NICHOLAS NEWTON, Bass-Baritone

Hailed for his “polished vocal technique” and “heart-tugging emotional communication” (*San Diego Story*), Nicholas Newton is garnering due attention as an up-and-coming bass-baritone in the classical music world. The artist’s 2023-24 season features the Houston Grand Opera world premiere of *Intelligence*, a new American epic created by a powerhouse trio: composer Jake Heggie, librettist Gene Scheer, and director/choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, founder of Urban Bush Women. Other engagements include Rossini’s comic masterpiece, *La cenerentola*, as Alidoro at Lyric Opera of Chicago, John Adams’ *El Niño* at the Metropolitan Opera in a new production directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz, resident director at Lincoln Center Theater, led by Marin Alsop, and the role of Leporello in a fresh interpretation by Stephen Barlow of *Don Giovanni* at the Santa Fe Opera under the baton of Music Director Harry Bicket.

Concert performances of the season include Handel’s *Messiah* with the Ann Arbor Symphony under the auspices of the University Musical Society and with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, as well as Terence Blanchard’s *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* in a new suite of music from the composer’s historic opera, performed with the celebrated trumpeter and his E-Collective, the Grammy Award-winning Turtle Island Quartet in Austin, Houston, and Richmond.

During the 2022-23 season Nicholas Newton made a European debut at the Salzburg Festival in Purcell’s *The Indian Queen* with Teodor Currentzis conducting Utopia choir and orchestra and a Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Peter in Richard Jones’ acclaimed production of *Hänsel und Gretel* conducted by Sir Andrew Davis. Other highlights of the season included *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Cincinnati Opera, Handel’s *Xerxes* at Detroit Opera, *Salome* and *Tosca* at Houston Grand Opera, and *Rigoletto* at The Dallas Opera.

Highlights of past seasons include *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Santa Fe Opera, *Rodelinda* at the Metropolitan Opera, the world premiere at Houston Grand Opera of Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney’s *The Snowy Day*, *La bohème* and *Sweeney Todd* at Wolf Trap Opera, *Rigoletto* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and both *Susannah* and *Giulio Cesare* at Rice University.

An avid concert performer and recitalist, Nicholas Newton is an alumnus of Ravinia’s Steans Music Institute and has toured with renowned pianist, Kevin Murphy, performing at the Tucson Desert Song Festival. He also has worked with the Cincinnati Song Initiative and performed in their virtual recital series: *A World of Song*, and appeared in Houston Grand Opera’s *Giving Voice: Lawrence Brownlee & Friends* concert. Other notable concert performances include Mozart’s *Requiem*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Fauré’s *Requiem*, Stephen Paulus' *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, Gershwin’s *Catfish Row* with San Diego Winds, Duruflé’s *Requiem* with San Diego Master Chorale, and the world premiere of Michael Capp’s *Christmas Revels* with Las Colinas Symphony.

In addition to his burgeoning profile on international opera and concert stages, Nicholas Newton is an independent researcher whose main focus is Black composers and their operatic and vocal concert repertoire. He is building a Black Opera Database; an in-progress resource created to archive, celebrate, and preserve the vocal compositional output of Black composers and works that chronicle the Black experience. He conducts most of his in-person research in New York at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and in Chicago at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago: these two centers have provided him the opportunity to research the music of Black composers in great detail through the access of Special Collections, Microfilms, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books. Nicholas Newton is an affiliate with the Black Opera Research Network where he works alongside the David G. Frey Distinguished Professor in Music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dr. Naomi André. Dr. André is today’s foremost scholar of Black opera, specializing in research on opera and issues surrounding gender, voice, and race. Nicholas Newton has delivered multiple lectures on Black opera composers while under the tutelage of composer, former Fulbright Scholar and Guggenheim Fellow, and 2023 American Academy of Arts and Letters Walter Hinrichsen Prize in Music winner, Dr. Shih Hui Chen.

A proud alum of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Nicholas Newton trained as a Studio Artist and Filene Artist with Wolf Trap Opera, a Young Artist with Aspen Music Festival, in the Young Artists Vocal Academy of Houston Grand Opera, and in San Diego Opera’s *Opera Exposed* program. A 2021 Sullivan Award-winner, he earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from San Diego State University studying with Laurinda Nikkel and his Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Rice University under the tutelage of Dr. Stephen King.