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Chris Merritt

*Tenor*



Renowned as one of opera's leading Italian Belcanto tenors, Chris Merritt is cherished for his great virtuosity and the distinctive timbre and brilliant top register of his voice.

Following his remarkable early career, Chris Merritt continues to set standards with numerous roles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century repertoire. Over the past seasons he has been expanding his repertoire and cheered for his Herodes in *Salome* which he most recently performed at Israeli Opera Tel Aviv in 2019, as well as in Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Bologna, Brussels, Essen and Paris, Altoum in *Turandot* in Rome, Barcelona and again scheduled for the Verona festival in 2020, the Governour/Vanderdendur in Bernstein's *Candide* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona in 2018, and again scheduled at Grand Théâtre de Genève in December 2020, Fatty in Weill's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Parma (originally planned for May 2020), Aegisth in *Elektra*, *Le Lépreux* in Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* (in San Francisco, Paris, Lucerne and the Salzburg Festival), as well as the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*.

Among Chris Merritt's current favorite roles are the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Fatty in Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, the Governor/Vanderdendur in Bernstein's *Candide*, Teresius in Henze's *Bassarids*, and Mephistophele in Busoni's *Doktor Faust*.

Over the past seasons Merritt has also performed Emmigrante in Nono's "*Intolleranza 1960*" in Stuttgart, Berlin and Dresden, Méphisto in Busoni's *Doktor Faust* in Salzburg and San Francisco, Captain in *Wozzeck* in Hamburg, San Diego and the Saito Kinen Festival in Japan, Tiresias in Henze's *The Bassarids* in Amsterdam, Piet-vom-Fass in Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* in Brussels, Barcelona, Rome and Buenos Aires, the Jailor in Dallapiccolas *Il prigioniero* in Paris and Clemente in the World premiere of Henze's *Venus und Adonis* in Munich.

From the early 1980's on Chris Merritt achieved international acclaim as one of the most sought-after interpreters of the tenor protagonists by Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. In 1981 he performed Arturo in Bellini's *I puritani*, one of his favorite parts, at the New York City Opera, followed by his debuts at the Vienna State Opera as Léopold in Hálevy's *La Juive*, at the Carnegie Hall with Rossini's *Tancredi*, and the Opéra National in Paris as Aménofi in *Moïse et Pharaon*. Other highly acclaimed guest appearances led him to the Royal Opera House and the Royal Festival Hall in London, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Chicago Lyric Opera, the San Francisco Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, to the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, where he appeared in two successive years, 1988 and 1989, under the baton of Riccardo Muti in the "Inaugurazione", the festive season opening on December 7.

Further highly successful appearances included roles such as Idreno in *Semiramide*, Rodrigo in *La donna del lago*, Arnold in *Guillaume Tell*, Paolo Erisso in *Maometto II.*, Conte di Libenskof in *Il viaggio a Reims*, Percy in *Anna Bolena*, Arrigo in *I vespri Siciliani* and the leading role in Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Throughout his career Chris Merritt has frequently worked with the most celebrated colleagues, conductors and stage directors such as Pierre Boulez, Christian Thielemann, Claudio Abbado, Seiji Ozawa, Riccardo Muti, Richard Bonyngé, Myung-Whun Chung, James Levine, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kent Nagano, Semyon Bychkov, Dan Ettinger, Sir John Pritchard, Klaus Tennstedt, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboim, Michel Plasson, Donald Runnicles and the directors Franco Zeffirelli, Werner Herzog, Peter Konwitschny, Luca Ronconi, August Everding, Götz Friedrich, Peter Sellars, Pier Luigi Pizzi, Peter Stein, Wieler and Morabito, Robert Wilson, Pier Luigi Sammaritani, Robert Carsen, Hugo d'Ana, Fura dels Baus and Harry Kupfer, among many others.