Opera to Broadway: Musical Theater for Classical Singers

Resources compiled by the Music Entrepreneurship & Career Center, July 2015

Advice Articles

Musical Theater Singing for the Classical Voice
Neil Semer on how musical theater can help classically trained singers

Where Do I Fit? Finding Your Place as a Crossover Artist
Kristen Hedberg on working in theater & opera

Transitioning from Opera to Broadway
Advice on building a musical theater career. Published on Backstage.com

Differences btwn Opera and Musical Theater
By composer/librettist Mark Adamo

Case Examples: Contemporary

Kristen Chenoweth
“Training is the most important gift you can give yourself.” Interviews: PhillyMag | Amazon

Andriana Chuchman
Roles include Magnolia in Show Boat & Adina in L’elisir d’Amore. Interviews: Camelot | L’Elisir

Victoria Clark
Performances include Margaret in The Light in the Piazza & Ma Joad in The Grapes of Wrath. Interview: Broadway World | WSJ

Nathan Gunn
Roles range from Lancelot in Camelot to Billy Budd. Interview: MusicalCriticism.com

Audra McDonald
Classically trained, Tony winner: Bess in a Porgy and Bess revival; Billie Holiday in Lady Day. NPR Interviews | Bio

Lauren Molina
Coloratura, belter, rocker. Interview: NPR

Kelli O’Hara
5 Tony nominations and a thriving Broadway career. Interview: Broadway World

Brian Stokes Mitchell
Sings Broadway, jazz, classical; does voiceovers. Interview: Broadway World

Paulo Szot
Tony winner: Emile in a revival of South Pacific; also performs at the Met. Article: Opera News

Lauren Worsham
Tony nominated soprano. Sings theater, opera, rock. Interview: Playbill

Case Examples: 20th Century

Eileen Farrell
Dramatic soprano; jazz & pop singer. Her advice: “Tell a story in song.” Videos | Bio

James Melton
Switched to opera in the 1930s after tenor voices went out of style in pop music. Bio

Marni Nixon

Janet Pavek
Played Guenevere in Camelot & Musetta in La Boheme at the MET. Obituary: Playbill.com

Frederica von Stade
Originally wanted to sing musical theatre; gained fame for opera. Interview: Opera Lively

From Johnson’s Kids to Lemonade Opera: The American Classical Singer Comes of Age
Book by Victoria Etnier Villamil on the 1930s-50s