

The Soprano

Atlanta opera singer Leah Partridge
hits the high notes of life while on the road | By Danny Bonvissuto | Photography by Ryan Pfluger |



LOCAL VOCALS

Partridge puts her pipes to work in NYC

Leah Partridge's apartment on New York's Upper West Side isn't home. Home is 900 miles away in Marietta. But it's her pied-à-terre for the next few weeks as the 34-year-old critically acclaimed soprano works as an understudy Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* at the Metropolitan Opera.

It's a part she knows well: Partridge debuted it in 2006 with the Atlanta Opera, and just blew the doors off the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre as Adina in their season opener, *Elixir of Love*.

Partridge grew up singing pop, country and gospel in Lincolnton, Georgia—a place where little girls want to be Faith Hill, not Maria Callas. But Partridge's high school teachers noticed her extensive range and suggested opera. "I thought they were insane, but then I fell in love with the history of voice and the challenge of projecting my voice over a 40-piece orchestra with no amplification," she says. "A lot of people think of opera as an out-of-touch form of expression, but it's thought-provoking—for those doing it and those listening to it."

Despite her newlywed status—Partridge met her husband in the Hartsfield-Jackson airport while waiting for a flight to New York—she won't be south of the Mason-Dixon anytime soon. Understudy work on Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment* at the Met, plus singing the lead Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, will keep her far from the High Museum and Antica Posta, two of her favorite haunts at home.

Before she preps her pipes for tonight's performance, Partridge is off to stretch her legs in the rain. "Central Park is so close and I love to get out and walk through it," she says. "It's the closest thing to Georgia in New York." 📍

Partridge's Hots:

Mollydooner Syrah, Kennesaw Mountain, Kindle, mezzo-soprano Joyce Didonato, David Letterman.

Partridge's Nots:

Cable news, extra baggage fees, pop-country music, Glenn Beck, bus rides, H1N1.