

JOCELYN ZELASKO

SOPRANO

BIO

Recognized for her "vocal brilliance" (City Pleasures) Metro-Detroit based soprano, Jocelyn Zelasko, is a versatile musician who is celebrated as an insightful performer with a captivating stage presence. She has performed 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 (JUX) and Whoopknox. Her career began in the classical realm, but a passion for making complex vocal music accessible to audiences led her to pursue new music.

Zelasko has performed world premieres with the Grammy award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird, Eastman Broadband Ensemble, New Music Detroit, Matt Ulery Trio, and Juxtatonal. She has also sung premieres with many outstanding performers including Vicky Chow, Tony Arnold, and Matthew Duvall. She has performed at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, 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.

As an advocate for the creation of new works, Zelasko has commissioned a vast number of composers including Angélica Negrón, Vid Smooke, Michelle McQuade Dewhirst, and Jorge Sosa. Her voice and cello duo, JUX, commissioned 14 composers for new works addressing issues of vulnerability, self, privilege, gender, age, and culture. The collection of works was performed on a 17-stop tour across Canada and the United States in 2019. Additionally, Zelasko originated the title role of 100 year-old photographer, Pat Sturn, in the new-mixed media chamber opera, "Pat & Emilia" (Smallman/Gervais with Sievers-Hunt) which also toured extensively in Canada and the Great Lakes region from 2015 – 2018. Michigan Opera Theatre's (MOT) former principal cellist, Nadine Deleury, commissioned the opera and hand-selected the chamber ensemble utilizing talented colleagues of the MOT orchestra. 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.

Her literary pursuits focus on the exploration of identity through the embodiment of music. Inspired by Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire and volcanoes, Zelasko is currently writing the libretto for a multimedia eco-acoustic work that examines the influences of nature and culture on the responsibility and fear of awakening one's potential. The six-movement libretto explores her experience of living in the "in-between" of bounded cultures while poetically "talking story" about her connectedness to Hawaii, her kama'aina (local) o'hana (family), their aloha'aina (love of land), and the goddess Pele. She was also invited to write the afterword to "Eleanor Smith's Hull House Songs: The Music of Protest and Hope in Jane Addams's Chicago" by Graham Cassano, Rima Lumim Schultz, and Jessica Payette. Her contribution details her research, character development, and embodiment of the characters in the *Hull House Songs* in preparation to performing and recording the set of 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 voice professors Dr. Edith Diggory and Dr. John Muriello, and voice scientist Dr. Ingo Titze. In addition to her work as a performer, Zelasko writes articles on embracing new music, participates in panel discussions on diversity, and maintains a thriving private voice studio. When not creating, you can find her competing on the golf course, surfing in the ocean, or squishing her kittens and husband.