

Jenny Stafford

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Jenny Stafford

is one of the brightest talents on the UK opera stage. In March 2018, she made her major house debut, with Dutch National Opera, as Sarah in James MacMillan's *Clemency*. Bachtrack.com praised how her '*soprano soared in Sarah's ecstatic music with dramatic intensity*'.

Jenny Stafford trained at King's College, London and the Royal Academy of Music, winning the Isabel Jay Operatic Prize and the Dame Eva Turner Award, and at ENO Opera Works and the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto.

In the UK, Jenny Stafford has appeared with: Bampton Classical Opera as Tisbé (*Cendrillon*) and as Eginia (*Gli sposi malcontenti*); the Buxton International Festival as Prima Donna (*Viva la diva*); the Cadogan Hall as Vitellia; English Touring Opera as Despina, Manon Lescaut, Melissa (*Amadigi*), Musetta, and Soprano Soloist (*St John Passion*); Nevill Holt as Musetta; Opera North as the Piper (*The Pied Piper of Hamelin*); Theatre Royal Bath as Miss Jessel (*Turn of the Screw*); Welsh National Opera as Pamina and Papagena; West Green House Opera as Nedda, Suor Angelica and Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), and Wild Arts as Fiordiligi.

Rupert Christiansen, reviewing her 2024 Manon Lescaut for The Daily Telegraph, wrote that: '**Jenny Stafford Shines as Manon Lescaut.** It was Jenny Stafford as Manon who really commanded the stage, with impressive ringing top Cs for declarations of undying passion, and interestingly subtle moments when you could feel a dawning, regretful awareness of her own flightiness.'

Season 2024/25 engagements include: her debut with English National Opera as Mary Seton (cover Mary Stewart) in Thea Musgrave's *Mary Queen of Scots*; her BBC Proms debut as Prima Cercatrice (*Suor Angelica*) with the LSO under the baton of Sir Antonio Pappano; cover Ellen Orford for Welsh National Opera, and *Suor Angelica* with Opera Bohemia at the Perth Festival.

Season 2025/26 engagements include: Female Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) with English Touring Opera, and the world premiere of Elena Langer's *To Die For* at De Nederlandse Reisopera.



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Jenny Stafford reviews

Opera Bohemia, Suor Angelica

Puccini's music for spiritual passion is no less intense than for romantic passion, and Jenny Stafford delivered a performance that repaid his generosity manifold with emotional depth and intensity - **The Edinburgh Review**

Stafford is a compelling stage performer throughout the hour and a quarter, musically absolutely on point in a demanding role - **Voxcarnyx.com**

In soprano Jenny Stafford, who covered the role for English National Opera, Bohemia have a fine new recruit to the more familiar faces in the company. Absolutely on top of the part vocally, she avoids any melodrama in a performance of affecting sincerity, her aria when she learns of the death of her child a real show-stopper - **The Herald**

West Green House Opera, Suor Angelica

Jenny Stafford... excels in an exceptional performance as Suor Angelica. The emotional trauma of Angelica is palpable - **Markaspen.com**

English Touring Opera, Manon Lescaut

Stafford has a lovely gleam to her voice, giving heart and muscle to her arias - **The Times**

Jenny Stafford Shines as Manon Lescaut. It was Jenny Stafford as Manon who really commanded the stage, with impressive ringing top Cs for declarations of undying passion, and interestingly subtle moments when you could feel a dawning, regretful awareness of her own flightiness - **The Daily Telegraph**

Jenny Stafford sings gleamingly as Manon - **The Guardian**

Committed and musically scrupulous as Manon, Jenny Stafford gains in visceral impact as her voice climbs the stave - **The Stage**

Manon is tenderly, lithely sung by Jenny Stafford, expressing an underlying vulnerability rather than either overweening or naive ambition - **Classical Source**

All credit, then, to the singers for wrenching so much poise and power from the thrift-shop catastrophe of this production's look...By the time of the great second-act duet, as Stafford's robust but never harsh soprano cut through swelling orchestration, we could hear not just the ardour but the doubt and inner conflict that each of this pair brings to

their passion...Still, both the final duet and the outcast Manon's searing soliloquy of farewell (to love's delusions, and to life itself) left us with a proper respect for Stafford's and

Morris's whole-hearted immersion in these roles. They gripped and moved, in spite of everything. Singing of such commitment proves that opera can survive not just its detractors, but its directors too - **The Arts Desk**

Jenny Stafford was a light-toned Manon, sweet on the ear but more a lyric than a spinto soprano - **Bachtrack**

A big hand, therefore, for Jenny Stafford's charismatic Manon - **i news**

Jenny Stafford, bright-voiced and appealing as the fickle heroine - **The Guardian**

Jenny Stafford as Manon...delivers exciting singing in the opera's telling moments - **The Reviews Hub**

The central couple are outstanding: Jenny Stafford's soprano is impressive as is Gareth Dafydd's highly accomplished tenor. Their singing soars—**The Sheffield Star**

The cast, led by Jenny Stafford as Manon and Gareth Dafydd Morris as Des Grieux, delivered strong performances despite the limitations of the English translation. Stafford's portrayal of the titular character was nuanced and emotionally charged, her soprano voice navigating the complex vocal lines with skill and passion - **Fairy Powered Productions**

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Jenny Stafford reviews

Voices were exceptional; I was particularly struck by soprano Jenny Stafford, who propelled the story with unwavering vocal energy and a convincing performance as Manon - **A Youngish Perspective**

When we meet Manon, (sung stupendously by Jenny Stafford) she is a young woman about to be sent against her will by her father to a convent - **Cambs News**

All the main roles are sung superbly well...Jenny Stafford's anguished Manon is seen to be torn between carnal and material impulses, equally seduced both by De Grieux's charms and by Geronte's wealth - **Stage Talk Magazine**

West Green House Opera, Pagliacci

Jenny Stafford's vibrant Nedda - **The Stage**

Jenny Stafford was an engaging Nedda, giving a beautifully rendered account of her song to the birds, yet the scene with Thomas Chenhall's strong Silvio showed us that she too could be cavalier, prizing her own freedom above that of others. What Ramster's production showed was that everyone was fallible. And the way Stafford made Nedda realise, during the final play with a play, that Samm's Canio was no longer in character, was nicely realised - **Planet Hugill**

In *Pagliacci* there are fine performances from Jenny Stafford as Nedda, Ronald Samm as Canio, Lawrence Thackeray as Beppe and Thomas Chenhall as Silvio - **Music OMH**

Welsh National Opera, The Magic Flute

Jenny Stafford's Papagena is a brief role, but her voice remains a treat - **Buzz**

Davies was a rather depressed Papageno but with Jenny Stafford as his bucolic Papagena there developed genuine and enthusiastic sexual chemistry - **Gramophone**

Quirijn de Lang's beautifully balanced romantic coward Papageno, the Queen's bird-catcher, was constantly attended by a lovely array of expertly manipulated hand-puppet birds. As was Jenny Stafford's no-nonsense love-of-his-life, Papagena - **The Fine Times Recorder**

At a different remove was the partnership between Quirijn De Lang's Papageno and Jenny Stafford's Papagena, both roles pleasantly sung - **Opera Today**

Jonathan Lemalu sang a sonorous Sarastro. With Raven McMillon as Pamina and Jenny Stafford as Papagena singing with sincerity, Welsh National Opera's *Magic Flute* was a delightful vocal performance - **The Article**

Neal Davies does his best with the sometimes laboured comedy of birdcatcher Papageno – his duet with Jenny Stafford's Papagena is a charming delight, as it should be - **Bum on a Seat**

The singing, as always with WNO, is superb with Neal Davies evelling in the role of Papageno, the night bird catcher, with a fine baritone and an equally fine sense of fun. He ends up on a rescue mission with Tamino but in truth, all he really wants is to be loved, so it is just as well Jenny Stafford is around as the always smiling day palace bird catcher Papagena to take him to her heart - **Behind the Arras**

Buxton Festival, Viva la Diva!

Jenny Stafford achieves the razor-sharp florid singing of the standard prima donna (satirised as the 'coloratura that pulverises crystal / coloratura that can be heard in Bristol') whilst maintaining a forceful, indomitable demeanour as the German 'L'assoluta' brought in to play the part. For them, as for Quentin Hayes's Ray (the deputy stage manager who falls into that position after a less than successful audition) it is no mean achievement, as professional musical actors, to perform with deliberate imperfection or knowing detachment from their assumed roles—**Classical Source**

English Touring Opera, Amadigi

Jenny Stafford brought out the humanity in Melissa, we were aware that this was a love-triangle rather than simply a fearsome sorceress. Stafford brought out the complexities of the character, she was focused on her love for Amadigi yet unafraid of using magic to this about, and Stafford moved finely from the moving woman in love to the terrific fiery aria at the end of Act Two to her profoundly simple death scene. Always engaging and stylish, this was a fine performance and a subtle one—**Planet Hugill**

Jenny Stafford, engaging and impassioned, was Melissa in Saturday's performance—**The Evening Standard**

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West Green House Opera, Eugene Onegin

There was much to enjoy from a mostly young cast with its blend of promise and experience. In a powder-blue dress, Jenny Stafford's Tatyana was a credible traversal of self-absorbed bibliophile through to society beauty, dignity and duty amply realised. In between, came an arresting dream sequence at the close of Act One where there was no doubting her arousal as she imagined her first sexual encounter with Onegin. Hers is a clear and silvery soprano voice, and in time she will discover more expressive power and tonal variety for the celebrated letter aria. More compelling was the emotional charge she brought to the closing duet with Nicholas Lester's Onegin, now vocally unrestrained and glowing with suppressed ardour—**Opera Today**

As the bookish Tatyana, Jenny Stafford has the acting ability to put across with finesse the transformation of the shy girl of Act One, secretly looking for a romantic adventure, into the self-assured and graceful noblewoman of Act Three. Her lyrical soprano voice is a joy of fluid refinement—**markaspen.com**

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English Touring Opera, Così fan tutte

Jeremy Sams' garrulous translation was particularly effective in Despina's case, full of earthy idioms that made her seem refreshingly down to earth. Jenny Stafford gave a sparkling and youthful rendition of the character that was infused with a liveliness that made her so much more than the stooge of Don Alfonso, and her surprise, regret, and even shame in the denouement was a convincing instance of the work's many melancholic touches. Her comic avatars as the fez-wearing, chalk-voiced Notary and vibrator-wielding Professor Mesma – a touch of the Marie Stopes there, surely – were deliciously droll - **Opera Wire**

But in particular, he and Despina - played by soprano Jenny Stafford - were a marvellous comedy duo, really playing off of each other's energies. Stafford's Despina was easily my favourite part of the show. Her diction was impeccably clear, her physical comedy well-timed, and her ability to switch between the multiple characters the role requires was both impressive and laugh-out-loud funny – **Schmopera**

Whenever Jenny Stafford's Despina is on hand, the performance gets a lift - **Financial Times**

Comic support came in buckets from Jenny Stafford's game Despina - **The Arts Desk**

As Despina, Jenny Stafford demonstrated the same comic timing and vocal grace that have impressed several times at Bampton Classical Opera - **Opera Today**

Vocal performances rise to a good standard, with some high points along the way...especially Jenny Stafford's vital Despina - **The Stage**

Jenny Stafford and Frederick Long are both naturally ebullient comedians, cheerfully enjoying the chance to overact as Despina and Guglielmo - **The Telegraph**

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Jenny Stafford partial repertoire

| Composer | Opera | Role |
|-------------|--|--|
| Bizet | Carmen | Micaela |
| Britten | Turn of the Screw | Governess/Miss Jessel |
| Donizetti | Viva la mamma | Daria Garbinati |
| Handel | Amadigi | Melissa |
| Holst | Savitri | Savitri |
| Isouard | Cendrillon | Tisbe |
| Leoncavallo | Pagliacci | Nedda |
| McMillan | Clemency | Sarah |
| Mozart | La clemenza di Tito Cosi fan tutte Idomeneo Die Zauberflote | Vitellia Despina, Fiordiligi Elettra Pamina, Papagena, Erste Dame |

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| Puccini | La boheme Manon Lescaut La rondine Suor Angelica | Mimi, Musetta Manon Magda Suor Angelica |
| Storace | Gli sposi malcontenti | Eginia |
| Tchaikovsky | Eugene Onegin | Tatyana |
| Willcox | The Pied Piper of Hamelin | Piper |

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VIDEOS

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[Puccini, Manon Lescaut: Alone, lost and abandoned](#)

[Puccini, Manon Lescaut: In quelle trine morbide](#)

[Britten, Turn of the Screw: How Beautiful It Is](#)

[Handel, Amadigi: Destero dell'empia dite](#)

[Handel, Alcina: Io godo, scherzo e rido](#)

[Mozart, Magic Flute: Ach, ich fuhls!](#)

[Mozart, Idomeneo: Oh smania! Oh furie! D'Oreste, d'Aiace](#)

[Mozart, Idomeneo: Idol mio](#)

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