

Mezzo-Soprano **STEPHANIE HOUTZEEL** is winning accolades for her opera and concert performances around the world. Appearances as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Paris-Bastille Opera, the New Israeli Opera Tel Aviv and the Graz Opera have been heralded as "vocally, dramatically and physically sublime" (OPERA NEWS). She was nominated one of the best up-and-coming singers by OPERNWELT Magazine for her Graz performance of the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (under Philippe Jordan), and has gone on to sing this role with success in Zurich, Tel Aviv and Antwerp.

She has sung all of the major Mozart roles for mezzo-soprano, most recently Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito* in Graz. On this occasion Austria's largest paper DIE PRESSE wrote: "...rarely has one seen such a vocally outstanding and moving performance of Sesto as on this evening; thunderous applause for this world-class performance!" Her appearance as Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo* with Opera Lafayette was noted by THE WASHINGTON POST as "thrilling, intelligent...filling her deep, azure mezzo with Idamante's sorrow, longing and love."

Ms. Houtzeel regularly sings the French lyric repertoire, including Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (most recently at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos-Lisbon, but also in Antwerp, St. Gallen and Linz), Margu rite in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* (Antwerp) and Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther* (Sassari). Her debut in *Werther* was celebrated by the Italian press: "A surprise, a joy, has arrived with the Italian debut of mezzo-soprano Stephanie Houtzeel - a powerful, expressive voice and outstanding stage presence."

Stephanie Houtzeel's baroque performances are also wide-ranging, both on stage and in concert. Most recently she performed and recorded the title role in Lully's *Armide* with Opera Lafayette, soon to be released on the Naxos label and acclaimed by the THE WASHINGTON POST as "the outstanding performance of the afternoon....her Armide seemed life itself, with its messy joys, sorrows, hungers and contradictions...the role was sung with all the ardor, intelligence and vocal luster at Houtzeel's command, which was plenty." In 2008 she sang both Juno and Mystery in Purcell's *Fairy Queen* in Rennes, France, where she was noted for her "majestic presence and timbre." Summer 2008 also marked her debut with the Ludwigsburger Festspiele, in an opera program of Jommelli and Mozart under the baton of rising star Michael Hofstetter. This performance prompted THE STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN to write: "The phenomenal Stephanie Houtzeel succeeded in packing high emotion into the broad and serpentine vocal lines of her *Fetonte* aria - exactly 240 years after the work's world-premiere on the same stage of this Palace Theater."

In the coming months Ms. Houtzeel will make her debut at the Op ra de Lyon as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* - a role she has sung many times to outstanding acclaim - as well as her debut at the Op ra National du Rhin, Strasbourg, as Dorabella in the David McVicar production of *Cos  fan tutte*. She returns to Graz in 2009 to reprise Octavian in Marco Arturo Marelli's production of *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Stephanie Houtzeel made her professional opera debut as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Hersfelder Festspiele, Germany and subsequently joined the Linz and Graz Operas, where she sang many Mozart and Strauss mezzo roles, the Rossini heroines Rosina and Cenerentola, the Handel roles Ariodante, Galatea and Ino, Nicklausse, Prince Orlofsky, Diana in *Orphée aux Enfers* as well as major roles in World Premieres by Austrian composers Peter Androsch and Balduin Sulzer.

Ms. Houtzeel's international concert appearances include Mahler's *Third Symphony* at both the Vienna Musikverein and Avery Fisher Hall, appearances with the Collegium Vocale Gent under Phillippe Herreweghe, the New York Festival of Song, Musicians from Marlboro, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, styriarte Graz, the International Bruckner Festival and Great Performers of Lincoln Center. She recently returned to the Musikverein to sing Mahler's *Lieder aus Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with the Graz Philharmonic and also appeared in a program of Respighi and Saint-Saens at La Monnaie in Brussels. She has collaborated with conductors Dennis Russell Davies, Philippe Jordan, Pinchas Steinberg, Phillippe Herreweghe, Eric Ericsson, Claus Peter Flor and Michael Hofstetter, to name a few. Upcoming engagements include appearances with the Orchestre de la Monnaie, the Ludwigsburger Festspiele, the Real Filharmonia of Galicia, the Norddeutsche Rundfunk, the Grand Tour Orchestra as well as chamber music concerts with The Four Nations Ensemble and Opera Lafayette.

In addition to the *Armide* recording (Naxos), Ms. Houtzeel sings the title role on the world premiere CD of von Suppé's *Fatinitza* (CPO), recorded at Austria's Léhar Festival and lauded by OPERA NEWS as "wonderfully, brilliantly taken. Her spirit and charm are readily in evidence." She appears on a CD of Handel chamber music with the Bouts Ensemble (Raumklang Label), which garnered high marks from both THE AMERICAN RECORD REVIEW and CLASSICS TODAY.

Stephanie Houtzeel was born in Kassel, Germany and grew up near Boston. She studied voice with Edward Zambara at New England Conservatory and at The Juilliard School, where she received her Masters of Music in 1996. She was the first recipient of Juilliard's Vocal Arts Debut Award as well as a Laureate at the 1996 International Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Competition.