

Barbara Rearick, mezzo-soprano

American mezzo Barbara Rearick, whom Opera News singles out for her “tonal beauty” and Gramophone Magazine for her “charm and finesse,” has established herself as one of today’s most versatile and fascinating artists on stage, be it in opera, oratorio, lied, contemporary music or cabaret. Her fast-growing career has taken her to both sides of the Atlantic with such orchestras as the Houston Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata and the Hallé and conductors as Hans Graf, Robert Spano, JoAnn Falletta and Carlos Miguel Prieto. Rearick is also a founding member of the Britten-Pears Ensemble, a chamber group specializing in rarely heard contemporary works.

In her 2012/13 season Ms. Rearick can be heard in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 at Carnegie Hall with the Canterbury Choral Society and in the rarely performed chamber work *Die Jünge Magd* by Paul Hindemith, while last season she was featured in an evening of songs by the great Duke Ellington and Fats Waller for “Symphony Under the Stars” with the Helena Symphony. She joined the Nashville Symphony’s performance of *Messiah*, sang *St. Matthew Passion* with Voices of Ascension and gave performances at the Virginia Arts Festival of several new works as mezzo-in-residence at the John Duffy Composer’s Institute. During the prior season Rearick made her Winter Park Festival debut in Bach’s *St. John Passion* and *Cantata 112* and showcased Mahler’s *Rückert Lieder* in Princeton.

2009/10 was a banner season marked by a series of debuts: at Chicago Symphony’s MusicNow series performing *Twice Through the Heart* by Mark Anthony Turnage; at Zankel Hall singing Bach’s *Magnificat* with Voices of Ascension under Dennis Keene, and at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston bringing Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* into focus. Other highlights included *Messiah* with the Indianapolis and Memphis symphonies, Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* with both the Colorado and Syracuse symphonies, and the *Coronation Mass* with Eugene Symphony. Overseas she joined the Hallé Orchestra in de Falla’s *El Amor Brujo* and arias from *Carmen* and sang at the St. Albans International Organ Festival with the Britten-Pears Ensemble.

2008 saw her perform at BAM’s Next Wave Festival in the world premiere of Douglas Cuomo’s opera *Arjuna’s Dilemma*; with Houston Symphony in Vivaldi’s *Gloria* and Bach’s *Magnificat*; with Helena Symphony in *Messiah*; Huntsville Symphony in *Lord Nelson Mass*; and with *Musica Sacra* at Lincoln Center in the *St. John Passion* under Kent Tritle.

Outside the US, she has found particular success in Great Britain, where she made her debut at the 1987 Aldeburgh Festival in the title role of Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* and has returned many times since. She was asked by conductor and protege of Britten’s, Steuart Bedford, to sing Britten’s *A Charm of Lullabies* in the orchestral version by Colin Matthews with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In 1994 she premiered three songs which renown composer/pianist Sir Richard Rodney Bennett wrote especially for her at the Burnham Market Concerts in Norfolk. The next season she performed the pieces at Wigmore Hall with the composer at the piano. In Wales she gave a recital of Percy Grainger songs for the inaugural festival at the Nimbus Arts Centre. Her Britten-Pears Ensemble has enjoyed frequent invitations in that region, including a premiere of Jonathan Lloyd’s *People Your Dreams* at Wigmore Hall in London.

In addition to the aforementioned orchestras, Rearick’s concert career over the years has taken her to the Santa Rosa Symphony under Jeffrey Kahane in Britten’s *Spring Symphony*, Kansas City Symphony in a concert version of Stravinsky’s opera *Le rossignol*, and the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester in Berlin where she portrayed the roles of Miriam, Ruth, and the Witch of Endor for the world-premiere performance and recording of Kurt Weill’s *The Eternal Road* under Gerard Schwarz. Her many *Messiah* performances have brought her together with the orchestras of Houston, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Buffalo, and St. John Smith’s Square in London to name a few.

On the opera stage she has offered a variety of roles, ranging from Cherubino and Suzuki to Meg Page and Hansel. Highlights have included the title role in the world-premiere performance of *The Mary Shelley Opera* by Allan Jaffe, *Lucretia (The Rape of Lucretia)* in Rio de Janeiro at Sala Cecilia Meireles, and *Maddalena (Rigoletto)* in a production with the Spokane Symphony to which she “brought juicy sensuality.” She has also portrayed the roles of Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Mother in Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

A prolific performer and champion of 20th-century music, the singer gave the US premiere of Nicholas Maw’s *Nocturne* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony at Bard, collaborated with the New York New Music Ensemble for the world premiere of *Sunflower* by Mary Wright, and sang *A Winter’s Journey*, Douglas Cuomo’s setting of Müller’s text (from Schubert’s *Winterreise*). Rearick has performed with the New York Chamber Ensemble in performances of Ravel’s *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, Ravel’s *Chansons madécasses*, and Berlioz’s *Les nuits d’été*.

Barbara Rearick has appeared on BBC World Service Radio, WQXR, and NPR and has recorded for Naxos, Gateway Classics, and ASV. Born in Pennsylvania, she is a member of the voice faculty at Princeton University.

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