

WM. CLAY THOMPSON
BASS

American Bass Wm. Clay Thompson has been praised by Opera News for his “mahogany-timbred” voice. A native of Lexington, Kentucky, Mr. Thompson recently completed his second year as a Resident Artist with Minnesota Opera, and is known for his “...strong, rich, and warm color, yet the ability to cross over into bass-baritone repertoire.”

Mr. Thompson’s 2019-2020 season included reprising the role of Suleyman Pasha in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Chateau de Versailles Spectacles in France, Handel’s *Messiah* with Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra, a series of *Opera UNTRAPPED* online concerts with Wolf Trap Opera, and his return the Minnesota Opera as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (cancelled). This season’s engagements include postponed or cancelled performances as Zuniga in *Carmen* with Arizona Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.



Mr. Thompson’s 2018-2019 season at Minnesota Opera included performances as Dottore Grenvil in *La traviata*, the French General in *Silent Night*, Crébillon in *La rondine*, and Charles Comiskey in the world premiere of Joel Puckett’s *The Fix*. Additionally, he returned to The Glimmerglass Festival in the summer of 2019, where he performed as Suleyman Pasha in *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Dottore Grenvil in Francesca Zambello’s *La traviata*, and the title role in Benjamin Britten’s *Noah’s Flood*. The 2017–2018 season saw Mr. Thompson in roles at Minnesota Opera including Antonio in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Second Prison Guard in Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, and Palémon in *Thaïs*, as well as having covered Don Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Warden Benton (*Dead Man Walking*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), and the title role in *Don Pasquale*. As a member of the Young Artist Program at the Glimmerglass Festival, he was seen as The Poacher in E. Loren Meeker’s new production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Father Palmer in Kevin Puts’ *Silent Night*, and Gladhand in Francesca Zambello’s production of *West Side Story*.

As a Studio Artist with Wolf Trap Opera for their 2016 and 2017 seasons, Mr. Thompson sang Benoit and Alcindoro in *La bohème*, Suleyman Pasha in Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Yakuside in *Madama Butterfly*, and covered the role of Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. As a Young Artist at the Seagle Music Colony he performed the roles of Olin Blitch (*Susannah*), Mordred (*Camelot*), and the Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*).

Mr. Thompson sang the role of Zuniga in *Carmen* at Fort Worth Opera’s 2017 Festival, and in previous seasons has been seen as Colline in *La bohème* with SOO Opera Theatre, Raymond Buck in the world premiere of *JFK* with Fort Worth Opera, and Billy Jackrabbit in *La fanciulla del West* with Kentucky Opera.

Mr. Thompson was a winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Kentucky District in 2013, and was Encouragement Award Winner in New Orleans District in 2014, and the Tulsa District in 2016 and 2017.

A graduate of the University of North Texas, Mr. Thompson performed the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Daniel Webster in Birgal Thomson’s *The Mother of Us All*, and Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. With the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre his roles included Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Don Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the Police Sergeant in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

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Zuniga*	<i>Carmen</i>	Lyric Opera of Kansas City	2021
Zuniga*	<i>Carmen</i>	Arizona Opera	2021
Leporello*	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	Minnesota Opera	2020
Suleyman Pasha	<i>The Ghosts of Versailles</i>	Château de Versailles Spectacles	2019
Noye	<i>Noye's Fludde</i>	The Glimmerglass Festival	2019
Dottore Grenvil	<i>La traviata</i>	The Glimmerglass Festival	2019
Suleyman Pasha	<i>The Ghosts of Versailles</i>	The Glimmerglass Festival	2019
Dottore Grenvil	<i>La traviata</i>	Minnesota Opera	2019
Charles Comiskey	<i>The Fix</i>	Minnesota Opera	2019
Beaupertuis (cover)	<i>Il cappello di paglia di Firenze</i>	Minnesota Opera	2019
French General	<i>Silent Night</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Crébillon	<i>La rondine</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Harašta	<i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i>	The Glimmerglass Festival	2018
Father Palmer	<i>Silent Night</i>	The Glimmerglass Festival	2018
Palémon	<i>Thaïs</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Count Ceprano	<i>Rigoletto</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Sparafucile (cover)	<i>Rigoletto</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Warden Benton (cover)	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Second Prison Guard	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	Minnesota Opera	2018
Don Bartolo (cover)	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	Minnesota Opera	2017
Antonio	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	Minnesota Opera	2017
Don Pasquale (cover)	<i>Don Pasquale</i>	Minnesota Opera	2017
Zuniga	<i>Carmen</i>	Fort Worth Opera	2017
Figaro	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	UNT Opera Theater	2016
Benoit / Alcindoro	<i>La bohème</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2016
Collatinus (cover)	<i>The Rape of Lucretia</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2016
Schlémil (scene)	<i>Les contes d'Hoffmann</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2016
Raymond Buck	<i>JFK</i>	Fort Worth Opera	2016
Suleyman Pasha	<i>The Ghosts of Versailles</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2015
Yakuside	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2015
Billy Jackrabbit	<i>La fanciulla del West</i>	Kentucky Opera	2014
Olin Blitch	<i>Susannah</i>	Seagle Music Colony	2014
Leporello	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	University of Kentucky Opera Theatre	2014
Superintendent Budd	<i>Albert Herring</i>	Seagle Music Colony	2013
Colline	<i>La bohème</i>	SOO Opera Theater	2012
Il Commendatore	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	Opera Orvieto	2012

Concerts

Soloist	<i>Opera UNTRAPPED online concerts</i>	Wolf Trap Opera	2020
Soloist	Handel: <i>Messiah</i>	Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra	2019

Honors & Awards

Encouragement Award	Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions	2015, 2016, 2017
District Winner	Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions	2014

Training & Education

Resident Artist	Minnesota Opera	2017 - 2019
Young Artist	The Glimmerglass Festival	2018 - 2019
Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance	University of North Texas	2017
Assistant Director Intern	Seagle Music Colony	2017
Studio Artist	Wolf Trap Opera	2015 - 2016

*Cancelled due to COVID-19

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CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Suleyman Pasha – The Ghosts of Versailles – The Glimmerglass Festival

“The large cast includes even more wonderfully rendered cameos and exceptional featured moments. . . Wm. Clay Thompson’s suave, secure bass made a great impression as Suleyman Pasha” -Opera Today

French General – Silent Night – Minnesota Opera

“French Lt. Audebert gave a glimpse of a decent family man being torn by war. Tensions between his father General Audebert (Wm. Clay Thompson) were palpable.” - Schmopera

Harašta – The Cunning Little Vixen – The Glimmerglass Festival

“Everything about Wm. Clay Thompson’s Poacher felt as sharp an outlier and desperately ruthless as his Wolf.” - DC Theatre Scene

“Bass Wm. Clay Thompson served as both the Wolf and the initially ridiculed Harašta, the poacher who manages to almost accidentally kill the Vixen.” - Bachtrack

“At the center of the plot, a wily lady fox is captured by the old Forester — but ultimately escapes, only to be felled by the poacher (Wm. Clay Thompson).” - The New York Times

“Mahogany-timbred bass Wm. Clay Thompson was an imposing presence as the oafish, lying Poacher” - Opera News

“The bass portraying the poacher Harasta — who kills the Vixen in a terrifyingly sudden moment, here strikingly set-off in Mark McCullough’s evocative lighting plot — acted vividly” - Gay City News

“Menacing and inexorable was William Clay Thompson’s Wolf/Poacher.” - New York Arts

Father Palmer – Silent Night – The Glimmerglass Festival

“Wm. Clay Thompson’s Father Palmer and Timothy Bruno as the General were strong contributors to this stirring performance, where such simple pleasures as smoking, singing and playing soccer were charged with meaning.” - Opera News

“One of the most moving scenes in the opera occurs when Father Palmer (William Clay Thompson), a Scottish cleric performs a Christmas service and all the soldiers join in.” - James Karas Reviews

“Even though the cease-fire offers the soldiers a reprieve from trench warfare, the Yuletide observance is likewise sober, to chilling effect. Ideally cast as Father Palmer, Wm. Clay Thompson delivers a Christmas mass in Latin for soldiers from all three camps.” - Operatoonity

Gladhand – West Side Story – The Glimmerglass Festival

“We also get a swish-o-rama Gladhand, the well meaning social worker in charge of the gym dance in Wm. Clay Thompson...” - Parterre Box

Palémon – Thaïs – Minnesota Opera

“Bass William Clay Thompson as Palémon provided the appropriate gravitas as the leader of the hermit’s monastery.” - Opera War Horses

"Also doing fine things with Massenet's music are tenor Gerard Schneider, bass William Clay Thompson and the Minnesota Opera Orchestra, under the direction of Christopher Franklin." - Twin Cities Pioneer Press

"Smaller roles were deftly handled: Wm. Clay Thompson's Palémon... [was] notable." - Opera News

"Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist bass William Clay Thompson performed the role of Palémon. Ever since seeing and hearing him perform at the season's sneak preview back in October, I have greatly looked forward to his roles, and he has yet to disappoint!" - Life in Revue

Antonio – Le nozze di Figaro – Minnesota Opera

"Wm. Clay Thompson does well in the small role of Antonio, the Count's gardener, whose confusion about the goings on in the home and garden add to the jocular side of the opera" - Talkin Broadway

The Notary – Don Pasquale – Minnesota Opera

"Some of the best moments in Don Pasquale involve short gags of physical humor, like the scene-stealing Notary (Wm. Clay Thompson)'s spastic background action." - Twin Cities Arts

Zuniga – Carmen – Fort Worth Opera

"Wm. Clay Thompson brings a smarmy and machismo-laden portrayal to the role of Zuniga." - Theatre Jones

"Bass William Clay Thompson portrayed a menacing, mean and lean Zuniga." - Texas Classical Review

"Zuniga, was sinisterly played by the tall Wm. Clay Thompson." - The Column

Pablo Escobar – Escobar – Fort Worth Opera Frontiers

"For me, the most successful of the eight excerpts was Matteo Neri's "Escobar," based on episodes from the life of Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. The quality of the music was high — including a brilliant soliloquy sung by bass-baritone William Clay Thompson (who was Zuniga in the company's mainstage "Carmen") — and the story was gripping." - Star Telegram