

Met Star's City Choir Connections: Soprano Danielle Talamantes



Though she now sings in the Metropolitan Opera, Danielle Talamantes never forgets her ties to Robert Shafer and City Choir. "When I was about 16, I joined the Oratorio Society of Washington, where my mother already sang," says Talamantes.

At City Choir, she has been a soloist in the Mozart *Requiem* with her husband Kerry Wilkerson, and sung in the Mozart *Mass in C Minor* and the Monteverdi *Vespers*. Says Talamantes, "The tradition and passion Bob gives to music and his choirs is very inspiring, and every time I come to sing under his baton, the chorus is immaculately prepared and it is full of wonderful energy."

Talamantes has sung at the Met since 2011, with such roles as Frasquita in *Carmen* and Anna in *Nabucco*. For our April 22 concert, she likes that the Handel piece to be performed "is a showcase piece for the soprano. What he asks for in breath control is Herculean."

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12 Tips: Things You Need to Know If You Want to Sing at the Met! -as contributed by Metropolitan Opera soprano Danielle Talamantes

1. First, go to every audition, and avoid being disappointed by assuming each audition will end in “No!” This way you can be shocked and surprised when you hear “Yes!”
2. Wear sensible shoes; Met staircases are notoriously steep and hallways long. Tripping into an audition is never a good look, and falling down does not a grand entrance make.
3. The Met is a huge labyrinth so draw a map or find a floor plan, and take your GPS. You WILL get lost, so take along trail mix, bottled water, and bread crumbs...
4. Good news, bad news: coffee at the Met canteen is just a dollar, BUT it’s bad! Look for a Starbucks or grab some Dunkin’ on your way to rehearsal.
5. If you suffer from natural light deprivation or are prone to claustrophobia, singing at the Met may not be a good career path. Spending long hours in small windowless rooms is ROUTINE.
6. Between 2:00-5:00 p.m. backstage dressing rooms are usually quiet, empty, and great places to practice, nap, or do other things...so I’ve been told.
7. Be nice, and get along with everyone, especially the “supers”—aka spear carriers—they pack daggers, swords and other weapons; props all. Or at least they’re supposed to be props...
8. Being nice also applies to the occasional sheep or other animals you might encounter in the Met’s halls. Be kind to and respectful of your four-legged cast mates; remember they’re working hard too, and they bite!
9. If you’re looking to dine post-Met performance—and maybe do some star gazing—head across the street to Café Fiorello where celebs, would-be celebs, and selfie takers gather and hang. Back in the day, even Luciano and Placido turned up.
10. Be aware there is a security guard posted 24/7—and cameras surveilling—at the Met stage door. Don’t ask me why I know this...
11. BE PREPARED FOR EVERY REHEARSAL, first to last, and always come note perfect and off book. This tip comes with a thank you, and a tip-of-the-hat, to Maestro Shafer.
12. And finally remember there are no small roles and few bad ones at the Met. Well perhaps a few, but still, you’re singing at the Met!

Good luck, and text if you get work!