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Barnaby Palmer

CONDUCTOR



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BIOGRAPHY

In 2002 Barnaby Palmer was named Artistic Director of San Francisco Lyric Opera and has since conducted over 25 new productions with that organization. He has served as guest conductor for Opera San Jose and Livermore Opera. In April 2008 Barnaby was named Music Director for Opera San Jose's production of Mozart's Die Zauberflote, and is currently one of the finalists for the position of Music Director of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra. He has studied conducting with Alan Gilbert, Rossen Milanov, Larry Rachleff and most recently Michael Morgan.

Critical Acclaim

Reviews: 2004 – 2009

Rigoletto San Francisco Lyric Opera

Artistic Director and Conductor Barnaby Palmer's choice of tempos was always judicious. Any conductor who treats the great quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore" (Fairest daughter of love) as poetry rather than as a strict-time throwaway deserves kudos, in my book.

Jason Victor Serinus San Francisco Classical Voice 4/19/09

Don Giovanni San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Palmer showed due sensitivity to his singers in musical emphasis and pacing, as well as to the drama in terms of the urgency of the orchestra's sound"

Immanuel Gilen summeriscomingin.blogspot.com 1/24/09

Aida San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Palmer supported the singers well, and elicited a vibrant performance of Verdi's score."

Georgia Rowe San Francisco Classical Voice 9/19/08

The Turn of the Screw San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Conducted with exemplary care by Artistic Director Barnaby Palmer and sung by a uniformly fine cast, Sunday's matinee performance allowed the audience to witness the work's magic right up close, without flinching or cheating.

Joshua Kosman San Francisco Chronicle 6/03/08

Die Zauberflöte Opera San José

"Barnaby Palmer, the young artistic director of the San Francisco Lyric Opera, is the conductor – a really good one, leading the orchestra in a fluid and controlled performance full of detail and color, consistently partnering the singers."

Richard Scheinin San José Mercury News 4/22/08

La Bohème San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Barnaby Palmer's sensitive and powerful conducting lent much beauty to the performance."

Lydia Mayne San Francisco Classical Voice 3/14/08

Tales of Hoffman San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Barnaby Palmer conducted with finesse and great musicality, shaping the music idiomatically and providing strong support for the cast."

Lisa Hirsch San Francisco Classical Voice 9/22/07

Lucia di Lammermoor San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Artistic Director Barnaby Palmer, who also conducted, has a good grasp of the score and was willing to dare some rubato and tempo modification. When he went for it, as in the reprise of the lovers' "Verranno a te" in Act 1, he produced a brilliant effect."

Michael Zwiebach San Francisco Classical Voice 5/26/07

Romeo and Juliet San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Up front: a super-talented young conductor Barnaby Palmer..."

Janos Gereben S.F. Examiner 3/1/07

The Magic Flute San Francisco Lyric Opera

"Just in time for the holiday season, San Francisco Lyric Opera unveiled Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, opera's answer to the *Nutcracker* ballet, in a superbly sung production, confidently conducted by Artistic Director Barnaby Palmer with his usual crispness."

Michael Zwiebach San Francisco Classical Voice 11/18/06

The Magic Flute Livermore Valley Opera

"It was a triumph of soloists, ensembles, and, above all, the musical vision of conductor Barnaby Palmer. His overture set the tone and tempo for a well-paced Mozartean orchestra that displayed uncommonly fine intonation, alternating solemn seriousness with bubbling light-hearted fun. The clever little musical 'conversations' among different instrumental sections were especially well-delineated. Obviously Palmer also worked diligently as chorus master to achieve an even, well-blended sound and admirable enunciation of the German text, often a weak point with American singer.

Susan Steinberg The Independent 11/23/2006

***Il Trovatore* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"Conductor Barnaby Palmer has made a quantum leap in the last year, not so much in his technical musicianship, which was always there, but in his interpretive capability. His leadership has become more fluid, nuanced, and idiomatic. The give-and-take with his singers seemed natural, and they molded the phrases in concert with each other. The orchestra responded extremely well."

Michael Zwiebach San Francisco Classical Voice 9/16/06

***The Rape of Lucretia* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"San Francisco Lyric Opera ended its season with a riveting performance of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Seen May 13, the production impressed as much for the wholehearted manner in which Music Director/Conductor Barnaby Palmer and his twelve-person orchestra embraced Britten's music as for the quality of the singing...

Thanks to Palmer's magical pacing and ability to contrast darkness with light, the high purity of Meagan Searles Todd's soprano, supported by Kathleen Moss's softer low tones, made for a most beautiful flower duet."

Jason Victor Serinus Opera News (online) August 2006

***The Rape of Lucretia* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"A tiny local company that takes on a complicated, challenging, still largely unfamiliar contemporary opera should get a big, shiny 'A' for effort. How delightful then is the experience of an excellent performance with talented young singers, an outstanding orchestra, and sterling musical direction by Barnaby Palmer."

Janos Gereben San Francisco Classical Voice 5/6/06

***Tosca* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"San Francisco Lyric Opera set a new standard of achievement for themselves with a new production of Puccini's *Tosca*. . . . The show ran smoothly without technical glitches and was well conducted by artistic director Barnaby Palmer. Palmer's conducting was fluid, following the singers and allowing lyrical phrases to expand, stopping the orchestra for the applause spots, but still shaping the dramatic arc of the scenes."

Michael Zwiebach San Francisco Classical Voice 3/4/06

***The Abduction from the Seraglio* S F Lyric Opera**

"It was the sensitive conducting of Barnaby Palmer that so expressively shaped and sculpted the opera. This young maestro is a major talent, and whether he is leading Lyric's production of Puccini, Rossini, or Wagner, he is the guiding artistic force."

James Keolker San Francisco Classical Voice 12/09/05

***Carmen* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"Barnaby Palmer met all challenges of size, familiarity, expectations by conducting a musical crackerjack of a performance: vibrant, steady, consistent, beautifully balanced."

Janos Gereben San Francisco Classical Voice 10/11/05

***Madama Butterfly* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"This ensemble was able to register every subtlety, every nuance, every emotional effect Puccini required. This seemed in large measure due to the efforts of their intense young conductor, Barnaby Palmer. Palmer seems to be that rare breed of musician who has an innate sense of the dramatic, sculpting into life the mere notes of the printed page."

James Keolker San Francisco Classical Voice 5/13/05

***Un Ballo in Maschera* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"Under the guidance of conductor and artistic director Barnaby Palmer, the company offers economy-scale opera while keeping the musical values high."

"The evening's hero was Palmer himself, shaping the performance with fluency and authority, and eliciting splendid playing from the orchestra. The first sign of things to come, in fact, was the superb rendition of the Act I prelude, done with a robustness and clarity that most ensembles could only envy."

Joshua Kosman San Francisco Chronicle 3/23/05

***Un Ballo in Maschera* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"The music director is mature and accomplished well beyond his years. Barnaby Palmer not only conducted a steady, consistent, restrained performance, but he did something near-miraculous in regional opera, assembling a cast without a weak link."

Janos Gereben San Francisco Classical Voice 3/19/05

***La Cenerentola* San Francisco Lyric Opera**

"Their new production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* is a small miracle. It brought this listener more pleasure than some of this year's offerings at the War Memorial Opera House."

Norman Rabkin San Francisco Classical Voice 12/3/04

***L'Elisir d'Amore* Livermore Valley Opera**

"Top honors go to Barnaby Palmer, who conducted a first rate team of orchestra and chorus nimbly negotiating some of opera's most rapid and complex ensembles. His well-rehearsed chorus astounded by smiling through the break-neck speed of their Italian text, perfectly coordinated entries, and constant stage activity."

Susan Steinberg The Independent 10/21/04

Curriculum Vitae

Engagements

2009

January *Don Giovanni* **San Francisco Lyric Opera**

April *Rigoletto* **San Francisco Lyric Opera**

October *Die Fledermaus* **San Francisco Lyric Opera**

2010

January *Guest Conducting* **La Crosse Symphony**

Operas performed, San Francisco Lyric Opera

Bizet *Carmen* 2005

Britten *Rape of Lucretia* 2006, *The Turn of the Screw* 2008

Donizetti *Don Pasquale* 2002, *L'Elisir d'Amore* 2003,
Lucia di Lammermoor 2007

Gounod *Romeo et Juliette* 2007

Menotti *The Telephone* 2003

Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro* 2002, *Così fan Tutte* 2003, *Don Giovanni* 2004, 2009 *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* 2005, *Die Zauberflöte* 2006, 2008

Offenbach *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* 2007

Puccini *Madama Butterfly* 2002, 2005, *La Bohème* 2002, 2008
Tosca 2006

Rossini *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* 2002, *La Cenerentola* 2004

Verdi *La Traviata* 2001, 2003, *Rigoletto* 2004, 2009

Un Ballo in Maschera 2005, *Il Trovatore* 2006, *Aida* 2008

Wagner *Das Rheingold* 2001, *Die Walküre* 2001

Guest Conducting

Opera San José *Die Zauberflöte* 2008 (music director)

Opera San José *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* 2006 (assistant)

Livermore Opera *L'Elisir d'Amore* 2004, *Die Zauberflöte* 2006

Symphonic repertoire, performed since 2001

Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6; Piano Concerto No 5

Fauré *Pelléas et Mélisande*

Haydn Symphony No. 99

Hindemith *Symphonic Metamorphosis*

Janáček *Idyll*

Mozart Symphony No. 40

Stravinsky Suite for Small Orchestra No. 2

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

Wagner Excerpts from *Lohengrin*

Elgar *Enigma Variations*

Chabrier *Bourée Fantasque*

Bloch *Concerto Grosso*

Bizet *Carmen Suite* No. 1

Residency

2003 Lecturer at Stanford University: History of Italian Opera
2002 Italian Cultural Institute: Verdi & *La Traviata*
2005 Alliance Française: *Carmen*
Since 2005 Academy of Art University: History of Opera
Since 2005 Academy of Art University: Art of Music 1 & II

Conducting Teachers

Alan Gilbert Music Director Designate, New York Philharmonic
Rossen Milanov Associate Conductor, Philadelphia Orchestra
Michael Morgan Artistic Director, Oakland East Bay Symphony
Larry Rachleff Music Director, Rice University

Schools

1997-1999 M.M. Clarinet Performance, University of Michigan
1993-1997 B.M. Clarinet Performance, Cleveland Institute of Music
1992-1993 H.S. Diploma Interlochen Arts Academy

Background

Born in Hong Kong 1974
Moved to California 1980
American and British (EU) passport holder

References

Michael Morgan

Music Director: Oakland East Bay Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic.

Artistic Director: Festival Opera, Oakland Youth Orchestra

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