

Angela M. Brown

Opera Singer

"Nothing is beneath you, sing, sing, sing!"



Opera singer Angela Brown is tickled to see her name on the SOLD OUT sign for AIDA in front of the Metropolitan Opera.

Courtesy of JEJ Artists.

Job Description

As an opera singer, Angela sings a story. Everything in an opera is set to music, and all of the words are sung. She performs as a principal artist in operas and as a guest performer at different venues around the world.

A Day on the Job

Starts with physical exercise to warm up her body and to get in touch with her core singing muscles. • Exercises her voice by vocalizing and working with a vocal coach in preparation for her upcoming events. • Mentally studies her music. • Communicates with her agent to determine when and where her next

performance will occur, travel arrangements, and payment for performances.

- Sometimes conducts master classes for opera students, usually in the towns where she is performing.

Job Likes

Angela likes the travel involved with her job. Her job takes her all over the world, from Venice, Italy, to small towns in America. • “I love to dig into a character” when singing in an opera. Finding the “back story” is fun.

Job Challenges

Travel can also be a negative aspect to Angela’s job. It is hard to establish and keep relationships going when you are gone a lot. • The life of an opera singer is expensive. The costumes, competition fees, and travel all add up.

Steps to Current Job

- Indiana Vocational Technical School—Worked as a hospital dietary aide for one year and a secretary for two years while attending school.
- Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, Bachelor of Arts in Music. Started the Positive Images singing group.
- Indiana University in Bloomington—graduate work in classics while working as vocal coach for the IU Soul Review.
- Started touring with Dean Charles Webb of Indiana University School of Music.
- Began entering competitions, which helped support her financially and brought her notoriety. Among her accomplishments are winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and shared first prize at the Altamura/Enrico Caruso International Voice Competition in Gibraltar.
- Opera Singer—sings at venues worldwide, including the Metropolitan Opera; Indianapolis Opera; San Antonio Symphony; Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Italy; The Kennedy Center; and Opera Company of Philadelphia. CDs recorded include opera arias, art songs, African-American spirituals, and selections from *Porgy and Bess*.

Advice

Besides having the talent, a good teacher is a necessity. Your teacher should have opera knowledge and experience and be current in today’s teaching practices. She also says that you must “sing all the time,” because you’ve got to “oil the machine.” Sing anywhere, anytime someone asks you; “Nothing is beneath you, sing, sing, sing!” As far as educating yourself, there are many, many schools where you can study opera. She suggests attending one of the top opera schools in the country, along the lines of Julliard; Indiana University; University of Kentucky; Curtis Institute and Academy of Vocal Arts, both of which are in Philadelphia; or the Manhattan School of Music.

Angela says young women should focus on the goal. She doesn't understand why young people get caught up in sex, drinking, and drugs when all that does is complicate things and takes you further away from where you want to be. "Keep your eyes on your goal," and stay grounded.

Helpful Personality Traits

Confident, assertive, hard worker, possess integrity, flexible and kind—"It costs nothing to be kind."

Hobbies & Interests

Makeup artistry, reading, sewing, crafts, and interior decorating.

READ IT ALL!

You have the luxury of exploring without boundaries. So, don't limit yourself to reading just those profiles that catch your eye. We purposely organized these jobs by first name rather than by career. Learning about the many different sides of each job will help you formulate your own career and desired lifestyle. Take, for example, Wanda Revis, the community college nursing instructor (see page 230). Maybe nursing is not for you, but the lifestyle of an instructor might be.

You can learn from each Firestarter whether her job interests you or not. If something does "spark" your interest, why not search the Internet for more information about that job? It's amazing what you can find. A site that we found enormously useful is the Occupational Outlook Handbook on the U.S. Department of Labor's Web site, www.bls.gov/oco. Once you have an overview of a particular job, you'll feel more comfortable taking some of the next steps for exploring careers:

- Someone in your school's career center or your guidance counselor can direct you to helpful resources.
- Talk with your parents and their friends. Chances are they'll know someone in the field that interests you and how to get in touch with him or her and learn more.
- A career assessment test can help identify your interests and strengths and can guide you in a direction of possible career choices. You can find these at your school's career center, libraries, on the Internet, and in bookstores.

continued