

KAREN SLACK Soprano



Hailed as possessing a voice of extraordinary beauty, celebrated American soprano **Karen Slack** has garnered international renown for her artistic versatility, charisma and entrepreneurial endeavors. A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Slack is known for her dynamic and passionate performances in both lead operatic roles and on the concert stage; as a sought-after collaborator, curator, and artistic advisor; and for her ground-breaking approach to engagement. She is an Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera, Co-Chair of the Women's Opera Network with Opera America, and serves on the board of the American Composer's Orchestra. In January 2022, Slack was appointed Creative Partner with Brooklyn's National Sawdust, opening with a solo recital and continuing through multiple programs throughout the season.

Highlights of Slack's 2022-2023 season include her debut with The Dallas Opera as Freia in *Das Rheingold*; the world premiere of Shawn Okpebholo's *Freedom on the Move: Songs in Flight*, developed by Sparks & Wiry Cries, alongside singer and multi-instrumentalist Rhiannon Giddens with Philadelphia Chamber Music Society at The Kimmel Center, and at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; performances in Austin and Portland with the Miró Quartet, and in Cincinnati and Albany with the Pacifica Quartet; a recital in Fort Worth with pianist Michelle Cann and at Cal Poly Arts with organist Alan Morrison; performing as featured soloist with the Nashville Symphony and Oklahoma City Philharmonic in two different world premieres by Hannibal Lokumbe; Beethoven's *Egmont* at Carnegie Hall with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Fresno Philharmonic; and titled roles in productions at Portland Opera and Edmonton Opera. She also continues her roles as Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera and Co-Chair of the Women's Opera Network with Opera America.

Karen Slack has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and San Francisco Opera in featured roles such as Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, *Tosca* with Arizona Opera, as *Aïda* 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 Minnesota, Atlanta, and Vancouver Opera. She made her Scottish Opera debut as Anna in Puccini's *Le villi*. Slack made her film debut portraying a featured role as the Opera Diva in Tyler Perry's movie and soundtrack *For Colored Girls*.

Her 2021-2022 season featured a debut performances with Houston Grand Opera in the world premiere of Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney's *A Snowy Day*, the title role in *Aïda* at Opera Carolina, recitals at Atlanta's Spivey Hall, performances as featured soloist with Symphony of the Americas and in Derek Geter's *Justice Symphony* with The Washington Chorus, her solo recital *Of Thee I Sing* at National Sawdust, and the May 2022 world premiere of a new work by James Lee III, written for her collaboration with the Pacifica Quartet and presented by Carnegie Hall and the Shriver Hall Concert Series.

During the 2020-2021 season, Slack drew on her experience in film to expand her artistic platform through premiere digital performances with Houston Grand Opera, Madison Opera, and Minnesota Opera, taking on a starring role in *Driving While Black* with urbanarias and launching her digital talk show, #kikikonversations, which garnered critical acclaim from both *Opera News* and *The New York Times*. She was also Co-Director for the 2020-21 Opera Program at the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts. Additionally, Slack became a sought-after collaborator to create bespoke content for the digital concert stage, co-creating and performing in *#saytheirnames – Women of the Movement*, a film recital and production in partnership with Philadelphia's Lyric Fest, performed in recital for Opera Philadelphia, and

was the featured vocalist alongside actor/narrator Liev Schreiber in Orpheus Chamber Orchestra's *Speaking Truth to Power* program, presented in October 2020 and hosted by livestream platform Idagio.

Slack's 2019-2020 season included a return to The Metropolitan Opera as Serena in *Porgy and Bess*, her debut with Opera Theatre of St. Louis originating the role of Billie in the world premiere of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, a recital with Opera Philadelphia, performing as guest soloist for Madison Opera's virtual Opera in the Park, and a series of recitals throughout the US including the Vilar Center for the Performing Arts in Vail, Colorado with pianist Joe Illick. In concert, she was a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in the world premiere of Hannibal Lokumbe's *Healing Tones* with conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Union Symphony Orchestra for Wagner's *Wesendonk Lieder*.

Equally at home on the concert stage, Slack has performed Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Mahler's 2nd Symphony, Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder*, and the Verdi *Requiem* with various orchestras throughout the United States, and was featured in her first performances of Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et la mer* with the Omaha Symphony in collaboration with Opera Omaha. Abroad she has appeared with the Melbourne Symphony, Sydney Symphony, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestras, and most recently, with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic in celebration of the 80th birthday of conductor Yuri Temirkanov. She made her Carnegie Hall debut as Agnes Sorel in Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans* with the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

A graduate of the Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera, the native Philadelphian is also a graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music. Karen Slack is a winner of numerous competitions and awards: most notably the Montserrat Caballé International Competition, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, George London Foundation Award, Marian Anderson ICON Award, Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, Rosa Ponselle International Vocal Competition, Portland Opera Lieber Award, Liederkrantz Foundation Award and the Jose Iturbi International Competition for Voice. For more information, please visit www.sopranokarenslack.com

KAREN SLACK

Soprano

OPERA

FREIA – Das Rheingold
TOSCA – Tosca
AIDA – Aida
MAMA – Snowy Day
MOTHER- Driving While Black
SERENA – Porgy and Bess
BILLIE – Fire Shut Up in My Bones
SERENA –Porgy and Bess

SISTER ROSE – Dead Man Walking

ADDIE PARKER – Yardbird
MICAELA –Carmen
EMELDA GRIFFITH – Champion
ANNA – Le Villi
DONNA ANNA – Don Giovanni
ALICE FORD – FALSTAFF
AIDA – Aida
TOSCA- Tosca
LEONORA- Il trovatore
AIDA-Aida
VIOLETTA- La traviata
LUISA MILLER - Luisa Miller
LIU - Turandot (cover)
SERENA - Porgy and Bess
CILLA- Margaret Garner
AGNES SOREL- Maid of Orleans
DESDEMONA - Otello
MIMI- La bohème
DONNA ANNA - Don Giovanni

The Dallas Opera (2023)
Edmonton Opera (2022); Opera Birmingham (2019)
Opera Carolina (2022)
Houston Grand Opera (2021)
UrbanArias (2021)
Metropolitan Opera (2019- 2020)
Opera Theatre of St. Louis (2019)
Fort Worth Opera (2019); University of Michigan (2018);
Bergen Phil Orchestra (2015); Lyric Opera of Chicago (2014)
Atlanta Opera (2019); Minnesota Opera (2018); Kentucky Opera;
Vancouver Opera; Lyric Opera of Kansas City (2017); Des Moines
Metro Opera; Madison Opera (2014)
Arizona Opera (2018)
Mill City Summer Opera (2018)
New Orleans Opera (2018); Opera Parallèle (2016)
Scottish Opera (2017)
Nashville Opera (2016)
Arizona Opera (2016)
Austin Lyric Opera (2015)
Arizona Opera
Arizona Opera
West Bay Opera; Lyric Opera of Kansas City
Sacramento Opera; West Bay Opera
Metropolitan Opera
Metropolitan Opera
Washington National Opera; San Francisco Opera
Michigan Opera Theater
San Francisco Opera
Melbourne Symphony Australia
Western Opera Theater Tour
Manila, Philippines

CONCERTS

FREEDOM ON THE MOVE
VERDI – Requiem

WAGNER – Wesendonk Lieder
HANNIBAL LOKUMBE – Healing Tones
EVENING WITH THE STARS
From La Scala to Broadway
GERSHWIN- Porgy and Bess
BEETHOVEN- Symphony 9
MAHLER- Symphony 2
WAGNER & VERDI: SUNDAY AT THE OPERA
VAUGHN WILLIAMS- Dona Nobis Pacem
July 4th CELEBRATION CONCERT
CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
TCHAIKOVSKY- Maid of Orleans
July 4th CELEBRATION CONCERT; MARSALIS- All Rise
RAVEL - Chanson Madecasses
CHRISTMAS GALA

Sparks & Wiry Cries (2023)
South Bend (2018); Canton (2017); Sacramento Choral Society;
Madison Symphony
Union Symphony (2019)
Philadelphia Orchestra (2019)
Fort Worth Opera (2018)
Toruń Symphony (2017)
National Chorale; Sydney Symphony Orchestra (2016)
Back Bay Chorale (2016); Birmingham Symphony (2013)
Lexington Philharmonic (2015); Latvian Nat'l Symphony (2010)
Back Bay Chorale (2013)
Sacramento Choral Society (2013); Pro Musica Albany Symphony
Cincinnati Pops Symphony
Cincinnati May Festival
Carnegie Hall
San Francisco Symphony
Weill Recital Hall
Philadelphia Orchestra

KAREN SLACK
Soprano
CRITICAL ACCLAIM

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA – THE SNOWY DAY

"...Mama's soliloquy of parental watchfulness and worry chilled the excited mood with an ill-fitting poignancy. That poignant scene, however, featured the sustained, powerful singing of soprano Karen Slack, whose distinguished performance as Mama supplied the raw urgency that moment needed."
-OPERA NEWS

"Mama, played by soprano Karen Slack, tidies up the room while singing about how her eyes are watching the world, but the sadness in her voice betrays what's really going on: the dawning acceptance that Peter won't be a little boy forever. It's a powerful performance, and one of the most emotional moments in the show."
-HOUSTON CHRONICLE

"Soprano Karen Slack boasted a hefty voice with something of a mezzo-soprano's glow, and she poured it out generously in Mama's aria about her love for her son."
-TEXAS CLASSICAL REVIEW

"Soprano Karen Slack was dramatically persuasive and vocally outstanding in the role of Peter's Mama. Slack's expressive voice of power was enlisted for a heartfelt performance of Mama's soliloquy, sung in Peter's bedroom after he left for his venture alone in the snow."
-OPERA WARHORSES

OPERA THEATRE OF SAINT LOUIS – FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES

"the feisty, rich-voiced soprano Karen Slack"
-NEW YORK TIMES

"The third spectacular voice we hear is that of Karen Slack as Charles's mother Billie. Her participation in the wonderful shouting gospel scene is a high-point of the evening."
- BROADWAY WORLD

"soprano Karen Slack supply rich tones and ardent personifications as Charles and Billie."
-DALLAS MORNING NEWS

FORT WORTH OPERA – PORGY AND BESS

"Karen Slack was a fetching Serena"
-DALLAS MORNING NEWS

"Karen Slack's mournful and transcendent "My Man's Gone Now" is a showstopper."
-THE COLUMN ONLINE

"Karen Slack's soulfully lush soprano brings Serena to the fore of every moment she is in, with a sweet, lilting high that made "My Man's Gone Now" one of the most powerful arias of the evening."
-THEATER JONES

ARIZONA OPERA – YARDBIRD

"Sung by Karen Slack, Addie's powerful personality reminded me of strong-willed mothers I have known as a teacher. With warm and inviting [...] tones, she sang fervently of raising a black man-child in a world that didn't always acknowledge the extent of his talent."
-OPERA WIRE

NEW ORLEANS OPERA – CHAMPION

"Karen Slack, as Emile's mother Emelda, has some of Blanchard's most beautiful music and she performed it with a warm and rich voice."
- OPERA NEWS

"By far the most persuasive singing came courtesy of soprano Karen Slack, who embraced the arduous assignment of Emile's mother Emelda – a personality by turns repulsive, pathetic, and finally capable of surprising sympathy – with exceptional interpretive instincts and superb vocal technique."
- MUSICAL AMERICA

"Soprano Karen Slack, as Emelda, the absentee mother who abandoned Griffith and six other illegitimate children in their native Virgin Islands, beautifully atones for her negligence with a soaring aria about "seven babies in the sun" that brought down the house Friday night."
-THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN – PORGY AND BESS

"The deep humanity Robinson conveyed as Porgy and the tonal radiance of Karen Slack as Serena stood out."

-CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"Soprano Karen Slack, who was the role of Serena, gave a notably heartbreaking performance of "My Man's Gone Now." Her powerful voice and expressiveness sent a wave of anguish over the audience. As Slack sang about the heart-wrenching grief of a widow, I found my own heart aching and paining for Serena's loss of her husband." -MICHIGAN DAILY

MINNESOTA OPERA – DEAD MAN WALKING

"There were moments of truly impressive singing on opening night from Karen Slack (Sister Rose)"

-MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

KENTUCKY OPERA – DEAD MAN WALKING

"Karen Slack returns to the role of Sister Rose with aplomb, her assurance with the musical stylings of this role evident in her enjoyment of performing."

- BROADWAY WORLD

SYDNEY SYMPHONY – PORGY AND BESS

"Karen Slack is also sensational as Serena. . . bringing the house down with her gleaming, stratospheric soprano in a heart-rending My man's gone now: one of the standout moments of the night."

-LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE

"soprano Karen Slack, as the widowed Serena, raises the roof with My man's gone" -THE AUSTRALIAN

"As the widow Serena Karen Slack sang with soaring power"

-THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

ARIZONA OPERA – FALSTAFF

"Karen Slack made a lively, joyous Alice, her sweet, soft-grained soprano extending to a substantive lower register one rarely hears in this part . . ."

- OPERA NEWS

"As Alice, Karen Slack sang with poise and radiant sound. Slack's amply blooming high notes were especially brilliant. She and Heather Phillips, who sang Nanetta, stole the show as far as the women were concerned. . . These two women produced some of the sweetest notes and most finely shaped phrases of the evening."

-OPERA TODAY

"The entire cast is excellent, with standout performances by sopranos Karen Slack as Alice . . ."

-AZ CENTRAL

OPERA PARALLÈLE – CHAMPION

"[Slack's] aria, a duet with jazz bassist Marcus Shelby, was a triumph. . . Slack and Shelby provided the musical highpoint of the evening"

-OPERA NEWS

". . . his mother Emelda (a magnificent portrayal of selfishness and self-assertion by Karen Slack)"

-SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

"Fine support is given by soprano Karen Slack as Emile's mother . . . Her blues aria, sung a cappella with only Marcus Shelby's jazz bass line in the background, was a show stopper."

-CULTUREVULTURE.NET

AUSTIN OPERA – AÏDA

"The principal voices are effective and moving. Karen Slack as Aïda soars at high volume . . . her subtle performance is outstanding. She carries herself in a way that feels always considered, never canned or forced."

-AUSTIN360

"And when Slack sings, her voice wringing the ache and sorrow out of Verdi's emotive music, her Aida becomes a tiny vessel of flesh and blood, lost in a wide, wide world. . . what makes the deepest impression again and again here are the personal moments: Slack's despairing Aida"

- AUSTIN CHRONICLE

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO – PORGY AND BESS

"Karen Slack's Serena ripped the audience's hearts out in "My Man's Gone Now," and she accomplished that formidable glissando over two octaves beautifully."

-OPERA NEWS

"Two veterans of the Zambello production – soprano Karen Slack (Lyric debut) as Serena. . . – are reprising their roles for this revival. "My Man's Gone Now," Serena's emotionally intense lament for her murdered husband, Robbins (Bernard Holcomb), was one of the evening's high points."

- CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"Karen Slack's pure-toned soprano suited the religious Serena, and she provided a highlight of the evening with a powerful "My man's gone now.""

- CHICAGO CLASSICAL REVIEW

"In another show-stopping moment, soprano Karen Slack delivered a goose bump-inducing a'capella opening to "My Man's Gone Now," while mourning the death of her character's husband, Robbins." - THE CHICAGOIST

"soprano Karen Slack, as Serena, lit up the house with her gospel-infused prayer over the languishing Bess, "Oh, Doctor Jesus." - CHICAGO ON THE AISLE

NEW PHILHARMONIC – TOSCA

"Karen Slack brought Tosca complex personality to life with her facial expressions and her vocal prowess. Tosca's well-known aria "Vissi d'arte" prior to killing Scarpia brought me tears with the beauty of Slack's high clear soprano." - CHICAGO-SPLASH.COM

DES MOINES METRO OPERA – DEAD MAN WALKING

"Sister Rose (the charming, mighty-voiced Karen Slack)" - THE DES MOINES REGISTER

"Karen Slack (Sister Rose) captured the audience with a spinning, thrilling top voice that soared above the staff. . . she is an artist we will definitely want to hear again (and again)." - OPERA TODAY

"Soprano Karen Slack was a sonorous Sister Rose." - OPERA NEWS

MADISON OPERA – DEAD MAN WALKING

"Karen Slack, as Sister Rose, delights with her impressive soprano instrument and her patient, no-nonsense attitude." - THE CAP TIMES

BACK BAY CORALE – WAGNER & VERDI CONCERT

" . . . soprano Karen Slack delivered "Dich teure Halle" with ease . . . for the Forza selection: her rendition was committed and shattering and stood out as a highlight of the evening. Her voice is a gleaming lyric soprano; her performance imbued drama into every phrase and movement." - BOSTON CLASSICAL REVIEW

ARIZONA OPERA- IL TROVATORE

"Karen Slack who sang the role of Leonora, the much sought after heroine, has a voluptuous soprano voice with silvery top notes and a formidable chest register. She seemed to throw care to the winds as she successfully navigated her music's many pitfalls. The result was an exciting performance of this difficult role." - OPERA TODAY

ARIZONA OPERA -TOSCA

"Karen Slack who made both her company and role debut in the title role. She not only has a easily reached high C, she also has a variety of luscious vocal colors in her middle and lower registers. She held nothing back in the acting part either. Her rendition of 'Vissi d'arte' was a beautiful oasis of melody in an otherwise intense portrayal." - MUSIC AND VISION

WEST BAY OPERA - AIDA

"Karen Slack's deeply felt Aida seemed modeled on Leontyne Price's glorious assumption. Dramatic in tone, generous in volume, flexible in tempo and luminous on top". - OPERA NEWS

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA – SCHWABACHER DEBUT RECITAL

"A lyric-spinto soprano with beautiful tone and great high notes she can spin back into a gorgeous piano, the kind of voice that can sing anything beautifully engaging the heart brilliantly. We have found this in Karen Slack. And on top of that has the authentic Strauss legato. No live performance of Strauss songs in my memory was so completely glorious. She knew exactly how to place each note in the phrase, how to keep her voice under control, when to hold back and when to soar. "Befreit" was fabulous. Soprano Karen Slack possesses the ideal lyrical musicality for a Strauss role. The voice is crystal clear, yet with that smooth nuance of the sort heard from a Schwarzkopf or Te Kanawa. Her performance has major career stamped all over it." - SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

METROPOLITAN OPERA NATIONAL COUNCIL – FINALS CONCERT

"Warmly expressive especially in her vibrant top" - THE NEW YORK TIMES

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA – MAID OF ORLEANS

"Karen Slack applied a radiant spinto soprano to the thankless role of Agnes Sorel" - FINANCIAL TIMES

SACRAMENTO CHORAL SOCIETY– VERDI REQUIEM

"However the most outstanding solo performance was Slack's "Libera me", the final movement of the operatic Mass. Her strength and emotive power sent chills through the audience." - SACRAMENTO PRESS

SACRAMENTO OPERA – LA TRAVIATA

"The fact was not lost on soprano Karen Slack, who turned her Violetta into a showpiece for her powerful and emotional soprano. Her tour de force performance was the high point of this solid and tasteful production. Throughout Slack's soprano grandly filled the hall. Her singing of Ah, fors'e lui... Sempre libera in Act 1 showed range as a singer and draw as an actor. She navigated the tricky coloratura with accuracy and did so powerfully." - SACRAMENTO BEE

MADISON SYMPHONY - VERDI REQUIEM

"The quartet of soloist was impressive, but soprano Karen Slack and mezzo- soprano Guang Yang stole the show. Their clear warm voices were angelic in duets, and Slack brought tender urgency to her final prayer." - MADISON ISHTMUS

"Soprano Karen Slack not only has the range for the Requiem, but she has the rich, weighty timbre. She has, as the program notes said, "a voice of extraordinary beauty." - WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

KAREN SLACK
Soprano

SUGGESTED OPERATIC REPERTOIRE

BLANCHARD	Champion	Emelda Griffith
	Fire Shut Up in My Bones	Billie Blow
BOITO	Mefistofele	Elena
GERSHWIN	Porgy and Bess	Bess*
		Serena
MASSNET	Herodiadè	Salomè
MOZART	Don Giovanni	Donna Anna/Donna Elvira*
	Le nozze di Figaro	Contessa
POULENC	Dialogues des Carmélites	Madame Lidione*
PUCCINI	Madame Butterfly	Cio-Cio San*
	Suor Angelica	Suor Angelica*
	Il Tabarro	Giorgetta*
	Tosca	Tosca
	Turandot	Liu
R. STRAUSS	Le Villi	Anna
	Ariadne auf Naxos	Ariadne*
	Elektra	Chrysothemis*
TCHAIKOVSKY	Eugene Onegin	Tatyana
	Maid of Orleans	Agnes Sorel
	Pique Dame	Lisa*
VERDI	Aïda	Aïda
	Un ballo in maschera	Amelia
	Don Carlos	Elisabetta de Valois*
	Ernani	Elvira*
	Falstaff	Alice Ford
	La forza del destino	Leonora*
	Luisa Miller	Luisa
	Otello	Desdemona
	Simon Boccanegra	Amelia*
	La Traviata	Violetta
WAGNER	Il Trovatore	Leonora
	Der fliegende Holländer	Senta*
	Lohengrin	Elsa*
	Tannhäuser	Elisabeth*
	Die Walküre	Sieglinde*

*Roles in preparation/under consideration