



## Karen Cargill

### Mezzo-Soprano

#### **WAGNER *Das Rheingold & Siegfried* (Erda), The Metropolitan Opera, Philippe Jordan**

It's hard to do much better than Karen Cargill's ravishing mezzo-soprano as Erda, the voice of eternity ...

*Eric C Simpson, The New York Classical Review, March 2019*

Erda was sung by the superb Karen Cargill ...

*David Deveau, The Boston Musical Intelligencer, April 2019*

The rich-toned mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, as the all-knowing earth goddess Erda...

*Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, March 2019*

#### **BERLIOZ *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Rophé, City Halls Glasgow**

The mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill inhabited the doomed queen's final moments with a commanding ring to the top of her voice and an operatic flair for the drama, making my scalp prickle with a chilling pianissimo as she addressed the ghosts of her ancestors.

*Simon Thompson, The Times, February 2019*

The principal danger in Glasgow came from the singing of Karen Cargill: commanding the stage with her stance alone, and holding her full vocal power in haughty reserve until the doomed Queen lets her poise drop and sends a jet of high-pitched pain spurting skywards. Cargill snarled, spat and soared until the fatal asp bite (the text is export-quality fustian: 'A vile reptile is my recourse') whereupon, with chilling control, she blanched all tone from that invincible voice and expired over juddering strings.

*Richard Bratby, The Spectator, February 2019*

...performed with exquisite dynamic clarity by mezzo Karen Cargill. The precision of her volume control in the acoustic of the room commanded attention, both in terms of the music and the character, and her performance of the recitatives hardly required translation.

*Keith Bruce, The Herald, February 2019*

#### **BERLIOZ *L'enfance du Christ*, BBC Symphony Orchestra/Gardner, Barbican Hall**

The solo line up needs special qualities, embodied above all in the Marie of Karen Cargill, the great Berlioz singer of our time (that the idiomatic French style seems so innate in a Glaswegian is one of music's many intuitive mysteries). ..the colours in the stupendous mezzo voice, with its contralto lower register, remain a wonder.

*David Nice, The Arts Desk, December 2018*

Karen Cargill sounded ravishing: Ô Mon Cher Fils was wonderful in its tenderness...

*Tim Ashley, The Guardian, December 2018*

#### **BERLIOZ *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, BBC Philharmonic/Morlot, Bridgewater Hall Manchester**

...Karen Cargill's majestic singing in Berlioz' death-scene cantata ...

*Richard Morrison, The Times, October 2018*

**WAGNER *Götterdämmerung* (Waltraute), Royal Opera Covent Garden**

Karen Cargill made the most of her scene as forlorn Waltraute ...

*Neil Fisher, The Times, October 2018*

Karen Cargill as Waltraute excelled.

*Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, October 2018*

Karen Cargill gave Waltraute's narration a deep-toned dignity ...

*Richard Fairman, The Financial Times, October 2018*

Karen Cargill's assumption of that role was exemplary ...

*Melanie Eskenazi, MusicOMH, October 2018*

**DEBUSSY *Pelleas et Melisande*, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 2018**

... there's superior singing from Karen Cargill's Genevieve ...

*George Hall, The Stage, July 2018*

Karen Cargill's wonderfully rich-toned Geneviève ...

*Andrew Clements, The Guardian, July 2018*

Superb playing and singing, especially from Cargill ...

*Anna Picard, The Spectator, July 2018*

Karen Cargill was luxury casting as the mysterious Genevieve ...

*Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, July 2018*

Karen Cargill's sumptuous mezzo and formidable presence are well utilised as the matriarch, Geneviève.

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, July 2018*

**Recital with Simon Lepper, piano. Works by Chausson, Debussy, Hahn, Duparc & Wagner. Wigmore Hall**

Karen Cargill has tremendous artistry but also a very great voice indeed, a mysterious gift which makes her one in a thousand ...

*David Nice, The Arts Desk, May 2018*

**HAYDN / BERLIOZ / PURCELL, Scottish Ensemble, Glasgow/Edinburgh/London**

...the opportunity to hear Cargill in the intimate company of a dozen strings singing Purcell's Dido's Lament after Haydn's Arianna a Naxos and an aria from the final act of Berlioz's epic Trojans was a rare and unmissable treat.

*Keith Bruce, The Herald, February 2018*

Cargill was making her debut with the Scottish Ensemble in an eclectic, Greek myth-inspired concert – and her mesmerising, microscopically inflected singing made a fitting counterpoint to the string group's own fresh, detailed, impeccably articulated playing under the guest leader Matthew Truscott.

*David Kettle, The Scotsman, February 2018*

**DVORAK *Biblical Songs*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ticciati, City Halls Glasgow**

The fullness of Karen Cargill's wonderful mezzo, so strong in mid-register, is exactly what these simple, direct melodies require and again the balance was absolutely perfect ...

*Keith Bruce, The Sunday Herald, January 2018*

**BERLIOZ *La Damnation de Faust*, LSO, Rattle, Barbican Hall**

As Faust's fantasy beloved Marguerite, Karen Cargill was appropriately demure and ardent...

*Nick Kimberley, The Evening Standard, September 2017*

Karen Cargill's beautifully centred, silky-sounding singing brought out all Marguerite's vulnerability and her stillness at the centre of this story.

*Erica Jeal, The Guardian, September 2017*

Karen Cargill sweet and vulnerable as his love, Marguerite...

*Stephan Pritchard, The Observer, September 2017*

Karen Cargill was sublime as Marguerite, her burnished mezzo bringing out the emotional depths of the role. In the ballad of the King of Thule every word was imbued with feeling. Wonderful harmony too in the fusion of voice with the playing of viola soloist Alexander Zemtsov.

*Clare Colvin, The Express, September 2017*

The real jewel, though, was Cargill, whose luxuriant tone, natural French and rapt intensity made her lovelorn Marguerite a spellbinding creation ...

*Rebecca Franks, The Times, September 2017*

Karen Cargill's sumptuous Marguerite, ripe of voice, though rapturous in both her great solos.

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, September 2017*

**MAHLER *Rückert Lieder*, BBC SSO, Brabbins, Edinburgh International Festival 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert**

For many in the audience, however, the highlight will have been the appearance of mezzo Karen Cargill remembering the contribution of Kathleen Ferrier to the 1951 Festival with Mahler's Ruckert Lieder. For me, it was her singing of "Um Mitternacht" in particular.

*Keith Bruce, The Sunday Herald, August 2017*

Scots mezzo soprano Karen Cargill performed three of Mahler's Rückert-Lieder, injecting each with the rich mahogany tone that distinguishes Cargill as one of today's front-ranking singers.

*Ken Walton, The Scotsman, August 2017*

**SCHOENBERG *Gurrelieder*, LSO, Rattle, BBC Proms**

Karen Cargill's Wood-Dove emerged from an earthy, covered start to soar, seamlessly legato, to the part's higher reaches.

*Flora Willson, The Guardian, August 2017*

And, as the Wood Dove, Scottish mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill made a riveting storyteller.

*Hannah Nepil, The Financial Times, August 2017*

Karen Cargill was a Wood-Dove of real pathos...

*Richard Whitehouse, The Independent, August 2017*

... a wonderfully sombre and eerie Karen Cargill as the Wood-Dove ...

*Richard Bratby, The Spectator, August 2017*

The crystal clear edge of mezzo Karen Cargill's Wood-Dove ... cut brilliantly through the packed auditorium.

*Clare Colvin, The Express, August 2017*

Karen Cargill intoning the Wood Dove's lament with urgent diction and sumptuous tone ...

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, September 2017*

**HAHN, DEBUSSY, CHAUSSON, DUPARC, WAGNER, Rectial with Simon Lepper, Edinburgh International Festival**

Beyond argument one of the finest singers Scotland has ever produced ... Karen Cargill is "in her prime".

*Keith Bruce, The Sunday Herald, August 2017*

Never over-singing but always projecting, mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill is an object lesson in the art of singing. With a rare purity of tone throughout what eventually became an overabundance of French song, the flawless control over every vocal line was staggering.

*Carol Main, The Scotsman, August 2017*

Nothing was better than the final song, Träume, where she swept the phrases into flights of lyricism that seemed to soar free of the repeated-chord accompaniment.

*Richard Morrison, The Times, August 2017*

**WAGNER Die Walküre, RSNO, Davis, Edinburgh International Festival**

Act II's domestic tiff between Bryn Terfel's commanding Wotan and Karen Cargill's riveting Fricka was powerful yet intimate, the mournful bass clarinet and plaintive cor anglais revealing the emotional truth behind their words.

*Susan Nickalls, The Scotsman, August 2017*

Scotland's own Karen Cargill was every inch a match for him [Terfel], both vocally and in character, their exchange perfectly setting up Terfel's with Goerke at the culmination of the last act.

*The Herald Scotland, August 2017*

Karen Cargill was the suitably implacable Fricka ...

*Andrew Clark, Opera, October 2017*

Karen Cargill's sardonic Fricka ...  
*Richard Morrison, The Times, August 2017*

**MAHLER *Symphony No.3*, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Nezet-Seguin, Verizon Hall**

Karen Cargill's said in an interview that Mahler illuminates the "Voice of humanity. ...resonance of the middle of the (mezzo) voice." And Cargill's controlled richness gives had an earthy and otherworldly quality. Cargill's stunning entrance in the 4th movement, almost a call and response with the French Horns.

*Lew J Whittington, Huffington Post, June 2017*

**MAHLER *Das Lied von der Erde*, The Met Orchestra, Salonen, The Carnegie Hall**

Cargill's singing was sonically and expressively beautiful. The throaty contralto-like touch to her voice was exactly the color Mahler intended in the work. Her vibrato was unexpectedly affecting, not just an ornament but a way to modulate and shade her expression of the text—a profoundly Mahlerian approach.

In each of her movements, her vocal journey from darkness to light and from a spare to a rich line, was deeply musical. The modulation from foreboding to acceptance in "Der Abschied" was the epitome of great artistry. In the final bars, her voice hovered like a bright, comforting ripple over the gentle orchestral music, an intimation of heaven.

*George Grella, New York Classical Review, 4 June 2017*

**BARTOK *Duke Bluebeard & Paterson The 8<sup>th</sup> Door*, Scottish Opera**

What is blatant is the beauty of the singing. Karen Cargill makes her debut as Judith and her vocal colours are ravishing – dark, velvety, harsh, coaxing, a whole breathtaking panoply. Her response to the opening of Door Five is crushingly vulnerable; her rapture at the lake of tears is sublime.

*Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 30 March 2017*

Karen Cargill sings Judith's music gorgeously, shaping Hungarian as if it's bel-canto Italian.

*Neil Fisher, The Times, 30 March 2017*

Mezzo Karen Cargill is simply at the top of her best remarkable form as Judith.

*Keith Bruce, The Herald Scotland, 30 March 2017*

...what makes the performance so powerful is the total commitment of Robert Hayward and Karen Cargill – both in excellent voice – to the inexorable drama.

*Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 29 March 2017*

...there are memorable performances from bass-baritone Robert Hayward (Bluebeard) and mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill (Judith). Their irreconcilable argument over the meaning of love is conducted at a transfixing emotional level.

*Mark Brown, The Sunday Herald, 2 April 2017*

... Robert Hayward's Bluebeard and Karen Cargill's Judith explore the tensions inherent in the text imaginatively, his sonorous bass supplying a fine match to her lush mezzo.

*George Hall, The Financial Times, 31 March 2017*

As his new wife, Judith, Karen Cargill is warm, fearless, finally broken but not submissive. This Scottish mezzo-soprano, radiant-voiced and imaginatively expressive, never disappoints.

*Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, 9 April 2017*

Robert Hayward and Karen Cargill gave their considerable all ... Cargill pouring her molten colours over Judith's lines, in an intense, radiant display of vocalism that had an epic, Wagnerian quality about it.

*Andrew Clark, Opera, June 2017*

#### **WAGNER *Götterdämmerung*, The Canadian Opera Company**

Karen Cargill stood out as a full-voiced Waltraute, carefully increasing the valkyrie's anxiety in her narrative about dire events unfolding at Valhalla.

*Christopher Hoile, The Opera News, February 2017*

... Karen Cargill was a superb Waltraute, singing the narrative with gleaming tone.

*Joseph So, Opera, June 2017*

#### **MAHLER *Symphony No.2*, Orchestra of WNO, Tomas Hanus**

Tomas Hanus marshalled his forces – including a stellar Karen Cargill – for a performance that seized the audience from the outset ... Beautifully nuanced singing by the mezzo Karen Cargill brought a rare quality to *Urlicht*.

*Rian Evans, The Guardian, 21 October 2016*

#### **SCHOENBERG *Gurrelieder*, BBC SSO, Donald Runnicles, Edinburgh International Festival**

Karen Cargill was a gripping storyteller as the Wood Dove – she had me before she even opened her mouth, that ability to hold the hall with her gaze, then her singing was burnished and supple and vivid.

\*\*\*\* *Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 29 August 2016*

With so much going on, it's a mighty ensemble to control, Runnicles working from a score the size of a kitchen table, and a real challenge for a vocalist to make an impression over – one that Scots mezzo Karen Cargill rose to majestically. For her narrative as the Wood-Dove, she commanded the stage with captivating musical authority.

\*\*\*\* *Keith Bruce, The Herald, 29 August 2016*

...Karen Cargill intoning the Wood Dove's lament with urgent diction and sumptuous tone ...

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, 4 September 2016*

#### **ELGAR *The Apostles*, RSNO, Edward Gardner, Edinburgh International Festival**

Karen Cargill [was] the warmly penitent Magdalene.

*Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 15 August 2016*

**MAHLER *Symphony No. 2*, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, Ravinia Festival**

Then came the "Urlicht" ("Primal Light"), sung with alluringly dusky colorations and genuine feeling for words and music by the plush-voiced mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill, followed by the long climb from the Day of Wrath to heavenly transcendence.

*John van Rhein, Chicago Tribune, 24 July 2016*

**WAGNER *Tristan & Isolde*, English National Opera, Edward Gardner**

The Scottish mezzo Karen Cargill was magnificent and tender as Brangäne; a performer with a special grace and energy.

*Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, 12 June 2016*

In supporting roles, Karen Cargill and Craig Colclough brought a manic brilliance to the two attendants that might be called pioneering.

*Michael White, The New York Times, 14 June 2016*

...Karen Cargill (a superb mezzo) as Isolde's servant Brangäne ...

*Cara Chanteau, The Independent, 14 June 2016*

There's terrific work from Matthew Rose, grave and sonorous as King Marke, Karen Cargill as Brangäne and Craig Colclough as Kurwenal.

*Richard Morrison, The Times, 11 June 2016*

... an eloquent Brangäne from Karen Cargill ...

*David Mellor, The Daily Mail, 18 June 2016*

... powerfully sung and enthusiastically enacted by Karen Cargill ...

*Rupert Christiansen, The Daily Telegraph, 10 June 2016*

Craig Colclough's Kurwenal was intermittently beautiful but always eloquent, as were Matthew Rose's Marke and Karen Cargill's Brangäne.

*Barry Millington, The Evening Standard, 10 June 2016*

Karen Cargill's gleamingly fresh Brangäne, whose verbal expressiveness added to the character's tenderness.

*John Allison, Opera, August 2016*

**HANDEL *Messiah*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

The five soloists were wonderful ... Few singers get so much interpretive mileage out of so much sound as mezzo Karen Cargill (her readings of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* are to die for).

*David Patrick Stearns, Philly.com, 14 December 2015*

**MAHLER *Symphony No 3*, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sakari Oramo**

...fine singing from the burnished mezzo Karen Cargill.

*John Allison, The Telegraph, 25 September 2015*

**SCHOENBERG *Gurrelieder*, Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester, Marek Janowski**

Karen Cargill singt daraus das *Lied der Waldtaube*, eine Stimme aus dem Jenseits, den Tod der Protagonistin verkündend. Mit einem Mezzo, der sich in seiner dunklen Fülle verströmt und dabei doch immer in festen Bahnen bleibt. Die Abgründe lauern in den Andeutungen, in dem, was Cargill nicht singt, von dem man aber spürt: Sie könnte es.

Karen Cargill sings the *Lied der Waltaube*, a voice from beyond the grave announcing the death of the protagonist. With her mezzo exuding dark richness but remaining finely focussed, the abyss lurks in the intimation of things not sung by Cargill but which she makes you feel.

*Udo Bedelt, Der Tagesspiegel, 18 September 2015*

**VERDI *Requiem*, BBC SSO, Donald Runnicles, BBC Proms**

...exceptional were the succulent-toned soprano Angela Meade and her grandly rhetorical mezzo colleague, Karen Cargill: their immaculately co-ordinated duetting provided some of the highlights of the interpretation as a whole.

*George Hall, The Guardian, 3 August 2015*

**BEETHOVEN *Symphony No 9*, London Symphony Orchestra, Bernard Haitink**

Karen Cargill was the sumptuous sounding mezzo...

*Tim Ashley, The Guardian, 23 June, 2015*

**RORY DOYLE *Watching Over You* (World première), Red Note Ensemble, Jean-Claude Picard**

...what made this premiere so deeply touching was the heart-rending delivery of its dedicatee and mezzo soprano soloist, Karen Cargill. She's a powerful Wagnerian...but her quiet, stripped-back control was breathtaking...those long, voluptuous lines and gentle swoops make her voice simply glow.

*Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 20 May 2015*

**MAHLER, WAGNER, GREIG, Recital, Carnegie Hall, Simon Lepper**

...she possesses one of the most beautiful (and most beautifully controlled) voices before the public today...Cargill's direct, unpretentious manner won the appreciation of an audience...She commands very clean, luminous vocal production over a wide range...flow of beautiful tone produced throughout the evening.

*David Shengold, Opera News, July 2015*

...the artistry of her singing...Cargill showed complete poise allowing the songs to be songs...the poetry is rich and Cargill demonstrated a keen appreciation of it...the considerable power of her instrument...the stunning variety she can find in her voice...The chest voice that she displayed here was astonishing, a crackling, muscular low register of harrowing power.

*Eric C. Simpson, New York Classical Review, 11 April 2015*

...startling power and a creamy middle range...ingenious theme of composers and their lovers. Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and Greig's *Opus 48 Songs* were eloquently done

*David Allen, New York Times, 13 April 2015*



**MAHLER, WAGNER, GREIG Recital, Kennedy Center Washington, Simon Lepper**

If you've never heard the name Karen Cargill, let this review be your notification. The Scottish mezzo-soprano had a grand and long-overdue Washington debut recital Tuesday evening...her commanding and disciplined voice...Cargill's luscious, full-bodied chest voice and her fluid sense of rubato (Mahler)...a light, pure tone in that (top) range... Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* also elicited the powerful side of Cargill's voice...but the more controlled, dulcet tone was even more striking...Finally, in Grieg's six German songs, Op. 48, Cargill let down her hair, with airy and flirtatious readings...

*Charles T. Downey, Washington Post, 8 April 2015*

Karen Cargill created a wee sensation...With clarity, purity and security, Cargill's rich, full voice moved effortlessly and elegantly among the well-balanced, well-chosen selections...

*Marscha Dubrow, The Examiner, 7 April 2015*

**DVORAK *Stabat Mater*, Orchestre Métropolitain, Montreal, Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

For the solos, they somehow managed to get soprano Layla Claire, mezzo Karen Cargill and bass John Reylea...(Cargill) layered beautifully with Claire's rich soprano. I wish the opera could afford them.

*Lev Bratishenko, Montreal Gazette, 29 March 2015*

**BERLIOZ *La mort de Cléopâtre*, London Symphony Orchestra, Valery Gergiev, LSO Live recording**

Karen Cargill gives a gripping account of *The Death of Cleopatra*, clearly relishing the music's graphic portrayal of a woman in a state of mental torment...her slow chromatic descent as the poison takes effect is breathtaking...

*Duncan Druce, Gramophone, April 2015*

In *La mort de Cléopâtre*...the mezzo Karen Cargill is deeply affecting...

*Stephan Pettitt, Sunday Times, 8 February 2015*

Things improve still further when Karen Cargill arrives for *La mort de Cléopâtre*. She impressed me mightily when she recorded this scene for Linn and she is every bit as impressive here, perhaps even pushed to still greater things.

*Simon Thompson, MusicWeb International, 3 May 2015*

**MAHLER *Das Lied Von der Erde*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

Mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill had to strike a very different note of sad, twilight nostalgia in *The Lonely One in Autumn*, and in the final *Farewell* make the difficult transition from desolation to acceptance of life's passing. In both she was a marvel.

*Ivan Hewitt, The Telegraph, 2 February 2015*

Cargill's molten performance from the ravishing *Von der Schönheit* to the valedictory *Der Abschied*, was a sensation, the visceral resonance of her low register like no other mezzo I know...

*Ken Walton, The Scotsman, 30 January, 2014*

**MAHLER *Symphony No 4*, London Symphony Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

...mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill sounded fresh and vibrant in the final movement's childlike description of heaven.

*Erica Jeal, The Guardian, 27 January 2015*

**WAGNER *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Metropolitan Opera, New York, James Levine**

The mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill was a rich-voiced Magdalene.

*Anthony Tommasini, New York Times, 3 December 2014*

...Eva, sweetly accompanied by Karen Cargill as Lene.

*Martin Bernheimer, Financial Times, 3 December 2014*

**MAHLER *Kindertotenlieder*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

And has Karen Cargill, plumbing the endlessly rich depths of her lower register in Mahler's *Songs on the Death of Children*, ever sung with more depth and intensity of feeling? If ever there was an exemplification of dignity or grief, it was enshrined in her time-stopping performance.

*Michael Tumelty, Herald Scotland, 20 October 2014*

Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*...were if anything, more harrowing. The Scottish mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill used her dark, dusky tone to reinforce the somber mood of these Friedrich Rückert settings; she also hardened her glinting higher register to expressionistic effect, for example in the final song *Im diesen wetter*...

*John Allison, The Telegraph, 19 October 2014*

**MAHLER *Symphony No 4*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

...and the final movement, over which Karen Cargill's heavenly mezzo soared was transcendent.

*Sarah Unwin Jones, The Times, 14 October 2014*

Mezzo Karen Cargill was soloist in the Wunderhorn finale, bringing gorgeously dark colours to the rapturous close of each stanza. It was a wistful, autumnal vision of paradise.

*Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 12 October 2014*

...when Cargill entered the finale, a truly melting moment in which the richness and warmth of her voice lifted the performance to sublime heights...

*Ken Walton, The Scotsman, 13 October 2014*

**VERDI *Requiem*, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Yannick Nézet-Séguin – San Sebastian**

Karen Cargill vient rappeler le rôle fondamental que la voix de mezzo-soprano doit occuper dans l'oeuvre, notamment dans le *Lacrymosa*, un mouvement qui s'épanouit grâce à elle dans toute la plénitude de son lyrisme. Ce n'est plus le chant d'une quelconque souffrance, mais bien celui de la douleur de la séparation définitive.

Karen Cargill reminds us of the fundamental role that the mezzo-soprano voice must occupy in the work, especially in the *Lacrymosa*, a movement that expands

thanks to the fullness of her lyricism. This is no longer the singing of general suffering, but instead that of the pain of final separation.

*Richard Boisvert, Le Soleil, 27 August 2014*

**MAHLER *Symphony No 8*, Philharmonia, Esa-Pekka Salonen**

Karen Cargill's gleaming mezzo conquered all before her.

*Neil Fisher, The Times, 1 July 2014*

**ALMA & GUSTAV MAHLER *Lieder*, Simon Lepper, Linn Records**

...nuanced, lovely vocalism...voice that never seems to strain...she reveals a full spectrum of dynamics in addition to noteworthy breath control...clearly and intelligently projected words...a remarkable range of tone color...Cargill's (recordings) have the virtue – rare at this point in recording history – of sounding unlike anybody else's.

*David Shengold, Opera News, October 2014*

And Karen Cargill's beautifully integrated, smoky mezzo reveals the full stature of these songs (by Alma), just as Simon Lepper relishes their fearless piano writing.

*Hilary Finch, BBC Music Magazine, 4 August 2014*

Cargill is blessed with an enormous and opulent voice which in full flight can reach operatic volumes, notably so in the triumphant conclusion to *Um Mitternacht*...

*Daniel Foley, The Wholenote, Toronto, October 2014*

...this is a bronze-tinted mezzo of Wagnerian amplitude...Cargill expressive at every level, while still proudly displaying the full glory of her voice...Cargill's richly coloured singing...Cargill and her accompanist Simon Lepper, do not hold back on it's luxurious radiance...The closing stanza of 'Ich bin der Welt', floated on the softest pp, is especially lovely. The *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen* encompasses a wide range of emotion and Cargill tears into the fury of 'Ich hab' ein glühend Messer' (a recording with orchestra surely beckons).

*Richard Fairman, Gramophone, July 2014*

(Alma)...a handful of fascinating songs, five of which Scottish mezzo Karen Cargill explores here with gusto. It's expressive, bold music and Cargill sings it eloquently, ably accompanied by pianist Simon Lepper.

*Neil Fisher, The Times, 21 June 2014*

**STRAUSS *Ariadne auf Naxos*, The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Antonio Pappano**

Ariadne's attendants are beautifully sung by Sofia Fomina, Kiandra Howarth and Karen Cargill...

*Erica Jeal, The Guardian, 26 June 2014*

The three nymphs, Sofia Fomina, Kiandra Howarth and Karen Cargill are excellent...

*Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 27 June 2014*

Sofia Fomina, Karen Cargill and Kiandra Howarth blend exceptionally well as the nymphs.

*John Allison, The Telegraph, 1 July 2014*

**BERLIOZ *L'enfance du Christ*, BBC SO, François-Xavier Roth**

Karen Cargill's Mary and Marcus Farnsworth's Joseph sang with beautifully even tone and immaculate phrasing.

*Anna Picard, The Times, 19 December 2013*

Karen Cargill sang Mary with a beautifully tender, gentle gleam...

*Erica Jeal, The Guardian, 17 December 2013*

**BERLIOZ *La mort de Cléopâtre*, London Symphony Orchestra, Valery Gergiev, Barbican Hall, London**

A mezzo-soprano with an imperious top to the voice but also softer qualities, she would surely make an imposing Dido in Berlioz's grandest opera, *Les Troyens*.

*Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 13 November 2013*

**BERLIOZ *Les nuits d'été*, London Symphony Orchestra, Valery Gergiev, Barbican Hall, London**

...the fluid beauties of Karen Cargill's singing and the careful dovetailing between voice and orchestra, especially in *Le spectre de la rose*, where Cargill whispered the first lines in appropriate ghostly tones.

*Geoff Brown, 4 November 2013*

**BERLIOZ *Beatrice and Benedict*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

...the sonorous, sharp-witted sparring of Karen Cargill's nuanced Beatrice.

*Sarah Unwin Jones, The Times, 7 October 2013*

**VERDI *Requiem*, BBC SSO, Donald Runnicles, Edinburgh International Festival**

...the scorchingly rich lower reaches of Scots mezzo soprano Karen Cargill...

*Ken Walton, The Scotsman, 2 September 2013*

**BACH *St Matthew Passion*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

The Scottish mezzo – so brilliant recently as Wagner's Waltraute and Berlioz's Anna at the Met – brought her rich voice and compelling artistry to a very different style, showing complete mastery of runs and inspiring dynamic control. Her impassioned, ravishingly vocalized *Erbarme mich* was the evening's vocal and emotional highlight.

*David Shengold, Opera News, 5 June 2013*

**WAGNER *Götterdämmerung*, Metropolitan Opera, New York, Fabio Luisi**

...the revelatory Karen Cargill as Waltraute.

*Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, The New York Times, 9 May 2013*

But the Scottish mezzo Karen Cargill brought such exquisite expression and a warm, vibrant and ample voice to the part that she thoroughly outclassed her colleagues onstage. Here, finally, was a singer who could control multiple dimensions, singing with fervent intensity without raising the volume and conjuring up different colors for her character's pangs of pity, hope and anger.

*Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, The New York Times, 24 April 2013*

**BERLIOZ *Les nuits d'été*, *La mort de Cléopâtre*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati, Linn Records recording**

Karen Cargill, an impressive Waltraute in runs of *Götterdämmerung* at the Met in 2012 and 2013, brings drama and lyric point to the music of Berlioz in a recent disc from Linn Records...a natural response and a superb technique...the mezzo's top notes are thrilling...both richness and focus and she moves between soft-edged delicacy and a glamorous steeliness with ease...vocal magnetism and theatrical sense come to the fore in *La Mort de Cléopâtre*. Cargill's huge dynamic range...she brings majesty to the declamation.

*Judith Malafronte, Opera News, November 2013*

The Scottish mezzo soprano Karen Cargill...is another reason to buy this disc. Dark. Mobile, richly emotional, her voice finds a near-perfect showcase in the dramatic plaints of the Cleopatra cantata...

*Geoff Brown, The Times, 3 May 2013*

Karen Cargill is up against some illustrious mezzo competition on disc, yet her ravishing account of *Les nuits d'été* ranks up there with the best of them...Cargill's French diction is superb...She offers a highly nuanced reading of *La mort de Cléopâtre*...This is a disc to which I'll be returning soon and often.

*Mark Pullinger, International Record Review, July/August 2013*

Cargill wraps her sumptuous voice around the curves of Berlioz's song cycle in a performance of extraordinary musical delicacy, poetic sensitivity and emotional range...Simply divine.

*Anna Picard, The Independent, 25 May 2013*

The Scottish mezzo's lush timbre is well profiled in *Les nuits d'été: Sur les lagunes* profiles her rich-and-fruity chest register, *Absence* has rarely sounded more seductive and *L'île inconnue* is ideally playful...Cargill invests the music with the radiance it demands, and her *Cléopâtre* really takes flight. Not since Régine Crespin 50 years ago has this music been so attractively interpreted on disc.

*Andrew Clark, Financial Times, 10 May 2013*

'Reviens, reviens'...is voiced with the utmost gentle longing...She has an interpretative range that can poignantly voice the veiled sentiments of *Au cimetière*...she can fuel the rapture of *L'île inconnue* and surmount the ecstatic heights of the phrase 'Et j'arrive du paradis'...This is a performance...distinguished by a singer, conductor and orchestra who are palpably of like interpretative mind... *Méditation* (Cleopatre) gloriously showing Cargill's affinity with the music...performances of exhilarating stature.

RECORDING OF THE MONTH *Geoffrey Norris, Gramophone, June, 2013*

...her account of *Les nuits d'été*, wonderfully controlled and exquisitely shaded, seems to me one of the finest to appear on disc in recent years. Her performance of the Cleopatra cantata is equally subtle and meticulous.

*Andrew Clements, The Guardian, 3 May 2013*

With his second release for the Glasgow-based label Linn, Ticciati could do for the Scottish mezzo what Barbarolli did for the young Janet Baker in the 1960s. Cargill's tone is plusher, but Baker is clearly one of her exemplars: the sense of loss in the refrain "Ah! Sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer", in *Sur les lagunes*, has something of the older singer's poignancy, but her timbre is more sensual in *Le Spectre de la rose* and *Absence*, her manner more skittish in *Villanelle...her Nuits d'été* and *Cleopatra* suggest a *Trojans* Dido of stature in the making.

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, 28 April 2013*

Scottish star mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill has a remarkably beautiful voice, full of sunny delicacy and warmth but also capable of Wagnerian dramatics...infusing innocent terms like 'des fraises des bois' with gentle sensuality, while not stinting the anguish of loss and regret...an air of freshness and immediacy which I greatly enjoyed.

*Michael Scott Rohan, BBC Music Magazine, May 2013*

#### **VERDI *Requiem*, Orchestre Métropolitain, Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

Soloists also were excellent...The Scottish mezzo-soprano, Karen Cargill produced a bold, shimmering sound of real character.

*Arthur Kaptainis, Montreal Gazette, 25 March 2013*

#### **MAHLER *Das Lied von der Erde*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati**

Mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill is, beyond argument, one of the finest singers working in the world today...No-one who heard her heart-stopping way with Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* this weekend, an exquisite performance in which she never seemed less than completely at ease, could possibly contradict that. Her voice, full of passion and presence across her range, is perfect for this intense, brooding work...At the end of the evening, however, the talk was all of Karen Cargill and the epic, closing *Der Abschied*. After the last note, Ticciati held the moment with his stick aloft for as long as he could. We only began to breathe again with some reluctance.

*Keith Bruce, Herald Scotland, 18 March 2013*

...it was mezzo Karen Cargill, with her nutty, velvet timbre and tender legato, who fully captured the magnitude and vulnerability of Mahler's songs.

*Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 19 March 2013*

...Karen Cargill, whose entire performance was molten and radiant, feeding the final moments with a spellbound intensity.

*Ken Walton, The Scotsman, 18 March 2013*

#### **Women In The Shadows, recital with Simon Lepper, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and BBC Radio 3**

Before outlining the enthralling narrative that underpinned the final concert on Friday in the series *Women In The Shadows*, a fine collaboration between Radio 3 and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, I must say something about mezzo Karen Cargill and her achingly sensitive accompanist pianist Simon Lepper. There is a magic when these two perform together: whatever it is, they have it in abundance. It makes them indivisible and it permeated every song. Cargill's voice was awesome in clarity and intensity as she poured her intoxicating mix of vocal

richness and brainpower into gorgeous music ranging from Mahler's *Wayfarer Songs* to Wagner's voluptuous *Wesendonck Lieder*.

*Michael Tumelty, Herald Scotland, 18 February 2013*

**BERLIOZ *Les Troyens*, Metropolitan Opera, New York, Fabio Luisi**

Karen Cargill's Anna showed a wide range of skills. She was an attentive duet partner for Graham and an assertive one for Youn, she finely shaded her lines, and she has an excellent legato.

*William R Braun, Opera News, March 2013*

Among the vast supporting cast, Karen Cargill stood out, her wine-dark mezzo bringing dignity and pathos to the role of Dido's sister Anna.

*James Jorden, The New York Post, 16 December 2012*

Standouts among the strong supporting cast included the earthy mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill as Anna...

*Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 14 December 2012*

Karen Cargill lavished suavity and voluptuous tone upon Anna's music.

*Marion Lignana, The Classical Review, 14 December 2012*

Karen Cargill supplied a beefy alto for Anna.

*Scott Cantrell, Dallas Morning News, 14 December 2012*

**BRAHMS, DUPARC, BARBER, BBC Radio 3 recital with Simon Lepper**

She has a fabulous voice, lustrous tone, unbelievable breath control and seamlessly-nuanced dynamics, all of which characterized her superb programme of songs by Brahms, Duparc and Samuel Barber, given as part of Radio 3's Scotland week...and suffusing Cargill's performance, from the passion of Brahms' *Eternal Love* to the dripping sensuality of Duparc's erotic little thriller *Extase* and the deceptive simplicity of Barber's *Daisies*, lies an open-hearted honesty. I've never heard or met a singer who is more down to Earth.

*Michael Tumelty, The Herald, 9 March 2012*

**Recital at Wigmore Hall, MENDELSSOHN, BRAHMS, CHAUSSON etc. with Sally Matthews and Simon Lepper**

The blend of their timbres is quite uncannily close, smooth and clean, and in terms of phrasing and colouring their musicianships seemed nicely compatible...the melancholy dying fall of *Lost is my quiet* was exquisitely rendered...Solos were also included, allowing Cargill to float *On wings of song* across a warm breeze and Matthews to go hunting alongside Queen Mab in *Neue Liebe*... a rapturously ardent *Die Boten der Liebe*...Chausson's *La nuit* and Emile Paladilhe's *Au bord de l'eau* were painted with an enchanted sensual glow...voices as sumptuous as these united in such heavenly harmony...

*Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 19, December 2011*

**MAHLER *Symphony No 2*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Donald Runnicles**

Karen Cargill handled *Urlicht* with due dignity...

*Andrew Clark, The Financial Times, 2 September 2011*



**MAHLER Rückert-Lieder, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Donald Runnicles**  
Karen Cargill was the soloist in the Rückert-Lieder...she's a favourite in this city and justifiably so for her heartfelt delivery.

*Kate Molleson, The Guardian, 10 April 2011*

**BRETT DEAN, 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert, Wigmore Hall, London**

..eight of his works played by an impressive lineup, including pianist Piers Lane, mezzo Karen Cargill, violinist Jack Liebeck and the Doric and Heath Quartets.

*Andrew Clements, The Guardian, 23 February 2011*

**MAHLER Symphony No 3, BBC Scottish SO, Donald Runnicles, BBC Proms**

...the outstanding presence of the mezzo Karen Cargill. The concentrated intensity of her fourth-movement midnight song yielded a voice from eternity: an Erda-like presence of bronzed vocal focus.

*Hilary Finch, The Times, 6 August 2010*

...and there was a deep well of pity in Karen Cargill's delivery of Mahler's Nietzsche setting in the fourth movement...This was an immense performance of an immense symphony.

*Nick Kimberley, London Evening Standard, 5 August 2010*

Karen Cargill was the lovely, ripe-voiced soloist.

*Fiona Maddocks, The Observer, 8 August 2010*

**MAHLER Symphony No 3, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, Tilson Thomas**

...mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill was the poised and eloquent vocal soloist.

*Jeremy Eichler, Boston Globe, 19 July 2010*

**MAHLER Symphony No 3, RLPO, Vasily Petrenko**

Mezzo Karen Cargill was tragically noble in the Nietzsche setting with which Mahler delineates man's questioning, alienated nature.

*Tim Ashley, The Guardian, 24 May 2010*

The meltingly rich tones of mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill were perfectly suited to this sotto-voce highly moving piece.

*The Liverpool Daily Post 24 May 2010*

**MAHLER Resurrection Symphony, BSO, Alsop, Festival Hall, London**

Karen Cargill, her deep, densely focused mezzo-soprano finding lament and primordial light in *Urlicht*. Then the soprano Katherine Broderick, almost imperceptibly gilding the hushed chorus in their anticipation of immortal life. Together, their vocal timbres pleaded strongly for belief ...

*Hilary Finch, The Times, 12 May 2010*

**BERLIOZ L'enfance du Christ, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ticciati**

The quartet of soloists was led by Karen Cargill's Mary, another exemplary performance from this honest-sounding mezzo, showcasing her intelligent musicianship and wonderfully supple timbre.

*Andrew Clark, Financial Times 8 February 2010*



The lovely mezzo of Karen Cargill was breathtakingly beautiful in Mary's lullaby to the newborn Jesus, ringing true of the passion of new motherhood.

*Sarah Urwin-Jones, The Times, 9 February 2010*

**BERLIOZ *Le mort de Cléopâtre*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ticciati**

But the core of this stunning concert was a shattering, heart-rending performance by Karen Cargill in awesome voice from top to bottom of her register and beyond both extremes in Berlioz's *Le Mort de Cléopâtre*.

*Michael Tumelty, The Herald, 20 December 2009*

**ROSSINI *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, Scottish Opera, October 2009**

The donna stellar performance of the buxom-and-proud mezzo Karen Cargill, a Scottish Marilyn Horne, pearly of tone and insouciant as she scampers up and down Rossini's dizzying scales. She gives a larger-than-life performance in every sense, as an all-tits-and-teeth soap diva. She's deliciously self-consciously vulgar, except when singing the notes: a genuine, home-grown prima.

*Hugh Canning, The Sunday Times, 8 November 2009*

The lynchpin is Scottish mezzo Karen Cargill, an Italian girl to reckon with; voluptuous, stylish and funny, with a twinkle in the eye. The voice sounds rich and even and Cargill meets the role's musical challenges with an insouciance that makes coloratura sound easy. She inhabits the stage as if she belongs there. What can Scottish opera give her next?

*Andrew Clark, The Financial Times, 2 November 2009*

Scots mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill as Isabella...sang *Per lui che adoro* and *Pensa alla patria* with an assured elegance, and gamely acted the vamp.

*Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 27 October 2009*

An excellent cast is led by Karen Cargill in superb voice, suitably minxish as the eponymous girl.

*Rowena Smith, The Guardian, 25 October 2009*

**VERDI *Requiem*, LSO, Sir Colin Davis, Barbican, January 2009**

What of the soloists? Here too we were blessed.....Cargill's focused and plangent mezzo voice provided a striking contrast to Brewer's more operatic boom, though the pair sank their differences with thrilling results in the *Recordare* duet.

*Geoff Brown, The Times, 13 January 2009*

**MAHLER *Das Lied von der Erde*, Proms 2008, Royal Albert Hall, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, August 2008**

... exquisitely in the luminous mezzo-soprano of Karen Cargill, perfectly attuned to every tint in the orchestral palette, and to the hushed breathing of the final valediction.

*Hilary Finch, The Times, 6 August 2008*

**MAHLER *Das Lied von der Erde*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, April 2008**

the high point was *Von der Schönheit*, in which the trilling delicacy of the orchestration was matched by the unaffected charm of Karen Cargill's singing.

*Rowena Smith, The Guardian, April 2008*

A performance that harnessed all the emotional heat of Mahler's Bethge settings, it owed much to Cargill's succulent tone and effortless musicality

*Kenneth Walton, The Scotsman, April 2008*

but above all - and heartbreakingly in the final song - for the sheer ache of mezzo Karen Cargill's long farewell, delivered with a tenderness that was shattering, and accompanied with infinite sensitivity and flexibility by Runnicles

*Michael Tumelty, The Herald, April 2008*

#### **PUCCINI Madam Butterfly, ENO, January 2008**

Karen Cargill seized her few vocal opportunities as Suzuki with a sturdy mezzo voice that is calling for greater challenges.

*Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 3 February 2008*

... the most expressive singing comes from Karen Cargill as Suzuki, ...

*Nick Kinberley, Evening Standard, 1 February 2008*

#### **ROSSINI Il Barbiere di Sevilla, Theatre Royal Glasgow, October 2007**

Sir Thomas is lucky to have a bright star of a Rosina, the soprano Karen Cargill. This young singer has the unbeatable combination of dramatic tone, sonorous mezzo range, zippy coloratura, varied colourings and, to top it all, real acting talent.

*Raymond Monelle, The Independent, 10 October 2007*

..she brings a welcome touch of international class, handling her weighty voice with impeccable Rossinian style

*Andrew Clark, Financial Times, 7 October 2007*

Blessed with an outstanding Rosina in Scotland's Karen Cargill

*Amanda Holden, The Observer, 28 October 2007*

#### **WAGNER Götterdämmerung, Proms, August 2007**

Christine Brewer as Brunnhilde floated with ecstatic radiance over the final immolation scene, though the most affecting singing came from Karen Cargill as her distraught sister Waltraute.

*Ivan Hewett, Telegraph.co.uk, 13 August 2007*

Two other performances were outstanding – Alan Held as Gunther and Karen Cargill as Waltraute ...

*Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 13 August 2007*

As Waltraute, Karen Cargill's mezzo gleamed with visionary fear and sorrow.

*Hilary Finch, The Times, 15 August 2007*

Karen Cargill was memorable in the brief but shattering mezzo role of Waltraute.

*Paul Driver, The Sunday Times, 19 August 2007*

Just as outstanding was the Waltraute of Karen Cargill.... Cargill sung with edge-of-the-seat subtlety and what Germans call *Innigkeit*

*Peter Reed, The Sunday Telegraph, 26 August 2007*

**BEETHOVEN *Mass in C*, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, May 2007**

A cut-glass interpretation, with an excellent line-up of soloists - particularly Karen Cargill's rich walnut mezzo

*The Scotsman, 12 May 2007*

**STRAUSS *Elektra*, RSNO, Edinburgh Festival, 2006**

Karen Cargill's rich-toned Maid also sounded like the real thing

*Rupert Christiansen, The Telegraph, 15 August 2006*

**WEBER *Oberon*, Scottish Opera at Edinburgh International Festival, 2005**

...Karen Cargill's Mermaid's Song a piece of pure enchantment...

*The Times*

**CONSTANT LAMBERT *The Rio Grande*, BBC Proms, 2005**

The Prommers were treated to some luxury casting in the evening's solo numbers. Paul Lewis, usually the most cerebral of pianists, was the flamboyant soloist in Constant Lambert's *The Rio Grande*. Lewis launched into the virtuosic piano part, and with mezzo- soprano soloist Karen Cargill, the piece sounded fresh, energetic and even moving, especially in Lambert's serene evocation of the Rio Grande's journey into the sea

*Tom Service, The Guardian, 12 September 2005*

**HANDEL *Messiah*, RSNO, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 2004**

Karen Cargill was equally at home in her sensitive, emotionally direct delivery of the biblical texts.

*Carol Main, The Scotsman, 3 January 2004*

**Wigmore Hall recital, London 2004**

she has an exceptionally beautiful voice... She is a sensitive artist too, shading the French songs in her opening group exquisitely.'

*John Steane, Opera Now, March/April 2004*

**National Opera Studio Showcase / Queen Elizabeth Hall 2002**

Karen Cargill's Romeo was genuinely accomplished.

*Opera Magazine, August 2002*

The duet from Bellini's *Capuleti e I Montecchi* was boldly executed by..... and the warmly polished mezzo of Karen Cargill

*Rupert Christiansen, Daily Telegraph, 6 June 2002*

**Wigmore Hall, Kathleen Ferrier Awards 2002**

Cargill made a smooth, noble sound...

*Adrian Jack, The Independent, 2 May 2002*