

RICARDA MERBETH - SOPRAN



Ricarda Merbeth ranks among the leading singers of our time. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the German soprano has appeared at the world's foremost opera houses, festivals and concert halls. Beginning with Mozart and the lyrical roles of Wagner and Strauss, she has carefully developed her repertoire over many years to encompass the great dramatic roles of her Fach. Today, she is regarded as one of the foremost interpreters of roles such as Elektra and Brünnhilde; more recently, she has also added Ortrud and Kundry to her repertoire.

Ricarda Merbeth opened the 2026/27 season with another role debut, appearing as the Foreign Princess in *Rusalka* at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse. Later in the season, she returns to Deutsche Oper Berlin as Elektra and sings Ortrud in *Lohengrin* in Valencia.

Concert engagements take her to Turin, Helsinki and Würzburg, while at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino she once again appears in the title role of *Elektra*.

After studying at the University of Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in Leipzig, Ricarda Merbeth began her career at the theatres in Magdeburg and Weimar. In 1999, she made her debut at the Vienna State Opera as Marzelline in *Fidelio* and remained a member of its ensemble until 2005. During this period, she built up an exceptionally varied repertoire ranging from the Countess, Donna Anna, Pamina and Fiordiligi to Chrysothemis, Elisabeth, Eva, Irene, Elsa, the Marschallin and Sieglinde.

Her international breakthrough came in 2004 with the title role in a new production of Richard Strauss's *Daphne* at the Vienna State Opera. She has maintained a close relationship with the company ever since and continues to return as a regular guest. In 2001, she received the Eberhard Waechter Medal, and in 2010, the then Director of the Vienna State Opera, Ioan Holender, awarded her the honorary title of Austrian Kammersängerin.

"Ricarda Merbeth rose to international acclaim through her powerful interpretations of Wagner and Strauss, establishing herself as one of the world's leading sopranos."

The Bayreuth Festival has played a particularly important role in her career. She made her festival debut in 2000 as Freia and Gutrune in Jürgen Flimm's production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. From 2002 to 2005 and again in 2007, she appeared as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, while from 2013 to 2018, she sang Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer*.

Since becoming a freelance artist in 2006, Ricarda Merbeth has appeared at leading opera houses including the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Vienna State Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra national de Paris, Teatro Real Madrid, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Dutch National Opera, New National Theatre Tokyo, and the opera houses of Zurich,

Stockholm, Helsinki, Toulouse and Marseille, as well as the Sydney Opera House and Vienna's Musikverein.

At the heart of her repertoire are the great Wagner and Strauss roles: Brünnhilde in all three operas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Isolde, Senta, Kundry, Ortrud, Elsa, Elisabeth and Venus, as well as Elektra, the Dyer's Wife, Helena, Salome, Ariadne and the Marschallin. Her repertoire also includes Turandot and Leonore in *Fidelio*.

Among the defining engagements since 2016 have been her role debuts as Isolde at the Hamburg State Opera, Turandot and Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and her title role debut as Elektra in Patrice Chéreau's acclaimed production at Teatro alla Scala. She subsequently returned to La Scala in the title role of *Die ägyptische Helena*. Further major appearances have included Brünnhilde in Madrid, Senta and Elektra at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Elektra at the Vienna State Opera, Ortrud in Bologna, Isolde in Valencia, and complete *Ring* cycles at the Semperoper Dresden and the Vienna State Opera.

Recently, she returned to the Hamburg State Opera and appeared at the Baltic Opera Festival as Senta. Further highlights have included Turandot at the Spring Festival in Tokyo, Elektra and Salome at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Elektra at the Finnish National Opera and Salome at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. In Toulouse, she made her staged role debut as the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, followed by her first staged Kundry in *Parsifal* at the Tiroler Festspiele Erl. She has also appeared as Brünnhilde in Deutsche Oper Berlin's *Ring* cycle.

Ricarda Merbeth is equally in demand on the concert platform. Her repertoire includes Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Beethoven's *Missa solennis*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and *Brentano Lieder*, and Mahler's Symphony No. 8. Recent concert highlights have included Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* at the Sydney Opera House and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Staatskapelle Dresden.

Ricarda Merbeth has worked with conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Myung-whun Chung, Christoph von Dohnányi, Daniele Gatti, Edward Gardner, Marek Janowski, Mariss Jansons, Philippe Jordan, Fabio Luisi, Ingo Metzmacher, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Seiji Ozawa, Kirill Petrenko, Donald Runnicles, Christian Thielemann, Franz Welser-Möst and Simone Young.

Directors with whom she has collaborated include Daniele Abbado, Philippe Arlaud, Sven-Eric Bechtolf, Calixto Bieito, Nicolas Brieger, Robert Carsen, Jürgen Flimm, Kasper Holten, Nicolas Joël, Günter Krämer, Marco Arturo Marelli, Mario Martone, Àlex Ollé, Otto Schenk, Katharina Wagner and Krzysztof Warlikowski.

[Official biography for the 2026/27 season]