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How do you morph from star running fullback to opera singer? Keith Miller's magical transformation began with "Phantom of the Opera."

He had never studied music, never sung in public and was enjoying being a University of Colorado football star when he invited a date to the musical. Sitting in the audience, he fell in love with the art form. Back on campus, he tried to sing along with the recording, but the music written for a tenor was not compatible with what he would later discover was his bass-baritone range.

On stage

'Madama Butterfly'

Where: Kennedy Center Opera House

When: Through March 19

Info: \$25 to \$300 at 202-295-2400, 800-US-OPERA or dc-opera.org

Still, he persisted. After starting in the Fiesta Bowl and the Cotton Bowl and carrying the Olympic torch for the 1996 Atlanta Games, Miller began a pro career playing for the European and Arena Football leagues. All the while he was teased by his teammates as he sang at the top of his voice in the dressing room. By this time, he was listening to and singing along to bass Samuel Ramey.

When a stranger dropped by, heard him and suggested he begin studying voice seriously, he switched career

goals. Miller applied himself earnestly to learning to read music. Soon the true deep voice within him emerged and he sang several roles with Portland Opera before heading to New York. Renowned voice coach Bill Schumann was impressed and helped him enter Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts.

Miller made his Met debut as the Bonze in "Madama Butterfly," the very role he sings in his Washington National Opera debut this month. Since that start, he has sung in more than 165 Met performances, including "Tosca," "Eugene Onegin," "Macbeth," "Turandot," "Salome" and "Aida," in which he played the king.

"I train for singing just as I trained for football," he said. "Others have become so interested in my techniques that I started a company training people for opera by using air to help improve the voice. When the body is put into duress, you must concentrate on breathing. An opera singer always needs to avoid tension in the voice. The way you handle air is the key."

For eight seasons, he has been director of the Crested Butte Music Festival near his home in Colorado and recently started the young artist program, a vocal training program for children between ages 7 and 12.

"I want to inspire youngsters to love music with our program of rhythm, solfege, acting and moving and to help those 13 to 18 get to the next level," he said. "I became interested in music programs for children by working with the Met's children's chorus. I was shocked to learn that they are let go when their voice breaks. My program helps youngsters to develop the new, emerging voice so they can sing all their lives."

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benjamin hochman

Hochman: Former Nuggets aide Mosley has passion and promising future

By Benjamin Hochman
The Denver Post

Posted: 02/28/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

Three nights ago, the woebegone Cavaliers beat the whoa-they-got-Melo Knicks. From the Cleveland bench, pride was felt all the way back in Denver. Cavs assistant coach Jamahl Mosley, who left the Nuggets' bench last summer, is an integral part of coach Byron Scott's staff. And the former Colorado Buffaloes standout — a passionate member of the Denver basketball community — is on the fast track to the hot seat on the bench.

"He's a guy who I feel will be an excellent head coach in this league," Scott said. "He just needs more experience."

Now, the Cavs aren't good. But they knocked off the Knicks and their fancy-pants stars, just a

couple of weeks after defeating the two-time defending champion Lakers. Mosley is in the mix, a hands-on teacher working with Cleveland's bevy of youngsters.

When the 32-year-old left the Nuggets, numerous coaches and players were vocal about how the staff would suffer. Meanwhile, in Cleveland, Scott is smitten: "Jamahl is a guy who's fearless — says what's on his mind. He reminds me of me when I first got into coaching. I had a lot of people tell me that I couldn't say certain things, but I think it's great that you say what's on your mind. When you speak to players the way they need to be spoken to, I think it's great, because they know exactly where you're coming from. He just is who he is.

"When he took the job here, and now that I've worked with him for six months, I have a pretty good feeling he won't be here long. I don't know how long I'll be able to keep him, (perhaps) two, three years."

Two images stand out when thinking about Mosley. One image is a YouTube hit, the other behind closed doors. As for the former, it happened during this season's game against LeBron James and the Heat. 'Bron was talking trash to the Cavs' bench, and there's Mosley, using certain words that can't be printed, telling James to, um, cease from speaking.

The other image is after a Nuggets loss in Phoenix last season. When the locker room doors opened, there was Mosley, sitting on the floor with his back to the wall, despondent. He takes

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this basketball stuff seriously. And to lose a tough one, well, he seemed to be taking it even harder than the players. That's passion.

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