

About Fionnuala McCarthy

A once aspiring cellist, the Irish soprano Fionnuala McCarthy had originally intended to pursue an orchestra career. After completing her Bachelor of Music and her Performer's Diploma in Cello, Piano and Voice at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, she had a change of mind, however, and opted for singing instead. A scholarship enabled her to continue her vocal studies abroad at the Music Conservatory in Detmold, Germany with Professor Helmut Kretschmar.

While studying in Detmold, she rapidly secured a contract with the *Nationaltheater Mannheim*, where she remained for two years before committing to the *Deutsche Oper am Rhein* in Düsseldorf. It was here she laid down the foundations of the lyric repertoire, singing the roles of *Pamina*, *Gretel*, *Frau Fluth*, *Mimi*, *Ilia*, *Antonia*, *Alice*, *Poppea*, *Liu* and *Violetta*.

After a guest contract in 1993 at the *Komische Oper Berlin*, portraying the roles of *Suor Angelica* and *Nedda*, she was contracted by the *Deutsche Oper Berlin*, a member of whose ensemble she has remained since 1994.

During the course of her career, Fionnuala has acquired a broad and diverse repertoire: *Juliette* in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (at the Deutsche Oper Berlin with Francisco Araiza), at a later stage in Harry Kupfer's production at the Komische Oper, *Susanna* in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Marzelline* in *Fidelio*, *Ighino* in *Palestrina*, the soprano parts in Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion* and *Carmina Burana*, both in staged versions by Götz Friedrich, *Manon* (Massenet), *Blanche* in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* and the *Vixen* in Janacék's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Katharina Thalbach's much acclaimed spectacle.

Other roles such as *Sophie* in *Rosenkavalier* and *Werther*, *Lauretta* in Gianni Schicchi, *Musetta* in *La Bohème*, *Sdenka* in *Arabella*, *Pamina / 1st Lady* in the *Magic Flute*, *Contessa* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Alice* in *Falstaff* have further enhanced and extended her repertoire.

Fionnuala has participated in many international festivals, e.g. in Schwetzingen with the world premiere of the opera *Sansibar* by Eckehard Mayer. In 1997 she sang *Sandrina* in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* at the „Festival de Radio France et Montpellier“. During the „Hamburger Opernwoche“ she interpreted *Micaela* in *Carmen* with Agnes Baltsa and Neil Shicoff. In Vienna 1997 she took part in the Festival „Schloss Schönbrunn“ as *Pamina* in the *Magic Flute*. The latter role in the same year marked her debut at the *Vienna State Opera*.

Between 2006 -2008, Fionnuala was contracted by the *Bayreuther Festspiele* to sing *Woglinde* in *Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* in a production of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* under the musical direction of

Christian Thielemann. A CD-recording of this production was released in 2009.

The soprano has made many guest appearances in international opera houses. In Vienna at the *Volksooper* she was *Eva* in a production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nuremberg*, directed by Christine Mielitz. She subsequently performed the same role in *La Monnaie* in Brussels and in Antwerp.

At *Le Grand Théâtre de Genève* she accomplished her first *Fiordiligi* under the musical direction of Phillippe Jordan, later she sang the role at the *Dresdner Semperoper*.

Fionnuala is an established concert singer, her repertoire spanning works such as Bach's *St. John and St. Matthew Passions*, Mendelssohn's *Elias and Paulus*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri*, *Beethoven Symphony No. 9* and *Mahler Symphony No.2*.

At the *Ruhr. 2010* festival she sang Richard Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder*.

In 2009 her CD-recording of Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* in a version for piano and timpani was released by Glor Classics.

Also released by Glor Classics in 2011 is her recording of Strawinsky's *Les Noces*, conducted by Sylvain Cambreling.

Her latest LP-CD recording was released in May 2011 by ACOUSENCE records, together with the *Horenstein Ensemble*, featuring 3 songs by Vaughan Williams entitled *Merciless Beauty*.