James Ley

Tenor

American-born James Ley is a graduate of the Opera Studies programme at New York’s prestigious Juilliard School, and a finalist of the 2022 Operalia Competition. He has been praised for his ‘pure tone and innocent expressiveness’ (operawire.com) and for his ‘lovely legato line and silvery tenor’ (seenandheard-international.com).

James Ley’s 2023/24 season includes several debuts: Kudrjas in *Katya Kabanova* for Bergen National Opera conducted by Jiří Rožeň, Scriabin’s *Symphony No. 1* with Danish National Symphony Orchestra under Fabio Luisi and with Orquesta y Coro de la Communidad de Madrid under Marzena Diakun, Handel’s *Messiah* with Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra led by Music Director Courtney Lewis, Bruckner’s *Te Deum* with Atlanta Symphony under Nathalie Stutzmann, Handel’s *Messiah* at Wheaton College, and Britten’s *Nocturne* with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra under Christoph Koncz.

The 2022/23 season began with Ley’s debut at the Edinburgh International Festival as the Second Nazarene in *Salome* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Edward Gardner, set for commercial release by Chandos Records, and a return to Ferrando in *Cosí fan tutte* in a special production of the Da Ponte Trilogy with Les Musiciens du Louvre and Marc Minkowski for performances and a recording in Versailles. The season continued with his debut as Vaudémont in David Bösch’s new production of *Iolanta* at Oper Bern, led by Chief Conductor Nicholas Carter, with further performances at Salzburger Landestheater in Thomas Mika’s production of *Iolanta*, led by Leslie Suganandarajah.

The 2021/22 season included important house debuts: at Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona and Opéra National de Bordeaux as Ferrando with Les Musiciens du Louvre under Marc Minkowski. On the concert stage, he debuted with Opéra de Limoges in Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* and with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunk in Mendelssohn’s *Elias*.

Further performing experience to date includes the world premiere of Marius Felix Lange’s *Der Gesang der Zauberinse*l at Salzburg Festival, Le petit vieillard in *L’enfant et les sortilèges* with the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Emmanuel Villaume and, at Wheaton College, Abraham in a staged production of Britten’s Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac and his first Tamino in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*.  In concert, James has performed Handel’s *Messiah* at Wheaton College, as well as excerpts from Schubert’s *Winterreise* with Brian Zeger at Alice Tully Hall as part of Juilliard Songfest.

James Ley has appeared in Masterclass with Yannick Nézet-Séguin as well as in Carnegie Hall’s SongStudio, with guest teachers including Renée Fleming.  He enjoyed several summers at the Internationale Meistersinger Akademie, and James participated in the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence Académie, the Salzburg Young Artist Project, and the Internationale Meistersinger Akademie. For the 2020/21 season he was a member of the Opernstudio of Bayerische Staatsoper Munich as the recipient of an Opera Foundation scholarship, where he sang the Messenger in *Aida* under Zubin Mehta as part of the Munich Opera Festival.