**LAYLA CLAIRE, Soprano**

Frequently praised for her colourful, flexible voice and graceful stage presence, Layla Claire has an exciting season ahead including her first performances as Handel’s Alcina, conducted by Andrea Marcon at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre and in Katie Mitchell’s acclaimed production. Under Andreas Spering, Alcina is also the role that takes her back to Karlsruhe’s Händel-Festspiele where, in 2015, she enjoyed unanimous acclaim as “a wonderful discovery…[and] a highly individual timbre with lustre and brilliance” (*Der Neue Merkur*) as Tusnelda (*Arminio*); the production is now released on CD by Decca.

Canadian Layla Claire was a member of The Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, making her debut there as Tebaldo (*Don Carlo*) under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. She has since returned to the Met’s stage for several guest appearances including the creation of the role of Helena in the Baroque pastiche *The Enchanted Island* under William Christie (available on Virgin Classics DVD) and as Anne Truelove (*The Rake’s Progress*) under James Levine.

In 2012, the Europe-wide ARTE broadcast of Layla Claire’s performance as Sandrina (*La finta giardiniera*) from the Aix-en-Provence Festival brought her to immediate European attention and led to her debut at the Glyndebourne Festival as Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*). Layla Claire has appeared at the Canadian Opera Company as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), at both Pittsburgh and Minnesota Operas as Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), and at the Tanglewood Festival as Donna Anna and Fiordiligi under James Levine. After a Salzburger Festspiele debut last year as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), she went on to reprise the role for both Opéra de Montréal and Opernhaus Zürich and joins Jakub Hrůšaand the Bamberger Symphoniker this season for concert performances, in Bamberg and at the Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg. Layla Claire has previously been honoured with the Prix des Amis d’Aix-en-Provence for best Mozart performance, as well as the Mozart Prize at the Wilhelm Stenhammar International Competition.

Layla Claire’s last few seasons have offered several opportunities to showcase her versatility, including her highly acclaimed Washington National Opera debut as Blanche de la Force in Francesca Zambello’s new production of *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and her first Contessa Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), marking her debut at Opera Philadelphia last season. In Europe, she was highly praised as the Governess in Willy Decker’s new production of Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw* at Opernhaus Zürich, equally so as Helena in Robert Carsen’s classic production of Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Festival d’Aix.

An expressive and diverse concert singer, Claire has twice collaborated with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Mahler’s Symphony No.2 under both James Levine and Michael Tilson Thomas, and again in Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* under Bernard Haitink. With Yannick Nézet-Séguin, she has performed both Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and Symphony No.9 at Festival de Lanaudière, as well as Dvořák’s *Stabat Mater* with L’Orchestre Métropolitain. At Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival she performed Beethoven’s Mass in C Major with Louis Langrée, and both Dvořák’s *Requiem* and Haydn’s *Seasons* at Grant Park Music Festival under Carlos Kalmar. This season, Layla joins both the San Francisco Symphony under Ragnar Bohlin and the Colorado Symphony under Brett Mitchell for Handel’s *Messiah*.