

Isabel Randall, opera singer & poet ("The Inquisitive Typist")



Isabel Randall is excited and grateful to be a 2024 artist fellow with the James Weldon Johnson Foundation!

Isabel is a civic-engaged librettist, opera singer, and poet from Rota, Spain, and is passionate about making opera more accessible and performing contemporary works. She originated the role of Mable in Boston Opera Collaborative's world premiere of Mary D. Watkins' and Anita Gonzalez's, *Courthouse Bells*, a microopera focusing on African-American voting rights. Isabel also participated in a workshop for Damien Geter's and Jessica Murphy Moo's *Loving v. Virginia*, an opera based on the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court case. In Fall 2024, Isabel will be performing in the world premiere of Mary D. Watkins' and Cerise Jacobs' opera, *Is This America?*, based on the life of civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer.

Known as "The Inquisitive Typist" in her poetry, Isabel collaborated with composer Ben Russman to transform her COVID-19 pandemic-themed poems into a staged song cycle titled *Five Short Pieces: The Inquisitive Typist*, drawing musical inspiration from Sergei Rachmaniov's *Elegy* & Lili Boulanger's *A Little Spring*. *Five Short Pieces: The Inquisitive Typist* received the St. Botolph Club Foundation 2023 Emerging Artist Award in Music. Isabel and composer Janet Lagah-Bona are developing an opera titled *Once There Was a Girl: An Opera in Three Acts*, based on the memoir of the same name by Isabel's mother, Wendy Reed Randall, which details episodes of overcoming abject poverty in the now defunct Florida Housing Projects in New Orleans, LA.

Although early in her career, Isabel has gained international and regional recognition within opera. She was finalist for the 2023-2025 SND Opera Studio at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, Slovakia, and a finalist for the Eastern Region for the 2024 National Association of Negro Musicians Scholarship Competition for Voice. Additional awards include First Place for the 2024 Thomas Music Study Club Voice Competition, the 2nd Prize Award for the 2023 Wilkinson Young Singers' Fund, Longy School of Music's 2023 Roman Totenberg Artistry Award, and Azusa Pacific University's 2021 Dennis Royse Graduate Achievement & Excellence Award.

Isabel has competed as a semifinalist in prestigious competitions such as the 2023 Benjamin Matthews Vocal Competition, the 2023 Annapolis Opera Voice Competition, and the 2022 Premiere Opera Foundation International Voice Competition (Virtual Rounds). Additionally, she was named the Alto Performance Winner for the 2022 Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra Collegiate Voice Competition.

Isabel's performed opera repertory includes *Alcina* (Händel), *Omar* (Rhiannon Giddens & Michael Abels), *Carmen* (Bizet), *The Love for Three Oranges* (Prokofiev), *Porgy & Bess* (Gershwin), and *Così fan tutte* (Mozart). In addition, her concert repertory includes *Symphony No. 9 & Choral Fantasy* (Beethoven) *Messiah* (Händel), *The Ballad of the Brown King* (Margaret Bonds), *El Amor Brujo* (Manuel de Falla), and most notably the North American premiere of Ēriks Ešenvalds' *St. Luke's Passion* conducted by Michael Slon.

Isabel was an Apprentice Artist at Des Moines Metro Opera in 2022 and 2023. She holds a Graduate Performance Diploma in Voice from Longy School of Music of Bard College, a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Azusa Pacific University and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Baylor University. Isabel would like to extend gratitude and appreciation to God, family, friends, mentors, and teachers who all have been alongside her opera journey!