

# Erica Papillion-Posey



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**For Immediate Release**

**Release Date** | November 1, 2016

## ***Erica Papillion-Posey* assumes role of Clara in The Aurora Fox Theater production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess***

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Multi-talented recording artist and author, **Erica Papillion-Posey**, described as “...a living tribute and testimony to the memory of the great Ms. Marian Anderson, the legendary opera superstar and African-American trailblazer” [Denver Weekly News] is proud to announce her debut in the role of Clara (*Summertime*) in The Aurora Fox Theater production of ***Porgy and Bess*** by George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose and Dorothy Heyward from the book adapted by Suzan-Lori Parks and musical score adapted by Dierdre L. Murray.

Fresh from the dual release of her November 2015 debut jazz album, ***The Standard Reimagined, when jazz...*** and debut literary project, ***Musings from the Mind of a Mezzo, Poetry & Prose of passion, pain & plight*** Michael C. Bailey [All About Jazz] beautifully compliments the prowess of **Papillion-Posey's** classical and jazz vocal stylings, “...though a classically trained (mezzo soprano to be precise) [she] is amazingly at home in the realms of jazz and popular music... Her facility in each area studied and certain, but not so much that her art has lost its

*organic nature through study and practice. ...a natural singer who does not have to force her instrument to a given genre, merely, she allows it to adapt and assimilate. ...perhaps the best classically-trained voice to approach jazz. She indulges in none of the technical wizardry necessary in opera, opting to display her keen instrument in its purest, most fundamental form. ...excellent...”*

Originally an opera first premiering in 1935 featuring an all-black, classically trained cast, Heywards' tale *Porgy and Bess* charts the lives of the inhabitants of Catfish Row, an African-

American division of Charleston, South Carolina. The musical follows the crippled Porgy and his beloved Bess, who is under the dominance of the dangerous Crown and the brawny drug dealer Sportin' Life.

Based in the 1930s, *Porgy and Bess* centers on the tragic love story of the crippled beggar Porgy and beautiful Bess, who longs to turn away from her former life as a prostitute and drug addict. Post murder, Bess's abusive companion, Crown, flees, leaving her at the mercy of a judgmental community and tempted by the seductive Sportin' Life. Bess forges an unlikely bond with Porgy and gradually finds acceptance on Catfish Row—until the death of Clara, during a violent hurricane, and the return of Crown alters their lives forever. **Papillion-Posey's** feelings on the role, “An opportunity to inhabit any character in this treasured production is an absolute honor and joy. To be entrusted with Clara’s *Summertime* is beyond... Having performed this gem on many occasions, I know her well and can’t wait to find new ways of finessing her words and orchestration.” The irony and pure chance of this—she was already slated to record *Summertime* on her upcoming Spring 2017 sophomore release: **DEEP Like...**

*Porgy and Bess* has evolved from its arguably racist stereotypes of 1930s Broadway. Favorites like: *Summertime* (morphing into a time-honored jazz standard), *It Ain't Necessarily So*, and Porgy's celebration of love and life *I Got Plenty of Nuttin'* forever stir the heart and soul. You are sure to see these characters from the not-too-distant past in some facet of today's cultural landscape.

With such vocal versatility, a keen sense of story-telling and interpretation, **Papillion-Posey's** portrayal of Clara is sure to make a lasting impression in this adaptation of black life, love, death and acceptance under the direction of Donnie Betts with musical direction by Jodel Charles.



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### ***Porgy and Bess* plays on The Aurora Fox Mainstage:**

**\*November 25, 2016** (day after Thanksgiving) - **January 1, 2017\***

-Fridays, Nov 25, Dec 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 7:30 pm

-Saturdays, Nov 26, Dec 3, 10, 17, 24, 7:30 pm, Dec 31 at 2:00 pm

-Sundays, Nov 27, Dec 4, 11, 18, Jan 1, 2:00 pm

**\*TICKETS:** Aurora Fox Box Office: 303-739-1970

Box Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm & 1 hour before each production or

<http://aurorafoxartscenter.org/NewSite/aurora-fox-porgy-and-bess/>

More on **Erica Papillion-Posey** including upcoming performance schedule:

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