

PRESSQUOTES

Gweneth Ann Rand

SOPRANO

Messiaen Harawi / Oxford Lieder / 2019
Simon Lepper (pf)

"Rand's sumptuous voice, technically brilliant, verbally agile and expressive... The concert turned out to be a contender for the fast-approaching best-of-year list."
(The Guardian / Fiona Maddocks)

"Gweneth Ann Rand rose to the challenge of this virtuosic and eclectic cycle magnificently, the extrovert declamations, and wildly varied music sounding entirely natural and unself-conscious in her interpretation. She set a moody, vibrato-laden tone for the first song, but then marked off each subsequent movement with an idiomatic colour or register as appropriate..."
(Seen and Heard International / Curtis Rogers)

4.48 Psychosis / Opéra national du Rhin / 2019
Cond. Richard Baker / Dir. Ted Huffman

"Let us salute the tireless performance of the six singers on stage, permanently moving and whose interpretation of the score is impressive. The dramatic and theatrical commitment is combined with an undeniable musical intensity. The driving force is Gweneth Ann Rand; her expressive force and vocal dexterity are astounding."
(Classiquenews.com / Sabino Pena Arcia)

"Gweneth Ann Rand, in the principal role naturally holds the attention, all the more since she uses her full soprano to the greatest effect..."
(Forum Opera / Yannick Boussaert)

"Soprano Gweneth Ann Rand, who is on stage most, moves effortlessly through the vocal range. The mid-voice, despite the harshness of the text, is rich and are always well-placed."
(Olyrix / Céline Wadoux)

Mother / Hansel and Gretel / English National Opera at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre / 2019
Cond. Ben Glassberg / Dir. Timothy Sheader

"Mother, played by Gweneth Ann Rand, is another treat. Over the top in her delivery, she works hard to provide a lot of physical comedy."
(Broadway World / Charlie Wilks)

Tippett A Child of Our Time / Philharmonia Orchestra / Brighton Festival / 2019
Cond. Roderick Cox

"Soprano Gweneth Ann Rand gave an impressively passionate account, full of drama and heart"
(Latest Brighton / Andrew Kay)

24 Italian Songs and Arias / The Yard / 2019
Brian Lobel (pf)

"Gweneth-Ann Rands voice is powerful and delicate"
(The Spy in the Stalls / Tatjana Damjanovic)

4.48 Psychosis / PROTOTYPE Festival / 2019
Cond. William Cole / Dir. Ted Huffman

"Rand delivers a powerhouse performance as Gwen. Equal parts helpless and defiant, Rand's gut-wrenching portrayal of the struggle and agony of depression has a raw honesty at once captivating and painful to watch. While Rand has a warm, penetrating vocal timbre, she is not afraid to allow her voice to crack, rasp, and choke with emotion, giving her performance a welcome vulnerability."
(Parterre Box / Callum John Blackmore)

"...the wondrous English soprano Gweneth-Ann Rand..."
(The Boston Globe / Zöe Madonna)

"The English soprano Gweneth-Ann Rand, who has sung the lead role in all performances of "4.48" to date, was fearlessly impassioned as Gwen..."
(The New Yorker / Alex Ross)

"The six performers are splendid, singing with unfailing accuracy and enormous commitment.... Rand and Schauer stand out as an intense duo, playing respectively, the increasingly desperate patient to the distressingly implacable doctor"
(Musical America / Clive Paget)

"the luminous protagonist, Gwen (sung by Gweneth-Ann Rand). Numbed and anguished as she moves dully around the stage, sometimes restrained by the other women, she sings in a silvery soprano..."
(The Washington Post / Anne Midgette) *"Gweneth-Ann Rand is deeply disturbing as the central figure."*
(The Financial Times / John Rockwell)

"One hates to call this a tour de force for Ms. Rand, an extravaganza of lyricism and movement, of internal fury and external grotesquerie. The whole work is so absorbing that one has no chance to think, "Oh, that sure is a great performance." Yet it is a great performance..."
(ConcertoNet / Harry Rolnick)

"...a soprano (a clear-toned Gweneth-Ann Rand) being assigned the main role..."
(Bachtrack / Edward Sava-Segal)

"The performers were all superb. Gweneth-Ann Rand sang the lead in a remarkably rich range."
(Berkshire Fine Arts / Susan Hall)

Tosca / Toscatastrofhe! / Tête à Tête / 2018
Cond. Timothy Burke / Dir. Bill Bankes-Jones

"...the equally excellent Gweneth-Ann Rand..."
(LondonTheatre1.com / Alan Fitter)

4.48 Psychosis / The Royal Opera at the Lyric Hammersmith / 2018
Cond. Richard Baker / Dir. Ted Huffman

"...the utterly convincing Gweneth-Ann Rand"
(The Arts Desk / David Nice)

"...the superb Gweneth-Ann Rand"
(Plays to See / Owen Davies)

"I don't think one can praise the singing of the Gweneth-Ann Rand enough. She sang not only beautifully, but with considerable power and raw emotion. When she sang "I REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE LOOK AWAY FROM ME" you really believed in her complete isolation and her rejection. It was an utterly devastating moment."
(Opera Today / Marc Bridle)

"Rand is so engaging as she convincingly portrays a person who is literally tortured to death by despair."
(MusicOMH / Sam Smith)

"Gweneth-Ann Rand standing out as a considerable talent."
(The 730 review / Alastair McElhago)

"Gwen, played with magnificent hopelessness by Gweneth-Ann Rand"
(The Express / William Hartston)

"Gweneth-Ann Rand's performance as the protagonist is profoundly moving and heroic..."
(Planet Hugill)

"...the roles allotted to soprano Gweneth-Ann Rand and to mezzo Lucy Schauerfer could not have fallen into more gifted hands..."
(The Stage / George Hall)

"Gweneth-Ann Rand, who is unflinching as the drama's self-abusing protagonist..."
(The Times / Geoff Brown)

Messiaen *Harawi* / Howard Assembly Room / 2017 Simon Lepper (pf)

*"Gweneth Ann-Rand's large and flexible voice admirably meets Messiaen's requirement for a dramatic soprano. The singer's immense dynamic range channelled into her subtly hued colouring of the words held the audience in thrall from the first note to the final *Mon amour, mon souffle!*"*
(Ilkley Gazette / Jim Setton)

4.48 *Psychosis* / The Royal Opera at the Lyric Hammersmith / 2016 Cond. Richard Baker / Dir. Ted Huffman

"...an outstanding Gweneth-Ann Rand"
(The Independent / Steph Power)

"The cast proves excellent, with the woman being played primarily by Gweneth-Ann Rand..."
(MusicOMH / Sam Smith)

"...stand-out performances from soprano Gweneth Ann-Rand and mezzo-soprano Lucy Schauerfer"
(The Upcoming / Abi Jenkins)

"Rand is particularly impressive; her voice resonates throughout the auditorium, and I found her performance the most emotionally engaging throughout..."
(A Younger Theatre / Rob Ellis)

"Among the singers Rand and Schauerfer stood out, both for the richness of their distinctive tones, but also the emotional range they discovered in the very taxing vocal lines."
(Plays to See / Tim Hochstrasser)

Title role / Aida / Opera Holland Park / 2015
Cond. Manlio Benzi / Dir. Daniel Slater

"Best of all was Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, who made a touching and convincing figure of the emotionally conflicted Aida, declaiming 'Ritorna vincitor' with vivid force and bringing considerable refinement to the Nile Scene. Why don't we hear more of this accomplished soprano?"
(The Telegraph / Rupert Christiansen)

"Gweneth Ann Jeffers has a substantial, vibrant voice..., yet she was also able to spin a beautiful long line. The Nile scene was sung with real expressive finesse with some finely extended quiet high notes. Throughout there was this sense of line, combined with a vibrant, well filled feeling for Verdi's phrasing."
(Opera Today / Robert Hugill)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers gave a superb vocal performance, particularly in dramatic passages where she could sing everyone else off the stage"
(Mark Ronan Theatre Reviews)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers is an experienced Aida... her control of dynamics was an outstanding factor in her stirring 'Ritorna vincitor!' and saw her through a beautifully shaped 'O patria mia'"
(Opera / Peter Reed)

"Ms. Jeffers has a clarion soprano that cut above the combined forces of orchestra and chorus to exceptional effect."
(Opera Britannia / John E. de Wald)

"In the title role Jeffers was most impressive vocally, with fine-spun delicate lines in the intimate scenes and the ability to soar over the other singers and the orchestra when required."
(British Theatre / Tim Hochstrasser)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers is a vocally commanding Aida, rising with confidence to the huge challenges of the title role."
(The Stage / George Hall)

"In the title role Gweneth-Ann Jeffers came off best; plenty of colour in the voice allied to a secure technique led to many thrilling moments, and she rode the climaxes with plenty of tone to spare."
(MusicOMH / Keith McDonnell)

"There's some excellent singing, however, not least from Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, who incarnates Aida from start to finish."
(Evening Standard / Barry Millington)

"...standout performance(s) from Gweneth-Ann Jeffers as Aida..."
(Londonist / Sam Smith)

Under Milk Wood: an opera / Taliesin Arts Centre / 2014
Cond. Wyn Davies / Dir. Keith Turnbull

"Helen-Jane Howells and Gweneth-Ann Jeffers also made their own impact in a series of character roles."
(Seen & Heard International / Paul Corfield Godfrey)

"Elizabeth Donovan, Helen-Jane Howells, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, Paul Carey Jones, Karina Lucas, Richard Morris and Eamonn Mulhall are all excellent in getting the words across and capture a world of delight and regret, gossip and black humour."
(The Telegraph / John Allison)

"Nice comedic touch from Gweneth-Ann Jeffers in the role of Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard, Mrs Organ-Morgan etc."
(The Young Critics / Barbara Michaels)

"The strong cast of singers move between playing several parts and in the main this was achieved, thankfully through voice and gesture rather than heavy over acting. Sopranos Elizabeth Donovan, Helen-Jane Howells, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers and mezzo soprano Karina Lucas charm us with their myriad of roles"
(Wales Online)

"...her portrayal of Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard was spot-on."
(Opera / Rhian Evans)

Sieglinde / Die Walküre (Act I) / St. John's Smith Square / 2013
Pf. Peter Selwyn

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers... shining and wonderfully feminine sounding Sieglinde was a very sympathetic presence."
(Capriccio)

Santuzza / Cavalleria Rusticana / Opera Holland Park / 2013
Cond. Stuart Stratford / Dir. Stephen Barlow

"full-blooded performances from Gweneth-Ann Jeffers' fiery Santuzza and Sarah Pring's Mamma Lucia."
(The Times / Neil Fisher)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers once again proves her vocal authority with Santuzza"
(Evening Standard / Barry Millington)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers pours out rich tone as the betrayed Santuzza"
(The Stage / George Hall)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers had plenty of rich tone for Santuzza"
(Opera / Hugo Shirley)

"sang with considerable power and authority"
(Seen & Heard International / Robert Beattie)

"she has a big voice with a shimmering edge"
(MusicalCriticism / Michael Migliore)

Tigrana / Edgar / New Sussex Opera / 2012
Cond. Nicholas Jenkins

"Mary Plazas's tender Fidelia, and Gweneth-Ann Jeffers's seductive Tigrana were the stars."
(The Guardian / Fiona Maddocks)

"Mary Plazas and Gweneth Ann Jeffers are gloriously full-blooded as the angelic and diabolical female parties."
(The Independent / Rupert Christiansen)

**Mélodies Passagères: Songs of Samuel Barber (Quartz)
Gweneth-Ann Jeffers (sop), Stephen De Pledge (pf)**

"Jeffers catches each mood with poise and grace; solid accompaniments from de Pledge."
(BBC Music Magazine, 5 Stars)

"She is at her best in the witty and touching Hermit Songs... Jeffers gets the swing; her high note are impressive..."
(Gramophone Magazine / Peter Dickinson)

**Lunchtime Recital / St Magnus Festival / 2012
Pf. James Baillieu**

"She is made for Wagner, startlingly so in this cathedral's natural amplification, where she fully embraced the ravishing extremes of the emotionally exhaustive Wesendonck Lieder, not least in the melting stillness of Im Treibhaus. And what a knockout Ravel's Chansons Madécasses are. Jeffers conveyed all that is wild, sensuous and extravagant about them."
(The Scotsman / Kenneth Walton)

**Leonora / La forza del destino / Chelsea Opera Group / 2012
Cond. Robin Newton**

"In La forza del destino, Jeffers is a force of nature, expressing levels of Leonora's personality hinted at in the score... Jeffers smoulders, caressing the low tessitura, soaring to crescendi and extended high passages. Forceful voice, well applied technique. Jeffers is a born diva, but her powers come from within, fuelled by intelligence and understanding of how music shapes role... Dramatic sopranos like Gweneth-Ann Jeffers are rare — why don't we hear her more often in this country?"
(Opera Today / Anne Ozorio)

**Clotilde / Norma / Opera North / 2012
Cond. Oliver von Dohnányi / Dir. Christopher Alden**

"I would suspect that Gweneth-Ann Jeffers has the vocal chops to one day go on and sing Norma herself. It's a big voice, warm and attractive and used in her small scenes with security and plenty of colour."
(Opera Britannia / Antony Lias)

**River Woman / Heart of Darkness / Opera East / Linbury Studio Theatre / 2011
Cond. Oliver Gooch / Dir. Edward Dick**

"The only female voice, the lustrous soprano of Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, had the big vocal moment, advancing frontstage and wowing us with her big, smooth, even emission of wordless, mysteriously powerful song from the African forest."
(Opera / Andrew Porter)

**Title role / La Wally / Opera Holland Park / 2011
Cond. Peter Robinson / Dir. Martin Lloyd-Evans**

"The vocal highlight for me, however, was Gweneth-Ann Jeffers in the title role. Jeffers possesses a wonderfully rich, warm and mellow soprano, with enormous power right through her range"
(MusicOMH / Lottie Greenhow)

"Gweneth-Anne Jeffers incarnates the title role with tremendous bravado and vibrant Italianate tone."
(The Telegraph / Rupert Christiansen)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers captures the complex, vulnerable character of Wally and her powerful voice with its tone of burnished gold suits the Italianate score."
(Sunday Express / Claire Colvin)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers' singing is so sensationally rich, ample and detailed that she tingles the spine with her vocal conviction."
(Metro / Warwick Thompson)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers produced power and dramatic intensity in the title role"
(The Times / Richard Morrison)

"...in a taxing assignment, her plush, weighty soprano was firmly controlled and proved tireless."
(Opera News / George Hall)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers pumped out impressive, verismo-style singing as the tomboy."
(The Financial Times / Richard Fairman)

"In Gweneth-Ann Jeffers Opera Holland Park offers a vocal heroine of strength and purpose as well as lyricism"
(The Stage / George Hall)

Title role / Aida / Oldenburgisches Staatstheater / 2011
Cond. Roger Epple / Dir. Nina Gühlstorff

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers is an Aida with a restrained passion and beautifully fulfilled pianissimo"
(NWZ Online / Horst Hollmann)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers as Aida and Andrea Baker as Amneris dominated the evening... Jeffers was able to give characteristic contour with her powerful soprano, especially in the height register. In the Nile aria she also proved her ability to sing with beautiful pianissimo."
(Kreiszeitung / Wolfgang Denker)

Leonora / La forza del destino / Opera Holland Park / 2010
Cond. Stuart Stratford / Dir. Martin Duncan

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, a striking stage presence, sang Leonora's three magnificent arias with alluringly warm tone and a gleaming top register which easily rode over the ensembles."
(The Telegraph / Rupert Christiansen)

"As the tragic Leonora, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers offers a soprano of huge potential."
(The Guardian / George Hall)

"It's the maddest career trajectory for any of Verdi's heroines, and yet Jeffers invests it with meaty vocal passion and heart-rending pathos."
(Bloomberg/ Warwick Thompson)

"There's grit and shimmer in this ample voice, and she soars magnificently over the chorus."
(The Independent / Anna Picard)

**Messiaen *Poèmes pour Mi* / Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich / 2010
Cond. Jun Märkl**

"The singer from England has not only power and energetic attack, but also a wide range and impressive lyrical qualities."

(Neue Zürcher Zeitung / Thomas Schacher)

**Amelia / Un ballo in maschera / Theater Erfurt / 2010
Cond. Walter Gugerbauer / Dir. Johann Kresnik**

"How Gweneth-Ann Jeffers transforms these abysses of human emotion into sound is simply sensational."

(Opernnetz / Christoph Schulte)

**Title role / Aida / Oper Kiel / 2009
Cond. Georg Fritzsche / Dir. Uwe Schwarz**

"An extremely touching intensification of Aida from anxious disquiet through immense emotional fluctuations to inner peace portrayed by Gweneth-Ann Jeffers with a shimmering, always clear and illuminating soprano."

(KN-Online)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers's Aida is the highlight of the production... breath-taking"

(Kielerleben / Franziska Falkenberg)

**Title role / Aida / Theater Bremen / 2009
Cond. Markus Poschner / Dir. Hans-Joachim Frey**

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers provided a bright, full-color soprano for the Aida's title role, flawlessly guided through the stops and in the Nile aria in the third act, letting the vocal beauty breathe. Rarely has one heard this delicate song in such a tonal differentiation, a rise and fall of the sound, of such a technical mastery."

(Extrem News / Thorsten Schmitt)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers gave a passionate Aida with a darkly timbred, powerful soprano and convinced in the Nile "Aria with beautiful crescendos."

(NWZ Online / Wolfgang Denker)

**Margherita/ Elena / Mefistofele / Theater Erfurt / 2009
Cond. Walter Gugerbauer / Dir. Guy Montavon**

"The discovery of the evening was undoubtedly Gweneth-Ann Jeffers (Margherita/Elena), who provided the most beautiful and artistic moments in singing as well as acting..."

(Tamino Klassikforum)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers a great soprano..."

(Operapoint / Peter Sykora)

**Senta / Der fliegende Holländer / London Lyric Opera / 2008
Cond. Lionel Friend**

"In a remarkable portrayal of near- psychotic obsession, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers's gleaming soprano leapt all her vocal hurdles, ballad included, with lacerating force and deep emotional insight."

(The Times)

"Her first essay into the role, it had the seeds of a very interesting interpretation, as well as a blooming, powerful sound... If Jeffers gets a chance to develop her characterisation in a full staging, we can look forward to a well-rounded portrayal with considerable vocal heft."
(MusicOMH / Simon Thomas)

"The performance's unquestionable highlight was the British soprano, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, making her role début as Senta. Lyrical and muscular of tone, with an assured stage presence and innate sense of drama... This 'authentic' performance edition has the Ballad in its original A minor, a tone higher than the familiar key, and it fit Jeffers's athletic soprano like a glove."
(Opera Today / Ruth Elleson)

**Messiaen *Poèmes pour Mi* / Oxford Lieder Festival / 2008
Simon Lepper (pf)**

*"Gweneth Ann Jeffers has made something of a speciality of Messiaen's powerful, idiosyncratic *Poèmes pour mi*, the composer's setting of his own pungently devout religious verses. It doesn't take long to see that Jeffers suits the highly-strung and visionary emotionalism of this music perfectly."*
(MusicalCriticism / Hugo Shirley)

"This was a performance so good that it deserved high profile exposure in London, and perhaps soon, for Oxford Lieder has the knack of picking the best before bigger venues catch wind of what's happening."
(Seen & Heard international / Anne Ozorio)

**Title role / *La Gioconda* / Opera Holland Park / 2008
Cond. Peter Robinson / Dir. Martin Lloyd-Evans**

"She has a very distinctive voice, strong in the lower register and able to produce some really thrilling tone"
(Musical Pointers / Serena Fenwick)

"a portrayal that was both emotional and vocally accomplished... There were some wonderfully steely top notes, while her sense of line and text was impeccable"
(MusicalCriticism / Dominic McHugh)

"In the title role, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers smoulders, shudders and shimmers with a gleaming timbre and rock-solid technique."
(The Independent / Anna Picard)

**Messiaen *Harawi* / BBC Proms / Cadogan Hall / 2008
Simon Lepper (pf)**

"Jeffers gave a truly engaging performance of great theatricality, conveying in the most compelling way the work's gamut of emotions. Bursting with invigorating passionate outbursts in 'Planetary repetition', she appeared distraught and lifeless by the end of the bleak piano coda to 'Farewell'."
(Classicalsource / Graham Rogers)

"...this is not a cycle for the faint hearted. Full marks for ambition! And she pulls it off. It was spectacular... So, listen to Gweneth Ann Jeffers and Simon Lepper on the repeat broadcasts. They could be the definitive champions of this work in our time."
(Classical Iconoclast)

*"...the lunchtime Prom on 11 August at the Cadogan Hall, which featured soprano Gweneth-Ann Jeffers and Simon Lepper, piano, repeating the extraordinary performance of *Harawi*, given earlier in the year during the Southbank festival."*
(The Organ / AB-W)

Messiaen *Harawi* / Queen Elizabeth Hall / 2008
Simon Lepper (pf)

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers is perhaps the most experienced Messiaen singer of her generation, as this performance showed... Jeffer's brooding, animal-like intensity conveyed the profound power in the music so her notes seemed to grow effortlessly from deep within, quite a feat as the breath control and vocal dexterity needed in this piece is truly formidable."

(Seen & Heard International / Anne Ozorio)

Gutrune / *Götterdämmerung* / BBC Proms / Royal Albert Hall / 2007
Cond. Donald Runnicles

"Gweneth-Ann Jeffers made the most of the part of Gutrune, coming across well despite the lack of potential in the writing."

(MusicalCriticism / Dominic McHugh)

"was particularly moving in her third act monologue"

(Classicalsource / Timothy Ball)

Leonora / *La forza del destino* / Opera Köln / 2006
Cond. Enrico Delamboye / Dir. Christian Schuller

"Her tone, rich in vibrato as well as her expressive miming and gestures make the aria, a combination of conflict, conscience and the longing for forgiveness, authentic. With Jeffers there was always a feeling of witnessing a great unity between the sung word, throughout the whole tessitura, and a superb dramatic achievement."

(Klassik.com / Rebecca Vogels)

Carter *Of Rewaking* / City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / 2004
Cond. Martyn Brabbins

"Here the soloist Gweneth-Anne Jeffers, creamy-toned and secure in her handling of Carter's soaring, aspiring writing, while Brabbins, Cheltenham artistic director-in-waiting, deftly fitted the CBSO's counterpoints around her."

(The Guardian / Andrew Clements)

Schoenberg *Gurrelieder* / Melbourne Symphony Orchestra / 2004
Cond. Markus Stenz

"Soprano Gweneth-Ann Jeffers sang a sombre, doom-laden Tove with a generous amplitude of colour"

(theage.com.au / Clive O'Connell)