

Barbara Kozelj, biography 2025

Slovenian mezzosoprano Barbara Kozelj has firmly established herself as a charismatic and hugely versatile artist. Her voice and performances have been described as "thrillingly beautiful," "deep and powerful," "breathtaking," "deeply expressive," and "straight to the heart." Equally at home in opera, concert, and recital repertoire, her performances have brought her to leading international stages and continue to captivate audiences around the world.

Recent opera engagements include Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) with the Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra and Jun Märkl in Taipei, Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) at Leipzig Opera's Wagner22 and at Teatro de la Maestranza in Sevilla, Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*) with NJO and Antony Hermus, and Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) with the Academy of Ancient Music and Richard Egarr at London's Barbican Hall.

Barbara is in great demand as a concert soloist. After her debut with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and her Carnegie Hall debut, her career has flourished. Recent highlights include Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, Respighi's *Il Tramonto* with Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife conducted by Antony Hermus, Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne* with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and Bas Wiegers in Ljubljana, Ligeti's *Requiem* with Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España and David Afkham, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with Camerata RCO at the Flanders Festival in Ghent, Mozart's *C-minor Mass*, and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne at the Aix-en-Provence Festival de Pâques, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Phion and the Residentie Orchestra.

This season, she will return to Wigmore Hall for performances of Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Zemlinsky's *6 Songs to Poems by Maurice Maeterlinck*, and Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with Klangforum Wien and Vimbayi Kaziboni this February. Later this year, she will perform Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with Camerata RCO (members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra). Future concerts also include *Winterreise* with Nino Gvetadze in Amsterdam, *Frauenliebe und Leben* with Richard Egarr in Namur, Haydn's *Ariadna a Naxos* with Shunske Sato, and Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* with Phion and the Residentie Orchestra.

Barbara has collaborated with conductors such as Iván Fischer, Jaap van Zweden, Jun Märkl, Henrik Nánási, Stefan Soltesz, Richard Egarr, Neeme Järvi, David Afkham, Paul McCreech, Kenneth Montgomery, Reinbert de Leeuw, Bas Wiegers, Antony Hermus, and Otto Tausk. She has performed with orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort and Players, Athens State Orchestra, Orquesta Simfónica de Barcelona, Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, St. Luke's Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and most of the Dutch orchestras.

Her versatility has also attracted the attention of many composers who have written works specifically for her. She has sung world premières of compositions written by Thomas Beijer, Jan van de Putte, Max Knigge and Oscar Bettison. Barbara has a strong affinity with Lieder, regularly performing recitals with Julius Drake, Thomas Beijer, Phyllis Ferwerda and Nino Gvetadze.

The foundation for her musical development was established in Slovenia, where she graduated from the Academy of Music in Ljubljana. She later continued her studies at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. She was a member of The New Opera Academy and the Dutch Opera Studio. Barbara has been coached by Marcos Bajuk, Irena Baar, Meinard Kraak, Ann Murray, Graciela Araya, and Anne Sofie von Otter, and she continues to study with Sasja Hunnengo throughout her career.