

J'Nai Bridges
Mezzo-soprano

American mezzo-soprano J’Nai Bridges is one of the pre-eminent vocal talents of her generation, an artist directly involved in two Grammy award-winning musical projects and a leading figure in the conversation about inclusion and racial justice in the performing arts.

Through early operatic experience as Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) at San Diego Opera, Preziosilla (*la Forza del Destino*) at Opernhaus Zürich and Bersi (*Andrea Chenier*) at both San Francisco Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper, J’Nai Bridges was heralded a rising star and attracted widespread international attention. She went on to debut at Gran Teatro del Liceu as Federica (*Luisa Miller*) and, in the 2022/23 season, the Washington State native made an anticipated debut at Seattle Opera to unanimous critical acclaim in Saint-Saëns’ *Samson et Dalila*, a role previously performed at Washington National Opera. After her role debut as Carmen at San Francisco Opera in the 2018/19 season, Bizet’s heroine has become Bridges’ most performed role leading many productions worldwide including at Arena di Verona, Dutch National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, Lyric Opera of Chicago and, most recently, at Hamburgische Staatsoper.

A committed performer of contemporary repertoire, J’Nai Bridges made an acclaimed debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Nefertiti in a sold-out run of Philip Glass’ *Akhnaten*, a role she previously performed at Los Angeles Opera returning subsequently as Kasturbai in *Satyagraha.* She created the role of Josefa Segovia in the world-premiere of John Adams’ *Girls of the Golden West* at San Francisco Opera, reprising the role in her house debut at Dutch National Opera, and most recently returned to the Metropolitan Opera in *El Niño*, conducted by Marin Alsop. She enjoyed acclaim as Sister Helen Préjean in Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* at Vancouver Opera, subsequently creating the role of Lucinda in his world premiere of *Intelligence* at Houston Grand Opera. J’Nai appeared in the role of Carmen in the world premiere of *Bel Canto* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, an opera by [Jimmy López Bellido](https://www.harrisonparrott.com/artists/jimmy-lopez-bellido) based on the novel by Ann Patchett.

In the current season, J’Nai Bridges returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Pier Giorgio Morandi conducting Bartlett Sher’s Weimar-inspired production, presents Didon in concert performances of *Les Troyens* at Seattle Opera led by Ludovic Morlot, and makes her debut at Wiener Staatsoper in Calixto Bieito’s production of *Carmen*. In concert, Bridges appears with the Minnesota Orchestra for their celebratory New Year concerts, debuts with London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Sir Antonio Pappano in Tippett’s *A Child of Our Time* paired with Beethoven’s Symphony No.9 and reunites with both Detroit Symphony Orchestra for *Carmen* with Jader Bignamini and with National Symphony Orchestra in her role debut as Erika in Barber’s *Vanessa,*led by Gianandrea Noseda. In solo recital, she joins Boston Symphony Chamber Players for a programme including Ravel’s *Chansons madécasses* and Golijov’s *Laika* led by Samy Rachid at Jordan Hall in Boston.

Acclaimed by *The New York Times* for her ​“plush-voiced mezzo-soprano”, J’Nai Bridges is an accomplished concert performer with a wide repertoire covering works by composers including Mahler, Mozart, Beethoven, Ravel, Verdi, Mendelssohn and Bernstein. Recent highlights include debuts with Boston Symphony Orchestra under Andris Nelsons in Berlioz’ *Roméo et Juliette*, New York Philharmonic under Dima Slobodeniouk in Julia Perry’s *Stabat mater*, Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Tippett’s *A Child of Our Time* with Susanna Mälkki at Tanglewood Music Festival, Beethoven’s Symphony No.9 with Gustavo Dudamel and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and with Stéphane Dénève and The Philadelphia Orchestra, Bernstein, Symphony No.1 ​“Jeremiah” with Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop, Ravel’s *Shéhérazade* with Salonen and NDR Elbphilharmonieorchester, Mahler’s Symphony No.2 with Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Jader Bignamini and her first Verdi, Messa da Requiem at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

In 2022, J’Nai Bridges was announced as one of Kennedy Center’s NEXT50 cultural leaders and presented numerous works as a guest artist in The Kennedy Center’s 50th Anniversary season including performances with The National Philharmonic of the world premiere of Adolphus Hailstork’s *A Knee on the Neck* and the world premiere of [Carlos Simon](https://www.polyarts.co.uk/roster/carlos-simon)​’s *Songs of Separation* alongside Berio’s *Folk Songs*with National Symphony Orchestra under Gianandrea Noseda. Bridges joined Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel as part of the Power to the People! festival for performances of Lieberson’s *Neruda Songs* and Amarillo Symphony for the world premiere of Chris Rogerson’s *Sacred Earth*. Her recording of Richard Danielpour’s oratorio *The Passion of Yeshua*, performed with Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra from the National Library of Congress, won a Grammy in 2021. As part of their digital SOUND/STAGE series, J’Nai Bridges was part of a special programme together with pop artists Coldplay, Shakira, Usher and other contemporaries with Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel as part of the Global Citizen movement’s Global Goal campaign.

Thanks to her innovative programming and ease of connecting directly with the audience, J’Nai Bridges is hugely in demand as a recitalist and has recently presented programmes widely across North America including ​‘Notes on Hope’ with percussionist Ulysses Owens Jr, showcasing composers ranging from Duparc and Satie to Duke Ellington and Florence Price, and a collaboration with Catalyst Quartet showcasing a world premiere, *Airs for Mother*, by Jimmy López-Bellido alongside works by de Falla, John Carter and Carlos Simon. J’Nai has appeared in recital at Carnegie Hall, San Francisco Performances, 92NY, Princeton, The Cliburn and at Caramoor among many others.

A native of Tacoma, Washington, J’Nai Bridges studied at Curtis Institute of Music, Manhattan School of Music and was in Lyric Opera of Chicago’s young artist programme at the Ryan Center. She represented the United States at the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, received the 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, was first prize winner at both the 2015 Gerda Lissner Competition and 2016 Francisco Viñas International Competition among many other competition successes and awards.