

Musical Biography of Laura Beckel Thoreson

Praised for her warm, rich tone quality, sensitive musicality, and compelling stage presence, mezzo-soprano **Laura Beckel Thoreson** is a rising presence in the opera and concert world.

Equally at home in the opera house, on the concert stage, and in the recital hall, Ms. Thoreson has appeared as a guest artist with such groups as Portland Opera, Eugene Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Augusta Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Indiana University Opera Theatre, the Oregon Symphony, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, San Juan Symphony, the Bach Cantata Choir and Orchestra, and more, and she has been a four-time guest artist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.



Ms. Thoreson has performed as a soloist in many concert works, including J.S. Bach's *B Minor Mass*, *Magnificat*, *St. John Passion*, and numerous cantatas, Händel's *Judas Maccabeus* and *Messiah*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, *Requiem*, and *Solemn Vespers*, Purcell's *Thy Word is a Lantern*, Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and many more.

Ms. Thoreson's opera roles include Zulma (Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*), Nefertiti (Philip Glass' *Akhnaten*), the Old Lady (Bernstein's *Candide*), La Zia Principessa (Puccini's *Suor Angelica*) Jo March (Adamo's *Little Women*), Orfeo (Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*), Suzy (Puccini's *La Rondine*), and Dido (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*). Her opera scenes – prepared under the tutelage of world-renowned soprano Carol Vaness – include Dame Quickly (Verdi's *Falstaff*), Adalgisa (Bellini's *Norma*), Hansel (Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*), Nerone (Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Rosina (Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*), and Suzuki (Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*).

Fortunate to be married to skilled collaborative pianist Joel Thoreson, Ms. Thoreson enjoys performing recitals in a wide variety of musical genres, including classical art song, early and new music, musical theater, and jazz. In 2012, Ms. Thoreson was invited to give a recital at the Seguidilla from Bizet's *Carmen*, Manuel de Falla's *Siete canciones populares españolas*, and Rossini's *Canzonetta Spangnuola*. Most recently, Ms. Thoreson—along with soprano Arwen Myers and pianist Susan McDaniel—launched [Northwest Art Song](#) (NWA), an organization based in Portland which celebrates and promotes the art of the song recital in the Pacific Northwest. Along with her fellow NWA members, Ms. Thoreson has appeared on All-Classical 89.9's [Thursdays at Three](#) radio program multiple times, and at Portland's [Friends of Chamber Music](#) and [Friends of Music](#) events.

A great advocate for new music, Ms. Thoreson recently performed the world-première of Pacific Northwest composer Teresa Koon's new song cycle, *Songs of God and Laughter*, for mezzo-soprano, trumpet, and four-hand piano. In 2016, she recorded two new works with Fifth House Ensemble by Grammy-nominated jazz pianist and composer J.J. Wright at the University of Notre Dame. She has also recorded Don Freund's *Medicine Wheel*, a duet cycle for soprano and mezzo-soprano written for Ms. Thoreson, soprano Arwen Myers, and Native-American flautist and former principal flautist of the Philadelphia Orchestra James Pellerite. Ms. Thoreson has enjoyed appearing as a soloist with the IU New Music Ensemble (Eric Lindsay's award-winning *Piano*) and Contemporary Vocal Ensemble (Arvo Pärt's *Missa Syllabica*), in addition to other contemporary music groups.

A great choral enthusiast, Ms. Thoreson has been a member of several professional ensembles, including The Kammerbach Ensemble, Aguava New Music Studio, Apollo's Voice, Vox Reflexa, Prometheus, and Portland-based Cappella Romana, Resonance Ensemble, Trinity Chamber Singers, and The Ensemble of Oregon. She has had the pleasure of performing with several high-level choirs throughout her career, including

Indiana University's Contemporary Vocal Ensemble and University Singers and early music ensemble Pro Arte Singers. Ms. Thoreson has sung with the cathedral choir at St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Oregon, and with Collegium Musicum at St. James Proto-Cathedral in Vancouver, Washington, and Northminster Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In addition, Ms. Thoreson has worked as a recording artist with AireBorn Studios in Indianapolis, recording demos for Boosey and Hawkes, Hal Leonard, and other major music publishers, and with Dynamic Catholic and Oregon Catholic Press. Her recordings have appeared in the Top 10 on the Billboard Classical charts.

Ms. Thoreson has been fortunate to work with such illustrious conductors, directors, coaches, and teachers as Arthur Fagen, Monica Huggett, Craig Jessop, Raymond Leppard, George Manahan, Kevin Noe, Robert Porco, Michael Ehrman, Candace Evans, Carol Vaness, Gary Arvin, Kevin Murphy, Timothy Noble, Patricia Wise, Paul Kiesgen, and Dr. Julia Nielsen.

Ms. Thoreson is a current Performer Diploma candidate at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, where she received her Master of Music in Voice, studying under Distinguished Professor Timothy Noble. She completed her Bachelor of Music in Voice at Central Washington University as a student of Diane Thueson Reich.

A native of Vancouver, Washington, Ms. Thoreson was a member of the voice faculty at the University of Portland for three years, and is currently on faculty at Clark College in Vancouver. She also maintains a full private voice studio in the Portland area. Her students are frequent performers, competitors, and winners at local, regional, and national levels, and attend music degree programs (classical voice, musical theater, music education, etc.) at Oberlin Conservatory, Indiana University, Oklahoma City University, Brigham Young University, and Central Washington University, among others. Ms. Thoreson is an enthusiastic member of NATS (the National Association of Teachers of Singing), and is a frequent clinician and adjudicator for choral programs, festivals, and vocal competitions throughout the Northwest. She is also a proud member of AGMA (the American Guild of Musical Artists).