

# JOCELYN ZELASKO

SOPRANO

BIO

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Detroit-based soprano, Jocelyn Zelasko, is a versatile musician who is celebrated as an insightful performer with a captivating stage presence. She performs chamber music, opera, and art song in festivals and concerts throughout Europe, the Caribbean, and North America. She is the vocalist for Detroit's premiere ensemble, New Music Detroit, and a founding member of ensembles Juxtatonal and Whoopknox. Her career began in the classical realm, but a passion for making complex vocal music accessible to audiences through character development and authentic storytelling led her to pursue new music.

As a new music performer, Zelasko has appeared with the GRAMMY award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird, Eastman Broadband Ensemble, Matt Ulery Trio, and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. She has also sung with many outstanding performers including Tony Arnold (International Contemporary Ensemble), Vicky Chow (Bang on a Can All-Stars), and Miles Brown (Alarm Will Sound), among many others. She has performed at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival (GLCMF), held residencies at the Wholehearted Musician and the Millay Colony for the Arts, was a fellow at [R]evolution Resonant Bodies and Eighth Blackbird's Creative Lab, and was a featured performer at soundSCAPE and the Summer Institute of Contemporary Performance Practice (SICPP).

As an advocate for the creation of new works, Zelasko has commissioned a vast number of composers including Michelle McQuade Dewhirst, Marti Epstein, David Smooke, Daniel Felsenfeld, Leah Maria Villarreal, Danny Clay, Griffin Candey, Emily Millard, and more. Her voice and cello duo, Juxtatonal (JUX), embarked on a large-scale commissioning project asking 14 composers for new works addressing relevance. The compositions deal with issues of vulnerability, self, privilege, gender, age, and culture, and include elements ranging from co-composition with 5<sup>th</sup> graders, new forms of musical notation, and choreography inspired by pop culture.

Additionally, she originated the title role of 100-year old photographer, Pat Sturn, in the new mixed-media chamber opera, *Pat & Emilia* (Smallman/Gervais/Sievers-Hunt) which toured extensively in Canada and the Great Lakes region from 2015 – 2018. Michigan Opera Theatre's (MOT) principal cellist, Nadine Deleury, commissioned the opera and hand-selected the chamber ensemble utilizing talented colleagues of the MOT orchestra. Jeff Smallman composed the music specifically for Zelasko and Deleury's chamber ensemble using lyrics by Windsor's poet laureate, Marty Gervais, with Canadian-American writer, Tara Sievers-Hunt. While being interviewed for the Canadian Arts Productions documentary, *Imagining Angels*, Zelasko discussed her inspirations to play Pat Sturn feeling connected to Pat's fierce independence, quest for perfection, and unwavering passion for art.

Zelasko's scholarly pursuits focus on fostering musical identity and embodying empathy through song. After her riveting lecture performance on Eleanor Smith's social protest songs, she was invited to contribute a book chapter on her research, development, and embodiment of the social protestors in Smith's *Hull House Songs*. The book and accompanied recordings were published in early 2019.

Zelasko received bachelor's degrees in vocal performance and economics from Oakland University where she was also a scholarship athlete. Furthering her education, she received a master's degree in music from the University of Iowa. She studied with acclaimed professors Dr. Edith Diggory, Dr. John Muriello, and Dr. Ingo Titze. In addition to her work as a performer, Zelasko is a grant-award panelist for New Music USA, conducts master classes, lectures, maintains a thriving private voice studio, and enjoys paddle boarding, surfing, and golfing.

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