



## Julia Bullock, soprano

 Oberon's Grove

**Young Concert Artists ~ Gala ~ 2016**

*Philip Gardner | Oberon's Grove | May 11, 2016*



*Aleksey Semenenko, Michael Stern, Julia Bullock,  
and Yun-Chin Zhou after tonight's exhilarating concert*

Music by three of my favorite composers - and an opportunity to hear three gifted young musicians in solo turns with the Orchestra of St. Luke's - drew me to the Young Concert Artists' annual gala at Alice Tully Hall in a state of eager anticipation. It was a wonderful evening, with a raptly attentive audience, and it ended with a full-house standing ovation following a magnificent performance of the Prokofiev third piano concerto.

Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is an atmospheric melding of poetry and music, redolent of still, perfumed evenings in the South a century ago. It is an especially appealing piece, and I wish it was performed more frequently; this was only my second experience of hearing it in a *live* concert, the previous opportunity being at Tanglewood in 1984 when Edith Wiens sang it with the BSO.

Julia Bullock, a strikingly attractive woman who looked elegant in a deep-charcoal-grey gown, established a lovely rapport both with Maestro Stern and his excellent players as well as with her audience. She managed to make an intimate connection with us, drawing us into the wonderment of the world of a young child just beginning to discover a wider world.

Ms. Bullock's voice seems to me a high-sitting lyric mezzo-soprano of true clarity and warmth. The highest notes of the vocal line had a slightly metallic tinge, whilst in the lower octave an enchanting violet resonance emerges. The sheer sound of her voice is poignantly expressive, and the orchestra - especially the horns, clarinet, and flute - added lovely hues to the musical palette. The audience were clearly very taken with the singer; there is so much music I want to hear her sing - starting with Chausson's *Poeme de l'amour et de la Mer*, the *Nuits d'Ete* of Berlioz, and Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*: music that singers like Dame Janet Baker and Frederica von Stade found so cordial.