CLAY HILLEY, Tenor

Winning critical acclaim for “vocal heft, clarion sound and stamina” (*New York Times*) and for performances described as “close to perfection – powerful, subtle, intelligent, every word crystal clear” (*Financial Times*), American Heldentenor Clay Hilley continues to garner success in an ever-growing list of opera’s most monumental heroic roles. He is the winner of the 2024 Richard Tucker Music Foundation Award and is proud to represent the legacy of one of the greatest American tenors of the the last one hundred years by carrying the honor forward into the 21st Century.

Highlights of the current season include debuts at the Wiener Staatsoper in the title role of *Tannhäuser* in a new production directed by Lydia Steier and conducted by Music Director Philippe Jordan, and with l’Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal in performances of *Gurre-Lieder* led by Music Director Rafael Payare. On the stage of his ‘home’ company, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the tenor bows as Der Kaiser in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* directed by Tobias Kratzer and led by Sir Donald Runnicles as well as in the title roles of *Tannhäuser* conducted by Axel Kober and *Tristan und Isolde* with Petr Popelka and Sir Donald Runnicles.

The tenor’s busy diary in the summer of 2024 included a role debut as Calaf in *Turandot* at Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi Trieste, the title role of *Parsifal* at the Bayerische Staatsoper marking his first collaboration with renowned Wagner conductor Ádám Fischer, and performances of the First Act of *Die Walküre* for his debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu and Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* (Schoenberg arr.) with Sir Donald Runnicles at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

After stepping into the premiere of Bayreuth’s new *Götterdämmerung* on one day’s noticein 2022,Hilley has returned to the Bayreuth Festival in the title role of *Tristan und Isolde*, one of several Wagnerian roles now featuring prominently in his operatic diary. The 2023-24 season saw his debut as the title role of *Tannhäuser* at the Edinburgh International Festival in a concert performance with Sir Donald Runnicles and later with the Deutsche Oper Berlin in fully-staged performances in Berlin led by Pietari Inkinen; a house debut at the Bayerische Staatsoper in the title role of *Parsifal*; and a return to the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Siegfried in a revival of Stefan Herheim’s production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen.* Additionally, the tenor joined the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director Karina Canellakis for a concert performance of *Siegfried* at Amsterdam’s venerable Concertgebouw.

Beyond Wagner, Clay Hilley has appeared as Beethoven’s Florestan (*Fidelio*) for the Canadian Opera Company, with conductor Johannes Debus, Strauss’s Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at the Hong Kong Arts Festival with the orchestra of the Bayerische Staatsoper under Patrick Lange, and in his Staatsoper Hamburg debut as Laca in Janáček’s *Jenůfa,* in performances conducted by Tomáš Netopil.

Vocally and dramatically assured in even the most challenging repertoire, recent high-profile role debuts include Der Kaiser in Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with the Berlin Philharmonic and Kirill Petrenko, both in concert at the Berlin Philharmonie and in a new staging by Lydia Steier at the Baden-Baden Festival, as well as the Drum Major in Deborah Warner’s new production of Berg’s *Wozzeck* for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, conducted by Music Director Sir Antonio Pappano – also the tenor’s company debut.

An artist accomplished on the world’s leading concert stages, recent highlights include Mahler’s Eighth Symphony with Marin Alsop and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival, and *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Houston Symphony and Juraj Valčuha, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and Stéphane Denève, and with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Sir Antonio Pappano – where he subsequently returned for Kodaly’s *Psalmus Hungaricus.*

Concert performances of opera are also a fixture: Clay Hilley has been heard in recent seasons as Florestan (*Fidelio*) for both Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Robert Spano and the Edinburgh International Festival with Sir Donald Runnicles and The Philharmonia; in Act Two of *Tristan und Isolde* with Edward Gardner and the Orchestra of the Norwegian National Opera; in Act Three of *Siegfried* with Erik Nielsen and the Bilbao Symphony; and as Radamès in Act Three of *Aida* with Nicola Luisotti and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

The tenor’s burgeoning video catalogue includes *Der Ring des Nibelungen* from Deutsche Oper Berlin (Naxos) - about which *Opera News* wrote, “Vocally, he’s the finest Siegfried on DVD, with ringing top notes, perfect diction and impressive tonal flexibility” - and *Götterdämmerung* filmed at the Bayreuth Festival (Deutsche Grammophon).