



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

IN SONG: JAMIE BARTON

Featuring performances with banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck

Now Available at sfopera.com, [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com)
#InSongSF

Launch Event: *In Conversation with Jamie Barton and Béla Fleck*
LIVE: Thursday, July 29, 4 pm PT



Jamie Barton and Béla Fleck in Nashville; *In Song: Jamie Barton* (Photos: Taylor Ballantyne)
Barton with her father, Jim Barton, at Mount Tabor United Methodist Church in Armuchee, GA (Photo: Elena Park)

San Francisco, CA (July 29, 2021) — San Francisco Opera's new short-form song and storytelling video portrait series, *In Song*, continues with the premiere of *In Song: Jamie Barton*. Acclaimed mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton revisits her roots and the music she was steeped in growing up in the foothills of northwest Georgia. Presented in partnership with Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, the new episode features Barton with banjo virtuoso and 15-time Grammy winner Béla Fleck in performances of Purcell's "Music for a While" and the traditional ballad "Bury Me Beneath the Weeping Willow." *In Song: Jamie Barton* is released today and available free of charge at sfopera.com/insong, [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com).

To celebrate the release, Jamie Barton and Béla Fleck join *In Song* director and executive producer Elena Park for a conversation streamed live today at 4 pm Pacific on [Facebook](#). Click [HERE](#) for free registration to the live event on Zoom. A recording will be available on demand for free on [YouTube](#) beginning tomorrow.

Renowned opera singer Jamie Barton takes viewers on a musical and personal journey from “Music City” Nashville, Tennessee with Béla Fleck to the rolling green foothills of Johns Mountain, Georgia. Barton explores her background coming up in “The Pocket,” a remote valley without wi-fi, where she was surrounded by gospel and bluegrass and where her father taught her to sing harmony in the back pew of their church.

Jamie Barton is increasingly recognized for how she uses her powerful instrument offstage—lifting up women, queer people and other marginalized communities. Barton made her San Francisco Opera debut as Adalgisa in Bellini’s *Norma* in 2014. She returned in 2018 for the Company’s production of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) as Fricka, the Second Norn and Waltraute and made her role debut as Sara in Donizetti’s *Roberto Devereux* (2018). Most recently, Barton captivated audiences as Ježibaba in Dvořák’s *Rusalka* (2019) and this fall she headlines *Live and In Concert: The Homecoming* on September 10 with soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen, both under the baton of San Francisco Opera’s new music director, Eun Sun Kim.

Barton’s 2007 win at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions launched a major international career that includes leading roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Madrid’s Teatro Real, Royal Opera, Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera. In recognition of her iconic performance at the Last Night of the Proms, Barton was named 2020 Personality of the Year at the BBC Music Magazine Awards. Her solo albums include *All Who Wander* and *Unexpected Shadows*, recorded with composer Jake Heggie.

Multi-Grammy winner Béla Fleck—the world’s premier banjo virtuoso and a celebrated musical adventurer—has both dug deep into his instrument’s complex global history and unlocked the breadth of its possibilities. Born in New York City and named for the classical giants Bartók, Webern and Janáček, Béla Anton Leos Fleck’s subsequent move to Kentucky and immersion into the sound’s heartland led to a spot in the acclaimed progressive bluegrass band New Grass Revival. The Flecktones, the project that immediately followed New Grass Revival, recently celebrated 30 years of melding

acoustic with electronic and bluegrass with jazz and funk. Fleck has made duo albums and tours with jazz legend Chick Corea and life partner Abigail Washburn, the Brooklyn Rider String Quartet, three classical banjo concertos and collaborations with Zakir Hussain, Rakesh Churasia and bassist Edgar Meyer. The award-winning 2009 documentary *Throw Down Your Heart* followed Fleck as he explored the African origins of the banjo. Those travels inform what he brought home to his new album, *My Bluegrass Heart*, the third chapter in a decades-spanning trilogy, which started with 1988's *Drive* and continued with *The Bluegrass Sessions*.

San Francisco Opera's *In Song* is a series of intimate video portraits featuring remarkable artists who draw us into their distinctive spheres through stories and song—from classical to bluegrass, spirituals and Samoan songs. Launched in March 2021, each episode invites us into the singer's world to see how they express themselves through deep connections to song. *In Song: J'Nai Bridges* and *In Song: Pene Pati* are available on demand at sfopera.com/insong and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). Upcoming episodes will feature tenor Arturo Chacón-Cruz and soprano Amina Edris.

In Song, along with San Francisco Opera's other new digital content initiatives including the podcast *North Stage Door* and *Atrium Sessions*, is made possible, in part, through generous gifts to the Creative Edge Fund, founded by Carol and Dixon Doll.

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In Conversation with Jamie Barton and Béla Fleck

Live Zoom conversation and audience Q&A,
moderated by *In Song* director Elena Park

Thursday, July 29 at 4 pm PT

Jamie Barton and Béla Fleck discuss their collaboration with *In Song* director and executive producer Elena Park. Viewers are invited to ask questions. The one-hour, live Zoom conversation is free; register [here](https://www.facebook.com/sfopera). It will be streamed live today at 4 pm PT on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sfopera). A recording will be available on demand for free on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) beginning tomorrow.

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In Song: Jamie Barton

Free and now available at sfopera.com, [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com)

Running time: 19 minutes

Featuring:

Jamie Barton, mezzo-soprano

Béla Fleck, banjo

Performances:

“Music for a While” by Henry Purcell; arranged by Béla Fleck

“Bury Me Beneath the Weeping Willow”; Traditional Ballad; co-arranged by Béla Fleck and Jamie Barton

A San Francisco Opera/Lumahai Productions collaboration.

Directed by Elena Park and Molly McBride

Executive Producers: Matthew Shilvock and Gregory Henkel

Executive Producer: Elena Park

Producer: Molly McBride

Editor: Steven E. Mallorca

Director of Photography: Roger Pistole

Recording/Mixing Engineer: Chuck Ainlay

Presented in partnership with Hardly Strictly Bluegrass.

The *In Song* series is made possible, in part, by the Creative Edge Fund, founded by Carol and Dixon Doll.

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Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs of *In Song: Jamie Barton* are available at sfopera.com/press.

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