

## **TAKESHA MESHÉ KIZART-THOMAS, SOPRANO**

Takesha Meshé Kizart-Thomas is "blasting star quality all over the stage with her stunning voice and sensational good looks" (*Opera News*). *The New York Times* describes her singing as "powerful, lustrous, silky, caramel-hued, wielding impressive ease and elegant control," and critics worldwide have praised her visually and vocally compelling performances. Kizart-Thomas' versatile body of work includes leading operatic heroines of the bel canto, verismo, and contemporary eras.

Mrs. Kizart-Thomas' musical roots run deep. A performer since the age of two, the Chicago native, Washington D.C. transplant, U.S. Coast Guard wife, new mother, marriage and family advocate, and radical holistic self-care champion is an alumnae of the lauded University of North Texas and Philadelphia's renowned Academy of Vocal Arts, and counts music legends McKinley "Muddy Waters" Morganfield and Tina Turner among her relations. She made her professional debut in 2006 as The Dutchess in Thomas Adès' *Powder Her Face* with Musikfest Bremen and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie. Her American professional debut occurred in 2008 in the title role of *Tosca* with The Dallas Opera. Both of these important debuts took place while she was still a resident artist at AVA.

Her exceptionally vivid portrayals include the title role of *Tosca* (Deutsche Oper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt, Oper Köln, Opera Australia, Opera North-UK, and The Dallas Opera); the title role of Respighi's *Marie Victoire* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Clitennestra in Gneccchi's *Cassandra* led by Maestro Donald Runnicles (Deutsche Oper Berlin); the title role of *Madama Butterfly* (Deutsche Oper Berlin and Slovenian National Opera); Mimi in *La bohème* (Opera Australia and Deutsche Oper Berlin); a rare feat of performing both Margherita and Elena in *Mefistofele* (Opéra National de Montpellier); Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle* (Oper Köln); Donna Leonora in *Il Trovatore* (Staatsoper Stuttgart); Donna Leonora in *La forza del destino* (Caramoor International Music Festival and The Academy of Vocal Arts); Lucrezia Contarini in *I due Foscari* (Opera Orchestra of New York); Costanza in *L'isola disabitata* (Gotham Chamber Opera); The Duchess in *Powder Her Face* (Musikfest Bremen); Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (The Latvian National Symphony Orchestra); Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* (The Fort Worth Symphony) and *Elijah* (AVA); Wagner's *Liebestod* (Symphony in C); Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*, the title role of *Vanessa*, Anna in *Le Villi*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* (AVA); Desdemona in *Otello*; Violetta *La traviata*; Giorgetta in *Il tabarro*; the title roles of *Suor Angelica*, *Manon Lescaut*, and Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*; Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*; Contessa Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*; Hanna in *The Merry Widow*; Lià in *L'enfant prodigue*; Händel's *Messiah*; Dubois' *Seven Last Words*; and Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio*. Further appearances include Chicago Symphony Orchestra, L'Orchestra della Fondazione Arturo Toscanini, WDR Broadcast Orchestra of Cologne, Kölner Philharmonie, Fort Worth Opera, The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Alte Oper Frankfurt, La Orquesta Filharmonica de Pilsen, Palm Beach Opera Orchestra, Duisberg Philharmonic Orchestra, Ocean City Pops Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, WRTI Radio, NPR Performance Today, PBS, NBC's Today Show, and Broadway in Chicago. Professional collaborations of note have included Yo-Yo Ma (with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and Wynton Marsalis (with Jazz at Lincoln Center).

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Fresh from her debut with The Colorado Symphony under the baton of Maestro Andrew Litton in the title role of *Tosca*, Mrs. Kizart-Thomas joined the Metropolitan Opera and The Lincoln Center Theater's Opera Commissioning Program in the starring role of Esther Mills for Ricky Ian Gordon's *Intimate Apparel*. Of her 2010 debut with the Metropolitan Opera in *La bohème*, the *New York Post* pronounced, "The most intriguing of the new faces was Takesha Meshé Kizart. With her exotic and voluptuous soprano, her megawatt presence automatically drew the eye."

Most recently, Kizart-Thomas appeared in *Corsair* from "Tales from a Safe Distance" with Chicago Fringe Opera and the Decameron Opera Coalition (which won *Chicago Reader's* "Best Opera of 2020" award) and sang the role of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Fargo Moorehead Opera in 2021 ("The soprano wields a bright, crystalline voice that she seems to deliver effortlessly, making her as compelling to watch as she is to hear...Kizart outshined everyone on the stage," reported [inforum.com](http://inforum.com) in their review of the production).

The current season will include concert performances in Pittsburgh, PA of "The Phenomenal Woman" with Resonance Works (including the premiere of a work commissioned by the artist), "Mahogany Chamber Performances: A Night of Song" with Crosstown Theater in Memphis, TN, and a recital tour with Anima Mundi Productions (in collaboration with Southern Oregon University, Seattle Opera, the Northwest African American Museum, the Portland State University School of Music & Theater, and Opera in the Park Portland) in performances of "Maternitá," a program that explores motherhood through the standard operatic heroine and a contemporary portrayal with the commissioning of world premieres by Black, First Nation Indigenous, and Latina women composers in which she also serves as Co-Producer and Librettist.

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