

Kenneth Overton

baritone



Kenneth Overton is lauded for blending his opulent baritone with magnetic and varied portrayals that seemingly “emanate from deep within body and soul.”

Heralded by the BBC for his “exceptional voice,” Kenneth made his New York City Opera mainstage debut in 2012 as Doctor Grenvil in Verdi's *La Traviata*. That season, Kenneth also made an acclaimed debut in the world premiere of David Ott's *The Widow's Lantern* at Pensacola Opera, whereby he was immediately re-engaged to star as Joe in *Showboat*. 2012–13 included debuts with New Jersey Symphony (Bruckner *Te Deum*) and Tacoma Symphony Orchestra (Verdi concert).

In collaboration with pianist Kevin Miller, Kenneth released his first solo CD in the fall of 2013. *Been In De Storm So Long: Songs My Fathers Taught Me*, is his homage to the spiritual tradition that has been formative in his artistic life. In step with this legacy, Kenneth is also co-founder and artistic director of Opera Noire of New York, a performing arts organization created to empower African-American artists to reach their full creative potential in a creative supportive environment.

Career highlights include Kenneth's San Francisco Opera debut as Lawyer Frazier in *Porgy and Bess* and Germont (*La Traviata*) with Sacramento Opera and Boheme Opera (NJ). As a leading baritone, Kenneth has sung with Opera Memphis, Nashville Opera, Connecticut Opera, Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Boheme Opera of NJ, Houston Ebony Opera Guild, Opera Delaware, Sacramento Opera and Opera Carolina. His roles with these companies include Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), Ping (*Turandot*) as well as Angelotti (*Tosca*), Bello and Sid (*La Fanciulla del West*).

Kenneth's interpretation of the title role in *Porgy and Bess* has been acclaimed as “breathtaking.” He made his international debut at Deutsche Oper Berlin in the critically-acclaimed production from South Africa's Cape Town Opera. Kenneth portrayed Porgy with Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh, Opera Memphis, Opera Carolina, Lexington Opera Society, the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, the Paducha Symphony and on tour throughout the British Isles. As Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, he performed at Stadttheater Klagenfurt and Princeton Opera Festival. **In 2014, he debuts with Opéra de Montréal and the Royal Danish Opera as Porgy.**

Kenneth is widely recognized for his concert work, having performed with Phoenix Symphony, Norwalk Symphony, Montclair State University, New Jersey's Cathedral Basilica, Duluth Superior Symphony, Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, Yonkers Philharmonic, Oratorio Society of New Jersey, Summit Chorale Festival (NJ), New York City Opera's Schomberg Series, Sarasota Symphony, San Antonio Symphony and Richmond Symphony. His concert and oratorio repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Vaughn Williams' *A Sea Symphony*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Schubert's *Mass in A-flat*, Haydn's *Creation* and Vaughn Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. Kenneth is also regularly featured with the American Spiritual Ensemble as a soloist for annual performances in the USA and international tours of Spain, Ecuador and France.

Kenneth has a passion for both musical theater and new works, and he made his Broadway debut in *Baz Luhrman's La Bohème*. He was featured in City Center Encores' production and recording of Romberg's *The New Moon*, and sang the role of Stephen Kumalo in *Lost in the Stars* with Skylark Opera. His Carnegie Hall debut was as the baritone soloist in *Come Follow Me* by Jackson Berkey with the Westfield Symphony Orchestra (Mid-America Productions). Kenneth has also excelled in diverse contemporary works including performances of *Corps of Discovery* by Michael Ching at Opera Festival of New Jersey; *Six Characters in Search of An Author* by Hugo Weisgall; and *The Gilded Cage* by Kioulaphides with Nexus Arts (NY).

Kenneth is a winner of the Liederkrantz Competition, Connecticut Opera Guild Competition, Rosa Ponselle Competition (Meriden, CT) and a national winner of the Leontyne Price Vocal Competition.

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Opera & Musical Theater

High Priest of Baal	<i>Nabucco</i>	Opera Carolina	October 2014
Porgy	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	Royal Danish Opera (Copenhagen)	2014
		Opéra de Montréal	2014
		Lexington Opera Society	2011
		Opera Theater of Pittsburgh	2010
		Opera Carolina	2010
		Deutsche Oper Berlin	2008
		Townsend Opera Players	2008
		Opera Memphis	2006
		UK (Living Arts)	2005
Jake	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	Princeton Opera Festival	2014
		Stadttheater Klagenfurt	2007
		Connecticut Opera	1998
Joe	<i>Showboat</i>	Pensacola Opera	2012
Judge Turpin	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	Pensacola Opera	2012
Sharpless	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	Opera Company of Brooklyn	2012
		Opera Memphis	2010
		Chattanooga Symphony & Opera	2009
		Metro Lyric Opera	2009
Papageno	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	Boheme Opera NJ	2012
		Chattanooga Symphony & Opera	2002
		Connecticut Opera	1995
Zodetrick	<i>Treemonisha</i>	New York City Opera	2012
Dr. Grenvil	<i>La Traviata</i>	New York City Opera	2012
Sid	<i>La Fanciulla del West</i>	San Francisco Opera	2010
Germont	<i>La Traviata</i>	Sacramento Opera	2010
		Boheme Opera (NJ)	2007
Lawyer Frazier	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	San Francisco Opera	2009
Angelotti	<i>Tosca</i>	Chattanooga Symphony & Opera	2008
Marcello	<i>La bohème</i>	Missouri Symphony Society	2007
Escamillo	<i>Carmen</i>	Missouri Symphony Society	2006
Stephen Kumalo	<i>Lost in the Stars</i>	Skylark Opera	2007
Bello	<i>La Fanciulla del West</i>	Opera Tampa	2006
Ping	<i>Turandot</i>	Sacramento Opera	2006
		Connecticut Opera	2002
		Opera Memphis	2002
		Nashville Opera	2002
		Opera Delaware	2002
		Opera Carolina (cover)	2000
Leporello	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	Opera Memphis	2006
		Houston Ebony Opera	2003
Taddeo	<i>L'italiana in Algeri</i>	Connecticut Opera	2005
Schaunard	<i>La bohème</i>	Metro Lyric Opera	2005
		Opera Memphis	2004
		Connecticut Opera	2001
Commendatore, Masetto	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	Westfield Symphony Orchestra (concert)	2004
Henry Davis	<i>Street Scene</i>	Dicapo Opera Theater	2002
Clark/York	<i>Corps of Discovery (Ching)</i>	Opera Festival of New Jersey	2000

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Concert & Oratorio

Soloist	<i>Te Deum</i> (Bruckner)	New Jersey Symphony	2014
Soloist	<i>Ninth Symphony</i> (Beethoven)	Westchester Philharmonic	2013
Soloist	National & International Tours	American Spiritual Ensemble	2005–13
Soloist	<i>Old American Songs</i> (Copland)	Kentucky Symphony	2012
Soloist	<i>Messiah</i>	Norwalk Symphony Orchestra	2009, 08
		Phoenix Symphony Orchestra	2007
		Handel Choir of Baltimore	2001
Soloist	<i>Porgy and Bess Suite</i> (arr. Bennett)	Paducah Symphony	2009
		Richmond Symphony	2008
Soloist	<i>A Sea Symphony</i> (V. Williams)	Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra	2008
Soloist	Gala Concert	Opera Noire of New York	2007
Soloist	<i>Musical Celebration of Christmas</i>	Riverside Symphonia	2007
Soloist	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	Opera Naples	2007
		Duluth Superior Symphony	2007
Soloist	<i>Requiem</i> (Mozart)	Bach Choir of Pittsburgh	2006
Soloist	<i>9th Symphony</i> (Beethoven)	Annapolis Symphony Orchestra	2006
Soloist	<i>Five Mystical Songs</i> (V. Williams)	Oratorio Society of NJ	2006
Soloist	<i>Old American Songs</i> (Copland)	Memphis Symphony Orchestra	2006
Soloist	<i>Mass in A-flat</i> (Schubert)	Summit Choral Festival, NJ	2005
Soloist	<i>Requiem</i> (Durufle)	Taghkanic Chorale	2005
Soloist	<i>Christmas Oratorio</i> (Saint-Saëns)	Taghkanic Chorale	2004
Soloist	<i>Mass in C</i> (Beethoven)	Summit Choral Festival, NJ	2004
Soloist	<i>Fascinatin' Rhythm</i> TM	Westfield Symphony Orchestra	2003
Soloist	<i>Coronation Mass</i> (Mozart)	Summit Choral Festival, NJ	2003
		Garden State Philharmonic	2003
Soloist	<i>The "Negro" Spiritual</i>	The Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation	2003
Soloist	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	North Arkansas Symphony	2002
Soloist	<i>Come Follow Me</i> (J. Berkley)	Carnegie Hall (Mid-America Productions)	2000
Soloist	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	Connecticut Opera	1999

Recordings

Soloist	<i>Been in De Storm So Long: Songs My Father Taught Me</i>	Debut Solo Album	2014
Soloist	<i>The New Moon</i> (Romberg)	City Center Encores!	2003

Competitions & Awards

Winner	Liederkrantz Foundation Vocal Competition	2004
Winner	Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation, Orlando Opera	2002
Finalist	Lotte Lenya Competition	2002
Winner	Connecticut Opera Competition	2002
Winner	Amici Competition, Opera Theater of CT	1998, 97
Winner	Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition	1996

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Training

Artist-in-Residence	Opera Carolina	2000
Artist-in-Residence	Connecticut Opera	1997–2000
Young Artist	Chautauqua Opera	1996

Teachers

Virginia Grasso, Mark Oswald, Sherry Overholt, Virginia Pyle, Frederic Moses

Directors

Henry Akina, Elena Araoz, Elizabeth Bachman, Helena Binder, Adelaide Bishop, Gary Briggie, Ned Canty, Dorothy Danner, Renaut Douce, John Doyle, Michael Ehrman, Angelo Gabatto, Stanley Garner, David Gately, Beth Greenberg, John Hoomes, Diane Kesling, Leland Kimball, Gina Lapinski, Matthew Lata, Ron Luchsinger, Larry Marshall, James Marvel, John Norris, Ellen Douglas Schlaefer, Karen Tiller, Enrique Toral, Lemuel Wade, Charles Randolph Wright, Francesca Zambello

Conductors

Robert Ashens, Daniel Beckwith, Bob Bernhardt, Michael Boder, Michael Ching, Anton Coppola, Thomas Douglas, Leslie Dunner, Mark Flint, Lionel Friend, Larry Gilgore, Joseph Illick, Andrew Litton, Nicola Luisotti, Guido Mancusi, Wayne Marshall, Dr. Everett McCorvey, Joe Mechavich, James Meena, Geoffrey Patterson, Elaine Rinaldi, Martin Rutishauser, Ken Schermerhorn, Jerome Shannon, Steve Stucki, Jason Tramm, Kirk Trevor, Barbara Day Turner, Willie Anthony Waters, Steven White, David Wroe