
Julia Sporsén

Selected Reviews

Grandi Voci recital, Göteborgs Operan (February 2025)

"Julia Sporsén has an impressive presence and tonal control during her solo concert at the Gothenburg Opera... Sporsén not only has an impressive technique, but also a way of deepening the characters so that the human element comes to the fore... Sporsén conveys the dizzying virtuosity and the subdued intimacy so that the music begins to speak, but with fantastic tonal control... [In Gabriel Fauré's song cycle "La bonne chanson"]...the special soundscape makes the rich tones in Sporsén's voice stand out, the low-key precision, the devoted and passionate tone that makes the melodies vibrate."

- **Magnus Haglund, Göteborgs-Posten**

Verdi *Otello* (Desdemona), Göteborgs Operan (November 2024)

"This exceptionally intelligent, confident, warm, musical soprano and stage personality has become a kind of plumb line among Swedish opera singers. Sporsén moves confidently through the music. From the most sublime pianissimos to softly swelling fortes. Always with a clear intention."

- **Gunilla Brodrej, Expressen**

"Julia Sporsén is brilliant... She goes from strength to strength, this Gothenburg soprano star who shines so brightly and touchingly."

- **SVT Nyheter**

"Julia Sporsén sang a Desdemona in which lightness concealed inner strength, delivering a tender Willow Song that traced a line directly into an unusually spacious Ave Maria, in tight partnership with Milletari, characterized at the last by a sure ability to float with a full tone. Sporsén appeared to control much of the Act 2 quartet with her silvery wire of sound. Her understated but telling plotting of the character's descent was perhaps the only truly shattering individual performance in a production whose power lay in its broader amplification of human behaviour, but had no less impact for that."

- **Andrew Mellor, Opera Magazine**

"The show's highlight was undeniably the drama and emotion of Julia Sporsén as Desdemona. Act 4 was her opera, masterfully aided by the now angled set and intimate lighting. She sang her great aria 'Ave Maria' with an introspection and delivery second only to Callas herself"

- **Hattie Butterworth, Opera Now**

"The soprano Julia Sporsén and the baritone Jens Søndergaard make fantastic contributions as Desdemona and Iago, and not least the long scene in the closing act is given a moving character, when Sporsén sings the song of the vine and with the toned-down refrain of grief captures the vulnerability in the face of the coming violence."

- **Magnus Haglund, Göteborgs-Posten**

"Julia Sporsén, who is completely alone in her final scene, evokes the most unimaginable in Desdemona. Not the damaged one, but the undamaged one. The healing movement of the unbroken melodic lines."

- **Martin Nyström, Dagens Nyheter**

"It is also Julia Sporsén – SvD's opera laureate 2023 – who truly holds the production with her complete presence and dramatic nerve... Julia Sporsén as the sacrificed Desdemona carries the production in Gothenburg."

- **Magnus Bunnskog, Svenska Dagbladet**

CD: *Swedish Songs & Operatic Scenes*, dB Productions (October 2024)

"Last, and perhaps best: Julia Sporsén in a couple of great arias from Gosta Nyström's *Herr Arnes penningar* with fabulously evocative playing from the orchestra of the Gothenburg Opera."

- **Camilla Lundberg, OPUS magazine**

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"[The disc] culminates in two arias from Gosta Nystroem's earlier setting of *Herr Arne's penningar*, softly and sweetly conveyed by the super-soprano Julia Sporsén as Elsalill in a frozen Marstrand." - **Johanna Paulsson, *Dagens Nyheter***

Jonas Forssell *Death and the Maiden* (Paulina Salas), Malmö Opera (May 2024)

"It is a formidable trio of singing actors who spin the drama in "Death and the Maiden", with Julia Sporsén's chain-smoking Paulina at the center. After her previous triumphs with Norma and Judit at Folkoperan, Sporsén portrays yet another female rebellion, where her voice vibrates with anger and her body signals desperate determination. Few can bite the head off a violently speculative portrayal of women better than her, which Dorfman's story is to some extent."

- **Sofia Nyblom, *Dagens Nyheter***

"Something wonderful happens when the singing trio Julia Sporsén, Dimitris Paksoglou and Fredrik Zetterström portray the drama about abuse and truth in the shadow of the dictatorship... Her aria in the first act transposed to Schubert's music, as well as the testimony aria in the second act, are astonishingly moving. The final scene where she reconquers the Schubert, with a drink and a cigarette in quiet solitary euphoria with the whole orchestra behind her, is among the most beautiful I have seen. Quite simply, a triumph."

- **Loretto Villalobos, *Svenska Dagbladet***

"Paulina is a big part, demanding both scenically and vocally. But Julia Sporsén has everything the role requires. Her performance is a master test, non-stop fascinating to follow. When you think she has no more to give, the voice opens up to even more sparkling spaces. Actually, Julia Sporsén is something of a one-of-a-kind on a Swedish opera scene."

- **Gunilla Brodrej, *Expressen.se***

"It is rare to understand the text when an upset soprano sings, but here there is no problem understanding every word from Julia Sporsén without looking at the surtitles... Julia Sporsén plays the main role with shaking intensity"

- **Lennart Bromander, *Aftonbladet***

Sibelius, Rangström & Stenhammar, BBC Concert Orchestra, Queen Elizabeth Hall (March 2024)

"The Swedish soprano Julia Sporsén — sporting a different dress for each half — never let the embers die down even between these neglected Nordic lieder, singing with a tightly spun intensity that suited these fervent torch songs and midnight meditations."

- **Daniel Lewis, *The Times********

"Written in quick succession at the beginning of a love affair in 1924, Rangström's two short songs constituting *The Dark Flower* are delicate and personal — and Sporsén treated them as such... her voice has a deeply expressive quality and she displayed economical vocal control. In *The Wind and the Tree* she handled the shifts from dark to light and minor to major with melancholic refinement. In the beautiful, hymnlike *Prayer to the Night* she showed intensity. Sporsén imbued the following — equally short — Stenhammar pieces radiantly: *Fylgia* was sung with grace and clarity; *Starry Eye* yearning and pleading, her consonants crisp, her voice lyrical. Sporsén performed each with energy, tragedy and occasional bitterness."

- **Susannah Moody, *Bachtrack********

Chausson *Poeme de l'amour et de la mer*, Jönköpings Sinfonietta, Kulturhuset Spira (February 2023)

"Poeme de l'amour et de la mer", a shimmeringly beautiful work consisting of two longer movements of song and a short instrumental interlude. The piece seems written for a singer like Julia who is in command of her singing and knows

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how to use simple means to create dramatic nerve in the performance (which is completely free from the staged approach from last season)."

- **Rikard Flyckt, Jönköpings-Posten**

Bellini *Norma* (Title role), Folkoperan Stockholm (September 2022)

"It is one of those shows about which you will say afterwards: I was there. "I was there when Julia Sporsén did "Norma" at Folkoperan"... Julia Sporsén sang the title role so well that we actually didn't have to miss Maria Callas. From death-defying risk-taking to heartfelt mournful songs. And I was there... Julia Sporsén and Ann-Kristin Jones' duets are so insanely expressive and emotional together... something that many will call her definitive breakthrough on a Swedish opera stage... Every fiber of her body convinces. To dwell on her being a dramatic coloratura would be pointless. Sporsén is past show singing. She means what she sings. It's like she just opens her mouth and the music is there. You forget that it is difficult. Of course, it is terribly difficult. But she just is. Norma. And I was there." - **Gunilla Brodrej, Expressen**

"The fairy-tale soprano Julia Sporsén is an obvious center of power in the title role with the aria "Casta diva", where Norma asks the moon goddess for peace. The design comes superbly close to her anguish, how she is torn between being left by partner and mother, scorned yet despairing - not to say completely furious... with beautiful duets between...Adalgisa and the deceived Norma, where Jones and Sporsén swarm together in the name of sisterhood."

- **Johanna Paulsson, Dagens Nyheter**

"Julia Sporsén as Norma has a forlorn presence with graceful coloratura. The "Casta diva" aria - in Tuvalisa Rangström's translation "Chaste moon" - becomes a test of strength embedded in melancholy. With the raised orchestra and Ellen Ruge's lights, it becomes like a synesthetic effect where the music is the silvering moonlight."

- **Loretto Villalobos, Svenska Dagbladet**

"Stubø and set designer Magdalena Åberg have created a stage space and a direction that allows the two female leads Ann-Kristin Jones and Julia Sporsén to shine as Bellini's lyrical music turns into both a dirty Norén drama and a timeless tragedy that makes you forget the sometimes mannered nature of opera conventions. Musical drama at its best."

- **Björn Wiman, Dagens Nyheter**

Tebogo Monnakgotlas *Den försvunna*, Kulturhuset Spira, Jönköping Sinfonietta, (May 2022)

"The movements are also composed both for and in close collaboration with the soloist Julia Sporsén - a soprano who goes from clarity to clarity and who in parallel is an artist in residence here. As such, she has also had the opportunity, together with Kulturhuset Spira's artistic team, to explore how to deepen the classical concert format on stage... Sporsén is at the same time a brave and modern soprano. With her mobility and superb voice control, she breathed new life into an ancient repertoire. Under the heading "The girl in the forest", she brought together songs by Ture Rangström and music by the 150th anniversary Hugo Alfvén into an imaginatively choreographed "song ballet". With astonishment and some obsession, she approached nationally romantic music by two mildly German-friendly composers, safely passed to the world of fairy tales in John Bauer's country itself under the sympathetic guidance of Australian conductor Matthew Wood."

- **Johanna Paulsson, Dagens Nyheter**

Gösta Nystroem *Herr Arnes Penningar* (Elsalill) Gothenburg Opera (February 2022)

"Among the singers, it is the foster sisters couple Julia Sporsén and Sofie Asplund who shine through; both brilliant."

- **Camilla Lundberg, SVT Kulturnyheterna**

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"Soprano Julia Sporsén's voice is both convincing and impressive, because the music with its varying whims seems difficult to sing, to say the least. Particularly strong is her aria in the beginning of the second act, when the dead foster sister reappears to force Elsalill to exact revenge for the murders and reveal the culprits." - **Britt Nordberg, *alba.nu***

"Sporsén convinces with elegiac intensity in her soprano."

- **Lennart Bromander, *Aftonbladet***

" [Sporsén] shines like a storm lantern in the dark"

- **Martin Nyström, *Dagens Nyheter***

"At the center of the drama is the close relationship between the girl Elsalill and her foster sister, very impressively portrayed by the two sopranos Julia Sporsén and Sofie Asplund."

- **Magnus Haglund, *Göteborgs-Posten***

"Julia Sporsén has impressed as both Isolde and Violetta, and here she makes her next big tragic role interesting with sincerity and depth."

- **Gunilla Brodrej, *Expressen***

"There are absolutely wonderful singing contributions, not least from Julia Sporsén as Elsalill and Sofie Asplund as her (nameless) foster sister: two clear sopranos - one tougher, darker, more dangerous and one that is shimmering, spooky light."

- **Bo Löfvendahl, *Svenska Dagbladet***

"Julia Sporsén as Elsalill, the only one who survives the atrocities of the Scottish mercenaries in Solberga vicarage, is well cut out for the role with her lyrically-dramatic soprano."

- **Sören Tranberg, *Tidskriften Opera***

Tebogo Monnakgotla *Den försvunna* and Schubert Lieder, Kulturhuset Spira, Jönköping Sinfonietta, (February 2022)

"It is brilliant and moving, and Sporsén finds an exact expression in both singing and acting... "Erlkönig" will be a pure dramatic highlight this evening."

- **Richard Flyckt, *Jönköpings-posten***

Ravel's *Sheherazade* & *Ariadne* arias, Kulturhuset Spira, Jönköping Sinfonietta, (November 2021)

"Julia Sporsén as artist in residence is a stroke of luck. She is an absolutely brilliant soprano who is able to take charge of the music regardless of whether it is dramatic with Strauss or painfully beautiful and delicate with Ravel. The main piece of the evening, despite the short playing time, is of course the Monnakgotla / Karam collaboration. This time Julia Sporsén sings from a child's perspective. It is an incredibly beautiful text, both painful and hopeful."

- **Richard Flyckt, *Jönköpings-posten***

Kulturhuset Spira – recital as an Artist in Residence (August 2021)

"Dich, teure Halle" from Wagner's "Tannhäuser" is a perfect party starter in itself, which is further highlighted here by the fact that Julia Sporsén not only sings it with both power and finesse but also steps onto the stage with a coat and suitcase and begins by tearing off her face mask ...Wagner's "Wesendoncklieder" were even more dramatised which added a much-needed nerve to the romantic songs ... During these six charged minutes [in *Den Försvunna*], Julia Sporsén does the piece full justice with intensity, presence and brilliant singing."

- **Rikard Flyckt, *Jönköpings-Posten***

CD Recording: *Dodgson's Margaret Catchpole: Two Worlds Apart* (Naxos 8.660459-61)

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"Julia Sporsén is an expressive Mrs Palmer."

- **George Hall, *Opera Magazine***

Isolde (Tristan und Isolde), Folkoperan Stockholm (October 2020)

"Julia Sporsén is sensational - it's hard to believe that this is her first real Wagner role."

- **Bo Löfvendahl, *Svenska Dagbladet***

"Julia Sporsén, who easily would have been able to match a full-scale orchestra, makes a very strong role debut as Isolde. The brilliance of her high notes is well complemented by Jesper Säll's shadier tenor."

- **Axel Englund, *Expressen***

"Julia Sporsén is a minor sensation as Isolde, with a large and strong presence both vocally and theatrically. With her dramatically Gothic charisma, she responds best to Tunström's rich and symbolist imagination."

- **Camilla Lundberg, *SVT***

"Julia Sporsén's dramatic soprano is magnificent ... with character and presence." - **Claes Wahlin, *Aftonbladet***

Pat Nixon (Nixon in China), Scottish Opera (February 2020)

"Julia Sporsén sang with compelling warmth."

- **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph*★★★★**

"[As] the president's thoughtful wife, Pat Nixon, Julia Sporsén [is] compelling and convincing."

- **Fiona Maddocks, *The Guardian*★★★★★**

"Julia Sporsén gave a towering performance as the ever-elegant First Lady."

- **David Smythe, *Bachtrack***

"Julia Sporsén's radiant Pat is almost as moving as Janis Kelly's at ENO and the Met, in her touching loyalty to her husband and her empathy with the victim of an unscrupulous landlord in the dance sequence."

- **Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times***

"special bouquet goes to Julia Sporsén, whose winsome Pat Nixon transcended politics, history, the stage and just about everything else, in a way that told us what it was like to be a bit-player in international politics and still maintain some integrity."

- **Andrew Clark, *Opera Magazine***

"The principals were good: strong-voiced and persuasive in their individual roles. ... Pat, sung by Julia Sporsén, is lighter and, true to character, slightly hysterical."

- **Christopher Lambton, *The Arts Desk***

"Julia Sporsén's infinitely touching Pat Nixon."

- **George Hall, *The Stage*★★★★**

"The multi-national cast that Scottish Opera has assembled for these performances is without a weak link. ... Of a wonderful three-part evening, it is the second act, which revolves around Pat Nixon (Julia Sporsén) and Madame Mao (Hye-Youn Lee), that is the absolute sensation of the night."

- **Keith Bruce, *The Herald*★★★★★**

"Julia Sporsén blossoms with genuine concern as his wife, Pat."

- **Ken Walton, *The Scotsman*★★★★★**

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Frida Andréa Fritiofs saga (Ingeborg), Gothenburg Opera (March 2019)

"Ingeborg is by far the largest role in the work, and soprano Julia Sporsén creates an extremely impressive interpretation of all its contradictions. The longing for sea air and freedom that Andréa captures with restrained harmonisations and passionate melodic twists becomes an expanded human space in Sporsén's richly characterised and detailed performance."

- **Magnus Haglund, GöteborgsPosten**

"Ingeborg / Julia Sporsén.... impresses with her high notes."

- **Helen Flensburg, Borås Tidning**

Komponist (Ariadne auf Naxos), Opera Holland Park (July 2018)

"Julia Sporsén's soprano glows in the role [of the composer]."

- **Erica Jeal, The Guardian ★★★★★**

"Sporsén brings warmth and expressive power to her Composer."

- **George Hall, Financial Times ★★★★★**

"Honours are stolen here by Julia Sporsén's ardently sung Composer: it's conventionally a trouser role, but McDonald adds a new frisson by keeping the trousers, but dispensing with gender-swapping. Sporsén is very affecting as she peels off layers of neurosis, much encouraged by Jennifer France's Zerbinetta peeling off layers of clothing. The duet between the two is the highlight of the night and takes us to the heart of what Strauss and his librettist are trying to tell us about the messiness of life, how a tiny collision of events can mean the universe."

- **Neil Fisher, The Times**

"Seria and buffa elements were confrontational rather than cohesive - perhaps that's how it should be - but Julia Sporsén's Composer brought disparate parts into a cohesive whole, with her Schubertian-Straussian paean to die Musik. Sporsén's soprano shone and thrilled and both her declaration that music is a holy art and her interactions with Zerbinetta were genuinely touching."

- **Claire Seymour, Opera Today**

"But the scene, and most hearts, I hope, are stolen from the first appearance of Julia Sporsén's adorable if volatile Composer, deeply simpatica. The role needs flaming soprano top notes - creator of the role, after all, was Lotte Lehmann - and Sporsén allies them to a plangent intensity I haven't seen to the same degree in the role since the young Maria Ewing took a Proms audience by storm on a Glyndebourne visit back in 1981."

- **David Nice, The Arts Desk ★★★★★**

"Sporsén sings gloriously as the Composer"

- **Barry Millington, The Standard ★★★★★**

"The Composer (an outstanding Julia Sporsén)..."

- **Sam Smith, MusicOMH ★★★★★**

"Played by the ardent Julia Sporsén, [the Composer] returns after the end of the opera..."

- **Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times**

"The Composer - Julia Sporsén, vehement and intense - is not the usual cross-dressed woman playing a man but, still wearing mannish trousers, a female composer."

- **Fiona Maddocks, The Observer ★★★★★**

"Julia Sporsén's vivid soprano Composer (the voice type specified by Strauss, despite the part having become a favourite of young mezzos) was the vocal highlight of the Prologue, with characterful cameos from the rest of the cast."

- **Matthew Rye, Backtrack ★★★★★**

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"The Composer is sung brilliantly by soprano Julia Sporsén – and how refreshing to hear it sung by a soprano, especially one with such a gleaming high register (intended by Strauss, but tradition has meant a shift to a mezzo)."

- **Colin Clarke, Seen and Heard International**

"Julia Sporsén's Composer hits the spot with her volatile, intense and outrageously self-centred artistic tizzies, pressing her suit on Zerbinetta with full-on eroticism, and then suddenly bringing us into her perspective with an electrifying account of her hymn to the power of music that gives us the full benefit of her lovely, lightly-shaded voice."

- **Peter Reed, Classical Source ★★★★★**

"However, the first part of the evening belongs unequivocally to Julia Sporsén as the Composer of the eponymous Ariadne opera. Playing her role as a busy, buzzing and passionate control freak who is only reconciled to her preposterous position by a latent attraction to lowbrow-in-chief Zerbinetta, the soprano (not here a mezzo, as has become the custom, nor dragged up as a man) inflects every word with sense and gauges her character's priceless reactions with entertaining care."

- **Mark Valencia, Whats On Stage ★★★★★**

"a passionate Julia Sporsen as the Composer"

- **Inge Kjemtrup, The Stage ★★★★★**

"[In the prologue,] comedy and seriousness were finely balanced with Julia Sporsen's composer being the passionate centre of everything. It was lovely to have the role sung by a soprano for once (the original composer was Lotte Lehmann), and it benefited from Sporsen's gloriously ringing top. Here McDonald had introduced another twist with the composer being a woman rather than travesty role. Sporsen was intense and committed, giving us a wonderfully vibrant line, and she was supported by some brilliantly etched characterful portraits from the rest of the cast. Certainly, Sporsen is a soprano who I want to hear in more Strauss, having heard her as the composer I now want to hear her as Octavian."

- **Robert Hugill, Planet Hugill ★★★★★½**

Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Scottish Opera (April 2018)

"Sporsén gave a truly magnificent performance, outraged at her opera seria being adapted and ruined by low-art burlesque. Her final aria, an outpouring on the importance of music and high art was passionately delivered, and one of the evening's musical highlights."

- **David Smythe, Backtrack ******

"Julia Sporsén's spunky portrayal of the Composer ... Those of us who prefer a voluptuous-sounding [mezzo-soprano] Composer could hardly cavil at Sporsén's lighter, higher, less full-bodied soprano, because she was so palpably inside the role and sang with such commitment."

- **Andrew Clark, Opera Magazine**

"[It] is the women who stand out as the characters who steer and sustain a path through the piece's complexities, none more so than Swedish soprano Julia Sporsén as the composer. A role conceived for a soprano playing a man, hers is updated to a female composer, shedding fresh light on the relationships at play."

- **Carol Main, The List ******

"Soprano Julia Sporsén was convincing as the affronted composer, her moving scenes with Zerbinetta – Jennifer France channeling Dita Von Teese – a highlight."

- **Susan Nickalls, The Scotsman**

"Musically, this duet was beautiful, with Sporsén and former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist Jennifer France as Zerbinetta producing a gorgeous blend, as the characters learn that despite coming from different walks of life, they may have more in common than they thought."

- **Miranda Heggie, The Arts Desk ******

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Kat'a Kabanova (*Kat'a Kabanova*), Opera Holland Park (July 2017)

"Julia Sporsen rends the heart with her searing singing of the adulterous (in thought) heroine."

- **Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times***

"I can confirm that it's still almost unbearably moving, with (again) a spot-on cast from which it feels unfair to single out Julia Sporsen as a luminous, painfully human Katya."

- **Richard Bratby, *The Spectator***

"From among the strong cast Julia Sporsén stands out in the title role, revealing a soprano whose fullness is matched by equally high levels of sensitivity and feeling."

- **Sam Smith, *musicOMH*, 4 stars**

"Julia Sporsén is gripping in the title role... [She] is secure and sings with a real dramatic intensity. For the love music with Boris, she produces a completely different tone, soft, round and utterly endearing."

- **Gavin Dixon, *Artsdesk*, 4 stars**

"It's soprano Julia Sporsén who takes us with her into the vortex of Kát'a's personal hell. Trapped in a life of abuse at the hands of her husband and stepmother, the love and consolation of her life now lost to her, this emotionally naked singer - who showed in ENO's *Duchess of Malfi* and *Giulietta* the extent of her dramatic range and courage - draws us in to share the harrowed woman's fate. It is a searing performance."

- **Mark Valencia, *Whats On Stage*, 5 stars**

"Olivia Fuchs's 2009 production makes a welcome return, with Julia Sporsén searing in the title role."

- **Clare Colvin, *Express*, 4 stars**

"Kát'a's torment in the second act was one of her finest moments; we feel her conundrum viscerally. Swedish soprano Julia Sporsén, previously a Micaëla, a Gilda and a Nedda for OHP, was fully involved in her tragic part right from the start making her demise all the more harrowing."

- **Colin Clarke, *Seen and Heard International***

"Intense and bird-like, the images of flight which come into Janacek's libretto seemed to imbue Sporsen's movements and she was very much like a wounded bird. Nervous yet intense and vividly alive even when constrained not to move, this was a remarkable performance which grew throughout the evening. Sporsen has been singing lyric roles (*Violetta*, *Pamina*, *Micaela*, *Gilda*) and gave a lovely fluid account of the role, but her voice had just the right amount of spinto ping to it, giving just the right amount of power. ... And of course, the glorious double duet which concludes Act Two, where the tense and nervous

start of Kat'a and Boris' duet showed Sporsen and Hoare at their intense best, expanding into a gorgeous lyricism whose over intensity boded no good for the relationship. In the final scenes, this lyricism veered into neurosis and Sporsen's solo was profoundly moving."

- **Robert Hugill, *Planet Hugill*, 4.5 stars**

"In Kát'a's monologue with Varvara, Sporsén convincingly suggested the nascent hysteria within Kát'a' as she realises that her only hope is to prevent Tichon's departure. And, in the double love scene in Act 2, her melodic lines swelled with limitless emotion, as if simply by singing without cease her revelation and love could be made to last forever."

- **Claire Seymour, *Opera Today***

"Julia Sporsén rises to the occasion in her portrayal of Janáček's fatally imaginative, innocent and big-hearted anti-heroine. She is a fine actor who sings Janáček's speech-inflected vocal lines with electrifying fluency, and she conveys the character's strength and vulnerability with focused verismo."

- **Peter Reed, *Classical Source*, 4 stars**

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"Swedish soprano Julia Sporsén, impassioned and lyrical in the title role."

- **Claudia Pritchard, *Culture Wisperer*, 4 stars**

"The stage pictures show us the Volga and the circumscribed, prison-like emotional world of Julia Sporsen's desperately vulnerable Katya, locked into a loveless marriage with cowardly drunk Tichon ... and mercilessly bullied by Anne Mason's vindictive Kabanicha – opera's mother-in-law from hell. ... [This] is an exemplary cast."

- **George Hall, *The Stage*, 4 stars**

Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Gothenburg Opera (April 2017)

"Julia Sporsén was a stunning Pamina: her warm lyrical soprano was a joy to listen to and her well-rounded acting reminded the audience that Pamina is not a classic damsel in distress but a woman with her own mind and a willingness to question authority."

- **Niklas Smith, *Seen and Heard International***

Violetta (*La Traviata*), Folkoperan, Stockholm (September 2015)

"Julia Sporsén's Violetta vocal line unfolded with virtuosity...superbly secure and passionate...she was a stand out! She delivered the great finale and death scene with impressive intensity."

- **Camilla Lundberg, *Dagens Nyheter***

"Julia Sporsén is outstanding in the lead role. Her Violetta is magnificent and human, bewildering and crystal clear. It is a singer's breakthrough that will be difficult to forget."

- **Björn Wiman, *Dagens Nyheter***

"Julia Sporsén is simply outstanding in the title role. With her strong, clear, vibrato she gives the role a credible range with many touching moments, not least in the last act."

- **Bo Löfvendahl, *Svenska Dagbladet***

"Julia Sporsén is unparalleled as Violetta. With a strong, dense and coherent voice full of character she gives a performance which deserves nothing but praise."

- **Claes Wahlin, *Aftonbladet***

"Once every ten years, it happens on an opera stage... A completely new opera singer comes along with exactly what it takes for a plot and storyline to take shape around her and come out in her voice. So it is with soprano Julia Sporsén who sings the leading role of Violetta... She excelled in the role of Kumudha in John Adams's opera *A Flowering Tree* at the Gothenburg Opera House earlier this year... Tension swarms around her as it does a queen bee... In her voice is contained the expansion reflective of the person she portrays... Everything is visible in her facial expressions and the full meaning is conveyed in her singing."

- **Expressen**

"But it is Julia Sporsén's interpretation of Violetta – both dramatically and vocally – that leaves the most significant impression."

- **Per Feltzin, *Sveriges Radio***

"The love story between Violetta and Alfredo is carved out with warmth, love and humour. This is not least down to the superb interpretation by Julia Sporsén, a soprano with rigor and a beautiful high voice."

- **Patrick Uhlman, *Ekuriren***

"Vocally speaking, Julia Sporsén demonstrates the most impressive effort, but I would have expected this having heard her earlier in the year at the Gothenburg Opera. Dramatically and vocally, I regard her performance as the highlight of the show!"

- **Mogens H Andersson, *Opera Logg***

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Kumudha (*A Flowering Tree*), Göteborg Opera (February 2015)

"Soprano Julia Sporsén as Kumudha filled the Gothenburg Opera with sonorous power and intensity in her interpretation of this expressive music. Her phenomenal strength made the scenes in the second half particularly poignant where her character is affected first by doubt, later by dire adversity."

- **Peter Bohlin, *Dansportalen***

"Above all, I was impressed by Julia Sporsén's...ability to allow the long melodic lines to create an impression of floating, her prolonged and elevated melodies blurring the time sequences and bringing the music a fascinating sense of stillness."

- **Magnus Haglund, *GP***

"Julia Sporsén acts completely convincingly, both in the subtle differences of her transformations and in her terror when she finds herself stuck in a mutilated form, without limbs. Her soaring lyrical soprano expresses all of this beautifully."

- **Niklas Smith, *seenandheard-international.com***

Antigone (*Thebans*), English National Opera (May 2014)

"With plenty of vocal temperament and incisive colour, Julia Sporsén was a passionate Antigone." - **John Allison, *Opera***

"Julia Sporsén's Antigone and Matthew Best's gorgeously upholstered Tiresias are both outstanding."

- **Guy Dammann, *The Guardian***

"A mournful cor anglais shadows the vocal line of Antigone, passionately delivered by Julia Sporsén."

- **Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer***

"Julia Sporsén's passionate, incisive Antigone gave Acts Two and Three a thrilling sense of obsession and tragedy."

- **Peter Reed, *classicalsource.com***

"Julia Sporsén's Antigone – ferociously sung, desperate and beautiful." - **Alexandra Coghlan, *theartsdesk.com***

Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), English National Opera (September 2013)

"Julia Sporsén was on fine vocal form as Rosalinde, singing a csárdás that would have lit up any production."

- **Peter Reed, *Opera***

"Julia Sporsén's performance was sympathetic and stylish."

- **Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer***

Nedda (*Pagliacci*), Opera Holland Park (June 2013)

"Julia Sporsén was a terrific Nedda, feisty, fiery, vocally secure and dramatically impressive."

- **Hugo Shirley, *Opera***

"Julia Sporsén's Nedda, a vivid characterization."

- **Rupert Christiansen, *The Daily Telegraph***

"Julia Sporsén...makes an in-depth exploration of Nedda's hopes and frustrations." - **George Hall, *The Stage***

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"...the admirable Nedda of Julia Sporsén."

- **Barry Millington, *The Evening Standard***

"Julia Sporsén, an actor with genuine range and full of vocal stunts, takes charge as Nedda, a travelling player and scarlet woman par excellence."

- **Joseph Woby, *Metro***

"It fell to the Nedda of Julia Sporsén, a soprano whose star is very much in the ascendant, to show how it's done – whether revelling in the bliss of plunging tired feet into a wash-basin during "Oh! Che volo d'augelli?" or else struggling to conceal her anguish while vamping a sultry, *Commedia dell'arte* tart during the clowns' performance."

- **Mark Valencia, *classicalsource.com***

"Julia Sporsen [is] excellent as the adulterous Nedda."

- **Simon Thomas, *Watsonstage.com***

Julietta (Martinů's *Julietta*), English National Opera (September 2012)

"But the biggest plaudits must go to Peter Hoare and Julia Sporsén as the bewitched, bothered, and bewildered lovers, both acting as brilliantly as they sing."

- **Michael Church, *The Independent***

"As Julietta, all nervous jiggles, vicious mocking and sudden seriousness, Julia Sporsen is dynamic, voluptuous and disturbing."

- **Anna Picard, *The Independent on Sunday***

"Julia Sporsén is warmly luscious as [Michel's] obscure object of desire." - **Rupert Christiansen, *The Daily Telegraph***

"Julia Sporsén sang with attack and brilliance."

- **Peter Reed, *The Daily Telegraph***

"Julietta is sung by the sexy, charismatic, pretty-voiced Julia Sporsén, a complete stage animal who deserves to go far."

- **Andrew Clark, *The Financial Times***

"Julia Sporsén is admirable as the elusive Julietta."

- **Barry Millington, *The Evening Standard***

"Memorable performance . . . from Julia Sporsen's enigmatic Julietta." - **George Hall, *The Stage***

"Rarely can a title role have so little to sing, yet Julia Sporsén captivates as Julietta, catching the ambiguity behind her character . . . she makes much of her scenes on stage, with some impassioned singing in the duet with Michel in the woods."

- **Mark Pullinger, *Opera Britannia***

"Julietta herself, lustrously sung by the generous Julia Sporsén"

- **David Nice, *theartsdesk.com***

"As for Julia Sporsén as Julietta, vocally and visually the Swedish soprano radiated such vitality that Michel was bound to be smitten."

- **Mark Valencia, *classicalsource.com***

"Julietta excellently acted and sung by Julia Sporsen."

- ***The Daily Express***

Katya (Weinberg's *The Passenger*), English National Opera (UK premiere, September 2011)

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"There's a simple unaccompanied folk song for Katya, one of the inmates, in Act 2. Julia Sporsen sings it with hushed rapture, and the effect is haunting."
- **Warwick Thompson, *Bloomberg.com***

"Julia Sporsen as inmate Katya nearly steals the show with a moving Russian folksong."
- **Ben Hogwood, *Metro***

"The large ensemble cast, including Julia Sporsen, Pamela Helen Stephen and Rebecca de Pont Davies, gave their heartfelt best."
- **Fiona Maddocks, *The Guardian***

"The most moving vocal moment in fact came a little later, as the *a capella* Russian folksong faded into nothingness (Julia Sporsén as Katya)"
- **David Fanning, *Opera***

"Julia Sporsen's rendering of Katya's Russian folk song is especially touching." - **Christian Hoskins, *Watsonstage***

"Julia Sporsen, who plays the Russian prisoner Katya, sang an enchanting and, ironically, captivating unaccompanied Russian folk song, during which she held the silent attention of the Coliseum in a moment of unparalleled beauty."
- **Paul Guest, *Ceasefire***

Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Opera Holland Park (July 2011)

"Julia Sporsen's Gilda [is] outstandingly sung; the father-daughter duets, in their shanty-town shack, wring the heart."
- **Michael Church, *The Independent***

"Julia Sporsén, as Gilda, was a real revelation, displaying superb clarity and projection, her tone pure and effortlessly pleasing."
- **Opera Today**

"The phenomenal voice Julia Sporsen...impressed from the first with her piercingly bright timbre and lyric vocal line...it was beautifully pitched, her trills flawless and her vocal colouring bright."
- **John de Wald, *Opera Britannia***

"Posner's focus is on the intensity of the relationship between Robert Poulton's Rigoletto and Julia Sporsén's Gilda, whose innocence is matched by the furious sexual energy of adolescence. Though the shivering flute obbligato is still wan with purity, her "Caro nome" is hot with desire."
- **Anna Picard, *Independent on Sunday***

"[Julia Sporsén] sang with considerable panache. Her 'Caro nome' could hardly have been more *dolcissimo*, laced with delightful rubato, which Stratford humoured perfectly. But she also had power to spare. The contrast between her graceful figure in a ballgown and her little-girl-lost in the penultimate scene was stark in the extreme. Most of the sexual electricity in her private encounter with the Duke was hers"
- **Martin Dreyer, *Opera***

"As the innocent Gilda Julia Sporsén's fleshy soprano maintains intensity with its expressive power."
- **George Hall, *The Stage***

"As Gilda, Julia Sporsén's agile attack and dramatic power regularly carry her to victory"
- **Geoff Brown, *The Times***

"Gilda is sung by the terrific Julia Sporsen whose singing and acting really tug at the heartstrings"
- **Warwick Thompson, *Metro***

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"Julia Sporsen is a terrific Gilda. She sings well, and conveys a fascinating half-scared, half-loving relationship with her father."

- **Bloomberg**

Micaela (*Carmen*), Opera Holland Park (June 2010)

"...Julia Sporsén's fearless, ardent Michaela..."

- **Anna Picard, *The Independent***

"... her singing has an impressively charged lyricism that blossoms in her third act aria."

- **George Hall, *The Guardian***

"...Julia Sporsén displays a heavenly purity of sound as Micaela."

- **Warwick Thompson, *Bloomberg.com***

"The best vocal performance of the evening was undoubtedly given by Julia Sporsén in the thankless role of Micaela. Her warm, beautiful voice was evenly produced throughout the range"

- **Sebastian Petit, *Opera Britannia***

"Julia Sporsen was a pleasing, simple Micaela who rose to her Act III aria..." - **Francis Muzzu, *Opera Now***

Micaela (*Carmen*), Clonter Opera (July/September 2008)

"The real eye-catcher of the production was Swedish-born soprano Julia Sporsén as Micaëla. Both her acting and singing were arresting and she showed superb versatility as a performer. Her Act 3 aria was remarkable, captivating the audience as her voice rang out with passion and emotion. A singer to watch!" - **Opera Now**

Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), English Touring Opera (March 2008)

"Julia Sporsén's gorgeously sung Donna Anna"

- **The Independent**

'Julia Sporsén makes Donna Anna an avenging fury, with steely tone and menacing coloratura"

- **The Sunday Times**

"Julia Sporsén's Donna Anna ... sing[s] with a full-blooded intensity" - **The Times**

"Julia Sporsen's Swedish Donna Anna negotiated the intricacies of her big Act Two aria with a warmth rare in exponents of the role..."

- **The Herald**

"Julia Sporsen's Donna Anna shows a defiant strength of character, notably in her act two aria, its coloratura beautifully expressed and full of meaning."

- **Birmingham Post**

Dreamlives 'A Freudian Fantasy', Tête À Tête Opera Festival (August 2007)

"With the aid of minimum props Julia Sporsen brought the scenario to life in a faultless display of presentation and

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timing, whilst singing a continuous sequence of 17 songs by Strauss, Berg and Schoenberg. She is an extremely versatile singer whom I have heard, with equal pleasure, sing pieces from the Bel Canto repertoire and as Tchaikovsky's innocent heroine, *Iolanta*. Here she adopted an earthy and sensual manner, hinting at something more sinister lurking below the surface of her dreams...Sporsen's realisation of Harcombe's concept lieder staging was an astonishing *tour de force*"

- **Musical Pointers**

***Iolanta (Iolanta)*, Royal Academy of Music (March 2007)**

"Julia Sporsén has a thrillingly powerful voice – a core of steel wrapped in a casing of velvet" - **Metro**

"Rising to its considerable vocal challenges are Julia Sporsen's *Iolanta*, who suggests her character's blindness without resorting to cliché..."

- **The Stage**

"Virtually imprisoned by the garden she couldn't see, Julia Sporsén's *Iolanta* charted the character's journey from introspective melancholy to the rapturous revelation of love and sight... with terrific assurance" - **The Times**

"...the soloists excelled with ear-catching contributions ... especially from Julia Sporsén as the blind princess of the title."

- **Evening Standard**