



IMG Artists

ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN, Soprano

Biography

Isabel Bayrakdarian burst onto the international opera scene after winning first prize in the 2000 Operalia competition founded by Plácido Domingo. Since then she has performed in many of the world's major opera houses, recital stages and concert halls. She is admired as much for her stunning stage presence as for her exceptional musicality, and she has followed a career path completely her own.

Ms. Bayrakdarian has an exciting 2011-12 season ahead which includes performances at Wigmore Hall with cellist Steven Isserlis and an extensive recital tour of British Columbia (Canada) with Serouj Kradjian. She will also be heard with the Vancouver Symphony in performances with Bramwell Tovey singing Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, and in a new production of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona, Spain). Ms. Bayrakdarian continues to be the on-air host of Opera on HIFI music + art.

Recent highlights of Ms. Bayrakdarian's career include debuts with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of its music director Alan Gilbert in the title role of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, her debut at Tanglewood, and Poulenc's *Gloria* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of David Zinman. Important concert appearances included Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Peter Oundjian, an arias program with the Seattle Symphony and Nicholas McGegan, Gorecki's Symphony No. 3 with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and John Axelrod, and the premiere of a new work by Serouj Kradjian with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Anne Manson. Last season she returned to the Canadian Opera Company, as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Operatic highlights of Ms. Bayrakdarian's recent seasons include her role debut of Mélisande in *Pélleas et Mélisande* at the Canadian Opera Company, the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Saito Kinen Festival and Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino both times under the baton of Seiji Ozawa, the title role of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at Teatro del Liceu, and her role debut as Blanche in Robert Carsen's production of Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago with Sir Andrew Davis. A consummate Mozartarian, she has appeared as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Metropolitan Opera, Zerlina at the Salzburg Festival, Despina in *Così fan tutte* at the Palau de les Arts in Valencia, and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Covent Garden and the Houston Grand Opera; most recently she has added Ilia in *Idomeneo* at the Paris Opera and the Canadian Opera Company.

In the 2008-2009 season Ms. Bayrakdarian toured North America at such prestigious organizations such as Carnegie Hall, San Francisco Performances, Celebrity Series of Boston, Philharmonic Society of Orange County, Roy Thomson Hall, and the Vancouver Symphony with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra conducted by Anne Manson performing the works of Armenian composer Gomidas Vartabed in a program created by her and Mr. Kradjian. Additional appearances on the orchestral platform include performances with the orchestras in San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, as well as at home in Canada with the Toronto Symphony, Tafelmusik, Les Violons du Roy, the National Arts Centre Orchestra and other major Canadian performing organizations, as well as with numerous groups in Europe. Other orchestral appearances included debuts with the Chicago and Montreal Symphonies – both in the Mahler Fourth Symphony – under David Zinman and James Conlon respectively. She has also participated in tango concerts at Toronto's Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts and at Stratford Summer Music. She collaborated in the world-premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Sheer's one-act opera *To Hell and Back* with Broadway legend Patti LuPone and San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

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Often partnered with Mr. Kradjian, Ms. Bayrakdarian has triumphed in recital in New York's Carnegie Hall, Berkeley, Boston, San Francisco, and elsewhere in the United States. Additionally they have toured Canada together, in such cities as Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and Ottawa, as well as major cities in Europe and Asia. Of Ms. Bayrakdarian's March 2008 Carnegie Hall appearance, the *New York Sun* commented that "she is a solid, smart, and well-prepared singer. And she gave a most enjoyable — even instructive — recital on Saturday night. Indeed, you could say that her recital did what a voice recital ought to do: provide a kind of tour, and showcase the talents and personality of a winning artist."

Ms. Bayrakdarian sings on the Grammy® award-winning soundtrack of the blockbuster film *The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers*, and her voice can also be heard in the multiple award-winning Canadian film *Ararat*. She has been honored with four Juno awards, Canada's highest recording prize, most recently for her CD *Mozart arie & duetti* with fellow Canadians Russell Braun and Michael Schade. Expanding her vast discography, Ms. Bayrakdarian was a guest soloist with the Canadian band Delerium on their 2007 Grammy® nominated dance remix "Angelicus." Ms. Bayrakdarian is the subject of a CBC-TV film entitled *A Long Journey Home* that documents her first trip to Armenia; on another trip there she recorded a disc of songs by the country's national composer, Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935), with Serouj Kradjian and the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra which is available on the Nonesuch label and was a 2009 Grammy® nominee.

Ms. Bayrakdarian has received many grants and other awards in addition to the First Prize in the Operalia: four Juno awards, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, the 2005 Virginia Parker Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Leonie Rysanek Award from the George London Foundation, and a Metropolitan Opera National Council Award in 1997.

Born in Lebanon of proud Armenian heritage and now a citizen of Canada, Ms. Bayrakdarian moved with her family to Toronto as a teenager. Her earliest singing experience was at church, which remains — along with her family — the central focus of her life. She holds an honors degree in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Toronto.

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