

STAGE DOOR
MAGDALENA KUŹMA



At 29, everything seems to have fallen in place for the Polish-American soprano Magdalena Kuźma, who makes her European opera debut this month as Pamina in the Barrie Kosky production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw. Her parents, who raised her in New York City, will travel there to cheer her on in the Mozart opera, which is a magical calling card for her: she made her professional debut in 2022 as Pamina at Opera Orlando, and for the past three seasons she has sung Papagena in both the ‘family-friendly’ and full-length productions of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met.

This month's young artist

Magdalena Kuźma sings Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Polish National Opera, January 2 to 4.
teatr Wielki.pl

Kuźma made the decision to be a performer when, aged five, she attended a Broadway musical with her mother and her grandmother, who was visiting from Poland. ‘*Cats* was about to close, and my mom took a chance and bought me a ticket as well. I was in a booster seat, but I really loved the show and afterwards sang the melody to “Memory”.’ She had the bug: ‘I wanted Broadway tickets and would dance and act in school shows. Then I got accepted into LaGuardia High School for drama and voice.’ There she had to choose what to concentrate on and settled on voice: ‘We had group classes learning technique together with 20 other people. One of the first songs I learned was “Se tu m’ami” by Pergolesi and I was kind of living for the drama and the poetry.’

This knack for ‘living’ for the work, combined with her luxe and flexible voice, served her well as she went from the Juilliard pre-college programme (where her mentor Lorraine Nubar developed her voice) to Oberlin College, followed by graduate school at Yale, where she was honoured as valedictorian—and then on to Merola, Lindemann and other young artist programmes while concurrently winning several prestigious vocal competitions. She’s the type of artist whose warmth and star quality make you sit up and take notice—whether she’s undertaking a small part such as Sister Catherine in *Dead Man Walking*, giving a recital, or starring as the doomed heroine in *Roméo et Juliette*. As for Pamina, ‘I have comfort with the role and the opera,’ Kuźma says.

REBECCA PALLER