

THE GERSHWINS'

PORGY AND BESS

By George Gershwin, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin

CONDUCTOR
David Robertson

PRODUCTION
James Robinson

SET DESIGNER
Michael Yeargan

COSTUME DESIGNER
Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Donald Holder

PROJECTION DESIGNER
Luke Halls

CHOREOGRAPHER
Camille A. Brown

FIGHT DIRECTOR
David Leong

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in two acts

Wednesday, November 3, 2021
7:30–11:00PM

The production of The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess* was made possible by a generous gift from **The Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund** and **Douglas Dockery Thomas**

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from NPD Group, Inc.

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera;
Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam; and
English National Opera

The Metropolitan Opera

2021-22 SEASON

The 73rd Metropolitan Opera performance of

THE GERSHWINS'

PORGY AND BESS

CONDUCTOR

David Robertson

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

CLARA

Janai Brugger

MINGO

Errin Duane Brooks

SPORTIN' LIFE

Frederick Ballentine

JAKE

Ryan Speedo Green*

SERENA

Latonia Moore

ROBBINS

Chauncey Packer

JIM

Norman Garrett

PETER

Joshua Blue

MARIA

Denyce Graves

PORGY

Eric Owens

CROWN

Alfred Walker*

BESS

Angel Blue

A DETECTIVE

Grant Neale

LILY

Zoie Reams

A POLICEMAN

Bobby Mittelstadt

AN UNDERTAKER

Msimelelo Mbali**

ANNIE

Brittany Renee

"LAWYER" FRAZIER

Kenneth Overton

NELSON

Steven Myles

STRAWBERRY WOMAN

Amani Cole-Felder**

CRAB MAN

Chauncey Packer

A CORONER

Michael Lewis

SCIPPIO

Neo Randall

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Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 7:30-11:00PM

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Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**

Musical Preparation **Howard Watkins***, **J. David Jackson**, **Bryan Wagorn***, and **Israel Gursky**

Assistant Stage Directors **Sara Erde**, **Kimille Howard**, **Rory Pelsue**, and **Kathleen Smith Belcher**

Assistant Costume Designer **Ryan Park**

Associate Choreographer **Maleek Washington**

Assistant Choreographers **Jövan Dansberry** and **Christopher Figaro Jackson**

Met Titles **Michael Panayos**

Prompter **Israel Gursky**

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Dyeing by **Emma van Bloomstein**

Additional costumes by **Dawson Tailors**, **Jennifer Love Costumes, Inc.**, and **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**

Wigs and Makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

This production uses strobe-light effects.

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* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

** Member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

Synopsis

Act I

Catfish Row, a tenement neighborhood of Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1920s. The inhabitants of Catfish Row are relaxing after a day's work. Clara sings a lullaby to her baby. The drug dealer Sportin' Life; Clara's husband, Jake; and some of the other men are playing craps under the disapproving eye of the religious Serena. Jake sings a lullaby of his own to the baby. The disabled beggar Porgy arrives and is about to join the game when Crown and his lover, Bess, appear. The loudmouthed Crown joins the dice game. Drunk and high on drugs, he loses, starts a fight, and kills Robbins with a cotton hook. Before the police arrive, Crown runs off to hide, telling Bess that he'll be back for her. The community shuns Bess as they await the arrival of the police. Sportin' Life offers to take her to New York with him, but she refuses. Only Porgy is sympathetic to her: He offers her shelter and his protection, which she accepts.

In her room the following evening, Robbins's widow, Serena, leads the mourners at her husband's funeral. A collection is being taken to meet the cost of the burial. Porgy and Bess enter, and Bess offers Serena a contribution, which at first she refuses thinking it must be Crown's money. She finally accepts it when it is explained that it is Porgy's. Police officers arrive and accuse Peter, the honeyman, of the murder. Fearing what might happen, he tells them that Crown was responsible but is himself promptly arrested as a material witness. Serena convinces the undertaker to bury Robbins for less than his usual fee. Bess leads everyone in an exultant spiritual.

A month later, Jake and the other fishermen are mending their nets. Porgy compares his life to theirs. Sportin' Life enters, but before he has an opportunity to peddle any of his "happy dust," Maria, the matriarch of Catfish Row, chases him away. "Lawyer" Frazier sells Bess a divorce, even though she and Crown were never married. Everyone is preparing to leave for a church picnic on Kittiwah Island. Sportin' Life asks Bess again to come to New York with him and tries to give her more dope, which she refuses. Porgy threatens him and chases him off. He and Bess reflect on their newfound happiness. Porgy insists that Bess should go to the picnic even though he can't manage the boat trip. At first, she refuses, not wanting to leave him alone, but eventually, she yields to his persuasion and joins the others as they set off.

On Kittiwah Island later that same day, Sportin' Life describes his own cynical view of religion to some of the revelers, until Serena chastises them for being taken in by his stories. The steamboat whistle announces that it's time to leave, and everyone starts to pack up their belongings. Bess hurries along

until Crown, who has been hiding on the island since the Robbins murder, calls out to her. He wants Bess to come with him, but she explains that she has a new life with Porgy. Crown forces her to stay with him.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:10PM)

Act II

In Catfish Row at dawn a week later, fishermen leave for a day's work at sea despite a storm warning. Bess is heard talking deliriously from Porgy's room. She has been feverish and ill since returning from Kittiwah Island. Peter, released from police custody that morning, advises Porgy to take her to the hospital, but Serena would rather pray for her recovery. Her prayers are answered: Bess emerges into the courtyard, free of the fever. She explains to Porgy that she wants to stay with him but that, when Crown returns, she'll be forced to go back to him. Porgy tells her that she doesn't have to go with Crown, and he and Bess reaffirm their love for each other. The wind begins to rise, and the hurricane bell sounds.

At dawn the following day, everyone cowers together in Serena's room, and they pray for deliverance from the storm. Suddenly, there's a knock at the door: It's Crown seeking shelter and looking for Bess. She won't go with him, insisting that she belongs to Porgy alone. He mocks Porgy and the frightened townspeople and counters their prayers for deliverance with a vulgar song. At the storm's height, Clara sees Jake's boat has overturned and rushes out to save her husband. Bess calls for the men to go after her. Crown is the only one to respond.

In Catfish Row the following night, the storm has passed. The women grieve for those who have been lost, including Jake, Clara, and, it is assumed, Crown. Sportin' Life appears, mocks their weeping, and hints that Crown is still alive. Bess is seen at a window lulling Clara's baby to sleep. Crown enters under the cover of darkness in search of Bess, but Porgy confronts him and delivers a fatal blow.

The next afternoon, the detective returns to Catfish Row, accompanied by the coroner. They are investigating Crown's murder, but their questioning of Serena and two other women draws a blank. They go to Porgy's room and tell him that he must come with them and identify Crown's body. Horrified that he must look at Crown's face, Porgy refuses to go and has to be dragged off.

Taking advantage of Porgy's absence, Sportin' Life tries to convince Bess that Porgy will be locked up for certain, and he attempts to lure her away to a new life. When Bess spurns him, he forces some dope on her and leaves more outside her door as he leaves.

A week later, the inhabitants of Catfish Row greet each other at the beginning of another day. Porgy returns from jail in a jubilant mood and is unaware of his friends' discomfort as he calls out for Bess. Eventually, Serena and Maria tell him that Bess has gone to New York with Sportin' Life. Hearing this, Porgy decides to follow her: He cannot live without Bess.

Synopsis reprinted courtesy of English National Opera.



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The Gershwins'

Porgy and Bess

Premiere: Alvin Theatre, New York, 1935

A supremely American operatic masterpiece and the most ambitious work by one of the nation's greatest musical talents, *Porgy and Bess* focuses on the joys and struggles of a Black neighborhood in Charleston, South Carolina, in the early 20th century. The opera's score features a rich cache of individual solos, many of which have become classics of the Great American Songbook, but the true core of this story is its depiction of a remarkable community. Many of the memorable supporting characters have important musical and dramatic functions within the opera, and the chorus maintains a central role throughout. In spite of (or perhaps partially because of) the marginalization of Catfish Row, the community has a profound understanding of the seasonal cycles of life and death—sometimes expressed in superstition, sometimes in sincere faith, and sometimes in wordless syllables and choral vocal sighs, as if saying that which is too deep for words. The disabled Porgy and the abused, addicted Bess are microcosms of their world: outcasts among outcasts who are granted further insights as a result. As an offset to this isolated community, there is also the idea of a far-off, vaguely comprehended New York, home of vice and sin but also a golden land of opportunity. The overall combination of music, word, and idea among a complex blend of Americana make this a unique and impressive work both within and beyond the operatic repertory.

The Creators

George Gershwin (1898–1937) was one of America's greatest composers, whose immortal and diverse works in song, orchestral suites, and musicals spanned the classical, jazz, and theatrical worlds. His brother, Ira Gershwin (1896–1983), was one of the great lyricists of American song, providing words for most of George's most memorable tunes. Ira continued to provide classic lyrics after George's tragically early death, collaborating with such composers as Kurt Weill and Harold Arlen. DuBose Heyward (1885–1940) was a novelist and poet who wrote about the diverse culture of his native South Carolina. His novel *Porgy* (1925) was the source for the opera, and he also provided many of the lyrics for the libretto. Dorothy Heyward (1890–1961) was a playwright born in Ohio who married DuBose after attending Harvard University. She collaborated with her husband in adapting his novel into a successful Broadway play, which later inspired the opera.

The Setting

The opera is set in slightly fictionalized versions of real places in and around Charleston, South Carolina. Catfish Row is a seaside version of the actual Cabbage Row, a group of old mansions converted into multiple dwellings with storefronts on the ground level, historically inhabited by the descendants of freed slaves. The church picnic in Act I takes place on Kittiwah Island, a version of the real Kiawah Island 25 miles south of Charleston.

The Music

Far beyond being a compendium of classic songs, the score of *Porgy and Bess* maintains a level of musical unity and a rich, descriptive language that compares with the greatest operatic achievements. Much of the work's dynamism comes from Gershwin's explorations of the Gullah music of Tidewater Carolina. The composer spent months on islands there, and DuBose Heyward recalled one night when Gershwin joined in a local meeting of "shouting," a complex combination of dance rhythms beaten out by hand and foot. Oral tradition on the islands claims that Gershwin was the only white person who had ever accomplished it correctly. The rhythms and orchestral tones associated with prayer, whether sacred (Serena's prayer over Bess in Act II) or profane (Porgy's craps game prayer in Act I), are especially evocative of the connection between characters and the unseen world that is an essential aspect of this opera's allure. The solo vocal lines are demanding. Bess's "I loves you, Porgy" requires the legato power of a Puccini heroine. The other members of the large principal cast face similar challenges: The matriarchal figure Maria is a character role with tricky patter—until she must do some difficult classical singing in the trio toward the opera's end. Likewise, Sportin' Life, a role that Gershwin originally imagined for Cab Calloway, must clearly deliver both the witty words of the mock-sermon "It ain't necessarily so" and the jazzy legato stylings of "There's a boat that's leaving soon for New York." Gershwin's own mastery of jazz and his Eastern European Jewish roots meld with the Gullah sources of this story to create a personal, idiomatic, brilliant, and thoroughly convincing musical canvas.

Met History

The long-discussed Met premiere of *Porgy and Bess* finally took place on February 6, 1985, in a production directed by Nathaniel Merrill and designed by Robert O'Hearn. James Levine conducted a specially engaged chorus and a cast headed by Simon Estes and Grace Bumbry in the title roles, with Florence Quivar, Myra Merritt, Isola Jones, and Gregg Baker. Actor Larry Storch appeared in the non-singing role of the detective. The opera received 54 performances in four seasons through 1990. On September 23, 2019, the opera returned to the Met, opening the season in a new production by James Robinson. David Robertson conducted a cast led by Eric Owens and Angel Blue as Porgy and Bess, alongside Golda Schultz, Latonia Moore, Denyce Graves, Frederick Ballentine, Alfred Walker, and Ryan Speedo Green, many of whom return in this season's revival.

Program Note

On the surface, George Gershwin and *Porgy and Bess* librettist DuBose Heyward don't seem to have had much in common beyond the fact that neither of them finished high school.

Gershwin was born in Brooklyn to Russian Jewish parents and grew up on Second Avenue, in the heart of the Yiddish Theater District of New York City. It was a bustling cosmos of shopkeepers, actors, musicians, and every kind of show imaginable, from Shakespeare to vaudeville to operetta. Gershwin studied piano and quit school at the age of 15 to work in Tin Pan Alley—the haven for songwriters and publishers originally situated on 28th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. He immersed himself in jazz and pop, wrote dozens of songs, and came of age as a serious composer and performer during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.

Heyward was born in Charleston, South Carolina, into a family of dispossessed land owners, descendants of Thomas Heyward, who had signed the Declaration of Independence. Heyward's father died when he was three years old, and his mother, Jane, was a writer and amateur historian, who chronicled the stories and dialect of the Gullahs of the Carolina barrier islands. According to Heyward biographer James M. Hutchisson, Jane became "one of the most famous 'dialect recitalists' of the 20th-century South." Heyward quit school at 14 to help the family, eventually taking a job on the waterfront that immersed him in the local Black community. After a subsequent stint as an insurance salesman, he became secure enough to pursue his ambitions as a writer and was able to work at the MacDowell Colony where he would meet his wife and collaborator, Dorothy.

In 1926, when Gershwin picked up Heyward's novel *Porgy* (1925), the first thing he would have seen was the author's poetic invocation of his muses:

Porgy, Maria, and Bess,
Robbins, and Peter, and Crown;
Life was a three-stringed harp
Brought from the woods to town.

Marvelous tunes you rang
From passion and death and birth
You who had laughed and wept
On the warm, brown lap of the earth.

Now in your untried hands
An instrument, terrible, new,
Is thrust by a master who frowns,
Demanding strange songs of you.

God of the White and Black,
Grant us great hearts on the way
That we may understand
Until you have learned to play.

As Gershwin would soon discover, Heyward's prose was also full of sound—spirituals, dirges, lullabies, Gullah dialect, prayers, dance rhythms, the swoosh of the tides, and the roaring winds of a hurricane. Heyward communicated time and space through sound: "Far away St. Christopher struck the hour. The mellow bells threw the quarter hours out like a handful of small gold coins to ring down upon the drowsy streets. Then very deliberately, they dropped ten, round, heavy notes, into the silence." And, of course, there was also the sound of suffering, as Robbins's widow, "[sat] at the foot of the bed ... swaying to the rhythm [of a dirge] like a palm in the ebb and flow of a bleak sea wind. ... The music faded away in vague, uncertain minors."

As Dorothy Heyward later recounted in an article in *Harper's*, Gershwin "read himself awake" that night. He wrote to Heyward immediately, but neither poet nor composer was ready to move forward with a musical show. DuBose and Dorothy, however, turned the book into a play of the same name, which premiered to great success on October 10, 1927, at the Guild Theater in New York. The advent of the play raised the stakes; it was a step closer to a libretto for an opera. But it took yet another five years before the collaboration between the two men became a reality. Finally, on March 29, 1932, Gershwin wrote again to Heyward, "[I]n thinking of ideas for new compositions, I came back to one that I had several years ago—namely *Porgy*—and the thought of setting it to music. It is still the most outstanding play that I know about the colored people."

While the history of musico-theatrical works by and about the Black community was long and fraught, it blossomed in the Harlem Renaissance. There were operas by African American composers, including Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* (1911) and Clarence Cameron White's *Quanga* (1932), starring baritone Lawrence Winters, who also sang on the first "complete" recording of *Porgy* (1951). And, of course, there was jazz, composed and performed by Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, and so many others. In 1921, Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle's all-Black musical *Shuffle Along* stimulated later productions such as *Strut Miss Lizzie* (1922), *Blackbirds* (1926), and *Hot Chocolate* (1929), which featured Fats Waller's hit song "Ain't Misbehavin'."

There were also "byproducts" of these developments: shows by white authors and composers that were either multi-racial—Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Showboat* (1927)—or featured all-Black casts—Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1927–28). Lewis Gruenberg's *The Emperor Jones* (1933) premiered at the Metropolitan Opera with Lawrence Tibbett in the title role—in blackface.

Gershwin had thought about an “American” opera with a jazz element for years and even tried his hand with *Blue Monday* (1922), a one-act tragedy set in Harlem, performed by white actors in blackface. But ten years later, a more mature Gershwin worried about authenticity and rejected blackface for his new opera—first, when Al Jolson was suggested for the role of Porgy. Gershwin responded that “the sort of thing I should have in mind for Porgy is a much more serious thing than Jolson could ever do.” Moreover, he sincerely believed that the only singers who could do justice to this story would be Black.

Porgy and Bess was first performed September 30, 1935, in Boston, as a kind of out-of-town tryout. The original version, nearly four hours long, was then pared down before opening on Broadway on October 10 of that year at the Alvin Theatre, with Todd Duncan and Anne Brown in the leading roles. Most early critics considered *Porgy* neither a “Black” work nor a political work, though Duke Ellington noted its lack of social criticism, which he believed to be an essential component of any drama about African Americans. In the decades since, the opera has spawned much debate about racial stereotyping and cultural appropriation. Harold Cruse, for example, condemned *Porgy and Bess* in his book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967): “Culturally, it is the product of American developments that were intended to shunt Negroes off into a tight box of subcultural artistic dependence, stunted growth, caricature, aesthetic mimicry imposed by others, and creative insolvency.”

One of the chief questions early critics did address was whether or not *Porgy and Bess* was an opera. That question gnawed at Gershwin, who defended himself in a *New York Times* article of October 20, 1935, by calling his work a “folk opera,” despite having written all of the music for it himself. He stated further that he put the work on Broadway and not in any of the “usual” operatic venues because he “hoped to have developed something in American music that would appeal to the many rather than the cultured few.” He talked about the range of genres that typified opera, citing Verdi, whose works were full of “song hits.” In response, *Times* critic Olin Downes conceded that *Porgy* “smells somewhat of Charleston and somewhat of Broadway, [combining] learned operatic usages or experiments ... with the twists and rhythms of our popular music.” A good example of such fusion is “Summertime,” a gently rocking lullaby that requires a classically trained singer with a strong upper range and the ability to sustain a Bellini-esque cantabile line. Years later, in 1987, Duncan (the original Porgy) addressed the opera question in an interview: “The passion that comes in the grand operas is in *Porgy and Bess*, and the main ingredients in *Porgy and Bess* are the same as in *Tosca* ... sheer heaven!”

Porgy and Bess is through-sung, propelled forward with breathtaking energy and fluidity with few breaks for applause. The text unfolds naturally and gracefully through recitatives and ariosos, while spoken dialogue, mostly reserved for heartless white policemen—presumably unable to sing—has a strong percussive

effect. The infrastructure of *Porgy and Bess*, however, is the chorus, whose members act as near constant witnesses, reacting as appropriate with a spiritual or a dirge. The large orchestra also plays an important role, underscoring extended action scenes, such as the fight between Porgy and Crown, which looks forward to Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957). In fact, Bernstein heard the Boston try-out of *Porgy and Bess* when he was a student at Harvard, recalling that he "freaked out" over it. He later bought a score, committed it to memory, and came to understand very well that the musical melting pot that is *Porgy and Bess* is akin to America itself. He even wrote about those issues in his Harvard senior thesis, "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music" (1939). But more than that, Bernstein had such a deep emotional connection to *Porgy and Bess* that discussing it in a TV interview in 1972 caused him to weep openly: "I don't know what the hell has happened to me. ... He [Gershwin] just touched something. ... I loved him so much."

—Helen M. Greenwald

Helen M. Greenwald is chair of the department of music history at New England Conservatory and editor of the Oxford Handbook of Opera.

The Cast



David Robertson

CONDUCTOR (SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON *Porgy and Bess* at the Met, *Kát'a Kabanová* in Rome, and concerts with the Utah Symphony.

MET APPEARANCES *Porgy and Bess*, *Così fan tutte*, *Jenůfa*, John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Billy Budd*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Carmen*, and *The Makropulos Case* (debut, 1996).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Between 2014 and 2019, he served as chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and he was music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra from 2005 to 2018. He has also served as music director of the Orchestre National de Lyon and Paris's Ensemble Intercontemporain. He has appeared at many of the world's leading opera houses, including the Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Santa Fe Opera, and San Francisco Opera, and regularly conducts the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and other ensembles internationally. A supporter of young musicians, he has worked with students at the Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood, Lucerne Festival, Paris Conservatoire, Music Academy of the West, and National Orchestra Institute. He is a member of the advisory council for the Tianjin Juilliard School.



Angel Blue

SOPRANO (LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON *Bess* in *Porgy and Bess* and *Destiny/Loneliness/Greta* in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Met, a concert with the Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, *Violetta* in *La Traviata* at Covent Garden, *Mimi* in *La Bohème*

at the Bavarian State Opera, *Marguerite* in *Faust* at the Paris Opera, and concerts with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES *Bess*, and *Musetta* and *Mimi* (debut, 2017) in *La Bohème*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include *Mimi* in Hamburg, Dresden, and at the Canadian Opera Company; the title role of *Tosca* in Aix-en-Provence; *Violetta* at La Scala and in Winnipeg; *Bess* at Seattle Opera; and *Liù* in *Turandot* at San Diego Opera. She has also sung Myrtle Wilson in John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* in Dresden, the *Peri* in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* in concert in Rome, *Clara* in *Porgy and Bess* at La Scala, *Donna Elvira* in *Don Giovanni* in concert in Tokyo, and *Mimi* in Valencia and at English National Opera and the Vienna State Opera. She was the 2020 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



Janai Brugger

SOPRANO (DARIEN, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Clara in *Porgy and Bess* at the Met and Haydn's *Missa in Tempore Belli* at Dutch National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Clara, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Jemmy in *Guillaume Tell*, Helena in *The Enchanted Island*, and

Liù in *Turandot* (debut, 2012).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Palm Beach Opera, Susanna and Clara at Cincinnati Opera, Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* at LA Opera, Clara and Servilia at Dutch National Opera, Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Liù at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden. She has also sung Musetta in *La Bohème* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at LA Opera; Micaëla at Washington National Opera, Opera Colorado, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Liù at Hawaii Opera Theatre; the Priestess in *Aida* in concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* and Norina in *Don Pasquale* at Palm Beach Opera.



Denyce Graves

MEZZO-SOPRANO (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

THIS SEASON Maria in *Porgy and Bess* and Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with the Met, Erda in *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in Paris, and a concert at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. She also directs *Carmen* at Minnesota Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Maria, Marnie's Mother in Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, the title role of *Carmen* (debut, 1995), Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*, Federica in *Luisa Miller*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, and Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Mary Cardwell Dawson in the world premiere of Sandra Seaton and Carlos Simon's *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* at the Glimmerglass Festival, the Old Lady in *Candide* at Washington National Opera and Palm Beach Opera, Mrs. Patrick De Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at Minnesota Opera, Grace in the world premiere of Daniel Sonenberg's *The Summer King* at Pittsburgh Opera, and Emelda Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion* at Washington National Opera. She has also appeared at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, and LA Opera, among many others.



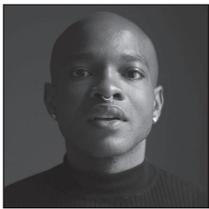
Latonia Moore

SOPRANO (HOUSTON, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON Serena in *Porgy and Bess* and Billie in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Met, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Dallas Opera, Billie at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the title role of *Aida* at LA Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Serena, *Aida* (debut, 2012), and Cio-Cio-San.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at the Glimmerglass Festival; the title role of *Tosca* at Austin Opera, Washington National Opera, Opera Australia, and in Rouen; Mimì in *La Bohème* at Palm Beach Opera; Serena at Dutch National Opera and English National Opera; Aida in Buenos Aires and at the Polish National Opera and English National Opera; and Desdemona in *Otello* in Bergen, Norway. She has sung Aida in Zurich and Tokyo; at Opera Australia, Pittsburgh Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, San Diego Opera, and the Dallas Opera; and in concert in Bergen and at Ravinia Festival. Other recent credits include *Tosca* at New York City Opera; *Fidelia* in Puccini's *Edgar* in Dortmund, Germany; *Cio-Cio-San* at San Diego Opera; *Liù* in *Turandot* at Covent Garden; and *Liù*, *Mimì*, and *Cio-Cio-San* in Dresden.



Frederick Ballentine

TENOR (NORFOLK, VIRGINIA)

THIS SEASON Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* at the Met; the Drum-Major in *Wozzeck* and Max in *Der Freischütz* in Kassel, Germany; Nick in Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* at English National Opera; Judah in the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience* at Cincinnati Opera; and a recital at Washington National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Sportin' Life (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS This season, he joins the ensemble at the Staatstheater Kassel. Recent performances include Wiley Stonecrop in a digital presentation of Mozart's *The Impresario* with Opera San Antonio; Charlie Parker in Daniel Schnyder's *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* at Seattle Opera; Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* at LA Opera; Sportin' Life at Cincinnati Opera, Dutch National Opera, and English National Opera; Don José in *Carmen* at Seattle Opera and Annapolis Opera; Kaherdin in Martin's *Le Vin Herbé* in concert at Wolf Trap Opera; the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Cincinnati Opera; Cacambo in *Candide*, the Herald in *Don Carlo*, and the Messenger in *Aida* at Washington National Opera; Reverend Parris in Ward's *The Crucible* and Sportin' Life at the Glimmerglass Festival; and Amon in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten* at LA Opera.



Ryan Speedo Green

BASS-BARITONE (SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA)

THIS SEASON Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, Uncle Paul in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Met; Rocco in *Fidelio* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and Escamillo in *Carmen* at Washington National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Jake, the King in *Aida*, Colline, Oroé in *Semiramide*, "Rambo" in John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, the Jailer in *Tosca*, the Second Knight in *Parsifal*, and the Mandarin in *Turandot* (debut, 2012).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In 2014, he became a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera, where his roles have included Banquo in *Macbeth*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Truffaldin, Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*, and Colline, among many others.

Other recent performances include the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* and Colline at Palm Beach Opera, Jake at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Houston Grand Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and was a 2021 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leightman.



Eric Owens

BASS-BARITONE (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*, Philippe II in *Don Carlos*, and Verdi's Requiem at the Met; Hunding in the first act of *Die Walküre* in concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Porgy, Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*, the Voice of Neptune in *Idomeneo*, Vodník in *Rusalka*, Jaufré Rudel in Kaija Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin*, Orest in *Elektra*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Alberich in the *Ring* cycle, and General Leslie Groves in John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Wotan in *Die Walküre* in concert at Seattle Opera, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Glimmerglass Festival, Porgy at Dutch National Opera, Wotan in *Siegfried* and *Die Walküre* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Philip II in *Don Carlo* and Stephen Kumalo in Weill's *Lost in the Stars* at Washington National Opera. In 2017, he was appointed artistic advisor of the Glimmerglass Festival. He serves on the board of trustees of both the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and Astral Artistic Services, and in 2019, he became co-chair of the Curtis Institute's opera department.



Alfred Walker

BASS-BARITONE (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)

THIS SEASON Crown in *Porgy and Bess* at the Met, Scarpia in *Tosca* at San Francisco Opera, and Nalikantha in *Lakmé* in concert with Washington Concert Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1998 debut as Grégorio in *Roméo et Juliette*, he has sung nearly 200 performances of 21 roles, including Crown, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Titirel in *Parsifal*, Parsi Rustomji in Philip Glass's *Satyagraha*, Wagner in *Faust*, Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, and Zaretski in *Eugene Onegin*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in concert at Michigan Opera Theatre, Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Orest in *Elektra* at San Francisco Opera, the Ruler in Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane* at Bard SummerScape, Thoas in *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Stuttgart, and Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* and Amonasro in *Aida* at Seattle Opera. He has also sung Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* at the National Opera of Chile, Wotan in *Das Rheingold* in Raleigh, Méphistophélès in *Faust* at Portland Opera, and Josh Gibson in the world premiere of Daniel Sonenberg's *The Summer King* at Pittsburgh Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.