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KISHNA DAVIS

Soprano

Kishna Davis, soprano, is widely acclaimed throughout the United States and Europe for her performances in opera, with orchestras and as a solo concert artist. Her operatic roles include the title role in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* (Juilliard Opera), Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking* (Baltimore Opera), Nedda in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* (Opera Memphis), the title role in Puccini's *Tosca* (Metro Lyric Opera of New Jersey), Norina in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (Indianapolis Opera), Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème* (Metro Lyric Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera), Bess in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (New York City Opera, John de Main, conductor; Opera Company of Philadelphia, Indianapolis Opera, Virginia Opera, Memphis Opera), the title role in Verdi's *Aida* (Metro Lyric Opera), Medoro in Handel's *Orlando*, and concert scenes from Verdi's *La forza del destino* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*, (the latter three at the Altenburg Opera Festival in Germany). She was a member in the Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera where she sang the role of the Countess in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, subsequently appearing in the same role at Western Opera Theatre. As a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, Ms. Davis sang the title role in Carlyle Floyd's *Susannah*, conducted by James Conlon, and also appeared there as Musetta. She performed Diedre Murray's jazz opera, *The Running Man*, in Lenox, Massachusetts.

She has frequently performed excerpts from *Porgy and Bess* with orchestras in the United States, including at Wolftrap with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony under Yuri Termirkanov, Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin, National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bobby McFerrin, and the Oregon, Pacific, Phoenix, and San Francisco symphonies. She has also performed songs from *Porgy and Bess* abroad, including Martinique, on tour with the Morgan State University choir in Prague, with the Chicago Sinfonietta during the ensemble's European tour, and recently in Rome and Siena under Yuri Termirkanov. She was also the feature soprano soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic. Other performances with orchestras have included concert performances of arias from Kurt Weill's opera *Street Scene* (Phoenix Symphony), André Previn's song cycle *Honey and Rue* (Annapolis Symphony), and the soprano solo in Leslie Dunner's *Songs of a Motherless Child* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as with the Dallas, Baltimore, and Annapolis symphonies. Other concert appearances have included the soprano solos in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Missa Solemnis, Duke Ellington's *Sacred Music* (Cleveland Jazz Fest), various arias from oratorios by Handel (Marin Alsop conducting the Colorado Symphony), Maria's songs from *West Side Story* (Spokane Symphony), and appearances with the Evansville Philharmonic and the Sunshine Pops Orchestra in southwest Florida. Ms. Davis also returned for the second year as soprano soloist for the New Year's Eve Gala, at the Kennedy Center with the National Symphony Orchestra. She will sing Holiday concerts with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic and Greenville Symphony in Dec, 2006.

Ms. Davis, a winner of the Baltimore Opera Competition, is a graduate of The Juilliard Opera Center, where she received her master's degree in music. In addition, she holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Morgan State University.

For upcoming engagements and additional information, keep an eye out for Ms. Davis' forthcoming website (www.kishnadavis.com).

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Critical Acclaim

In concert with the Baltimore Symphony:

“Kishna Davis launched “Summertime”...had the lullaby purring, with some personal touches in the phrasing adding to the appeal. The soprano delivered a gutsy, riveting “My Man’s Gone Now” and was a positively melting partner as Bess...”

- Tim Smith – *The Baltimore Sun*

As Musetta in *La bohème*:

Then there was Kishna Davis as Musetta. Her debut with the company last season in the title role of "Aida" was a winner, and she made this flirty woman into a musical and comical delight in Act 2. Her voice easily reaches into the coloratura stratosphere, while its broad range gave depth to her more serious moments later on. Davis hammed it up, and how, in the famous scene at the café. And her stage presence is very powerful. She skirted the edge of going too far, but made the scene work.

- Albert H. Cohen – *Asbury Park Press*

As the title role in *Aida*:

“Kishna Davis appeared for the first time as Aida and immediately established herself in the role with her superb acting and singing skills. Davis made every moment onstage effective. Her eyes were always expressive, as were her gestures, communicating her anguish and love. Her voice is beautiful throughout its range, with an especially lush upper register. Moreover, she brought subtlety to her arias; the endings of "Numi, pietà" and "O patria mia" emerged as gorgeous, spine-tingling sighs.”

- Albert H. Cohen – *Opera News*

“Soprano Kishna Davis embarked on her first Aida here with an air of confidence and impressive preparation of the score. The voice was rich and even, her technique secure, and her stamina in this most taxing of roles was quite good...”

-Willa J. Conrad – *The New Jersey Star Ledger*

“The audiences who attend Metro Lyric Opera performances are knowledgeable about the popular works that are this company’s fare. So, when the 1,400 opera fans who filled Red Bank’s Count Basie Theatre on Saturday let out a lusty roar for Kishna Davis, singing the title role in Verdi’s “Aida,” it came as no surprise.

The young soprano made her first-ever outing in this classic role something to cherish. When she’s a big star, performing in the world’s largest opera houses, we Shore people can say, “We heard her first.”

...what made this Aida so impressive was a combination of superb acting and singing skills. Davis made every moment on stage effective. Her eyes were always expressive, as were her hands and arms. You felt her anguish, her love and her conflicts. She has a beautiful voice throughout its range, with an especially lush top end. Moreover, she knew how to bring subtlety to her arias, so the ending of “Numi pietà” and “O patria mia” emerged as gorgeous sighs that sent chills through the listener.”

-Al Cohen – *Asbury Park Press*

As Norina in *Don Pasquale* with Indianapolis Opera:

“After seeing Kishna Davis' Indianapolis Opera debut last season as a soft, melancholy Bess in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, I'll bet many never guessed the soprano has skills as a comic actress. She does.

In fact, Davis' wily antics often give this production its most hilarious highs. She plays Norina, a lusty girl who hopes to marry Don Pasquale's nephew, Ernesto. After Pasquale attempts to ruin those plans, she impersonates Dr. Malatesta's sister, a "former nun," as part of an elaborate joke on the bachelor Pasquale while he plans to take a much-younger wife...Davis gives the sister a knee-slappingly funny split personality: demure one moment, domineering the next."

-Whitney Smith – *The Indianapolis Star*

"This production's most impressive singing was by soprano Kishna Davis, the only female principal, as Norina. Her delivery was well burnished throughout her range...."

- Tom Aldridge – *Nuvo Calender*

As soloist in "*A Night of Opera*" with the Grand Rapids Symphony:

"Soprano Kishna Davis, a rising young singer, made her Grand Rapids debut Friday evening in an exciting night of opera's greatest hits with music director David Lockington and the Grand Rapids Symphony.

In seven arias plus one encore, encompassing more than 30 minutes worth of singing, Davis demonstrated that she'll be a singer to keep an eye and ear on in the years ahead.

A soprano leaning toward the spinto in size and power, it's easy to hear why Davis is compared to the great Leontyne Price. She has a robust lower register with a hint of contralto, a dark mid-range that cuts through a full orchestra, and sonorous, spinning upper notes that can cause an audience to swoon.

...given the playful coquettishness of Musetta from *La Bohème*, Davis' seemingly effortless singing and riveting sensuality captivated the audience as she flirted her way up one side of the stage and down the other in Musetta's Waltz.

Wielding a mask for the Hungarian "Czardas" from *Die Fledermaus*, Davis was the vivacious party girl having a merry prank on her husband...

It's a tough choice, but her showstopper may have been Louise's Act III aria "Depuis le jour" from Gustave Charpentier's 1900 opera *Louise*...singing from the front of the box seats to the left of the audience, Davis' voice carried easily and effortlessly in the goose-pimple provoking performance right up to the high B for "bravo," which rang through the hall afterward.

For an encore, Davis returned for a moving performance of George Gershwin's "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*. Her voice floated beautifully, and her final note seemed to go on forever."

- Jeffrey Kazmarczyk – *The Grand Rapids Press*

As Bess in *Porgy and Bess* :

With Opera Company of Philadelphia:

"The large cast is populated by evenly strong singer-actors, led by Kishna Davis' complex Bess – a sex kitten who wants better out of life.

Davis has a voice that sensuously hugged string doublings, but struck out with sass in other spots."

-Peter Dobrin- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

With Virginia Opera:

"Davis was nicely cast as Bess, a sultry restless woman whose voice carries and edgy hardness towards life. But she softened in the soaring duets with Powell that contains some of the Gershwin's most beautiful melodies and lyrics."

-David Nicholson - *Daily Press*

“Davis was a perfect match, just as endearing as she fell in love with him. Her voice soared with rich tone to the heights...”

-Lee Teply -*The Virginian-Pilot*

Other reviews:

“...soprano steals the show, Kishna’s performance was spectacular. Not only is her voice powerful, tonally opulent and deeply expressive but she acts as well as she sings. She received two prolonged ovations, and she deserved them.”

Joseph McLellan, *The Washington Post*

“The great soprano Leontyne Price described Davis’ voice as “juicy and lyrical,” who am I to argue? “Davis can float out high notes with the best of them, and when it’s time for high drama she leaves pulses pounding and jaws dropping all through the house.”

Phil Greenfield, *The Baltimore Sun*

“Ms. Davis possesses a naturally juicy, superbly trained lyric soprano voice that is absolutely thrilling from top to bottom.”

Glenn McNatt, *The Baltimore Sun*

“The performance was enhanced by the passionate brilliance of Davis’ soprano.”

-*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

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Soprano

Operatic Repertoire

Bizet	CARMEN	Micaela
Charpentier	LOUISE	Louise*
Floyd	SUSANNAH	Susannah
Gershwin	PORGY AND BESS	Bess
Gounod	FAUST	Marguerite*
Handel	ORLANDO	Medoro
Massenet	LE CID HERODIADE	Chimène* Salome*
Mozart	DON GIOVANNI LE NOZZE DI FIGARO IDOMENEO DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE	Donna Elvira* Countess Elettra* Pamina
Offenbach	TALES OF HOFFMANN	Antonia
Puccini	LA BOHEME MADAMA BUTTERFLY LA RONDINE SUOR ANGELICA TURANDOT	Musetta, Mimi Cio-Cio San* Magda* Suor Angelica Liu
Strauss, J.	DIE FLEDERMAUS	Rosalinde
Tchaikovsky	EUGENE ONEGIN	Tatiana*
Verdi	AIDA UN BALLO IN MASCHERA ERNANI FALSTAFF LA FORZA DEL DESTINO IL TROVATORE OTELLO SIMON BOCCANEGRA	Aida Amelia* Elvira* Alice Ford* Leonora Leonora Desdemona* Amelia*

* - roles in preparation

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Orchestral Repertoire

Bach	Magnificat Mass in b minor St. John's Passion St. Matthew's Passion
Barber	Andromache's Farewell Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Beethoven	Missa Solemnis Symphony No. 9
Bernstein	Mass
Brahms	Deutsche Requiem
Bruckner	Mass in F
Handel	Messiah
Mahler	Symphony No. 2 Symphony No. 8 (Soprano I)
Mozart	Requiem
Poulenc	Gloria
Rossini	Stabat Mater
Strauss	Four Last Songs
Vaughan Williams	Serenade to Music
Verdi	Requiem