



Shira Renee Thomas

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"... a top notch soprano ... beautiful sound, so lovely and musical ... the voice big and rich"

- Carol Vaness

Shira Renee Thomas will enjoy a very busy summer in 2010, making her New York debut as **Gilda** in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with Opera Company of the Highlands in July, then making her Northern California debut covering **Violetta** and performing **Annina** in Verdi's *La traviata* with Fremont Opera in August. In January 2011, she will revisit one of her favorite roles, portraying Juliet in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* with Townsend Opera Players in Modesto, CA, and in March 2011 she will perform **Violetta** in a concert version of *La traviata* with Center Stage Opera (CA).

In October 2010, Ms. Thomas will create the role of **Marie** in the world premiere of *Marie's Orchard* with Center Stage Opera (CA). *Marie's Orchard* is a brand new opera by composer Philip Westin and librettist Dylan F. Thomas inspired by Willa Cather's novel, *O Pioneers*. In April 2008, Ms. Thomas sang the role of Marie in segments from a previous version of the story, entitled *Heartland*, for an invited audience of ASCAP heavyweights, including Stephen Schwartz and Eric Whitacre, both of whom have remained involved in the revision of the opera. The role of Marie in the original score was tailored specifically for Ms. Thomas, and the role in the re-envisioned work, *Marie's Orchard*, has been written entirely for her.

Thomas has delighted audiences in many diverse leading roles including **Marguerite** in *Faust*, **Gilda** in *Rigoletto*, **Juliette** in *Roméo et Juliette*, **Violetta** in *La traviata*, **Lucia** in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, **Adina** in *L'elisir d'amore*, **Micaela** in *Carmen*, **Fiordiligi** in *Così fan tutte*, **Fanny** in Rossini's *La Cambiale di matrimonio*, **Adele** in *Die Fledermaus*, **Susanna** in *Le nozze di Figaro*, **Papagena** in *The Magic Flute*, and the dual characters **Isabelle/Madeline** in *The Face on the Barroom Floor* (Mollicone). Ms. Thomas also debuted the character of **Pieta** in the world premiere, staged version of Eric Whitacre's groundbreaking work, *Paradise Lost - Opera Electronica*.

Ms. Thomas portrayed the role of **Mrs. Hayes** in Floyd's *Susannah*, and covered soprano Nicole Cabell in the role of **Pamina** in *Die Zauberflöte* at Orange County, CA's Opera Pacific. As a resident artist of that company, Thomas was a featured soloist in numerous events, including "Opera in the Park" and "Opera Under the Stars". She also performed the role of **Pamina** in the Pacific Symphony's Family Musical Mornings presentation of *The Magic Flute*.

Thomas was a Festival Artist with the Utah Festival Opera Company in 2009, where she was a soloist on two different orchestra concerts, singing "Deh vieni non tardar" from *Le nozze di Figaro*, as well as "June is Busting Out All Over" from *Carousel*, both with the UFOC orchestra conducted by Maestro Barbara Day Turner. In addition, she covered the roles of **Micaela** in *Carmen* and **Yum-Yum** in *The Mikado*, and was chosen as a finalist in the *Concorso Lirico International Opera Competition*

Metropolitan Opera soprano Carol Vaness states that "(Thomas') rendition of the Poison Aria from *Romeo et Juliette* is incredibly moving, as she can sing it beautifully with incredible passion and commitment." As **Adina** in *L'elisir d'amore*, critics stated that Thomas "dominates the story, the stage, and all the music of the work". The Press Enterprise noted her "...perfect intonation, elegant control, and artistic phrasing", in a performance of arias and duets with the Riverside Philharmonic. As **Juliette**, Ms. Thomas was reviewed as being "...a wonder of dramatic and lyric intensity."

Among the numerous awards and scholarships earned by Ms. Thomas, she was awarded 1st prize in the prestigious *Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod Vocal Solo Competition* in North Wales. The Musical Eisteddfod has hosted such competitors as Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti in past years.