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Pela Kurennaya

Soprano



Celebrated by the press for her “immaculate singing” as well as her “beautiful and distinctly recognizable timbre”, the young Russian soprano Pela Kurennaya is a frequent soloist at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Equipped with remarkable stage presence, exceptional musicality and her youthful-vibrant voice, Pela is already enjoying great success, within the Russian, Italian, French, as well as the contemporary repertoire.

Born in Mityakinskya (Rostov-on-Don region), Pela started her musical training at the age of 12. From 2007 to 2010 she studied at the Moscow Ippoltov-Ivanov Music Academy. In 2016 she graduated from the Rimsky Korsakov Conservatory in St. Petersburg, where she studied with Professor Tamara Novichenko, who had previously taught Anna Netrebko. Roles she performed at the conservatory include Rosina in *Barber of Seville*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Marfa in *The Tsar's Bride*. She further attended master classes at the Riccardo Muti Academy in Ravenna, at the Los Angeles Opera Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, with Mariella Devia and Elena Obraztsova. From 2009 to 2014 Pela received numerous prizes at international competitions, including in Moscow, Milan, Bari and St. Petersburg.

In October 2014, under the direction of Mariss Jansons, she sang the role of Prilepa in Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame* at the Munich Gasteig and the Philharmonie de Luxembourg. In 2016 she performed this role on stage, again with Jansons, in a production by Stefan Herheim at the Nederlandse Opera in Amsterdam. Both productions were released on CD and DVD, respectively.

She made her debut at the Mariinsky Theatre in a production of *Pique Dame* under the direction of Valéry Gergiev in 2015, and has since been performing as a soloist at the Mariinsky.

A fortunate encounter with the Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin resulted in two important invitations. In October/November of 2015 she sang Shchedrin's Romance for soprano and strings *Tanya-Katya* in concerts conducted by Maestro Gergiev in St. Petersburg and Munich. On December 26, 2015 Pela first performed the leading role, Zamarashka, in the world premiere of Shchedrin's Opera *A Christmas Tale* - to such success that she has been re-engaged for revivals of the work ever since.

July 2017 saw Pela's Finland debut at Valery Gergiev's Music Festival in Mikkeli with Shchedrin's *Tanya-Katya* as well as with a recital, which was repeated the following summer. In September 2017 the renowned pianist Denis Matsuev invited her to take part in the final concert of his festival "Stars of the Baikal" in Irkutsk, Siberia.

In December of 2017 Pela was invited to sing in three concerts honouring Rodion Shchedrin for his 85th birthday in Moscow. One month later she performed Stravinsky songs at Valery Gergiev's Stravinsky Festival in Munich. In April 2018 Pela made her US debut under the direction of the Finnish conductor Hannu Lintu with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. She sang Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*, and was subsequently invited by Maestro Lintu to perform Mahler's 4th Symphony later that year with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Named by Rodion Shchedrin as his favourite soprano, Pela has earned particular acclaim for her personification of the title role in his opera *Lolita*, a part she performed at the Prague National Theater in autumn of 2019 as well as at the Mariinsky Theater in the spring of 2020. The production has been nominated for the most prestigious Russian theatre award, the "Golden Mask", and will be performed for the jury at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater in February 2021.