

Gary Lehman

Tenor



Gary Lehman's phenomenal rise to international prominence as one of the world's premiere Heldentenors was ignited by his exciting 2008 Metropolitan Opera debut as Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde*. This important role debut opposite the Isolde of Deborah Voigt prompted *The New York Times* to rave, "Something of a savior has risen from the rubble." His return the following year as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* earned exceptionally high praise from *Opera News*, who wrote, "Chalk up an unqualified success, first, for tenor Gary Lehman... on this evidence, the singer's natural gifts are as arresting, and rare, as the suave way he deploys them. His physical bearing and rich vocal timbre were ideal for the role, as was his ability to shape an ardent 'Winterstürme' and to maintain expressivity and emotion." His most recent role debut at the Met was equally well-received, with *The New York Post* declaring, "Gary Lehman's tenor rang with confidence as the heartbroken Alwa" in Berg's *Lulu*. In the midst of these successes in New York, he has been garnering worldwide critical acclaim and audience enthusiasm in performances which include Samson in *Samson et Dalila* in St. Gallen, *Tannhäuser* in Oslo, Tristan in Leipzig and St.

Petersburg, Russia, *Parsifal* in Nice and St. Petersburg, and *Peter Grimes* and Canio in *I Pagliacci* in Düsseldorf. Mr. Lehman's Heldentenor debut came merely 5 years ago as Parsifal with Los Angeles Opera, where he also recently performed the role of Stathis Borans in *The Fly*. Since then he has also performed the roles of Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Florestan in *Fidelio*. In this short time, he has been honored to work with many of the world's most important conductors, following the batons of James Levine, Daniel Barenboim, Valery Gergiev, James Conlon, Fabio Luisi, Philippe Auguin and Plácido Domingo.

This summer Mr. Lehman will sing Siegmund in concert with Festspiele Baden-Baden, then begin his 2010/11 season as Tristan in Peter Sellars' *The Tristan Project* on tour with the London Philharmonia and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Also this season, he returns to Oslo for Alwa with Den Norske Opera and Ballet, Parsifal in Hamburg, Tristan in Lyon and in concert with the Orchestra de Paris, conducted by Christopher Eschenbach, and a special Gala performance of *Tannhäuser* with Deutsche Oper Berlin. Upcoming engagements include returns to Oslo, St. Gallen, Düsseldorf and

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the Metropolitan Opera, in addition to debuts with Vienna Staatsoper, Opera Australia, Teatro della Maestranza in Seville, Bayerische Staatsoper and Münchener Opern Festival. Future seasons will see role debuts in Wagner's Ring Cycle as Siegfried in both *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, Othello, Faust in *La Damnation de Faust*, and the Tambourmajor in *Wozzeck*.

Mr. Lehman received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University and continued his studies at Indiana University. He then appeared in more than 90 performances with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as a member of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, and spent the early years of his career performing leading baritone roles for opera companies throughout North America.

Mr. Lehman's first recording as Parsifal, a collaboration with Valery Gergiev, featuring Violeta Urmana and René Pape is soon to be released on the Mariinsky label.

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Gary Lehman

Press Reviews

Alwa in *Lulu* (Metropolitan Opera)

"Gary Lehman's tenor rang with confidence as the heartbroken Alwa."

- Martin Bernheimer, *New York Post*, May 10, 2010

"Gary Lehman was an ardent, ultimately pitiable Alwa."

- Steve Smith, *New York Times*, May 9, 2010

"Gary Lehman's urgent heldentenor reinforces the anguish of Alwa..."

- Martin Bernheimer, *Financial Times*, May 10, 2010

Title role in *Parsifal* (Opéra de Nice)

"Parsifal himself was American Gary Lehman who has effected a transition from baritone to a splendid heldentenor of total security with power to burn. He was willing to attempt the acting of the innocent fool (surely one of opera's more thankless tasks) redeeming his seeming dramatic naivete with fine vocal art."

- Michael Milenski, *Opera Today*, February 2010

"Quant au Parsifal très haut de gamme de Gary Lehman, il étincelle. Passé il y a trois ans de la tessiture de baryton à celle de ténor, c'est un véritable Heldentenor qui allie les couleurs des deux tessitures et nous charme par une aisance et une souplesse vocale qui ne faiblissent pas. Il est l'innocent au cœur pur qui suit ses impulsions, reçoit en direct les messages de Dieu et se laisse guider par l'intelligence du cœur. Il vit intérieurement la compassion, vertu partagée par le bouddhisme et le christianisme, qui permet à Parsifal d'identifier la souffrance d'Amfortas en recevant le baiser de Kundry et de reconnaître en lui-même le rédempteur annoncé par les anges. Il trouve sans peine les accents du désespoir comme de l'allégresse sans que sa voix n'en souffre jamais. Un pur bonheur."

- Elisabeth Bouillon, *Forum Opera*, February 2010

(As for Parsifal and the very high range of Gary Lehman, it sparkles. He spent three years passing from baritone to tenor, and this is a real Heldentenor combining the colors of the two tessituras and charming us with an ease and flexibility of voice that did not waver. It is his innocent pure heart that follows his impulses, receives direct messages from God and is guided by the intelligence of the heart. His compassion is internal, a virtue shared by Buddhism and Christianity, which allows Parsifal to identify the suffering of Amfortas in receiving the kiss of Kundry and recognize in himself the redeemer announced by angels. He finds without difficulty the accents of despair as well as joy without his voice suffering for it. Pure happiness.)

Gary Lehman, *Press Reviews, cont'd.*

Title role in *Peter Grimes* (Oper am Rhein)

"Lehman singt den Peter Grimes mit robustem und kraftvollem Tenor, zeigt die Sehnsüchte und Nöte der Figur. Dabei klingt seine Stimme immer frei, und in der Artikulation ist er als Muttersprachler sowieso perfekt."

(Lehman sings Peter Grimes with a robust and powerful tenor, showing the aspirations and needs of the figure. Yet his voice is always free, and the articulation is as perfect as a native speaker anyway.)

- Rudolf Hermes, *Der Westen*, November 2009

Siegmond in *Die Walküre* (Metropolitan Opera)

"Starting with *Die Walküre*, each of the big operas boasted one major performance that, if not transformative, at least generated real excitement. Chalk up an unqualified success, first, for tenor Gary Lehman, who stepped in as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* on short notice, just as he had as Tristan a year ago. On this evidence, the singer's natural gifts are as arresting, and rare, as the suave way he deploys them. His physical bearing and rich vocal timbre were ideal for the role, as was his ability to shape an ardent "Winterstürme" and to maintain expressivity and emotion, even as Levine's lugubrious pacing, in the Act II Todesverkündigung."

- David J. Baker, *Opera News*, July 2009

"Tenor Gary Lehman, has a great talent, extraordinarily steady nerves and, comparatively at least, robust good health. Just three years ago, he was a fairly successful baritone who had decided to become a tenor. When Plácido Domingo caught a cold, Lehman made his heldentenor debut as Parsifal at the L.A. Opera. A year later, Ben Heppner, who was scheduled to sing Tristan at the Met with Deborah Voigt as Isolde, was struck down by a virus. His cover had a difficult time so, for the following performance, the Met called upon Lehman. When the Met's General Manager, Peter Gelb, announced the cast change, he told the audience that Lehman was making his house debut in a role that he had never sung before. Stunned silence. Nevertheless, things went along fine until the middle of the second act, when Deborah Voigt doubled over and rushed off the stage. Stomach flu. Her cover was summoned, and Lehman had to finish the opera making passionate love to an Isolde he just met.

For this final revival of Otto Schenk's Ring cycle, the Met brought Lehman back to cover the role of Siegmund. On Saturday morning, just hours before the performance was set to begin, he was told he had to replace Johan Botha, who was ill. Lehman had sung Siegmund once before, in English, with a 25 piece orchestra, at the Long Beach Opera. That abridged version of The Ring had been developed by Jonathan Dove and Graham Vick for the City of Birmingham Touring Company. So Lehman's performance at the Met was to be his third high profile role debut. There was an air of disappointment when Peter Gelb made the announcement, but Lehman won the audience over straightaway. He was superb.

He sang with a ringing tone, unforced power, and a seamless legato line. But he did more than that: he inhabited the role of Siegmund. When he told Sieglinde and Hunding the story of his past, it seemed as if he was reliving his own memories. His phrasing and every gesture showed great intelligence and sensitivity.

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Gary Lehman, *Press Reviews, cont'd.*

He projected a touching vulnerability in his interactions with Sieglinde as he fell in love with her before our eyes. But he was also convincing as the noble hero. When he told Brünnhilde that rather than go to Valhalla, he would remain with Sieglinde, he conveyed both dignity and an almost unbearable poignancy. She was moved and so were we."

- Arlene Judith Klotzko, *ConcertoNet.com*

Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* (Metropolitan Opera Debut)

"Yet after... opening night, something of a savior has risen from the rubble of the original cast. He is an American, Gary Lehman, and among his unusual assets is that he is a Tristan who looks like a Tristan... No need to fish around for euphemisms like husky or full-figured. Mr. Lehman is handsome and athletic. Can he sing? Wagnerians long hardened to diminished expectations for this strenuous role had every reason to be happy on Tuesday night. His tenor is not beautiful, but it is beautiful enough. Has he the stamina? Mr. Lehman seldom faltered, even when the Met's stage machinery seemed out to get him... This Wagner opera, the most unearthly exploration of helpless passion ever conceived, also resembles an episode of "Survivor." Any Tristan must be part marathon runner, part weight lifter, and this before anyone can even think about the musical demands and psychic overload the part must bear. Surviving Tristan is in itself an accomplishment. Mr. Lehman did more than survive, and the Met must be pleased to have him."

- Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*

"And from the moment he appeared on the Met stage, he took control of the role, with a strong presence - enhanced by his tall, relatively trim figure - and a sturdy tenor that projected well into the vast auditorium... Lehman was particularly gripping in the long soliloquies of Act 3, when the dying Tristan ruminates about his troubled life and has delirious visions of Isolde."

- Mike Silverman, *The Washington Post*

"The first glimpse of Tristan was a happy surprise. Lehman is tall and lithe, unlike most other Wagner tenors... And when it came time to sing and sip the love potion, Lehman's manly, yet sweet tenor did not disappoint; Voigt seemed to enjoy his company... A tenor who'd never sung Tristan onstage before, now embarked on one of music's greatest love duets with a soprano he'd most likely met for the first time a few minutes before... And they triumphed."

- Zinta Lundborg, *Bloomberg.com*

"Gary Lehman's Tristan was the real vocal highlight of the evening. The role is one of the hardest to cast in the entire operatic repertoire for any voice type, and yet Lehman was ideal, with an authentic heldentenor sound, albeit at the lighter end of the spectrum, and great technical assurance. Impressive throughout, it was in the Act II love duet that his voice really shined. He had no difficulty with the breadth of the phrases, and was equally capable of floating his voice softly through the sinuous lines, and rising to huge, easy, passionate climaxes."

- John Woods, *MusicalCriticism.com*

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Florestan in *Fidelio*

"As Florestan, Gary Lehman's huge cannon of a tenor not only filled the hall and effortlessly overpowered the orchestra, but also almost literally nailed concertgoers to the wall with its power and vitality."

- Seth Williamson, *Roanoke Times*, 4/19/08

Beethoven's Ninth (Columbus Symphony)

"Best by far was tenor Gary Lehman, whose gorgeous singing in the march was a highlight of the evening."

- Barbara Zuck, *The Columbus Dispatch*, 10/13/2007

Title role in *Tannhäuser* (Erfurt)

"Das Publikum erlebte einen glänzend aufgelegten Gary Lehman aus den USA, der als Tannhäuser mit seiner enormen Stimmkraft und Darstellungskunst eine überragende Leistung bot. Lehman hatte im vergangenen Jahr schon einmal für Aufsehen gesorgt, als er an der Los Angeles Opera kurzfristig für Placido Domingo eingesprungen war. Bei seinem Deutschland-Debüt in Erfurt erntete er Beifallsstürme."

- Jochen Wiesigel, *Die Neue Epoche*

(The audience experienced the magnificent-voiced Gary Lehman of the USA as Tannhäuser, who with his enormous vocal power and with his acting prowess offered an outstanding performance. Lehman had already created a sensation last year, when he replaced Placido Domingo at the last minute in a performance at the Los Angeles Opera. Here in Erfurt, his German debut, he earned thunderous applause.)

"Mit Gary Lehman wurde in Erfurt ein Tannhäuser aufgebieten, der die schwierigen Anforderungen in jeder Hinsicht erfüllen konnte. Sein frischer Heldentenor hatte grosse dramatische Kraft und das nötige Durchhaltevermögen, so dass auch die Romerzählung noch hervorragend gelang."

- *Das Opernglas*

(With Gary Lehman Erfurt would bring in a Tannhäuser who could fulfill the difficult requirements in every respect. His fresh Heldentenor had large dramatic strength and the necessary staying power, so that the "Rome Narrative" still excellently succeeds.)

"Gary Lehman agierte auf beachtlich hohem Niveau. Seine baritonale gefärbte Stimme wurde allen Anforderungen gerecht und lief besonders in der Rom-Erzählung zu bestechender Form auf."

- *Opernwelt*

(Gary Lehman acted on a notably high level. His baritone colored voice would fulfill all demands and deliver particularly the "Rome Narrative" in outstanding form.)

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Samson in *Samson et Dalila* (Orlando)

"Lehman's bright and strong tenor made him a near equal to [Denyce] Graves in their love scene and a commanding presence when on his own."

- Scott Warfield, *The Orlando Sentinel*

Title role in *Parsifal* (Los Angeles)

"Gary Lehman was a last-minute substitute for an ailing Plácido Domingo. Mr. Lehman had the pressure not only of filling a star's shoes, but also of having to make sure those shoes stood in exactly the right spot. This prescription for disaster resulted instead in a glowing success. The Tenor proved a Wilsonian from stock-still head to unbending toe.he sounded as secure vocally as he looked physically."

- Mark Swed, *The Los Angeles Times*



Siegmond in *Die Walküre*

"Gary Lehman, recently an admired Parsifal at L.A. Opera, gave an eloquent, smoothly gauged account of Siegmund."

- Timothy Mangan, in *Opera News*

"Gary Lehman, the impressive Parsifal stand-in for Plácido Domingo at Los Angeles Opera last month, impressed once more as Siegmund."

- Mark Swed, *The Los Angeles Times*

"Gary Lehman's Siegmund is a wonder, and the chemistry he has with the Sieglinda is electric. You wish their section hadn't been cut at all."

- John Farrel, *The Press Telegram*

"The weekend's most impressive vocalism came from Gary Lehman as Siegmund. A powerful seasoned artist, Mr. Lehman has become a true Heldentenor."

- Robert Croan, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

"Tenor Gary Lehman was a handsome Siegmund....singing forcefully but also with a soaring line."

- Mark Kanny, *Pittsburgh Tribune*

Gary Lehman as Siegmund in
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Repertoire

Berg	<i>Lulu</i>	Alwa
Britten	<i>Peter Grimes</i>	Peter Grimes
Saint-Saëns	<i>Samson et Dalila</i>	Samson
Strauss, R.	<i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i>	Bacchus
Verdi	<i>Otello</i>	Otello
Wagner	<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i>	Erik
	<i>Die Walküre</i>	Siegmund
	<i>Parsifal</i>	Parsifal
	<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Tannhäuser
	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	Tristan
Weber	<i>Der Freishütz</i>	Max

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Gary Lehman in his Metropolitan Opera debut as Tristan
(photo by Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera)