



## Christopher Tonkin Baritone

Christopher Tonkin grew up in Geelong, Australia, and began his musical life while still at school. He performed principal roles with local theatre companies and played trumpet in the local concert band until his interest in singing took a more serious turn while studying with internationally renowned tenor Gerald English. In 2002, Christopher moved to Melbourne to take up a position at the Victorian College of the Arts, where he completed a Bachelor of Music Performance under the tutelage of Anna Conolly. While there, he won several awards and scholarships, including the Sleath-Lowrey Rotary Arts Scholarship, the Daisy Webster-Ester Nolan Scholarship and the Victorian Welsh Male Choir-Ross Hartnell Memorial Scholarship and sang in masterclasses with Sir Donald McIntyre and Richard Bonyng. He also undertook professional engagements with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic, the Melbourne Chorale and Opera Australia's touring company, OzOpera.

After graduating from the VCA, Christopher was engaged with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as bass soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Cantata BWV207*. In the same year, Christopher made the finals of the Opera Foundation German Operatic Award, won a place in the prestigious Herald Sun Aria competition and won the Opera Foundation Italian Opera Award; a prize which took him to Europe to study in Pisa for two months and then to Romania, where he performed the role of Silvio in the Galati Theatre summer production of *I Pagliacci*.

Following a successful audition trip to London, Christopher was offered a full scholarship to study at the prestigious Royal Academy of Music, where he was supported by the Kohn Foundation and the Josephine Baker Trust. His principal voice lessons with Raymond Connell were supplemented with tuition from such distinguished mentors as Anthony Legge, Jonathan Hinden, Audrey Hyland and Iain Ledingham, and masterclasses with celebrated professionals including Alan Opie, John Mark Ainsley and John Graham-Hall. Christopher sang principal roles in six Academy productions, a highlight of which was *Le nozze di Figaro*, where he performed the role of Count Almaviva in a production directed by John Copley and conducted by Sir Colin Davis. On graduating, Christopher was awarded the coveted 'Diploma of Royal Academy of Music,' granted for performance excellence and distinguishing him as one of the Academy's top graduates. During his time in the UK, Christopher was also engaged to sing at venues including Chichester Cathedral, the Barbican and the Royal Albert Hall, as well as being broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on several occasions.

Since his return to Australia in 2008, Christopher has performed with Opera Australia in the critically acclaimed *Billy Budd* (Novice's Friend), with the State Opera of South Australia in *La Fanciulla del West* (Happy), and was nominated for a Green Room award for his portrayal of Belcore in Victorian Opera's 2008 production of *The Elixir of Love*. In February 2010 he heads to the Adelaide Festival to sing the role of the Black Minister in the La Fura dels Baus internationally renowned production of *Le Grand Macabre*, before returning to Europe to commence a 2 year contract as principal baritone with Hannover State Opera.

Other roles Christopher has performed include: for Opera Australia, Antonio (*The Gondoliers*), for Victorian Opera, Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), for Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, L'Horloge Comtoise and Le Chat (*L'Enfant et les sortilèges*) and Happy (*La Fanciulla del West*) and for Melbourne Opera, Don Giovanni. At the Royal Academy Opera he has performed Antenor (*Dardanus*), Robert (*Iolanta*), Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*), Tarquinius (*Rape of Lucretia*) and Drebyednyetsov (*Paradise Moscow*).

Christopher Tonkin's Manager Worldwide is Graham Pushee: [graham@artsmanagement.com.au](mailto:graham@artsmanagement.com.au)  
assisted by Sarah Holloway: [sarah@artsmanagement.com.au](mailto:sarah@artsmanagement.com.au)

February 2010

Not to be altered or reprinted without permission – this biography is for website use only

Telephone (+61 2) 9211 9422 Facsimile (+61 2) 9211 9466

# ArtsManagement

Christopher has extensive concert experience throughout Australia and the United Kingdom, including Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, the *Christmas Oratorio*, *Magnificat*, *Coffee Cantata*, Cantatas BWV 12, 22, 23, 75 and 128, Mozart's *Vespers* and *Requiem*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, *Maria Theresa Mass* and *Paukenmesse*, Purcell's *Ode for St Cecilia*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Vaughan-Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* and *Songs of Travel*, Rudi Stephan's *Liebeszauber*, Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and he has sung Bach's Cantata 207, Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Christopher Tonkin's Manager Worldwide is Graham Pushee: [graham@artsmanagement.com.au](mailto:graham@artsmanagement.com.au)  
assisted by Sarah Holloway: [sarah@artsmanagement.com.au](mailto:sarah@artsmanagement.com.au)

February 2010

*Not to be altered or reprinted without permission – this biography is for website use only*

Telephone (+61 2) 9211 9422 Facsimile (+61 2) 9211 9466