
Ben McAteer

Selected Reviews

Le Nozze di Figaro (Count Almaviva), Irish National Opera (April 2018)

"Ben McAteer conveys youthful brio as the frustrated Count who believes he's making all the right moves but can't quite figure out why he is so consistently thwarted." ***The Irish Times***

"The Count, in Ben McAteer's authoritative baritone, uses his height to great advantage and makes for a charming villain, as he bumbles about getting outwitted by all." ***Irish Independent***

"It's the Count who has the trickiest role to maintain, keeping on the right side of caricature that can either go the way of pathetic bumbling fool to unsympathetic cheating lecher, neither of which tend towards a convincing redemption. Ben McAteer's Almaviva carried a measure of those characteristics, but - in line with the well-considered period setting - was more of a last-gasp opportunist finding that the times (and women's rights) were fast catching up with his sort. His singing was perfectly measured for technique and character, a perfect foil for whoever he was on stage with at any given moment." ***Opera Journal***

"As for the lecherous Count, Ben McAteer looked every inch the part, towering above the rest of the cast, the sweet heft of his baritone voice projecting very well." ***BachTrack***

"Ben McAteer is terrific playing the Count as a slightly thick toff." ***Irish Examiner***

"The Count was a suitably dominating physical and vocal presence, booming out clearly even in larger ensembles." ***Journal of Music***

"Ben McAteer presents an intriguing figure, smoothly-sung, decisive yet distracted, a reading of the role that is disarmingly naturalistic." ***Goldenplec Music News***

Iolanthe (Earl of Mountararat), English National Opera (April 2018)

"As Tolloller and Mountararat, Ben Johnson and Ben McAteer were irresistible - their vowels deliciously Victorian-aristocrat, their acting only just over the top..." ***Opera Magazine***

"Ben McAteer gets the gormless dignity of Lord Mountararat down pat, and when he's not camping it up with Ben Johnson's Tolloller...swaggers sonorously through 'When Britain Really Ruled the Waves.'" ***The Spectator***

"The brace of earls, Tolloller (Ben Johnson) and Mountararat (Ben McAteer), are the smoothest and wittiest of the lot, and their singing is sublime." ***What's On Stage***

"The pair of dippy earls, Ben Johnson (Earl Tolloller) and Ben McAteer (Earl of Mountararat), sang beautifully and have the makings of a classic comic duo. Next, their own show?" ***The Observer***

"As the two Earls, Tolloller and Mountararat respectively, Ben Johnson and Ben McAteer show a pleasing instinct for the G&S idiom, and the self-deprecating satire of the latter's 'When Britain Really Ruled the Waves', as Gilbert lampoons the two-party system, stingingly hit the mark." ***Opera Today***

"Ben Johnson and Ben McAteer find exactly the right mode of deadpan deliberation which, in their heyday, the unjustly-axed D'Oyly Carte company (which some of us still remember) had to a T." ***The Independent***

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"Ben Johnson and Ben McAteer seemed to be having the time of their lives as the two love-smitten Earls, all deft foot-work, delightful characterisation, and pukka accents, yet superbly sung too." **Robert Hugill**

"The rival Earls Tolloller and Mountararat, tenor Ben Johnson and baritone Ben McAteer, sing just as beautifully and act out their more-than-bromance, public-school style, deliciously." **The Arts Desk**

"As the hereditary peers Ben Johnson and Ben McAteer are nicely differentiated; the latter comes close to stealing the show with 'When Britain really ruled the waves'." **Classical Source**

From the House of the Dead (Goryanchikov), Welsh National Opera (October 2017)

"Outstanding among a consistently fine ensemble [is] Ben McAteer as Dostoyevsky's representative, the resilient aristocrat, Goryanchikov" **Financial Times**

"But the ensemble cast is beyond reasonable criticism, not least for the uniform excellence of its enunciation of Pountney's serviceable translation...while Adrian Thompson, Ben McAteer and Mark Le Brocq shine in lesser roles." **The Telegraph**

"As Goryanchikov, Ben McAteer has less to do and sing than one might have expected, given that the character's experience, in a sense shapes the work, he is there as a political dissident, not as a thief and/or a murderer like most of the others, and the work begins with his entry into the prison and ends with his release from it; even so, McAteer made one warm to the character's dignity and humanity, both in the way he resisted the taunts of some of the other prisoners and in the kindness of his treatment of Aleya." **Seen & Heard International**

Le Nozze di Figaro (Figaro), Scottish Opera (October 2016)

"Ben McAteer has blossomed since his time as a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist. Now singing lead roles, he displayed an ideally nuanced power. I anticipate he will be a part of the company's future over the coming years." **Scottish Daily Mail**

"Ben McAteer's Figaro is solid, both in voice and acting performance." **The Stage**

"Gravitas was finally achieved by Act IV in Figaro's misogynistic aria "Aprite un po' quegli occhi", lit with almost gothic brilliance by a single white spotlight, and in Susanna's "Deh vieni non tardar". Indeed, Ben McAteer's Figaro and, in particular, Anna Devin's Susanna were the two stand-outs." **BachTrack**

The Mikado (Pish Tush), Scottish Opera (May-July 2016)

"But it was the three noble lords who came close to stealing the show...Ben McAteer's Pish-Tush was a comic masterclass, looking for all the world like a sub-Pythesque colonial caricature, complete with pith helmet and cricket bat. But his voice is first rate" **Scottish Daily Mail**

"Ben McAteer, fresh from Scottish Opera's stunning recent new commission The Devil Inside, demonstrated that he could hold

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his own in a very different genre. Here he was an absurdly camp comic Pish-Tush who was considerably more funny than most absurdly camp comic turns usually are" **Opera Britannia**

"Ben McAteer was a wonderfully camp Pish-Tush using semaphore to reveal his inner desires in "Our great Mikado, virtuous man"" **BachTrack**

The Devil Inside (James), Scottish Opera/Music Theatre Wales (January-March 2016)

"...the cast inhabited their roles with panache. Ben McAteer explored the Wotan-esque extremes of James" **Opera Magazine**

"Ben McAteer (the John Mather Charitable Trust Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, 2015/16) was definitely the highlight of our night. He sang with a modern, contemporary sound that cut through the ample orchestra and over some extremely dramatic scoring for the pit. His range was astounding and the ease of production was inspiring." **Schmopera**

"Ben McAteer sings the principal role of James. He has a solid, powerful baritone and really good stage presence. This is the most emotionally complex role and he conveys the thoughtful, ambiguous character well, especially at moments of interior, lyrical, reflection such as when he compares his own, damned, state to a poor couple crossing the road in the rain." **Opera Ramblings**

"Ben McAteer was James, the hapless first bottle buyer, using his riches to become a property magnate, his high baritone part expressing the range of initial wariness, delight and greed...there is not a weak link in this uniformly strong cast." **Bachtrack**

"Ben McAteer (James) is a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist for 2015/16 and, on this performance, the accolade is justified. His love scenes with Catherine have warmth and sincerity. As he explains the wedding anniversary presents, or leaps to conclusions about what Catherine is trying to tell him, he engages our sympathy." **OperaCritic**

The Magic Flute (Papageno), Northern Ireland Opera (September 2016)

"An enormously likable, robustly-sung performance from Newry-born baritone Ben McAteer...a natural comic actor with the bumbling, puppy-like demeanour of a youthful Oliver Hardy. His closing duet with Papagena was pure catharsis, the most simply joyful moment in the entire evening...a heartening and - yes - magical evening." **Opera Magazine**

"Leading the charge was Newry baritone Ben McAteer, a wonderfully affable, endearing Papageno, making his professional operatic debut. He's a natural actor, and much more will be heard of him in the future." **Belfast Telegraph**

"Ben McAteer's Papageno is more than a side-show. His comic timing and delivery of the folk-song-like melodies and patter are hugely rewarding." **Irish Times**

"When you're talking about an entertaining Magic Flute, you're talking about one where Papageno makes a strong impact and Ben McAteer's performance, in dungarees covered with bird-crap, was indeed the stand-out routine of the night, his voice agile, his enunciation clear and his personality engaging." **Opera Journal**

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Hansel & Gretel (Father), Sinfonia D'Amici April 2013)

"All six solo singers delivered fully-rounded performances and sang with grace and individuality – and, in the case of Ben McAteer as Father, something more. This remarkable young baritone, who was runner-up at the 2012 Kathleen Ferrier Awards...is of a calibre that bespeaks a great future."

Classical Source

Le Nozze di Figaro (Count Almaviva), Guildhall School of Music & Drama (March 2013)

"Ben McAteer provided the most rounded account of any of the characters assigned to the singers. Initially he did not come across as an ogre on his first surreptitious advance to Susanna in her room in Act One, but rather as an imperfect human who is not in command of his passions and urges. Rightly this was not a reading about stark black and white moral opposites: there was nothing to suggest that somebody in Susanna's position would automatically rebuff him out of horror or disgust. McAteer grew into an angrier and more forceful figure as Almaviva's plans become increasingly thwarted, for instance when he tries to gain access to the Countess's wardrobe in Act Two. In his reflective scena at the beginning of Act Three where the Count discloses more of his human foibles and flaws, McAteer remained outwardly and musically firm, conveying Almaviva's frustrations and complexities. There was also a certain nobility at the denouement of the drama as he asked the Countess for forgiveness – in effect standing-in for all humanity in seeking remission for its shortcomings."

Classical Source

Kathleen Ferrier Awards 2012

"I would have handed the Song Prize to 24-year-old Ben McAteer, who showed a maturity of musicianship beyond his years. His immediate engagement with the text of Schumann's ballad Belsazar was exemplary and he pitched wistful songs by Gurney and Harty just the right side of sentimentality. In arias from Eugene Onegin and *Così fan tutte* he was scarcely less impressive, singing with an engagingly understated ease and fluency. His tuning was immaculate, his tone focused. Another one to listen out for."

The Telegraph

"The Irish McAteer also deserved his own spotlight: with his attractive timbre and musical intelligence, he's a singer of genuine potential."

The Times

"I felt that McAteer's communication of the text, as he effortlessly embodied a range of characters in different dramatic and emotional situations, put him in the running for first prize. Whether outpouring Romantic angst or relishing the ironic wit of Classicism, every word was crystal clear and every musical gesture perfectly matched to the sentiments of the text."

Opera Today