

For immediate release. Friday, December 1, 2023 (Charlottesville, VA)
Please direct all inquiries to Miriam Gordon-Stewart: mgordon@victoryhallopera.org

VICTORY HALL OPERA LAUNCHES 2024 SEASON

Highlights of VHO's 9th Season include a new documentary film that is sure to create a stir: titled "[YAPs](#)", the documentary will present the previously unheard, true stories of singers at a pivotal turning point in their lives: as they seek admission to opera's highly competitive apprenticeship Young Artist Programs. Winning the audition can mean the difference between "making it" or giving it all up. But becoming a "YAP" is only the beginning of these young artists' journeys into the uncertain waters of an industry on the brink of collapse, as they face off against the egos of conductors, pervasive racial typecasting, all while earning less than a living wage.

"We are at a crucial juncture in our art form's history", says VHO Artistic Director Miriam Gordon-Stewart (also directing the film). "Career sustainability, or even the chance to make a living by singing solely within the United States is now statistically impossible."

"But God keeps making singers!" says VHO Dir. Of Music/Producer Brenda Patterson. "Our responsibility is to examine this decimation of viable singing careers. The new generation of singers is just as passionate as their predecessors, and they deserve the chance to pursue their own paths to happiness."

There will be an open casting call for the chief subjects/ co-creators of *YAPs*, accessible via the industry platform YAP Tracker in January 2024, with an eventual film release planned for 2025.

Fans of the Boehler/ Gordon-Stewart breakout chamber opera from 2021, *Fat Pig*, will be thrilled to hear of a new opera by this pair. Mall in America will extend VHO's [Motif Method](#) to create a devised opera, calling upon their permanent Troupe to contribute to the libretto. Designed to be performed in abandoned mall atria after hours, [Mall in America](#) will bring stories of pathos, survival and humanity to these formerly thriving hubs.

Since its inception as a way of creating live performances during the pandemic, VHO's *Soundflight* in Schuyler Quarry has become a Virginian golden ticket. "I started receiving calls in August of this year, pleading for the details of next year's Quarry performances", says Gordon-Stewart. "The calls haven't stopped since then. Demand is almost fanatical!" [Soundflight 3](#) will once again bring some of VHO's starriest Troupe members to the Quarry Gardens at Schuyler for 4 performances of an all-acoustic program. Following a recent triumph as Elijah Mohammed in The Metropolitan Opera's "*X: The Life and Times of Malcom X*", tenor [Victor Ryan Robertson](#) will perform alongside star of *Fat Pig* [Sarah Wolfson](#) (soprano). Katy Ambrose also returns, with French horn and alphorn in hand, with star percussionist I-Jen Fang and Brooklyn-based composer/ accordionist Will Holshauer. Tickets go on sale on the VHO website (victoryhallopera.org) in April 2024.

VHO 2024 SEASON



YAPs

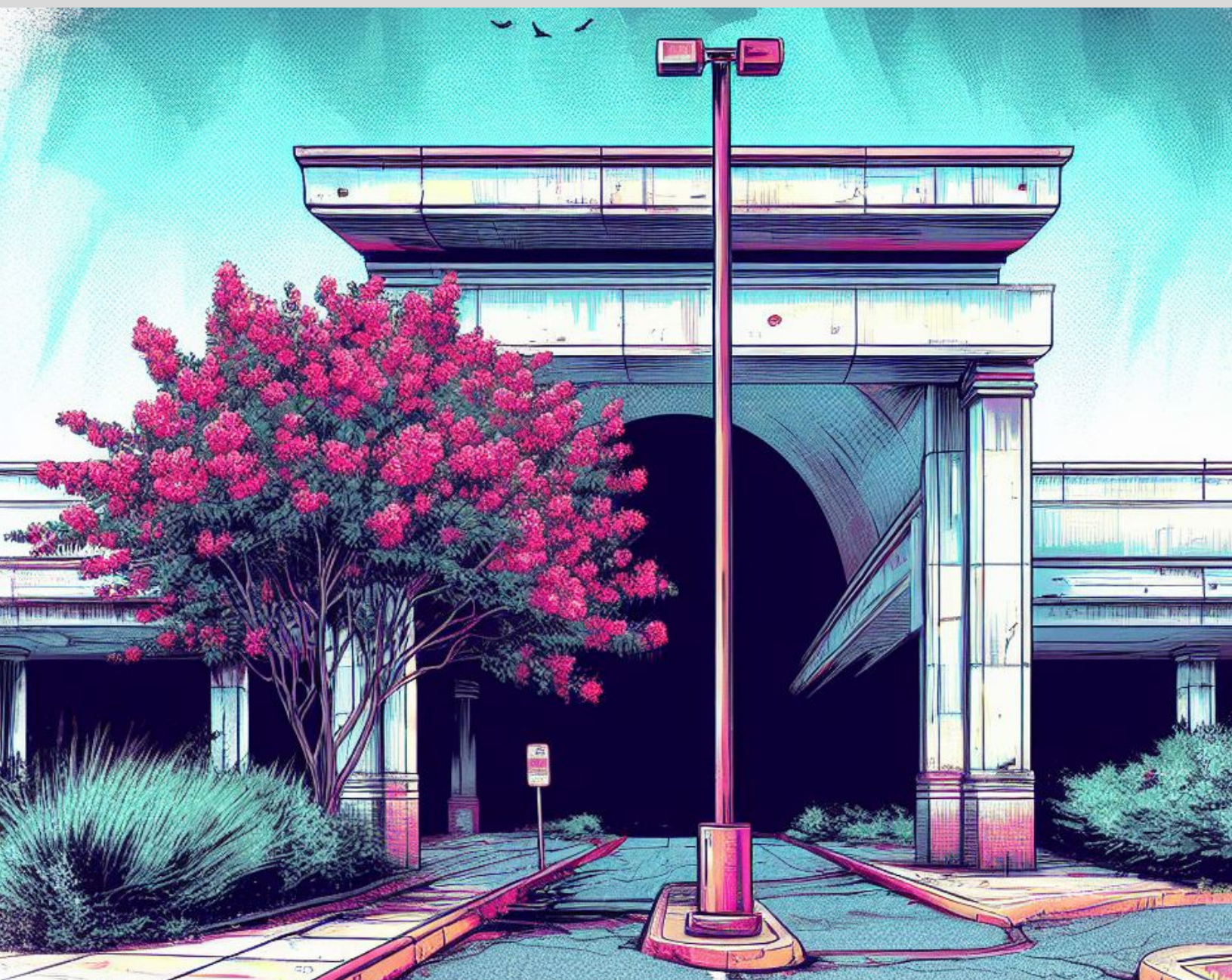
a new documentary film
Widespread closures threaten the very existence of live theater in America. A traditional career as an opera singer seems less and less viable. And yet: In spite of a system stacked against them, young singers continue to follow their calling, risking everything to gain entry into fiercely competitive apprenticeship programs. In VHO's new documentary film, an open casting call will find some of the nation's most compelling Young Artists, sharing their true stories with unprecedented access. What is driving their ambition? Who will "make it"? And what does success even mean to the next generation? Directed by Miriam Gordon-Stewart

SOUNDFLIGHT 3

Opera in the Quarry Gardens at Schuyler
June 2, 4, 6 & 8
6pm

No microphones - just the magic of Nature's amphitheater in this immersive concert of operatic & instrumental works, set in a spectacular quarry. Bring a picnic, then follow the concert around the trail of these serene native gardens, as the frogs & birds chime in.

Starring Victory Ryan Robertson (tenor), Sarah Wolfson (soprano), Katy Ambrose (horns), I-Jen Fang (percussion) and Will Holshouser (accordion).



Mall in America

a new opera
Led by the creators of VHO's smash hit *Fat Pig*, Matt Bohler & Miriam Gordon-Stewart.

Every town has one. These once-bustling, now abandoned spaces have stories to tell. With this site-specific commission designed to be performed in a mall atrium after hours, VHO's Troupe comes together to devise a new opera that investigates the life, death, and afterlife of the iconic American shopping center.