

**Julia Bullock** sings with a wholehearted belief in the power of every word. The soprano has had well-received performances in the title roles of *Centurion* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Juilliard Opera, impressive appearances with the New York Festival of Song and a big win at the 2014 Naumburg International Vocal Competition. But it was her debut recital tour last year, with stops including Georgia, Illinois, Washington, D.C., and New York, that seemed to find Bullock most in her element. Her soft-grained, coruscating soprano shone in a program that ranged from Berio and Rossini songs to a world premiere by David Hertzberg to Jeremy Siskind's arrangement of Josephine Baker songs. "It's definitely an exchange with the audience," she says. "I don't feel alone up there. I'm really exposed, and yet I think it's a pretty safe place. It's just trusting that whatever I am doing — if people are choosing to watch — they'll be able to see it."

Next month, Bullock makes her English National Opera debut, reprising the title role in Peter Sellars's staging of Purcell's semi-opera *The Indian Queen*, a project that had its premiere in 2013 in Madrid. Bullock notes that the DVD of Sellars's Glyndebourne production of Handel's *Theodora* "helped me understand the power of staged performance in a really profound way." She regards the chance to work with the director and the project's conductor in Madrid, Teodor Currentzis, as an artistic watershed. "They sent all the music from *Indian Queen* that Purcell wrote, along with a bunch of songs that Peter wanted to incorporate. And we all brought the piece together in this tiny town at the border of Siberia. I'd never made a project like that from scratch," she says, adding that Sellars and Currentzis "are some of the most demanding, also inspiring and inspired people."

A Missouri native, Bullock joined Opera Theater of Saint Louis's artist-in-training program while still in high school. She received her bachelor's degree from the Eastman School of Music and her master's from Bard College's graduate vocal-arts program, where she worked with Dawn Upshaw. Currently in her final year of the artist diploma program at Juilliard, Bullock seems poised on the threshold of an important career — but she's also determined to make the most of her time as a student. "It's a nurturing place, but Juilliard was for me a strange environment. Part of it is that this is a school, and I know this is a time for me to just be trying things out, but it's also in the middle of New York, in the middle of Lincoln Center. The pressure is high, but I think everyone is still giving me time, which I really appreciate. Because I know I still feel very much in process." ADAM WASSERMAN

Photographed by Dario Acosta in New York  
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# SOUND BITES

