



2017 Biography [936 words]

With an utterly unique personal narrative beginning in Fairbanks, Alaska, and an international career that now spans more than two decades, mezzo-soprano **Vivica Genaux** charms audiences and critics alike with her charisma, commitment, and astounding vocal technique. After noting that she 'has stage presence in spades,' Clive Paget wrote in Australia's *Limelight Magazine* in April 2016 that Vivica 'demonstrated complete mastery with her exemplary phrasing and effortless vocal dexterity. Add to that a voice of great richness, easy at the top, yet with an ability to plunge at will into a beefy bottom register, and you have what can only be described as the real deal.'

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, witnessed her professional début in 1994, when she interpreted Isabella in a Florentine Opera production of Gioachino Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri*, a part that she reanimated to great acclaim in 2015 for Opera Fairbanks. Her 1997 début at New York's Metropolitan Opera was in her most-performed rôle, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and she returned to the MET for more Rosinas in 2002. In the wake of those milestones, Rossini rôles have taken Vivica to opera houses and concert halls throughout the world. Her Angelina in *La Cenerentola* has been heard in her native United States in cities including Charlotte (North Carolina), West Palm Beach (Florida), and Washington, DC, and internationally in locations ranging from the prestigious Grand Théâtre de Genève, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Wiener Staatsoper to Bremen (Germany), Rieti (Italy), and Santiago (Chile). In addition to Angelina, she has sung another pair of her finest Rossini rôles for Washington Concert Opera, Falliero in *Bianca e Falliero* (2008) and Arsace in *Semiramide* (2015), as well as singing music from *La donna del lago* and *Maometto secondo* in the 2016 gala concert celebrating WCO's thirtieth anniversary. Singing both female heroines and male *travesti* rôles, Vivica has amassed a repertory of nine Rossini characters, one of her favorites among whom,

Malcolm in ***La donna del lago***, she revisited in concert at the Salzburger Pfingstfestspiele in June 2017.

Alongside her *bel canto* credentials, Vivica has been widely lauded for her performances of the music of Georg Friedrich Händel, Antonio Vivaldi, and their contemporaries. A cornerstone of Vivica's extensive Baroque repertory is the music of Johann Adolf Hasse, whose work she champions in performance and on disc. In 2017, the rôle of Piramo in Hasse's ***Piramo e Tisbe*** takes her to Budapest, Vienna, Valencia for concert performances with Europa Galante and Fabio Biondi. 2017 also brought her rôle débuts as Lepido in Händel's ***Lucio Cornelio Silla***, presented in concert with Europa Galante at Wiener Konzerthaus in January, and as Eternità and Diana in Francesco Cavalli's ***La Calisto*** at Opéra national du Rhin, with performances in both Strasbourg and Mulhouse.

Earlier in the current season, Vivica interpreted the rôle of Emilia in Antonio Vivaldi's ***Catone in Utica*** for the first time in a pair of concert performances with Oper Köln. In July 2016, she added Junon in Marc-Antoine Charpentier's ***Actéon*** to her repertory via a double bill with Henry Purcell's ***Dido and Aeneas***, in which she sang Dido, presented by Les Talens Lyriques in Beaune, France, and reprised in Acre, Israel, and Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in September and October 2016.

On the concert platform, a highlight of the 2016 – 2017 Season is the début of a new program featuring music composed for the mythological singer Orpheus by Gluck, Händel, Hasse, Porpora, Ristori, and Wagenseil. This continues the tradition of ***Rival Queens***, Vivica's exploration with soprano Simone Kermes of arias and duets composed for Eighteenth-Century divas Faustina Bordoni and Francesca Cuzzoni, documented on CD by Sony Classical and revived in Turkey, Switzerland, and Malta in January 2017. In February 2017, Vivica returned to Chicago for three concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with which ensemble she débuted in 2014. Other concert appearances in the 2016 – 2017 Season took Vivica to Tours, France, for ***The Colours of Emotions*** with Concerto Köln; to Rovigo, Italy, for ***La magnifica comunità***, featuring works by Riccardo Broschi (brother of the legendary castrato Farinelli), Händel, Hasse, and Vivaldi; and to the Händel-Festspiele Halle for ***Pianto di Maria***, presenting music formerly misattributed to Händel.

Some of Vivica's most memorable endeavors in recent seasons include participating in the world première of Piet Swerts's *Le sack de Louvain* in August 2014, commemorating the centennial of the destruction of Louvain at the start of World War One; a rapturously-received portrayal of Händel's *Giulio Cesare* in Shanghai in 2014; her rôle début as Ruggiero in Händel's *Alcina* in Moscow in January 2015; singing the title rôle in the modern première of Francesco Cavalli's *Veremonda, l'amazzone di Aragona* at the 2015 Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina; her Brisbane Baroque début in April 2016; a tour of Asia with The Academy of Ancient Music in May 2016; and concert performances of Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* with Europa Galante and Fabio Biondi.

The winner of coveted prizes including a 1997 ARIA Award, New York City Opera's 2007 Christopher Keene Award, and Pittsburgh Opera's 2008 Maecenas Award, Vivica enjoys sharing her experiences and expertise with new generations of singers via masterclasses and teaching opportunities. She is frequently featured in broadcasts and CD and DVD/Blu-ray recordings, expanding an impressive discography that documents the whole span of her career to date, and she continues to expand her concert and opera repertoires, the latter of which now extends to more than sixty rôles. It was announced in November 2016 that Vivica is the 2017 recipient of the City of Halle's prestigious Händel-Preis, formally awarded in June 2017.

Vivica resides in Italy with her husband, Massimo.

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