

PRESSQUOTES

Susanna Fairbairn

SOPRANO

Clori / Clori, Tirsi e Fileno / Bampton Classical Opera / 2022
Cond. Julia Perkins / Dir. Jeremy Gray

"Susanna Fairbairn's Clori was an absolute minx, her capriciousness conveyed by her nimble soprano, luxuriant tone and sparkling florid passagework."
(Opera Today / Claire Seymour)

Elvida / Fernando, re di Castiglia / Opera Settecento / 2022
Cond. Leo Duarte

"Susanna Fairbairn's sumptuous Princess Elvida, all dramatic ice and vocal fire, turning an ingenue into a queen..."
(The i Paper / Alexandra Coghlan)

"Fairbairn conveyed Elvida's tenderness and innocence from the first, urging her mother to wipe away her tears in a serene 'Rendi 'I sereno al ciglio'. The passagework in 'Vola l'augello' was clean and accurate, and her tone throughout was velvety and rich."
(Opera Today / Claire Seymour)

Donna Elvira / Don Giovanni / Diva Opera / 2021
Cond. Bryan Evans / Dir. Cameron Menzies

"L'oeuvre ultime du maître, cette partition animée par la violence du désir a été sublimée par la prestation de Matthew Durkan, déployant l'envergure d'un Don Giovanni jouisseur dévoyé et manipulateur vicieux, comme par la noblesse vocale de Susanna Fairbairn en Donna Elvira tourmentée et Gabriella Cassidy en Donna Anna assoiffée de vengeance."
(La Montagne / Dragan Perovic)

Bess Foster / Georgiana / Buxton International Festival / 2019
Cond. Mark Tatlow / Dir. Matthew Richardson

"Susanna Fairbairn was plaintive and sensuous as Bess, the shared lover of Duke and Duchess alike."
(The Arts Desk / Richard Bratby)

"As Georgiana herself, Samantha Clarke was all that could be wished: wonderfully accomplished singing allied to physical beauty and effortless characterisation. The same could be said of Susanna Fairbairn as Elizabeth (Bess) Foster."
(Bernard Lee Music / Michael Tipler)

"Susanna Fairbairn a hugely sympathetic Bess."
(Mark Ronan Theatre Reviews)

"The singing throughout was top notch, and especially by Samantha Clarke as Georgiana, Susanna Fairbairn as Bess and Benjamin Hulett as the duke."

(The Oxford Times / Chris Gray)

"Susanna Fairbairn exudes warmth and compassion as her beloved companion, Bess."

(The Stage / George Hall)

"Samantha Clarke and Susanna Fairbairn sparkle in their roles, balanced by Benjamin Hulett's well-judged Duke."

(The Times / Rebecca Franks)

"The substantial role of Georgiana's best friend, lover and eventual successor, Lady Bess Foster, is not an easy part. Georgiana's story is introduced by Bess, she also brings it to a conclusion, and she plays a pivotal role in the lives of both Georgiana and her husband, the Duke... It fell to the soprano, Susanna Fairbairn, to navigate this role, and a fine job she did too. While putting in a strong performance in her own right, and establishing Bess as a distinct personality, it was always clear that the spotlight was shining on Georgiana. Fairbairn sang well, her voice possesses a pleasing timbre, with an attractive and appealing coloratura, and her phrasing was always carefully crafted to bring depth to her character."

(OperaWire / Alan Neilson)

"Samantha Clarke and Susanna Fairbairn are wonderful singers and effective actors."

(Theatre Reviews North / Robert Beale)

"Samantha Clarke ... is complemented by the warmth and humanity of Susanna Fairbairn's Bess. ... [Clarke] and Fairbairn are powerfully moving in their final duet, as Bess comforts the dying Georgiana."

(Classical Music Daily / Mike Wheeler)

The Judgment of Paris / Dutton Epoch / 2019 – CD REVIEW

Cond. John Andrews

"Susanna Fairbairn, meanwhile, delivers Pallas's big aria with majestic aplomb."

(Gramophone / Tim Ashley)

"The three rival goddesses are vividly characterised by both composer and singers, but the standouts for me were Susanna Fairbairn's imperious 'The glorious voice of war' (capped with a rock-solid high D)..."

(Presto Classical Editor's Choice / Katherine Cooper)

"Susanna Fairbairn is a strong Pallas whose aria includes martial trumpets, whilst her vibrato brings a softer, feminine edge to her portrayal too."

(Planet Hugill)

"Even more powerful and strident is Susanna Fairbairn's Pallas in The glorious voice of war, a rather Handelian aria which celebrates martial success."

(Musicweb International / Richard Hanlon)

"...the bright-voiced Pallas of Susanna Fairbairn..."

(Opera / Brian Robins)

Pallas / The Judgment of Paris / London Handel Festival / 2018

Cond. John Andrews

"Susanna was a dauntless, feisty Pallas"

(The Idle Woman blog)

Crobyle / Thaïs / Chelsea Opera Group / 2018
Cond. Stephen Higgins

"...the brightly seductive Crobyle of Susanna Fairbairn..."
(Opera / Yehuda Shapiro)

Galatea / Acis and Galatea / Opera Theatre Company / 2017
Cond. Peter Whelan / Dir. Tom Creed

"Within this setting, bartender Galatea (the wonderfully feisty Susanna Fairbairn) presides. Her richly expressive voice finds an excellent foil in the polished tone of tenor Eamonn Mulhall (Acis)"
(Goldenplec.com / Michael Lee)

Giunone / La Calisto / English Touring Opera / 2016
Cond. & Dir. Timothy Nelson

"Susanna Fairbairn's bright-voiced, volatile dominatrix of a Giunone took the honours for most expressive diction."
(Opera / Yehuda Shapiro)

"There are splendid turns too, from Susanna Fairbairn as a harridan of a Giunone."
(WhatsOnStage / Mark Valencia)

"Susanna Fairbairn is a stalwart Giunone, and she sings and plays the part with great and wanted gusto."
(Bath Chronicle / Nancy Connolly)

"There's some fine singing, especially from Susanna Fairbairn's angry Juno..."
(The Stage / George Hall)

"Susanna Fairbairn injected her soprano with a suitable level of wrathful menace as Giunone."
(Bachtrack / Dominic Lowe)

"...insincere sympathy to Calisto from the imperious Juno of Susanna Fairbairn, the ladies had a strong night..."
(Mark Ronan Theatre Reviews)

Countess / Le nozze di Figaro / Longborough Festival Opera / 2016
Cond. Robert Houssart / Dir. Thomas Guthrie

"...the rich-voiced soprano Susanna Fairbairn is the long-suffering Countess Almaviva to a tee..."
(Stratford Herald / Gill Sutherland)

"A talented young cast ... Susanna Fairbairn's Countess does with her voice what she is not allowed to do in movement, projecting a desperate despair calcified into an uneasy restraint. The charged pianissimo of her 'Dove sono' carries all the anguish of a musical scream."
(The Spectator / Alexandra Coghlan)

"Susanna Fairbairn is everything one expects the Countess to be..."
(Seen and Heard International / Roger Jones)

"Fairbairn's approach to phrasing was particularly noticeable; the Countess is a role in which everything said and the way it is said matters, and Fairbairn captured inherent sadness and nobility of the character well."
(Bachtrack / Dominic Lowe)

"There are places, however, where such a 'minimalist' approach works better, such as in 'Porgi, amor'. A few servants move about, but essentially the Countess sings the aria as she slowly advances towards us. With Susanna Fairbairn's sensitive yet sufficiently weighty voice coming to the fore, this is all that is needed."
(MusicOMH / Sam Smith)

90th Birthday Tribute to Horowitz / PLG Young Artist / Wigmore Hall / 2016
Matthew Schellhorn (pf)

"Fairbairn gave a powerful dramatic performance which captured the force of the music's rhetoric. Her full, glossy tone conveyed the self-assurance of Lady Macbeth's aspirations for power... And, she declaimed the challenging vocal lines, which depict the Lady's mental distress, with conviction... Fairbairn had the measure of the operatic intensity of the work which compresses an extraordinary gamut of emotions into its nine minutes... [In Zum 11^{ten} März] Fairbairn spun the simple lyrical melody with a lovely gentleness and lustre, floating the final phrase most beautifully. The Garden of Love (2015) had a silky wistfulness, perfectly attuned to Blake's text... The cool, quiet piano introduction of C'est l'extase langoureuse (This is the languorous ecstasy) led into an unhurried vocal descent of calm dreaminess. Fairbairn's soprano brightened and became more incisive as Verlaine described the burbling and whispering of the wood's choir of voices, then drifted off, languidly, as the imagery of swirling water evolved into a soul's lament. At the climax of the vocal line, Fairbairn hit the hit A right in the centre of the note and skilfully controlled the dynamic arc, closing on a hushed, low murmur... Fairbairn again demonstrated impressive technique, controlling the rising and plunging octaves which convey the poet-speaker's emotional unrest and distress. Both the warmth of her lower range and the crystalline brilliance of the top were in evidence in L'ombre des arbres (The shadow of the trees). Tight left-hand trills beneath crisp staccatos were a perfect springboard for the voice's nimble instruction, 'Tournez, tournez' (O whirl and twirl), in Chevaux de bois (Wooden horses), in which the tempo eased, then flowed, with naturalness. The opening of Aquarelles 1. Green was graceful and free, the low-lying close mysterious and veiled... Debussy's cycle was followed by Fauré's Après un rêve, in which Fairbairn's radiant sheen surged through the long, flowing phrases. ... The recital came to a vivacious close with Horowitz's Foie-Gras, a setting of Michael Flanders' paean to gluttony. Fairbairn entered enthusiastically into the cabaret high-spirits, whispering conspiratorially then gushing exuberantly, whirling with abandon across the Wigmore Hall stage."

(Opera Today / Claire Seymour)

Donna Anna / Don Giovanni / English Touring Opera / 2016
Cond. Michael Rosewell / Dir. Lloyd Wood

"Susanna Fairbairn is a member of English Touring Opera's ensemble for this tour and I was impressed by her trenchant Bice in Thursday's Pia de' Tolomei. She was due to sing Donna Anna on 25th May, so this assumption of the role came two months early. She has a big, bright voice, a classic Donna Anna voice, which rose over the orchestra admirably yet was able to be tender and touching. This was an intense, very serious portrayal and a notable assumption. I do hope to encounter Susanna Fairbairn's Donna Anna again soon."
(Planet Hugill)

"The best singing came from the women who suffered Giovanni's wandering hands ... Susanna Fairbairn suitably haughty as Anna."

(The Evening Standard / Nick Kimberley)

"Fairbairn is really commanding"

(The Guardian / Tim Ashley)

"Susanna Fairbairn proved herself a worthy, confident understudy"

(WhatsOnStage / Mark Valencia)

Bice / Pia de' Tolomei / English Touring Opera / 2016
Cond. John Andrews / Dir. James Conway

"Susanna Fairbairn demonstrated a striking presence, along with firmness of voice and purpose as Pia's servant Bice."
(Planet Hugill)

"...with Susanna Fairbairn showing excellent vocal emotion as Pia's lady in waiting..."
(Mark Ronan Theatre Reviews)

1st Priestess & Greek Woman / Iphigénie en Tauride / English Touring Opera / 2016
Cond. Martin Andre / Dir. James Conway

"There is vivid support from Susanna Fairbairn..."
(The Times / Anna Picard)

Recital / English Touring Opera / 2015

"Susanna Fairbairn proved equally accomplished in the roles of Mimì and Musetta, so ETO need not panic if one of its principles in La Bohème calls in sick."
(Seen and Heard International / Roger Jones)

Margery / The Dragon of Wantley / London Handel Festival / 2015
Cond. Chad Kelly

"The four singers attacked every word with gusto [...] As maidens Mauxalinda and Margery, Rhiannon Llewellyn and Susanna Fairbairn stole the show, their extended cat-fight an exuberant expression of unsisterly conflict."
(The Evening Standard / Nick Kimberley)

"Susanna Fairbairn has a strong, lyric soprano voice and made a Margery a great comic tour de force, but Fairbairn impressed in her solo moments so that her tragic stays aria was finely sung (and very funny). It helped that her diction was good so that not only did she shape the music, but we could clearly hear lines like 'My poor eyes are red as ferrets'."
(Planet Hugill)

PLG Young Artist New Year Series / 2015

"The serious side continued with Horowitz's Lady Macbeth scena, setting extracts from three of her best speeches. Susanna Fairbairn, a dramatic soprano to be reckoned with, declaimed the nerve-shredding music fiercely, anchored by her equally accomplished pianist ... Fairbairn was very affecting in Horowitz's 1995 song Zum 11^{ten} März (On 11th March, the date in 1938 of Austria's Anschluss), miraculously keeping sentiment simmering in a way Sondheim would admire or Mahler might have done. Fairbairn's last number was Horowitz's Foie-Gras, to Michael Flanders' over-the-top examination of Gluttony (Flanders' daughter, the much-missed Stephanie Flanders from BBC2's Newsnight, was in the audience). Fairbairn lived up to its cabaret high spirits with impressive abandon."
(Classicalsource / Peter Reed)

Giunone / La Calisto / Hampstead Garden Opera / 2014
Cond. Oliver-John Ruthven / Dir. Joe Austin

"Susanna Fairbairn is imperious as Juno."
(Bachtrack / David Karlin)

St. John Passion / Birmingham Symphony Hall / Ex Cathedra / 2012

"In the Denial sequence soprano Susanna Fairbairn was eager and bright in her aria, befitting of the phrase Mein Leben, mein Licht (My light and my life, from No. 13)"

(Seen and Heard International / Geoff Read)

Armida / Rinaldo / Trinity College of Music Opera Company / 2011

"However the high point for me, vocally and acting wise, was the Enchantress Armida, played on this occasion by Susanna Fairbairn. By turns stropky, vicious, efficient, winsome, indignant and vengeful, I particularly enjoyed Armida's fist fight with the Saracen general, and her later tidying the in-tray on his desk."

(cherrypotts.co.uk blog)