

Ricarda Merbeth | Short Biography

Ricarda Merbeth ranks among the leading sopranos of our time. Since the beginning of the 2000s, she has appeared at the world's foremost opera houses, festivals and concert halls. From Mozart and the lyrical roles of Wagner and Strauss, she has gradually developed her repertoire to encompass the most demanding dramatic soprano roles. Today, she is regarded as one of the foremost interpreters of Elektra and Brünnhilde, while more recently adding roles such as Ortrud and Kundry to her repertoire.

Ricarda Merbeth opened the 2026/27 season with her role debut 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 returns to 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. There she built 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*. She has maintained a close relationship with the Vienna State Opera ever since and continues to return as a regular guest. In 2001, she received the Eberhard Waechter Medal, and in 2010 she was awarded the honorary title of Austrian Kammersängerin.

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 Ring cycle. 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, she has appeared at leading houses including the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra national de Paris, Teatro Real Madrid, Gran Teatre del Liceu, 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.

At the heart of her repertoire are Brünnhilde in all three operas of the Ring cycle, Isolde, Senta, Kundry, Ortrud, Elsa, Elisabeth and Venus, as well as Elektra, the Dyer's Wife, Helena, Salome, Ariadne and the Marschallin. Career highlights include *Elektra* in Patrice Chéreau's production at Teatro alla Scala, *Die ägyptische Helena* at the same house, Isolde in Hamburg and Valencia, Turandot in Berlin and Tokyo. In the last few years, highlights include complete Ring cycles at the Semperoper Dresden, Vienna State Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salome in Naples and Buenos Aires, and her first staged Kundry at the Tiroler Festspiele Erl.

Ricarda Merbeth is equally in demand on the concert platform. Her repertoire includes Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and *Brentano Lieder*, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony. She has worked with conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Daniele Gatti, Mariss Jansons, Philippe Jordan, Kirill Petrenko, Christian Thielemann, Franz Welser-Möst and Simone Young.