

The Star-Ledger

# Inside Jersey

21 Jersey artists making their mark beyond Main Street

# BREAKING

JANUARY 2012



## Stefan Weisman

Composer, East Brunswick  
[stefanweisman.com](http://stefanweisman.com)

He's a composer so proud of his New Jersey roots that growing up on Route 9 is one of the first things he mentions in the artist bio on his website — and with good reason. Stefan Weisman, 41, developed his love for music playing violin in the orchestra at East Brunswick High School and spent summers studying at the American String Teachers Association workshop in Glassboro.

Seeing his talent and enthusiasm, his mother brought home overflowing bags of records from the Englishtown Flea Market, and he spent hours devouring first Mozart, then Shostakovich and eventually contemporary music.

He discovered composition at Bard College and went on to earn his master's degree from Yale University and his Ph.D from Princeton University. With three operas and many symphonic and chamber works to his name, his music has been performed at the New York City Opera's VOX showcase, the Guggenheim Museum and the Bang on a Can Marathon. His critically acclaimed chamber opera "Darkling," based on Anna Rabinowitz's poem depicting loss and memory within her Polish-Jewish family, was released last year on Albany Records.

Although Weisman hesitates to classify his music, he admires minimal and post-minimal music, categories that call to mind Philip Glass and David Lang the latter of whom was once his teacher.

At its best, he says, "it appeals to people who understand the technical side and appreciate the way it's put together and at the same time, it has a surface appeal that anybody could appreciate."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTIST

## Kiri Deonarine

Soprano, Fair Lawn  
[kiriideonarine.com](http://kiriideonarine.com)

She was born to be an opera singer, with a world-famous diva as her namesake and music as the family business. But Kiri Deonarine is on her way to stardom on her own terms.

With a pealing coloratura soprano and winsome stage presence, at 26, Deonarine has spent two years as a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio and is currently a young artist at Chicago Lyric Opera. She was also a grand finalist in the Metropolitan Opera 2009 National Council Auditions, often referred to as the opera house's "American Idol."

Named after soprano Kiri Te Kanawa, Deonarine grew up in Fair Lawn, an easy commute to the Metropolitan Opera where her father, baritone Kim Josephson performed.

The two gave their first professional performance together in 2010 with the Milwaukee Symphony, singing the Fauré Requiem under the baton of Edo de Waart.

"My dad and I are incredibly close friends. I think that sharing a passion for music has only brought us closer," she says.

Deonarine has made her mark in operas by Mozart, Strauss and Donizetti. On her list of dream roles are Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" and Verdi's "La Traviata."

Her nerves were tested at HGO when asked to sing a leading role without rehearsing with the chorus or orchestra — or practicing lifts where she sang on someone's shoulders.

"It was the moment that I truly realized that this was where I belonged," she says. "I knew that this was the chance I had been waiting for all my life."