

# MARGARET O'CONNELL

## MEZZO SOPRANO

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**Mezzo-Soprano Margaret O'Connell** enjoys a versatile musical career in opera, contemporary music, musical theatre, oratorio, and recording.

Margaret portrayed a "fiercely committed" Older Alyce in an acclaimed production of Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied* on an aircraft carrier, as part of NY OperaFest 2017. In March 2018 she portrayed Matilde Urrutia in *My Life with Pablo Neruda* by Ray Luedeke with Voice Afire Productions, NYC. She made her Carnegie debut with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra as Ein großes Mädchen in Strauss' *Feuersnot*. The following summer she sang with Maestro Botstein at the Bard Festival as Camilla in Schubert's *Die Verschworenen*. Future engagements include singing Chausson's *Chanson perpétuelle* with the Pantofola Quartet for the City Concert Society of New York, and Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung* with the New York Wagner and Verismo Society.

Other operatic engagements include Olga in *Eugene Onegin* (conducted by William Hobbs), the title role in *Carmen*, Dulcinée in *Don Quichotte*, Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Florence in *Albert Herring*, Maman in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Cathleen in *Riders to the Sea*, Flora in *La Traviata*, and Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

Working with Michael Ching and Dean Anthony, Margaret created the role of Margaret Krusemark in J. Mark Scarce's *Falling Angel*. She also premiered excerpts from Mr. Ching's new opera *Speed Dating Tonight!* at *operamission*, with the composer at the

piano. She originated the role of Ashley opposite soprano Lauren Flanigan in *Best Friends*, a new opera by Deborah Drattell and Wendy Wasserstein. Other world-premiere roles include the Evil Stepmother in Josh Ollswang's *The Juniper Tree*, Grandmother in Waundell Saavedra's *Sweet Dreams* and the Seamstress in his *Great Supper*, and a Greek Elder in Michael Sirotta's new musical adaptation of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* at New York's La MaMa Experimental Theatre. Margaret created the role of Emily Dickinson in *Dwell in Possibility* by Miriam Raiken-Kolb, which included eight songs composed especially for her.

Ms. O'Connell made her international debut in 2013 in Berlin as Giulietta in a concert of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Alkor edition) opposite Deutsche Oper Berlin's Scott Fennell, preparing the role with only two days' notice. One month later she appeared as the Alto Soloist with tenor Mark Tucker in Monteverdi's *Marienvesper*, as part of Berlin's *Stegitzer Tage für Alte Musik*. In 2014 she was invited to give a concert of Berg, Ravel, and Weill as part of Munich's *Liederfreude* concert series.

Ms. O'Connell made her Merkin Hall debut in 2009 with Opera Slavica's inaugural *Opera Under the Tsars* Festival, under the direction of William Hobbs. In 2011 she sang "Parto Parto" (*La Clemenza di Tito*) with musicians from the Chamber Philharmonia of New York, and was cover soloist for their performance of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

In November of 2014, Ms. O'Connell was invited to make her Weill Hall debut in the New York premiere of *The Oracle at Delphi: The Music of Dinos Constantinides*. Other premieres include *Oh! The Sport of Love (a Bawdy Operetta)* by prizewinning composer Lisa Heffter, *Three Nudes* by Jacob Goodman, and *Three Poems* by Gerald Busby, written especially for Margaret.

Margaret has many additional concert premieres to her credit, including *Six Lyrics to Poems of Marilyn Hacker* by Tamara Cashour (NY Composers Circle); and *Sappho Songs* by Dinos Constantinides (National Association of Composers, USA). Awarded a scholarship to participate in SongFest at Pepperdine University, Ms. O'Connell worked with composers **John Harbison** and James Primosch, and also premiered works by Eric Chasalow, Antonio DeFeo, Dorothy Chang, and Dan Crozier.

Margaret's premiere recording of *Traveling West* by Randall Snyder with conductor Max Lifchitz (North/South label) was praised by **Fanfare Magazine**. She has recorded the roles of Lady Thiang (*The King and I*) and Aldonza (*Man of La Mancha*) for Stage Stars Records, and a Mermaid (Bernstein's *Peter Pan*) for Koch International Classics.

In the musical theatre arena, Ms. O'Connell has appeared as Martha in *The Secret Garden* and the Singer/Fiddler Jones in *Spoon River Anthology*. Off-Broadway credits include Young Jennie in *Portrait of Jennie* (with Brent Barrett) and Gabriella Winterova in Michael Slade's play *Children of Terezin*. She also appeared with Victor Trent Cook (Three Mo' Tenors) in the Disney Channel musical film *Starlight*.

Ms. O'Connell holds a Master of Music in Solo Voice from McGill University, and a Bachelor of Music in Violin and Voice Performance from Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

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### OPERA AND THEATER

Wellgunde	<i>Götterdämmerung</i> (w/Marc Verzatt)	NY Verismo & Wagner Guild	2018
Matilde Urrutia	<i>My Life with Pablo Neruda</i> (Ray Luedeke)	Voice Afire Productions, NYC	2018
Older Alyce	<i>Glory Denied</i>	NY Opera Fest 2017	2017
Preziosilla (cover)	<i>La Forza del destino</i>	New Amsterdam Opera (K. Chambers)	2017
Jane	<i>Phone Sex</i> (Waundell Saavedra, world premiere)	Empire Opera, NYC	2017
Margaret Krusemark	<i>Falling Angel</i> (Scearce, world premiere)	Center for Contemporary Opera	2015
Camilla	<i>Die Verschworenen</i>	Bard Festival Orchestra	2014
Ein großes Mädchen	<i>Feuersnot</i> (Strauss)	American Symphony Orchestra	2013
Giulietta	<i>Les contes d'Hoffman</i> (Alkor edition)	Oper Einspringen, Berlin	2013
Evil Step Mother	<i>The Juniper Tree</i> (Ollswang, world premiere)	Jan Hus Theater	2012
Grandmother	<i>Sweet Dreams</i> (Saavedra, world premiere)	Empire Opera	2012
Dulcinée	<i>Don Quichotte</i>	Empire Opera	2012
Olga	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Opera Slavica	2011
Carmen	<i>Carmen</i>	Amore Opera; Regina Opera	2011
Nicklausse/La Muse	<i>Les contes d'Hoffman</i>	Regina Opera	2011
Marcellina	<i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i>	Amore Opera	2010
Maddalena	<i>Rigoletto</i>	Bleecker Street Opera	2010
Forest Nymph	<i>The Judgment of Midas</i> (Ince, world premiere)	American Opera Projects	2010
Greek Elder	<i>Agamemnon</i> (Aeschylus/Sirota, world premiere)	LaMama Experimental Theater Club	2009
Seamstress	<i>The Great Supper</i> (Saavedra, world premiere)	Empire Opera	2009
Ashley	<i>Best Friends</i> (Drattell/Wasserstein, world premiere)	Reading Produced by Lauren Flanigan	2009
Olga	<i>Opera Under the Tsars</i>	Russian Opera Theater, Merkin Hall	2009
Mercedes	<i>Carmen</i>	NJ Association of Verismo Opera	2008
Dido	<i>Dido and Aeneas</i>	ConcertOPERA Phila.	2008
Adalgisa	<i>Norma</i>	Metropolitan Lyric Theater (NJ)	2008
La Ciesca	<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	Empire Opera	2007
Ute	<i>The Merry Niebelungs</i>	Dicapo Opera	2006
Berta	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	Opera New Jersey	2005
Florence Pike	<i>Albert Herring</i>	Opera New Jersey	2004
Maman	<i>L'Enfant et les Sortilèges</i>	Opera New Jersey	2004
Dorabella	<i>Così fan tutte</i>	Metropolitan Lyric Theater	2003
Martha	<i>The Secret Garden</i>	MIT Players	2002
Emily Dickinson	<i>I Dwell in Possibility</i> (Raiken-Kolb, world premiere)	Boston tour produced by the composer	2002
Singer/Fiddler Jones	<i>Spoon River Anthology</i>	Musical Theater Works NYC	2001

### CONCERT/ORATORIO

Soloist	<i>Three Nudes</i> (Goodman, world premiere)	New York Composers Circle	2016
Mezzo Soloist	<i>Durufié Requiem, Op. 9</i>	Church of the Resurrection, NYC	2015
Mezzo Soloist	<i>Mozart Requiem</i>	Church of the Resurrection	2015
Soloist	<i>Oh! The Sport of Love!</i> (Heffter, world premiere)	Empire Opera	2015
Oracle of Delphi	<i>The Music of Dinos Constantinides</i> (NYC Premiere)	Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall	2014
Berg, Ravel, Weill	<i>Kammermusikabend</i>	München Seidlvilla, Germany	2014
Alto Soloist	<i>Lord Nelson Mass</i>	Mineola Choral Society, New York	2013
Altsolistin	<i>Monteverdi Marienvesper</i>	Steglitzer Tage für alte Musik, Berlin	2013
Cover Soloist	<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i>	Chamber Philharmonia of New York	2011
Soloist	<i>6 Lyrics of Marilyn Hacker</i> (Cashour, world premiere)	Brandeis Women Composers Conf.	2011
Mezzo Soloist	<i>Handel Messiah</i>	Hanson Place Orchestra	2004

### DISCOGRAPHY

Lady Thiang	<i>The King and I</i>	Stage Stars Records	2006
Mezzo Soloist	<i>Traveling West</i> (Snyder, premiere recording)	North/South Consonance Records	2005
Mermaid	<i>Peter Pan</i> (Bernstein, premiere recording)	Koch International Classics	2005
Aldonza	<i>Man of La Mancha</i>	Stage Stars Records, Inc.	2003

### CONDUCTORS

Michael Ching, Leon Botstein, Daniel Beckwith, William Hobbs, Max Lifchitz

### COMPOSERS

Tom Cipullo, John Harbison, Dinos Constantinides, Waundell Saavedra, and others

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### CRITICAL ACCLAIM

**Glory Denied** “..Margaret O’Connell, fiercely committed as the Older Alyce..” – ZEALnyc



Margaret O’Connell as Older Alyce in *Glory Denied*

### **Mirabai Songs**

“Because of her exceptionally high level of musical skills, I immediately suspected that Margaret O’Connell had a background as an instrumentalist . . . she sang the first of my ‘Mirabai Songs’ with a confident presence that made her performance memorable. Anyone seeking a real musician-singer, that rare bird, will be well advised to offer her opportunities.”

- *John Harbison*, Pulitzer Prize-winning Composer

### **Speed Dating Tonight!** and **Falling Angel**

“I have always found Maggie to be very well prepared and a wonderfully pleasant colleague. She has an impressive voice and fetching stage presence.”

- *Michael Ching*, Composer and Musical Director, Nickel City Opera

### **Traveling West by Randall Snyder (Commercially released premiere recording)**

"Margaret O'Connell is the superb mezzo who handles [the complex atonal song cycle] with seeming ease."

- *Fanfare Magazine*

### **Les contes d'Hoffmann**

"Her exquisite singing of 'La vérité, dit-on' in the prologue was inspiring. O'Connell has a rich and mellow mezzo voice and fine acting skills. Her moving recitation in the epilogue 'Moi, la fidèle amie' touched the heart."

- *Nino Pantano* - Brooklyn Daily Eagle

"[In the] double role of the Muse/Nicklausse, Margaret O'Connell was exceptional, handling the gender-bending of the part convincingly and engaging in a lush, sensual 'Barcarolle.'"

- *Paul Pelkonen* - Superconductor

### **Albert Herring**

"Margaret O'Connell as Florence Pike . . . soared into the upper ranges and carried the comic element well."

- Princeton Town Topics



Margaret O’Connell as Carmen

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### **CRITICAL ACCLAIM (continued)**

#### **Oracle at Delphi; Listenings and Silences; Sappho Songs**

"Margaret is an outstanding soprano. Her tone is beautiful and her technique truly excellent. She has an understanding of styles and her performance is very attractive and intelligent. Her velvety tone is very suitable to romantic and classic works and her accurate rhythm and intonation bring out the best of any contemporary works. In short, she is a true artist.

- *Dinos Constantinides* – Composer and Boyd Professor of Music, Louisiana State University

#### **Multiple roles at Empire Opera, New York City**

"...her talent is unsurpassed in my opinion. Her voice is incredibly agile with great color and control taking on dramatic roles as well as the lighter coloratura. The rich warmth of her tones speaks of true mezzo singing. And her interpretations are perfectly executed demonstrating her knowledge of the works she performs and the time she spends preparing."

- *Waundell Saavedra* – President & Artistic Director, Empire Opera, Inc.

#### **Peter Mark, Artistic Director Emeritus of Virginia Opera, writes:**

"...the richness and solidity of her voice throughout her extensive range and the authority of her presentation are striking. I urge you to hear her at this crucial point and consider helping her with what I feel can be an extraordinary career."