

## **RICHARD MARGISON - BIO**

Hailed for his ringing top notes and spine-tingling power, Canadian tenor Richard Margison is one of the most critically acclaimed singers on the international stage today. He performs regularly in many of the world's leading opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Canadian Opera Company, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the San Francisco Opera, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Sydney Opera and the Grand Teatros del Liceu in Barcelona.

## **PERFORMANCES**

Richard's 2011-2012 features a mix of opera and concerts – he opens the season as Canio in the Edmonton Opera production of *I Pagliacci*, performs a benefit concert in Ottawa, takes on Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Victoria Symphony before returning to Ottawa in one of his great roles – Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca* for Opera Lyra Ottawa. He closes out his season with Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with the Toronto Symphony.

In 2010-2011, Richard celebrated his Canadian roots with performances across the country featuring his signature roles – Calaf in Puccini's *Turandot* with Opera Lyra Ottawa, Manrico in *Il Trovatore* with l'Opéra de Québec, Cavaradossi in Manitoba Opera's *Tosca*, and Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Canadian Opera Company. The spring saw Richard return to his home province of British Columbia for a recital tour with acclaimed pianist Kinza Tyrrell. In addition he reprised his celebrated role as O'Brien in Lorin Maazel's *1984* in Valencia, Spain.

## **RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Highlights from recent seasons featured performances as Bacchus in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Teatro Campoamor in Oviedo, Spain, as Radamès in Verdi's *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera, as Pollione in Bellini's *Norma* with the Vancouver Opera, and in a series of concerts for Arizona Opera. A highlight of his 2009-2010 season was his trip to China for the opening of the new Guangzhou Opera House where Richard appeared in the inaugural performances of Puccini's *Turandot* with Lorin Maazel in one of his most celebrated roles, Calaf: "Richard Margison's Calaf revealed both vocally and dramatically the calculated determination of a man who knows how to get what he wants." (*Financial Times*, 11 May 2010)

Previous seasons include Richard's debut as Aegisthus in Strauss's *Elektra* with the Seattle Opera and the New York Philharmonic, his debut at Milan's famed La Scala as O'Brien in Lorin Maazel's *1984*, a role he originated at the ROH Covent Garden in 2005, recently released on DVD. Renowned for his interpretations of Verdi, Puccini, Strauss and Beethoven, recent seasons have featured performances of *Un Ballo in Maschera* (l'Opéra de Montréal, Hamburg, the ROH Covent Garden), *Turandot* (New York, Barcelona, Toronto), *Aida* (New York,

Cincinnati, l'Opéra de Montréal, Chicago, Orviedo), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Madrid, London, Hamburg, New York), *Fidelio* (Seattle, Vancouver), *Il Trovatore* (New York, Toronto, Berlin, San Francisco), *La Gioconda* (Barcelona) and *Don Carlo* (New York).

A much sought after concert artist, Mr. Margison took Toronto by storm in a concert at Roy Thomson Hall garnering such praise as "...it is an important experience to hear Margison live, simply to come into contact with the physical presence of the voice. It has both brass and beauty, and its power is so forceful and concentrated that you have to remind yourself that its source is a human throat..." (*Globe and Mail*). As well, he has appeared with the Royal Philharmonic in London, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and at the Ravinia Festival. He has also performed with Bryn Terfel at his opera gala at the Faenol Festival in Wales.

## **RECORDINGS**

Mr. Margison's most recent releases include an all-Verdi recording on CBC Records and the highly acclaimed recording of Beethoven's *Fidelio* with Christine Brewer on Chandos. He has also recorded *Lanza* (Warner Music), a recording made for the film on the life of Mario Lanza, in which he sings the title role. Other recordings include Verdi's *Don Carlo* with the Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus under the direction of Bernard Haitink (Philips) and Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa* with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Neeme Järvi (Deutsche Grammophon). He has made three recordings with the late Richard Bradshaw and the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra: a solo album of *French and Italian Arias* (CBC Records), *Rarities by Rossini and Verdi*, with Gary Relyea (CBC Records) and *Aria, une sélection de Radio-Canada* with Anita Krause, Wendy Nielson and Gary Relyea (CBC Records). Richard Margison is also a featured artist on the Millennium Opera Gala recording released by CBC Records.

His DVDs include the upcoming release of his highly acclaimed appearances as Bacchus in the Metropolitan Opera production of *Ariadne au Naxos* with Deborah Voigt and Natalie Dessay (Virgin Classics), his roles as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and as O'Brien in Lorin Maazel's *1984* (both on Decca), and as Enzo in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* (TDK).

## **FOLK-SINGING OPERA STAR**

Richard's rise to the top of the opera world did not follow the traditional path – his career began in the coffee houses and clubs of Victoria, BC, where he performed with his own rock band for ten years. Since making his debut in 1980 with Pacific Opera Victoria, he has gone on to take the opera world by storm while not neglecting his roots, enthusiastically performing songs by Gordon Lightfoot or Stan Rogers whenever possible. In January 2010, Bravo! presented a documentary (Harbinger Films) on

Richard called the *'Folk-Singing Opera Star'*. Now available on DVD, the documentary features him in a musical collaboration with Bruce Cockburn, in major performances and in discussion about his life and career.

www.thefolksingingoperastar.com <<http://www.thefolksingingoperastar.com/>>

## **HIGHLANDS OPERA STUDIO**

In the summer of 2007, Richard Margison and Opera Director Valerie Kuinka founded the Highlands Opera Studio, which provides advanced operatic training to a select group of talented young professionals with the main objective to provide these singers with the necessary skills to embark on a career in opera. Looking forward to its 4th season in the summer of 2010, the program includes vocal master classes, individual voice lessons, movement classes, stagecraft coaching and staging rehearsals for a fully staged production. The faculty includes renowned singer-pedagogues Timothy Noble, John Fanning, Christianne Riel, and Mark Pedrotti. www.highlandsoperastudio.com

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## **HONOURS AND BENEFIT WORK**

Although Richard is in great demand on the great opera stages of the world, he gives generously of his time to support a number of causes. He has offered his talent at benefits in Chicago, for the Metropolitan Opera, Leukaemia Research (Ontario), LOFT Community housing (Toronto), the Children's Opera Chorus (Toronto), the Royal Conservatory of Music, and many others. He has been particularly active in his home province of British Columbia, where he has raised more than two million dollars through benefit concerts including Victoria Symphony, Pacific Opera Victoria, the Victoria Conservatory of Music, Vancouver Symphony, Vancouver Opera and the Rotary Club.

Richard Margison was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2001 not only in honour of his contribution to musical life in Canada but in recognition of his presence on the international stage. In October 2009 he received Lifetime Achievement Awards from both the The Giulio Gari Foundation and The Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation. He also holds Honorary Doctorates from the University of Victoria (DMus), University of British Columbia (D.Litt) and McMaster University (D.Litt).

He shares his home in Toronto, Canada with his wife, opera director Valerie Kuinka and his daughter Lauren, a budding singer.