

# OPERA LEGENDS:

## ESTHER NELSON IN CONVERSATION WITH JANE EAGLEN



**JANE EAGLEN**  
SOPRANO

Jane Eaglen has one of the most formidable reputations in the opera world today. Enjoying unique success in the contrasting roles of Isolde (for the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Teatro Liceu Barcelona, Lyric Opera of Chicago and in Puerto Rico ); Norma (performed for the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Ravenna Festival with Maestro Muti, and the Bastille ); and Brunnhilde

(performed in Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Milan, New York, Oslo and the UK), she has garnered spectacular reviews worldwide. Other memorable operatic performances include Ariadne for Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera and in London; Senta (*Die fliegende Hollander*) for Seattle Opera and in concert with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra; Lady Macbeth in Vancouver; Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) for Seattle Opera; La Gioconda in Chicago and London; Tosca in Japan and London; Donna Anna in New York, Vienna, Los Angeles, Munich and Bologna; and many others.

Her equally impressive reputation on the concert platform includes performances of Strauss' Four Last Songs with Daniel Barenboim and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Strauss' final scene in *Salome* with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic, and Sir Richard Hickox and the London Symphony Orchestra; Wagner's *Immolation Scene* with both Bernard Haitink and Jeffrey Tate and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Zubin Mehta and the NY Philharmonic; Verdi's *Requiem* with Danielle Gatti and the Orchestra of St. Cecilia, Rome; Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Klaus Tennstedt; *Nabucco* with Riccardo Muti for the Ravenna Festival; *Gurrelieder* with Claudio Abbado for the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals; *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* with James Conlon in Cologne, and many others.

Jane Eaglen's numerous recordings include many solo albums for Sony Classical: arias by Wagner and Bellini, arias by Strauss and Mozart; Strauss' Four Last Songs and other song cycles, and Italian Opera Arias. Her recording of Wagner's *Tannhauser* with Barenboim for Teldec earned a Grammy for Best Complete Opera. She may also be heard in Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Chailly for Decca; in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with Abbado for Sony; as *Tosca* for Chandos; as *Norma* with Muti for EMI, and in the title role of Opera Rara's recently rereleased *Medea in Corinto*. In addition, Ms. Eaglen is featured on Sony's soundtrack for the film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

Ms. Eaglen was honored by Congress in the United States House of Representatives, and has been awarded honorary Doctor of Music from McGill University, Montreal and from Bishop Grossteste University College, Lincoln, UK. Ms. Eaglen was the recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the Licea Albanese-Puccini Foundation, and is an honorary member of the Northern California Wagner Society. She was awarded the Reginald Goodall Award from the Wagner Society of London. She is a regular Master Teacher and mentor the San Francisco Opera Merola Program and Cardiff International Academy of Voice and is now a voice and opera faculty member at the New England Conservatory in Boston and director of the Boston Wagner Institute at NEC.

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## ESTHER NELSON

BLO STANFORD CALDERWOOD GENERAL & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Under Esther Nelson's artistic and administrative leadership since 2008, Boston Lyric Opera has seen extraordinary growth in programming and operations, cementing its national reputation as an acclaimed producer of traditional and reimagined classic operas, and claiming its place among the nation's important incubators of new opera works. Just as importantly, the company under Ms. Nelson has seen nearly a decade of surplus budgets, grown its audiences in number and diversity, and implemented new programs that have brought critical and industry notice.

Before joining Boston Lyric Opera, Nelson enjoyed a career with several opera companies and was a successful management consultant for a variety of companies and organizations. She served from 1995-2002 as General Director and CEO of Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, New York, one of the country's largest and most prestigious opera festivals. During her tenure, the company experienced artistic growth and fiscal stability, including elimination of an accumulated deficit and development of a surplus. Nelson's leadership at Glimmerglass earned her a professional citation from the governor of New York. Previously Nelson was General Director and CEO of Nevada Opera in Reno, where she was responsible for the administrative and artistic direction of the company, and founded its successful state-wide touring program. Before that, she headed press, marketing, and development departments at the New Orleans Opera and eventually assumed a senior management role there. Nelson held a leading management position at Virginia Opera, during a crucial time when the company was on an international tour and underwent a state-wide expansion of its work. She served as chief executive of Triangle Opera Festival in Durham, NC, producing programs for Duke University as part of her work there.

Nelson's leadership roles in the national and regional arts community include serving as an evaluator for the New York State Council. She has been a consultant for the industry's national service group OPERA America. In Louisiana, Nelson served in an advisory capacity to the State Tourism Commission and created joint activities with major cultural organizations of New Orleans.

Nelson management consulting work encompassed a broad range of non-profit clients including: the New York Historical Association; the Fenimore Art Museum and the Farmers' Museum (both Cooperstown) where she also held the position of Acting President; the European International Music and Arts Foundation; the Cultural Diplomacy Institute (NY and Berlin); Albany Symphony Orchestra; The Douglas Moore Fund in New York City; Foothills Performing Arts Center in Oneonta, NY; the Portland (Maine) Opera; Opera Memphis; and The National Endowment for the Arts. She currently serves on the Board of Directors, and the Executive and Finance Committees, for Assurant Insurance Company of New York State. Nelson was on the boards of the Spring Brook Home for Adults and Children with Disabilities, and the international executive committee of the Friends of Amerika Haus in Berlin.

Esther, her husband Bernd Ulken – a retired Delta Airlines captain – and their two adult children live in the Boston area.