

DEPAUL

MAGAZINE

14 UNDER
40



ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE



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The inaugural issue of DePaul Discoveries, a journal of undergraduate primary research, showcases the opportunities students at DePaul's College of Science and Health have to conduct and publish original research.

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Mid-career is often a time for reassessment. Are you where you want to be in your professional life? Here are some suggestions for how to take stock and make changes.

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Alumni Making a Difference

DePaul alumni are accomplished, engaged and eager to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Although their career paths are varied, each person included in this edition of 14 Under 40 has taken the knowledge and spirit from their years at DePaul with them into the world—with spectacular results! Please meet our distinguished alumni for this year and enjoy getting to know them and learning their stories. As with all of our 14 Under 40 alumni, we present them with pride and confidence that their successes will continue well into the future.

Cecelia Hall

MUS '06

Opera Singer



To look at the rarefied surroundings opera singer Cecelia Hall (MUS '06) finds herself in these days—the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Seattle Opera, to name a few—it may be hard to envision her upbringing in North Carolina, “in a little house in the woods.” Going from a semi-rural setting to the world stage might be too daunting for many, but Hall found courage in the example her parents set: “My father’s work focuses on social justice, and my mother is an artist. Seeing them pursue their passions helped free me to follow my own.”

Hall’s musical grounding started at six, when she took piano lessons with concert pianist Pei-Fen Liu. “She was a wonderful teacher who exposed me to the great composers, and pushed me to care deeply about making beautiful music come to life,” Hall remembers.

“When I was about 8, she told my mother, ‘Your daughter sings to herself a lot. I would be happy to start teaching her a little about singing.’ So my vocal studies began.”

Hall sang in choirs in public high school, and attended summer music camps, including one at the state arts college, the North Carolina School of the Arts. “At the time, they had a free year-round division for high school students,” says Hall, “and I was lucky enough to attend in my senior year. I had such a wonderful experience taking college-level classes and singing with people who were more experienced than I thought, why stop here?”

Hall investigated a number of undergraduate programs before deciding on DePaul. “Many things

drew me to DePaul,” she says. “I wanted to be in a city, surrounded by art and first-class musicians. Chicago also felt like a safe city—I think I would have been terrified if I’d landed in New York at 17. I also wanted to go to a university instead of a music conservatory so that I could get a well-rounded education.” Renowned mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, who became Hall’s teacher, was also a big draw. “She has such a wonderful voice and a first-rate career, and has sung many of the same roles I’m singing now,” Hall enthuses.

Hall recalls exploring the rich cultural life of Chicago as part of her education while at DePaul. “One of my most memorable experiences was when I went to the Chicago Opera Theater (COT) to see Handel’s ‘Agrippina.’ I remember being worried that I’d get bored, but I was on the edge of my seat the whole time!” Hall went from COT spectator to performer, singing Handel’s “Teseo” during the 2012-13 season.

Hall has a long association with the Lyric Opera. “I worked there as an intern, and they encouraged me to go to Juilliard for further training,” she says. Later, Hall was accepted into the Lyric’s Ryan Opera Center for emerging singers, and will return for the 2013-14 mainstage season in Mozart’s “La Clemenza di Tito.”

Hall has this to say about her vocal range: “I’m so glad I turned out to be a mezzo-soprano. Half of the time, I get to play a man, and it gets me in touch with a part of my personality that is much stronger and bolder than I am offstage.” While preparing for her first “pants” role at DePaul, she was on a CTA train and “noticed the women sitting with their legs together and their arms folded, while the men took up as much space as they wanted. It gave me a lot of insight into the physicality and mindset of a man. It’s amazing what one can learn on the El!”

Bonus: Hear Hall sing two very different selections at bit.ly/ceceliahall.