**Karolina Pilou, Mezzo-soprano**

Mezzo-soprano Karolina Pilou is quickly gaining a reputation for her powerful and charismatic portrayals of many of opera’s best-known leading roles including Amneris in AIDA, Mistress Quickly in FALSTAFF, Azucena in IL TROVATORE and Marquise de Berkenfield in LA FILLE DU REGIMENT.  Her repertoire also extends to most of the leading Wagnerian mezzo soprano roles including Brangäne in TRISTAN UND ISOLDE, Fricka in both DIE WALKURE and DAS RHEINGOLD, Waltraute and First Norn in GOTTERDAMERUNG and Erda in both DAS RHEINGOLD and SIEGFRIED.

No stranger to bel canto and baroque music, Ms. Pilou also excels in the heroic writings of Rossini and Handel due to her natural ability to move her voice quickly with accuracy. Suggested roles in the Rossini and Handel repertoire include Arsace in SEMIRAMIDE, Isabella in ITALIANA IN ALGERI, the title role in TANCREDI, Calbo in MAOMETTO II, Juno in SEMELE, Cornelia in GIULIO CESARE and Eduige in RODELINDA.

Suggested concert repertoire for Ms. Pilou includes the mezzo soprano solos in Bach’s ST. MATTHEW PASSION, ST. JOHN PASSION, CHRISTMAS ORATORIO and B MINOR MASS, Mahler’s DAS LIED VON DER ERDE, KINDERTOTENLIEDER, RUCKERT LIEDER and LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN as well as Handel’s MESSIAH, Verdi's REQUIEM and Mussorgsky’s ALEXANDER NEVSKY.

“Cream of the as-always rich crop of Loft Opera artists was Karolina Pilou, a statuesque mezzo with a massive, sinfully rich voice,” states *The Observer* critic James Jorden.

The *New York Times* writes, “As Federica, the mezzo-soprano Karolina Pilou demonstrated a lovely, plummy lower range in the Act I scene from Luisa Miller where Rodolfo rejects her for another woman. The two also joined forces for an engrossing rendition of Scene I, Act IV from Aida."

Pilou has sung the roles of Azucena in Verdi’s IL TROVATORE in London, Zita in Puccini’s GIANNI SCHICCHI in Tel Aviv and Older Woman in J. Dove’s FLIGHT with the British Youth Opera. She also sang the role of Mistress Quickly in Verdi’s FALSTAFF(Mannes Opera and Aspen Music Festival). Most recently she sang the role of Marquise de Berkenfield in LA FILLE DU REGIMENTwith the Martina Arroyo Foundation, a performance for which *The Observer* proclaimed her “Eminently ready for prime time … A booming contralto … a major personality who will go far.”

In September 2015 she was the featured mezzo-soprano soloist for Loft Opera’s *Verdi Concert* and in May 2016 she will be singing the leading contralto role of Morna in a revival of Pacini's opera MALVINA DI SCOZIA with the Vertical Player Repertory Theater in New York City.

She has won several Encouragement Prizes and Grant Awards in competitions such as the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, the Licia Abanese-Puccini Foundation Vocal Competition and the Career Bridges Foundation. Most recently she won the 2nd Prize at the New York Lyric Opera Competition in 2015. She has participated in Young Artist Programs such as DMMO, Dolora Zajick’s Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and most recently Martina Arroyo’s Prelude to Performance in New York.

As a soloist in symphonic and oratorio works she has performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Empire State Sinfonia), Bach’s WIENACHTS-ORATORIUM, Handel’s MESSIAH, Verdi’s REQUIEM(The Hellenic Music Foundation’s Annual Gala) and Villa-Lobos' MAGNIFICAT-ALLELUIA FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO (Little Orchestra Society of NY).

Parterre Box Critic John Yohalem wrote of Karolina Pilou’s recent performance at Loft Opera’s VERDI CONCERT singing Amneris’ Judgement scene duet in Act 4, Scene 1 of AIDA:

*“Pilou is a big woman with a voice of near-contralto grandeur, though high notes do not unsettle her. The instrument is deep but subtle, full of curious pastel colors that she wielded cleverly to imply her yearning for love and her rage when he speaks of another woman. She did not drown him out, either—mind you, Rodriguez might take some singing over—though one suspects she could blast the house down if she cared to. (Ortrud, anyone?)* *Their second selection was the confrontation that opens Act IV of Aida, and you know I was muttering—everyone was muttering—“Finish it. Just sing the whole scene. We’ll sing the priests.” But they concluded with Radames’ exit to be waterboarded. Pilou, in contrast, was entirely controlled, a true Amneris sound, wonderful serene dark phrases and a very slow build to indicate the furies beneath. This scene (with what follows) demonstrates why the opera should be named Amneris, and a great Amneris can easily steal the show. Pilou understood—all four singers understood—the personality of the characters they were playing, the text, the nuances, the way a melody should be shaped to the mercurial changes of active debate.”*