

## **TORA AUGESTAD, mezzo-soprano**

"Tora Augestad is far more than an academically trained singer. She lives and suffers through her songs, taking her vocal and theatrical capabilities to the max." Mitteldeutsche Zeitung

Tora Augestad's versatility inspires composers, theatre directors, and conductors. Through commissioning new works and through the collaboration with her various ensembles she continuously seeks new challenges and the exchange of artistic ideas. She knows how to be theatrically convincing and knows how to engage her vocal capabilities, which defy easy classification, in an appropriate and compelling manner.

Born in Bergen in 1979, the singer/actress Tora Augestad studied classical music as well as jazz singing in Oslo and Stockholm, devoting herself principally to repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries. While studying in Berlin and Munich she intensified her involvement with German music, before then graduating in cabaret singing at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo.

In the meantime, Tora Augestad has become a regular guest in the opera houses, concert halls, and theaters of her native Norway and in the rest of Europe, sharing the podium with musical partners such as the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Modern (the *Three Penny Opera* under the direction of HK Gruber in Athens, and Benedict Mason's *Chaplin Operas* in Dresden, Baden-Baden, Salzburg and Strasbourg), the Oslo Sinfonietta (*Pierrot Lunaire* at the Chamber Music Festival in Oslo, and Christian Eggen's opera *Eine Bitte* at the Venice Biennale), Ensemble Contrechamps (*No Thanks* by Evan Gardner), and the Klangforum Wien (Grisey's *Quatre Chants pour franchir le seuil*, conducted by Sylvain Cambreling in the Vienna Konzerthaus). In 2013 she interpreted Berio's *Folk Songs* in the Casa da Música in Porto, with the Remix Ensemble conducted by Peter Rundel.

Collaboration with the Swiss director Christoph Marthaler, which began in 2010 with the premiere of Beat Furrer's music theatre work *Wüstenbuch* (Klangforum Wien) has since then become a constant in Tora Augestad's artistic life. *Meine faire Dame*, Marthaler's reply to *My Fair Lady*, which after its success in Basel was taken up by Naples, Avignon, Edinburgh, and Paris, was followed by the Verdi homage *Lo Stimolatore Cardiaco*. Tora Augestad performed in the Zurich Opera production of *Sale* with music by Handel, conducted by Laurence Cummings, with Anne Sofie von Otter, Malin Hartelius, and the Orchestra la Scintilla Zurich. She presents Marthaler's staged lied recital *King Size*, comprising operetta, classic, jazz, cabaret, and pop, at the International Summer Festival Kampnagel in Hamburg, and in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Bozen, Meran, Prague, Moscow, and Nanterre. The production *Letzte Tage. Ein Vorabend* (Last Days: an Eve), a collage about the time preceding World War One, was premiered at the 2013 Wiener Festwochen and will be presented in September 2013 at the Festival d'Automne Paris and May 2014 at the KunstenFestivaldesArts in Brussels.

In 2004 Tora Augestad founded the ensemble Music for a While, made up of renowned musicians from the Norwegian jazz scene. After the release of their CD *Weill Variations* in 2007, Tora Augestad received the renowned Lotte Lenya Prize, and in 2009 the ensemble was invited to the Kurt Weill Festival in Dessau. Their 2012 CD *Graces that refrain*, with new arrangements and interpretations of classical arias, was widely praised by the press. For the debut CD of her trio BOA (clarinet, cello, and voice) fourteen Norwegian composers created works all having the length 3'30", that of a pop song. The album will be presented in August 2013 at the Chamber Music Festival in Oslo.

In the course of the 2013/14 season, Tora Augestad will appear with various formations at the Stavanger Chamber Music Festival, the Festival Niedersächsische Musiktage, and the Oslo Opera Festival. She will perform Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with members of the Oslo Philharmonic, conducted by Jukka-Pekka Saraste, and she will present two premieres: A work by Marcus Paus performed with the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra under Jonathan Stockhammer, and Beat Furrer's new song cycle *Canti della tenebra*, in a piano version with Trygve Brøske at the Ultima Festival Oslo and in an ensemble version with the Klangforum Wien at the musica viva series in Munich.

2013/2014 season