

## **Jonas Kaufmann**

Since his sensational début at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in a performance of “La Traviata” in 2006, Jonas Kaufmann has numbered among the top stars on the operatic horizon. The international press has singled him out as the “new king of tenors”. Insiders praise him as the most important German tenor since Fritz Wunderlich.

Jonas Kaufmann comes from Munich. He completed his vocal studies there at the local Music Academy, in addition to which he attended master classes with Hans Hotter, James King and Josef Metternich. During his first years on stage at the State Theatre in Saarbrücken he continued his training with Michael Rhodes in Trier.

After engagements in Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Milan - in Giorgio Strehler’s production of “Così fan tutte” and “Fidelio” with Riccardo Muti on the podium - Kaufmann moved on to the Zurich Opera in 2001. From there he began his international career. Appearances at the Salzburg Festival and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Paris Opéra and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, La Scala Milan, the Deutsche Oper and the State Opera in Berlin, the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan in New York. In 2010 he made his début at the Bayreuth Festival as Lohengrin in a spectacular staging by Hans Neuenfels.

Kaufmann is just as much in demand internationally in the Italian and French repertoires as he is in German opera. He has sung Massenet’s Werther in Paris and Vienna, Cavaradossi in Puccini’s “Tosca” in London, at the Met and La Scala. His intensive characterizations of Don José in Bizet’s “Carmen” and Werther in Massenet’s opera took opera fans

throughout the world by storm. Kaufmann loves portraying shattered characters, immersing himself in their world and making their thoughts and emotions strikingly believable.

Besides his vocal and musical qualities, it is his total identification with his roles that has been received with such enthusiasm by press and public. This was the case at his role début as Siegmund in “Die Walküre” at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in the spring of 2011. The eagerly awaited new production, masterfully conducted by James Levine, and transmitted world-wide on radio and in HD to cinemas, allowed audiences to hear the special quality of Kaufmann’s Wagner interpretations in detail: The blend of “German” expressive power and Italian vocal finesse. When Kaufmann afterwards had such a great success performing the title role of Gounod’s “Faust” (a new production that could also be seen in cinemas all over the world) he showed once again his vocal and theatrical versatility.

In 2012 he gave his debut as Bacchus in “Ariadne auf Naxos” by Richard Strauss at the Salzburg Festival. In Salzburg he was also heard as Don José in the new production of “Carmen” conducted by Simon Rattle and in a performance of the Verdi Requiem conducted by Daniel Barenboim, which has been also performed at La Scala and at the Lucerne Festival. In December 2012 he came back to Milan for the opening of La Scala’s new season with the new production of “Lohengrin”, conducted by Barenboim and directed by Claus Guth.

2013 was the year of Wagner and Verdi: After the Met’s new production of “Parsifal” and the revival of “Don Carlo” at the ROH in London, Kaufmann portrayed the title role in “Don Carlo” also in Munich and Salzburg.

Furthermore he undertook two Verdi roles for the first time: Manrico in “Il Trovatore” and Alvaro in “La Forza del Destino”, both in new productions at the Bayerische Staatsoper. In February and March 2014 he portrayed Massenet’s Werther in a new production at the Met, in June he gave his debut as Des Grieux in Puccini’s “Manon Lescaut” at the ROH in London.

Highlights in 2015 were his debut as Andrea Chenier in a new production at the ROH with Antonio Pappano conducting, his first Radames in Rom (in a concert performance with Anja Harteros and Pappano), a high acclaimed double debut in the new production of “Cavalleria rusticana / Pagliacci” at the Salzburg Easter Festival, a Puccini recital at La Scala, and new productions of Beethoven's “Fidelio” in Salzburg and Berlioz’ “La Damnation de Faust” at the Opéra National in Paris.

After the big success of his solo album with evergreens from the late Twenties and early Thirties (“Du bist die Welt für mich”) he presented his new album with Puccini arias (“Nessun dorma”) in September 2015. Some of those arias he has performed at the legendary “Last night of the proms” in the Royal Albert Hall on September 12<sup>th</sup>.

In Munich’s new production of Wagner's “Meistersinger”, which had its premiere in May 2016, Kaufmann has sung the part of Walther von Stolzing for the first time on stage. In August 2016 Kaufmann made his South American tour debut with concerts and recitals in Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Lima and Santiago de Chile.

In January 2017 Kaufmann returned to the Paris Opéra with Claus Guth’s production of “Lohengrin”, in March he was the protagonist in Munich’s new

production of “Andrea Chenier”. In June he made his long awaited role debut as Otello at the ROH in London. “Kaufmann sings an Otello for the ages” was the headline of the NY Times’ review; a week after the premiere, the production was broadcast in cinemas all over the world. In August he returned to the Sydney Opera House for several performances of “Parsifal”. His first production in the season 2017/18 is the French version of Verdi's “Don Carlos” in Paris, staged by Krzysztof Warlikowski and conducted by Philippe Jordan. In November 2017 Kaufmann did his first recital tour in China with Lied recitals in Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Beijing and an opera concert in Shanghai.

After a revival of “Andrea Chenier” at the Bayerische Staatsoper in November/December 2017, Jonas Kaufmann performed opera concerts in Japan as well as recitals in Santa Monica and at Carnegie Hall in January 2018. Further highlights of the 2017/18 season included a tour of Hugo Wolf’s “Italienisches Liederbuch”, which brought Kaufmann, Diana Damrau and Helmut Deutsch to concert halls throughout Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Vienna, London, Paris, Budapest and Barcelona; “Andrea Chenier” in Barcelona (his opera debut at the Teatro Liceu) and Vienna; concertante performances of “Tristan”’s second act with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons in Boston and Carnegie Hall in New York - and “An Italian Night” in Berlin’s Waldbühne.

At the beginning of the 2018/19 season, Kaufmann gave a series of recitals in Moscow, Vienna, Paris and the Scala in Milano amongst others. Having presented his program “You mean the world to me” for the first time in New York, he made his return to the MET with Puccini’s “Fanciulla” in October. This was followed by a new production of Verdi’s “Otello” at the Bayerische Staatsoper, conducted by Kirill Petrenko. After the concert tours in January and February 2019 (Mahlers “Lied von der Erde” and Scenes from

French Operas), Kaufmann won great acclaim at the ROH again, this time in Verdi's "La Forza del Destino" with Anna Netrebko (Leonora), Ludovic Tezier (Carlos) and Antonio Pappano conducting. In June / July, Kaufmann recorded "Otello" with Pappano in Rome, in August he returned to the opera house in Sydney, singing three concert performances of "Andrea Chenier" conducted by Pinchas Steinberg.

In September he started the new season with four performances of "Otello" in Munich. At the Bayerische Staatsoper he will also make his debut as Paul in the new production of Korngold's "Die Tote Stadt" conducted by Kirill Petrenko (premiere on November 18). Further plans for the Season 2019/20 include a concert tour with his "Wien" project in January and a new production of "Fidelio" in London in March. In April he will sing the 3rd act of "Tristan" for the first time, in concert performances in Boston and at the Carnegie Hall in New York, followed by performances of "Die Walküre" in Paris.

Kaufmann's versatility has been documented on a number of CD's and DVD's in performances of such works as "Lohengrin", "Walküre", "Parsifal", "Königskinder", "Ariadne auf Naxos", "Don Carlo", "La Forza del Destino", "Aida", "Tosca", "Adriana Lecouvreur", "Werther" and "Carmen". His solo albums are bestsellers only a few weeks after being released. In 2011 he was presented the coveted "Opera News Award" in New York. Shortly afterwards Kaufmann was named a "Chevalier de l'Ordre de l'Art et des Lettres" by French culture minister Frédéric Mitterrand. Kaufmann has been selected several times as "Singer of the Year" by the classical music magazines "Opernwelt", "Diapason" and "Musical America" as well as by the juries of "Echo-Klassik" and the inaugural "International Opera Awards" (London 2013).

Kaufmann is also a familiar figure world-wide on the concert and recital platforms. He regards art song interpretation as “The Royal Class of Singing”. since this genre calls for considerably more finesse and differentiation than any other vocal discipline. His partnership with pianist Helmut Deutsch, with whom he worked as far back as his student days in Munich, has proven itself in countless concerts, including one on October 30 2011, on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. This was the first solo recital given at the Met since Luciano Pavarotti’s back in 1994.

*October 2019*