

pressquotes

LEIGH MELROSE, BARITONE

**Title role in Berg *Wozzeck* / ENO
cond. Edward Gardner / dir. Carrie Cracknell**

"Lost in the phantasmagoric visions that over-take his reality, Melrose finds – and more impressively sustains – an edgy place for Berg's demanding vocal writing that chafes thrillingly against the orchestral richness from Ed Gardner's pit."

Alexandra Coghlan, *New Statesman*, May 2013

"...with the baritone Leigh Melrose superb at the head of an internationally distinguished cast."

Paul Driver, *Sunday Times*, May 2013

**Escamillo in Bizet *Carmen* / London Coliseum
English National Opera / cond. Ryan Wigglesworth / dir. Calixto Bieito**

"[Leigh Melrose] was confidently and beautifully voiced. I wish he had been allowed the full version of the duel duet".

Sebastian Petit, *Opera Britannia*, November 2012

"Leigh Melrose delivered a wonderfully spivvy, darkly sung Escamillo, and the sight of him at the end of the 'March of the Toreadors', alone in his bullfighter's lights, was an unforgettable bit of direction".

Peter Reed, *Classical Source*, November 2012

"Leigh Melrose [acted his heart out] as Escamillo, the toreador. [T]his is a "Carmen" that reminds you how superb the familiar music is."

Paul Levy, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 2012

"As Escamillo, Leigh Melrose absolutely stole the show! His voice has a solid, syrupy core that he uses ruthlessly to communicate and pull heartstrings (his looks don't hurt either). His acting is natural and he plays the cocky bullfighter expertly".

Michael Migliore, *Musical Criticism*, December 2012

"Leigh Melrose, at first resembling Ol' Blue Eyes in suit and hat then transforming into a macho bullfighter, was secure as Escamillo".

Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer*, November 2012

**Ned Keene in Britten *Peter Grimes*
BBC Proms 2012 / cond. Edward Gardner**

"Leigh Melrose's Ned Keene was fittingly dark and sinister".

Claire Seymour, *Opera Today*, September 2012

**Papageno / *Die Zauberflöte* / San Sebastian
cond. Jaime Martín**

"Baritone Leigh Melrose impressed with his strong and secure voice..."

"barítono Leigh Melrose por su firme y segura voz."

Nino Dentici, *El Correo*, August 2012

"Leigh Melrose, fulfilled the demands of the role superbly as an actor and singer..."

"Leigh Melrose, en la línea de lo que Papageno requiere, fue un gran actor y un cantante correcto..."

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

Mikel Chamizo, *Gara.net*, August 2012

Title role in Berg *Wozzeck* / Landestheater Salzburg / cond. Leo Hussain

“Leigh Melrose is, with the metallic baritone energy and the increasingly hard-wearing vocal core, an excellent Wozzeck.”

Karl Harb, *Salzburger Nachrichten*, May 2012

“Vocally, Leigh Melrose goes effortlessly into the deepest, dissonant twelve-tone abyss.”

Jörn Florian Fuchs, *DeutschlandRundfunk*, May 2012

“Wozzeck himself seems the most clear-sighted, the British baritone Leigh Melrose gives this gearing a precise acting form and vocal incisiveness”

Florian Oberhumme, *Oe24.at*, May 2012

Patrick Hadley *Fen and Flood*

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra / cond. Paul Daniel / Albion Records / ALBCD012

“Performances by soprano Mary Bevan and baritone Leigh Melrose in *Fen and Flood* are excellent”

San Francisco Classical Voice, September 2011

“*The Captain’s Apprentice* is Vaughan Williams’s arrangement of a two-minute song used in *Fen and Flood*... sung solo by the ravishing Leigh Melrose... natural, sensitive, and gorgeous.”

American Record Guide, January 2012

Tadeusz in Weinburg *The Passenger* / English National Opera

cond. Richard Armstrong / dir. David Pountney

“The climax, musically and emotionally, comes when Marta’s proud violinist fiancé, Tadeusz, sung with compelling anger by Leigh Melrose...”

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, September 2011

“Leigh Melrose’s Tadeusz is a figure of heroic defiance”

Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times*, September, 2011

“Tadeusz was superbly sung by Leigh Melrose.”

Fiona Maddocks, *The Guardian*, September 2011

“Kim Begley and Leigh Melrose are strong as Walter and Tadeusz”

John Alison, *The Telegraph*, September 2011

“He’s a superb singer and performer and I expect him to give his very best in the opera...”

(Quoting Michael Church - The Independent newspaper’s music critic)

Peter Gruner, *Islington Tribune*, August 2011

Britten *Cantata misericordium* / BBC Proms 2011

BBC Symphony Orchestra / cond. Mark Wigglesworth

“Leigh Melrose ...was at the forefront in *Cantata misericordium* ...this was a faultless performance...”

Leigh Melrose... gave an impassioned performance as the beleaguered traveller.”

Adrian Horsewood, *MusicoOMH*, August 2011

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

"Leigh Melrose...put eloquent effort into making the vocal lines fly."

Geoff Brown, *The Times*, August 2011

**Peter Maxwell Davies *Eight Songs for a Mad King* / Queen Elizabeth Hall
London Sinfonietta / cond. Baldur Brönnimann**

"Leigh Melrose gave a *tour de force* of a performance, every wail and word from memory, and when required to sing, did so with typical mellifluousness."

Colin Anderson, *Classical Source*, June 2011

"He despatched the extended technique brilliantly. He screeched. He squealed. He howled. He rasped. And he made sure that no one sound was ever alone. This is not a simple madman, and his is not a simple voice. There was screechy howling, squeally screeching and howly whispering. There was much detail in the pungency. And there was emotion too. As the songs become increasingly knowing, Melrose became increasingly haunted. He flirts with a flute. He smashes a violin (gulp - a stomach-in-throat moment for those who didn't know it was a fake). And he's chased off stage by a big bass drum. It was moving..."

The Arts Desk, June 2011

**Martin Suckling *Candlebird* (World Premiere) / Queen Elizabeth Hall
London Sinfonietta / cond. Nicholas Collon**

"Leigh Melrose's enthusiastic baritone made every note and phrase expressive."

The Times, May 2011

"In the title song, sliding, indistinct string melodies sound like a Brahms sextet melting in extreme heat. Baritone Leigh Melrose rose superbly to the music's demands."

The Guardian, May 2011

**Papageno in Mozart *Die Zauberflöte* / Seattle Opera
cond. Gary Thor Wedow / dir. Chris Alexander**

"As Tamino's sidekick Papageno, the infuriating bird-catcher whose only wish is to eat good food and find a wife, Leigh Melrose inhabited the part like his own birds: chatty, skittish and comical with a one-legged stork pose for frightening moments. His aria, 'Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen', had real sorrow."

The News Tribune, May 2011

"Leigh Melrose played Papageno from just the right angle, and proved himself the most rounded artist of the whole production; both vocally sound and dramatically effective."

Resmusica, May 2011

**Carter *On Conversing with Paradise* / Ensemble Intercontemporain
cond. Ludovic Morlot**

"'On Conversing with Paradise' fut chantée ce soir par le baryton Leigh Melrose qui l'a créée en 2009 (Festival d'Aldeburg) et gravée dans la foulée pour le label Bridge Records. (...) Leigh Melrose prêtait sa voix ample et flexible à ce long poème dont Carter restitue très fidèlement la valeur expressive et incantatoire."

"'On Conversing with Paradise' was sung by baritone Leigh Melrose, who premiered the piece in 2009 at Aldeburgh Festival, and recorded it shortly after on the Bridge Records label. (...) Leigh Melrose lent his full and flexible voice to Ezra Pound's long poem, set to music by Elliott Carter, who remained faithful to the poem's expressive and incantatory nature."

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

Resmusica, February 2011

**Bormenthal in Raskatov *A Dog's Heart* / English National Opera
cond. Garry Walker / dir. Simon McBurney**

"Leigh Melrose's impressively sung, alternately solid and near-collapsed Bormenthal, the professor's assistant, was in many ways the main foil to Peter Hoare's thoroughly crazed and creepy Sharikov"

MusicOMH, November 2010

**Finnissy *Maldon* / Queen Elizabeth Hall
London Sinfonietta / Cond. James Weeks**

"Leigh Melrose produced astounding volume and colour in his account of Byrhtnoth's battle"

Classical Source, October 2010

"Then came Michael Finnissy's *Maldon*, an Anglo-Saxon commentary on war superbly declaimed by the baritone Leigh Melrose."

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, October 2010

Rosenblatt Recital at St John's Smith Square, London / acc. Simon Lepper

"The third Rosenblatt recital deserved a medal for gallantry. The scheduled singer succumbed to a cold in the morning, and the young baritone Leigh Melrose answered the call. He sang a full programme of operatic arias, with well-placed confidence in a sturdy voice and a communicative personality."

John Steane, *Opera Now*, January 2010

"The Rosenblatt recital promoters were fortunate to secure the services of Leigh Melrose when the singer scheduled to appear at St. John's, Smith Square on September 23 fell ill. At only a few hours' notice, he stepped into the breach, with minimum rehearsal, and offered a programme of arias performed with polish and confidence that demonstrated his familiarity with the roles; and the fact that he had no need to bury his face in the scores gave him the freedom to animate them. A young baritone who is steadily building a career in opera, Melrose has a repertory that ranges from Mozart and Rossini through Leoncavallo and Puccini to Britten, plus forays into the contemporary field. Two Mozart arias revealed a big baritone sound, the bottom register rich and strong: Guglielmo's *Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo* from *Così fan tutte* conjured up a rounded characterisation; and Papageno's song of longing for Papagena in *The Magic Flute* plumbed the birdcatcher's despair as his hopes fade. Melrose showed a command of 19th-century French operatic style in Valentin's ardent *Avant de quitter* from *Faust* and in Hamlet's *O vin, dissipe la tristesse* by Ambroise Thomas. From *The Queen of Spades* by Tchaikovsky he infused emotional intensity into Prince Yeletsky's outpouring of his love to Lisa, his voice rising to a finely-gauged swelling phrase at the conclusion. Most moving of all was the baritone's deeply-felt singing of Billy Budd's soliloquy as he contemplates his imminent hanging and burial at sea in Britten's opera. Two more ladykilling roles displayed Melrose's stagecraft: first, Sergeant Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and then from Bizet's *Carmen* the toreador Escamillo, to whom he brought ringing top notes and the easy charm of the practised seducer in his boastful account of his heroics in the bullring."

Musical Opinion, January 2010

**Brahms & Glanert *Four Preludes and Serious Songs*
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / cond. Vasily Petrenko**

"Hamburg-born Glanert has woven a sinuous orchestration around the quartet of songs, brought to life here by soloist Leigh Melrose on his Hope Street debut. The baritone produced crisp and

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

precise German diction and some pleasing phrasing in what was a thoughtful reading of the piece by both singer and Phil.”

Liverpool Echo, November 2009

Xenakis *Aïs* / BBC Proms 2009

BBC Symphony Orchestra / cond. David Robertson

“This was a spectacular performance by baritone Leigh Melrose, who handled the extremes of register (much of the baritone part lies within the soprano range) and the complex demands of Xenakis’s writing with impressive vocal dexterity and a convincingly theatrical delivery.”

MusicWeb International, September 2009

“Although written for baritone, the settings of texts by Homer and Sappho make such demands on the voice that Leigh Melrose was frequently soaring above the orchestra in an amplified falsetto, deploying a range of techniques designed to keep his voice on the edge of expressive tension. Whether growling, barking, or sighing, this was a performance putting into incisive context Xenakis’s vivid description of a journey into Hades.”

Classical Source, September 2009

“Leigh Melrose delivered the disjointed Greek text in virtuoso falsetto swoops and cries that all too briefly relaxed into an almost lyrical, keening line in his normal register.”

Erica Jeal, *The Guardian*, September 2009

“The Xenakis death piece was *Aïs*, 18 savagely eloquent minutes of Homer and Sappho quotations, flung across the Albert Hall’s dome by an ululating baritone (Leigh Melrose, brave), a furious solo percussionist (Colin Currie, indefatigable) and an irruptive orchestra fond of sulphurous brass laments.”

Geoff Brown, *The Times*, September 2009

“The second piece by Xenakis, *Aïs*, was performed with great emotional strength by the soloists Colin Currie and Leigh Melrose. The piece allowed us to experience the power of the percussion; the Kung-fu-like technique of stalling just before engaging bodily contact. There were vivid bird calls from Leigh Melrose, a leading baritone in his Fach. This was a deeply affecting experience of Odysseus’ descent to the Underworld.”

Kulturradio, September 2009

Carter *On Conversing with Paradise* / Aldeburgh Festival Birmingham Contemporary Music Group / cond. Oliver Knussen

“Leigh Melrose sang impressively, supplying euphony as well as fierceness. His indignant repetitions of “vanity” (as in “Pull down thy vanity”) cut through the texture with admonitory stoutness.”

Paul Driver, *The Times*, June 2009

“The baritone (Leigh Melrose, excellent)”

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, June 2009

“...baritone Leigh Melrose and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group evoked a timelessly simple and savage world which made the Maltings rafters ring.”

Michael Church, *Independent*, June 2009

Bartley in Vaughan Williams *Riders to the Sea* / English National Opera

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

cond. Edward Gardner / dir. Fiona Shaw

"But the cast does well, notably...Leigh Melrose's devil-may-care Bartley."

George Hall, *Independent on Sunday*, November 2008

"... an outstanding young cast: Leigh Melrose as the angry remaining son, resolved to follow in his brothers' wake."

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, November 2008

Britten *Death in Venice* / Teatro Liceu, Barcelona

cond. Sebastian Weigle / dir. Willy Decker

"Aschenbach was tailed by a group of six camp cabaret figures led by Leigh Melrose who made a clearly projected cameo as the English Clerk"

Eric Jeal, *Opera Magazine*, July 2008

Tempter in Peter Maxwell Davies *The Martyrdom of St. Magnus*

Hebrides Ensemble / cond. William Conway

"The real character role(s)... baritone Leigh Melrose's sleazily extrovert turn as the Tempter..."

The Guardian, June 2008

Philip Whilby *Bronte Mass*

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / cond. David Hill

"...the outstanding baritone Leigh Melrose evokes the mournful whine of an Aeolian harp by floating up to a ghostly falsetto..."

The Guardian, November 2007

Evan in MacMillan *The Sacrifice* / Welsh National Opera

cond. James Macmillan / dir. Katie Mitchell

"Leigh Melrose makes a convincing political thug..."

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, September 2007

"Leigh Melrose is suitably volatile as a hothead whose jealousy fuels his tribal hatred."

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, September 2007

"Leigh Melrose was spot on as the enemy Evan."

Rupert Christiansen, *Daily Telegraph*, September 2007

"...the love duet in the second act between Sian and Evan, powerfully sung by Lisa Milne and Leigh Melrose, is charming..."

The Herald, September 2007

"The passionate Act II...finely sung by Leigh Melrose."

Stephen Walsh, *Independent*, September 2007

"...splendidly sung by Melrose"

Paul Driver, *The Sunday Times*, October 2007

Sid in Britten *Albert Herring* / Salzburg Landetheater

cond. Ivor Bolton / dir. Stephen Medcalf

"The singing was magnificent without exception, played with lashings of clichés. Yvonne Kenny (Lady Billows), Susan Gorton (housekeeper), James Edwards (Albert), Della Jones (his mother),

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

the young lovers Sid (Leigh Melrose) and Nancy (Astrid Hofer) were all perfectly suited to this "very British" performance. The applause was most enthusiastic."

Salzburger Nachrichten, April 2007

**Lubano in Mozart *Der Stein der Weisen* / Garsington Opera
cond. Steuart Bedford / dir. John Cox**

"Leigh Melrose acts and sings everyone else off stage as Lubano."

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, June 2006

"The jolly gamekeeper Lubano is energetically and engagingly played here by Leigh Melrose."

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, June 2006

**Achille in Offenbach *La Belle Hélène* / English National Opera
cond. Emmanuel Joel / dir. Laurent Pelly**

"The kings duly dominate, with David Kempster and Leigh Melrose giving stand-out performances as Agamemnon and Achilles."

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, April 2006

Escamillo in Bizet *Carmen*

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / cond. Sakari Oramo

"Leigh Melrose served up two verses of Escamillo's alluring Act III song at almost a subdued pianissimo. It was tantalising."

The Independent

**Escamillo in Bizet *Carmen* / Royal Albert Hall
cond. Peter Robinson / dir. David Freeman**

"The best performances came from the other characters. Leigh Melrose made Escamillo more than just a stock figure."

Opera

"Leigh Melrose's Escamillo flourished panache."

Financial Times

"Leigh Melrose was accomplished as Escamillo."

Fiona Maddocks, *Evening Standard*

Demetrius in Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream* / English National Opera

cond. Paul Daniel / dir. Robert Carsen

"Leigh Melrose's darkly sonorous Demetrius."

The Independent

Junius in Britten *The Rape of Lucretia* / English National Opera

cond. Paul Daniel / dir. David McVicar

"Both Clive Bayley as Collatinus and Leigh Melrose as Junius made strong impacts."

Michael Kennedy, Opera

"Clive Bayley and Leigh Melrose were excellent as Collatinus and Junius."

Michael Kennedy, Sunday Telegraph

Rambo in Adams *The Death of Klinghoffer* / Channel 4 Television Film

cond. John Adams / dir. Penny Woolcock

intermusica

Crystal Wharf, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8GJ
Tel: 020 7608 9900 Fax: 020 7490 3263
mail@intermusica.co.uk www.intermusica.co.uk

pressquotes

“English baritone Leigh Melrose is positively terrifying as the vicious Rambo who callously torments the passengers.”

Los Angeles Times

**Silvio in Leoncavallo *I Pagliacci* / Welsh National Opera
cond. Tugan Sokhiev**

“With Leigh Melrose’s sexy Silvio, an advert out of *Men’s Health*, this has all the required machismo and heated elements for a *crime passionel*, an unusually convincing one.”

Michael Tanner, The Spectator

“The performers were all excellent, without exception: (...) the vocal and theatrical versatility of Leigh Melrose...”

Público

**Count Almaviva in Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro* / English National Opera
cond. Jane Glover / dir. Steven Stead**

“From Leigh Melrose’s swaggeringly libidinous Count to Mark Le Brocq’s high-camp Don Basilio, the comedy of the baddies is hilariously broad.”

Anna Picard, Independent

**Junius in Britten *The Rape of Lucretia* / English National Opera
cond. Paul Daniel / dir. David McVicar**

“There’s a rugged young Junius from Leigh Melrose.”

What’s On

“Leigh Melrose was first rate.”

The Times

**Papageno in Mozart *The Magic Flute* / English National Opera
cond. Grant Llewellyn / dir. Nicholas Hytner**

“Naturally Leigh Melrose’s willing handsome smiles steal the applause.”

Evening Standard

**Metifio in Cilea *L’Arlesiana* / Opera Holland Park
cond. John Gibbons / dir. Tom Hawkes**

“Through this world of midday gaiety and dark evening spectres passes Metifio, the dastardly horse-breeder; and baritone Leigh Melrose rolls the vowels splendidly round his throat as he cracks the whip of jealousy.”

The Times