

# Katie Bray

## Selected Reviews

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### **Effigies of Wickedness**

#### **The Gate Theatre/English National Opera (May 2018)**

"Four characterful and accomplished singers – the classically trained baritone Peter Brathwaite (who originated the show's concept) and mezzo-soprano Katie Bray...Bray is splendid too in The Ballad of Marie Sanders" – **Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph**

"They're prodigious talents, and when the four attack a song together they fill the space thrillingly with mordant, subversive verse that burrows into you from all angles...Bray vaulting through the heavens above. It is particularly thrilling to hear the two opera singers up close, and also to see the pair let their hair down a bit and hold their own against the gargantuan personalities they've been paired with." – **Andrzej Lukowski, Time Out**

"incisive vocals come from the rising operatic stars Katie Bray and Peter Brathwaite. Together they convey not just the songs' mordant wit, but the growing desperation, verging on dread, that their original performers must have felt." – **Richard Morrison, The Times**

"The mezzo-soprano Katie Bray is in soul-searing form in her climactic delivery of "The Ballad of Marie Sanders" written by Brecht and Eisler in response to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which forbade sexual relations between Jews and "Aryans"." – **Paul Taylor, The Independent**

"Mezzo soprano Katie Bray is magnetic" – **Henry Hitchings, The Evening Standard**

### **Don Giovanni**

#### **Welsh National Opera (February 2018)**

"Katie Bray's Zerlina was sweet-voiced and secure, and was nobody's fool" – **Benjamin Poore, Bachtrack**

"Katie Bray chirpy and assertive as a far from naïve Zerlina" – **Richard Morrison, The Times**

"Katie Bray also gave a nicely rounded performance showing both sides of the peasant girl Zerlina" – **Mike Smith, South Wales Argus**

"Mention must also be made of Katie Bray's perky and delightful Zerlina" – **Barbara Michaels, The Reviews Hub**

### **Opera North – Little Greats Season (Autumn 2017)**

#### **Cavalleria Rusticana**

"There are sharp cameos from Rosalind Plowright as the cynically watchful Mamma Lucia and Katie Bray as Lola" – **Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph**

"Katie Bray is an impressive regular at Opera North, and as Lola she has only one aria to sing. This is 'Fior di giaggiola' which she performs with a delightfully coquettish verve as she puts her considerable stamp on Lola." – **Sandra Callard, on:Yorkshire magazine**

# Katie Bray

## Selected Reviews

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"Mezzo Katie Bray's lovely dark tones fitted the part of Lola" – **Richard Wilcocks, Bachtrack**

### **L'enfant et les sortilèges**

"vividly characterised multitasking performances from John Graham-Hall, Ann Taylor, Fflur Wyn and Katie Bray." – **Richard Morrison, The Times**

"Quirijn de Lang and Katie Bray make a stunning pair of cats" – **Tim Ashley, The Guardian**

### **Il Turco in Italia**

#### **Garsington Opera (Summer 2017)**

"Katie Bray sings the role of Zaida with style and warmth, a perfect foil to Tynan" – **Anna Picard, The Times**

"I'd defy anyone to name a more complete singing actress than Sarah Tynan, except perhaps Katie Bray. Here we get them both...as the gypsy Zaida, the every-changing Bray – who never ceases to astonish – lent her irresistible stage presence along with her rich, penetrating mezzo to a performance of scene-stealing delight" – **Mark Valencia, What's on Stage**

"Katie Bray, as Selim's former lover Zaida, had perhaps an easier job to make her character sympathetic as the wronged innocent, but Bray really made Zaida count. She combined a vivacity with warmth of tone, and created a real sense of character." – **Robert Hugill, Opera Today**

"Katie Bray's sweet-toned mezzo" – **David Karlin, Bachtrack**

"Katie Bray, another house favourite, sang Zaida with superb projection and mastery of her role" – **Melanie Eskenazi, musicOMH**

"Katie Bray's Zaida traverses effectively from the heartbroken fiancée to the fiery scorned lover, and is engaging in both roles." – **Russell Bailey, Daily Information**

### **La scala di seta**

#### **Scottish Opera (April 2017)**

"Katie Bray's Lucilla sang stylishly" – **Andrew Clark, Opera Magazine**

"Katie Bray brought her warm mezzo to Lucilla's aria 'Sento talor nell anima'" – **David Smythe, Bachtrack**

### **Hansel and Gretel**

#### **Opera North (Spring 2017)**

'Katie Bray and Fflur Wyn could scarcely be bettered as the eponymous brats.' – **Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph**

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## Selected Reviews

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'Fflur Wyn and Katie Bray made a delightful and highly characterful pairing as the siblings, with Wyn nicely bossy as the elder sister and Bray brilliantly sulky. All of the key moments were finely sung.' – **Robert Hugill, *planethugill.com***

'Katie Bray's Hansel and Fflur Wyn's Gretel sing with a light, spontaneous ease that overcomes the disconnect of a pair of pre-teens expressing themselves with mature, adult voices. The famous duet in which they sing themselves to sleep is breathtaking' – **Alfred Hickling, *The Guardian***

'Katie Bray (Hansel) and Fflur Wyn (Gretel) are a convincingly youthful pair of siblings, their voices combining admirably, Bray proving again that she is an outstanding new talent (and a pretty good comedian)' – **Andrew Hirst, *Huddersfield Examiner***

'Katie Bray as her brother was last seen at the company as Rosina in Rossini's *Barber* where she demonstrated a superb gift for comic timing that again stood her in good stead. Their beautifully sung duet before they go to sleep in the forest was a vocal high point.' – **John Leeman, *Seen and Heard International***

'Mezzo Katie Bray was a notable Rosina for Opera North two years ago in *The Barber of Seville*, and here in trousers (or rather tatty jeans) as Hansel she is similarly full of charm and zest.' – **Richard Wilcocks, *Bachtrack***

'Katie Bray and Fflur Wyn sing beautifully and make convincing children' – **Anthony Arblaster, *The Independent***

'Katie Bray as Hansel is ideal in all respects, having clearly studied how young boys move and what expressions they adopt. She has a lovely voice, too, and the opening scene for the two is ravishing musically.' – **Michael Tanner, *The Spectator***

"in Bray's case, as good an impersonation of a boy as you'll ever see from a young woman. Only her floridly gorgeous mezzo gives her away" – **Mark Valencia, *What's on Stage***

## La Calisto, Ulysses's Homecoming and Bach's St John Passion English Touring Opera ( Autumn 2016)

'...matched by the soprano Katie Bray's beautifully sung Minerva' – **Peter Reed, *Opera, December 2016***

'Katie Bray declaims Minerva's injunctions with irresistible authority and panache' – **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph***

'Katie Bray's Minerva offers dignity and rich tone' – **George Hall, *The Stage***

'...and Katie Bray as the warlike goddess Minerva, her voice seemingly fuelled on pure anger.' – **Richard Morrison, *The Times***

'Katie Bray – the performer of the season – once again shows her quality as Minerva' – **Alexandra Coghlan, *The Spectator***

'Katie Bray repeated her tremendously spirited performance of the previous evening, surmounting the high-lying line with panache as a commanding Minerva whose rulings and instructions must be obeyed' – **Claire Seymour, *Opera Today***

'not for the first time it's Katie Bray who radiates true star quality as the goddess Minerva. Ever since her glowing Charlotte in a Grimeborn *Werther* it's been clear that this young mezzo is something special. Now audiences can see for themselves on ETO's length-and-breadth tour' – **Mark Valencia, *What's on Stage***

'Katie Bray's exceptional Minerva glows with unnerving energy, Monteverdi's stratospheric demands delivered with calm panache by her tireless, lyrical soprano. Bray's gifts as singer and actress allow her to achieve a playful, slick and severe delivery

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## Selected Reviews

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which is ideal for the goddess of wisdom and war, the greatest of all immortal strategists fighting for her favourite hero, in a fabulous performance' – **Charlotte Valori, *Bachtrack***

'Katie Bray's Satirino bubbled with dynamics, colour and unstoppable comic energy' – **Yehuda Shapiro, *Opera***

### ***L'Italiana in Algeri* Garsington Opera (July 2016)**

"Her attendant, Zulma, was the vivacious and vibrant Katie Bray." – **Claire Seymour, *Opera Today***

"Katie Bray's focused Zulma." – **Anna Picard, *The Times***

### ***Barber of Seville* Opera North (October 2015)**

"Katie Bray is a delightfully sparky and sympathetic Rosina; when it was revealed that her penniless admirer was actually a count, Bray beamed as if all her Navidades had come at once." – **Neil Fisher, *The Times***

"Yet it is the bright young mezzo Katie Bray who really impresses here, showing both the emotion and colour of voice to support Rosina's challenging range. The finest Rosinas must alternately resemble both a flute and a clarinet: Bray's voice has scope to develop further, but she's not far off that scale." – **Alfred Hickling, *The Guardian***

"Katie Bray was a lively Rosina... Her accomplished coloratura weathered the stresses of speed." – **Martin Dreyer, *Opera Magazine***

"Katie Bray's expressive and very funny Rosina is equally outstanding. Handling Rossini's coloratura with ease and a beautifully even tone, she brings character (a very feisty one) to even the most testing music." – **Ron Simpson, *The Huddersfield Examiner***

### ***Lakmé* Opera Holland Park (July 2015)**

"Bray and Dickinson excel in their company debuts." – **Anna Picard, *The Times***

### ***Zemlinsky's Sechs Gesänge* Royal Academy of Music Soloists Ensemble (Linn CKD481)**

"Katie Bray's mezzo is richly spiced and colourful in potent performances of the Zemlinsky." – **Hugo Shirley, *Gramophone***

### ***Werther* Grimeborn Festival (August 2014)**

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## Selected Reviews

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"The most strikingly successful element of the evening was Katie Bray's fresh-faced and ingenuous Charlotte. Her olive-toned mezzo projects cleanly, and she rose to the breast-beating histrionics of the third act without going embarrassingly over the top. Here is a name to remember." – **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph***

"Katie Bray is a superb Charlotte." – **Kieron Quirke, *Evening Standard***

### ***Vert-Vert***

#### **Garsington Opera (June 2014)**

"Naughty girlie chums Katie Bray (a super mezzo) and Raphaella Papadakis are scrumptious in their opening pranks." – **Roderic Dunnett, *The Arts Desk***

### ***L'Étoile***

#### **New Sussex Opera (November 2013)**

"Lazuli was sung with panache by Katie Bray." – **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph* \*\*\*\*\***

"The character who might be said to have been born under a lucky star, Lazuli, was personified with great charm by Katie Bray, who delivered her solos in a firmly rounded mezzo-soprano and her dialogue in clear-cut tones." – **Margaret Davies, *Opera Magazine***

"The magnetic Katie Bray was an itinerant beautician Lazuli." – **Robert Thicknesse, *Opera Now***

### **Albert Herring, Opera North (May 2013)**

"Katie Bray's handsome-voiced Nancy." – **Andrew Clark, *The Financial Times* \*\*\*\*\***

"Katie Bray caught my ear as Nancy." – **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph***

"Marc Callahan (Sid) and Katie Bray (Nancy), two other debutants with Opera North, also gave exceptionally attractive performances. Theirs is a decidedly heterosexual love duet, rare in Britten's operas, and was passionately sung." – **Michael Kennedy, *Opera Magazine***

"And I liked the unresolved volatility between Katie Bray's sharply assertive Nancy and Marc Callahan's Brylcreem-Boy Sid." – **Richard Morrison, *The Times* \*\*\*\*\***

"Marc Callahan's ardent Sid, prowls around like a tom cat, courting Katie Bray's pert, knowing Nancy - as attractive and engaging a couple of young lovers as one could have wished for." – **Geoffrey Mogridge, *Opera Britannia* \*\*\*\*\***

"In a score dominated by staccato outbursts, Marc Callaghan and Katie Bray stand out as Sid and Nancy, their rapturous music highlighting Britten's gifts as a melodist." – **Graham Rickson, *The Arts Desk***

### ***Emperor of Atlantis***

# Katie Bray

## Selected Reviews

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### English Touring Opera (November 2012)

"Musically it's terrific, with not a weak performance anywhere, though Katie Bray's warmongering Drummer and Callum Thorpe as the multiple voices of reason and technology that Ullmann simply calls Loudspeaker, are particularly outstanding" – **Tim Ashley, *The Guardian***

"Bray has a wonderfully punchy and character-driven mezzo that makes light work of this athletic role, comfortably inhabiting the more physical side of her stage persona (where some of her colleagues struggle)" – **Alexandra Coghlan, *The Arts Desk***

"Katie Bray's mezzo was outstanding. Her punch performance as the thigh-bone wielding Drummer combined vocal athleticism with physical vigour on stage" – **John-Pierre Joyce, *Music OMH***

"Miss Bray is another rising star who must have been spotted while on the Royal Academy's Opera Course. ETO has an excellent track record of providing a launch pad for feisty mezzos who can act and Miss Bray did not disappoint." – **Miranda Jackson, *Opera Britannia***

"Katie Bray was outstanding." – **Opera Now**

"There were nonetheless strong performances from Katie Bray (Drummer), a commanding stage presence as well as an ever flexible singer." – **Flora Willson, *Opera Magazine***

### ***Béatrice et Bénédict*** **Royal Academy Opera**

"Kate Bray's Béatrice is sparkily acted and warmly sung" – **Richard Morrison, *The Times***

"The Béatrice of Katie Bray was stunningly brilliant" – **Michael Tanner, *The Spectator***

"with Katie Bray lending Béatrice a sharply etched personality and a clearly focussed mezzo, expressive of the character's evolving emotions;" – **Opera Magazine, February 2012**

"Katie Bray outshone the rest of the cast with her sparkling heroine." – **Opera Now, February 2012**

"Vocally, Katie Bray as Béatrice was as idiomatically French-sounding, with her agile, full mezzo shaping the drooping phrases of her Act Two aria with great elegance, and she managed Béatrice's love-struck transformation very affectingly" – **Peter Reed, *Classicalsource***

### ***Le Nozze di Figaro*** **British Youth Opera**

"Katie Bray was the vivacious Cherubino, her 'Voi che sapete' sung with charm" – **Margaret Davies, *Opera Magazine***

# Katie Bray

## Selected Reviews

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### ***Kommilitonen* - World Premiere (Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies) Royal Academy of Music**

"Wu is sung with the luxurious mezzo-soprano of Katie Bray, a sound of compassion, plangent but not abject or begging. This is the most convincingly operatic performance, Bray characterising Wu with the quality of sound. Consequently it's, for me, the most gripping account of a maligned individual of the evening." - **Framescourer**

### ***Così fan tutte* Royal Academy of Music**

"Katie Bray was a suitably flibbertigibbet Dorabella" - **David Karlin, *Bachtrack*, November 2011**

"Bray as Dorabella is the sillier of the two: flighty, excitable and attracted, magpie-like, to pretty jewels. We know she will be the first to fall, and so it proves. The scene in which she is seduced is beautifully sung and simply staged: Charles Rice's rich baritone and Bray's full-toned mezzo-soprano communicate the complex emotions of the two characters and create one of the most memorable scenes of the evening." - **Lizzie Davis, <http://theatrigirl.wordpress.com>**

### **Cabaret Recital Cossington**

"Katie Bray charmed her audience from the outset, with her consummate acting skills and her lovely rich mezzo voice, full of youthful passion. Aply and sympathetically accompanied by William Vann, she sang superbly throughout. Particularly memorable were her renditions of Britten's settings of four moving W.H. Auden poems, the glorious tango rhythm of Weill's Youkali and a beautiful performance of Edith Piaf's classic La vie en rose."

- **Bridgwater Mercury, September 2011**

### ***Die Dreigroschenoper* Royal Academy of Music**

"Vocally, the undisputed star was Katie Bray as Polly. Bray gave us wonderful feel for Weill's melodic lines and for every mood, whether lyrical in her Farewell Song, waywardly self-willed in the Song of Yes and No or rapid-fire in her Jealousy duet with Runette Botha's Lucy" - **David Karlin, *Bachtrack***

### **London Handel Festival Singing Competition**

"Katie Bray...portrays Ariodante's grief and rage at the perceived betrayal of his love, Ginevra. This is a hugely testing aria requiring dramatic declamation and an extensive range. Too often one hears singers resorting to brassy-toned lower notes

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# Katie Bray

## Selected Reviews

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which seems unconnected to the rest of the voice and this was a danger that Bray conspicuously avoided...Bray brought a really exciting bravura to the piece. This was the first time in the evening when the hairs on the back of the neck were raised." -

**Sebastian Petit, *Opera Britannia***

## Wigmore Hall Recital

"...with Kurt Weill's 'Je ne t'aime pas' - written for the cabarets of Paris after he'd been sacked by Universal - she revealed an accomplished command of *poesie maudite*" - **Michael Church, *The Independent***