



Mezzo-Soprano

Isola Jones

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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at www.pricerubin.com

Isola Jones – Biography

Acclaimed American mezzo-soprano Isola Jones sang at the Metropolitan Opera for 16 seasons and has performed with many opera companies throughout the U.S. and abroad.



She was born in Chicago, Illinois. She is part African American, Native American (Cherokee) and also has European ancestry. She received her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Among her musical influences, she credits Leontyne Price.

After college, she joined the Chicago Symphony Chorus and was the understudy for Yvonne Minton for the Verdi *Requiem* in 1975. During the next two years, she sang in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Chicago and in *Porgy and Bess* in Cleveland.

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Isola Jones – Biography

She joined the Metropolitan Opera in 1977, first playing Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. She sang at the Met for sixteen seasons and more than 500 performances. In her first year at the Met, she sang the role of Maddalena in *Rigoletto* in a live telecast from the Met, and she later sang in 10 *Live from the Met* telecasts.

She has also sung with the Arizona Opera, Baltimore Opera, Calgary Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Dallas Opera, the Hungarian Opera Company, Palm Beach Opera, Seattle Opera, at the Spoleto Festival, and at the Kennedy Center with the Washington Opera. In 1999, she joined the faculty at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona. The title role in the opera, *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses*, was written for Jones, who wrote one of the arias. The opera was composed by James DeMars of Arizona State University, and its recording was nominated in four categories for the 2010 Grammy Awards.

She continues an active career as a performer and teacher.



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Isola Jones – Reflections On A Career

Opera Fresh Blog, August 11, 2011 plus December 2011 updates



Isola Jones was born in Chicago, Illinois. The mezzo-soprano of American Indian and African American descent started singing at 4-years old. By age 11, while attending a Roman Catholic grade school, she saw a performance of Leontyne Price on television and begged her mother to buy a recording of the soprano. It was at this moment that she determined she wanted to be an opera singer as a career. She attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, to receive her undergraduate degree. After school she became a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She made her professional debut in 1975 as the mezzo-soprano soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* with the Chicago Symphony as a last-minute replacement for Yvonne Minton, who had taken ill.



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Isola Jones – Reflections On A Career

The conductor was Sir Georg Solti and the soprano soloist was none other than her idol Leontyne Price. The subsequent year she was engaged to sing in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Chicago with Solti and Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with Loren Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra. Within two years of her professional debut, she was headed to New York City for one of the greatest professional relationships of her operatic career: The Metropolitan Opera. Ms. Jones made her MET debut on October 15, 1977, as Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with fellow castmates Nicolai Gedda, Sherrill Milnes, Teresa Zylis-Gara and conductor James Levine in the company's first performance of the opera in Russian. "During the intermission between the first and second acts, I remember going back to the dressing room and looking in the mirror, and I was visibly shaking. I thought, 'I cannot have a career, this is just too nerve-wracking!'



But I know that I was there for a reason. I needed to be at the Met to get what I needed for my singing. It is a fabulous place to learn, because you are working with the best people in the world. You are hearing, up close, in your face and personal, great singing, and there is no substitute for that." She was also featured in many "Live from Lincoln Center" performances including *Francesca da Rimini*, *La forza del destino*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Rigoletto* at the MET. She sang over 500 performances at the MET including major comprimario roles in such operas as *Thaïs*, *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Parsifal*, *Carmen*, *Rise and Fall of the City*

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of *Mahagonny*, *Wozzeck*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Porgy and Bess* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.



While she was singing *Francesca da Rimini* at the MET, she was offered a contract at La Scala to sing her first *Carmen*. "I was advised not to do my *Carmen* at La Scala first. But I don't know who would have conducted it, who else was in the cast. I figure that maybe I was saved from an unpleasant experience." She went on to sing *Carmen* with Maestro Levine at the MET for the first time on April 2, 1986, with Plácido Domingo as Don José and Catherine Malfitano as Micaëla. Her last performance with the company was on February 23, 1991, as Federica in *Luisa Miller* alongside Luciano Pavarotti, Paul Plishka, Kallen Esperian and Nello Santi conducting the orchestra. Throughout her career she has sung with the Arizona Opera, Baltimore Opera, Calgary Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Dallas Opera, Denver Opera, Greensboro Opera, Hungarian Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Seattle Opera, Spoleto Festival, and at the Kennedy Center with the Washington Opera. In addition to the roles she sang at the MET, she also took on

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such lead parts as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Amneris in *Aida*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Dalila in *Samson and Dalila*. Ms. Jones has appeared on opera and concert recordings such as Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* and Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti and James Levine conducting, respectively; Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with Lorin Maazel conducting; Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, James Levine, conducting; and a solo recording entitled *Music of Bach, Handel and Purcell*. In 2002, she appeared on a recording titled *Vivaldi a Due Voce* with Eileen Mager. The singer has been the recipient of many honors and accolades marking the achievement of her career. In 1984 Ms. Jones was presented with the Merit Award from her alma mater, Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. She has been inducted as an honored member of the United Who's Who of Executives and Professionals. She is also listed in *Faces of Arizona*, an art book of Arizona's famous artists and patrons created

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and photographed by Michel Sarda. Ms. Jones was recently honored with the Living History Award for Excellence and Extraordinary Service in the Performing Arts by the Phoenix Chapter of the Links Inc., Jack and Jill of America Inc., and Gamma Mu Boule' Fraternity. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Musical Arts from Providence College in Rhode Island. As a member of Desert Life Church, Ms. Jones serves as Treasurer on the Board of Directors for the Love Images Ministry Inc. in Phoenix, Arizona. During the 2005-06 season of the Arizona Opera, she sang the title role of *Carmen* and in April 2006 she was heard as the mezzo-soprano soloist in the Mahler Symphony No. 2 performed at ASU in Gammage Auditorium under the baton of Dr. Timothy Russell. In January 2007, Ms. Jones was a celebrity dancer for The Arizona Kidney Foundation's first annual "Dancing with the Stars" fund raiser.

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Other celebrity dancers included Tony Dovolani from the popular reality series, "Dancing with the Stars," which airs weekly on the ABC broadcast network. She was honored to participate in the world premiere of James DeMars's *The Blessingway Songs* along with Native American flutist, R. Carlos Nakai. In addition to concerts and recitals in Phoenix and Chicago during the 2009 and 2010 seasons, Ms Jones has collaborated with ASU professor and composer James DeMars on the opera: *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses* available on Canyon Records at Amazon.com. This recording was nominated in four categories for the 2010 Grammy Awards. In April 2010, the mezzo-soprano performed at the 24th Annual International Conference of the Seven Ray Institute and the University of the Seven Rays in a program titled "Songs from the Ageless Wisdom." In November 2011, she sang with The Metro Chamber Orchestra in New York as part of an all-Mahler program commemorating the 100th anniversary of the composer's death. On the program was his *Rückert Lieder* and *Symphony #4*.

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Isola Jones as Carmen in a portrait titled *The Diva* by Greig Steiner.

Click [here](#) to purchase the artwork.

Ms. Jones received a Master's Degree of Science in Education from Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is currently teaching voice as an adjunct faculty member at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona.

VIDEO GUIDE:

- 1) Linda White Wolf interviews Isola for Arizona Native News.
- 2) Quartet from Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the MET with Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Leo Nucci and Isola Jones.
- 3) "Píntadnos los tiempos venideros" from *Guadalupe, Our Lady of the Roses* in 2009.
- 4) "Fior di giaggiolo" from *Cavalleria Rusticana* in concert with Plácido Domingo and Tatiana Troyanos.

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Isola Jones – Video Links

Isola Jones YouTube Video Links

Linda White Wolf interviews Isola Jones for the *Arizona Native News*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg66XM-0G_I

Quartet from Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Bella Figlia dell'Amore) at the MET with Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Leo Nucci and Isola Jones

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5NEOh-XhyA>

Isola Jones sings "Song To The Moon" from *Rusalka* by Dvorak

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrBqTVcr5ow>

Isola Jones sings "D'amour lardante flame" from *The Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxZCR9c113I>

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