

CANADA'S GREAT DIVA: ADRIANNE PIECZONKA

MAKES HER ROLE DEBUT AS AMELIA IN A MASKED BALL

In recent years, the Canadian Opera Company has lured Canada's internationally acclaimed soprano Adrienne Pieczonka from the world's stages of New York, London, Paris, Milan, Berlin, Vienna, Bayreuth and Salzburg to the Four Seasons Centre for one riveting performance after another. This winter, COC audiences

are the first to witness Pieczonka in a role she calls "more dramatic than any other Verdi role I have sung to date" – Amelia in Verdi's *A Masked Ball*.

"Amelia appeals to me because she is a mature woman – she is married and she is a mother, both of which I can relate to," shares Pieczonka. "Amelia

sings a heartbreaking aria begging her husband that, before she is killed, she be allowed to say goodbye to her young son. It's this kind of emotion which really affects me deeply." ■

Adrienne Pieczonka's performance is generously sponsored by Jack Whiteside

Follow the development of Canada's great diva from her early COC appearances to more recent moments in this world-renowned soprano's career abroad and here at home.



Mimì, *La Bohème*, COC, 1994: It was very special to sing Mimì in Toronto. It was my first major collaboration with Richard Bradshaw and my first appearance in Toronto in a major operatic role. Exciting!

Photo: Robert C. Ragsdale



Sieglinde, *Die Walküre*, COC, 2004: To make my debut in the role in an Atom Egoyan production was amazing. I loved working with Atom and hope to collaborate with him again soon. I won a Dora award for my portrayal of Sieglinde, which was a huge honour.

Photo: Michael Cooper



Marschallin, *Der Rosenkavalier*, Bilbao, 1999: The Marschallin is one of my favourite roles of all time. It is such an elegant Strauss role. This was my debut in the role in Bilbao in 1999. As I get older, I can relate more and more to Marie Therese's feelings of fading youth and the inevitable passing of time.

Photo: Bilbao Opera



Lisa, *Pique Dame*, Metropolitan Opera, 2004: Well, I think my expression is self-explanatory! I was making my Met debut as Lisa in *Pique Dame* with Plácido Domingo singing Herman. What a thrill! My entire family came down and celebrated with me. Very happy memories.

Photo courtesy of Adrienne Pieczonka

Arabella, *Arabella*, Glyndebourne, 1996: Arabella is a very special Strauss role close to my heart. I started my career in Vienna and lived there for six years. This opera is Viennese to the core. Living in Vienna helped me greatly to understand the background story of the opera and its characters. Glyndebourne is a magical place. I spent two heavenly summers there. I fell in love with England, especially the English countryside.



Elisabeth de Valois, *Don Carlos*, COC, 2007: It was very sad that Richard Bradshaw died before we began rehearsals on *Don Carlos*. We performed the opera in his memory and I think everyone felt the passion and power of this incredible opera.

Photo: Michael Cooper



Senta, *The Flying Dutchman*, Opéra Bastille 2010. This was my debut as Senta and also my debut at the Opéra Bastille in Paris. The Willy Decker production was so simple and beautiful. He is one of my favourite directors and I've worked with him on many productions. The great James Morris was my Dutchman and again I relished sharing the stage with this seasoned and celebrated Wagner interpreter.

Photo: Fred Toulet



Chrysothemis, *Elektra*, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 2013: I only recently added this Strauss role to my repertoire. I loved this gown and red wig in this production. I felt very glamorous compared to my sister Elektra who was dressed in rags. It's a gruesome opera but the music and libretto are riveting. From the first three chords, Strauss sets the scene for the tortured psychological drama which will unfold.

Photo: Clive Barda



Leonora, *Fidelio*, COC, 2009: I had such a great time singing Leonora. I think the quartet in Act 1 is one of the most heavenly compositions ever written. I had fun wearing the short wig and men's clothing. Everyone told me I looked exactly like my brother!

Photo: Michael Cooper



Mme Lidoine, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, COC, 2013: What a joy it was to sing this gorgeous music by Poulenc. I love Lidoine's strength and conviction. Johannes Debus conducted this delicate score with reverence and depth. It was a very moving, spiritual experience for me. Alexander Neef assembled a wonderful Canadian cast and this production deservedly won several Dora awards!

Photo: Chris Hutcheson



Amelia, *Simon Boccanegra*, Metropolitan Opera, 2010: What a thrill it was to play Plácido Domingo's long-lost daughter Amelia in this beautiful opera. He is such a gentleman and exquisite artist and I was moved deeply in every performance at the moment we discover that we are in fact father-daughter. Singing under James Levine was a dream come true – they call him a "singer's conductor" and I can vouch for this 100%!

Photo: Marty Sohl



Kaiserin, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Vienna State Opera, 2012: This was a gorgeous Robert Carsen production and I felt very glamorous in this wig and robe. The Kaiserin is a fiendishly tricky role and the opera is massive. It's slowly becoming a favourite of mine. It's unlike any other Strauss opera and the music is enigmatic and very soulful.

Photo: Michael Poehn