

Sourouzian, Nora - Mezzo Soprano

Biography



The Armenian-Canadian mezzo-soprano, Nora Sourouzian, captivates audiences worldwide with her rich and expressive voice and captivating stage presence. After studying at McGill University in Montreal and a stint in the Young Artists Program of the *Internationaal Opera Centrum Nederland* in Amsterdam, Nora Sourouzian honed her skills at the Staatstheater Kassel. Her talent blossomed, opening doors to the **most prestigious opera houses**, including the Zurich Opera, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Opéra du Châtelet in Paris, the Opéra du Rhin in Strasbourg, the Teatro Sao Paolo in Lisbon, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Den Norske Opera in Oslo, the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff, the Komische Oper Berlin, the Leipzig Opera, the Cologne and Essen Opera, the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Teatro Massimo di Palermo, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, the Quebec and Montreal operas, Palm Beach Opera, Seattle Opera, Bellas Artes in Mexico, and the New National Theatre in Tokyo. Her talent has also been recognized by renowned **conductors such as** Paolo Carignani, Cyril Diedrich, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Jean-Claude Malgoire, Marc Minkowski, Leif Segerstam, Ed Spanjaard, and Franz Welser-Möst.

With nearly 50 roles in her repertoire, Nora Sourouzian demonstrates vocal agility and an ability to embody diverse characters. She excels in dramatic mezzo-soprano roles, such as **Azucena** in *Il trovatore*, **Amneris** in *Aida*, **Eboli** in *Don Carlo*, and **Carmen**, a role she has performed in over 20 productions. Nora Sourouzian does not limit herself to the great classics. She boldly explores **rarer works**, revealing the richness and diversity of her talent. Her repertoire includes Massenet operas such as *Thérèse*, *La Navarraise* (where she shone in the role of **Anita**) and *Don Quichotte* (in the role of **Dulcinée**) and finally *Werther* (in the role of **Charlotte**). She also ventures into **contemporary compositions**, such as Daugherty's *Jackie O.* (where she played **Callas**), Nuno Cortez Real's *Rapaz de Bronze* (in the role of **Florinda**), and Dvořák's *Dimitrij* (in the role of **Marfa**).

Her interest in discovery leads her to explore varied French opera universes, such as Théodore Dubois's *Aben Hamet* and Fauré's *Pénélope*, an opera in which she triumphed at the Wexford Festival. She returned there to perform **Herodias** in Mariotte's *Salomé*.

Finally, her interpretation of **Ježibaba** in *Rusalka* was critically acclaimed, demonstrating her ability to master both classical and contemporary roles.

She is particularly recognized for her interpretations of Mahler's works, such as the poignant *Lied von der Erde* and the profound *3rd Symphony*, as well as for the subtlety of her singing in the same composer's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Her interpretation of Schönberg's *Lied der Waldbaube*, excerpted from *Gurrelieder*, is also remarkable. She has also performed Haydn's cantata *Arianna a Naxos*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Beethoven's *9th Symphony*. She masterfully handles Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*, Wagner's *Wesendonck-Lieder*, as well as Frank Martin's cycle *Le Cornet* and his oratorio *Golgotha*.

In 2024-25, she opened the season with **Azucena** in *Il trovatore* at the Staatstheater Braunschweig, where she also appeared on stage as the **Prioress Madame de Croissy** in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. As part of the May 2025 International Festival, she will perform the mezzo-soprano part in Verdi's *Requiem* at the Hessisches Staatstheater in Wiesbaden under the direction of Leo McFall.

Nora Sourouzian, a passionate artist whose voice and talent continue to resonate on the world's opera stages.

Repertoire

Opera

Bellini, V.	I Capuleti e i Montecchi	<i>Romeo</i>
Berlioz, H.	La damnation de Faust	<i>Marguerite</i>
Bizet, C.	Carmen	<i>Carmen</i>
Britten, B.	A Midsummer Night's Dream	<i>Hermia*</i>
	Phaedra	<i>Phaedra</i>
	The rape of Lucretia	<i>Lucretia</i>
Daugherty, M.	Jackie O.	<i>Maria Callas</i>
Donizetti, G.	La favorita	<i>Leonora</i>
Faure, G.	Penelope	<i>Penelope</i>
Giordano, U.	Andrea Chenier	<i>Madelon</i>
Mascagni, R.	Cavalleria rusticana	<i>Santuzza</i>
Mariotte, A.	Salome	<i>Herodias</i>
		<i>Salome*</i>
Massenet, J.	Don Quichotte	<i>Dulcinee</i>
	Therese	<i>Therese</i>
	La Navarraise	<i>La Navarraise</i>
	Werther	<i>Charlotte</i>
Mozart, W.A.	Idomeneo	<i>Idamante</i>
Offenbach, J.	Les contes d'Hoffmann	<i>Niklausse*</i>
Ponchielli, A.	La Gioconda	<i>Laura</i>
Saint-Saens, C.	Samson et Dalila	<i>Dalila*</i>
Strauss, R.	Ariadne auf Naxos	<i>Composer</i>
Verdi, G.	Aida	<i>Amneris*</i>
	Don Carlo	<i>Eboli</i>
	Il trovatore	<i>Azucena</i>
Wagner, R.	Das Rheingold	<i>Fricka*</i>
		<i>Erda*</i>

* Studied parts

Symphonic/Oratorio

Beethoven, L.van	Symphony No.9
Berlioz, H.	La mort de Cleopatre
	Les nuits d'ete
Brahms, J.	Liebeslieder
Haydn, J.	Arianna a Naxos
Mahler, G.	Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen
	Symphony No. 3
Mozart, W.A.	Requiem
Pergolesi, G.B.	Stabat Mater
Rossini, G.	Petite messe Solonnelle
Verdi, G.	Requiem*
Wagner, R.	Wesendonck-Lieder

Reviews

Carmen, Minnesota

It does have an illuminating performance by Nora Sourouzian in the title role, and that's no small accomplishment... On the plus side was Sourouzian's Carmen, a subtle portrayal of an attractive, sexy, confident young woman who knows exactly who she is and what she wants. It's clear, too, that this particular Carmen doesn't love Don José and never did. She saw him as a challenge, someone to tease, but he became an irritant and then a threat. Sourouzian moved onstage with easy, tiger-like grace and brought to the vocal line a richly colored, evenly produced mezzo with sensitive inflections of the text.

- *Startribune, Michaels Anthonyght*

<https://m.startribune.com/minnesota-opera-s-carmen-is-disappointing/301458391/>

...and Nora Sourouzian did an excellent job as the eponymous Carmen: quick, sultry, and saucy (and if you speak French, enjoy her French-Canadian accent!).

- *Aisle Say Twin Cities, Lyz Biron*

<https://aislesaytwincities.wordpress.com/2015/04/25/carmen/>

Hérodiad, Mariotte's opera

Strangely, Mariotte's opera does not feature a soprano role; both Hérodiad and Salomé are cast as mezzos. Nora Sourouzian (who made such a strong impression in [last year's Massenet double bill](#) —) made much of Hérodiad's brief but characterful appearances. Similarly, the lunchtime recital that the French-Canadian mezzo-soprano offered with pianist Carmen Santoro show-cased Sourouzian's affinity with tragic, lyrical repertoire: particularly impressive was Berlioz's *La Mort de Cléopâtre* (the first time that Sourouzian had performed the work in public) in which the mezzo soprano demonstrated her dramatic nous (especially her ability to ground Berlioz's more histrionic tendencies) and velvety tone to splendid effect. As Mariotte's queen, Sourouzian was a vibrant, emotionally intense Hérodiad, and her vocal splendour was pleasingly complemented by Scott Wilde's authoritative, attractive Hérode.

- *Opera Today, Claire Saaymour*

http://www.operatoday.com/content/2014/11/wexford_festiva.php

Thérèse, La navarraise

Both shows are dominated by the scintillating performances of Nora Sourouzian in the title roles. The French-Canadian mezzo is, on this showing, a force of operatic nature, singing from the outset of Thérèse with an attack and focused intensity which made you fearful she could ever make it to the brief but harrowing mad scene at La Navarraise's conclusion.

Sourouzian turns out to be indefatigable. The voice itself is a vibrant, richly expressive instrument, thrilling when unleashed at moments of high emotional intensity (there are many in both operas), but retaining its poise and tonal plenitude in more introverted, quieter sections.

Sourouzian acts superbly too, graphically tracing the conflicted loyalties of her love-triangle entanglement in Thérèse, and unleashing the raw passions of a wounded tigress in the blasted militaristic setting of La Navarraise. So well differentiated is her approach to the two characters that you wonder initially, when the curtain rises after the interval, whether it can possibly be one and the same singer.

- *Irish Theatre Magazine, Terence Blain*

French-Canadian mezzo-soprano Nora Sourouzian is full and forward in tone in the roles of the two heroines, her eager, committed immediacy sounding at its best in La Navarraise. This is the more effective of the two pieces, as Massenet provided colourful sounds of war as he aimed to take his listeners by the scruff of the neck and not let go until his heroine, having killed for money but still lost her lover, reaches the extremity of madness.

- *The Irish Times, Michael Dervan*

French-Canadian Nora Sourouzian fits the bill admirably: she does a terrific double as the nobly self-sacrificing Thérèse and the obsessive Navarraise outsider, her singing lush and firm in tone and phrase, her acting committed and uninhibited. A frenzied final mad scene would have made Janis Joplin at Monterey look demure.
 – *The Telegraph*, Rupert Christiansen

... but in Nora Sourouzian, a Canadian mezzo, Wexford has found a great singing actress who was able to offer a terrifying set of performances. Rightly, they programed the later opera (Thérèse) to go first, because the end of La Navarraise is so shocking and hair raising in Ms. Sourouzian's hands that it sent chills up my spine as Anita succumbs to grief-induced madness. It was a great performance.

In fact, I could scarcely believe that the two heroines were portrayed by the same woman: Therese is beautiful young wife in a lovely empire gown and an elaborate be-ribboned coif based on a portrait of the Desmoulins by Jacques-Louis David. Anita is a poor, dirty, ill-kept peasant girl, clearly disturbed from her first appearance. Both operas rise to terrifying climaxes, but Navarraise's finale is overwhelming. Sourouzian's voice is very fine too, able to encompass the powerful emotion and also the few moments of quiet passion in Thérèse. It was tour-d-force.

– *Opera pronto journal*, Charles Jernigan

... Sourouzian's acting is the equal of her singing, and as both the parts of Therese and Anita mirror the descent into societal mayhem, she had to dig deepest to unfurl the sacrifice of one and the madness of the other. By my estimation, she was only off stage for ten minutes for the duration of both operas, which were also gifted by the presence of Philippe Do, Brian Mulligan and Damien Pass.

Taken as a whole, I don't think I have ever seen as complete a performance at Wexford as Sourouzian, certainly not since Biriucov, or even Notare, but to segue two contrasting roles in one evening was a remarkable and, if you were fortunate to be present on Saturday, frankly miraculous undertaking. In the last scene of Therese, Sourouzian appropriates her death while defiant to the violence that spurred it. She gave us beauty, rapture and madness.

That ability to morph from one to the other as seamless as water, from Revolutionary France to Civil War Spain, transfigured Therese in particular which looked – on paper – as exciting as chess.

– *Wexford Echo*, Tom Mooney

Both works prove ideal vehicles for the Canadian mezzo Nora Sourouzian, whose powerful voice always serves the drama. She was hardly recognisable as the same artist in roles of strikingly different temperament.

– *The Sunday Times*, Hugh Canning

At the heart of the score are the passionate exchanges of Thérèse and Arnaud, and French-Canadian mezzo soprano Nora Sourouzian and French tenor Philippe Do prove that they possess the stylishness, lyricism and sensitivity to convey the poetry of these scenes most beautifully...

... Thérèse's Act 2 aria, 'Jour de juin, jour d'été' was deliciously sweet and exquisitely phrased...

... The singing was, however, as committed as before the interval, with Do and Sourouzian once more a formidable duo, as Araquil and La Navarraise. Sourouzian's lustrous high register was in evidence, in her Act 1 lament that she will not be able to marry her beloved Araquil; and she had real presence in the fiery outbursts which result in her mad demise.

– *Opera Today*, Claire Seymour

Vocal laurels went emphatically to the mezzo-soprano of Nora Sourouzian (Thérèse), though the men who surrounded her were all of the good-to-high standard that one nowadays expects at Wexford...

The chief merit of the performance was, once again, Nora Sourouzian. Her stage persona moved so seamlessly from elegant French dame to crazed Spanish peasant that one was forced to check the programme to be sure it was the same singer.

– *Auditorium Mag*, Ben Pateman

Wesendonck, Les Nuits d'été

Sourouzian, who recreated the magic of midrichness nineteenth century Romantic lieder. Programming the exquisite Songs d' Eté from the pen of Hector Berlioz, as well as the great Wesendonk Lieder of Richard Wagner, Ms. Sourouzian handled potential excesses of the Berlioz compositions with exquisite phrasing and understatement, and was expertly accompanied by her pianist Frederico Nicoletta.

The Wesendonk Another Friday evening at 9, on 15 June, we were served the charming and world class mezzo soprano Nora, named for the poetess of the texts, wife of his host in Zurich, delivered the lavish and more chromatically complex sculpting of themes that Wagner would further develop in his beloved Tristan and Isolde. Ms. Sourouzian adeptly inferred the powerful inspiration that the composer received from this muse, in an effortlessly yet dramatically poised generosity. The effect of these songs was stunning and intoxicating.

- *Lynda DiMartino Wetherill*

Pénélope

N.S. was Pémélope of one's dream, with her external beauties of physique and voice (a lustrous, high mezzo) communicating an inner beauty and resolve.

- *Financial Times Andrew Clark*

Canadian soprano N.S. perfectly captured the emotional confusion of the title role...

- *Irish Independent, Pat O'Kelly*

The Canadian-Armenian mezzo NS makes an ideal, touching Pénélope : She moves wonderfully, her phrasing is acutely sensitive, while the voice transforms to a musical fieriness apt for pained outburst.

- *The Independent, Roderic Dunnett*

There were strong performances, despite all the extra-curricular goings-on, from the Canadian mezzo Nora Sourouzian as Penelope and American tenor Gerard Powers as Ulysses.

- *Opera news*

...and musically the performance was fine indeed, eloquently conducted by Jean-Luc Tingaud, with thrilling singing from Nora Sourouzian and Gerard Powers as the reunited husband and wife.

- *The Times*

Carmen

Nora Sourouzian is a first class, sensual Carmen.

- *Henning Hoholt, kulturkompasset*