

# **Hopkins Center for the Arts**

at Dartmouth

presents

## The Metropolitan Opera

**HD LIVE ENCORE**

# **Porgy and Bess**

George Gershwin, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin

**Sunday, August 18, 1 pm**

Loew Auditorium • Dartmouth College • 2024

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Cynthia and Jeffrey Manocherian P'15, '18*

# Porgy and Bess

George Gershwin, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin

Originally broadcast on February 1, 2020

Duration: 3 hours, 6 minutes including intermission

(Cast in order of vocal appearance)

Bess.....	Angel Blue
Clara.....	Golda Schultz
Serena.....	Latonia Moore
Maria.....	Denyce Graves
Sportin’ Life.....	Frederick Ballentine
Porgy.....	Eric Owens
Crown.....	Alfred Walker
Jake.....	Donovan Singletary
Conductor.....	David Robertson
Production.....	James Robinson
Set Designer.....	Michael Yeargan
Costume Designer .....	Catherine Zuber
Lighting Designer.....	Donald Holder
Projection Designer.....	Luke Halls
Choreographer .....	Camille A. Brown
Fight Director.....	David Leong
Live in HD Director .....	Gary Halvorson
Live in HD Host.....	Audra McDonald

# Synopsis

## ACT I

*Catfish Row, a tenement neighborhood of Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1920s.* The inhabitants of Catfish Row are relaxing after a day's work. Clara sings a lullaby to her baby. The drug-dealer Sportin' Life, Clara's husband Jake, and the other men are playing craps under the disapproving eye of the religious Serena.

The disabled beggar Porgy arrives and is about to join the game when Crown and his partner Bess appear. Crown joins the dice game and starts a fight when he loses, killing Robbins with a cotton hook. Before the police arrive, Crown runs off to hide, telling Bess he'll be back for her. Sportin' Life offers to take Bess to New York with him, but she refuses. Only Porgy is sympathetic to her: He offers his protection, which she accepts.

A month later, everyone is preparing to leave for a church picnic on Kittiwah Island. Sportin' Life asks Bess again to come to New York with him and tries to give her more dope, which she refuses, and Porgy chases him off. Porgy insists that Bess should go to the picnic without him, which she reluctantly agrees to. That evening, on Kittiwah Island, Sportin' Life describes his cynical view of religion, until Serena chastises them and the steamboat whistle signals it's time to leave. Bess hurries along until Crown, who has been hiding on the island since the Robbins murder, calls to her. He wants Bess to come with him, but she explains that she now has a new life with Porgy. Crown forces her to stay.

## Intermission (10 Minutes)

## ACT II

A week later, fishermen leave Catfish Row for a day's work at sea despite a storm warning. Bess, delirious with fever, has been ill since returning from Kittiwah Island. Serena prays for her recovery, and Bess emerges into the courtyard, free of the fever. She explains to Porgy that she wants to stay with him but will be forced to go back to Crown when he returns. Porgy tells Bess that she doesn't have to go, and they reaffirm their love for each other. The wind rises and the hurricane bell sounds.

As everyone prays for deliverance from the storm, there's a knock at Serena's door. It's Crown looking for Bess, who insists that she now belongs to Porgy alone. Crown mocks Porgy and counteracts the townspeople's prayers for deliverance with a vulgar song. At the storm's height, Clara sees Jake's capsized boat and rushes out to save her husband. Bess calls for one of the men to go after her, but only Crown responds. After the storm passes, the women grieve for those who were lost, including Jake, Clara and, it is assumed, Crown. But Crown steals in after dark and approaches Porgy's door—but Porgy is ready for him, strikes the first blow and kills him.

# Synopsis *continued*

The next afternoon, the detective and coroner arrive to investigate Crown’s murder and tell Porgy he must identify the body. Horrified to look at Crown’s face, Porgy refuses and is dragged off. Taking advantage of Porgy’s absence, Sportin’ Life tries to lure Bess away. When Bess spurns him, he forces some dope on her and leaves more outside her door.

A week later, Porgy returns from jail in a jubilant mood: He distributes gifts that he has bought with money he won playing games of crap in jail. He is unaware of his friends’ discomfort as he calls out for Bess. Eventually, Serena tells him that Bess has gone to New York with Sportin’ Life. Hearing this, Porgy decides to follow her: He cannot live without Bess.

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