

ELIZABETH BYRNE

SOPRANO



Established as one of the most exciting dramatic sopranos of her generation, the success of **Elizabeth Byrne's** first integral performances of the role of Brünnhilde in the new Tim Albery production of Wagner's Ring Cycle at the Scottish Opera was recognized by a Royal Philharmonic Society Award Nomination. Of her performances, The Scotsman reported "This epic cycle has made a star out of soprano Elizabeth Byrne who has grown both vocally and dramatically into the role of Brünnhilde with electrifying results. She never fails to create a frisson of excitement whenever she appears on stage – a wily and tense heroine whose power is understated but never in doubt." And of her appearance in *Die Walküre* at the Edinburgh Festival, Paul Griffiths of The New York Times wrote that "Ms. Byrne has a voice of flame and accuracy, the voice of a young person keenly in tune with herself, quick and 100 percent in her emotional responses. She also had vitality in her stage presence."

Particularly suited to the German repertoire Ms. Byrne has been seen as Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer* with Portland Opera, Arizona Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro James Levine. In operas from Wagner's Ring Cycle she has been seen as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* with the Staatstheater Stuttgart, Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* at the Austin Lyric Opera, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* in concert with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, as well as Gutrune and Gerhilde in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's first complete Ring Cycle conducted by Zubin Mehta. Ms. Byrne has also covered the roles of both Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and Leonora in *Fidelio* at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as Isolde in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* for San Francisco Opera. Other career highlights include Kostelnièka in Jonathan Miller's production of *Jenùfa* and the title role in *Salome* at Glimmerglass Opera, the Composer in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Dallas Opera, and Leonora in *Fidelio* with the Scottish Opera. At the Metropolitan Opera she has been seen as The Duchess of Parma in Busoni's *Doktor Faust* and the Fourth Maid in *Elektra* and at the Lyric Opera of Chicago she performed the role of the Overseer in the Götz Friedrich production of *Elektra* and cover Ortrud in *Lohengrin*. Most recently Ms. Byrne was seen as the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* with Indianapolis Opera, after previously having sung the Mother with the Phoenix Symphony. She has also been heard as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* with Indianapolis Opera, the Mother in *Hansel and Gretel* with Portland Opera, and Herodias in *Salome* with Minnesota Opera. In the next seasons she'll return to Lyric Opera of Chicago in the production of *Elektra* and *Hansel and Gretel*, and the Metropolitan Opera in their production of *Die Walküre*.

An excellent musician, Elizabeth Byrne is noted for her performances of contemporary operas having sung the world premiere performances of the role of Blanca in James MacMillan's opera *Inés de Castro* at the Edinburgh Festival. The work was also performed in Glasgow and in Oporto, Portugal. Jonathan Moore directed the Scottish Opera production, which was broadcast on BBC-TV. In concert, Elizabeth Byrne has performed Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* at Royal Albert Hall and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 14* at Canada's National Arts Centre. She made her Avery Fisher Hall debut performing Zemlinsky's rarely-heard *Lyric Symphony* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra. She has performed the Verdi *Requiem* with the Alabama Symphony and the Greensboro Symphony, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the symphony orchestras of Utah, Seattle, Richmond, and South Bend Symphony. She has appeared in concert at the Buxton Festival and at the Prague Festival, with the New Seoul Symphony in Korea, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Fort Wayne Symphony and with the Northwest Indiana Symphony. Her first performances of the *Liebestod* by Richard Strauss were with the Valdosta Symphony.

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Suggested Repertoire

BEETHOVEN	Leonore	FIDELIO
ALBAN BERG	Countess Geschwitz	LULU
BERLIOZ	Cassandra	THE TROJANS
BOITO	Elena, Margerita	MEFISTOFELE
BRITTEN	Lady Billows	ALBERT HERRING.
	Queen Elizabeth	GLORIANA
	Mrs. Grose, Miss Jessel	THE TURN OF THE SCREW
DEBUSSY	Genevieve	PELLEAS AND MELISANDE
DUKAS	Judith	BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE
GIORDANO	Maddalena di Ciogny	ANDREA CHENIER
HUMPERDINCK	Mother, Witch	HANSEL AND GRETEL
JANACEK	Kostelnicka	JENUFA
MASCAGNI	Santuzza	CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
MASSENET	Herodias	HERODIADE
MUSSORGSKY	Marina	BORIS GODUNOV
SCHOENBERG		ERWARTUNG
STRAVINSKY	Jocasta	OEDIPUS REX
SHOSTAKOVITCH	Katerina Ismailova	LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK
RICHARD STRAUSS	Ariadne, Komponist	ARIADNE AUF NAXOS
	The Countess	CAPRICCIO
	Barak's Wife(The Dyer's Wife)	DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN
	Herodias	SALOME
VERDI	Aida, Amneris	AIDA
	Lady Macbeth	MACBETH
	Abigaille	NABUCCO
WAGNER	Fricka	DAS RHEINGOLD
	Sieglinde, Brünnhilde,	DIE WALKÜRE
	Frika, Gerhilde, Ortlinde	DIE WALKÜRE
	Brünnhilde	SIEGFRIED
	Brünnhilde, Gutrune	GOTTERDÄMMERUNG
	Senta	THE FLYING DUTCHMAN
	Ortrud	LOHENGRIN
	Kundry	PARSIFAL
	Venus	TANNHAUSER
	Isolde, Brangaene	TRISTAN & ISOLDE

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Critical Acclaim

Portland Opera – *Hansel and Gretel*

“As the Mother, Elizabeth Byrne terrifically portrayed a woman who was pushed to her wits end when she harshly judged her children.”

- Oregon Music News

Minnesota Opera – *Salome*

“Elizabeth Byrne, herself an accomplished Salome, makes something memorable of Herodias' every line. “

- Star Tribune

“Elizabeth Byrne’s Herodias was more conventional — sneering and cruel”

- Minnpost

“And as the understandably embittered Queen Herodias, soprano Elizabeth Byrne serves as the modulating counterbalance to all this heightened passion.”

- Examiner.com

Indianapolis Opera – *Hansel and Gretel*

“Elizabeth Byrne's portrayal of the Witch was delightful. The British-born, Chicago-based dramatic soprano took an earthy, alluring approach -- as a dotty old eccentric, not a scary specter.”

-Indianapolis Star

Scottish Opera – *Die Walküre*

“Ms. Byrne has a voice of flame and accuracy, the voice of a young person keenly in tune with herself, quick and 100 percent in her soft emotional responses. She also had a vitality in her stage presence.”

-The New York Times

“This epic cycle has also made a star of soprano Elizabeth Byrne, who has grown both vocally and dramatically into the role of Brünnhilde with electrifying results. She never fails to create a frisson of excitement whenever she appears on stage – a wily and tense heroine whose power is understated but never in doubt.”

-The Scotsman

“...Elizabeth Byrne’s Brünnhilde is astonishing as she grows to inhabit every corner of the role.”

“Elizabeth Byrne is an immensely generous – with voice and emotion – Brünnhilde, giving such an unstinting performance...”

-The Times

“Elizabeth Byrne grows increasingly passionate as she charts Brünnhilde’s transformation from frigid Valkyrie to complex human being.”

-The Guardian

“Brünnhilde, in the person of Elizabeth Byrne, was lithe, plucky, refreshingly young, and vocally tireless, a wonderful performance.”

-The Herald

Austin Lyric Opera – Die Fliegende Holländer

“...the lovely young Senta was so driven to redeem the doomed captain, but in her obsessive intensity, Elizabeth Byrne left no doubt that she was, and in that she certainly held our attention.”

-The Austin Chronicle

“Byrne’s bright gloss and slightly metallic edge...her singing was always pleasurable.”

-San Antonio Express

Glimmerglass Opera – Salome

“Elizabeth Byrne sings convincingly in the title role.”

-The New York Times

“Soprano Elizabeth Byrne portrayed a vocally feminine introspective princess, which belied the volcanic and pathological eroticism of the troubled teenage, hell-bent for the head of the Baptist. Strauss asked much of Salome, setting the demanding vocal line over thick orchestrations punctuated with percussive intrusions. Byrne struck the balance between big vocal sound and crumbling teenager.”

-Times Union

“Elizabeth Byrne as Salome is up to the challenge. Her voice is large, capable of the Straussian ‘crescendi’ and either lovely or harsh as the moment demands. Musically and visually persuasive, she becomes completely caught up in the sensuous and macabre elements of her character. Although her final scene is not for the faint of heart it is the most powerful. Byrne owns Salome.”

-Utica Observer-Dispatch

Minnesota Opera – Tosca

“...what Byrne did create was not only believable but showed the progression in Tosca from diva to jealous lover to heroic defier of tyranny. And unlike many sopranos, who turn ‘Vissi d’arte’ into a mere vocal statement, Byrne gave the number ample emotion, showing us a woman at her breaking point. Her singing throughout was well-produced and beautifully focused.”

-Star Tribune

“Elizabeth Byrne, who sang the title role, is a Wagnerian as well as Puccini soprano. Physically and vocally, she is imposing, a true diva. Her voice has a core of iron, which she can bend to her will. She came off haughty and bossy in her first scene with her lover Cavaradossi, but in the second act confrontation with Scarpia, she showed deep tenderness alongside unstoppable resolve.”

-Pioneer Press