NICHOLAS NEWTON, Bass-Baritone

Hailed for his “polished vocal technique” and “heart-tugging emotional communication” (*San Diego Story*), Nicholas Newton garners due

attention as an up-and-coming bass-baritone in the classical music world.

The artist’s 2024-25 season features a debut at the Opéra national de Paris in Rameau’s *Castor et Pollux* in a new production directed by Peter Sellars under the baton of Teodor Currentzis, *Le nozze di Figaro* at Lyric Opera of Chicago directed by Barbara Gaines led by Erina Yashima, and a new production of *Don Giovanni* at Opera Philadelphia directed by Alison Moritz and conducted by Music Director Corrado Rovaris. Concert performances include a debut with Boston Baroque joining Music Director Martin Pearlman for Haydn’s *The Creation* and Handel’s *Messiah* with the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Patrick Summers.

Washington National Opera bestowed upon Nicholas Newton the 2025 Marian Anderson Vocal Award, named for the groundbreaking African American contralto. This award recognizes a young American singer in opera, oratorio, or recital repertory and is given annually by the Kennedy Center, offering its winner a cash prize, a residency at Washington’s Duke Ellington School of the Arts, and a recital presented by Washington National Opera.

Last season’s diary included 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, Rossini’s comic masterpiece *La cenerentola* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, John Adams’ *El Niño* at the Metropolitan Opera in a new production directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz led by Marin Alsop, and the world premiere of Gregory Spears and Tracy K. Smith’s *The Righteous* along with 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 included Handel’s *Messiah* with the Ann Arbor Symphony and the Rhode Island Philharmonic as well as a three-city tour of 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, his E-Collective, and the Grammy Award-winning Turtle Island.

Highlights of past seasons include a European debut at the Salzburg Festival in

Purcell’s *The Indian Queen* with Teodor Currentzis conducting Utopia choir and

orchestra, the role of Peter in Richard Jones’ acclaimed production of *Hänsel und*

*Gretel* at Lyric Opera of Chicago conducted by Sir Andrew Davis, *Il barbiere di*

*Siviglia* at Cincinnati Opera and Santa Fe Opera, Handel’s *Rodelinda* at the

Metropolitan Opera and *Xerxes* at Detroit Opera, *Rigoletto* at The Dallas Opera and

Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and both *La bohème* and *Sweeney Todd* at Wolf Trap

Opera.

At Houston Grand Opera, which the artist considers his ‘home company,’ he

has bowed in the world premieres of Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney’s

*The Snowy Day* and Damien Sneed and Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton’s *Marian Song* and

worked on many other productions such as Barrie Kosky’s acclaimed production of

Handel’s *Saul*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Rigoletto*, *Salome*, and *Tosca*.

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 also trained as a

Studio Artist and Filene Artist with Wolf Trap Opera, as 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.