

# pressquotes

## LEIGH MELROSE, BARITONE

### **Xenakis's *Aïs* at the BBC Proms**

#### **BBC Symphony Orchestra / cond. David Robertson / percussion Colin Currie**

"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."

*Carla Rees, 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."

*Ben Hogwood, 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*

### **Carter's *On Conversing with Paradise* at 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, The Independent, 5 stars, June 2009*

### **Bartley in Vaughan Williams *Riders to the Sea***

#### **English National Opera / cond. Ed Gardner / dir. Fiona Shaw**

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

*George Hall, Independent on Sunday, November 2008*

"Around her (Pat Bardon) is an outstanding young cast: Leigh Melrose as the angry remaining son, resolved to follow in his brothers' wake."

*Richard Morrison, The Times, November 2008*

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**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***

**Cond. William Conway / Hebrides Ensemble**

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

*Rowena Smith, The Guardian, June 2008*

**Philip Whilby's *Bronte Mass***

**Cond. David Hill / Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**

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

*Alfred Hickling, The Guardian, November 2007*

**Evan in MacMillan's *The Sacrifice***

**Welsh National Opera / cond. James Macmillan / dir. Katie Mitchell**

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

*Andrew Clark, The 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, The 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..."

*Mike Smith, The Herald, September 2007*

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

*Stephen Walsh, The Independent, September 2007*

"...splendidly sung by Melrose"

*Paul Driver, The Sunday Times, October 2007*

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**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), 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, Ernst P. Strobl, April 2007*

**Lubano in Mozart & Schikander's *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's *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***

**CBSO / cond. Sakari Oramo**

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

*Roderic Dunnett, The Independent, September 2005*

**Escamillo in Bizet *Carmen***

**Raymond Gubbay production (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."

*Patrick O'Connor, Opera, April 2005*

"Leigh Melrose's Escamillo flourished panache."

*Richard Fairman, Financial Times, February 2005*

"Leigh Melrose was accomplished as Escamillo."

*Fiona Maddocks, Evening Standard, February 2005*

**Demetrius in Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

**English National Opera / cond. Paul Daniel / dir. Robert Carsen**

"Leigh Melrose's darkly sonorous Demetrius."

*Bayan Northcutt, The Independent, June 2004*

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**Junius in Britten *The Rape of Lucretia***

**English National Opera (Barbican) / cond. Paul Daniel / dir. David McVicar**

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

*Michael Kennedy, Opera, January 2004*

“Clive Bayley and Leigh Melrose were excellent as Collatinus and Junius.”

*Michael Kennedy, The Sunday Telegraph, November 2003*

**Rambo in Adams *The Death of Klinghoffer***

**cond. John Adams / dir. Penny Woolcock (filmed for Channel 4)**

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

*Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times, April 2003*

**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, March 2003*