

SHIRLEY CLOSE

Soprano



Shirley Close, Associate Professor of Voice at Florida State University, has performed leading roles in the major opera houses of Europe, America and Asia for the past thirty years. Highlights of her operatic career include performances at the **Bavarian State Opera (Munich)**, **Cologne Opera**, **Bayreuth Festival**, the **State Opera of Berlin**, **Deutsche Oper in Berlin**, **Düsseldorf**, **Duisburg**, **Salzburg**, **National Theater of Mannheim**, **Opera du Rhin (Strasbourg)**, **Opera de Nantes**, **Opera de Nice**, **Festival d'Orange**, the opera companies of **Washington**, **Dallas**, **Atlanta**, **Glimmerglass**, **Mobile** and many others.

Ms. Close has spent the majority of her career as a mezzo-soprano, but on the advice of Sir Georg Solti made the transition to dramatic soprano. Soprano roles she has performed are *Kundry (Parsifal)*, *Ortrud (Lobengrin)*, *Tosca (Tosca)*, *Giulietta (Hoffmann's Erzählung)*, *Elizabeth and Venus (Tannhäuser)*, *Santuzza (Cavalleria Rusticana)*, and *Brünnhilde (Der Ring des Nibelungen)*. She covered *Isolde (Tristan und Isolde)* at the **Seattle Opera**, *Brünnhilde (Die Walküre)* at the **Chicago Lyric Opera**, *Kostelnicka (Jenufa)* at the **San Francisco Opera** and at the **Saito Kinen Festival** in Japan (Ozawa).

As a mezzo she was noted for her portrayals of *Amneris (Aida)*, *Aldagisa (Norma)*, *Azucena (Il Trovatore)*, *Fricka (Das Rheingold and Die Walküre)*, *Waltraute (Die Walküre and Götterdämmerung)*, *Gutrune* and all three *Norns (Die Götterdämmerung)* and *Fenena (Nabucco)* among many others.

She has sung under many renowned conductors including **Ricardo Muti**, **Daniel Barenboim**, **Wolfgang Sawallisch**, **James Conlon**, **Pinchas Steinberg**, **Michel Plasson**, **John Nelson**, **Dennis Russell Davies**, **Julius Rudel**, **Michael Gielen**, **Sir David Willcocks**, **Louis Langrée**, **Hans Graf**, **David Atherton**, **Egon zu Gutenberg**, **Marek Janowski** and others.

Alongside her stage performances she is often engaged as a concert performer in the major oratorio repertoire, having sung with the **Philadelphia Orchestra**, **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, **San Francisco Symphony**, **Bonn Philharmonic**, **Indianapolis Symphony**, **Buffalo Philharmonic**, **San Diego Symphony**, **Rheinland Pfalz Symphony**, **Oslo Philharmonic**, **Stuttgart Philharmonic**, **Munich Philharmonic**, **Salzburger Dom**, at the **Duomo in Perugia, Italy** and at the **Caramoor** and **Marlboro Festivals**. She has performed many times at **Carnegie Hall** and at the **Kennedy Center** in Washington D.C. In 1994 she premiered a work by Hans Werner Henze for the **Biennale** in Munich.

Ms. Close is also well-known as a recitalist of song literature from the 18th to the 21st centuries. In addition, she often combines recitals with master classes for voice students at colleges and universities, which have received an overwhelmingly positive response from the students and faculties alike.

Born in Oklahoma to parents who were both pastors, she began singing in church as a child. Her love of singing continued in her higher education. She earned a Master of Music degree in Voice from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Olivet Nazarene University. She has received many honors for her singing including the **Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation**. She was a winner of the **San Francisco Opera Regional Auditions**, the **Oratorio Society of New York Competition**, and the **NATS Singer of the Year (Southern California Chapter)**.

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Soprano

In 2003 she was honored as the recipient of the Maggie Sloan Crawford Award given by Olivet Nazarene University to women who have excelled professionally and who are role models to young women. Other recipients have been Sandra Day O'Connor and Elizabeth Dole.

Prior to teaching at Florida State University, she held the same position at Houghton College's Greatbatch School of Music in Houghton, NY. She has taught at the summer programs of AIMS (American Institute of Musical Studies) in Graz, Austria and "Il corso estivo" with the Scuola Italia in Urbania, Italy. In addition she returns annually as a guest pedagogue at the Hochschule für Musik (State Conservatory of Music) in Stuttgart, Germany and has given master classes at the Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, Germany, and the Konservatorium für Musik in Vienna, Austria.

In the summer of 2011, she appeared as soloist in the Mozart *Requiem* in Venice, Vicenza and Verona, Italy and the Verdi *Requiem* in Perugia, Asiago and Salò, Italy. Invited to participate on the voice faculty in the prestigious Ars Vocalis Festival in Zamora, Mexico, she also presented two recitals in Zamora and Morelia. In October, 2011 she will appear as soloist with the Tallahassee Symphony singing the "Liebestod" from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and the Beethoven *9th Symphony*.

Ms. Close maintains an active private voice studio in New York City where many of her students are on the rosters of the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera and other leading opera houses.

July 2011