



## Sarah Johannsen, Soprano

Sarah Johannsen, soprano, who grew up in Minnesota, U.S.A., began singing and acting early, playing her first role on an amateur stage at the age of 12 and singing her first solo with a symphony orchestra at the age of 16. She studied voice as a mezzo-soprano at the University of Kansas, where she studied with the Metropolitan Opera bass, Kenneth Smith.

While studying at Kansas, she participated in operas presented by the school, apprentice programs in Iowa and Santa Fe and won recognition by being chosen several times for "Honors Recitals" as well being awarded the prize for best graduating singer. She participated as a soloist on the final concert of the only symposium given for Samuel Barber during his lifetime and at which he was present. She also made her professional debut with the Kansas City Lyric as Pitti-Sing in *The Mikado*. Miss Johannsen continued her vocal studies at the University of Illinois where she made the change to soprano and sang her first Butterfly as well as coached with the world-renowned accompanist, John Wustman.

Miss Johannsen's career then brought her to New York City where she studied with Marlena Malas, Henry Lewis and Olga Chernov, among others. She won awards from the Sullivan Foundation, the Liederkranz Foundation and in the Metropolitan Opera Regional Auditions. She sang in productions of less known works (i.e., Fauré's *Pénélope*, Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, Zandonai's *Romeo et Giulietta*). She also sang the soprano solo of the Mozart *Requiem* under the baton of Georg Alexander Albrecht. Her first role as a soprano with a major US company was one of the *Walküre* - Ortlinde - with Miami Opera. There followed roles with other companies including Mimi, Desdemona, Tosca with the New York City Opera tour and Fidelio with Sarasota Opera. Miss Johannsen was the First Place Winner of the Opera Index Competition and has been a winner of the Liederkranz Competition and Wagner Society in New York, as well as the prestigious George London Award.

In 1994, Miss Johannsen sang her German debut in the role of Donna Elvira for Theater Giessen. There followed Senta in *The Flying Dutchman* in Hof in the "Urtext" version, where she was described by Opernwelt as being a Senta "who knows the perfect interpretation of the Ballade." Senta is a role that she has sung in Rome, Braunschweig, Bremerhaven and the Eutin Summer Festival. For Bremerhaven, she sang in one season Abiagille in *Nabucco* and a highly praised debut as Elektra. Further appearances as Elektra were in Verona, where she was double cast with Hildebard Behrens, and also in Mannheim, Darmstadt and Oldenburg.

Miss Johannsen sang her first Isolde in Carnegie Hall in a Dress Rehearsal with Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York. Her stage debut with the role was in Oldenburg, Germany. Miss Johannsen also covered Waltraut Meier in the role in the highly publicized Peter Sellars/Bob Viola/Esa-Pekka Salonen production of *Tristan und Isolde* for the Opera Bastille.

Miss Johannsen has sung all of the Brünnhildes in various productions in Oldenburg, Magdeburg, and Augsburg as well as the whole *Ring* Cycle in Braunschweig. Other roles in the German repertoire are Ariadne and Ortrud and Fidelio. In Italian repertoire, Miss Johannsen has had great success in the roles of Turandot, Tosca and Abigaille.

Miss Johannsen has also been featured as a concert soloist with works like Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, Ravel's *Shéhérezade* and Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* with orchestras all over Europe. In New York, Miss Johannsen has been featured by Oratorio Society in Carnegie Hall, singing the Gounod *Gallia* and the Wagner *Wesendonck Lieder* with orchestra, and, in a later engagement, as the soprano soloist of the Verdi *Requiem*. She is also an experienced recitalist presenting programmes in many languages and stylistic directions.