



Julia Bullock, soprano

South Florida
CLASSICAL REVIEW

Young Soprano Sparks New World's French and Spanish Program

Lawrence Budman | South Florida Classical Review | February 29, 2016

Music from Spain and France conveying impressions of the Iberian peninsula dominated the New World Symphony's chamber program on Sunday but the thrilling singing of a young American soprano was the afternoon's major event.

Ravel's *Three Poems of Stéphane Mallarmé* is one of the French impressionist's most strikingly original works. Scored for a similar chamber ensemble as Schoenberg's groundbreaking *Pierrot Lunaire*, Ravel set three of the elliptical writings of the French poet. Filled with adventurous harmonies and jagged melodic lines, the songs are a formidable test of the singer's vocal range and communicative powers.



Credit: Christian Steiner

Julia Bullock is a rising star who counts Dawn Upshaw, Jessye Norman, Eric Owens and José Van Dam among her mentors. Bullock's large, deep-textured instrument easily filled the New World Center. Her refined sonority, flexibility and ethereal high register took flight in "Sigh." In "Futile Petition," her voice blended almost as an orchestral instrument with the tonal warmth of the strings.

The angular melodies of "Rising Up from its Haunch and Flank" (which pictures an empty vase) were imbued with edgy intensity and sheer beauty of sound. Bullock's lower voice almost had the depth of a mezzo. New World conducting fellow Christian Reif brought out Ravel's subtly detailed instrumental colors in a well balanced reading.

Bullock returned, in the program's second half, for Manuel de Falla's *Psyche* which sets the myth of Psyche and Eros in Granada, the music reflecting both French and Spanish influences. Bullock brought great emotion to the alternately lyrical and astringent writing while maintaining purity of tone. Flutist Masha Popova and harpist Julia Coronelli exhibited firm control, articulating the long, high-pitched writing reminiscent of Ravel's Introduction and Allegro.