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A close-up portrait of Mary L. Trump, a woman with long brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a pink shirt and a dark blazer. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

**Mary L.
Trump**

**POTUS's out niece
tells her truth**

**Mayor
Alex Morse**
In his own words

**Challenging
Times**
The year in review

**Social Media
Influencers**
Local LGBTQ trendsetters

Shifting Scene
New England's gay gathering spots

Virtual Dancer
Boston Ballet's John Lam



Doug Dodson. PHOTO Sam Brewer

Question: Who is Doug Dodson?

Clue: This accomplished Boston early music singer is also a 'Jeopardy!' champ

Doug Dodson has been a proud and out member of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society for nearly 10 years and a soloist since 2017. When he appeared on the 35th season of "Jeopardy" in 2018, he wasn't about to shy away from his close-up.

Not only did Dodson end up a three-day champion on the beloved quiz show, taking home about \$55,000, he deliberately struck a blow for LGBTQ representation.

"I intentionally tried to make it clear I was gay. 'Jeopardy' is a cultural phenomenon so it has to reflect our culture," said Dodson. "I am a super ham so when I filled out the [show's] five-page questionnaire, I put as a 'fun fact' that I am 'tragically single.'" During the "get to know the contestants" segment, host Alex Trebek asked Dodson what that meant. "I said, 'My last boyfriend was ripped apart and eaten by a hammerhead shark. Just kidding!' A few

people have reached out and thanked me for being open, being myself and having joy," he says.

Several months later, he heard from another gay "Jeopardy" contestant who found inspiration in Dodson's playful openness. "We interacted on Twitter and he told me that he was afraid going into his audition; should he 'tone it down'; how were people going to react?" Dodson recalls. "Then he said, 'I remembered your appearance and I was able to go in relaxed and not worried about how I would be perceived. You made it easier for me to do it.' That was touching to hear."

Dodson grew up in a musical family from the Black Hills of South Dakota. Out since college, he earned his undergraduate degree in anthropology from the University of South Dakota (Vermillion). "I intended to become an archeologist but decided it was too much digging in the dirt and tedious article writing. The 'Indiana Jones' parts are a little rarer than I thought," he says. So he shifted his focus to music, earning his master degree in voice from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Dodson discovered that early music was "a synthesis of all my interests because early music involves a lot of research. Sometimes you are working from a scan of an original manuscript that's sitting in a library in Cologne. Sometimes you have to go digging and find historical context—was there a war going on? Not everything is on the page. Early music is like the archeology of music. It's a combination of history and research but still beautiful and about art."

Since he's also a student of the classics, with a minor in mythology, Dodson has found this background to be valuable in working with early music ensembles.

"It turns out that mythology is usually Greek mythology, which is the basis of the plot in many baroque operas. So when there would be a reference in the text, I'd be the one familiar with it and could give background to that story. Also, vocally I am a countertenor, and baroque is suited to that. So it was like the universe was telling me" where to focus his career, he says.

Although Dodson has performed with esteemed choral ensembles throughout

the country, he says colleagues in the classical world suggested that he “go to Boston [because] they do tons of early music there. Once I arrived, the Handel and Haydn Society was the first group that started hiring me regularly.”

After performing with the Handel and Haydn Society chorus for several years, Dodson made his main stage solo debut in Cantata 147 (“Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben”) as well as his solo debut with Boston Baroque as Nireno in Handel’s “Giulio Cesare.”

Although he sings with many small chamber groups, H+H, said Dodson, allows him to be onstage with a big choir doing masterworks. It’s a fully professional ensemble with period instruments, which is very special.”

A countertenor, Dodson says he “always had a strong falsetto that I treated as a joke but it is the best part of my voice. My real voice, my ‘boy’ voice, just doesn’t have the range. All of the color and flexibility is in my falsetto so that’s what I’ve worked to develop. Most of the repertoire for countertenor is baroque, which is what I love. So I can do this for the rest of my life.”



Doug Dodson with “Jeopardy!” host Alex Trebek

Following the July announcement of the closure of Symphony Hall through November, the H+H fall program has moved online. Concerts stream for registered listeners on Tuesdays at 3 p.m. On November 8, there will be one special performance of “Every Voice,” H+H’s beloved community concert celebrating the many voices of the Boston community. “Every Voice” will be led by Reginald Mobley,

countertenor and programming consultant, and honor women and celebrate the 100th anniversary of Women’s suffrage. “The Magic of Handel” will be performed on November 24 at 3 p.m. Each concert will be available free, with a suggested donation of \$10, through the Handel and Haydn Society website. [x] handelandhaydn.org/streaming-concerts/



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