

New England Opera Club



New England Opera Club Newsletter

Logo by Barbara Winston

Date: January 30, 2020
Time: 3:00 - 4:30

Place: Weston Public Library
87 School St, Weston, 781.786.6150

This presentation by the Weston Public Library is open to the public:

WESTON
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Presents

Opera for everyone!

Come and explore this legendary and heartfelt American opera:

Porgy and Bess

by George Gershwin



Porgy and Bess tells the story of the unshakeable love between Porgy, a crippled beggar, and Bess, a beautiful woman haunted by the demons of her past. It was George Gershwin's final stage work and is a combination of opera, jazz, folk, and spirituals.

Met transmission in HD on February 1, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Speaker Erika Reitshamer is a lifelong student and lover of opera who thoroughly enjoys passing on her passion to others. She was active in the formation of the Boston Lyric Opera Company, has led opera tours to Europe and served as Vice President of the Boston Wagner Society. She is a board member of the New England Opera Club, member of Sudbury Opera Lovers Organization and teacher of opera appreciation for LLARC at Regis College, LTL in the towns of Sharon, Sherborn and Newton.

Directions:

From 128/95: Take Route 128 to Exit 26 (Route 20). Go west on Route 20 about 1.5 miles to the second traffic light, which is on the corner of Route 20 and School Street. Turn left on School Street. The library is 4/10 of a mile on your right, just before the Field School.

From the Mass Pike: Heading West Take the Weston Exit off the Mass. Pike, Exit 15. Follow the signs for 128/95 North. Follow the directions above.

Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 3:00 pm

Free and open to the public

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Wendy Mandel
info@neoperclub.org

Treasurer

Mima Leivi
617-983-0310
mleivi@msn.com

**Webmaster and
Newsletter Assistant**

Marion Leeds Carroll
marion@leedscarroll.com

Board

Andrew Altenbach

Maria-Pia Antonelli
617-527-1372

Felice Kahn
617-332-7230

Angelo Mammano
781-777-2178
operangelo@comcast.net

Erika Reitshamer
508-485-1214
erika@reitshamer.com

Noel and Deborah Rose
617-383-5045

To contact NEOC:
operainfo@neoperclub.org

**Letters or Articles to
the Editor:**

NEOC
Mima Leivi
80 Paul Gore St., #1
Jamaica Plain, MA
02130

Annual Membership:

\$40 for each individual
/ \$45 for a couple at
same address
\$15 student with valid
ID

Mail check, payable to
NEOC, to

Mima Leivi, Treasurer
(see address above)

2019 NEOC Programs

(listings are subject to change)

Details of the 2020 season will be sent separately.

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The new year is here!  
**Membership fees are due in January.**

Fees for 2020:

\$40 Single, \$45 Double (Two persons at the same address)  
\$15 student with valid ID.

Note: if you joined after June 2019, you are only due  
to pay half as much for 2020!

**Thank you for your support!**

The mission of the New England Opera Club:

The object of this nonprofit association is  
exclusively educational:

- To promote appreciation of the art of opera
- To support performances of quality opera in New England
- To encourage talented students in their pursuit of operatic careers

**Metropolitan Opera Confirms Anna Netrebko  
As Turandot In Future Season**

By Francisco Salazar / operawire / Dec 16, 2019

The Metropolitan Opera has confirmed that Anna Netrebko will perform the title role of Puccini's *Turandot* in a future season.

The news was revealed in the December *Playbill* at the Met, in a letter written by the general manager himself. There was no confirmation, however, of when this series of performances would take place.



The soprano is scheduled to sing her first full production of Puccini's final opera this January at the Bayerische Staatsoper and will sing the second act of the work at the Metropolitan Opera's New Year's Eve Gala.

Netrebko recently opened that Teatro alla Scala's 2019-20 season in a new production of *Tosca* and set to reprise the role at the Royal Opera House, Salzburg Festival, and Metropolitan Opera. She will also make her highly anticipated role debut as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* at the Semperoper Dresden.

The soprano is scheduled to open the 2020-21 Metropolitan Opera season in the title role of *Aida*

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*The mission of this nonprofit association is educational: To promote appreciation of the art of opera; to support performances of quality opera in New England; to encourage talented students in their pursuit of operatic careers.*

To subscribe to our newsletter or to join our mailing list, please send your name and email address to neoperclub@gmail.com

**Jacopo Peri Award**

*The NEOC frequently honors a person who has made a significant contribution to the local opera scene.*

Eunice Alberts  
John Balme  
Scott Brumit  
Sarah Caldwell  
Schuyler Chapin  
Carole Charnow  
Richard Conrad  
Federico Cortese  
Patricia Craig and  
Richard Cassilly  
Phyllis Curtin  
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Bradley Pennington  
Jeffrey Rink  
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Susan Stone  
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Ernest Triplett

## How a Fast-Rising Opera Singer Prepared for Her Met Debut

J’Nai Bridges chose music over a career in basketball, but she still relaxes by shooting hoops — and runs while she sings.

By Merrell Hambleton, Nov. 13, 2019

On a Monday evening in early November, the singer J’Nai Bridges, 32, is standing at the piano in the front room of her Harlem apartment. In just four days, she will make her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where she will sing the part of Nefertiti in Philip Glass’s 1983 opera *Akhnaton*, but tonight she is practicing runs from the 19th-century French opera *Samson and Delilah*, which she will perform at the Washington National Opera in the spring. Opera singers perform unamplified, and their voices must be strong enough to project to every seat in a cavernous auditorium like the Met. So when Bridges begins to sing in the small space, the sound of her mezzo-soprano voice seems to shake the walls. Often, when she’s practicing, passers-by on the street will stop and listen. “I wasn’t able to do that in undergrad,” she says of her resonance. “It’s just a lot of years of training your muscles.” She read that Beyoncé used to jog on a treadmill and sing in order to improve her live performance, so now, she says, “Sometimes I literally run around the room.”



Bridges, who has had a year of professional triumphs, including singing the title role in *Carmen* at the San Francisco Opera and performing for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the Kennedy Center, has an athletic approach to music that is deeply ingrained. As a high school student in Lakewood, Wash., she ran track and played basketball at the state championship level. She might have gone on to a professional career in basketball, in fact, had she not found opera during her senior year as a chorus member in Puccini’s *Tosca*. When a rehearsal fell on the same day as a finals game, her basketball coach made it clear she had to choose between the two activities. She never played competitive basketball again. Still, she says, “I’m thankful for my athletic background. It wasn’t such a shocker that I had to practice all the time.”

After squeezing in a few more bars of *Samson and Delilah*, Bridges walks from her apartment to the nearby restaurant Red Rooster, where she meets her parents, Pamela and Paris, who have flown in from Washington for a celebratory dinner before the final *Akhnaton* dress rehearsal. Bridges orders a burger (“When I eat protein the night before a performance, I sing so well”), and her mother explains the strange twist of fate that led Bridges to classical music. “We never ever went to the opera,” says Pamela. “We didn’t think it was for us.” In 1987, when Bridges was just a few months old, the family moved from Hawaii — where’d they’d been stationed for Paris’s military job — to Lakewood, a suburb of Tacoma. In the living room, they found a baby grand piano that did not belong to them. It had been left there, it seemed, by the previous owner. A week went by, then a month. No one came to collect it. Soon, it had been two years. “It was taking up space,” says Pamela. By then, Bridges was 2, and though she was too small to crawl onto the stool without her parents’ help, she was constantly at the piano. “It never sounded like random notes,” says Pamela. “It sounded melodic.” Shortly after, they signed her up for lessons.

Backstage at the Met the following day, Bridges sits patiently while a makeup artist applies gold leaf to her hands and feet — part of her transformation into Queen Nefertiti. “I’m freaking out,” Bridges says. “But I’m ready.” On the day of her first rehearsal for *Akhnaton*, in September, Bridges tells me, she got a notification on her phone that Jessye Norman, the legendary African-American soprano, had died. Bridges will sing at Norman’s memorial service later this month at the Met, which feels “like a passing of the torch.”

During a costume change, Bridges reflects on what lies ahead. Though she has a full schedule of appearances in classical operas at various theaters across the States, she’s thinking about ways to push the boundaries — and exposure — of the genre. “I’d love to see an opera about Harriet Tubman,” she says. Sharing the stage with Beyoncé is also a dream. “She’ll do her *Ave Maria* thing, then I do my thing,” she says, playfully. “I imagine a big fan blowing in my hair.” It’s a fantasy rooted in Bridges’s serious desire to increase access to opera and change who gets to see it. “Opera is for all. It’s a way to feel, and now more than ever we need to be feeling more,” she says. “But the opera house has to look more like America.”

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**Local Opera and Classical Music, January 2020**

For up-to-date activities, visit FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/NEoperaevents/>  
Join NEOC! Visit <https://neoperacub.org/membership.html#form2>

January 5, 3 PM

**New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society** | *The Pirates of Penzance* - unrehearsed sing-through  
University Lutheran Church, 66 Winthrop Street, Cambridge | 617.876.3256, [negass.org/](http://negass.org/)

January 5, 10 AM

**Emmanuel Music** | Bach Cantata Series: BWV 63 - *Christen, ätzt diesen Tag*  
| 617.536.3356 x 5, [emmanuelmusic.org/](http://emmanuelmusic.org/)  
Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston

January 11

**Metropolitan Opera Live in HD** | *Wozzeck*, Berg  
<https://www.metopera.org/season/in-cinemas/2019-20-season>

January 12, 10 AM

**Emmanuel Music** | Bach Cantata Series: BWV 123 - *Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen*  
| 617.536.3356 x 5, [emmanuelmusic.org/](http://emmanuelmusic.org/)  
Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston

January 19, 10 AM

**Emmanuel Music** | Bach Cantata Series: BWV 3 - *Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid I*  
| 617.536.3356 x 5, [emmanuelmusic.org/](http://emmanuelmusic.org/)  
Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston

January 19, 2 PM

**Sudbury Opera Lovers Organization** | *Tristan und Isolde* - talk by  
Meredith Palmer | 978.443.7262 <http://www.sudburyoperalovers.org/>  
Sudbury Senior Center, 40 Fairbank Road, Sudbury



January 24, 7:30 PM; January 26, 3:00 PM

**Handel + Haydn Society** | *Mozart + Haydn* | 617.262.1815,  
[handelandhaydn.org/concerts/2019-20/mozart-haydn](http://handelandhaydn.org/concerts/2019-20/mozart-haydn) | Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston

January 24, 8 PM

**Cantata Singers** | *Copland, Wyner, Ives, and Fine* | NEC's Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsborough St, Boston

January 25, 1 PM

**Scandinavian Cultural Center** | *Opera is Cool: Birgit Nilsson – A Life Well Sung* - talk by Erika Reitshamer  
| 617.795.1914, <http://scandicenter.org/event/opera-is-cool-birgit-nilsson-a-life-well-sung/>  
206 Waltham St., West Newton

January 26, 10 AM

**Emmanuel Music** | Bach Cantata Series: BWV 156 *Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe* | 617.536.3356 x 5,  
[emmanuelmusic.org/](http://emmanuelmusic.org/) | Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston

January 31, 7 PM

**Greater Worcester Opera** | *Winter Cabaret*, featuring the music of *The Beatles!*  
65 Briarwood Circle, Worcester

February 1

**Metropolitan Opera Live in HD** | *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin  
<https://www.metopera.org/season/in-cinemas/2019-20-season/porgy-and-bess-live-in-hd/>