

Michelle Rice

Mezzo-soprano

With “tones of pure gold” (Washington Post), Michelle Rice brings to her work a rich mezzo voice and notable performance intensity. Her portrayal of Mrs. Grose in Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw* at the Kennedy Center, conducted by Maestro Lorin Maazel, was described as “nuanced and sensitive” (Washington Post), “dramatically charged and vocally superlative” (dcist.com), and having a “firm, warm vocalism [that] made every phrase speak” (Baltimore Sun).



Hailed as a “standout” for her prominent dramatic and vocal contributions onstage, Ms. Rice has appeared in such roles as Herodias (*Salome*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Flora Bervoix (*La traviata*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), and covered the role of Amneris (*Aïda*). As Emilia in Festival Opera’s production of Verdi’s *Otello*, the San Francisco Chronicle extolled she “brought vocal and theatrical impact to the role.” Other operatic roles from the standard repertoire include Carmen and Mercedes (*Carmen*), the Witch and the Mother (*Hansel and Gretel*), the Voice of Antonia’s Mother (*Les contes d’Hoffmann*), Gertude (*Roméo et Juliette*), Berta (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*), Irene (*Tamburlaine*), Serse and Arsamene (*Serse*), and many more, with companies including West Bay Opera, Opera San José, Fresno Grand Opera, Opera Cleveland, Annapolis Opera, Pasadena Opera, and other organizations throughout the United States.

Ms. Rice’s musicianship and warmth of tone make her a sought after artist in modern music. Her performances in this repertoire include earlier works such as Respighi’s *Il tramonto* for mezzo and string quartet and the role of Savitri (Holst’s *Savitri*); roles in seminal 20th-century operas such as The Mother (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), Mrs. Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*), Mrs. Olsen (*Street Scene*), the Secretary (*The Consul*), and Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*); and roles in more recent works including Anna (Dove’s *Tobias and the Angel*), Maria (De Silva’s *Gesualdo, Prince of Madness*, reading), Jade Boucher in a new chamber version of Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, and the role of Kathy Hagen in Terence Blanchard’s first opera, *Champion: An Opera in Jazz*. She created the title role in *Clara*, a 21st-century opera by Robert Convery based on the life of Clara Schumann. Of that performance, the Washington Post declared, “Rice was...reflective and confident in both her singing and acting...[she] excelled at dramatic subtleties and pierced scenes with her presence and clarity of voice—especially compelling during revelatory biographical moments.” Ms. Rice frequently performs 20th- and 21st-century song cycles, such as Mohammed Fairouz’ *Jeder Mensch* with texts from the diary of Alma Mahler, Ned Rorem’s epic song collection *Evidence of Things Not Seen*, and Dominick Argento’s Pulitzer Prize-winning monodrama *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Her 2012 performance of *Virginia Woolf* was regarded as “magnificent” by the composer himself.

Equally compelling on the concert stage, Ms. Rice’s appearances include the mezzo solo in a lauded performance of the Verdi *Requiem* with James Morris and Sharon Sweet, about which the Washington Post remarked, “Rice [sang] credibly and fervently, in true Verdian style, as though she’d just stepped out of ‘Aïda.’” From Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri* to Schubert’s *Mass No. 5*, Elgar’s *The Music Makers* to Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*, and Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* to Carlos Alberto Pinto Fonseca’s rarely heard *Missa Afro-Brasileira*, Ms. Rice excels in a wide spectrum of oratorio and symphonic repertoire. San Francisco Classical Voice praised her performance as the mezzo soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with the Masterworks Chorale, saying “Rice’s dark, full sound shone brightly and gave serious weight to her aria ‘O rest in the Lord.’” She has appeared with the Washington Concert Opera (Albina, *La donna del lago*), MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall (Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*), and many other organizations performing works such as Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, Händel’s *Messiah*, Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, and the Verdi *Requiem*.

Ms. Rice holds degrees from the University of Washington and the University of Maryland Opera Studio.