

# Christopher Trakas



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Christopher Trakas, “an elegant baritone with a commanding sound” (NYTimes) enjoys a free spirited and all encompassing career noted for its eclecticism and consistent excellence. In opera, concert and theatre, on television, radio and recordings, Mr. Trakas has impressed audiences around the world with his deeply felt and intensely communicative art. From the Metropolitan Opera to Joe’s Pub, he has performed a vast repertoire ranging through the works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Rossini, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler, Wolf, Mussorgski, Rachmaninoff, Chausson, Faure, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Vaughan Williams, Britten, De Falla, Obradors, Piazzola, Jobim, Villa-Lobos, Menotti, Gershwin, Ellington, Ives, Copland, Barber, Bernstein, Blitzstein, Reiman, Kim, Bolcom, Musto, Del Tredici, Rorem, Foreman and Adams.

His operatic roles include “Harlekin” at the Metropolitan Opera (James Levine) “Pelleas” in Basel, Switzerland and with the Handelfestspiel Orchestra in Halle, Germany, “Marcello” (Opera Carolina), “Schaunard” (New York City Opera), “Dandini” (Washington Opera), “Figaro” (Minnesota Opera), “Papageno” (Opera Arkansas) and “Don Giovanni” in concert with Hans Vonk and the St. Louis Symphony. Mr. Trakas sang the “Count” opposite Renee Fleming in Gian Carlo Menotti’s celebrated Spoleto production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He was “Figaro” in Amy Trompeter’s puppet production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at St. Ann’s Warehouse (Jaarvi) and “Don Quixote” in Basil Twist’s realization of De Falla’s *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* with the Eos Orchestra (Sheffer). Mr. Trakas also received critical acclaim as “Alberich” in Christopher Alden’s chamber adaptation of *Rheingold* with Eos. He returned to Spoleto to sing “The Prisoner” in Menotti’s *Maria Golovin*, starring Paulo Szot. With American Opera Projects he created the role of “Tristan” (*The Lost Childhood*) and was the lead in the professional premiere of Tom Cipullo’s *Glory Denied* with NYC’s Remarkable Theatre Brigade, conducted by Steven Crawford. With director Christopher Alden, Mr. Trakas created the role of Edward Hopper in the world premiere of Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie’s *Hopper’s Wife* at the Long Beach Opera. He returned to the Met in 2011 to understudy “Nixon” in Adam’s *Nixon in China*. He created the role of “Manfred” in Janice Hamer’s *Lost Childhood* with American Opera Projects and sang the world premiere in 2103 with the Washington Philharmonic.

His orchestral credits include *L’enfant et les Sortilèges* with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony, *Damnation of Faust* with James Levine and the Chicago Symphony, *Kindertotenlieder* with the Danish radio orchestra, *Szenen aus Goethe’s Faust* in Frankfurt (Cambreling), *Giulio Cesare* with the Academy Of London, *Carmina Burana* in Oakland (Buckley), Ives and Copland with James Sinclair (Orchestra New England), *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Boston Philharmonic (Zander) and *Songs and Dances of Death* with the Florida Orchestra. Mr. Trakas sang the world premiere of Menotti’s *O Llama de Amor Vivo*, written for him, with Fruhbeck de Burgos (Spoleto Festival Orchestra) and both Ravel and Ibert’s *Don Quixote* orchestral cycles with Angel Ordonez’s Post-Classical Ensemble at the Kennedy Center. In concert with the Eos orchestra Mr. Trakas took the role of “Chou En Lai” in John Adam’s *Nixon in China* at Alice Tully hall in NYC. He travelled to the Czech Republic to sing *Kindertotenlieder* and record Daniel Asia’s *Symphony #7* with the Czech National Radio Orchestra in Pilsen.

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Equally at home in musical theatre, Mr. Trakas sang “Riff” in *West Side Story* with the Israel Philharmonic (Barrett), “Joe” in Jeffery Stocks *Temperance Songs* at the Public Theatre and a review of the composers work “Taking Stock” at Joe’s Pub. Mr. Trakas was “Mahler” at the Musical Theatre Workshop in Scott Frankel and Michael Korie’s *Doll* directed by Graciele Daniele and featuring Roger Bart and Mary Testa and appeared with Kristen Chenoweth, Adam Guettel, Judy Blazer and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson in Lincoln Center’s American Songbook concert of Ricky Ian Gordon’s *Bright Eyed Joy*, conducted by Ted Sperling. Mr. Trakas acted and sang the role of “Amiens” in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* at San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre, directed by Stephen Wadsworth and he created the role of “Hoffmeister” at the Sundance Theatre Lab working with director/playwright Richard Foreman in his opera *Yiddisher Teddy Bears*.

As winner of the Naumburg Award – sharing first prize with Dawn Upshaw – Chris is a distinguished recitalist and has performed at major venues with such distinguished pianists as James Levine (Schuman and Ravel - Ravinia Festival), David Del Tredici in the world premiere of the pianist/composer’s “Love Addiction” at Merkin Hall, Francois Rene Duchable (*Winterreise* - Newport Music festival) Ruth Laredo and James Tocco (Ives and Bernstein - Detroit Chamber Music). A frequent guest artist with the Boston Chamber Music Society he performed the world premiere of Earl Kim’s “7<sup>th</sup> Dream” (with Ms. Upshaw) as well as Ravel, Schumann, Mahler, Eisler and Korngold and returned in 2013 for *Le Bal Masqué* (Poulenc) and *Chansons Madécasses* (Ravel). Recordings include Poulenc with Dalton Baldwin and his Naumburg Award Debut disc with Steven Blier. Along with Dame Felicity Lott and Ann Murray, Mr. Trakas recorded the complete songs of Chausson with pianist Graham Johnson. He shared duo recitals with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson and Amy Burton with pianists John Musto, Glenn Parker and Steven Blier on Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series and toured with American Ballet Theatre singing *Kindertotenlieder* on stage in Tudor’s “Dark Elegies”, subsequently broadcast on PBS’s *Dance in America*. As a noted champion of new music, Mr. Trakas has sung world premieres by such noted composers as Bolcom, Del Tredici, Menotti, Musto, Kim Zebrowsky, Cipullo and Kapilow, among others. More recently he sang Walter Arlen’s cycle “The Poet in Exile” (Milosz) at NYC’s Museum of Jewish History with Toronto’s Award winning ARC Ensemble.

Mr. Trakas holds BA and MM degrees in music history, organ and voice from Eckerd College and the University of Houston. He was visiting professor of Voice at Florida State University and also taught on the voice faculties of the North Carolina School of the Arts and SUNY Stony Brook. He has also directed master classes in song literature at the Juilliard School and many colleges and Universities throughout the USA. His principal teachers include Elena Nikolaidi, Marlena Malas, Myron MacPherson and Bonnie Hamilton.