

# COLIN LEE – TENOR

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Photo by: Robert Carpenter-Turner

## COLIN LEE – TENOR

South African-born, Colin Lee studied in London with Welsh tenor Jeffrey Talbot.

A *bel canto* specialist, his current and future roles include TONIO *La fille du Regiment* (ROH, Hamburg Staatsoper); ALMAVIVA *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Metropolitan Opera, ROH, Wiener Staatsoper, Opéra de Paris, Berlin Staatsoper, WNO, ENO); ELVINO *La sonnambula* (Vlaamse Opera); RAMIRO *La cenerentola* (WNO); the title role *Le Comte Ory* (Greek National Opera, Garsington Opera); LINDORO *L'italiana in Algeri* and ERNESTO *Don Pasquale* (Klagenfurt, Austria and Opera Holland Park); ERMANNO *L'equivoco stravagante*, GIACOMO V/UBERTO (Garsington Opera, Moscow Philharmonic) and RODRIGO *La donna del lago* (ROH, Opéra de Paris); *Nemorino* *L'elisir d'amore* (Grange Park), ARGIRIO *Tancredi* (Theater an der Wien) and NARCISO *Il turco in Italia* (ROH, Berlin Staatsoper).

Other roles include the title role in Rameau's *Plateé* (De Nederlandse Opera, Amsterdam) and ALFREDO, *La traviata* (Cape Town Opera); LÉOPOLD *La Juive* (Opéra de Paris); ALPHONSE *Zampa* (Opéra Comique); ARTURO *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Metropolitan Opera); NADIR *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Chelsea Opera Group); MARZIO *Mitridate, Ré di Ponto* (ROH, Salzburg Festival, Theater an der Wien) and, on the ENO Young Singer programme (2001-2003), FERRANDO *Così fan tutte*; IOPAS/HELENUS *Les Troyens*; FENTON *Falstaff*; REMENDADO *Carmen*.

Colin has made 11 recordings with Opera Rara, including most notably, ORESTE in Rossini's *Ermione* which won the prestigious Gramophone Award for Best Opera Recording 2011 and most recently the role of GERARDO in Opera Rara's recording of *Caterina Cornaro*. For Chandos he has also participated in recordings with John Tomlinson and Jennifer Larmore and a recording of Puccini Arias. In 2009 he sang the tenor soloist in Berlioz's *Te Deum* conducted by Sir Colin Davis, which was recorded live by *LSO Live*.

Colin enjoys a varied concert repertoire including Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Messa di Gloria*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Coronation Mass* and *Solemn Vespers*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Jephtha*, Britten's *St Nicolas*, Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Ramirez' *Missa Criola* and Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*.

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**COLIN LEE – TENOR  
PRESS REVIEWS**

**LA TRAVIATA, CAPE TOWN OPERA, 2011**

“Colin Lee was a deeply moving Alfredo, torn between immature emotions and loyalties. Lee has a beautiful tenor voice and paid close attention to details of articulation and phrasing.”

**The Cape Times , 13 October 2011**

“The Capetonian Colin Lee, who is based in London and who has sung *bel canto* roles from Covent Garden to the Metropolitan, impressed with his even tone and intuitive singing. He sings beautifully long legato phrases, as in the duet “Un di felice”, and, though the voice is light and lyric, he is not afraid of the dramatic sections, as in “De’ miei bollenti spiriti... Oh mio rimorso!”.

**Die Burger, 13 October 2011**

**RECITAL, CAPE TOWN, SEPTEMBER 2011**

“How then can one best describe the remarkable singing of this young man now at the height of his vocal powers? It is that kind of singing which goes straight to the heart imbued as it is with a quality which not only somehow seems to suspend time but also convinces the listener that, at that particular moment, there is no other way in which the music could possibly be sung. Perhaps also because he is brave enough to bare his deepest emotions to a hall full of strangers and, in allowing himself to be vulnerable, becomes a consummate communicator. There was so much that was memorable in the programme that to single out any song for special mention would require more space than the hapless reviewer is allowed. But for sheer beauty of line and musical control, especially in such seamless *legato* singing, I found his interpretation of Duparc’s fragile-setting of *Phidylé* achingly beautiful.”

**The Cape Times, 20 September 2011**

**DON PASQUALE, OPERA HOLLAND PARK, 2011**

“Only the magnificent Colin Lee tames the acoustic, but then again he is one of the leading *bel canto* tenors on the circuit so that’s not a surprise. Lee’s Act Two lament, ‘Cercherò lontana’, is the evening’s highlight by a street.”

**WhatsOnStage.com, 8 June 2011**

“Colin Lee is luxury casting for Ernesto. He is one of an extraordinary wealth of *tenori di grazia* who now populate the world’s opera stages with an assurance which would not have been thought possible even twenty years ago. He offers purity of tone but also drives the music onwards with an excitingly muscular vigour and his top notes are fearlessly produced. He had begun the second verse of his cabaletta softly but ended it with a

high D flat in full voice. Dramatically he was always on the ball, nicely balancing boyish playfulness with adult calculation."

[www.ClassicalSource.com](http://www.ClassicalSource.com), 7 June 2011

"Top vocal honours went to the Ernesto, the South African tenor Colin Lee who is now deservedly enjoying a high-profile international career. He has a personable stage presence, and a voice at the more substantially rounded end of the flexible bel canto tenor spectrum, with bright liquid tone which pings right to the back of the auditorium."

[Opera Today](#), 20 June 2011

"[Colin Lee's] singing of Ernesto was the musical highlight of the evening. He lavished plangent tone and superb breath control on "Povero Ernesto" and "Com'e gentil" and sang the cabaletta to the former with real *slancio* crowned with a stonking top D Flat. He also made more of the wimpy character than usual - all in all a distinguished performance."

[Opera Britannia](#), 10 June 2011

### **PLATÉE, DE NEDERLANDSE OPERA, 2011**

"Belcanto-tenor Colin Lee creeps convincingly into the skin of Platée. His exaggerated feminine acting works well and he excelled artistically in the very high lying role."

[www.operamagazine.nl](http://www.operamagazine.nl), 6 April 2011

"The singers were cheered, and foremost, the demanding travesty-role of Platée, brilliantly sung and played by the South African tenor Colin Lee"

[De Volkskrant](#), 6 April 2011

### **ERMIONE, OPERA RARA RECORDING, 2010**

"Colin Lee sings Orestes. Lee is often the back-up to the renowned Florez in the high tessitura of Rossini performances at the major addresses, perhaps getting to sing at the end of the run after opening night and the headlines. Well, that is changing pretty fast with his now being carded as Tonio for the whole of *La Fille du Régiment* at Covent Garden in 2012. He has already featured alongside Florez in the recent *La Donna del Lago* in Paris as well as singing the role of Arturo in the Metropolitan Opera's relay of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, now available on DVD. As well as having the necessary vocal flexibility, he fields more body of vocal tone than his Peruvian coequal. This enables him to invest significant characterisation in his interpretation without distortion of his singing or vocal line. This quality is particularly appropriate and appreciated in the act one duet with Ermione."

[Musical Criticism](#), November 2010

### **LA DONNA DEL LAGO, OPERA DE PARIS, GARNIER, 2010**

"As Elena's intended husband, Rodrigo, Colin Lee has the unenviable task of going up against Mr. Flórez but brings it off brilliantly. A high point comes in an

extended number in Act 2 — perhaps the opera's finest piece — when the two tenors repeatedly trade high C's."

**New York Times, June 2010**

"South African Colin Lee, vied with Florez for the pingiest tenorissimo notes. It was a rare chance for Lee — who is used to filling in for Florez on his nights off at Convent Garden — to pit his considerable talents against the star's. He, too, is a Rossini tenor to be reckoned with."

**Sunday Times, July 2010**

### **LA FILLE DU REGIMENT, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, 2010**

"The important issue for the audience at the particular performance was whether this revival would survive without Juan Diego Flórez the star tenor Tonio, who was succeeded by Colin Lee. Never having heard Flórez sing 'Ah! mes amis' with the infamous nine high Cs, I cannot make a direct comparison but I doubt that he could surpass Mr Lee. He received a prolonged ovation for this defining moment at the end of Act I, when he hit the top notes solidly without the slightest hint of strain. I was also grateful that he was not a typically French-sounding tenor with a slender, reedy tone: he has a much more resonant, full-bodied sound and he sang winningly — and most affectingly — throughout the evening while acting a suitably gauche, but heroic, Tonio."

**Musical Criticism, May 2010**

### **ERMIONE, OPERA RARA, ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, 2009**

"But it was Colin Lee as Oreste who stole the show with some brilliant pyrotechnics: I'm not sure that Juan Diego Florez could have fired them off better."

**Daily Telegraph, April 2009**

"Colin Lee's Oreste was the best, encompassing both force and sensitive singing up in the tenor's stratosphere."

**Financial Times, March 2009**

Visit <http://www.askonasholt.co.uk/artists/singers/tenor/colin-lee> for more reviews.

## COLIN LEE – TENOR – REPERTOIRE

<b>COMPOSER</b>	<b>WORK</b>	<b>ROLE</b>
Bellini	La sonnambula	Elvino
	I Puritani	Arturo *
	Adelson e Salvini	Salvini *
Berlioz	Les Troyens	Helenus
	Les Troyens	Iopas
	Te Deum	Tenor soloist
Bizet	Carmen	Remendado
	Les pêcheurs de perles	Nadir
Britten	The Turn of the Screw	Peter Quint
	St Nicolas	Nicolas
Donizetti	Don Pasquale	Ernesto
	Il diluvio universale	Cadmo
	Caterina Cornaro	Gerardo
	La fille du Regiment	Tonio
	L'elisir d'amore	Nemorino
	Les Martyrs	Polyeucte
	Lucia di Lammermoor	Edgardo
	Lucia di Lammermoor	Arturo
Halévy	La Juive	Leopold
Handel	Jephtha	Jephtha
	Messiah	Tenor soloist
Haydn	Harmoniemesse	Tenor soloist
Herold	Zampa	Alphonse
Lehár	Die lustige Witwe	de Rossillon
Mercadante	Emma d'Antiochia	Aladino
Mozart	Così fan tutte	Ferrando
	Die Zauberflöte	Tamino
	Mitridate, Ré di Ponto	Marzio
	Requiem	Tenor soloist
	Solemn Vespers	Tenor soloist
	Coronation Mass in C	Tenor soloist
Orff	Carmina Burana	Tenor soloist
Puccini	Gianni Schicchi	Rinuccio
	Messa di Gloria	Tenor soloist
Rameau	Plateé	Plateé
Rossini	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Almaviva
	Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra	Guglielmo
	Ermione	Oreste
	Il turco in Italia	Narciso
	L'equivoco stravagante	Ermanno
	L'italiana in Algeri	Lindoro
	La cenerentola	Don Ramiro
	La donna del lago	Uberto/Giacomo V
	La donna del lago	Rodrigo
	Le Comte Ory	Le Comte Ory
	Tancredi	Argirio
	Messa di Gloria	Tenor soloist
	Petite Messe Solennelle	Tenor soloist
	Stabat Mater	Tenor soloist
Strauss	Der Rosenkavalier	Italian Tenor
Vaughan Williams	Serenade to Music	Tenor
Verdi	Falstaff	Fenton
	La Traviata	Alfredo

\* - In preparation

## **DISCOGRAPHY**

<b>LABEL</b>	<b>WORK</b>	<b>COMPOSER</b>
Decca (DVD)	Mitridate, Re di Ponto	Mozart
Opera Rara	Caterina Cornaro	Donizetti
	Il diluvio universale	Donizetti
	Emma d'Antiochia	Mercadante
	Maria Stuart	Mercadante
	Zaira	Mercadante
	Margherita d'Anjou	Meyerbeer
	Entre nous	Offenbach
	Sofonisba	Paër
	La prigioniera di Edimburgo	Ricci
	Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra	Rossini
	Ermione	Rossini
LSO Live	Te Deum	Berlioz
Chandos	Great Operatic Arias – Tomlinson	
	Great Operatic Arias – Larmore	
	Great Operatic Arias – Puccini	