href="#">Ira Cambric III</a> <sup>+</sup>
Conductor	<a href="#">Viswa Subbaraman</a> <sup>+</sup>
Stage Director and Choreographer	<a href="#">Bill T. Jones</a> <sup>+</sup>
Projection Designer	Jorge Cousineau <sup>+</sup>
Set Designer	Matt Saunders
Sound Designer	Rob Kaplowitz
Costume Designer	Liz Prince
Assistant Choreographer	TBA
Lighting Designer	Robert Wierzel
Stage Manager	Robert Klein
Assistant Conductor	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Director of Musical Studies	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>
Assistant Stage Director	Seth Hoff

Production co-produced by Opera Philadelphia, The Apollo Theater, and Hackney Empire. Developed in partnership with Art Sanctuary.

- <sup>+</sup> Pittsburgh Opera debut
- <sup>\*</sup> Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

## Ticketing Information

Adult tickets for *We Shall Not Be Moved* start at \$15; adult tickets for *Denis & Katya* are \$50. Tickets for kids and teens ages 6–18 are half-price. Patrons buying tickets to both operas can save 25% off the regular ticket price at [pittsburghopera.org/two](http://pittsburghopera.org/two).

For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Benedum Center Box Office, or order online at [pittsburghopera.org/tickets](http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets) or [CulturalDistrict.org](http://CulturalDistrict.org).

Pittsburgh Opera is committed to making opera accessible to all groups by providing great discounts and special benefits to group ticketholders. A group at Pittsburgh Opera can be as few as 6 people! In addition, college and university students, faculty, and staff are eligible

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for our [Cheap Seats program](#)—see [pittsburghopera.org/CheapSeats](http://pittsburghopera.org/CheapSeats) for details. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#), contact Wendy Parkulo at (412) 281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org).

Pittsburgh Opera is continuing its no-hassle refund policy for all 2022–23 operas. Pittsburgh Opera will offer full refunds for any patrons who notify us that they need to cancel their tickets at least one hour prior to their performance start time.

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2022–23 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor.
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera’s Media Sponsor.
- [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#) is the Tuesday performance and ‘Meet the Artists’ post-show event sponsor.
- Support for *We Shall Not Be Moved* comes from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#).
- *Denis & Katya* is sponsored in part by a gift from an Anonymous Donor.