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NEWS RELEASE

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*"With the debut of 'Fire Shut Up in My Bones' at the Met, it's a watershed moment for American opera." — The Washington Post*

## Terence Blanchard Premieres His Highlights From Two Operas at The Soraya

This Partnership with LA Opera Off Grand Will Open  
The Soraya's Inaugural [LA SEEN Festival](#) and Feature  
Music from Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*  
and *Champion*



**April 6 at 7PM; Tickets start at \$48 and are now available at [TheSoraya.org](https://TheSoraya.org).**

(Los Angeles, CA) March 18, 2025— On April 6, eight-time GRAMMY© winner **Terence Blanchard** will return to **The Soraya** to present newly orchestrated highlights from his operas *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Champion*. This West Coast premiere, commissioned by The Soraya in partnership with the **LA Opera Off Grand** series, will feature Blanchard performing with his E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet. The concert will also serve as the opening event of the inaugural [LA SEEN festival](#).

Blanchard made history in 2021 as the first Black composer to premiere an original opera at the Metropolitan Opera with ***Fire Shut Up in My Bones***. Based on the 2014 memoir of the same name by celebrated writer and *New York Times* columnist Charles M. Blow, the opera in three acts took the world by storm with a narrative focus on Charles, a young African-American man growing up in poverty who, as he comes of age, must decide how to deal with the sexual abuse he previously suffered at the hands of his cousin.

The opera opened the Metropolitan Opera season in 2021 and was the first opera by a Black composer ever performed there in the Met's 138-year history. It returned to The Met in 2024.

Blanchard achieved another milestone in 2023 with the release of ***Champion***, an "opera in jazz" as described by Blanchard himself. This opera narrates the life of Emile Griffith, a boxer who tragically killed his opponent in the ring and subsequently grappled with his sexuality and guilt throughout his life. The opera delves into themes of identity, violence, forgiveness, and redemption through a fusion of jazz, blues, and classical music. Blanchard's score effectively conveys the emotions and conflicts of the characters, as well as the intensity and drama of the boxing scenes. *Champion* premiered at the Metropolitan Opera on April 10, 2023, and its subsequent recording earned the 2024 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Following the success of the 2021 production of Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, *Champion* has been both a commercial and critical triumph.

On April 6, Blanchard returns to The Soraya to inaugurate [LA SEEN](#), The Soraya's month-long festival dedicated to the performing arts in Los Angeles. An esteemed American trumpeter and film composer, Blanchard will lead his own E-Collective and the Turtle Island Quartet in the highlights from the two operas, with baritone **Justin Austin** (currently appearing in LA Opera's *Così fan tutte*) and soprano **Adrienne Danrich**, and visuals by Andrew F. Scott.

The opera highlights remove traditional stage scenery to focus on the music. Blanchard said, "Concert versions present the music without opera scenery. I've reduced it to the E-Collective, Turtle Island String Quartet, and two vocalists, and it's effective." He added that audiences still engage with the story despite the minimal setup. Combining opera and jazz, the concert highlights the storytelling and emotional depth of Blanchard's compositions, promising a powerful musical experience.

**For story development and interview requests, please contact:**

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- Click [HERE](#) to access your press kit.

### **About Terence Blanchard**

NEA Jazz Master, two-time Oscar nominee and eight-time GRAMMY winner Terence Blanchard has been a consistent artistic force for making powerful musical statements concerning painful American tragedies past and present. From his expansive work composing the scores for almost 20 Spike Lee projects over three decades, ranging from the documentary *When the Levees Broke* to the latest Lee film, *Da 5 Bloods*, Blanchard has interwoven beautiful melodies that created strong backdrops to human stories. Blanchard received an Oscar nomination for his original score for *Da 5 Bloods* in 2021 which marked his second nomination. He previously received an Oscar nomination for his original score for Spike Lee's *BlacKkKlansman*.

Blanchard is only the second Black composer to be nominated twice in the original score category, duplicating Quincy Jones' feat from 1967's *In Cold Blood* and 1985's *The Color Purple*. For *One Night in Miami*, which marked Regina King's feature directorial debut and premiered at the Venice International Film Festival, the Academy Award winning actress tapped the talents of Blanchard as did Gaz Alazraki, the director of *Father of the Bride*, which debuted on HBO Max. Some of Blanchard's other film and television credits include Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, *25th Hour* and *Inside Man*.

### **About LA Seen Festival**

For more than a decade, Los Angeles performing artists have had a home at The Soraya. They are standouts throughout the many seasons, performing original works, undertaking first-time collaborations, and rising to new heights. The Soraya both keeps an eye out for rising local talent and uplifts the ongoing work of the region's favorites. Thousands of fresh eyes in The Soraya's Great Hall have been introduced to hometown dancers, jazz artists, and other musicians. In April 2025, The Soraya introduces its first monthlong series of programs dedicated to the performing arts in Los Angeles, LA Seen.

### **About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)**

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre designed and built by HGA Architects and Engineers and opened in January 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian, the venue was renamed The Soraya in 2017. Vibrant programming has served to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and its 1.8 million residents and as one of the top arts and culture venues in Southern California. Since its inaugural season, The Soraya has presented over 500 artists and companies across the genres of music, dance, theater, and film and is a highly in-demand location for filming and rental events.

The Soraya's 2024-25 Season boldly advances the expansive sound of orchestras both traditional and contemporary; the freestyle vibe of jazz; an array of dance luminaries, and a cultural bounty drawn from the musical well of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, excelling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect Los Angeles' many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work and artists from the local region as well as nationally and around the world. Located on the vibrant campus of California State University Northridge (CSUN), The Soraya and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication share an integral link that enhances student access and opportunities in the arts and performing arts. A \$5 million contribution from record producer and former California Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb was pivotal in ensuring the completion and opening of The Soraya in 2011. For his founding support and in acknowledgment of the integral relationship between the Mike Curb College and The Soraya, Mike Curb is recognized as one of The Soraya's Cornerstone Benefactors. This partnership fosters academic and artistic excellence, elevating the talents and the future growth of CSUN's students through master classes, student tickets, concerts of student ensembles, and students appearing alongside renowned artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Aida Cuevas, and Martha Graham Dance Company.

**What: Terence Blanchard**  
***Champion and Fire Shut Up In My Bones***  
**Highlights from two operas by composer and jazz trumpeter Terence Blanchard**  
**Featuring Blanchard, the E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet**  
**Visuals by Andrew F. Scott**  
**Justin Austin, baritone**  
**Adrienne Danrich, soprano**  
**A Soraya Commission in collaboration with LA Opera Off Grand**

*"History-Making"*  
*"A Singular Achievement"*

*Performance Generously Underwritten by Ryan & Melissa Clinton*

*Performance Sponsor Premier America Credit Union*

*LA Opera Off Grand – Promotional Partner*

**Where:** Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)  
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

**Website:** [www.TheSoraya.org](http://www.TheSoraya.org)

**Ticket Office:** 818-677-3000

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