

Jennifer Johnston

Mezzo-soprano

Esteemed mezzo-soprano Jennifer Johnston is recognised as one of the most important voices of her generation and celebrated for her performances of works by Mahler, Wagner, Britten, Beethoven, Schumann and Elgar among others. She was awarded Royal Philharmonic Society’s Singer Award in 2021 in recognition of her “commitment and emotional force” to both performance and education.

During the 2023/24 season, Jennifer Johnston can be heard in Mahler, Symphony No.3 with Klaus Mäkelä conducting the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, Bucharest and Vienna, in Mahler, Symphony No.8 with both Bayerisches Staatsorchester in Munich under Kirill Petrenko and NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra in Hamburg under Semyon Bychkov and Ravel, Schéhérazade with Sakari Oramo conducting BBC Symphony Orchestra at London’s Barbican Hall. Additionally, she joins Vasily Petrenko and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Verdi, Messa da Requiem, Philharmonia Orchestra and David Hill for Elgar, The Dream of Gerontius and, marking her debut as Judith, Oslo Filharmonien and Klaus Mäkelä in Bartok’s Bluebeard’s Castle.

On the operatic stage, Jennifer Johnston has enjoyed a close collaboration with Bayerische Staatsoper where she has sung over 80 performances including as Mrs Sedley (Peter Grimes), Brigitte (Die tote Stadt), Second Norn (Götterdämmerung), Roßweise (Die Walküre), Floßhilde (Das Rheingold and Götterdämmerung), Hedwige (Guillaume Tell) and La Ciesca (Gianni Schicci). Productions outside of Munich have included Juno (Semele) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Mrs Grose (The Turn of the Screw) at Teatro alla Scala, Carmi (Mozart’s La Betulia Liberata) and Leda (Die Liebe Der Danae) at Salzburg Festival, Dido (Dido and Aeneas) for Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.

In huge demand on the concert platform, Jennifer Johnston has collaborated with many of the world’s leading orchestras and conductors and enjoys a special relationship with the orchestra of her home town, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, where she has been Artist in Residence and with whom she recorded her first solo recording, A Love Letter to Liverpool (Rubicon Classics). Recent engagements include Jocasta in Stravinsky, Oedipus Rex under Sir John Eliot Gardiner with both Berliner Philharmoniker and London Symphony Orchestra, Wagner, Wesendonck Lieder with Hallé Orchestra and Gergely Madaras, Mahler, Symphony No.8 with Wiener Philharmoniker and Franz Welser-Möst, Verdi, Messa da Requiem with BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo as part of the First Night of the BBC Proms, Chausson, Poeme de l’Amour et de La Mer with London Philharmonic Orchestra under Bertrand de Billy, Schumann’s Faustszenen with Daniel Harding and Gewandhausorchester, Beethoven, Symphony No.9 with Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst, Elgar, Sea Pictures with Irish National Symphony Orchestra and Leonard Slatkin and Britten, Phaedra with Martyn Brabbins and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

A former BBC New Generation Artist, and a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music, Jennifer Johnston has appeared extensively in recital with collaborative pianists Malcolm Martineau, Joseph Middleton and James Baillieu and has an extensive discography including the Grammy-nominated Vaughan Williams, Four Last Songs (Albion Records), Stravinsky, Oedipus Rex (LSO Live), Wagner, Die Walküre (Waltraute) with Sir Simon Rattle and Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchester and, Gramophone Awards’ 2022 Recording of the Year, Korngold, Die tote Stadt from Bayerische Staatsoper.