



JOYCE DIDONATO

Mezzo-soprano

“The staggering, joyful artistry of Joyce DiDonato reminds us that in any generation there are a few giants. Joyce is not only a great, brave and inspiring artist – one of the finest singers of our time- but she is also a transformative presence in the arts. Those who know her repertoire are in awe of her gifts, and those who know nothing of it are instantly engaged. Joyce sings and the world is suddenly brighter. She compels us to listen actively, to hear things anew.”

Jake Heggie, Gramophone

In all her endeavors, both on and off the stage, Joyce DiDonato engages audiences through her energy, imagination, and commitment to her art form. Through these qualities, and with a constantly questing spirit, she has nurtured the vocal, musical and dramatic talents that have taken her to the pinnacle of her profession as a performer. Equally, they serve her as an eloquent and formidable advocate for the transformative power of the arts as she takes music far beyond the world’s great stages – to educational institutions, refugee camps, and maximum-security prisons. “Music heals,” she has said, “and it can fire people up with purpose and courage to change the world.”

The winner of multiple Grammys and the 2018 Olivier Award, Kansas-born Joyce DiDonato is, in the words of the New Yorker, “perhaps the most potent female singer of her generation”, her voice having been described by The Times as “nothing less than 24-carat gold”. For all its beauty and agility, its true impact lies in Joyce’s capacity to illuminate character and meaning through nuances of colour and phrasing and her unfailingly communicative way with the text.

Joyce DiDonato’s repertoire spans five centuries and through her operatic career she has grown from the mischievous or melancholy ingénue (Rosina, Cendrillon, and Cenerentola) to tragic Queen (Maria Stuarda, Semiramide, and Didon), and from hormonal teenage boy (Cherubino and Sesto) to gallant medieval prince (Ariodante and Romeo). Her recent appearances include her stage debut as Didon in Berlioz’s epic *Les Troyens* in Vienna, a highly praised tour, recording, and stage debut as the title role in Handel’s *Agrippina*: and concert performances of more Berlioz (*Les Nuits d’été*) with Sir Antonio Pappano and the National Youth Orchestra of the United States at the BBC Proms. Critically acclaimed recitals of Schubert’s monumental *Winterreise* with Yannick Nézet-Séguin at the piano mark a true artistic arrival point. Over the past five years she has heightened audiences’ engagement with Baroque music through themed programmes of arias – ‘Drama Queens’, ‘Stella di Napoli’ and, especially, a 5-continent tour of ‘In War and Peace’, which she produced “to steer conversation and discourse towards peace through the power of harmony found in music and the concert hall”. This project has reached over 2.3 million viewers globally.

Joyce’s 2019/20 season sees her giving the staged premieres in the title role of *Agrippina* for both the Royal Opera House and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as her acclaimed Charlotte in *Werther* for the Met. Concert performances as Semiramide at the Liceu Barcelona round out her operatic season. For the second time, she is featured as Carnegie Hall’s Perspectives Artist with appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Riccardo Muti, Yannick Nézet-Séguin in concert and recital performing Mozart’s *Ch’io mi scordi di te* and Schubert’s *Winterreise*, a *Joyce & Friends* chamber music concert joined by the Brentano Quartet, a baroque inspired programme *My Favourite Things* with Il Pomo d’Oro, as well as her annual live-streamed masterclasses. The season holds the final tour of her album *In War & Peace* to South and North America culminating at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, as well as an international tour of *My Favourite Things*. Other highlights include a tour with the Orchestre Métropolitain under Nézet-Séguin; touring her latest album release *Songplay* in Europe and recorded concerts of Berlioz’s *Roméo & Juliette* with John Nelson and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg - the third in the series of this highly extolled artistic collaboration.

In early 2019 Joyce added *Songplay* - a collaboration with artists from the world of jazz - to her extensive and diverse discography as an exclusive recording artist with Erato/Warner Classics, winning her the *2019 Female Singer of the Year* from Opus Klassik. Released in 2017, *Les Troyens*, recorded live in Strasbourg under John Nelson, has proved a particular triumph, winning Recording of the Year at the 2018 Gramophone Awards, and also emerging victorious in the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Awards, the 2018 International Opera Awards and the inaugural OPUS KLASSIK Awards. Joyce’s other recent albums include *In War & Peace*, winner of the 2017 Gramophone Award for Best Recital, *Stella di Napoli*, and her Grammy-Award-winning *Diva Divo* and *Drama Queens*.

Her gifts as a communicator have also enhanced numerous documentaries and news programmes. Recent projects have included the PBS documentary on the American broadcaster Fred Rogers, *Mister Rogers: It’s You I Like*, and Tom Volf’s film *Maria by Callas*, in which she voices the legendary soprano’s letters.

When it comes to contemporary music, Joyce has developed a close and creative relationship with the American composer Jake Heggie, making a signature role of Sister Helen Prejean in *Dead Man Walking* and giving the premieres of his opera *Great Scott* and his song cycle *Into the Fire*, works written for her. She has recently appeared as Sister Helen in Madrid and London and released a CD of *Into the Fire*.

Joyce's original vocation as a teacher becomes evident in the many masterclasses she gives around the world, most regularly at Juilliard School and Carnegie Hall. Her style combines technical rigour with a wealth of interpretative and practical insights, all leavened with characteristic warmth, generosity and humour. Made freely available on the internet, these masterclasses have been watched by millions of people around the world. Ever a pioneer among classical musicians, Joyce identified the potential of social media in its early days. She soon established herself as a lively and compelling blogger and vlogger, engaging directly and closely with an audience of huge geographic and demographic diversity.

Part of her mission as a board member of Carnegie Hall centers around its education programme. Its Musical Connections project has taken her repeatedly to Sing Sing prison in upstate New York, where she works closely with inmates, mentoring them and performing music they have composed. She has also played a key role in Carnegie Hall's Lullaby project, encouraging single mothers in the Bronx to write cradle songs for their babies. She performed some of these lullabies in a recital at Carnegie Hall, also recording them for a Universal Classics album, *The Lullaby Project*.

As patron of El Sistema Greece, launched in 2016, Joyce has made numerous visits to refugee camps around the country, working and performing with refugee children from countries including Afghanistan and Syria, and proving that music really is the proverbial universal language. As she says: "In every society, music plays a protagonistic role in the way people express themselves and come together as a community. It serves as a unifier and an expressive tool that truly can unlock division and turmoil."

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