

Topi Lehtipuu

Tenor, Artistic Director

The bright spot is tenor Topi Lehtipuu, who plays the role of the nameless monster. His voice is a beacon of humanity, depth and sophistication. He turns the monster into a tragic creature for which you feel compassion.

De Volkskrant, Mark Gray *Frankenstein*

Topi Lehtipuu enjoys a reputation as one of Finland's most highly individual artists. An extremely versatile artist and a highly-skilled stage performer, he is renowned for repertoire ranging from early music, through Bach, Mozart and classical composers, to contemporary creations. He has enjoyed close working relationships with directors and conductors alike – conductors include Ivor Bolton, Emmanuelle Haïm, René Jacobs, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Riccardo Muti, Christophe Rousset, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Daniel Harding, whilst he collaborates with directors including Alex Ollé, David Alden, Claus Guth, Nicholas Hytner, Yannis Kokkos, Barrie Kosky, Christof Loy, Laurent Pelly and Peter Sellars.

Recent highlights include the creation of the role of The Creature in *Frankenstein* by Mark Gray, an opera commissioned by La Monnaie/De Munt, as well as participation in a new multi-disciplinary dance and vocal project featuring music by Monteverdi - *Third Practice* - with renowned dance group Tero Saarinen Company. Projects in 2019-20 include The Witch in *Hänsel & Gretel* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davies, Britten's *Spring Symphony* with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and Kazushi Ono and a return to Salzburg to sing *Vesperae Solemnnes de Confessore* at MozartWoche.

Topi also enjoys a career as artistic consultant and curator. He was Director of the Helsinki Festival from 2015 to 2018, a wide-ranging and innovative multi-arts festival and a major event in Finland's cultural year. He was also artistic director of Turku Music Festival from 2010 to 2015, as well as of Joroinen Music Days, a chamber music festival in eastern Finland.

In Europe he appears regularly in Berlin, Brussels, Savonlinna, London, Paris, Salzburg and Vienna. Highlights include Glück's *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Pylade) at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival, and semi-staged performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Peter Sellars, Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic, which toured extensively including to New York and to the BBC Proms. At the Salzburg Festival 2016 he appeared as the 'Stuttering Prophet' in the world premiere of Eötvös' *Oratorium Balbulum* with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Daniel Harding, with subsequent performances in Vienna, Budapest, Cologne, Zurich, and finally Sydney. As a fervent champion of contemporary music, Topi is regularly invited to perform new works by composers including Peter Eötvös, Nico Muhly, renowned Finnish composer Jukka Tiensuu whose work *Mora* was written for Topi (also recorded) and Brett Dean's *From Melodious Lay* with Zürich's Tonhalle orchestra and also in Melbourne with the composer conducting.

Topi features on numerous recordings – notably the 2012 Grammy-nominated DVD of *The Rake's Progress* and the 2015 BBC Music Magazine award-winning DVD of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, both

recorded at Glyndebourne. He appears on multiple versions of the *St Matthew Passion*, including a DVD conducted by Sir Simon Rattle with the Berlin Philharmonic and a Grammy-nominated and ECHO Klassik prize-winning CD conducted by René Jacobs with the Academy for Ancient Music, Berlin.

Born in Australia to Finnish parents, Topi grew up in Finland, where he studied piano, violin, choral conducting and singing at the Sibelius Academy, with teachers including Peter Lindroos, Howard Crook and Elisabeth Werres. On leaving the Academy, he became a member of the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir, and made his operatic debut singing Albert Albert Herring with Finnish National Opera, leading to regular appearances with this company as well as at the Savonlinna Opera Festival and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. He was also the vocalist and violinist in a progressive rock band Höyry-kone ("steam engine") – a group that performed, toured and recorded a diverse repertoire, ranging from Gregorian chant to heavy metal. In addition, Topi has also worked as an actor and has broad experience as a producer and arranger.