

SHEILA SMITH
Dramatic Soprano

PRESS ACCLAIM

As Tosca in **Tosca**:

For Opera Grand Rapids:

"Soprano Sheila Smith was the star of the show as the jealous, passionate, strong-willed Floria Tosca, in one of the greatest diva roles in opera—a diva playing a diva...Smith, a spinto with a rich tone, weighty when necessary, soaring as needed, proved to be as capable a singer as an actress...Her second-act aria, "Vissi d'arte," was poignant and heartfelt." (**Grand Rapids Press**)

For Central City Opera:

"Sheila Smith seemed to revel in the title character's tempestuous qualities...Her soprano was in glorious form...consistently lush, creamy and impeccably focused." (**Rocky Mountain News**)

"A statuesque, aristocratic Tosca...Smith has...a silvery voice and commands attention on stage...every inch the prima donna...at the end of the opera, she made a sweepingly athletic leap to her death." (**Denver Post**)

For Cleveland Opera:

"A stunning Tosca...The stately Smith convinced us that Tosca's charms would mesmerize tenors and baritones. She also sang the role with bountiful tonal sheen and emotional depth...Her Tosca was magnetic, vulnerable, vain and daring, an alluring depiction of a diva with a mission. The opera's most famous aria, "Vissi d'arte," gave Smith a plum opportunity to convey Tosca's humanity with touching directness. Whenever Smith was onstage, the performance exuded more than a little welcome heat." (**Cleveland Plain Dealer**)

"Forget about everything you need to do today. The taxes can wait, but this is the last performance of Cleveland Opera's production of **Tosca**. And it's one you owe it to yourself not to miss...Sheila Smith...is a riveting actress as well as a soprano of considerable power and stamina. Smith showed the character of Floria Tosca to be one madly jealous diva, but one who is commendably devoted to her man...Smith made it clear from the start that she was a woman not to be toyed with. In face, imperiousness was such a pivotal part of her acting that it seemed inevitable that she would kill the vile Baron Scarpia...Smith thrived on the vocal challenges in the part, singing such such fluid power." (**Cleveland Bureau Journal**)

"Sheila Smith shone in the title role. Her voice is powerful and ringing, but focused, and secure through all registers. Her big second-act aria was affecting and drew loud, appreciative applause." (**Canton Repository**)

"A strong portrayal of Tosca: Sheila Smith...She is a powerful soprano and is technically and musically near perfect. In addition, she brings strong acting abilities to the stage. When Smith sings, the audience believes her." (**West Side Leader**)

As Senta in **Der fliegende Holländer**:

For Knoxville Opera:

"Senta [was] beautifully sung by soprano Sheila Smith...[she] superbly captures the dramatic and spiritual essence of [**The Flying Dutchman**]. (**Knoxville News-Sentinel**)

For Indianapolis Opera:

"The tall and beautiful Sheila Smith sang the role of Senta, the woman who pledges to love the Dutchman...extraordinarily beautiful...superbly sung. (**Indiana Public Radio**)

"Smith projects a smooth, evenly centered, rather powerful voice that carried easily over the orchestra...most impressive in her portrayal of a sweet innocent caught up in myth and legend." (**Nuvo Newsweekly**)

"Smith has the sound and the fury for the part of Senta...Her singing of the second-act ballad was full of nuances, but...she really caught fire in the duet [with the Dutchman]. (**Indianapolis Star**)

For Cleveland Opera:

"A knockout cast. Sheila Smith...made a clear-voiced and passionate Senta." (**The Morning Journal**)

For Fort Worth Opera:

"Soprano Sheila Smith melted her silky but substantial tones nicely...The combination [with] Smith in Act II turned into one of the most thrilling moments on the operatic stage in Fort Worth in recent seasons." (**Fort Worth Star-Telegram**)

As Ariadne in **Ariadne auf Naxos**:

For Glimmerglass Opera:

"Vocally and visually, Sheila Smith made a beautiful Ariadne." (**Opera News**)

"Ariadne was sung by Sheila Smith, appropriately statuesque, broad and instinctively musical of phrase, an experienced soprano who clearly has the measure of the role." (**Opera**)

"Sheila Smith, who sang the Composer here 10 years ago, was an excellent Ariadne, taking powerful hold of the big lines." (**New York Times**)

"Sheila Smith's nuanced singing as Ariadne...adds musical and visual texture." (**Wall Street Journal**)

"Sheila Smith's bountiful Ariadne...would do the world's most distinguished world's opera festivals proud." (**New York Observer**)

"Soprano Sheila Smith, the Composer of the first **Ariadne**, now has the darker, richer timbre and power for the title role she sang so brilliantly on opening night. Her long soliloquy to an imagined Hermes ('Es gibt ein Reich') was beautifully done." (**Ithaca Journal**)

"Sheila Smith, as Ariadne, filled the hall with her emotionally-charged dramatic sound. Dressed in a spectacular costume that fell like liquid gold, she seemed a Greek statue come to life." (**Utica Observer-Dispatch**)

"Sheila Smith, who was the Composer ten years ago, sang the title character this time. Her voice is now a full dramatic soprano with an exciting edge; she made the most of her big aria, 'Es gibt ein Reich.'" (**Syracuse Herald-Journal**)

"Ariadne's part calls for little movement, but a great deal of dignity. Sheila Smith brought this quality and more to her singing, with a particularly magisterial rendition of 'Es gibt ein Reich'...Like a brilliant comet, this Ariadne is something out of this world." (**Ithaca Times**)

As Countess Almaviva in **Le Nozze di Figaro**:

For Indianapolis Opera:

"Sheila Smith, as the Countess Almaviva...could teach just about everybody a thing or two about singing. Regally tall and beautifully proportioned, Smith provided the production's most aristocratic singing ideally, in the Countess' two arias." (**Indianapolis News**)

"Smith had the warmth and dignity needed for the role. Her singing was smooth and radiant." (**Indianapolis Star**)

As Helen of Troy in **La belle Hélène**:

For Washington Opera:

"Sheila Smith makes a beautiful Helen, both physically and vocally. The voice is rich and pretty, and she has dignity as well as humor." (**Opera News**)

"It is a hit primarily because of Sheila Smith, who towers over this production in the title role--literally towers, for she is as statuesque physically as she is vocally. She has a deep, rich...tone, a skill at shaping and projecting words and a comic talent that almost seems a shameful extravagance added to her other gifts. Helen was immortalized by Christopher Marlowe as 'the face that launched a thousand ships.' As represented by the splendidly mobile and expressive features of Smith, she also launched a thousand laughs." (**Washington Post**)

"Sheila Smith, a statuesque beauty with a shimmering voice, had the sex appeal to launch armadas, and comedic talent of epic scope." (**Washington Times**)

For Canadian Opera:

"Helen herself, in the voluptuous person of Sheila Smith [sounds] every inch the clear-voiced American she is. How easy it would be to imagine a thousand ships launched to bring her back." (**Toronto Star**)

"Sheila Smith made a beautiful Helen, both physically and vocally." (**Opera Canada**)

"The star was unquestionably Sheila Smith in the title role, as beautiful as Offenbach's Helen thought she was." (**Toronto Globe and Mail**)

"Sheila Smith revelled in revealing the statuesque appeal of a Vegas showgirl while singing to top operatic standards." (**Toronto Sun**)

As the Composer in **Ariadne auf Naxos**

For Glimmerglass Opera:

"Sheila Smith made a handsome, impetuous composer. Her voice has a lovely flicker-vibrato. She can mold even the most difficult phrases musically, in part because she has easy access to piano and forte without having to shift gears from one to the other." (Will Crutchfield, **New York Times**)

"The lion's share of the singing in the act-long Prologue is given to the Composer--a young lad--but this...trouser role performed by Sheila Smith comes through splendidly here, singing with intensity, passion and control." (**Schenectady Gazette**)

"Ravishing...was Sheila Smith in the trouser role of the Composer...It was the kind of full-blown singing that one expects to hear only in major opera houses." (**Syracuse Post-Standard**)

As the Grand Duchess in **La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein**

For Glimmerglass Opera:

"Sheila Smith...performed with verve and specificity of characterization. [She] projected a kind of tight-lipped erotic hauteur." (**New York Times**)

"[Smith's] voice contains to gain resonance and breadth and...her singing was thrilling. Her high point...was the poignant delivery of her second-act aria." (**Syracuse Post-Standard**)

"Sheila Smith was a tall, slender and beautiful Duchess, who sang...with a fine legato line...a teasing rubato ebullience." (**Opera**)

"But if anyone made **Duchess** really sing, it was Sheila Smith in the title role...an inspired and vivacious performance. Her Act 2 declaration of love ("Dites-lui") was both poignant and witty, a striking contrast to her robust and provocative Act I rondo." (**Ithaca Journal**)

"This **Grand Duchess** turned out to be a solid triumph for...Sheila Smith in the title role. Her experience was evident in her every calculated move. She was also the vocal star of the of the production, and her dusky voice was often cleverly used to accent the humor of the situation." (**Schenectady Gazette**)

"Sheila Smith, who sang the title role, was gorgeous, with a voice to match. But it was the way this regal redhead could be alternatively royal or raunchy, stately or sexy, that gave a special focus to this madcap three-ring can-can." (**Syracuse Herald-Journal**)

For San Francisco Spring Opera:

"Sheila Smith is another victory for the San Francisco opera system. She is a tall beauty with a...voice that is silvery when not silky." (**San Francisco Chronicle**)

"Sheila Smith moves with lascivious elegance, leers with exotic hauteur and purrs with provocative charm as the titular heroine." (**San Francisco Times**)

"The beautiful Sheila Smith as the lubricous Duchess sings stylishly and delivers her spoken lines with aplomb." (**San Francisco Examiner**)

For Long Beach Opera:

"The evening did produce one bona fide surprise in Sheila Smith, who brought to the title role real flair, as well as a seductively smoky [voice] that turned arrestingly powerful." (**Los Angeles Herald Examiner**)

"Smith is a tall, stately, gorgeous and occasionally lascivious Grand Duchess. She impressed not only with the quality of her singing but with the style required of operetta vamps. In addition to the exquisite timing she brought to the delivery of her lines, Smith even wafted a beguiling pianissimo in 'Tell him please.'" (**Los Angeles Register**)

As Hanna in **The Merry Widow**:

For The Opera Company of North Carolina:

"Sheila Smith's rich, full soprano and statuesque beauty gave Hanna a sophisticated air, her singing of the famous 'Vilja' satisfyingly haunting. Her dialog was pleasingly natural...All the big moments were there." (Raleigh **News and Observer**)

For Baton Rouge Opera:

"Most impressive [was] Sheila Smith's Hanna Glawari...Smith possesses a big voice, used with uncommon finesse. Her "Vilja," a deceptively simple-sounding aria, was exquisite. Smith's control of dynamic shading was as impressive as her diction." (Baton Rouge **Sunday Advocate**)

For Lyric Theatre of Jacksonville:

"Superb talent, particularly in the front ranks. The production marked the first time...that an operatic stage was filled with such skills in Jacksonville...The ladies won the day: Soprano Sheila Smith as the Merry Widow Hanna was no less than outstanding." (**Florida Times-Union**)