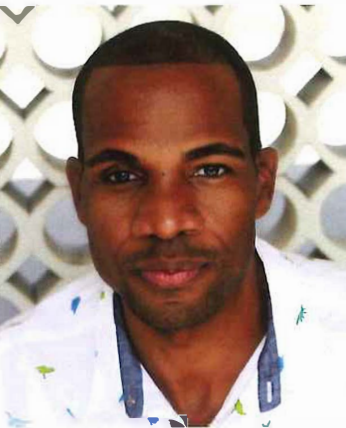


# Meet Dr. Derrell Acon: LBO's New Manager of Education & Engagement

LBO's newest staff member brings a fierce passion to everything he does, from singing to advocacy. A professional opera singer and dedicated activist, Derrell has forged a unique path as an artist and influencer.



Derrell Acon, LBO's Manager of Education and Engagement

After growing up in the inner city of St Louis, he ended up becoming a successful professional opera singer, but his life's mission to utilize his artistry as a form of activism wasn't catalyzed until he recovered from a random act of violence three years ago that almost claimed his life. After being shot in the head walking home from the gym in Chicago, his doctors were amazed that with such a traumatic injury, he had no disfigurement, and this felt to him like a call to action to use his skills to make a positive impact on the world. He brings this passion for advocacy to LBO every day in his work with young people and community-driven projects.

Derrell will perform sections from his personal lecture recital about his life as an artist of color as part of the first Community Conversation. He will also perform one of the leading roles in *The Central Park Five*. In addition to serving as Project Director for the Community Conversation Initiative, Derrell is currently managing LBO's educational programming and overseeing opera performances for school children in Los Angeles, Orange County and Long Beach, while maintaining a very active and successful operatic career.

Derrell is not only an accomplished bass- baritone who has sung roles with companies throughout the U.S., Europe, and The Middle East, he also holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Voice, and was a Fullbright Scholar in Italy.

**OPERA**  
LONG BEACH

3029 E South Street  
2nd Floor  
Long Beach CA 90805

First Class Mail  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Long Beach, CA  
Permit No. 5128

## LBO Behind The Curtain

IN THIS ISSUE

Community Conversations Initiative

LBO's Dr. Derrell Acon: Education & Engagement Leader

Meet LBO's Community Advisory Committee

## LBO 's Community Conversations Initiative

Long Beach Opera believes that discussions inspired by art should extend beyond the lobby of the theater. For this reason, LBO is using its 40th anniversary season theme, Justice, as a catalyst to present a brand new set of programs entitled The Community Conversations Initiative. This initiative, which will feature five "Conversations" and three youth programs, will create community-wide discussions about race, equity and the justice system in programs that are free to the public and held in locations throughout Long Beach. (cont pg 3)

Subscriptions and tickets now available for LBO's season of #Justice

[www.longbeachopera.org](http://www.longbeachopera.org) 562.470.7464



*The Black Cat*  
Jan 19, 20



*The Central Park Five*  
June 15, 22, 23



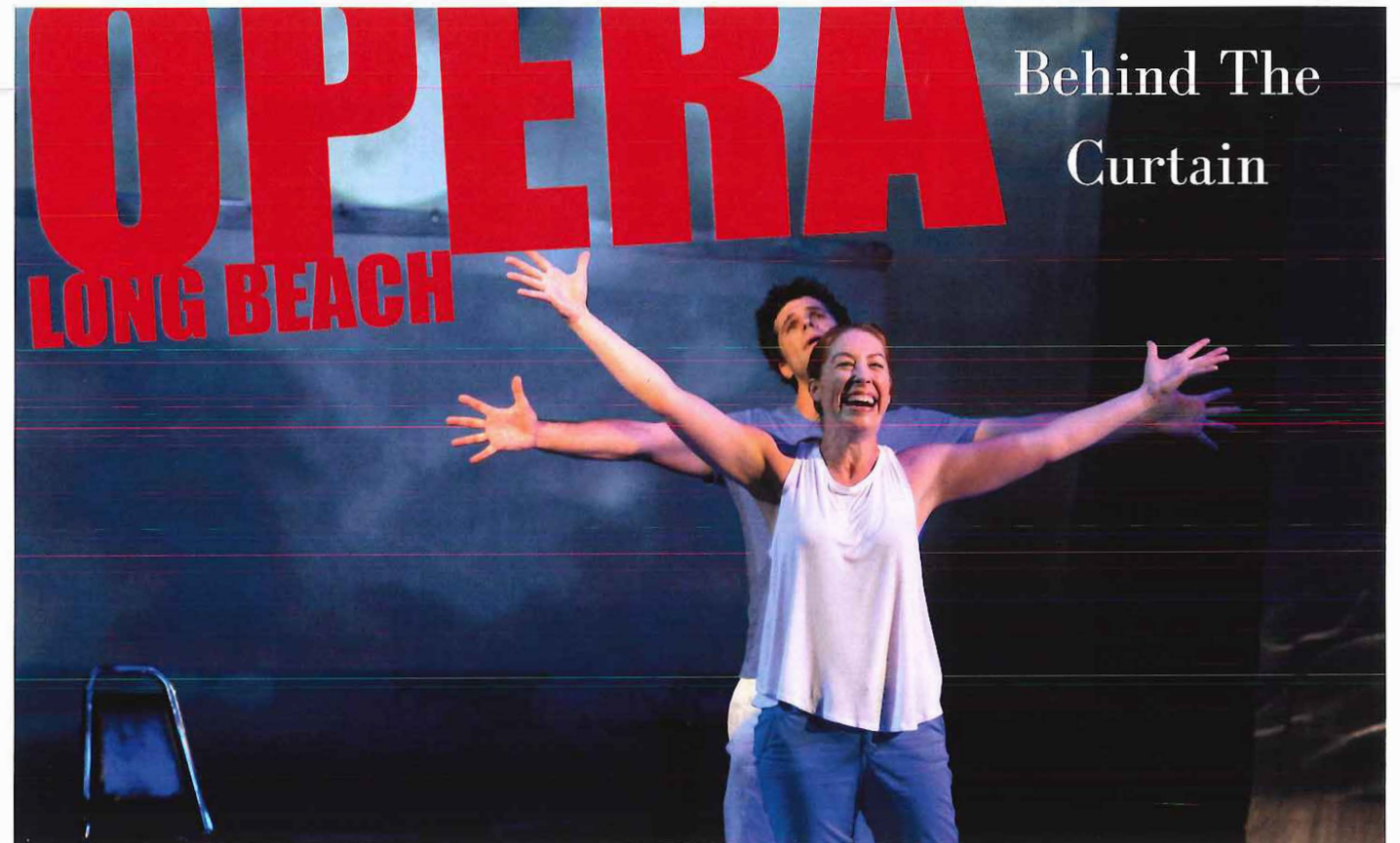
*In the Penal Colony*  
April 25-May 5

### LBO Needs YOU!

None of LBO's programming or initiatives would be possible without the generous support of donors like you. Please help LBO continue to create programming that sparks curiosity in the minds of people of all ages by making a tax-deductible contribution today. Your gift matters.

[www.longbeachopera.org/contribute](http://www.longbeachopera.org/contribute) or call 562.470.7464 x 105.

THANK YOU!





## Long Beach Opera's Community Advisory Committee

LBO relies on volunteers from the Long Beach and Southern California communities to help guide our programming, initiatives and special events. This season LBO has established a new committee of leaders called the Community Advisory Committee, which is playing a vital role in the planning and execution of the Community Conversations Initiative. Under the leadership of LBO's Manager of Education and Engagement, Dr. Derrell Acon, LBO's Community Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly to plan and curate this important series of events and the concurrent youth programming. The members of the Community Advisory Committee and their affiliations are as follows:

- Chris Anthony**, Executive Director, Cal Rep Theater
- Kate Azar**, Executive Director, LB Public Library Foundation
- LaDawn Best**, Executive Director, Peer Health Exchange Los Angeles
- Herlinda Chico**, Field Deputy, Supervisor Janice Hahn's office
- Anthony Davis**, Composer, *The Central Park Five*, Malcolm X, *Amistad*
- LaVerne Duncan**, Executive Director, Andy Street Community Association
- Otis Hogan**, Board Member, Long Beach LGBTQ+ Center and Houghton Park Neighborhood Leader
- Tasha Hunter**, President of the Board, Arts Council Long Beach
- Greta Mandell**, Community Psychiatrist
- Dr. Vickie McCloyn**, Founder & Creative Director, Young Gifted and Talented Black History Month Club
- Rex Richardson**, Councilmember, 9th district, Long Beach
- Dr. Joni Ricks-Oddie**, Director of the UCI Center for Statistical Consulting
- Dr. Sabrina Sanders**, Director of Student Affairs Projects and Initiatives, CSULB
- Shawna Stevens**, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Rex Richardson
- Griselda Suarez**, Executive Director, Arts Council Long Beach
- Marcus Tyson**, Private Investor and Co-Chair, Villager Young Leaders Program
- Dr. Rev. Leon Wood**, Retired Dean of the School of Business and Technology, LBCC
- Paula Wood**, Executive Director of Success in Challenges Inc
- Glenda Williams**, Director of Library Services, Long Beach Public Library



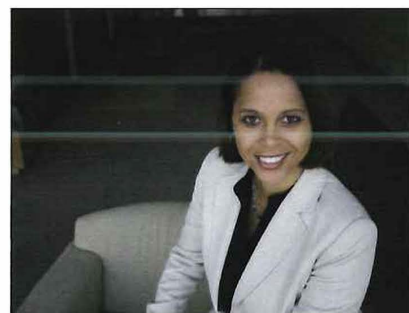
Herlinda Chico



Tasha Hunter



Dr. Leon Wood



Dr. Sabrina Sanders



Councilmember Rex Richardson



Paula Wood

(cont from pg 1) The Community Conversations Initiative, made possible by a grant from the Knight Foundation, will bring together multiple organizations, artists, and community leaders to create community-wide discussions, available and accessible to all.

The details for the Five Conversations, which begin in February 2019, are as follows:

### Conversation #1: "Dismantling Racism as a Community"

**Date:** February 9th at 2 pm  
**Location:** Michelle Obama Library  
**Featured Speaker and performer:** Dr. Derrell Acon  
 - Dr. Acon is an operatic bass baritone, lecturer and activist  
**Moderator:** Dr. Sabrina Sanders  
**Panelists:** Katie Balderas (Manager of Office of Equity for the City of Long Beach), Audrena Redmond (Black Lives Matter Long Beach Co-Founder), and others

### Conversation #2: "Equity and Diversity in the Arts"

**Date:** March 10th at 4 pm  
**Location:** Museum of Latin American Art  
**Featured Speaker:** Dr. Naomi André  
 - Dr. André is a professor and the author of the book "Black Opera; History, Power, Engagement"  
**Performers:** TBA  
**Moderator:** Tasha Hunter  
**Panelists:** Naomi André, Anthony Davis, and others

### Conversation #3: "Life Beyond Prison"

**Date:** April 30th at 3 pm  
**Location:** CSULB Studio Theater  
**Featured Speaker:** California State University Long Beach, Rising Scholars Justice Lab  
 - RSJL is an organization on the CSULB campus which supports formerly incarcerated individuals in their educational pursuits  
**Performers:** TBA  
**Moderator:** Isaac Bryan  
**Panelists:** Jasmin Harris (California Innocence Project), CIP exoneree, CSULB Rising Scholars Justice Lab members



### Conversation #4: "Guilty Until Proven Innocent"

**Date:** May 25th at 3 pm  
**Location:** Long Beach City College, Dyer Hall  
**Featured Speaker:** Gary Tyler  
 - Mr. Tyler was the youngest person ever convicted of the death penalty and was incarcerated in Angola prison for 41 years before having his sentence overturned and being released in 2016  
**Performers:** TBA  
**Moderator:** Kimmy Maniquis  
**Panelists:** Gary Tyler, Carl Kemp (Long Beach lobbyist and community leader) and others

### Conversation #5: "Black Lives, the Arts, and Mattering"

**Date:** June 6th at 4 pm  
**Location:** Long Beach City Council Chamber  
**Featured Speaker:** Anthony Davis  
 - Mr. Davis is the acclaimed composer of the opera "The Central Park Five" which will premiere at Long Beach Opera in June 2019  
**Performers:** Anthony Davis, Nicole Mitchell  
**Moderator:** Chris Anthony  
**Panelists:** Councilmember Rex Richardson, Marcina Riley (My Brother's Keeper Initiative Coordinator, City of Long Beach), and others

All programs will be ticketed, but will be free to the public. Conversations will be live-streamed on Facebook for those who are unable to attend in person. Tickets and additional information will be available through LBO's website. Visit [www.longbeachopera.org](http://www.longbeachopera.org), join [facebook.com/LBOConversations](https://facebook.com/LBOConversations) or call 562.470.7464 to learn more.



The Community Conversations Initiative is made possible thanks to a grant from the Knight Foundation

