

pressquotes

FELICITY PALMER - MEZZO-SOPRANO

Auntie, Britten *Peter Grimes* from *La Scala Milan* (DVD)

Cond. Robin Ticciati / Dir. Richard Jones

"There is strength from first to last among the soloists...Felicity Palmer a very human Auntie..."

Mark Valencia, *Classical Source*, September 2013

Madame de Croissy, the Prioress in Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmélites* / The Met

Cond. Louis Langrée / dir. John Dexter

"Now we come to Felicity Palmer—Dame Felicity Palmer, who did her Madame de Croissy, the First Prioress. I have said before that this may be the best portrayal in opera today... "But the First Prioress is an easy role to impress in," you might say, "with all that dramatic God-questioning and dying." You would have a point. But the role can be overdone, underdone, inadequately done—and Dame Felicity gives an abiding lesson in it."

Jay Nordlinger, *New York Chronicle*, June 2013

"Felicity Palmer delivered the most haunting instance in the entire performance during the prioress' death scene. In her first entrance, Palmer's voice had an even keel that gave her an authoritative presence. However, the final scene saw that vocal quality slowly darken and then transform into harsh, almost disembodied shrieks of pain. The visceral impact of this scene really expressed the torturous experience of dying with tremendous fear and provided a powerful counterpoint to the more "peaceful" death procession of the Carmélites."

David Salazar, *Latinos Post*, May 2013

"...soprano Felicity Palmer as Madame de Croissy ... made this an extraordinary revival."

Gale Martin, *Bach Track*, May 2013

"... Felicity Palmer, expertly deploying a husk of a mezzo in the agonizing death scene of the order's prioress..."

James Jordan, *New York Post*, May 2013

"As vividly portrayed by the veteran mezzo-soprano Felicity Palmer, the agonies and blasphemies of the prioress were painful and even shocking to witness."

Sioux City Journal, May 2013

Mrs Peachum in Kurt Weill *The Threepenny Opera*

London Philharmonic Orchestra / Royal Festival Hall / cond. Vladimir Jurowski

"Far better were the veterans Felicity Palmer and John Tomlinson as the Peachum parents... Palmer's "Ballad of Sexual Slavery" was pitched between solemnity and deviant horror. These two grotesques helped anchor the younger cast, who seemed unwilling to push into the unpleasant places the authors lead their characters..."

Alexandra Coghlan, *New Statesman*, March 2013

"Old hands Dame Felicity Palmer (Mrs Peachum) and Sir John Tomlinson (J J Peachum) proved that classical musicians can straddle cabaret and the concert hall."

Anna Picard, *Independent*, March 2013

"John Tomlinson and Felicity Palmer were venality incarnate as the Peachums."

Tim Ashley, *Guardian*, March 2013

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"Felicity Palmer's Frau Peachum brought Frickaish authority to bear on her verse, though, and combined line with text to deadpan perfection in the "Ballad of Sexual Bondage".

David Nice, *The Arts Desk*, March 2013

"... Felicity Palmer's splendidly hatchet-voiced Mrs Peachum."

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, four stars, March 2013

Mrs Sedley in Britten *Peter Grimes*

English National Opera / BBC Proms / cond. Edward Gardner

"As Mrs Sedley, Dame Felicity Palmer enunciated every word crisply and with self-justifying emphasis, just as one imagines this self-righteous laudanum addict would pontificate. But, Palmer injected another dimension, conveying Mrs Sedley's essential isolation from the Borough whose moral position she assumes she articulates. Seated in the chorus, alone at the end of a row, during the Sunday Morning scene, she struck a rather pitiful figure".

Claire Seymour, *Opera Today*, September 2012

"Grimes's persecutors, all of them superbly characterised, included... Felicity Palmer as the most terrifying Mrs Sedley imaginable."

Tim Ashley, *Guardian*, August 2012

"Thanks to Dame Felicity Palmer, Mrs Sedley was portrayed as a dotty, handbag-wearing, meddling old bat—a bit like Miss Marple, but far better at gossiping than solving crimes."

Julia Savage, *Bachtrack.com*, August 2012

"Even straight-as-a-die portrayals such as Felicity Palmer's hypocritical Mrs Sedley had subtleties that fleshed out her 'bigoted old trout' personality..."

Mark Valencia, *Classicalsource.com*, August 2012

"An exceptional cast... Dame Felicity Palmer 'is' Mrs Sedley, every nuance of the character's neurosis conveyed both by phrasing and gesture."

Melanie Eskenazi, *musicOMH.com*, August 2012

Dame Carruthers in Gilbert & Sullivan *The Yeomen of the Guard*

BBC Proms / cond. Jane Glover

"Outstandingly, we had the magisterial Felicity Palmer as Dame Carruthers..."

Rupert Christiansen, *Telegraph*, August 2012

"Felicity Palmer's Dame Carruthers [was] a model of focused tone and diction combining in a perfectly realised characterisation: the Tower of London, you feel, would be safe in her hands any day."

George Hall, *The Guardian*, August 2012

"Felicity Palmer [was] splendid as the cheerful "housekeeper of the Tower" Dame Carruthers, a character thoroughly surreal in a particularly Gilbertian manner."

David Carlin, *Bachtrack.com*, August 2012

Klytemnestra in Strauss's *Elektra* (concert performance)

London Symphony Orchestra / cond. Valery Gergiev

CD Recording / LSO LIVE, 2012

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"Thank heaven for the veteran Klytämnestra, Felicity Palmer: at sixty-five, she is trenchant but solid and healthy of voice, as well as alert to every expressive nuance of text and dynamics. Palmer and the fine orchestral solo work are the best reasons to sample this release".

David Shengold, *Opera News*, October 2012

"Her sound remains steady, richly textured in the all-important lower octave and acutely responsive to musical and dramatic needs, Palmer's entire career has been one of making sung text meaningful and that skill 'kicks in' here, with every line not only impeccably enunciated but perceptively inflected (listen, early on, to 'O Götter, warum?': this woman's torment is already memorably present). Caricature is totally eschewed; however tortured Klytämnestra may be, Palmer maintains an innate regality in her vocal presence. She has so many colours to work with – she can seduce as persuasively as she can thunder. 'Ich habe keine guten Nächte' is perfectly judged (especially the whispered 'Nichts ist es') and one feels the character increasingly struck with horror. When this queen indicates to Elektra that she has forbidden mention of Orest's name, her hatred of her son is terrifying... Any Elektra enthusiast will want to hear ... the magnificent Palmer."

Roger Pines, *International Record Review*, August 2012

"It is difficult to find any faults in Felicity Palmer's classic Klytämnestra. Under her dramatic management her long, constantly evolving scene is compelling. The voice in the lower reaches has the colour, strength and solidity of mahogany. There are no signs of a break between registers. Throughout the words are crystal-clear, permitting only a very occasional exaggeration. Indeed she is always scrupulously musical and no thoughts of caricature invade one's attention."

Richard Nicholson, *ClassicalSource.com*, July 2012

"Felicity Palmer is as superb and impressive as ever, her voice seems to be immune against the ravages of time."

Jacques Schmitt, *Res Musica*, July 2012

"The added bonus of the wonderful acting and solid singing of Felicity Palmer (Klytemnestra) ... add to the overt value of this production."

Steven Ritter, *Audiophile Audition*, August 2012

Auntie in Britten's *Peter Grimes* / Teatro alla Scala Cond. Robin Ticciati / dir. Richard Jones

"If I say that all singers excelled in their roles I cannot fail to mention Palmer's fantastic Auntie..."

Jorge Binaghi, *Mundoclasico.com*, June 2012

Diction Coach in Humperdinck *Hansel and Gretel* / The Metropolitan Opera Cond. Robin Ticciati / Prod. Richard Jones

"The production benefits from David Pountney's agreeable English translation, with no less a practitioner of crisp diction than Felicity Palmer billed as English coach."

George Loomis, *Musical America*, December 2011

Genevieve in Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* The Metropolitan Opera / cond. Sir Simon Rattle / dir. Jonathan Miller

"Felicity Palmer brought dignity and gravitas to the role of Geneviève."

Ronnie Reich, *New Jersey Local News*, December 2010

Klytemnestra in Strauss's *Elektra* (concert performance) London Symphony Orchestra / cond. Valery Gergiev

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“The standout performer was the matchless Felicity Palmer, whose Clytemnestra — foul, but humane and frail with it — somehow managed to charm as much as horrify.”

Neil Fisher, *The Times*, January 2010

“Palmer’s handling of her dream-monologue, her guilty mind shredded ‘like a gown eaten by moths’, was a tour de force.”

Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer*, January 2010

“Angela Denoke, revelling in Chrysothemis’s Straussian raptures, and Felicity Palmer, an imperious yet vulnerable Clytemnestra, were both pretty much ideal.”

Rupert Christansen, *The Telegraph*, January 2010

“The only principal wholly inside her role was Felicity Palmer as Klytemnaestra – a complete marriage of vocalism and histrionics.”

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, January 2010

“Palmer’s lip-smacking, whip-cracking, ululating Clytemnestra underpinned Grand Guignol invective with intelligent, humane details.”

Anna Picard, *The Independent*, January 2010

“The sensational Felicity Palmer evoked just that and then some as Clytemnestra, her sepulchral rasps turning the line “my nights are bad” into the understatement of the century.”

Edward Seckeron, *The Independent*, January 2010

“Felicity Palmer has still got what it takes. The passing years seem only to increase her suitability for her signature role of Clytemnestra. Her tone has all the substance, character and, most importantly of all, menace that the part requires. The image of her in her stately black satin dress, cackling maniacally at the humiliated Elektra is one that will stay with me for a long time.”

Gavin Dixon, *Seen and Heard International*, January 2010

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Klytemnestra in Strauss's *Elektra*

The Metropolitan Opera / cond. Fabio Luisi / Otto Schenk revival production

"As the mother to end all mothers, Klytemnestra, mezzo-soprano Felicity Palmer was impressive in her one extended scene, managing to be both terrifying and terrified at the same time."

Mike Silverman, *The Associated Press*, December 2009

"Felicity Palmer offered a vivid interpretation of the cranky, drug-addled and sleep-deprived Klytemnestra, who represses memory of her crime and is plagued by nightmares."

Vivien Schweitzer, *The New York Times*, December 2009

"Felicity Palmer brought an arresting, viperous intensity to the role of Klytämnestra."

Susan Stempleski, *Classical Source*, December 2009

Countess in Tchaikovsky *The Queen of Spades*

The Metropolitan Opera / cond. Seiji Ozawa / dir. Elijah Moshinsky

"Palmer stood out with a harrowing portrayal of the Countess, who dies of fright when Ghermann tries to find out the secret three-card sequence."

Ronald Blum, *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2008

"The opera is dominated by and named for a supporting role, the Countess, Lisa's grandmother, portrayed grippingly here by the veteran mezzo-soprano Felicity Palmer. In her youth the Countess, called the Queen of Spades, was also obsessed with gambling. She is thought to be guarding the secret to the three cards that can win at the tables. In the scene in which the Countess, returned to her spacious bedroom after an elegant ball, thinks of the days when she was young and desirable and sings the refrains of an 18th-century French aria by André Grétry, Ms. Palmer conveyed the imposing old woman's vulnerability through a worn, crackly and affecting voice."

Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, December 2008

Marquise de Berkenfield in Donizetti's *La fille du regiment*

The Metropolitan Opera / cond. Bruno Campanella/ dir. Laurent Pelly

"Felicity Palmer capitalised on crusty chest-tones as an endearingly supercilious Marquise of Berkenfield"

Martin Bernheimer, *Financial Times*, April 2008

Kabanicha in Janáček *Katya Kabanova*

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden / cond. Sir Charles Mackerras / dir. Trevor Nunn

"Felicity Palmer, singing the Kabanicha, incredibly for the first time here, incarnates a Tsar-like tyranny in her rigid presence, and in an iron voice that finds its serrated edge just where it hurts most."

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, June 2007

"Palmer never descends into caricature, so her tight-lipped venom is all the more terrifying, every note wrenched from somewhere dark and cavernous."

Nick Kimberley, *Evening Standard*, June 2007

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**Madame de Croissy in Poulenc *Dialogues des Carmelites*
Lyric Opera of Chicago / cond. Andrew Davis / dir. Robert Carsen**

"The loudest ovation deservedly went to mezzo-soprano Felicity Palmer for her mesmerizing portrayal of Madame de Croissy, the fatally ill prioress. She brought profoundly human conviction to the mother superior's death agonies, in which she bitterly questions why God should abandon one whose life was based on faith and humility."

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, February 2007

**La Marquise de Berkenfeld in Donizetti *La Fille du régiment*
Royal Opera House / cond. Bruno Campanella / dir. Laurent Pelly**

"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, *The Times*, January 2007

"A marvelous character actor/singer our own Felicity Palmer ensure that the comedy is well anchored"

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, January 2007

"As La Marquise, Felicity Palmer was impeccable"

Fiona Maddocks, *Evening Standard*, January 2007

"There are scene stealing character parts for Felicity Palmer and the wonder of it all is that her French dialogue comes across as if it were English."

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, January 2007

"Felicity Palmer's Marquise is a sort of cross between her ENO Katisha and Covent Garden Klytaemnestra, simultaneously hilarious and touching"

Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times*, January 2007