



Paul Whelan Bass-Baritone

"In the 1910 *Songs of the Fleet*, settings of poems by Henry Newbolt, the orchestra was joined by the fresh-sounding voices of the Belfast Philharmonic Choir and the New Zealand bass baritone Paul Whelan. The songs may be fustian, but Whelan's delivery – the voice startlingly full, the tone exceptionally even, the beauty of sound apparently effortless – had one hanging on every note."

– Michael Dervan, *Irish Times*, March 10, 2009

Parsifal, New Zealand International Arts Festival

"Paul Whelan's expressively sung Amfortas showed that Wagner singing can and should be much more than sheer volume of sound. He brought a lieder-like quality to his portrayal, placing particular emphasis on the text, as Wagner would surely have desired."

Michael Sinclair

The Opera Critic, March 2006

Paul Whelan, 1993 Lieder Prize winner in the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, pursues a busy concert, operatic and recital career.

In May this year Paul returns to Australia to sing *Mozart's Requiem* with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra under Paul Daniel.

In 2008 his engagements included the Priest and the Angel of Agony in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Berlin, Salisbury and New Zealand, a return to the London Bach choir for *St. Matthew Passion* at the Festival Hall, the Bass Roles in *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies at the Hebrides Festival, and the world Premiere of *Terra Incognita* - a Symphonic cantata about Scott in the Antarctic for Bass soloist and Choir, written for Mr. Whelan by Gareth Farr and performed by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. He made an unexpectedly early return to English National Opera (ENO) where he was credited with rescuing the opening-night production of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* when he stepped in at short notice to sing the role of Raimondo. He also sang the roles of The Bonze in Anthony Minghella's production of *Madama Butterfly* and Raimondo again in the aforementioned *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the ENO. He also sang Duke Bluebeard in *Bluebeard's Castle* with NBR Opera New Zealand and Vector Wellington Orchestra and Beethoven's *Missa Solennis* with Sydney Symphony for World Youth Day.

Highlights in 2007 for the native New Zealander included Escamillo in *Carmen* at Welsh National Opera, Christus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the City of Birmingham Symphony orchestra (CBSO) and London Bach choir, Judas in Elgar's *The Apostles* at the Leeds Festival, Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* for Spanish television with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, and a series of concerts with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Sydney Symphony.

During his decade-plus as baritone, Mr. Whelan found his voice maturing and settling, and therefore decided to concentrate on the bass-baritone and lyric bass repertoire. The numerous engagements reflecting this repertoire change have included Christus in a staged version of Bach's *St. John Passion* (directed by Deborah Warner) and Schaunard in a new production of Leoncavallo's *La bohème* both at ENO, Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen* with Welsh National Opera (WNO), and concert performances of Valens in Handel's *Theodora* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and in Winterthur. The past few years have also seen him adding repertoire such as the Four Villains in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Canterbury, New Zealand; Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* with the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Delius's *Sea Drift* in Osaka, Argante in Handel's *Rinaldo* in Munich, Apollon in Gluck's *Alceste* at the Dresden Festival, the Nightwatchman in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* at the closing concert of the Edinburgh Festival, and Mussorgsky *Songs and Dances of Death* with the Ulster Orchestra, both recorded for BBC Radio 3. He was featured in the world premieres of *The Assassin Tree* by Stuart Mcrae in a joint production with the Royal Opera House and the Edinburgh Festival, and *Bird of Night* by Dominique Legendre, also for the Royal Opera House.

Paul Whelan's Manager Worldwide is Judith Alexander: judith@artsmanagement.com.au
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Paul Whelan studied as a baritone at the Wellington Conservatoire and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won several prestigious prizes and scholarships. Early highlights included his debuts at Covent Garden, the Netherlands Opera and the Metropolitan Opera as Schaunard in Puccini's *La bohème*, and as Marcello at the Munich State Opera. His Welsh National Opera debut was in the title role in *The Doctor of Myddfai*, a new commission by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (also recorded). He debuted at the ENO as Shaklovity in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*. He has sung Flint in Britten's *Billy Budd* for the Geneva Opera and Paris Opera – Bastille; the Count in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Teatro Municipal de Santiago di Chile; Figaro in a new production of *Le nozze* for Scottish Opera.

With Opera Australia he has sung the title roles in *Don Giovanni* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, as well as Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a production directed by Baz Luhrmann. He has also sung Demetrius in Tourcoing, Montpellier, Nimes and at the Edinburgh Festival. He returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Ned Keene in Britten's *Peter Grimes*; to Munich for Marcello; to the Bastille as Marcello in the Puccini *Bohème*, The Husband in Menotti's *Amélie va au Bal*, and Gil in *Le Secret de Suzanne*; to The Royal Opera for performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress* at the Royal Festival Hall, conducted by Valery Gergiev. He sang the title role of Handel's Saul with the RIAS Berlin Chamber Choir; Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* in Nantes, Apollon at the Netherlands Opera, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* for Dublin and New Israeli Opera, Olivier in Richard Strauss's *Capriccio* in Sydney, and the *Figaro* Count with Scottish Opera.

Other engagements have included concerts under Sir Simon Rattle, Valery Gergiev, Kent Nagano, Richard Hickox, Yehudi Menuhin, Gary Bertini and Vassily Sinaisky. He has performed with many leading UK orchestras, as well as with the RIAS Berlin Chamber Choir and the Budapest Symphony Orchestra. He has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall, The Purcell room, St. David's Hall in Cardiff, the Cheltenham Festival, for the BBC Pebble Mill, Perth Festival and at the Châtelet Theatre in Paris. Recordings include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the LSO under Sir Colin Davis (Philips), Kurt Weill's *Silbersee* under Markus Stenz (BMG) recordings with the BBC Philharmonic for Chandos and the BBC Scottish Symphony for Hyperion. He has also recorded for ABC Classics.

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