
Janai Brugger

Selected Reviews

Carmen, Washington National Opera (September 2015)

"...and Janai Brugger as Don Jose's girlfriend from back home, who has come to find him. (Brugger's lovely soprano voice is shown to even greater advantage in the mountain scene when she makes a second pilgrimage to save her love Jose and sings, "*Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante.*") *Susan Galbraith, DC Theatre Scene, September 2015*

"A standout opening night, however, was American soprano Janai Brugger as the jilted Micaela..." *Roger Catlin, Operaworld.com, September 2015*

"A standout is soprano Janai Brugger as Micaela, who has an unrequited crush on José; Brugger is sparkling, draws rich colors, and is naturally sympathetic—though it's a bad sign for any *Carmen* that the most exciting role is someone not named Carmen." *Mike Paarlburg, Washington City Paper, September 2015*

"Janai Brugger was a quite glorious Micaëla: white-gloved, of course, and with sensible shoes, but a voice not at all that of the girl-next-door." *Hilary Stroh, Backtrack, September 2015*

"Janai Brugger, a sweet-voiced and slightly spunky Micaëla" *Anne Midgette, The Washington Post, September 2015*

Die Zauberflöte, Royal Opera House (February 2015)

"Pamina turns out to be the real hero. Making her Royal Opera debut, Janai Brugger made a strong impression in the role, her creamy soprano well inflected in the aria "Ach ich fühls", her very fast vibrato adding to her sense of vulnerability. She brought a sense of pathos and calm dignity." *Mark Pullinger, Backtrack*

"This was the first time I had heard his Pamina, Jania Brugger, but I very much hope that it will not be the last. Her performance balanced dignity and beauty of tone in properly Mozartian manner, her second-act aria an object lesson in pathos without exaggeration." *Mark Berry, Seen and Heard international*

"It helped that he was matched by Janai Brugger's beautifully performed Pamina, which managed to embrace the role both as archetype and character. This American soprano seems to have it all – a warm, subtle presence, a gleaming, mobile voice full of colour and nuance, packed with emotion in a show-stopping 'Ich fühls', and a natural connection with the music. Together with Spence, they became the point of the opera." *Peter Reed, Classical Source*

"He deserves a fine Pamina and gets one in the beautiful, melting singing of Janai Brugger...." *Richard Fairman, The Financial Times*

"... there's a warmth and vulnerability to Chicago-born Janai Brugger's timbre that makes her the ideal Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Indeed, I can't recall a soprano in this slightly silly part who has been quite so genuinely touching." *Mark Valencia, What's on Stage*

"Amongst the 'discoveries' of the evening in vocal terms, the most promising was Janai Brugger, making her house debut as a lustrous Pamina; singing with directness and sweetness of tone yet with an edge to her phrasing, she resembled the unforgettable Ileana Cotrubas in this role." *Melanie Eskenazi, Music OMH*

"soprano Janai Brugger, a newcomer to the Royal Opera whose performance, both vocal and physical, is more than promising; she offers a Pamina of unflawed tonal clarity and subtle colouring, beautifully shaded in detail, and like Spence she looks the part as well as proving a fluent actor." *George Hall, The Guardian*

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New York Festival of Song Recital (November 2014)

Both singers were technically superb, and their personal qualities were ideal for the program; Brugger's velvety voice possesses a mezzo color that carries the intimacy these songs needed, speaking directly to the listener. *George Grella, New York Classical Review*

John Brancy and Janai Brugger both possess exceptionally beautiful, flexible voices but also, more importantly, an artistic maturity beyond their tender years. *Geoffrey Wieting, Classical Scene*

...The stirring, impassioned and even beguiling singing by the baritone John Brancy and the soprano Janai Brugger, who each combined poise and ardor in the service of songs that explored where our feelings intersect with our psyche. *Bob Hughes, Classical TV*

...talented young singer Janai Brugger, displaying a full, dusky lyric soprano...Brugger sang, with an engagingly light and seductive touch. *Bruce-Michael Gelbert, QonStage*

Carmen, Opera Colorado (May 2014)

"Soprano Janai Brugger, as José's jilted fiancée, the pure and guileless Micaela, had the audience enraptured with the astonishing purity and beauty of her voice." *Kelly Dean Hansen, The Daily Camera*

"I also thoroughly enjoyed the passionate performance and vocals of Janai Brugger as Michaela." *Michael Mulhern, Broadway World*

The Enchanted Island, Metropolitan Opera (Feb 2014)

"Standouts among the quartet of refugee lovers from A Midsummer Night's Dream were [...] the warm, mezzo-sounding soprano Janai Brugger." *Eric Myers, New York Classical Review*

Die Zauberflöte, Los Angeles Opera (Nov 2013)

"a rapturous Pamina ready for prime time" *Mark Swed, LA Times*

"The rising soprano Janai Brugger, tone creamy and phrasing elegant, found feeling within the constraints of the production's stylization, her hair in an Expressionist-era Louise Brooks bob and her body flinching eloquently under the burden of Pamina's suffering." *Zachary Woolfe, New York Times*

"The role of Pamina, who not only survives her cunning mother and the lascivious Monostatos, but also the paternalistic clichés of the plot, was consummately sung by Janai Brugger. With a Louise Brooks wig, wearing white face, and dressed in schoolgirl black, she let loose a shimmering soprano. When she sings of her loss of love's happiness in her Act Two aria, she caresses each line with tenderness, and the effect is exquisitely heartbreaking." *Jane Rosenberg, Seen and Heard international*

"Pamina was Janai Brugger, one of those marvelous discoveries who will go far." *David Gregson, Opera West*

"...every exquisite second of singing by rising L.A. Opera star Janai Brugger -- her solo inside a cartoon snowglobe was the heartrending high point of the evening." *Tim Appelo, The Hollywood Reporter*

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Turandot, Hawaii Opera (Oct 2013)

"As Liu, lyric soprano Janai Brugger brought the house to its feet. She has a warm, clear brandywine tone with a tight vibrato that makes her voice shimmer — an absolute delight to hear, and her singing tugs at our heart strings." *Ruth O. Bingham, Honolulu Pulse*

Zarzuela Gala, LA Opera (June 2013)

"Janai Brugger, whose supple and luminous soprano delivered one gloriously floated high note after another." *Los Angeles News*

"Former Domingo Thornton Program member, Met Auditions, and Operalia winner Janai Brugger sang another selection from *La del manojó de rosas*, "No corte más que una rosa" (Don't cut more than one rose) with sterling silver tones. Hers is a truly beautiful soprano. She looked vivacious in her bright red silk gown when she rendered another solo, the rousing "De España vengo" (I come from Spain) from Pablo Luna's *El niño judío*. (The Jewish boy) An expressive artist from whom we can expect a major career, she sang duets with both Domingo and Guerrero." *Maria Nockin, Opera Today*

Mozart Requiem, Cincinnati May Festival (May 2013)

"The soloists were well-matched and provided some exceptional solos. One of the most memorable moments was their "Benedictus," which unfolded with pastoral beauty. Soprano Janai Brugger, in her debut, was a standout, communicating warmth and velvety tone and beautiful expression." *Janelle Gelfand, Cincinnati.com*

Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition final concert, New York (March 2012)

"Only one singer inspired me to look forward to a full performance. Janai Brugger sang two lyric soprano standards with poise and style, quiet intensity and superb phrasing... Her physical performance was reserved in both "Depuis le jour," from Charpentier's "Louise," and "Ach, ich fühl's," from Mozart's "Zauberflöte." The emotion was in her sound, which projected, with silvery ease, first relaxed but focused bliss in "Depuis le jour" and then haunting melancholy in the Mozart. She met the challenge of the Charpentier, which is to be simultaneously languid and light. Her top notes were clear and secure; she descended from the high A near the end of "Depuis le jour" with lucid beauty" *Zachary Woolfe, New York Times*

"Soprano Janai Brugger, a crowd favorite, is clearly someone to watch. In both her arias, the famous "Depuis le jour," from *Louise*, and *Die Zauberflöte's* "Ach, ich fühl's," demonstrated warm tone and command of legato and ornamentation." *Greg Moomjy, Opera Today*

La Boheme, Los Angeles Opera (May 2012)

"There was more vocal personality to Brugger, who supplied an intriguing poignancy to the often superficially treated Musetta." *Mark Swed, LA Times*

Operalia Competition, Beijing (June 2012)

"The winners of the 20th edition of Plácido Domingo's Operalia – The World Opera Competition have been announced. Held in Beijing from June 4-10, the competition awarded First Prize for a female singer to American soprano Janai Brugger, who is currently enrolled in LA Opera's Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program. Brugger also received the Pepita Embil Domingo Zarzuela Prize and the Audience Prize." *Gramophone*