

biography



DAME FELICITY PALMER – MEZZO-SOPRANO

“It’s the quality of the performances that makes this a must see...Felicity Palmer’s terrifying then touching Marquise de Berkenfeld summons up quaking vocal reserves from the baritone register then displays deft digits on the ivories in the singing lesson.”

Richard Morrison, *Times*

Felicity Palmer has had a career spanning some four decades, firstly as a concert soprano and, during the 1980s, as an operatic mezzo-soprano.

Her early work included a wide variety of repertoire, from baroque music (with Sir Roger Norrington, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and concerts and recordings with Nikolaus Harnoncourt), to contemporary works with the London Sinfonietta and David Atherton and work with Pierre Boulez, with whom she recorded and toured Messiaen’s *Poemes pour Mi* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She met the composer when she later performed the same work with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta.

During her soprano years she made a tour of Australia for the ABC and worked, among others, with Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis, Rozhdstvensky (Shostakovich Symphony No.14 and *The Trojans* at the BBC Proms), Raymond Leppard (recording of *Messiah*), Sir Charles Mackerras (recording of *Judas Maccabaeus* for DGG, concert performances and the BBC Proms) as well as concerts with all the major London orchestras, the New York Philharmonic and the LA Philharmonic.

Recital work formed a key part of those years: with Geoffrey Parsons, Graham Johnson and the Songmaker’s Almanac, Roger Vignoles, Malcolm Martineau, Julius Drake and a great deal with John Constable, who, after a QEH concert early on, played for three French song records for Argo Records and two Victorian ballads.

Becoming a mezzo-soprano led to operatic engagements, which soon included regular appearances at Glyndebourne, the Royal Opera House (including *Sweeney Todd* and *Elektra*); her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York in Wagner’s *Ring* with James Levine and many subsequent appearances; *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Munich with Zubin Mehta, *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Riccardo Muti at La Scala and with Michel Plasson in Zurich and Toulouse, as well as work in Amsterdam, Chicago, San Francisco, Paris and ENO in London.

Felicity Palmer has recorded *Elektra* with the WDR Orchestra and Semyon Bychkov and recently, two concerts of the same opera were recorded for the LSO label with Valery Gergiev at the helm. There is also a recording of *Dialogues des Carmélites* with ENO and Paul Daniel.

Dame Felicity Palmer’s recent engagements include *Dialogues of the Carmélites* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Mrs Peachum *The Threepenny Opera* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski, Clytemnestra for Rome Opera, Auntie *Peter Grimes* at La Scala and *Dialogues of the Carmélites* for Bayerische Staatsoper. This season she will sing Mrs Sedley *Peter Grimes* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, conducted by Antonio Pappano, and return to English National Opera to sing the same role in David Alden’s critically acclaimed production that returns to the theatre early next year. She will also appear at the BBC Proms and, in future seasons, return to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

She was made a CBE in 1993 and a Dame of the British Empire in 2011.

Dame Felicity Palmer is represented by Intermusica worldwide.
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