



Karen Cargill

Mezzo-Soprano

MAHLER Rückert-Lieder, CBSO, Grazinyte-Tyla, Symphony Hall Birmingham

Karen Cargill's performance of Mahler's Rückert-Lieder was wholly moving: bees buzzed, the fragrance of linden trees wafted, we stepped beyond life's daily tumult. Perhaps it was from when she took off her mask and shared a beaming smile, perhaps it was from her exquisitely controlled first phrase, but throughout, the Scottish mezzo-soprano held her audience entranced. 'I am lost to the world' she sang, and for five miraculous songs, painted in subtle orchestral colours, so were we.

Rebecca Franks, The Times, June 2021

BARTOK *Bluebeard's Castle*, London Symphony Orchestra, Rattle, LSO St Luke's ...

Karen Cargill was in stupendous voice as Judith.

Richard Morrison, The Times, September 2020

[Gerald Finley] is ideally matched – in music if not marriage – by the Judith of Karen Cargill, who sings with richness and sculpted lines in an altogether majestic performance.

John Allison, Opera, December 2020

MAHLER Rückert-Lieder, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Sondergard, Edinburgh Festival Theatre

Even better was the peerless Karen Cargill, singing three of Mahler's Rückert-Lieder with ravishing tone.

Richard Morrison, The Times, August 2020

Alma MAHLER Songs & Gustav Mahler Symphony No. 4, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Kensho Watanabe

The dark shimmer of her voice is the finest you'll hear when it comes to that lower middle part of the mezzo range, so suggestive of both potential and danger...

Simon Thompson, The Times, February 2020

Although she had the score in front of her, Cargill rarely consulted it, soaring effortlessly over the lush accompaniment on material that demands a voice of power across a wide range.

Keith Bruce, The Herald Scotland, February 2020

They were given a lustrous performance by the wonderful mezzo soprano Karen Cargill ...She needed no introduction to Edinburgh audiences and this evening they responded with affectionate enthusiasm to her beautifully sung, reflective selection of Alma Mahler's moving lieder.

Edinburgh Evening News, February 2020

Alma MAHLER Songs, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Saraste, Barbican Hall

Here we heard six of her songs, beautifully and persuasively sung by Karen Cargill.

Richard Morrison, The Times, January 2020

ELGAR *Sea Pictures*, London Symphony Orchestra, Pappano, Barbican Hall

She has a contralto chest voice to set her alongside the redoubtable singer at the first performance, Clara Butt (Ms Butt dressed as a mermaid; Cargill chose Marian blue). But she also hones the most exquisite tone colours, the perfect match for the LSO's hyper-refinement under Pappano, and the heft for the big optimism.

David Nice, The Arts Desk, December 2019

BARTOK *Bluebeard's Castle*, Orchestra of Opera North, Sian Edwards, Leeds Town Hall

... Cargill's sumptuous Judith — a sensuous, assertive woman rather than a naive innocent, more than a match for her husband. Cargill's generous mezzo overflows into the music, filling its furrows and warming the often chilly surface.

Alexandra Coghlan, The Spectator, November 2019

She [Cargill] has spoken recently, on Radio 3's Music Matters, about her emotional investment in those staged performances, and that hinterland was palpable here, the character of Judith forming with each bar of music, as the orchestra and Edwards built their picture of the castle itself, and its lovely hidden garden.

Keith Bruce, The Herald Scotland, November 2019

... the Scottish mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, who wore the role of Judith as if it were her own skin, flayed by the revelations of her new husband as each of the seven doors opens to reveal its horrors. One of our most instinctively expressive performers, Cargill has so many colours and inflections in her voice that each short outburst carries a wealth of additional meaning.

Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, November 2019

Cargill managed to convey the transformation from girlish expectation to the slavery of obsession, as Bluebeard gradually elevated her to the pedestal on which he had imprisoned all his previous wives. This involved some clever contrasts between the two singers. Judith's lines, so studded with chromatics, suggest a woman of emotion. Cargill's heart-in-mouth tone conjured this. As she progressed, she opened up her resonance, her mezzo acquiring chestiness, yet her legato untroubled. But her most magical moment was in response to the opening of the fifth door ... Cargill's appreciation of this came in a crystalline pianissimo. All the while she had been turning this way and that, changing expressions to match her moods.

Martin Dreyer, Opera, February 2020

BERG *Seven Early Songs*, RSN, Sondergard, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

I was mesmerised by the performance of them [Berg songs] by our own international mezzo-soprano star, Karen Cargill. It was, as a breathless audience clearly recognised, an enormous privilege to hear these works sung by a performer who is not only at the top of her own game, but in the top echelons of classical voices of our own era.

Keith Bruce, The Herald, October 2019

For Berg's Seven Early Songs, the mahogany warmth of mezzo soprano Karen Cargill's lower register was the magic ingredient, molten and otherworldly...

Ken Walton, The Scotsman, October 2019

... a sumptuous performance by Scotland's superstar mezzo Karen Cargill. ...commanding the hall with an opulent tone that sounds as effortless as it is confident.

Christopher Lambton, The Arts Desk, October 2019

WAGNER *Götterdämmerung* (Waltraute), Edinburgh Festival, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Sir Andrew Davis

...Valkyrie sister Waltraute (an awesome and highly persuasive Karen Cargill)...

Neil Fisher, The Times, August 2019

Her [Cargill's] scene as Waltraute with Christine Goerke's Brunnhilde, the most intimate of this last part of the cycle, remained one of the most memorable sections of the evening ...

Keith Bruce, The Herald, August 2019

Where this *Götterdämmerung* really delivered was in Karen Cargill's Waltraute and Christine Goerke's Brunnhilde. In the scene together Wagner's drama suddenly took hold of the Usher Hall, and we seemed to be in a different place altogether – the world of the imagination, fired by the do-or-die magnificence of Cargill's oration and the ardour of Goerke's open-hearted singing.

Andrew Clark, Opera, November 2019

MAHLER *Symphony No.2*, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Gražinytė-Tyla

Mezzo Karen Cargill delivered the *Urlicht* song with sustained beauty of tone

Andrew Clements, The Guardian, June 2019

POULENC *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Mère Marie), The Metropolitan Opera, Yannick Nezet-Seguin

Yet more luxury casting brought us Karen Cargill as the manipulative Mother Marie, who essentially bullies the other sisters into their fatal vow. Her rich mezzo, though, made her case sound downright seductive.

James Jordan, The Observer (US), May 2019

BERLIOZ *La Damnation de Faust*, LSO, Rattle, Barbican Hall, LSO Live CD

Karen Cargill reigns supreme as a heartbreakingly lovelorn Marguerite

Geoff Brown, The Times, March 2019

WAGNER *Das Rheingold & Siegfried* (Erda), The Metropolitan Opera, Philippe Jordan

It's hard to do much better than Karen Cargill's ravishing mezzo-soprano as Erda, the voice of eternity ...

Eric C Simpson, The New York Classical Review, March 2019

Erda was sung by the superb Karen Cargill ...

David Deveau, The Boston Musical Intelligencer, April 2019

The rich-toned mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, as the all-knowing earth goddess Erda...

Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, March 2019

BERLIOZ *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Rophé, City Halls Glasgow

The mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill inhabited the doomed queen's final moments with a commanding ring to the top of her voice and an operatic flair for the drama, making my scalp prickle with a chilling pianissimo as she addressed the ghosts of her ancestors.

Simon Thompson, The Times, February 2019

The principal danger in Glasgow came from the singing of Karen Cargill: commanding the stage with her stance alone, and holding her full vocal power in haughty reserve until the doomed Queen lets her poise drop and sends a jet of high-pitched pain spurting skywards. Cargill snarled, spat and soared until the fatal asp bite (the text is export-quality fustian: 'A vile reptile is my recourse') whereupon, with chilling control, she blanched all tone from that invincible voice and expired over juddering strings.

Richard Bratby, The Spectator, February 2019

...performed with exquisite dynamic clarity by mezzo Karen Cargill. The precision of her volume control in the acoustic of the room commanded attention, both in terms of the music and the character, and her performance of the recitatives hardly required translation.

Keith Bruce, The Herald, February 2019

BERLIOZ *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, BBC Philharmonic/Morlot, Bridgewater Hall Manchester

...Karen Cargill's majestic singing in Berlioz' death-scene cantata ...

Richard Morrison, The Times, October 2018

WAGNER *Götterdämmerung* (Waltraute), Royal Opera Covent Garden

Karen Cargill made the most of her scene as forlorn Waltraute ...

Neil Fisher, The Times, October 2018

Karen Cargill as Waltraute excelled.

Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, October 2018

Karen Cargill gave Waltraute's narration a deep-toned dignity ...

Richard Fairman, The Financial Times, October 2018