**Julia Bullock**

***Classical Singer***

American classical singer Julia Bullock is “a musician who delights in making her own rules” (*New Yorker*). Combining versatile artistry with a probing intellect and commanding stage presence, she has, in her early 30s, already headlined productions and concerts at some of the preeminent arts institutions worldwide. An innovative programmer whose artistic curation is in high demand, her curatorial positions include collaborative partner of Esa-Pekka Salonen in 2020-21, his inaugural season as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony; 2019-20 Artist-in-Residence of the same orchestra; Artist-in-Residence of London’s Guildhall School for the 2020-22 seasons; opera-programming host of new broadcast channel All Arts; founding core member of the American Modern Opera Company (AMOC); and 2018-19 Artist-in-Residence of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. Chosen as a 2021 “Artist of the Year” by *Musical America*, which hailed her as an “agent of change,” Bullock is also a prominent voice of social consciousness. As *Vanity Fair* notes, she is “young, highly successful, [and] politically engaged,” with the “ability to inject each note she sings with a sense of grace and urgency, lending her performances the feel of being both of the moment and incredibly timeless.”

As Artist-in-Residence of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bullock curated five thought-provoking programs in some of the museum’s most iconic spaces: “History’s Persistent Voice,” which combined traditional slave songs with new music by American women of color, including the world premieres of new Met commissions from Tania León, Courtney Bryan, Jessie Montgomery and Allison Loggins-Hull; a program of Langston Hughes poetry and settings, featuring New York Philharmonic principal clarinetist Anthony McGill, the Young People’s Chorus of New York, and American composers and vocalists; a new chamber arrangement of John Adams’s Christmas oratorio, *El Niño*, at the Cloisters; AMOC’s account of Hans Werner Henze’s *El Cimarrón* (“The Runaway Slave”); and, marking the first full-length performance on the museum’s grand staircase, *Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine*, the musical portrait of Josephine Baker that was conceived by Bullock in collaboration with Peter Sellars and written for her by MacArthur “Genius” Fellows Tyshawn Sorey and Claudia Rankine. The residency crowned a banner 2018-19 season for Bullock. She took part in the world premiere of Terence Blanchard’s *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and reprised Dame Shirley, the leading role she created in Adams’s *Girls of the Golden West*, for the opera’s European premiere at Dutch National Opera. She also gave the Boston premiere of *Perle Noire* at Harvard’s OBERON, made her Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra debut in Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, and gave a North American recital tour with her frequent piano partner, John Arida.

Bullock recently made several key operatic debuts: at San Francisco Opera in the world premiere of *Girls of the Golden West*, at Santa Fe Opera as Kitty Oppenheimer in Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, at Festival d’Aix-en-Provence and Dutch National Opera as Anne Truelove in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, and at the English National Opera, Spain’s Teatro Real, and Russia’s Perm Opera House and Bolshoi Theatre in the title role of Purcell’s *The Indian Queen*. Her wide-ranging repertoire also encompasses the title roles of Massenet’s *Cendrillon*, Ravel’s *L’enfant et les sortilèges* and Janaček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Monica in Menotti’s *The Medium*; Susanna in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*; and Pamina in his *The Magic Flute*, which she sang on tour in South America under the direction of Peter Brook and in concert with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Bullock reunited with Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2019, for season-opening performances of Barber’s *Knoxville*. The collaboration was just one of her important recent orchestral engagements. As part of her 2019-20 residency with the San Francisco Symphony, she joined the orchestra under Music Director Designate Salonen for a pairing of Ravel’s *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* with Britten’s *Les Illuminations*. The English composer’s song cycle was also the vehicle for debuts with the symphonies of Milwaukee and Indianapolis, where she performed under the baton of Marc Albrecht. Under Andris Nelsons’s leadership, she headlined the Bernstein centennial gala that launched the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 2017-18 season, and Bernstein’s music also saw her make debuts with the San Francisco Symphony, led by Michael Tilson Thomas; at the Hollywood Bowl, with Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic; with Japan’s NHK Symphony under Paavo Järvi; and with the New York Philharmonic, in open-air concerts under Alan Gilbert’s direction in Vail, Santa Barbara and multiple New York City parks. At the invitation of Sir Simon Rattle, she made debuts with both the Berlin Philharmonic, in Kaija Saariaho’s *La passion de Simone*, and the London Symphony Orchestra, in Maurice Délage’s song cycle *Quatre poèmes hindous*. Her other concert highlights include performing Adams’s *El Niño* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

In 2014, Bullock gave her first U.S. recital tour, capped by her debut at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Since then, she has maintained a thriving solo career. In 2019, she joined pianist Cédric Tiberghien under Katie Mitchell’s direction for the American, British, Belgian and Russian premieres of *Zauberland* (“Magic Land”), a new work juxtaposing Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* with original songs by Bernard Foccroulle and Martin Crimp. This followed the high-profile North American recital tour Bullock gave in 2018, which featured masterclasses and local school performances in each city, with dates at New York’s Carnegie Hall, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Cal Performances at UC Berkeley and Boston’s Celebrity Series. Other solo performance highlights include her 2017 Disney Hall debut and appearances at the 2016 Mostly Mozart and Ojai Music festivals, where she collaborated with Roomful of Teeth and the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) on Peter Sellars’s new staging of *La passion de Simone* and on the world premiere of *Josephine Baker: A Portrait*, the original prototype for *Perle Noire*.

Bullock’s growing discography already comprises a number of distinguished recordings. Her account of *Quatre poèmes hindous* with Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra was captured live on DVD, as was her title role appearance in Sellars’s productionof *The Indian Queen* for Sony Classical. Selected as one of the *New York Times*’s “25 Best Musical Tracks of 2018,” her starring role in Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, recorded with the composer conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra, was a nominee for the 2018 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. This marked Bullock’s second appearance on a Grammy-nominated recording, following her live account of *West Side Story* with Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, a nominee for Best Musical Theater Album in 2014.

Her other honors include the 2016 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, a 2015 Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship, the 2015 Richard F. Gold Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, Lincoln Center’s 2015 Martin E. Segal Award, First Prize at the 2014 Naumburg International Vocal Competition and First Prize at the 2012 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. She was chosen as one of WQXR’s “19 for 19” artists to watch in 2019; among the “Best Classical Music of 2018” by the *New York Times, Los Angeles Times,* *Washington Post* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*; as one of *Opera News*’s “18 to Watch in 2018-19”; and among the *New York Times*’s “Best Classical Music of 2016.” In November 2020, during the pandemic, Bullock recorded a “Tiny Desk (Home) Concert” for NPR Music’s special quarantine edition of the series; NPR’s Tom Huizenga found it “among the most transcendent musical moments I've experienced this year.”

Bullock’s political engagement is informed by her own mixed heritage, and she is committed to integrating community involvement with her musical life. High in demand as a speaker in panels on diversity, equity and inclusion in the arts, Bullock has taken part in livestreamed conversations presented by Music Academy of the West, Long Beach Opera, Los Angeles Opera and other organizations. As well as trying to engage with local communities in each city she visits, she serves on the Advisory Board of Turn The Spotlight, a foundation designed to empower women and people of color, both on stage and behind the scenes, to make a more equitable future in the arts. She has also organized and participated in benefit concerts for the FSH Society, which funds research for Muscular Dystrophy; the Medicine Initiative for New York’s Weill Medical Center; and the Shropshire Music Foundation, a nonprofit serving war-affected children and adolescents through music education and performance programs in Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Uganda.

Julia Bullock was born in St. Louis, Missouri, where she joined the artist-in-training program at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis while in high school. She went on to earn her Bachelor’s degree at the Eastman School of Music, her Master’s degree in Bard College’s Graduate Vocal Arts Program, and her Artist Diploma at New York’s Juilliard School. It was there that she first met her husband, conductor Christian Reif, with whom she now lives in Munich.

# # #

*© 21C Media Group, December 2020*