**Week 3: The Divas**

1. This Russian-Austrian soprano is known for her coloratura soprano roles, most notably Violetta in Verdi’s *La Traviata* and you can catch her on Saturday, April 11’s Met Opera’s stream of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*. Who is she?
   
   **A: Anna Netrebko**

   Anna Netrebko was born in Krasnodar, Russia and made her opera debut at age 22 as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Saint Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre in 1994 where she had previously worked as a janitor.

   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTmZ7LW-Eqw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTmZ7LW-Eqw)

   Following her Met Opera debut in 2002, she sang her first Donna Ann in *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburg Festival in 2002. Which she would do later again in her debut at La Scala in 2011. Her debut at Carnegie Hall in 2007 was with long-time friend and Russian baritone, Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccy9Wrb4o-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccy9Wrb4o-Y)

2. This American lyric soprano is a four-time Grammy Award winner and a Fulbright Scholar, most notable now for her research into the voice and brain. She was last heard in Cincinnati in January 2020 with the Cincinnati Symphony. Who is she?
   
   **A: Renée Fleming**

   Born in Indiana, Pennsylvania in 1959, she went on to study at Juilliard and hit a major break after winning the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in 1988 at age 29. However, she had made her European opera debut the year prior as Konstanze in Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJI920y57is](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJI920y57is)

   As our own Evans Mirageas stated, Renée Fleming is credited to the popularizing of *Rusalka* due to her Czech background and her portrayal of the titular character. However, she has performed *Der Rosenkavalier* more times, totaling a number of 27 times as of 2019.

   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj810zB3L04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj810zB3L04)
3. Born in the state of Kansas, this lyric-coloratura mezzo-soprano is most noted for her interpretations in 19th century romantic era works. She won the 2012 and 2016 Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Solo. Who is she?

A: Joyce DiDonato

Born as Joyce Flaherty in Prairie Village, Kansas in 1969, Ms. DiDonato became interested in opera after a PBS telecast of Don Giovanni and went on to study voice at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. She was a young artist at Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco, and Houston Grand Opera from the years 1994-1997.

Following the young artist program, she began her professional career in 1998, most notably, in the world premiere of Tod Manchover’s Resurrection with Houston Grand Opera. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-YP3aRT-TM

Later in La Scala’s 2000/01 season, DiDonato made her debut with them as Angelina in La Cenerentola. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3reLK2FbNI

While she does perform many traditional roles, and some world premieres, she is also a great collaborator. Performing alongside orchestras globally as well as a teacher and masterclass coach. Here she is at an NPR Tiny Desk concert:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4Al4EM0Ni4

4. This American mezzo-soprano of Argentine ancestry, didn’t make her professional operatic debut until 2007 as Stéphano in Roméo et Juliette. Who is she?

A: Isabel Leonard

Born in New York City in 1982, she went on to receive her Bachelors and Masters at Juilliard. Before her operatic debut, she did perform with the New York Philharmonic and the Chamber Music Society. Her Santa Fe Opera debut in 2008 as Cherubino in The Marriage of Figaro is the role she has performed more than any other on the Met. A total of 29 times.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNRF-SEI27o

In the short time, she has performed outside of the states in multiple roles. Here she is performing in La Cenerentola: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaAVHNYwH4M

Leonard has also won two Grammy Awards for Best Opera Recordings, one in 2014 and the other in 2016. Here she is demonstrating her range and warm ups with Classic FM: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aWjr_hVrcs
5. South African soprano, Pretty Yende, was inspired to learn opera after hearing this famous duet for a girl by Léo Delibes at age 16. What well-known duet was it?
   A: Flower Duet from *Lakmé*

Born in Piet Retief, Mpumalanga, South Africa, Pretty Yende heard the Flower Duet in a British Airways TV advertisement. After graduating from the Accademia Teatro all Scala, she went on to sing Musetta in *La bohème* at La Scala in 2012. The following year she made her Met Opera debut as Adèle in Rossini’s *Le comte Ory*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWB7N4VJK1I

She won the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition in 2009, the Vincenzo Bellini International Competition in 2010, and the World Opera Competition in 2011, among others. As an international voice, here she is with the Opera Paris in *La Traviata*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir8I-1IZLH8

She also has her own YouTube channel, where she performs arias; here she is with an aria from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Interestingly, her younger sister, Nonbuelo Yende, is also an opera singer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWzsZyRISjc

6. This American soprano, who first performed on the Music Hall stage when she was still a student and answered Nick Muni’s call as a last-minute understudy, is best known for winning the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in 2005. Who is she?
   A: Nicole Cabell

Nicole Cabell was born in California, and is of African American, Korean, and Caucasian ancestry. She studied at Eastman School of Music at University of Rochester and shortly went on to be involved with the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists.

After winning the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2005, she went on to debut in London in 2006, followed by the Royal Opera House and the Deutsche Oper in 2006. Here she is singing in Minnesota Opera’s production of *La Traviata*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF6ku79i_LU

In 2019, she was Juliet in our production of *Romeo and Juliet* marking her sixth appearance with Cincinnati Opera. Take a listen to her talk with our Artistic Director, Evans Mirageas.