
Robin Johannsen

Selected Reviews

Handel: Ariodante (Dalinda)

Boston Baroque (April 2025)

Johannsen was initially winsome and girlish as the deceived Dalinda, rose gold in color to Forsythe's silver. Then she suddenly produced a stunner near the end of the opera in "Neghittosi, or voi che fate," calling down lightning on the treacherous Polinesso.

- **Boston Globe**

But perhaps the most praiseworthy work came not from the leads but rather from the secondary romantic pair, Dalinda (Robin Johannsen) and Lurcanio (Richard Pittsinger). Both brought nuance to portrayals of characters that otherwise might have been somewhat one dimensional.

- **The Boston Musical Intelligencer**

Christoph Graupner: Dido, Königin von Carthago

La Cetra / Innsbrucker Festwoch (August 2024)

"A notable feature of the cast was the strong Spanish involvement, although the Dido was the American soprano Robin Johannsen. She is a singer I've long felt to be underrated, a stylist who can boast a technique well suited to Baroque repertoire: she has a fine trill, gave us a wonderful messa di voce and some ravishing mezza voce singing, and was exquisite in the accompagnato at her death. The voice is bright yet warm and beautifully produced and was well contrasted with the lighter soprano of the enchanting Alicia Amo as Dido's sister Anna."

Brian Robins, Opera Magazine

Mozart C Minor Mass

B'Rock Orchestra / Brussels, The Hague, Antwerp (May 2023)

"La soprano Robin Johannsen fait preuve d'une exquise délicatesse, rendant avec autant de virtuosité vocale que de sincérité l'heureuse adhésion du croyant au mystère de l'incarnation."

"Soprano Robin Johannsen demonstrates exquisite delicacy, rendering with as much vocal virtuosity as sincerity the believer's joyful embrace of the mystery of the Incarnation."

- **Patrice Lieberman, Bachtrack**

"...la chanteuse réussit à tenir sa voix d'une extrême maîtrise. Les vibratos serrés et légers sont modelés de sensibilité inspirée. Robin Johannsen tient sa partition en une altitude presque céleste et l'interprète avec une lenteur qui laisse place à la profondeur méditative de l'opus, témoignant de la piété artistique de Mozart."

"...the singer succeeds in holding her voice with extreme mastery. The tight, light vibratos are shaped with inspired sensitivity. Robin Johannsen holds her score at an almost celestial altitude, and performs it with a slowness that gives way to the meditative depth of the opus, testifying to Mozart's artistic piety."

- **Soline Heurtebise, www.olyrix.com**

Haydn's Creation

Concertgebouw Orkest/Phillipe Herreweghe / Amsterdam, Lucerne, Cologne, (August 2022)

"Die Sopranistin Robin Johannsen führt ihre Stimme locker durch die schnellen Passagen und in die Höhe. Klanglich elegant und entspannt."

"The Soprano Robin Johannsen leads her voice easily through the fast passages and at the top. Her tone is elegant and relaxed."

- **Roman Kühne, Luzerner Zeitung**

"soprano Robin Johannsen ... optimally cast" - **Peter van der Lint, Trouw**

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BACH Mass in B minor

National Orchestra of Spain with David Afkhamm (April 2022)

En la parte vocal, se lucieron especialmente la soprano Johannsen y el tenor Ovenden. Ambos con bonita voz y buen volumen, además de impecable articulación y línea de canto.

Translation: "In the vocal part, the soprano Johannsen and the tenor Ovenden especially shined. Both with nice voice and good volume, as well as impeccable articulation and song line." - Rafael Ortega Basagoiti, Scherzo

CD: TELEMANN Miriways

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Bernard Labadie, Pentatone (released May 2020)

"In the trouser role of Sophie, Robin Johannsen is also heroic, but finds a touching wistfulness in the aria that concludes the second act." - Richard Lawrence, *Gramophone*

CD: BEETHOVEN Leonore, Marzeline

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Rene Jacobs Harmonia Mundi (released November 2019)

"Johannsen enjoys herself with Marzeline's florid part – in this 1805 version she is effectively promoted to the role of co-principal with Leonore." - Mike Ashman, *Gramophone*, February 2020

"Robin Johannsen's Marzeline is a joy, sung with purity of tone and encompassing both shrewish delight in her exchanges with Jacquino and winning warmth in her infatuation with the disguised Leonore." - Brian Robins, *Opera*, DISC OF THE MONTH

HANDEL Judas Maccabeus

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (December 2019)

"... splendidly matched by soprano Robin Johannsen, whose Israelitish Woman offered a wealth of pointed, crystalline singing. The Act 2 aria 'From mighty kings he took the spoil,' a virtuoso display of technical prowess and expressive specificity, was only one delight among many." - Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"To soprano Robin Johannsen, the Israelitish Woman, were handed the most extensive runs and coloratura, which she handled with ease while also spinning fine legato phrases in arias such as 'Come, ever smiling liberty.'" - Michael Zwieback, *San Francisco Classical Voice*

"While the gentlemen were superb, it was the ladies — radiant soprano Robin Johannsen as the Israelitish Woman and velvety mezzo-soprano Sara Couden as the Israelitish Man — who performed the main heavy lifting among the principals. The two characters function as high-profile everyday Israeli figures.

With a pleasantly soft, clear voice and honeyed textures, Johannsen was sublime in her Act 1 air 'Pious orgies, pious airs,' 'O liberty, thou choicest treasure,' and 'Come ever-smiling liberty' and she had more gems in store, including the Act 2 air 'From mighty kings' and her Act 3 air 'So shall the lute and harp awake.'" - James Ambroff-Tahan, *San Francisco Examiner*

PURCELL King Arthur

Staatsoper Berlin, Rene Jacobs (November 2019)

"Her fellow soprano, Robin Johannsen ('A Priest, Honour, A Shepherdess, She, A Siren, A Nymph') was another standout singer, her

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sweet, clear voice delightful to listen to and dramatically effective, and her diction convincingly British (though the singer herself is American).” - Elyse Lyon, *Opera Wire*

TELEMANN Arias

La Folia Barokorchester, Bad Arolsen (May 2019)

“She shone with gallant, graceful vehemence in the rapid, wailing rage of ‘Se giunge un dispetto’ from Agrippina.”

Jens Klier, *Bachtrack.com* (translated) May 2019

VIVALDI, SCARLATTI, BACH & PERGOLESI - Cantatas

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Innsbrucker Festwochen für Alte Musik & Bachwochen Thun (August 2019)

“Robin Johannsens’ lyrical tenderness and softness, her smile – which she also puts into the voice – merged with the sense of style and charm of the meaningful and perfectly-integrated Akamus ensemble.”

- Ursula Strohal, *Tiroler Tageszeitung* (translated)

“The star of the baroque evening was undoubtedly the soprano Robin Johannsen. She knew how to turn the most demanding coloratura passages into a listening experience with her wonderfully warm soprano. How radiant and triumphant ‘Scheide denn und lass uns in Schmerz und mit wehem Herzen zurück’ in a Bach cantata, the American artist performed with flying colours. The ‘Vidit suum’ from ‘Stabat Mater’ by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, as a last encore, went to the heart in the purest form.”

- Christina Burghagen, *BZ Thunder Tagblatt* (translated)

CD: HANDEL ‘Parnasso in festa’

Barockorchester & Vokalensemble Basel, Andrea Macron, Pentatone (released August 2017)

“Robin Johannsen’s assumption of this, the biggest female role [Clio], comes close to stealing the show. Hers is a lovely bright soprano, full of character, a voice that comes with a high level of technical accomplishments which include excellent diction and beautifully turned, agile ornaments that encompass several perfectly executed cadential trills.”

- Brian Robins, *Opera Magazine*

BEETHOVEN Leonore

European tour with the Freiburger Barockorchester and René Jacobs (October 2017)

“Robin Johannsen sang an impressive Marzeline with pristine musicality and appropriate pertness.”

- Jonathan Sutherland, *Bachtrack*

“Robin Johannsen gave us a beguiling Marzeline, the voice seemingly floating on air through the hall, with a liquid legato matching the crystalline tone.” - *Operatraveller*

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HANDEL Parnasso in festa

Het Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Andrea Marcon (February 2017)

"The revelation was American soprano Robin Johannsen, superbly agile and fresh-sounding—but also expressive—in Clio's taxing music." - David Shengold, *Opera News*

STEFFANI: Amor vien dal destino

Staatsoper Berlin im Schillertheater (April 2016)

"Robin Johannsen is responsible for some of the evening's most seductive and accomplished singing as unhappy sister Giuturna." - Shirley Apthorp, *Financial Times*

"As both Venus and Giuturna, Robin Johannsen brought a luminous soprano and an at times instrumental quality to her arias, such as in the Act Two number "Turn the captain back to shore," in which she begs Turnus to turn back from the coast (Lavinia) to the shore (herself)." - Rebecca Schmid, *classicalvoiceamerica*

"In her twin roles of Venus and Giuturna, Robin Johannsen had more prominent numbers, through which she was able to display all the emotion and technique of her refined soprano. Giuturna, driven near-insane by her forbidden love for Turno, repeated three times her metaphorical helmsman's aria. Johannsen especially shone in Venus's prologue lament arias, in which, accompanied by oboe, she fears for the fate of her son, Aeneas." - Waltraut Anna Kautz, *Bachtrack*

"American soprano Robin Johannsen, seen in last year's Emma und Eginhard, was inexhaustible and often perky as Lavinia's mad sister, while also briefly doubling as Venus. She sang with bright-voiced flexibility, but without the same clarity and delicacy that characterized her star turn last season." - AJ Goldmann, *Opera News Magazine*

CD: MOZART Die Entführung aus dem Serail

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs, Harmonia Mundi (released October 2015)

"[Jacobs's] Entführung unfolds with potent theatrical energy. It aims to entertain, to bring the situations to continuously animated life...I found it an uninterrupted pleasure to listen to the aria singing of Robin Johannsen's bright-toned, intensely involved heroine." - *Opera Magazine*

"Johannsen, though, is a superb Konstanze, with impeccably expressive coloratura and a beautiful silvery tone reminiscent at times of Anneliese Rothenberger on Josef Krips's recording (EMI, 10/70)." - Tim Ashley, *Gramophone*

"Robin Johannsen is the very excellent soprano who sings Konstanze...Johannsen copes with the formidable demands of the role of Konstanze extremely well." - Iain Burnside, *BBC Radio 3*

"Robin Johannsen sings Konstanze, and her lovely, pristine voice is a pleasure to behold, with its impeccable tuning and precise trill." - Robert Levine, *www.classicstoday.com*

TELEMANN Emma und Eginhard

Staatsoper Berlin im Schillertheater, René Jacobs (April 2015)

"Of a solid cast, Robin Johannsen's Emma stands out for her easy purity and well-rounded musicality."

- Shirley Apthorp, *Financial Times*

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"American soprano Robin Johannsen led the pack as Emma. Her elegant voice gently wafted over the Schiller Theater (hardly the best place to hear Baroque opera). With freshness and legato, she gave the evening's most fully defined performance, from her precise and measured coloratura to the warm notes of her lower range during the tender 'alphabet of love' that she sings with Eginhard." - A.J. Goldmann, *Opera News*

CD: CALDARA 'In dolce amore' - Arias and Cantatas (World premiere recording)

Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro De Marchi, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi (released May 2014)

"A pair of warbling recorders adorns Sabina's touching siciliano 'Numi, se giusti siete' from Adriano in Siria (1732), and Johannsen sings with limpid sweetness in Emilia's 'In dolce amore' from Scipione Africano (1735). There are judicious contrasts in dramatic situations and musical moods, such as the unjustly condemned Dircea's chromatically expressive 'Se tutti i mali miei' from Demofoonte (1733) in comparison to the flirtatious comedy of Dorina's 'Una donna' from I disingannati (1729).

Academia Montis Regalis and Alessandro De Marchi accompany with robust directness or lighter delicacy as required, and Johannsen's versatile singing helps to reveal an enriching glimpse of Caldara's virtues." - David Vickers, *Gramophone*