

ROBERT WESLEY MASON, BARITONE

Hailed as a "gifted and fiercely committed baritone whose voice is spacious and reverberant," (*Opera News*) Robert Wesley Mason (he/they) has established themselves as one of today's most versatile performers, employing "his mighty baritone to stunning effect, using interpretive phrasing and nuanced delivery" (*Albany Times Union*). In their teenage years, inspired by rock vocalists like Chris Cornell and Jeff Buckley, Wes sang in local bands and played solo in coffee houses in his hometown of Norfolk, Virginia. Voice lessons led to a passion for opera and new music that continues to this day.

An acclaimed interpreter of contemporary works as well as the inherited repertoire, Wes has performed more than 50 unique operatic roles. Highlights include Hannah Before in ***As One*** with **Pensacola Opera**, **Eugene Opera**, and the **Lyric Opera of Kansas City**, Jan Nyman in ***Breaking the Waves*** with **West Edge Opera**, Stanley Kowalski in ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** with **Kentucky Opera**, Father Flynn in ***Doubt*** with **Union Avenue Opera**, Jonathan in ***Siren Song*** with **Hawaii Opera Theatre**, Dax/Larry in the world premiere of Paterson and Cote's ***Three Way*** with **Nashville Opera** and **American Opera Project**, Charlie in ***Three Decembers*** and Ping in ***Turandot*** with **Nashville Opera**, the title role in ***Hamlet*** with **Fort Worth Opera**, the title role in ***Guillaume Tell*** with the **Southern Illinois Music Festival**, Reinaldo Arenas in the world premiere of Martin and Koch's ***Before Night Falls*** with **Fort Worth Opera**, Belcore in ***L'elisir d'amore*** with **Gulfshore Opera**, Masetto in ***Don Giovanni*** with **Opera Philadelphia** and **Opera Naples**, Achilla in ***Giulio Cesare*** with **Opera Roanoke**, Escamillo in ***Carmen*** with **Fargo-Moorhead Opera**, Escamillo in ***La Tragédie de Carmen*** with **Syracuse Opera**, Marcello in ***La bohème*** with **Hawaii Opera Theatre**, **Fort Worth Opera**, and **Norwalk Symphony**, Schaunard in ***La bohème*** with the **Crested Butte Music Festival**, Zurga in ***Les pêcheurs de perles*** with **Opera Delaware** and **Baltimore Concert Opera**, the baritone soloist in ***Broadway Extravaganza*** with **Opera Hong Kong**, Sciarrone in ***Tosca*** with **Dallas Opera**, and Morales in ***Carmen*** with the **Glimmerglass Festival** and **Michigan Opera Theater**.

Recently, Wes returned to **Michigan Opera Theatre** to perform the role of Figaro in Ragnar Kjartansson's performance piece ***Bliss***, a continuous 12-hour singing marathon based on Mozart's ***Le nozze di Figaro***. In 2020, Wes made his Off-Broadway debut as Wotan/Gunther/Hagen in **On Site Opera's** production of ***Das Barbecü***. Other noted stage performances include Billy Bigelow in ***Carousel*** with **Union Avenue Opera** and **Utah Festival Opera Musical Theater**, Curly in ***Oklahoma!*** with **Maryland Live Arts** and **UFOMT**, Bishop Myriel in ***Les Misérables*** with **UFOMT**, Frank Butler (u/s) in ***Annie Get Your Gun*** with the **Glimmerglass Festival**, and a staged version of **Elvis Costello's *The Juliet Letters*** at the **Signature Theatre** in Arlington, Virginia with **Urban Arias**.

A passionate advocate for new works, Wes has enjoyed working with such composers as **Laura Kaminsky**, **Luna Pearl Woolf**, **Missy Mazzoli**, **Stephen Schwartz**, **Jimmy Roberts**, **Jake Heggie**, **Jonathan Dove**, **Ricky Ian Gordon**, **Jorge Martin**, **Conrad Cummings**, **Robert Paterson**, **Glen Roven**, **Mark Adamo**, **Clint Borzoni**, and **Robert Maggio**.

Mason has been featured on the world premiere cast recordings of ***Three Way*** as Dax/Larry with **Naxos** and ***Before Night Falls*** as Reinaldo Arenas with **Albany Records**. Wes was also a recipient of a **Career Development Award** from the **Sullivan Foundation**, a finalist in the **Opera Index Competition**, an **Encouragement Award Winner** in the **Loren L. Zachary Society Competition**, a **Regional Winner** in the **Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (MONCA)**, an **Encouragement Award Winner** at the **District Level of the MONCA**, a **three-time nominee** for the **Sarah Tucker Study Grant**, and the recipient of the **Earl V. Moore Award for Outstanding Contribution to the School of Music, Theater, and Dance** at the **University of Michigan**. Wes is a graduate of the prestigious **Academy of Vocal Arts** in Philadelphia and received a Bachelor's in Voice Performance from the **University of Michigan**.

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