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MEZZO SOPRANO, ATLANTA OPERA

Be willing to take stock and reassess yourself often. There are unimaginable synchronicities awaiting you when you shed your skin. You will painfully, messily, and beautifully grow to be the purest, most authentic version of yourself. As artists, we make it our mission to be a mirror for the world, but the moment we are afraid to turn that mirror on ourselves, we are being hypocritical. Do not be compliant. Being compliant without uncomfortably excavating your own path only prolongs toxic cycles in the arts. The outdated notion of what opera “looks like” is finally starting to crumble because a global pandemic forced artists to reexamine the business. I realize that I can thrive in being my own version of an opera singer. As a woman, I can be openly queer, have tattoos and body hair, and talk about imposter syndrome. You don’t have to wear ballgowns out of expectation or feign being self-assured all the time. I used to tell aspiring professional musicians, “if you think you can do anything else, do it.” Now I believe the opposite: “if you think you can do anything else, good.” You should have other pleasures outside of your career—life is full of them! If you aspire to be a musician and think you would also find joy in being a gardener, or a lawyer, or a mother, good—you’ll make a brilliant musician.



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