

BRETT SPRAGUE

Tenor

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Critical Acclaim

Translation from French: The Mark of American tenor Brett Sprague is also a model of beautiful singing in service of this quintessentially British score, which offers him some magnificent arias of heightened romanticism, enhanced by the resonances of the language. Now a member of the Karlsruhe ensemble, it comes as no surprise to learn that he was recently a noteworthy Peter Grimes at the Erfurt opera, as it is clear when one listens to (and watches) him that he possesses a certain "bardic" quality that also suits the role of Mark in Ethel Smyth's work. Gifted with a very beautiful timbre and a technique that allows him to deliver both long, powerful, and well-sustained notes and passages of ascending or descending arpeggios with flawless legato, he effortlessly imbues his character with a palpable depth.

-Cult News (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

Translation from German: Dorothea Spilger and Brett Sprague, two of the house's leading artists, were featured, both possessing the necessary charisma and vocal capabilities to give their roles distinct profiles. In his first performance in Karlsruhe, the American tenor presented highly promising material, currently situated in the extended spinto repertoire. He impressed with beautifully shaped musical phrasing, nuanced singing, and secure placement of the high notes.

-Das Opernglas (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

Translation from Czech: The role of Mark was performed by American tenor Brett Sprague, a new member of the Karlsruhe ensemble this season. He sang with complete ease, cultivated tone, balanced across all registers, and without any signs of strain. His appealing appearance and the lyrical quality of his voice could secure him roles in the future as deeply conflicted and vulnerable leading male characters.

-Opera Journal, Czech Republic (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

Translation from German: In sharp contrast stands the lyrically rhapsodic Mark. Brett Sprague sings this tenor role with great passion, vocally expansive yet with a flexible and impressive upper register—a model of youthful vitality.

-Online Musik Magazin (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

Translation from German: Passionate and with a warmly timbred, well-balanced tenor, Brett Sprague stands out as the fisherman Mark; he handles the long and demanding passages effortlessly.

-Pamina Magazin (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

Translation from German: The role of the young fisherman Mark is especially characterized by elements of "folksong" and balladry, which inspire the American tenor Brett Sprague to deliver extraordinarily lyrical performances. At the same time, this newcomer to the Karlsruhe opera ensemble rises vocally in the duets with mezzo-soprano Dorothea Spilger as Thirza to a level that immediately brings to mind the intoxicating second act of *Tristan*.

-Die Rheinpfalz (The Wreckers, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 2024)

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Translation from German: The American tenor Brett Sprague delivered a gripping interpretation of a work by Benjamin Britten at the Tonhalle... With Brett Sprague (tenor) and Pascal Deuber, principal horn player of the Bavarian State Orchestra, two soloists were heard who brought depth and intensity to the piece. A wonderful highlight was the interplay between singer and horn, with the horn at times blending almost mysteriously with the singer's timbre. This eight-part work, scored for string orchestra, evokes a wide range of emotions and offers unique, finely woven soundscapes full of warmth and profound expressiveness.

-St. Galler Tagblatt (Serenade for Tenor, Horn, Strings, Konzert Theater St. Gallen, 2024)

Translation from German: And this is also noteworthy: nearly the entire Erfurt ensemble is featured in this new production and delivers convincing performances. The standout was the American tenor Brett Sprague. His Loge is a mischievously nimble schemer and cunning instigator, whose every word feels believable! Vocally, he delivered the most outstanding performance of the evening alongside Albert Pesendorfer as Wotan.

-Oper! Das Magazin (Das Rheingold, Theater Erfurt 2024)

Translation from German: The cast of singers was celebrated with rousing applause at the end. Brett Sprague's almost Kafkaesque, scheming portrayal of Loge earned him extra applause.

-MDR (Das Rheingold, Theater Erfurt 2024)

Loge is truly in a league of his own! Brett Sprague impresses both vocally and dramatically. His sheer enjoyment of performing is palpable.

-RK-Voigt.de (Das Rhinegold, Theater Erfurt 2024)

Translation from German: Brett Sprague was magnificent in the title role, which seems to be tailor-made for him. Vocally, the lyrical passages are particularly captivating, as they suit the beautiful timbre of his tenor exceptionally well. He also succeeds in convincingly portraying the fisherman's inner turmoil.

-Das Opernglas (Peter Grimes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: "Peter Grimes" stands and falls with the casting of the title role—a particularly demanding challenge for any performer. Brett Sprague had stepped in the day before at the Semperoper in Dresden as Hoffmann. However, the American tenor, who admits that Peter Grimes is one of his favorite roles, possesses both stamina and reserves of strength. How deeply he has engaged with the score becomes evident during the performance. The singer has an exceptionally beautiful voice that asserts itself effortlessly. He avoids the mistake of overexerting himself in the title character's choleric outbursts, focusing instead on the dramatic portrayal. This allows the lyrical moments to shine, which is an advantage, as it enables the singer to explore the complexity of the character more effectively.

-Der neue Merker (Peter Grimes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: The musical merits of the evening belong to an exquisite ensemble of Protagonists: above all Brett Sprague as a grandiose Peter Grimes, with his inner conflict and above all else his impressively focused, well-timbered tenor, which forms the vocal center of the evening.

-Neue Musikzeitung (Peter Grimes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

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Translation from German: Brett Sprague is a Peter Grimes playing a defiant figure with a resistant eloquence and a radiant Tenor, who also finds tender times in his dreams of the stars. The main role is brilliantly cast in Erfurt.

-In Süd Thüringen Magazin (Peter Grimes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: So intense remains throughout the three hour production about this outsider Peter Grimes, whom Brett Sprague plays with slumped shoulders and perplexed look at the beginning, but the anger at the mouths that slander him is expressed angrily and strongly sung out. But he also dreams of stars, clouds, and a better life, sounding very tender.

-Opern.news.de (Peter Grimes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: Excellent was Brett Sprague in the title role of Orestes with brilliant high notes and very well understood German articulation.

-Das Opernglas (Orestes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: Orestes is cast with Brett Sprague. He first appears in Part II, but is fully challenged from then on to the end of the opera. His heroic tenor has penetrating power and stamina. He believably shapes the change from avenging son to atonement and thereby acquires numerous interesting facets of the character. The voice rings, is conducted in a controlled manner, and is able to express emotional worlds perfectly. In addition, the voice has gained depth and a strong foundation. This role should open up new perspectives for the singer in the dramatic repertoire.

-Der neue Merker (Orestes, Theater Erfurt 06.2023)

Translation from German: Really on an excellent level, Brett Sprague takes a role with a rather Siegfried like requirement and he makes it with no lack of strength and stamina.

-Deutschlandfunk Kultur (Orestes, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: Orestes - Brett Sprague with a powerful Heldentenor and a comprehensive repertoire of colors.

-Der neue Merker (Orestes, Theater Erfurt 05.2023)

Translation from German: A cast of the highest vocal niveau was Adolphe Nourrit for the young Greek warrior Néoclès. BRETT SPRAGUE faces the tour de force with which Rossini wanted his tenor Nourrit to shine, with admirable consistency and a tirelessly present tone. In his great aria in the third act, he copes with the heroic texture with never-ending energy, without surrendering to forced showmanship.

-Der neue Merker (Le siège de Corinthe, Theater Erfurt 04.2023)

Translation from German: Brett Sprague is not a typical Rossini tenor. As the fine-ribbed Néoclès, the American tenor appealed with a beautifully developed lyrical tenor and finely balanced high notes. He increases the large trio with Pamyra in act 3, the wedding scene, to a musical highlight of the performance.

-Operalounge.de (Le siège de Corinth, Theater Erfurt 2023)

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Translation from German: The other tenor role is played by Brett Sprague. Néoclès is Pamyra's potential bridegroom and thus subject to alternating emotions, which the tenor masters with elegance and bravura. Very confidently and radiantly he sings a high D in Act 3! Regardless of this, the singer is also fully challenged scenically. Ruinous staircases have to be mastered in all haste, parts of buildings on fire have to be sung in.

-Der neue Merker (Le siège de Corinthe, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: All in all, this production is one of the best overall musical performances by the Erfurt Theatre in a long time. For the rough spectacle, there is a cast that is fully up to the towering vocal demands: as Pamyra's fiancé Néoclès, Brett Sprague once again shows what a great tenor catch the Erfurt Theatre has made with him. His combination of softness, power, and ornamentation is touching.

-Concerti.de (Le siège de Corinthe, Theater Erfurt 2023)

Translation from German: Tenor Brett Sprague embodies Nicholas Gage in New York in 1963. He exemplifies stage presence. You can tell that the research is upsetting him. But he radiates calm and level-headedness. Vocally, he convinces with an appealing and well cultivated voice.

-Der neue Merker (Eleni, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: Next to the stage, as a frame, a desk at which Nicholas (tenor Brett Sprague, who performed with haunting eloquence), living in America in 1963, types the results of his research (and memory) into his typewriter.

-Die deutsche Bühne (Eleni, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: The same can be said of Brett Sprague, who let his beautiful young dramatic tenor shine, handling the uncomfortably high-lying role of the Junger Diener without any trouble.

-Der neue Merker (Elektra, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: The dramatic force came from the impressive singing voices throughout... Stars included Brett Sprague, who had to be content with the Hebrew prince role of Ismaele, deliberately left in a smaller format by Verdi...

-Neue Musik Zeitung (Nabucco, DomStufen Festspiele 2022)

Translation from German: Brett Sprague since 19/20 at the house played as Hoffmann an artist at the mercy of the powerful, who impressed with his lyrically melting tenor full of radiant sound pearls and passionate acting.

-Das Opernglas (Hoffmanns Erzählungen, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: Among the soloists, the American tenor Brett Sprague was particularly convincing as the title character. All respect for what he did in this vocally demanding role in terms of staging ideas. An immensely credible character portrait of an artist who is tugged at by the world.

-Bayerischer Rundfunk (Hoffmanns Erzählungen, Theater Erfurt 2022)

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Translation from German: Of course, the realization of the poet Hoffmann himself demands the most empathy and stamina; the American tenor Brett Sprague, who graduated in California, was vocally (and also dramatically) highly present in this role until the last act.

-Amusio.com (Hoffmanns Erzählungen, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: Hoffmann is not an old man disappointed by love and life, but on the contrary: an ageless artist rebel suffering from abuse of power and deprivation of freedom under National Socialism, GDR socialism and turbo-capitalism. Revoluzzer Hoffmann, sung richly in tone and with tender melodiousness by Brett Sprague, is humiliated by Lindorf for his system-critical attitude.

-Thüringer Allgemeine (Hoffmanns Erzählungen, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: For the musical performances, however, there were hearty cheers.... Above all, the theater has fielded a fantastic lineup of soloists. Starting with the highly lyrical Brett Sprague as Hoffmann.

-MDR (Hoffmanns Erzählungen, Theater Erfurt 2022)

Translation from German: The expressive, dramatic tenor Brett Sprague, ensemble member of the Erfurt Opera since the season 2019/20, thrilled in Macduff's aria, "Ah la paterna mano" with his melting-warm big voice, nuanced singing, brilliant legato and great stage expressiveness.

- Das Opernglas (Opera Gloriosa, DomStufen Festspiele 2020)

Translation from German: Ernesto being doubled vocally by Brett Sprague... Brett Sprague masters his role from the music stand at the edge of the stage with voluminous heights and perfect interaction with the orchestra. One did not notice that the American tenor Brett Sprague sang the role a few years ago. He seemed fresh as at a premiere.

- MeinAnzeiger.de (Don Pasquale, Theater Erfurt 2019)

Translation from German: As Gwidon, Brett Sprague makes a big impact with his romantic tenor.

-Thüringer Allgemeine (Das Märchen vom Zaren Saltan 2019)

Translation from French: We do not have the opportunity every day to be able to write without seeming insulting that the tenor utters cries of monkey: that's what Brett Sprague is doing as a young lord of Henze's eponymous opera, and with a lot of conviction, elegance and musicality... this tenor voice with triumphant treble is none other than the monkey bought from a circus of passage, and here is the small society of local elites brought back to their pettiness.

- ResMusica.com (Der junge Lord, Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz 2019)

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“The vocal soloists, a responsive, theatrically interactive trio, negotiated the difficulties of their lines and contours with bravado, Brett Sprague nailed his part in style.”

- Classicalsource.com (Carmina Burana, Göteborgs Symfoniker 2019)

Translation from Finnish: Brett Sprague is an exceptionally brilliant sounding tenor. He came from Colorado to sing this demanding tenor, where the singer has to live the part of the swan that is turning on the spit.

- Heikin Herkut (Carmina Burana, Tampere Filharmonia 2018)

Translation from Finnish: Orff has written to all soloists a remarkably high level of singing. This was not a problem for American Brett Sprague, who dazzled in his issue of *Olim lacus colueram*. I have never heard of such a great high tenor in Carmina Burana.

- oopperaa.blogspot.com (Carmina Burana, Tampere Filharmonia 2018)

Translation from Finnish: The soloists crystallize their fairly small portions in Carmina Burana's choir-based setting... Tenor Brett Sprague brought a welcome breath of fresh air with his vocal mysticism. The entire artistry made a heroic deed that further strengthened the attraction of Carmina Burana.

- Sydän-Hämeen Lehti (Carmina Burana, Tampere-Talo 2018)