



## ***THE JOURNEY WITH ANGEL BLUE***

**New Episodes Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. Central Time**

**Premiered August 25, 2020**

**TDO Network** presents *The Journey with Angel Blue*, hosted by one of the world's most engaging and beloved sopranos, Angel Blue. Her new TDO Network series is designed to lift the spirit by finding the "silver lining" in even the most challenging circumstances. Ms. Blue will reflect on her own personal journey through life, offer unique perspectives, and share her ideas on how to accentuate the positive every day.

**ABOUT THE HOST:** Incandescent American soprano **Angel Blue** has performed, to date, in more than 35 countries with companies including the Vienna State Opera, Semperoper Dresden, San Francisco Opera, Frankfurt Opera, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, La Scala (where she was the first black singer to portray Violetta), and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Her most recent triumph was headlining the Metropolitan Opera's 2019/20 season-opener, *Porgy and Bess*. The Gershwin classic was seen in theaters all around the world as part of the Metropolitan Opera's "Live in HD," and was also featured on PBS's "Great Performances." Over the course of her career, Ms. Blue has earned enthusiastic acclaim in numerous roles, including the title role of *Tosca*, Violetta in *La traviata*, Liù in *Turandot*, Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*, Elena in Boito's *Mefistofele*, Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and both Clara and Bess in *Porgy and Bess*. She is perhaps most popularly associated with Puccini's *La bohème*, making her U.S. debut with LA Opera as Musetta, and going on to make her La Scala debut in the same role. Since singing her first Mimì at English National Opera in 2014, the doomed heroine has become her signature role with performances at Vienna State Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Hamburg State Opera, the Semperoper Dresden, and at the Met. American audiences will have the opportunity to experience her as Mimì in upcoming productions with Seattle Opera, San Diego Opera, Metropolitan Opera, and Washington National Opera. International engagements in 2020 include Violetta at La Scala and the title role in *Tosca* at Semperoper Dresden.



## **ELZIE'S EATS WITH ELZA VAN DEN HEEVER**

**New Episodes Fridays at 1:00 p.m. Central Time**

**TDO Network** presents *Elzie's Eats with Elza van den Heever*. The acclaimed soprano is a woman of many talents—both on and off the stage! Her playful imagination and artistry in the kitchen are on full display in this celebration of the art of cooking and baking. Whether whipping up a delectable “Mezzo-rella” or creating a fabulous, edible homage to another superb singer, *Elzie's Eats* are a delicious and beautiful addition to the network schedule.

**ABOUT THE HOST:** Distinguished South African soprano **Elza van den Heever** has performed numerous roles to great acclaim at the Metropolitan Opera, including Marie in 2019's *Wozzeck* (also shown on “Live in HD”), Elettra in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, and Elisabetta in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. In that role in her memorable Met debut, she was described as “a vocally burnished and emotionally tempestuous Elizabeth...She turns flights of coloratura passagework into bursts of jealousy and defiance” (*The New York Times*). She was also unforgettable in the title role of *Norma* in a new production for Bordeaux National Opera. Other signature portrayals overseas include Ellen Orford in Britten's *Peter Grimes* at both the English National Opera and Vienna State Opera. In North America, Ms. van den Heever sang Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) and *Norma* at The Dallas Opera, Armida in Handel's *Rinaldo* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) with Santa Fe Opera. She has also starred as Norma at the Canadian Opera Company. At San Francisco Opera, she created the role of Mary Custis Lee in the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Appomattox*. Ms. van den Heever enjoys a flourishing performance partnership with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, with performances of Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* and Grammy Award-winning performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 in San Francisco, on tour throughout Europe, and on disc for SFS Media. Ms. van den Heever's depiction of Ellen Orford was reprised with Mr. Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony in June 2014, where she was lauded as “... a brilliant Ellen, deploying her focused, penetrating instrument with urgency upon discovering the Boy's bruises in Act II, and singing with ineffable beauty and poignancy in the Embroidery Aria” (*Opera News*).



## **CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH KAREN SLACK**

**Aired Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. Central Time in August**

**TDO Network** presents *Creative Conversations with Karen Slack*. Throughout the month of August, this popular network offering was led by guest host Karen Slack, one of America's most admired sopranos, who explores the complex creative journeys of fellow artists, including tenor Noah Stewart and Pulitzer Prize-winning librettist Mark Campbell. Programs now can be found in the TDO Network archive.

**ABOUT THE GUEST HOST:** Hailed for possessing a voice of extraordinary beauty, a seamless legato and great dramatic depth, American soprano **Karen Slack** has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and San Francisco Opera. In recent seasons she has sung the roles of Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, Leonora in *Il trovatore* and *Tosca* with Arizona Opera; *Aida* at Austin Opera; Emelda Griffith in *Champion* with New Orleans Opera; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Nashville Opera; Violetta in *La Traviata* with Sacramento Opera and Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking* with both Minnesota Opera and Vancouver Opera. Ms. Slack made her Scottish Opera debut as Anna in Puccini's *Le villi*. During the 2019/2020 season, she returned to The Metropolitan Opera as Serena in *Porgy and Bess*, performed a series of recitals throughout the U.S., and had a featured role as the Opera Diva in Tyler Perry's movie and soundtrack, *For Colored Girls*. Equally at home on the concert stage, Ms. Slack has performed Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Mahler's 2nd Symphony and the Verdi *Requiem* with numerous orchestras throughout the U.S. Abroad, she has appeared with the Melbourne Symphony, Sydney Symphony, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and most recently, with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic in celebration of the 80th birthday of Yuri Temirkanov. She made her Carnegie Hall debut as Agnes Sorel in Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans* and will return in spring 2021 with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra for a digital performance of Beethoven's *Egmont*. While Ms. Slack's debut with Houston Grand Opera in the world premiere of *A Snowy Day* has been delayed due to COVID-19, audiences will be able to enjoy a video presentation of the work. Additional upcoming engagements for the 2020/2021 season include a digital presentation of Poulenc's *La voix humaine* with Madison and Austin Opera—presented at Austin Opera as part of their new *Blue Starlite Drive-In Series*. Her performance of Verdi's *Requiem* with Highlander Concert Series at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas has been postponed due to COVID-19.



## **PITCH SQUAD WITH LIZ AND ELENA**

**New Episodes Saturdays at 9:00 p.m. Central Time**

**TDO Network** presents *Pitch Squad with Liz and Elena*. Elizabeth Sutphen, host of one of TDO Network's inaugural shows, *Late Nite with Liz* is back! This time around she is partnering with Houston Grand Opera Studio Artist Elena Villalón to form late-night comedy's newest duo: *Pitch Squad*. Join them each week for sketch comedy with a classical-music twist.

**ABOUT THE HOSTS:** "Impressive coloratura soprano" (*The New York Times*) **Elizabeth Sutphen** has garnered praise for her sparkling voice and her ability to "soar deftly through stratospheric trills and arpeggios" (*Financial Times*). Also praised as "exquisite" (*The Guardian*, UK) for her Glyndbourne Festival Opera debut as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Ms. Sutphen made her Texas debut last season as Faustina in Houston Grand Opera's world premiere of *The Phoenix* by composer Tarik O'Regan with the libretto by John Caird. The 2019/2020 season brought Ms. Sutphen back to HGO for her role debut as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, as well as a return to Frankfurt Opera in her first role as a Rossini heroine: Lisetta in *La gazzetta*, which she performed to great critical acclaim. Ms. Sutphen was slated to make her Dallas Opera debut in 2020 as A Heavenly Voice in *Don Carlo*, in addition to her Des Moines Metro Opera debut as La Folie in Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Platée*. She was also scheduled to return to Frankfurt Opera as the charming Filene in *Mignon*; however, all these productions were either cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19.

Soprano **Elena Villalón** is a studio artist at Houston Grand Opera and was named a Grand Finals winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Career highlights include Inès in Kevin Newbery's new production of *La Favorite*, and La Mujer in the world premiere of Javier Martinez' *El Milagro de Recuerdo*. Ms. Villalón was a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theater of St. Louis in the 2018/2019 season, where she debuted as Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro* and performed scenes as Lucia from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. She sang Marzelline in *Fidelio* with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, where she earned the company's Barbara and Stanley Richman Award. She now appears in recital with Houston Grand Opera and the Cincinnati Song Initiative, and has performed in a variety of digital concerts. The soprano was engaged to portray Sophie in *Werther*, Clorinda in *La Cenerentola*, and to cover the role of Bess in HGO's *Breaking the Waves* before these productions were cancelled due to the pandemic. During the 2020/2021 season, she will perform in HGO online productions of *Vinkensport*, *The Snowy Day*, and *Hansel and Gretel*.