

biography



SUSAN BICKLEY – MEZZO-SOPRANO

“...the outstanding vocal performance: on the first evening Susan Bickley, the extraordinarily versatile mezzo, delivered the most moving and eloquent account of Waltraute’s narration that I have ever witnessed. This was truly great singing, with a use of the words which no one else emulated, and a dramatic intelligence which meant that, as Wagner intended, the distinction between narration and presentation vanished...One rarely, now, comes across such a performance.” Michael Tanner, *The Spectator*, May 2009

Susan Bickley is firmly established as one of the most accomplished mezzo sopranos of her generation, with a wide repertory encompassing the Baroque, the great 19th and 20th Century dramatic roles and the music of today.

Following unanimously acclaimed performances in the 08-09 season with conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Ingo Metzmacher, Trevor Pinnock, Christian Curnyn and Sir Andrew Davis, Susan performs the roles of three formidable women in the 09-10 season in major new productions. Mescalina in the much anticipated *Le Grand Macabre* by Fura dels Baus, her first Babulenska in Richard Jones’ *The Gambler* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden under Antonio Pappano, and Kabanicha *Katya Kabanova* in a production by David Alden at ENO, conducted by Mark Wigglesworth.

Bickley has sung on many of the great stages of the world, performing operatic roles for the Opéra de Paris (Kabanicha), Glyndebourne (Kostelnicka & Baba the Turk), San Francisco Opera (Herodias), Covent Garden (Irene *Theodora*; Ludmilla *Bartered Bride*, Aksinya *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Salzburg Festival (Nono’s *Madre*), De Vlaamse Opera (*Geschwitz Lulu*); and Staatsoper Unter den Linden conducted by Daniel Barenboim (Ghost in Birtwistle’s *The Last Supper*). Well known for her eloquent and engaging performance of contemporary repertoire, Susan has also created roles in *Writing to Vermeer*, Netherlands Opera; Turnage’s *Twice through the Heart* and Gerald Barry’s *The bitter tears of Petra von Kant* both for English National Opera.

On the international concert platform Susan has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras and ensembles. She made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Stravinsky’s *Requiem Canticles*; has sang Ligeti’s *Requiem* and George Benjamin’s *Upon Silence* at the Salzburg Festival, opened the 2008 Edinburgh International Festival singing Begbick *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and regularly appears at the BBC Proms. Recent performances have included Waltraute *Götterdämmerung* and *Alexander Nevsky* with the Hallé Orchestra, Adès’ *America: A prophecy* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Mahler 2 with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Bach’s B minor Mass at the Barbican, London.

In the 09-10 season she will perform with RundfunkChor Berlin, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Northern Sinfonia, Huddersfield Choral Society, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra and at the Three Choirs Festival.

Passionate about lieder, Susan has appeared with Roger Vignoles at the Kennedy Center in Washington, with Iain Burnside in Ludlow and at the Spitalfields Festival, with Julius Drake at St John Smith’s Square and Oxford Lieder Festival, and with the Nash Ensemble at the Wigmore Hall. Her disc of songs by Ivor Gurney with Iain Burnside was released in early autumn 2009.

Recordings by Susan can be heard on EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, BMG, Hyperion and Nimbus, and include Handel *Serse*, *Theodora*, *Solomon*; Purcell *The Fairy Queen*, *Dido and Aeneas*; Vivaldi *Juditha triumphans*; Reynaldo Hahn Songs; George Benjamin *Upon Silence*; Thomas Adès *America, a prophecy*; and Simon Bainbridge’s *Ad ora incerta* and Primo Levi songs.

Susan Bickley is represented by Intermusica.

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