



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

The Handmaid's Tale Cast Biographies



(Spring, Texas)

Two-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano **Sasha Cooke** has been called a "luminous standout" (New York Times) and "equal parts poise, radiance and elegant directness" (Opera News). Ms. Cooke is sought after by the world's leading orchestras, opera companies, and chamber music ensembles for her versatile repertoire and commitment to new music.

A graduate of Rice University and The Juilliard School, Sasha Cooke also attended the Music Academy of the West, the Aspen Music Festival, the Ravinia Festival's Steans Music Institute, the Wolf Trap Foundation, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and Seattle Opera and Central City Opera's Young Artist Training Programs. Ms. Cooke has given masterclasses throughout the United States and Canada. She lives near Houston, TX with daughters Evelyn and Julia and husband baritone [Kelly Markgraf](#).



(Vancouver, Canada)

Canadian Soprano, **Sarah Cambidge**, is making important role debuts this 2020-21 season, including Aunt Lydia in *A Handmaid's Tale*, Ghita in Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* and covering the role of Leonore in *Fidelio* at the San Francisco Opera. She is currently covering the role of the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Metropolitan Opera and will be making her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Ortlinde, and covering Sieglinde, in their 2020 Ring Cycle. Last season, she made her Metropolitan Opera debut as the Dama di Lady Macbeth in their 2019 production of *Macbeth*. She also made her European debut as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* at the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, her French debut as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at l'Opéra National de Bordeaux, and returned to the San Francisco Opera for her role debut as the Foreign Princess, in *Rusalka*.

Recently, she appeared in San Francisco's 2017-18 season, performing the roles of Ortlinde and the 3rd Norn in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, as well as the Soprano Angel in Jake

Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*. She also debuted the role of Amelia in Livermore Valley Opera's production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Ms. Cambridge is an alumnae of the world renowned San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship, was a National Semifinalist at the 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and was named the winner of the 2016 Denver Lyric Opera Guild competition.



(Seattle, Washington)

The Boston Globe hails **Michaela Martens** for her "dense, color-saturated voice" and declares: "She is a passionate and sympathetic vocal actress." Ms. Martens has fast become known for her portrayals of some of the most difficult dramatic mezzo-soprano roles in the repertoire, beginning with a triumphant last-minute debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as die Amme in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role she repeated for the Oper Graz in a new production by the critically acclaimed director Marco Marelli.

In the 2019-2020 season, Ms. Martens debuts the role of Amneris in *Aïda* with Houston Grand Opera. She makes returns to San Francisco Opera as Gertrude in *Hänsel und Gretel* and to Santa Fe Opera as Ježibaba in *Rusalka*. Concert performances include Klytemnestra in *Elektra* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Herodias in *Salome* with the Seattle Symphony and the American Symphony Orchestra. Last season, she was Adelaide in *Arabella* with San Francisco Opera, followed by performances of Klytemnestra in *Elektra* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and a return to the Met for *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

Ms. Martens saw a return to San Francisco Opera as Klytemnestra in *Elektra*, followed by performances of the same role with Houston Grand Opera. She returns to North Carolina Opera as Dalila in a concert performance of *Samson et Dalila*, and sings Susan B. Anthony in Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All* at the Hudson Opera House in Hudson, NY.

Source: Columbia Artists



(Seattle, Washington)

American bass **James Creswell** has established himself as one of the leading basses of his generation. Born in Seattle Washington, James graduated from Yale University and his early career included apprenticeships with Los Angeles Opera and San Francisco Opera until moving to Germany as

a soloist with the Komische Opera Berlin.

Mr Creswell has appeared at the Dutch National Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Bilbao Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt, Theater an der Wien, Opéra de Bordeaux, Angers-Nantes Opéra, English National

Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, Nederlandse Reisopera, Tallinn Festival, Ravinia Festival and Bergen International Festival.

Source: IMG Artists



(Portland, Maine)

Named "Debut Artist of the Year" by the Joy in Singing Foundation, **Abi Levis** is one of the most exciting singers of her generation. Critics the world over have described her artistry as "fearless", "dazzling", "impressive", and "breathtaking". Ms. Levis' passion for vocal music has been continuously nurtured throughout her life - singing Irish folk music with her father and Patsy Cline tunes at county

fairs with her mentor, Tom Dyhrberg. She began classical training at the age of 15 and, after reading *Opera for Dummies*, became a die-hard opera fan. When not singing, she enjoys knitting, eating, playing PokemonGO! (gotta catch 'em all), tasting all the beers, and traveling the world as The Tessitourist (@tessitourist on Instagram and Ravelry).

Abi holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, and Bard College Conservatory where she was the recipient of the Mimi Levitt Scholarship. While a Young Artist she performed with Los Angeles Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Utah Opera/Utah Symphony, The Britten-Pears Young Artist Program, and Songfest. She resides in Southern California with her husband, award winning author David Treuer, his three kids, and a small zoo of pets.



(Boston, Massachusetts)

Tenor **Matthew DiBattista** has been described as by *Opera News* as having "...a strong, pleasantly ringing voice with a nice extension up top, incredible stamina, and acting abilities not often seen on the operatic stage." He is continually in demand on some of the world's most prestigious stages, having performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe. He has

sung with such conductors as Sir Andrew Davis, James Conlon, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, and the late Robert Shaw. In the summer of 2019, he performed in the concert "Deep River" with Boston Landmarks Orchestra. In the 2019-20 season, he sings as the Earl of Surrey in Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII* with Odyssey Opera, Beppe in *Pagliacci* with Michigan Opera Theatre, and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* with Santa Fe Opera.



(Sedalia, Missouri)

Winner of the Birgit Nilsson prize at the 2016 Operalia competition, tenor **Brenton Ryan** is hailed by Opera News for his "remarkable tonal suavity and refined phrasing," and is widely recognized as a singer of great vocal diversity and dramatic depth. The 2019 – 2020 season sees Mr. Ryan's return to the Metropolitan Opera as Der Naar in the new William Kentridge production of *Wozzeck*, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, as well as a return to Houston Grand Opera as Monostatos in the Barrie Kosky production of *Die Zauberflöte*. Mr. Ryan also sings both Novice in *Billy Budd* and Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro* with San Francisco Opera, and Don Basilio in a new production of *Le nozze di Figaro* with LA Opera, conducted by James Conlon.

Mr. Ryan returned to the Metropolitan Opera in the 2018 – 2019 season to sing both Spoletta in Sir David McVicar's production of *Tosca* and Monostatos in the Julie Taymor production of *The Magic Flute*. Mr. Ryan also made his European debut singing Pedrillo in a new production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Opéra de Monte-Carlo, returned to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis singing Nero in Tim Albery's production of *The Coronation of Poppea*, and returned to Opera Philadelphia for his role debut as Lysander in the U.S. premiere of Robert Carsen's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Orchestral engagements included Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with the LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, conducted by Bramwell Tovey.

Source: Promethean Artists



(Walnut Creek, California)

Praised for her beautiful, profound, and even tone, as well as her artistry and dramatic capabilities*, contralto **Sara Couden** is equally at home in opera, concert, and chamber music. A former violist, choir singer, and literature major, Sara began seriously studying classical voice at age 23. She graduated from San Francisco Conservatory of Music with an M.M., Honors, in Opera, then went on to the Yale

Institute of Sacred Music to earn her A.D. in Early Music, Chamber Music, and Oratorio, after which she spent three years at the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, from which she graduated in 2017. Sara has participated as a young artist at the Music Academy of the West and the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, and has been a fellow at the Marlboro Music Festival, Music@Menlo, and the Staunton Music Festival. She has studied with Marilyn Horne, Dolora Zajick, Ken Noda, Cesar Ulloa, Warren Jones, Roger Vignoles, James Taylor, Nic McGegan, Masaaki Suzuki, Fred Carama, and Ted Taylor, and has been coached by Renata Scotto and Deborah Voigt.



(Aldergrove, B.C., Canada)

Described as a "superb singer and artistic presence," **Rhoslyn Jones** has established herself as an important presence on the operatic and concert stages of the world. Hailed as "The delicious diva," Ms. Jones captivated the audience with her "unforgettably powerful voice" in her role debut in Vancouver Opera's production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. As the Countess, Rhoslyn Jones imparted "a grace

and dignity that prevent[ed] her from descending into the mould of the stereotypical wronged woman, and [allowe]d her to become a relatable individual for a modern audience. Ms. Jones is a joy to watch and reason alone to see the show." Equally passionate about her own singing and the future of singing, Jones is a champion of arts education and works to promote young singers and their training through her work on Voice Faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and as the co-founder of the Bay Area Vocal Academy.

Ms. Jones is also a highly gifted educator who was recently appointed to the Voice Faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She has also held positions at The University of British Columbia and was the Director of the University of British Columbia Summer Vocal Workshop; a young artist training program that she ran for 7 years. Students come from all over the world to take lessons, coach, and perform in the program that has quickly grown into a major training program under her direction. She has served on the Vocal Faculty at Sonoma State University, as well as an Artist in Residence at the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts. Her students have been accepted into the best schools in the country, and have won various major competitions under her tutelage.



(Milkwaukee, Wisconsin)

The Oregonian praises soprano **Katrina Galka** for her recent performances of Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, exclaiming that she "looked like a young Glenn Close, projecting power over Nemorino as she thrilled with fine coloratura filigree and pure high notes." In the 2019-20 season, she returns to the Wiener Staatsoper to reprise Fritzi in Staud's *Die Weiden* following her debut with the company in the work's world premiere last season. She also joins the company for Manfred Trojahn's *Orest*. She sings her first performances of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in a return to Arizona Opera and the Controller in *Dove's Flight* with Minnesota Opera as well as returns to

the Las Vegas Philharmonic for Handel's *Messiah*. Future engagements include role and company debuts at the Opernhaus Zürich and San Francisco Opera. Last season, she also made company debuts with both New Orleans Opera and Opera San Jose in returns to *Blondchen* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy as a guest artist for Frasquita in *Carmen*, and Odyssey Opera as Aithra in *Die ägyptische Helena*. On the concert stage, she joined the Florida Orchestra for a concert celebrating Bernstein's *Broadway*.