

### Leontyne Price To Open New Metropolitan Opera

NEW YORK--(NPI)--The role of Cleopatra in Samuel Barber's new Opera "Antony and Cleopatra" will be premiered by Leontyne Price at the opening night of the new Metropolitan Opera House, Sept. 16. This is the most coveted honor in the history of music.

Based on the tragedy by William Shakespeare, the new opera was commissioned by the Metropolitan under a grant from the Ford Foundation. The text was adapted by Franco Zeffirelli, who is also staging the work and designing the scenery and costumes. Thomas Schippers will conduct and choreography is by Alvin Ailey, making his Metropolitan debut. The production is the gift of Francis Goelet.

Other singers in the cast are Justine Diaz, who sings the role of Antony, Rosalind Elias who will create the character of Charmain and Jess Thomas plays the part of Caesar. Ezio Falgello is cast as Enobrabus.

In the period of a few short years, Leontyne Price has become the most superb voice of the century. She created frenzied excitement as Leonora in Verdi's "Il Travatore" and won a 42-minute ovation at the Metropolitan Opera when she made her debut in 1961.

Since that historic evening, Miss Price, who in her first season was presented in seven different roles, has been awarded unprecedented accolades, crowning her "Prima Donna Assoluta" of the international music world. This magnificent young American soprano reigns as star of the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Vienna State Opera and the San Francisco Opera.

The list of honors and memberships accorded Miss Price increases by the year. She has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, honorary doctorates from Dartmouth College and Howard University, a Fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been elected as a trustee and Board member for international House. She is a member of Advisory Board for the National Cultural Center in Washington, D. C., has received the Order of Merit from Italy, was voted Musician of the




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year, holds six awards from National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (Grammy Awards). She was the first artist to sing before integrated audiences in Laurel, Miss.

Her talent and her virtuosity inspire all who see and hear her to descriptive flights. In the words of Schonberg, music critic for the New York Times, "she is the Stradivarius of singers."

Today she stands at the pinnacle of the music world, admired as an artist and respected as an individual.

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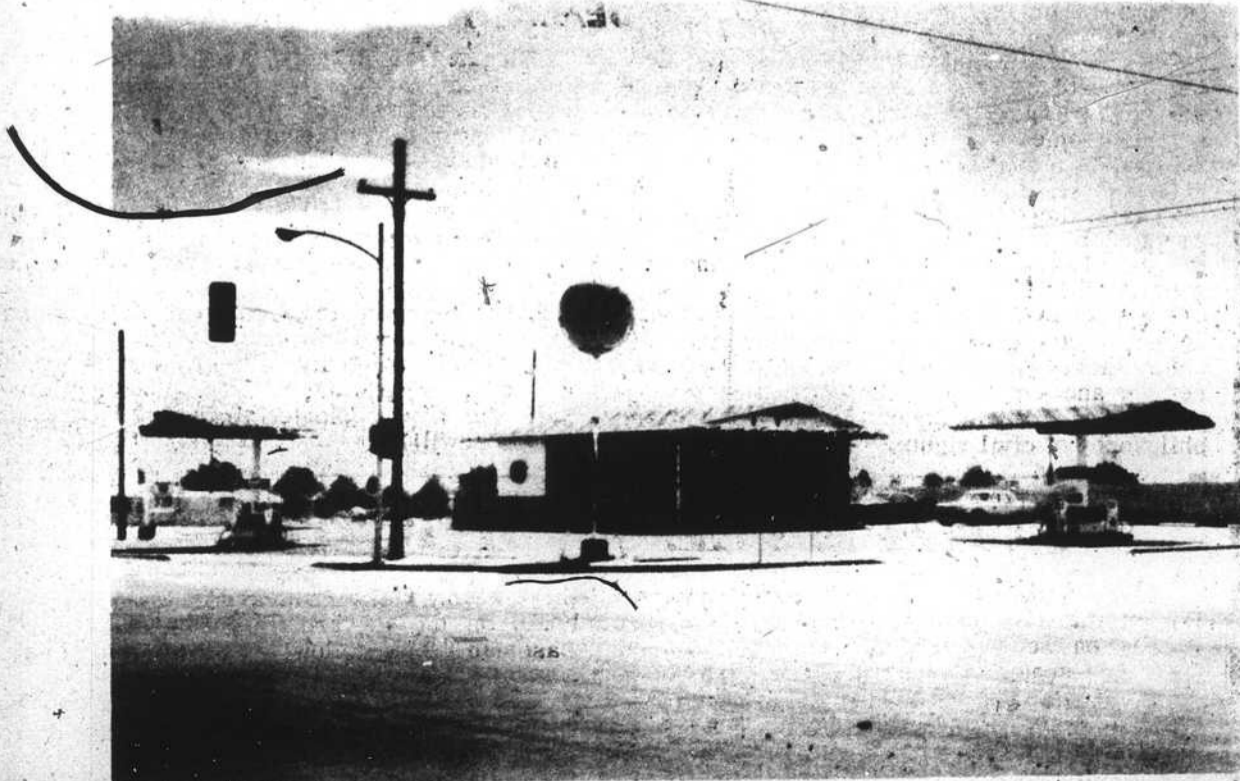
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