



NEIL FUNKHOUSER

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Jason Stearns

Baritone



Jason Stearns has steadily built a reputation as a distinguished interpreter of the most unique and challenging roles in the dramatic baritone repertoire. Over the past two years, Mr. Stearns has made impressive appearances with the **Metropolitan Opera** (Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, where he appeared on less than one hour's notice), the **Lyric Opera of Chicago** (Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*), the **Savonlinna Festival** (title role in *Der fliegende Holländer*), and the **Los Angeles Opera** (Biterolf in *Tannhäuser* and the title role in Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, both under James Conlon).

In the summer of 2009, Jason Stearns sang the title role in *Macbeth* at **Palacio das Artes** in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, followed by Monterone in *Rigoletto* under Maestro Conlon at the **Ravinia Festival**. The baritone opened the 2009-2010 season covering Scarpia in Luc Bondy's new production of *Tosca* at the **Metropolitan Opera**, before his debut at **Den Norske Opera** in Oslo, as Jack Rance in *La fanciulla del West*. He later appears as the High Priest in *Samson et Dalila* with **Bob Jones University** and returns to the **Metropolitan Opera** to cover the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* and Stankar in *Stiffelio*.

In the 2010-2011 season, Jason Stearns makes returns to **Den Norske Opera** and the **Metropolitan Opera**.

In the 2008-2009 season, Mr. Stearns appeared at the **Metropolitan Opera** as Monterone in *Rigoletto* and covered Donner in *Das Rheingold*. At **Lyric Opera of Chicago**, in addition to his role and company debut as Kurwenal, he sang matinee performances of Tonio in *Pagliacci* and covered Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

The baritone's 2007-2008 engagements included Don Carlo in *Ernani* with **Opera Boston**, and Veit in Ullmann's *Der zebrochene Krug* at **Los Angeles Opera**, where he also covered Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*.

Jason Stearns was the First Prize winner of the first annual **Chester Ludgin American Verdi Baritone Competition**. Other recent notable engagements include the High Priest in *Samson et Dalila* opposite Denyce Graves at **Florida Grand Opera**, *Lohengrin* with the **Leipzig Opera**, Tonio in *Pagliacci* with Boston's **Chorus Pro Musica**, Scarpia in *Tosca* with **Summer Opera**, and the Mill Foreman in *Jenufa* at **Los Angeles Opera**.

His European debut was as Di Luna in a new production of *Il trovatore* with **Musiktheater im Revier** in Gelsenkirchen in Spring, 2006. Mr. Stearns has also appeared with **Washington National Opera** as Nikitisch in *Boris Godunov*, the King in *Le Cid*, the Herald in *Otello*, and Westmorland in *Sly*.

With the **National Symphony** in Washington, D.C., Mr. Stearns recorded the baritone solos in John Corigliano's *Of Rage and Remembrance*, which won a Grammy Award in 1997.



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Repertoire

Bellini	I Puritani	Riccardo
Donizetti	Lucia di Lammermoor	Enrico
Donizetti	Maria di Rohan	Enrico
Donizetti	Marino Falliero	Bertucci
Donizetti	Poliuto	Severo
Leoncavallo	Pagliacci	Tonio
Ponchielli	La Gioconda	Barnaba
Puccini	La fanciulla del West	Jack Rance
Puccini	Madama Butterfly	Sharpless
Puccini	Il tabarro	Michele
Puccini	Tosca	Scarpia
Strauss	Arabella	Mandryka
Verdi	Aida	Amonasro
Verdi	Un ballo in maschera	Renato
Verdi	Ernani	Don Carlo
Verdi	La forza del destino	Don Carlo
Verdi	Macbeth	Macbeth
Verdi	Otello	Iago
Verdi	Rigoletto	Rigoletto
Verdi	La traviata	Germont
Verdi	Il trovatore	Di Luna
Wagner	Der fliegende Holländer	Holländer
Wagner	Lohengrin	Telramund
Wagner	Parsifal	Amfortas
Wagner	Das Rheingold	Wotan
Wagner	Siegfried	Wanderer
Wagner	Tristan und Isolde	Kurwenal
Wagner	Die Walküre	Wotan
Wolf-Ferrari	Sly	Westmorland



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Review Excerpts

Ravina Festival – Rigoletto

Jason Stearns was terrific as Monterone

Mark Thomas Ketterson, [Opera News](#), November 2009

Lyric Opera of Chicago – Tristan und Isolde

Jason Stearns delivered a resonant Kurwenal.

Mark Thomas Ketterson, [Opera News](#), May 2009

Metropolitan Opera – La Gioconda

Barnaba, the villain with a heart of ice, should have been Carlo Guelfi, but illness forced the last-minute substitution of Jason Stearns. Jason Stearns? He had once served in the Met chorus and undertaken tiny solos. In spite of a few pardonably rough patches, one had to admire his firm, wide-ranging baritone, not to mention his steadfast bravado.

Martin Bernheimer, [The Financial Times](#)

Opera Boston – Ernani

Jason Stearns as Don Carlo showed off a smooth and commanding baritone.

Jeremy Eichler, [The Boston Globe](#)

Though difficult to believe, the baritone of Jason Stearns was even larger in size. It is a huge, dark voice, with a powerful cutting edge. At full volume, it can best be described as a force of nature. Scaled for a much larger theater, it nearly dislodged the first few rows of the house. But he also sang with a fine legato, and, in the lyrical moments, nuance. Judging from this performance, he seems destined to be an important, Verdi baritone.

Ed Tapper, [The Edge](#)

Baritone Jason Stearns sang a booming Don Carlo (crowned Carlo V in the third act, and rocking some Prince Humperdinck hair) with one of the loudest voices that this Bostonist has ever heard emitted from an unamplified human mouth.

C. Fernsebner, [Bostonist.com](#)

Summer Opera Theatre - Tosca

...and only Jason Stearns (Scarpia) so inhabited his role that his singing "disappeared," in a sense...

Stearns was the standout. He made every smirk and shrug tell, but he was more than a cardboard villain; you saw the wheels turning in Scarpia's head as he plotted, and in his reflective moments he



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seemed to be genuinely searching for the source of his evil. Vocally, he was impeccable all evening, with perfectly centered sound, and he made the Act 1 malediction "Va' Tosca" both thrilling and terrifying. His performance was a triumph.

Robert Battey, [The Washington Post](#), July 16, 2007

...and it boasts a strapping baritone you are likely to be hearing a lot more of in the future. Jason Stearns, cast as the villainous Baron Scarpia who comes between a diva and her painter/revolutionary boyfriend, possesses a vocal instrument of uncommon presence - a discernible tinge of star quality, if you will.

Stearns dominated the opening-night performance Saturday at the Hartke Theatre on the Catholic University campus. His tone, evenly produced from top to bottom, fleshed out Puccini's music effectively, rising mightily in the great Act 1 finale and oozing considerable sensuality in Scarpia's fatal Act 2 advances on Tosca.

Additional layers of shading and nuance would have been welcome, but this was nonetheless remarkably assured, thoughtful, mature singing. Stearns also delivered the theatrical goods. If his acting was a little on the obvious side, well, it's a pretty obvious character, and the baritone did get beyond the broad gesture here and there to give Scarpia some depth.

Tim Smith, [The Baltimore Sun](#), July 17, 2007

Best of all, oddly enough, is baritone Jason Stearns' Scarpia. Mr. Stearns brings great support, beautiful diction and brilliant vocal discernment.

[The Washington Times](#), July 16, 2007

Florida Grand Opera - *Samson et Dalila*

As Dalila's co-conspirator, the High Priest of Dagon, Jason Stearns overcame his Ming-the-Merciless get-up to deliver the most consistent singing of the evening with a burnished, penetrating baritone.

Lawrence Johnson, [The Miami Herald](#), April 13, 2007

Moments of pleasure crop up in strange places. Jason Stearns, as the Philistine High Priest, has a dark and sparkly instrument, all velvety evil.

Brandon K. Thorp, [The Miami New Times](#), April 12, 2007

En el tercer acto fue opacada por completo por el barítono Jason Stearns, quien como Sumo Sacerdote de Dagón fue lo mejor de la noche. Muy en carácter a pesar del cuello ridículo que le impusieron. (*In The Third Act she was completely dwarfed by the baritone Jason Stearns who as the High Priest of Dagon was the best thing of the evening. Very much in character despite the ridiculous collar they made him wear.*)

Daniel Fernandez, [El Nuevo Herald](#), April 17, 2007

As the villainous High Priest of Dagon, Jason Stearns unfurled a powerful, voluminous bass-baritone. Theatrically he was a suave embodiment of evil.

Lawrence Budmen, [Entertainment News & Views](#), April, 2007



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Top singing and acting honors go to Stearns, whose voice is well controlled through all the extreme demands of the role, notably the gamut of emotions in Act 2 that range from a tearful plea for mercy to a thundering pledge of revenge. His acting is as powerful as his singing, which is very powerful indeed. (*Rigoletto*)

[The Washington Post](#)

Stearns showed off his acting talents and fine singing in his heartbreaking performance as Chevereuse in *Maria di Rohan*...

[The Washington Post](#)

Baritone Jason Stearns in the title role of *Elijah* gave a rich characterization of the embattled prophet, as well as an eloquent and musically proficient presentation of his words.

[The Washington Post](#)

Jason Stearns gave a wonderful performance of Poulenc's *Le Bal Masque* at the National Gallery last night. He approached the vivid texts first as an actor, reveling in the rapid-fire declamation...rolling the French vowels out over his tongue as if he could taste them, his fine voice heightening the drama and the absurdity of each scene.

[The Washington Post](#)

Baritone Jason Stearns lent his considerable vocal talents to the role of Sharpless. He contributed substantially to the drama, both in the Act III trio and in his Act I duet with Pinkerton where he brought such fire to Sharpless's warnings to Pinkerton that they became more memorable later. Stearns invested his Act II exchange with Butterfly with worldly wisdom and warm compassion.

[The Baltimore Sun](#)