

TERENCE BLANCHARD / LIBRETTO BY KASI LEMMONS

FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES

CONDUCTOR
Evan Rogister

CO-DIRECTORS
James Robinson
Camille A. Brown

SET DESIGNER
Allen Moyer

COSTUME DESIGNER
Paul Tazewell

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Christopher Akerlind

PROJECTION DESIGNER
Greg Emetaz

CHOREOGRAPHER
Camille A. Brown

DRAMATURG
Paul Cremo

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in Three Acts by Terence Blanchard

Based on the Book by Charles M. Blow

Libretto by Kasi Lemmons

Friday, April 12, 2024

8:00–11:05 PM

The production of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* was made possible by a generous gift from **The Ford Foundation** and the **Francis Goelet Trusts**

Additional support was received from The Joan Ganz Cooney and Holly Peterson Fund

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from The Ford Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Austin T. Fragomen, Jr., and Mastercard

Commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera
Originally commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, co-commissioned by Jazz St. Louis

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago

Throughout the 2023–24 season, the Met continues to honor Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.

The Metropolitan Opera

2023-24 SEASON

The tenth Metropolitan Opera performance of

TERENCE BLANCHARD'S

FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES

CONDUCTOR
Evan Rogister

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

CHARLES
Ryan Speedo Green*

UNCLE PAUL
Kevin Short

DESTINY
Brittany Renee

FOREMAN
Darren Drone

BILLIE
Latonia Moore

CHICKEN PLUCKER
Bernard Holcomb

CHAR'ES-BABY
Ethan Joseph

RUBY
Briana Hunter

WILLIAM
Joshua Elijah Lewis

SPINNER
Chauncey Packer

NATHAN
Kamari Saxon

VERNA
Kimberli Render

JAMES
Sean-Michael Bruno

LONELINESS
Brittany Renee

ROBERT
B.G. Stalling

YOUNG LOVELY
Jasmine Muhammad

Friday, April 12, 2024, 8:00-11:05PM

CHESTER
Daniel Rich**

BERTHA
Cierra Byrd*

PASTOR
Blake Denson

WOMAN SINNER
Briana Hunter

ADULT ROBERT
Calvin Griffin

ADULT WILLIAM
Bernard Holcomb

ADULT NATHAN
Errin Duane Brooks

ADULT JAMES
Darren Drone

WOMEN
Denisha Ballew
Christine Jobson
Jasmine Muhammad
Kimberli Render
Nicole Joy Mitchell
Karmesha Peake

EVELYN
Kearstin Piper Brown

KABOOM
Blake Denson

PLEDGE
Jonathan Tuzo

NASH
Chase Taylor

GRETA
Brittany Renee

ORCHESTRA RHYTHM SECTION
PIANO Bryan Wagorn*
BASS Michael Blanco
GUITAR Adam Rogers
DRUMS Jeff "Tain" Watts

* Graduate of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

** Member of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

Friday, April 12, 2024, 8:00–11:05PM

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Bradley Moore,***
Bryan Wagorn,* William Long, and
Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad

Assistant Stage Directors **Melanie Bacaling** and
Doug Scholz-Carlson

Assistant Set Designer **Ryan Howell**

Assistant Costume Designer **Devario Simmons**

Associate Choreographer **Jay Staten**

Assistant Choreographer **Voltaire Wade-Greene**

Intimacy Director **Doug Scholz-Carlson**

English Diction Coach **Lynn Baker**

Prompter **Donna Racik**

Met Titles **Michael Panayos**

Additional Casting **Tara Rubin, CSA,** and
Spencer Gualdoni, CSA

Special Thanks **Dr. Angel Caraballo**

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and
painted by **The Scenic Route, Pacoima,** and **Metropolitan
Opera Shops**

Costumes constructed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume
Department; Barak LLC, Jersey City; John Kristiansen
New York Inc., New York City; Donna Langman, New York
City; Jennifer Love Costumes, New York City; and Crystal
Thompson, New York City**

Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan
Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

This production uses gunshot effects.

The commissioning and development of the world premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis was made possible with support from the Fred M. Saigh Endowment at Opera Theatre, the Sally S. Levy Family Fund for New Works, the Whitaker Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and OPERA America's *Opera Fund*.

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

* Graduate of the
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Met Titles

To activate, press the red button to the right of the screen in front of your seat and follow the instructions provided. To turn off the display, press the red button once again. If you have questions please ask an usher at intermission.

Visit metopera.org.

Synopsis

Act I

Charles Blow, age 20, drives down a Louisiana backroad with a gun in the passenger seat. Destiny sings to him, calling him back to his childhood home. He begins reliving memories from his childhood.

Charles's seven-year-old self, Char'es-Baby, talks to his mother, Billie. He is desperate for affection, but Billie is too frazzled to give him the validation that he craves. They are dirt poor. Billie works in a chicken factory, but she dreams of Char'es-Baby getting a good education and escaping their town. Her husband, Spinner, is a womanizing spendthrift. When she hears that he's flirting with other women, she confronts him at gunpoint. Billie doesn't shoot, but she tosses Spinner out. Billie and her five sons move in with Uncle Paul. Char'es-Baby dreams of a different life, collecting "treasure" from the junkyard while Loneliness sings to him. One day, his cousin Chester comes to visit. When Chester sexually abuses him, he is too horrified and ashamed to say anything.

Adult Charles begins to weep as he recoils from these memories, while Destiny reminds him that there is no escape.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:10PM)

Act II

As Charles grows into a teenager, he is full of confusion and rage, and tormented by phantom terrors. He attends a church service in which the pastor is baptizing people, promising that God can wipe all sins clean. Charles decides to get baptized, but it fails to free him of his inner demons. Charles tries to talk to his brothers, but they refuse to engage in any "soft talk." Loneliness reappears, promising to be his lifelong companion. Evelyn, a beautiful young girl, interrupts Charles's reverie. Their chemistry is clear. Charles feels a new sense of independence and is finally ready to strike out on his own; Grambling State University has offered him a full scholarship. Billie is left alone to reflect on all that she has sacrificed for her family and wonders what might lie ahead.

Act III

At his college, Charles rushes Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, where the brothers lead an elaborate and energetic step dance. Charles and the other pledges are hazed, but he stoically takes each indignity in stride: Pain is nothing new for him. Later, he goes to a frat party and meets an attractive young woman, Greta. They begin a passionate love affair. Charles eventually shares his awful secret with

Greta, only to find out that she's still seeing someone else. Charles is left alone again. He calls home, desperate to hear his mother's voice. To his shock, Billie tells him that Chester has come back to visit. Charles instantly decides to return home to confront Chester, gun in hand.

Charles sits in his car on the dark road, contemplating the choice lying before him. Destiny starts to sing to him once again, seductively promising to stand by him through to the bloody end. As Charles reaches his childhood home, Char'es-Baby appears, urging him to leave his bitterness behind. Charles must decide whether to exact his revenge or begin his life anew.

Synopsis reprinted courtesy of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

If you or someone you know needs support in relation to sexual abuse, contact the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network at rainn.org or 800.656.4673.



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Looking for more operas by contemporary American composers? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons—including *Live in HD* transmissions of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Champion*, Kevin Puts's *The Hours*, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, and more. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 850 complete performances at metoperaondemand.org.

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Terence Blanchard

Fire Shut Up in My Bones

Premiere: Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, 2019

Fire Shut Up in My Bones is a setting of journalist and commentator Charles M. Blow's contemporary memoir, which deals with the author's attempts to find love and healing in his young adulthood after a childhood pervaded by abuse. The abuse took multiple forms, both in the background of dire poverty of Blow's rural Black community—embedded in the visible and unseen systems of class and race that perpetuated that poverty—and in a harrowing incident of sexual trauma perpetrated by a cousin on the seven-year-old Charles (called Char'és Baby), an act of betrayal that unleashed a years-long process of self-recrimination and shame. As he matures, Charles struggles in relationships—with a personification of Destiny, who challenges him to consider his place in the world; with a personification of Loneliness, who lays claims on him; with a young woman named Greta to whom he is attracted (all three characters portrayed by the same singer); with his other relatives and members of his community; with his church; and above all, with his mother, Billie, whose love is clear but not always available. Ultimately, he must confront the defining experience of his own inner conflicts before he can achieve any form of self-actualization, either through revenge on his childhood abuser or through some resolution of the ongoing personal crisis that it engendered. The score, by Terence Blanchard, draws on several sources—ranging from jazz to classical to the traditional music of these rural communities—to depict internal and communal conflicts.

The Creators

Terence Blanchard (b. 1962) is a celebrated composer whose many works express his roots in jazz but defy further categorization. The eight-time Grammy Award winner was born in New Orleans and became a trumpeter for the Lionel Hampton Orchestra in 1982. His first opera, *Champion*, was produced in St. Louis in 2013 and had its Met premiere in 2023. He is especially celebrated for his close collaboration with director Spike Lee and his accomplishments as an award-winning composer of film scores, including for *Malcom X*, *BlackKklansman*, *Da 5 Bloods*, *Mo' Better Blues*, and more than 60 others. Charles M. Blow (b. 1970) is a journalist and commentator regularly featured as an op-ed columnist for *The New York Times* and as an anchor for the Black News Channel. The libretto for *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* marked the first foray into opera for Kasi Lemmons (b. 1961), a noted writer, actress, and director, whose films include *Harriet*, *Talk to Me*, and *Eve's Bayou*.

The Setting

The opera takes place in and around the small and poor town of Gibsland, in northwestern Louisiana, as well as at Blow's alma mater, Grambling State University. The time ranges from Charles's childhood in the 1970s to his adulthood in the 1990s.

The Music

Both grounded in the classical idiom and deeply steeped in the form-defying jazz that has been central to Blanchard's output, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* does not fit perfectly into any single category or genre. The composer's use of film-score techniques—including a lyrical sweep that propels the action forward and the ability to have a sudden audio "close-up" on a given character—is a notable feature of the score. Another element worth noting is the use of the music of the characters themselves and the world that they inhabit, although these recognizable references are always a part of the overall narrative soundscape. The music associated with the church services that the struggling Charles attends, for example, embraces the style of Black spiritual music of this region but is not a literal recreation. The vocal writing also parallels this path, composed for singers with the power of traditional classical training but also requiring a comfort level with the methods of jazz and gospel singing. Spoken, rather than sung, passages appear briefly and with dramatic significance, and at many times during Charles's flashbacks, he and his younger self, Char'es-Baby, sing the same lines in unison. The characters of Destiny and Loneliness in particular express themselves in music that incorporates jazz and classical traditions while not being entirely defined by one or the other. Charles's mother, Billie, likewise, has music that must express her great love for her family while simultaneously showing her inability to express that affection. In this, her music recalls the most complex and nuanced characters in the operatic repertory. Charles's soliloquys, musicalized internal monologues that give voice to the character's epic psychological journey to self-acceptance, are prime examples of the score's demands on the performer's skills in several diverse genres at once.

Met History

The first opera by a Black composer performed at the Met, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* had its company premiere on Opening Night of the 2021–22 season, following the longest closure in Met history due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducted a production co-directed by James Robinson and Camille A. Brown and starring Will Liverman as Charles, Angel Blue as Destiny/Loneliness/Greta, and Latonia Moore as Billie.

A Note from James Robinson

When I became artistic director at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2009, among my first priorities was to embark on a wide-ranging commissioning initiative called *New Works, Bold Voices*. The objective was to create new operas and to provide opportunities for composers to take a second look at operas they had already premiered. One of the first composers I contacted was jazz trumpeter Terence Blanchard. I was well acquainted with Terence's music from his powerful film scores, and I still consider his haunting album *A Tale of God's Will* one of the best things in my personal music library. After our first meeting, Terence agreed to create an "opera in jazz," and in 2013, we premiered *Champion*, based on the life of bisexual boxing champ Emile Griffith. The success of Terence's opera was tremendous, so I immediately asked him to follow it up with another. *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* was premiered in 2019 in St. Louis, and, yet again, it was met with great enthusiasm.

Both of Terence's operas deal fearlessly with Black men struggling with their identity and sexuality, in addition to confronting some very difficult and often painful subjects. The story of Emile Griffith is told through the fog of pugilistic dementia and confronts the athlete's search to embrace his love of other men. As Emile sings in the opera (after being haunted by the death of an opponent he killed during a bout): "I kill a man, and the world forgives me. I love a man, and the world wants to kill me." Charles M. Blow's elegant and gripping memoir *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* reveals a man haunted by the abuse he suffered at the hands of an older cousin and how coming to terms with his own sexuality became a lifelong journey. And while not everyone has experienced the reality of growing up poor in rural Louisiana, Blow's memoir touches on universal themes that are both resonant and relevant.

In both operas, an honest light is shone on taboos, social norms, and stereotypes. And what I find particularly moving is how Terence uses music to give these characters compelling voices. Charles is faced with a brutal choice and looks back on his life to understand what has led him to a potentially life-ruining crossroads. He wonders if he could have changed the course of his own personal history. His is a journey of self-loathing, self-discovery, and eventually self-forgiveness. Charles states that he is a "stranger in [his] hometown," and I find this idea deeply affecting, for many of us have felt the loneliness of not fitting in or not belonging, even in an environment that should be comforting and familiar.

While preparing *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, first in St. Louis and then at the Met, one of the challenges was how to adapt Kasi Lemmons's cinematic libretto to the stage. Kasi and I talked about how a memoir is like a collection of old photographs. With that in mind, the creative team and I—joined at the Met by co-director and choreographer Camille A. Brown, with whom I've also had the immense honor of working on *Porgy and Bess* and *Champion*—set out to create a fluid, multi-layered, almost collage-like production. I cannot say enough about how thrilling it has been to work with this extraordinary composer and librettist and two sensational casts for the premiere of this historic production in 2021 and its return this season.

—James Robinson

A Note from Camille A. Brown

When *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* had its Met premiere in 2021, contributing my voice to Terence Blanchard's beautiful and haunting music, creating movement language for Kasi Lemmons's libretto, sharing the story of celebrated writer Charles M. Blow, and co-directing with James Robinson—with whom I've also had the pleasure of working on *Porgy and Bess* and *Champion*—was a dream. It was also uniquely challenging because I joined the project at the height of the pandemic, five years after work began on the original production. Not only did I have to choreograph, I had to find my directorial voice, among a team that had been collaborating for years. It was daunting, thrilling, and overwhelming to play catch-up. I started with what I know—dance—and approached the piece the same way I approach all of my creative work, asking questions, investigating, and listening. How could I make sure that the gestures and movements stayed true to the intentions of the composer? How could my direction amplify the voice and the heart of this piece?

In the director's seat, I wanted to play with abstraction and time travel, capturing the psyche of Charles, his inner turmoil, and his tussles with Destiny and Loneliness. We treated each scene as though it were one of those aged Polaroid pictures—static in time, with the only breath being Charles, walking us through his journey, the pictures shapeshifting as we follow him along. Isolated both spiritually and physically, it was important to show Charles's struggles, his longing for peace, and his search for a savior—only to realize that his savior was himself, the younger version of himself, giving him grace and resolve.

Two phrases within the show resonate with me: "Sometimes you gotta' just leave it in the road" and "I bend, I don't break, I sway."

They speak to the specificity of the Black experience but also call upon a universal theme of determination and the need for personal resolution. Charles experienced a traumatic childhood event, which changed his life. He ultimately finds the strength and motivation to "leave it in the road." Past traumas can either haunt us or heal us. Charles's story empowers us with the understanding that the devastation of the past does not have to define our futures. We too can give ourselves the grace to let go. *Fire* also illuminates themes of perseverance and resilience—both hallmarks of the Black experience. We don't break, we sway. We never give in. Our light will never go out. To honor this, I wanted to find a way—amid the struggle—to elevate the stuff of the Black experience that celebrates us. That heals us. That shows us off.

Terence has created a percussive score that is complex and nuanced, and I have tried to add to that my original artistic expression in movement, bringing to bear the many influences and elements that make up my individual style. What I found so thrilling was that I could use step to embody triumph, pain, and the joy of life, and create my own rhythmical score for this powerful "opera in jazz." Step is a social dance rooted in African American history and culture, tracing

back more than 200 years to West Africa, transformed by enslaved people throughout the Americas. Stepping is energetic, visceral, urgent, and powerful. It is also embedded in the fabric of Black fraternities and sororities, which were intentionally created as safe spaces when white Greek-letter organizations would not let Black men and women join them. It has always been historically important for Black people to create safe spaces for themselves. What has emerged from that has been extraordinary: Black people creating community for themselves everywhere—in the Church, at the jook joint, and at historically Black colleges and universities. In these safe spaces, we converge to share all that is messy and radiant in our lives, in our relationships, and in our humanity.

I continue to be humbled and honored to be a part of this show that is inviting audiences into a vulnerable and poignant story.

At one point in history, Black people were not allowed to perform on the Met stage and, even more so, were not able to authentically portray our own narratives. The full spectrum of our real lives was unseen. But we did not break.

Once invisible, now beautifully and vibrantly visible. Past, present, and future, we sway.

—*Camille A. Brown*

The Contributions and Complications of Black Fraternities and Sororities

Black fraternities and sororities are significant in the African American community, with the cultural and service-oriented tenets acting as strong reasons that individuals join. In the early 1900s, America was a place where Black people were looking for spaces to fit in. Black college students were looking for others with relatable challenges to bond and organize with for individual and collective success. There were few avenues for educated Black people to come together for service to their people and community until these fraternities and sororities emerged.

The founding of these organizations was influenced and rooted in a legacy of trauma and hurt—hurt that was carried by individuals who were in the same generation as families raised in the antebellum South under Jim Crow. They all promote higher education as a means to elevate their people. They all advocate for closing wealth and healthcare disparities, civil and voting rights, affordable housing, criminal justice reform, and jobs with living wages, and they all believe in robust community service and mentoring. But, as we see in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, they also were all plagued with unsanctioned and unfortunate occurrences of hazing.

Charles Blow and I were drawn to the same fraternity—Kappa Alpha Psi—presumably for the same reasons: the mission of achievement, the idea of brothers who stand together and stand up for one another, and the comfort of men who would befriend and never betray. Kappa gave us leaders and role models to emulate. In fact, most Black men doing significant things were members of a Black fraternity. These associations help raise the bar for what one can accomplish, especially against overwhelming odds.

Navigating America as a Black man or woman presents a unique set of challenges that are marginally mitigated by joining a fraternity or sorority. For me and Blow, it became important to have the support and encouragement of a group of people who also aspired to be leaders and change agents. The potential of being hazed seemed a small price to pay for this bond and legacy of strength and community. Because of this rationale, pledges and brothers generally attributed honor and heritage to the legacy of hazing and were each trained to teach the same to those who followed. And therein lies the cycle of a historic and horrific mentality that has left a black eye on the great character and value of fraternities and sororities, otherwise amazing treasures in the Black community.

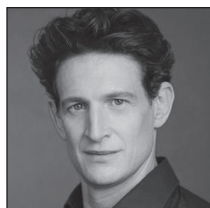
I recall similar instances of hazing in pledging Kappa as those depicted in Blow's memoir and Terence Blanchard's opera. The questions Blow asked himself, I asked myself. The conflicting emotions that he experienced also surfaced within me. Sadly, after more than 30 years as a brother, I still find myself trying to balance, equate, and weigh the good versus the brutal and bad.

Blanchard's opera shows that every individual brings their own stories, traumas, and experiences with them to college and to fraternities or sororities. How they are shaped, formed, and realized will be different for each individual. For me, pledging was not the highlight of the fraternal experience. I appreciate that the opera brilliantly captures the beautiful traditions of stepping and line dancing in celebration of a rich history of achievement. My memories also involved challenges that shaped me into the man I am today. Not only did it prepare me for the rigors of being a Black man in America, but it also helped me see all the possibilities that can be achieved through hard work and perseverance. These are the same challenges that Blow faced during the process of joining a fraternity, as well as the general history of Black people learning to rise above the surrounding circumstances. I am proud that our fraternities today are exercising safer, legal ways to create bonds that uplift the next generation of Black leaders in America.

—Sean Pittman

Sean Pittman is an alumnus of Kappa Alpha Psi's chapter at Florida State University, where he earned bachelor's and law degrees and was student body president. A prominent attorney, philanthropist, and political commentator in the Tallahassee area, he is the immediate past president of the Orange Bowl Committee.

The Cast



Evan Rogister

CONDUCTOR (RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA)

THIS SEASON *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and the Eric and Dominique Laffont Grand Finals Concert at the Met, *Die Zauberflöte* in Dresden, *Roméo et Juliette* at Washington National Opera, and concerts with the Badische Staatskapelle.

MET APPEARANCES *The Magic Flute* (debut, 2017).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is principal conductor of Washington National Opera and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. Between 2009 and 2011, he served as Kapellmeister at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. In recent seasons, he has appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Royal Swedish Opera, San Diego Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Dallas Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and Seattle Opera. He has also led performances with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, National Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Essen Philharmoniker, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.



Latonia Moore

SOPRANO (HOUSTON, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON Billie in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and Sister Rose in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at the Met, Margherita in *Mefistofele* in Cagliari, and a recital at San Diego Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Musetta in *La Bohème*, Emelda Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion*, the title role of *Aida* (debut, 2012), Serena in *Porgy and Bess*, Billie, and Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Cio-Cio-San in Bologna and at Staatsoper Berlin and the Dallas Opera, Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at Washington National Opera and the Glimmerglass Festival, Serena in concert at Lucerne Festival, *Aida* in Verona and at LA Opera, Billie at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of *Tosca* at Austin Opera, and Mimì in *La Bohème* at Palm Beach Opera. She has also sung *Tosca* in Rouen and at Washington National Opera, Opera Australia, and New York City Opera; Serena at Dutch National Opera and English National Opera; *Aida* in Buenos Aires, Zurich, Bergen, and at Dubai Opera, English National Opera, and Opera Australia; Desdemona in *Otello* in Bergen; Fidelia in Puccini's *Edgar* in concert at the Klangvokal Musikfestival Dortmund; and Cio-Cio-San at San Diego Opera.



Brittany Renee

SOPRANO (BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA)

THIS SEASON Destiny/Loneliness/Greta in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Met, Julie in Rhiannon Giddens's *Omar* at San Francisco Opera, and Musetta in *La Bohème* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

MET APPEARANCES Sadie Donastorg Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion*, Giannetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, a Handmaiden in *Medea*, Annie in *Porgy and Bess*, and Evelyn in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (debut, 2021).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Destiny/Loneliness/Greta at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Micaëla in *Carmen* at Opera Orlando, and Bess in *Porgy and Bess* in Turin. She has also appeared in Dresden, Bari, and at Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, Opera Theatre of the Rockies, Opera San Jose, Florida Grand Opera, Salt Marsh Opera, Piedmont Opera, the Chautauqua Opera, and the Crested Butte Music Festival, among others. Concert engagements include performances at the *Vogue* Fashion Fund Gala and with Voxspex, Wynton Marsalis's U.S. tour of *The Abyssinian Mass* with Chorale Le Chateau and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, the American Spiritual Ensemble, and the Siena Chamber Orchestra on tour throughout Italy.



Ryan Speedo Green

BASS-BARITONE (SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA)

THIS SEASON Charles in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Met, Varlaam in *Boris Godunov* in Hamburg, King Heinrich in *Lohengrin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Bavarian State Opera, Wotan in *Das Rheingold* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Santa Fe Opera, and concerts with the Chicago Philharmonic Society and at Austin Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2012 debut as the Mandarin in *Turandot*, he has sung more than 100 performances of 13 roles, including Young Emile Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion*, Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Uncle Paul in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In 2014, he became a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera. He has also appeared at Washington National Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and Houston Grand Opera, among others. He was a 2011 Grand Finals winner of the Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition (formerly National Council Auditions) and is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. In 2021 and 2023, he received the Met's Beverly Sills Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



Ethan Joseph

TREBLE (FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY)

THIS SEASON Char'es-Baby in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Met and Little Michael in the First National Tour of *MJ the Musical*.

MET APPEARANCES Little Emile in Terence Blanchard's *Champion* (debut, 2023).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In 2022, he made his Broadway debut as Little Craig in *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*. Additional credits include Little Noah in *Still* as part of the Ensemble Studio Theatre's 38th Marathon of One-Act Plays, Kurt / Friedrich swing in *The Sound of Music* at Paper Mill Playhouse, and Travis Younger in *Raisin* at the Axelrod Performing Arts Center.