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20+

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GUEST EDITOR

JOYCE DIDONATO

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WARD

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Joyce DiDonato
behind the lens

PLUS

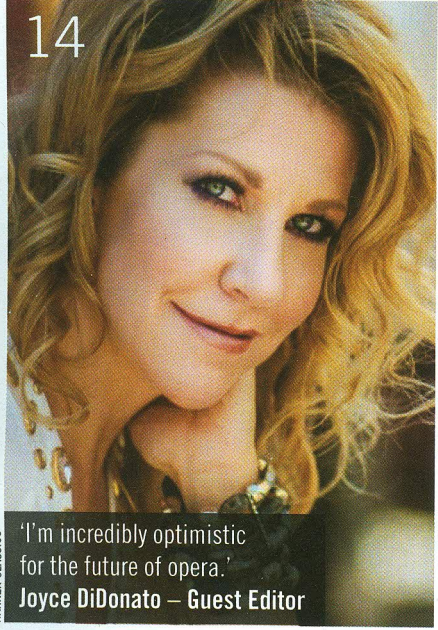
Why American
operas matter

Massimo Cavalletti
at Covent Garden



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'I'm incredibly optimistic for the future of opera.'
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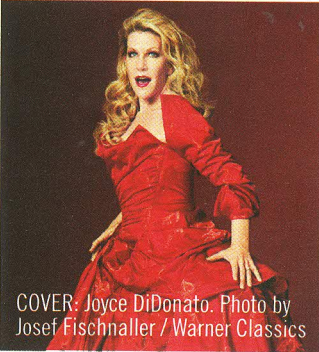
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Welcome



BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

We're thrilled to welcome the extraordinary, dynamic and prodigiously talented operatic superstar Joyce DiDonato as the Guest Editor of this issue of *Opera Now*. The Kansas-born mezzo has one of the busiest international schedules of any opera singer, flitting between continents to perform in major houses and recital venues around the world. The rest of her time, she devotes to promoting opera, raising awareness among the general public and helping young, aspiring artists to learn and understand the considerable demands of their chosen profession.

Joyce is an inspiring figure in so many ways: not only does she give her all on stage, she is a tireless and vociferous advocate of the power that the arts have in shaping our attitudes to the world around us. 'What's

missing in so much of our day-to-day lives is empathy,' she told me as we discussed the themes she wanted to explore in this issue. 'When everything is working as it should in an opera, it's the nearest thing I know to understanding how others might think and feel, even if they are totally different from me. Through great music and great drama, we can get to experience true empathy – now think of how that might change the world!'

Joyce DiDonato's editorial focus in this issue concerns the transformation and empathy that opera can bring to our lives. Education is a subject very dear to the singer's heart, so in 'Opera for Life' (page 21) we have looked at how opera engages with development and learning from infancy to old age. The impact of opera on the intellectual, physical and psychological aspects of life is explored in our feature that examines 'Mind, Body, Spirit' (page 27). 'I want to take a three-dimensional view of an art form that is made up of so many creative strands, is so much greater than the sum of its parts, and asks a great deal of our inner resources,' said Joyce.

Of vital importance, too, is the future. Joyce DiDonato is a singer who has embraced new technology and communications with vigour in order to spread her passion for opera: 'As an artist I need to shout from the rooftops about why opera is important for now and for tomorrow. I don't want to be seen as a museum curator. The past teaches us a great deal, of course, but I want to look at the now and at what's to come.' 'The Road Ahead' (page 39) takes us to the hopes and aspirations of a new generation of talent across many spheres of opera – these are the thoughts and ideas of young professionals on whom the future of opera will depend.

Finally, I'd like personally to thank Joyce DiDonato for giving so much of her time and energy to *Opera Now* as we developed her ideas for this issue. Her input came with characteristic modesty, good grace and a refreshing dose of un-Diva-like, down-to-earth charm. We hope that you will find the results stimulating, insightful and thought-provoking.

Ashutosh Khandekar

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