



Stephen King's 'The Shining,' Philadelphia High School Hip-Hop Program Inspire New American Operas

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New life is being pumped into opera in the United States, with the world premiere next month of an operatic version of Stephen King's novel, [The Shining](#), and a new collaboration between the Apollo Theater in Harlem and Opera Philadelphia.



The Minneapolis-based Minnesota Opera will conclude its 2015-2016 season with the world premiere May 7 of *The Shining*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell. Based on King's 1977 best-seller, *The Shining* is the iconic, supernatural horror story that firmly established the novelist as the genre's definitive voice.

Like the novel, the opera is a thriller about the struggles of Jack Torrance; his wife, Wendy; and their son, Danny, to survive the isolation of the Overlook Hotel in Colorado, where Jack is the winter caretaker. The family tries to remain together despite their growing isolation from the world, the hotel's paranormal activity and Jack's abusive nature, alcoholism and increasing madness.

"It's tremendously exciting that Stephen King granted us permission to adapt *The Shining* into an opera," said Minnesota Opera's artistic director Dale Johnson. "Opera has the unique ability to amplify a story's emotions. By putting one of the most powerfully imagined stories of our time into the hands of Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell, we've created an intensely thrilling horror opera. I couldn't be more eager to share it with our audience."

Moravec considers *The Shining* a perfect fit for the operatic art form.



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“Opera for me is about three things: love, death and power. This story has all of those elements on steroids. For all of its sophistication, opera is simple, primordial. It speaks to us so deeply because it deals with who we are on the most fundamental level. That’s certainly what Stephen King does in *The Shining*. His story explores timeless, universal human issues in a high-voltage way, and that’s operatic.”

The Apollo Theater and Opera Philadelphia, which recently presented the new opera *Charlie Parker’s YARDBIRD* at the theater, have entered a multi-year partnership to stage contemporary operas. Their next co-production will be the New York premiere of *We Shall Not Be Moved*, set for the fall of 2017.

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The recent performances in New York of the opera about jazz musician Parker marked the first time the

Apollo Theater presented opera on its stage as well as the first time Opera Philadelphia produced in New York.

We Shall Not Be Moved, developed by composer Daniel Bernard Roumain, librettist Marc Bamuthi Joseph and director Bill T. Jones, will have its world premiere in Philadelphia before being presented at the Apollo. Set in Philadelphia, it will tell the story of a group of orphans who decide they want to live apart as a family, recognizing their marginalization and claiming it as a source of power. It is an outgrowth of Opera Philadelphia's Hip H'opera program for local high school students.

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