

FEATURES / INTERVIEWS

Verdi, Verdi Good

"Standing well over 6 feet tall, Stephen Powell has the physicality of a Mafia capo and the demeanor of your favorite hip uncle. He started out as a pianist and switched to singing when he was 25. Since then, he has sung and performed opera with major orchestras and companies throughout the world ... and, most recently, at Great American Ballpark during the seventh inning stretch. Coburn, a veteran of six Rigoletto productions, says Powell's Rigoletto is 'fantastic. It's perfect!'"

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— Anne Arenstein, **Cincinnati City Beat** [Related Link](#)

Family Affair

"These days Shirvis and Powell enjoy performing together with a song recital dubbed 'Hearts Afire,' though they're careful not to oversell themselves as a package. "I think we're at the point in our lives where people know us separately," Powell said." [Read More...](#)

— Andrew Adler, **Louisville Courier-Journal**

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REVIEWS / LIVE PERFORMANCE

CARMINA BURANA - Dallas Symphony Orchestra

"Baritone Stephen Powell brought a beautiful tone and fine character projection to the most substantial of the vocal roles,"

— Wayne Lee Gay, **Texas Classical Review**

Rigoletto - Portland Opera

"The majority of the opera's weight was borne confidently by the hunched back of baritone Stephen Powell in the title role...he soared, drawing out the wounded emotion and raw anger needed to give this iconic role its breadth and power."

— Robert Ham, **Portland Mercury**

Dello Joio's Joan Comes to Life and Death

"Of all the men who are determined to control Joan, the most powerful is the Bishop Pierre Cauchon, sung by baritone Stephen Powell, making his debut with Odyssey. He was absolutely splendid vocally and also with the intense, unyielding focus that Joan confess and yield to the demand that she dress like a woman. Whenever the two of them measure off, sparks fly."

— Steven Ledbetter, **Boston Musical Intelligencer**

Dello Joio Revealed

"When Stephen Powell, baritone, took the stage, robed in crimson as a prince of the Church, he almost stopped the show with his commanding evocation of Joan's nemesis, Pierre Cauchon. His vocal range and tone were totally up to the challenges that his role required. He created a palpable, believable and impactful stage presence. Bravo!"

— John Ehrlich, **Classical Scene**

Odyssey Opera unearths musical treasure with Dello Joio's, "The Trial at Rouen"

"As Pierre Cauchon, Stephen Powell sang with a strong, cavernous voice that had just the right touch of darkness to bring out the character's stubborn hostility. Yet he, like Joan, is also convinced of his own religious righteousness, and Act 2 prayer rang with conviction."

— Aaron Keebaugh, **Boston Classical Review**

La Traviata – San Diego Opera

"Powell quite literally stole the performance with his nuanced acting, fine singing and splendid top voice in 'Di Provenza il mar.'"

— Charlene Baldrige, **Opera News**

KC Symphony offers thought-provoking performance with monumental 'War Requiem'

"Stephen Powell and soprano Christine Brewer were expressive and powerful."

— Libby Hanssen, **Kansas City Star**

SDO's La Traviata

"We had Stephen Powell as Germont. Mr. Powell is a seasoned opera singer. This is the guy you want to hear. He's been doing it for over 20 years, and he is in the prime of his singing career. He was spectacular."

— Garrett Harris, **San Diego Reader**

Fine Traviata Completes SDO Season

"Stephen Powell sang the often-ungrateful part of Alfredo's custom-bound father, Germont. Powell's large, resonant voice enchanted the San Diego operagoers, and they greeted his aria "Di Provenza il mar, il suol" ("The sea, the soil of Provence") with momentous applause."

— Maria Nockin, **Opera Today**

La Traviata - Seattle Opera

"Stephen Powell was a magisterial, powerful Germont."

— Mark Mandel, **Opera News**

Dinner at Eight - Minnesota Opera

"Stephen Powell also excelled as Millicent's husband Oliver, financially and physically on the edge of collapse."

— Thomas May, **Musical America**

Messiah - Philadelphia Orchestra

"Stephen Powell's dark, portentous baritone can really move when the music gets fast."

— Matthew Westphal, **Philadelphia Inquirer**

The Makropulos Case - San Francisco Opera

"Baritone Stephen Powell's gruff and rather nasty Baron Jaroslav Prus gets what he wants.... His dark-sounding voice is well-suited to the role. His consternation at the finale seems genuine."

— Philip Campbell, **Bay Area Reporter**

'Makropulos Case' at S.F. Opera

"Baritone Stephen Powell was a robustly menacing Baron Jaroslav Prus ..."

— Georgia Rowe, **Mercury News**

Capturing a complicated Otello

"Stephen Powell's ... resonantly sung "Credo" made a strong impression ..."

— Michael Anthony, **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

Minnesota Orchestra's 'Otello' full of exceptional musicianship

"The dominant performer was Stephen Powell as the duplicitous Iago, every false assurance and malevolent reaction layered and shaped, every note powerful and precise."

— Rob Hubbard, **St. Paul Pioneer Press**

Carmina Burana - Tanglewood

"Baritone Stephen Powell had audience and performers alike laughing when he drunkenly wobbled to his feet to sing as the Abbot of Cockaigne."

— Keith Powers, **Patriot Lodger**

Macbeth - Michigan Opera Theatre

"A veteran of meatier, more playful roles such as Falstaff, baritone Stephen Powell contended here with the undifferentiated gloom of the role of Macbeth. Powell's undeniably powerful voice seethed with potential until his astonishing Act IV andante, when the gleaming beauty and sumptuous musicality of his rich baritone was finally given resplendent display."

— Jennifer Goltz, **Opera News**

Tosca – Minnesota Opera

“Stephen Powell’s vivid Scarpia would have been career-making if his career hadn’t already been made. More than an archetypal villain, this police chief (robed, perplexingly, as an ecclesiastical figure at the close of Act I) was a force of nature, predatory and indefatigable. At moments his singing seemed almost too beautiful: one wanted harder edges and more gravel in the voice. Yet this was a portrayal to savor, delicious in its evocation of unbridled evil.”

— Larry Fuchsberg, **Opera News**

Kansas City Symphony premieres revelatory composition that vividly evokes World War I

"Baritone Stephen Powell performed the vocal role in the third movement with poignant clarity and smooth control, the lines presented in straightforward and heartfelt fashion."

— Libby Hanssen, **Kansas City Star**

MOT debuts solid ‘Lady Macbeth’

"Baritone Stephen Powell shone brightly as Macbeth. His burnished, bronzed voice has great beauty and range, but Powell knows how to use it to underscore his character’s guilt and fear."

— George Bulanda, **Detroit News**

Sumptuous Tosca Muddles Imagery, Makes Out Musically

"Stephen Powell’s deliciously evil Scarpia was thrilling throughout, but especially in 'Va, Tosca.' His baritone voice has a dark, rich tint to the vibrato that is especially pleasant to listen to."

— Basil Considine, **Twin Cities Arts Reader**

Minnesota Opera's 'Tosca'

"Stephen Powell was a formidable Scarpia: a venomous smoothie, his singing resonant and powerfully inflected."

— Michael Anthony, **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

Three leads power Minnesota Opera's 'Tosca'

"Baritone Stephen Powell sinks his fangs into the role [Scarpia] with relish, his powerful, thickly textured voice combining with his creepy smiles and brutish physicality to produce a genuinely intimidating figure."

— Rob Hubbard, **Saint Paul Pioneer Press**

La Traviata – Opera Philadelphia

"Stephen Powell [was an] excellent Germont.... The masterful Powell, (deliberately) stiff in demeanor but dispensing firm legato lines and finely honed dynamics.... World-class."

— David Shengold, **Opera News**

This 'La traviata' makes news

"The best chemistry happens between Violetta and Alfredo's father, sung by baritone Stephen Powell. Powell was born to sing this role. He looks it, he acts it, and he brings a lovely humanity to it. The last part comes by way of a voice that is not only deeply resonant, but also full of overtones."

— Peter Dobrin, **Philadelphia Inquirer**

La Traviata - Opera Philadelphia

"Seasoned baritone Powell impresses with his rich, mature voice and commanding stage presence as the angry and scandalized patriarch who comes to respect the dignity of his son's lover, defends her against Alfredo's offensive insults, and ultimately feels responsibility, guilt, and repentance for his role in her unhappiness."

— Debra Miller, **Phindie.com**

Landmarks Orchestra plays all-Italian on the Esplanade

“The star of the evening was baritone Stephen Powell, who opened the concert with the Prologue to Leoncavallo’s ‘Pagliacci.’ Here and in Iago’s ‘Credo in un Dio crudel,’ from Verdi’s *Otello*, he commanded a full range of emotions, with a gloriously rich voice and exemplary diction. At the end of Iago’s aria, the line ‘E poi? La Morte e il Nulla’ sent chills down my spine. The last section before intermission was the finale from Act I of Puccini’s *Tosca*, in which Powell sang Scarpia to Barbara Shirvis’s Tosca.... Powell and Shirvis are husband and wife, and they matched each other in beauty of voice and passion. It made me wish I could hear them in the complete opera.”

— Jeffrey Gantz, **Boston Globe**

La Favorite – Caramoor Festival

“Vocally, the evening was dominated by Stephen Powell as Alphonse — the richest and most fully drawn character, who is a clear model for Ernani’s regal Carlo. Powell exuded authority while using his fine sense of line and genuinely beautiful baritone to dispense Donizettian elegance, including a trill, true pitch and nuanced dynamics.”

— David Shengold, **Opera News**

CARMINA BURANA – Cleveland Orchestra and Chorus

“The baritone Stephen Powell sang with force, an assured tone and lots of character, inhabiting his solos as if he were on the opera stage. He brought sulfurous anger to his first solo in the Tavern section and a bilious pomposity, complete with staggering and a well-timed hiccup, to the song of the Abbot of Cockaigne.”

— David Fleshler, **Miami Herald**

SWEENEY TODD - Virginia Opera

“In the title role, Stephen Powell’s commanding work started with his intensely focused look, which suggested a single glance could have turned Sweeney’s enemies into stone, had there not been a more elaborate plan in mind. The baritone’s dark, solid voice and wonderfully animated phrase-sculpting were matched to an affecting portrayal of the tormented soul.”

— Tim Smith, **Opera News**

Atlanta Symphony returns to loud ovation

“Baritone Stephen Powell’s stentorian invocation to sing was bold and on target.”

— Mark Gresham, **Arts Atlanta**

Kraemer opens MOB season with well-tempered Mozart

"The vocal end was especially well-served Monday with a finely balanced quartet ... [which included] baritone Stephen Powell.”

— Lawrence A. Johnson, **Chicago Classical Review**

Virginia Opera's gloomy, surprisingly moving 'Sweeney Todd'

“As Benjamin Barker, aka Sweeney Todd, baritone Stephen Powell was superb as Sondheim’s hulking, brooding, working-class anti-hero. Throughout most of the evening his troubled face was a mask of anguish, revealing the kind of intense, personal suffering that only death can end. His deep, commanding baritone focused the action whenever he appeared on stage and his diction was nearly flawless—a superb, memorable performance.”

— Terry Ponick, **Communities Digital News**

'Sweeney Todd' at Virginia Opera Company

“Stephen Powell is a brooding, powerful Sweeney, who manages to maintain the Barber’s bitter stoicism while being expressive and engaging.... Both Mr. Powell and Ms. Pancella [Mrs. Lovett] avoid the trap of caricature, instead singing their parts with a grounded humanity that belies their unthinkable acts, as in the Act One ending ‘A Little Priest.’”

— Michael Poandl, **DC Metro**

Va. Opera's 'Sweeney Todd' rides on operatic voices, despite miking

“The baritone who played the title role [is] Stephen Powell. Much is written about opera singers and acting, and whether they can or can’t act, and whether, if they can do it, they can really sing: Powell is one of the rare birds who truly, and excellently, does both. His voice is powerful and dark; his spoken delivery was less stilted than I’ve heard from some Broadway actors in the role. And I’ve never seen Todd done better.”

— Anne Midgette, **Washington Post**

SWEENEY TODD - Virginia Opera

“Stephen Powell, who debuted locally as Falstaff earlier, is in fine voice as the ominous barber who comes back after 15 years to seek revenge for the supposed death of his wife and abduction of his [daughter]. He looks the part, and he captures the soul-searching qualities.”

— Mal Vincent, **Virginian-Pilot**

Opera Was in Superb Form at the Caramoor Festival Last Weekend

"[Powell's] voice is large yet lyrical, just right for the warmly romantic moments when the tragic jester allows himself to feel tender affection for his daughter. Yet Mr. Powell had plenty of power in reserve for the dramatic moments, even the fierce denunciation of the courtiers in the second act. Even then, his singing was utterly musical, with every grace note precisely on the mark, but never studied or fussy."

— James Jorden, **New York Observer**

play your hunch

"Well, one note out of Stephen Powell's (Rigoletto) mouth, and you quickly understood why Crutchfield scheduled this performance. Powell was absolutely amazing—this is the Rigoletto voice we all hear in our heads as the 'ideal' Rigoletto, but never actually encounter in live performance. Powell's baritone was rich, booming, powerful from top to bottom. He had no problems with the extreme demands of the role—he could interpolate all the traditional high notes (at the end of 'Pari siamo,' 'Si vendetta,' and the final 'Maledziona') but his lower register had a rich, organ-like resonance.

"He could make his voice do anything—he could turn it into a nasty snarl when he was at court, or he could sound tender and heartbroken. He could even trill. He was wonderfully expressive, and really gave us a completely towering, three dimensional portrayal. Bravo to Stephen Powell for proving that yes, there are still baritones who can really sing Rigoletto."

— **Parterre Box** [Related Link](#)

Will Crutchfield Conducts 'Rigoletto' at Caramoor

“The title role of Verdi’s ‘Rigoletto’ is one of the great Jekyll and Hyde operatic characters: a man of manipulative sneer in public and tender paternal love in private. His dual personalities were aptly illuminated at Caramoor on Saturday evening in a powerful performance by the baritone Stephen Powell.... Mr. Powell imbued his interpretation with a bel canto aesthetic, singing with beautiful legato, smooth and mellifluous timbre and a rich dynamic palette. His range of vocal colorings and shadings rendered potent the conflicting personality elements of snarky jester and tender father, especially vital in a semi-staged performance that had limited physical movement.”

— Vivien Schweitzer, **New York Times**

Minnesota Chorale helps close Minnesota Orchestra's shortened season

“Of the soloists, baritone Stephen Powell had the most to do and delivered the most sonorous and nuanced performance.”

— William Randall Beard, **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

Minnesota Orchestra offers a big, big farewell to short season

“Helping on that account was baritone Stephen Powell, who used his ample operatic experience to deliver each splendidly sung solo as if it were coming from the mouth of a different vividly drawn character.”

— Rob Hubbard, **St. Paul Pioneer Press**

Review: 'La Traviata' from Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra

“Alfredo’s father [is] sung with rich conviction by Stephen Powell ... as he pleads with his son to return home.”

— Matthew J. Palm, **Orlando Sentinel**

Orlando Phil takes you to 1920s Paris with a new La Traviata

“Stephen Powell plays the role [Germont] with an imposing baritone, completing this dynamic trio of leads.”

— Esteban Meneses, **Orlando Weekly**

Suspenseful Last Note for a Tribute to Britten

“The baritone Stephen Powell brought a robust voice, crisp diction and sober directness to his singing of the Owen poems.”

— Anthony Tommasini, **New York Times**

Atlanta Symphony and Chorus shine a light darkly on Britten's "War Requiem"

“The baritone Stephen Powell sang with robust, crackling tone and brought excellent narrative instinct to the text. A clear and floating top register served him well, but it was his imposing and ominous sonority that made him a force in this performance. His powerful singing of [poet Wilfred] Owen’s description of an artillery piece gave the brass and chorus room to spit fire in the ‘Dies irae.’”

— Eric C. Simpson, **New York Classical Review**

California Dreaming

“Remember City Opera’s 2003 ‘pregnant Lucia’ staging, in which only Stephen Powell’s Enrico did the music full justice? Happened again here, due to his combination of oakish resonance, flexibility, and fine diction.”

— David Shengold, **Gay City News**

Lucia di Lammermoor - Los Angeles Opera

“Stephen Powell, as the brother, was a believable villain with an excellent baritone voice.”

— Juliet Schoen, **Malibu Times**

A Dream Lucia Gives LA Opera a Magical Success

“From the onset, baritone Stephen Powell as Enrico showed strength in voice and stature. An ultimate and secure professional, he sang ‘Cruda, funesta smania’ with distinction and was a commanding presence throughout.”

— Carol Jean Delmar, **Opera Theater Ink**

L.A. Opera's 'Lucia di Lammermoor' sweeps away resistance

“Opposing him [Edgardo], dynamic for dynamic and confrontation with confrontation, was Pennsylvania baritone Stephen Powell as a powerhouse Enrico, excellently even in range, and actually sensitive to the havoc he was causing his sister because of the desperate political need to save the Lammermoor line as well as, not so incidentally, his own position.”

— Chris Pasles, **Los Angeles Times**

A Haunting and Magnificent Lucia di Lammermoor at LA Opera

“With his silky baritone, Stephen Powell portrayed the vengeful Enrico with the imperiousness demanded of the role. As Lucia’s brother, a man willing to sacrifice his sister for personal gain, Enrico is one of opera’s most villainous characters. Yet with his vocal shadings and his depth of tone, Powell manages to make Enrico’s inhumanity almost comprehensible.”

— Jane Rosenberg, **Seen and Heard International**

San Diego Opera's 'Pagliacci' Stands On Its Own

“In his first ever appearance in the role of Tonio, [Stephen Powell] captured the audience’s attention with his vocal beauty and brilliance from the opening note of the difficult Prologue - a tour-de-force for any baritone - to his final, ‘La Commedia è finita!’ His highly nuanced rendering of the tormented hunchback vividly presented the dark, conflicted character’s desires for love and revenge.”

— Erica Miner, **Broadway World**

“Stephen Powell sounded terrific as Tonio. His rich, resonant baritone voice filled the theater. The malevolent nature of his character was never in doubt.”

— James Chute, **San Diego Union-Times**

Top five performing arts events of 2013

"The Virginia Opera has had its financial troubles this year but that didn't stop the struggling company from mounting a superb production of Verdi's last opera. Led by the blustery Stephen Powell in the role of the philandering knight, the production was mirthful and musically excellent.”

— David Nicholson, **Daily Press**

Virginia Opera's 'Falstaff' has everything necessary for great opera buffa

“It may be that, at least for opera buffa, all you need to put on a great show is a first-rate lead.... The Virginia Opera’s new production of *Falstaff*, Verdi’s last opera, has ... Stephen Powell, with his big, expressive and agile baritone voice, as a rollicking but dissolute Sir John Falstaff.”

— Joan Reinthaler, **Washington Post**

Virginia Opera production of Verdi's 'Falstaff' is great fun

“Baritone Stephen Powell had an interesting take on Sir John Falstaff as he morphed his character from a snooty, dismissive actor into the very person of Sir John himself, demonstrating his genuinely sophisticated acting chops. Vocally, Mr. Powell has a dominant, authoritative instrument but capably works falsetto and humorous tics into his routine as well. He is quite simply a marvelous, fully realized Falstaff, which is, after all, what this opera needs: a vain buffoon who’s bigger, fatter, and more outrageous than life. With a Falstaff like Mr. Powell, everything else in the production pretty much falls into place.”

— Terry Ponick, **Washington Times**

Opera review: 'Falstaff'

“Falstaff’ requires performers as adept at acting as they are at singing. That’s where Lawless’ production succeeds, beginning with the wonderful introspection that baritone Stephen Powell brings to the title character. His Falstaff is just as foolish as Shakespeare’s King Lear, but this is foolishness raised to a majestic level.”

— Roy Proctor, **Richmond Times-Dispatch**

“Stephen Powell [was] dynamite.... Powell [as Rodrigue], a genuine lighter-Verdi baritone in command of superb line and infinite dynamic shadings, provided the evening’s best vocalism, his death scene a triumph.”

— David Shengold, **Opera News**

Lyric Opera Baltimore/Rigoletto

“Stephen Powell ... filled out melodic lines warmly. And he made every syllable matter, shaping arias and duets with palpable intensity.”

— Tim Smith, **Opera News**

Lyric Opera of Baltimore presents a worthwhile 'Rigoletto'

“This Baltimore production offered many excellent qualities, beginning with the powerful and emotionally intense performance of baritone Stephen Powell in the title role. Verdi’s masterful characterization of Rigoletto makes the viewer both dislike and sympathize with the spiteful court jester, and Powell captured both sides of this complex role.”

— Charles T. Downey, **Washington Post**

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Lyric Opera offers sterling cast in 'Rigoletto'

“In the title role of the hunchbacked court jester who loses his moral compass and his daughter, Stephen Powell was a commanding presence. ... There was consistent expressive force in the baritone’s vocalism and a communicative intensity that made the deeply flawed character affecting.”

— Tim Smith, **Baltimore Sun**

'Rigoletto' at The Lyric Opera

“Powell is a versatile emotionally expressive baritone that plays an exceptional Rigoletto. His physical approach to the character’s deformity allows the audience to easily empathize with him, even sympathize with him, longing for his life to be better. Powell’s ability to quick change from venting bile and harsh anger in ‘Cortigiani! Vil razza dannata!’ to a humbled and desperate man pleading for mercy in ‘Miei signore... perdono, pietate...’ is astonishing. His vocal prowess brings forth a storm of emotions that rivals the storm brewing in Act III and his character’s overall stage presence is beyond impressive. A stunning performance given; the title character receiving all the justice due of such an iconic and richly complex creation.”

— Amanda Gunther, **DC Metro Theater Arts**

Cleveland Orchestra: Bach and Orff with Walters and Feddeck

“The agile baritone Stephen Powell ran through a vast repertory of tone from masculine-stentorian to velvety falsetto and floating sotto voce and acted out the boozy Abbott of Cockaigne with staggerings and hiccups.”

— Daniel Hathaway, **Cleveland Classical**

'Carmina Burana' gets new lease in performance by Cleveland Orchestra, Chorus and guests (review)

"Stephen Powell proved the complete musical package. Not only did the baritone provoke laughter as the drunken, noise-emitting Abbot of Cockaigne. Between several arias, he also demonstrated a strikingly broad vocal range, from a resonant low register to a truly beautiful falsetto."

— Zachary Lewis, **Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Spectacular 'Rigoletto' ends Sommerfest

"In the demanding title role, baritone Stephen Powell was nothing short of phenomenal; it's hard to imagine a more complex, more integrated portrayal. Powell's is a voice of stunning potency and immediacy, and he used it brilliantly to capture the successive waves of rage and tenderness that engulf his character (a hunchbacked, acid-tongued court jester who is also a fatally overprotective father). He appeared to hold nothing back, yet had power in reserve for his final, anguished cries."

— Larry Fuchsberg, **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

Classical music review 'Rigoletto' a celebration by the river

"In the title role, baritone Stephen Powell painted a compelling portrait of the embittered court jester whose daughter is his sole source of joy. Both musically and dramatically, Powell navigated difficult transitions fluidly, quickly transforming from jaded and venomous to gently paternal or desperate and heartbroken."

— Rob Hubbard, **St. Paul Pioneer Press**

'Carmina Burana' rousing start to May Festival

"Baritone Stephen Powell's contributions were both refined and humorous. He was a warm-toned storyteller in 'Omnia Sol temperat' and his later 'Dies, nox et omnia,' which were beautifully shaded. His entertaining characterization of the Abbot made the audience laugh out loud."

— Janelle Gelfand, **Cincinnati.com**

Music of the Baroque is steady with Bach Mass

"Baritone Stephen Powell was unostentatiously manly throughout."

— Alan G. Artner, **Chicago Tribune**

Robertson, SLSO in a Bach B-minor Mass with a split personality

"Baritone Stephen Powell essayed his two very different arias with beauty, skill and understanding."

— Sarah Bryan Miller, **St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

Tenors on the march

"The strongest singer was the baritone, Stephen Powell, as Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's unsympathetic father, who disapproves of his son's affair with Violetta. Mr Powell's stirring rendition of 'Di Provenza il mar' proved the highlight of the afternoon."

— **The Economist**

"Stephen Powell was powerful and intelligent as the archdeacon lusting after the gypsy girl."

— Leslie Kandell, **Musical America**

From a Forgotten Composer, A Familiar Romantic Story

"The rich-voiced baritone Stephen Powell sang with power and authority as the Archdeacon."

— Vivien Schweitzer, **New York Times**

Man lebt ja nur ein einzig mal: Schmidt's Notre Dame

"Stephen Powell excelled in the central role of the archdeacon. His German was beautiful, and his phrasing expressive. Powell has a strong, sonorous baritone, and as in the *Traviata* I saw him in last month, he proved capable of bringing psychological depth to an unsympathetic character."

— **Opera Obsession** [Related Link](#)

"Baritone Stephen Powell sang with nuance and a gruff but appealing sound as Germont and received an enthusiastic ovation."

— Ronni Reich, **New Jersey Star-Ledger**

"Germont, Alfredo's father, may be the most middle-class figure in Verdi, a baritone without revenge, blighted love or a visible daughter to fuel his outbursts. Still, the long, intricate duet in which he must persuade Violetta to renounce his son's love, even as, step by step, he learns to appreciate her character and her tragedy, is the emotional center of the opera.

Stephen Powell, a City Opera stalwart since 1995, sang and performed this part with mature flavor and evident ease, phrasing beautifully and filling the theatre with seamless sound. Verdi's operas are difficult to bring off without great baritones such as this one, one would like to hear what Powell could do with more intense parts such as Boccanegra and Renato."

— John Yohalem, **Musical America**

"A few bright spots relieved the gloom, notably stalwart NYCO baritone Stephen Powell as Alfredo's stern father. He won the afternoon's biggest ovation for his stylish performance of the aria 'Di Provenza.'"

— James Jorden, **New York Post**

"The biggest ovations of the afternoon went to the baritone Stephen Powell as Alfredo's disapproving father, Giorgio Germont. They were deserved. Mr. Powell brought a strong, dark and textured voice to the role and gave an elegant account of the great aria 'Di Provenza il mar,' in which he tries to persuade Alfredo to give up his reckless affair with Violetta and return to the family home."

— Anthony Tommasini, **New York Times**

'Traviata' opens City Opera's short season

"Also excellent was baritone Stephen Powell as Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont. His rich, mellow tone gave his medium-size voice the warmth associated with that rare breed, the true Verdi baritone. He drew the day's biggest ovation for his impassioned performance of the famous aria 'Di Provenza il mar.'"

— Mike Silverman, **Associated Press**



"Stephen Powell has matured into a grave, seriously heart-breaking Rigoletto with a voice of granite weight and power."

— Charles H. Parsons, **Opera News**

Review: Pittsburgh Opera's 'La Traviata'

"Baritone Stephen Powell's excellent singing served a well-honed dramatic presentation of Giorgio's gradual recognition that Violetta deserves a degree of respect he never expected."

— Mark Kanny, **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review** [Related Link](#)

Anna Samuil is first-rate Violetta in 'La Traviata' at the Benedum

"As the elder Germont, Stephen Powell was every bit the match for the heroine. His lyrical baritone is young-toned for an old man role, but he shaped the lines with sensitivity and delivered the words with expressive inflection. His Act 2 duet with Violetta -- the heart of this opera -- was haunting and emotionally compelling."

— Robert Croan, **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** [Related Link](#)

Review: Carmina Burana

"Stephen Powell has such a fluid baritone; he very inventively incorporated tenor and bass parts of his characterizations of various parts with ease and skill. The audience loved his staggering (physically and vocally) as the drunk Abbott."

— Lewis Whittington, **ConcertoNet.com** [Related Link](#)

Atlanta Symphony review: A new fanfare and brilliant springtime rarities from Rachmaninoff and Britten

"Sergei Rachmaninoff's 'Spring,' a 15-minute cantata for baritone, chorus and orchestra, premiered in 1902 in Moscow.... Drawn from Nikolai Nekrasov's poem 'The Green Noise' - a folk expression for the return of springtime - the cantata is riveting as storytelling and meltingly lovely as music. Snowed in for the winter in a peasant hut in Russia, a husband recounts his wife's confession of infidelity and his plan to murder her in revenge. Baritone Stephen Powell, with a flowing delivery, chestnut-brown timbre and excellent Russian diction, sang with operatic intensity, as if it were Verdi."

— Pierre Ruhe, **Arts Critic Atlanta** [Related Link](#)

"Impeccable intonation, magnificent dynamic shading, near-perfect ensemble and, above all, crystal clear diction drove the forces onwards and upwards, ever inspired by the imposing presence of American baritone Stephen Powell (left), who delivered his words with magisterial complacency, revelling in menace yet maintaining a dramatically statuesque poise, a creeping right hand the only visual concession to that terrifying moment when the dismembered hand appears to scrawl its graffiti of doom on the wall. His every single syllable cut through the texture like a blade, and while I have to confess that his voice is new to me, I have no hesitation in placing Powell up among the very best I have ever heard in the role."

— Marc Rochester, **Singapore Straits Times**

Worlds collide gorgeously, in song

"The complex, wrenching scene between Violetta and Germont ... is the heart of 'Traviata' and one of the finest things in opera. Elizabeth Futral and Stephen Powell play it magnificently, alive to every flicker of feeling: indignation, fear, shame, sympathy, grief, resignation.... Powell's sonorous baritone vibrates with sincerity, but he wisely avoids making Germont overly sympathetic."

— Larry Fuchsberg, **Minneapolis Star-Tribune** [Related Link](#)

Minnesota Opera basks in the rapturous passion of Verdi's *La traviata*

"*La traviata* offers a trio of astonishing performances.... And rounding out the three, Powell's sumptuous baritone establishes resolve, but without sacrificing the underlying sympathy of his character."

— Brad Richason, **Minnesota Examiner** [Related Link](#)

Minnesota Opera production of '*La Traviata*' keeps it real

"As the father who asks the dying heroine to sacrifice her dreams of love for his family's sake, Powell uses his versatile voice and strong acting skills to create a fascinating blend of resolve, compassion and guilt."

— Rob Hubbard, **Pioneer Press** [Related Link](#)

Watts, CSO deliver elegant Beethoven

"Powell, who will sing the title role in Cincinnati Opera's '*Rigoletto*' this summer, put his warmly expressive baritone to work in the '*Libera me*.'"

— Janelle Gelfand, **Cincinnati Enquirer** [Related Link](#)

Review

"Soloist Stephen Powell's mellow baritone fit both the soothing Hostias and the urgent *Libera me*, where Fauré allows the Last Judgment to intrude, if just momentarily."

— Mary Ellyn Hutton, **ConcertoNet.com** [Related Link](#)



Cyrano: SF Opera

"Stephen Powell voiced De Guiche with authority."

— Georgia Rowe, **Opera News**

SF Symphony review: Stephen Powell rocks 'Messiah'

"Powell brought a full complement of vocal gifts to his assignment: a weighty but agile sound, splendid diction, expressive ardor and technical precision in even the most challenging passagework. This was a performance of rare vitality and beauty."

[Read More...](#)

— Joshua Kosman, **San Francisco Chronicle** [Related Link](#)

A night at the opera, unstuffed and radiant

"Powell filled the hall with his free, open baritone, taking stage with impressive swagger in the toreador aria from 'Carmen.' It seemed the audience held its breath during his hushed, heartfelt floating of the hymn to the evening star from 'Tannhäuser.'" [Read More...](#)

— Roy C. Dicks, **News & Observer (NC)** [Related Link](#)

The Grapes of Wrath Collegiate Chorale & American Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall

Powell was in fine form all night as a thoroughly credible Uncle John, holding his own with the choral floodtide in the stirring "Little Dead Moses."

— David Shengold, **Opera News**

A 'Carmina Burana' for the ages

"The soloists were excellent. Powell, who sang Miller in the May Festival's 'Luisa Miller,' was richly communicative in his solos such as 'In Taberna' (In the Tavern). But he stole the show in the role of the drunken abbot, as he stumbled and hiccupped through the humorous words. It may be hard to ever hear this performed 'straight' again."

— Janelle Gelfand, **Cincinnati Enquirer** [Related Link](#)



FALSTAFF - Pittsburgh Opera

"Stephen Powell (Ford) played the cuckold well, with a booming voice."

— Andrew Druckenbrod, **Opera News**

Baritone delivers a superb 'Falstaff'

“Powell was spectacular as Ford.”

— Andrew Druckenbrod, **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** [Related Link](#)

“There can be few better Germonts around than Stephen Powell, who contributed fine, generous tone and splendid legato.... It would be rude – yet so easy! – to list less qualified Germonts the Met has employed while ignoring Powell for the last decade.”

— David Shengold, **Gay City News**

Baltimore Symphony closes summer season with Beethoven's Ninth

"Baritone Stephen Powell phrased his opening lines with rich tone and welcome nuance."

— Tim Smith, **Baltimore Sun** [Related Link](#)



La Traviata, New Orleans Opera, 4/17/09

"It was not until Act II that the audience was treated to the real vocal star of the evening – baritone Stephen Powell, making his highly welcome New Orleans Opera debut as Germont. Powell's rendition of 'Di Provenza' was a model of how this aria should be sung. As an actor he fully conveyed the dignity and nobility of this character; his voice was unfailingly warm and evenly produced."

— George Dansker, **Opera News**

La Traviata Reborn

"And singing a most convincing Germont, with a voice and bearing that make you wonder why the Met only casts him in secondary roles, is baritone Stephen Powell."

— Jason Victor Serinus, **San Francisco Classical Voice** [Related Link](#)

Das Klagende Lied, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Philadelphia Singers Chorale

"Baritone Stephen Powell, a mainstay of Philadelphia-area concert life, offered superb legato and handsome, resonant tone at all dynamic levels."
— David Shengold, **Opera News**

Rarely shown opera enthralls May Festival

"American baritone Stephen Powell, as Luisa's father, Miller, conveyed the grief and pain of a father whose heart is broken with warmth and richness of tone. His duet with Luisa, pledging to wander the earth in poverty, was one of the highlights."

— Janelle Gelfand, **Cincinnati Enquirer** [Related Link](#)

Bass Stephen Powell kept up the dramatics, swaying and hiccupping his way through an abbot's drinking song. But Powell also sang beautifully, yearning at the high end of his range in a lonely man's lament -- "the chattering of maidens makes me weep."

— **New Jersey Star-Ledger** [Related Link](#)

washingtonpost.com

Affirming the Power of Brahms's 'Requiem'

"Stephen Powell commanded a burnished baritone that was emotionally captivating, lyrical and dramatic without crossing over into operatic territory."

— Grace Jean, **Washington Post** [Related Link](#)

Falstaff, New York City Opera, 3/19/08

"The evening's best performance -- beautiful tone, persuasive phrasing, clearheaded dramatic acumen -- came from Stephen Powell; there can't be many better Fords around." [Read More...](#)

— David Shengold, **Opera News** [Related Link](#)

IN REVIEW: The Pearl Fishers, Kentucky Opera, 2/2/07

"Just as Zurga was 'King of the Pearl Fishers,' so baritone Stephen Powell was 'King of the Kentucky Opera Stage.' Vocally commanding, always sturdy and rock-solid, a column of bronze sound, Powell made Zurga into a sympathetic hero. As Leila, cause of all the romantic dust-up between tenor and baritone, Barbara Shirvis (Powell's wife offstage) was equally commanding in a strong-willed and brave portrait -- a superb complement to Powell's Zurga. The Leila-Zurga confrontation in Act III was dramatically thrilling." [Read More...](#)

— Charles H. Parsons, **Opera News**

"Baritone Stephen Powell was a splendid Camoëns, crisp and authoritative, his Act III recitative and aria charged with urgency and his Act V barcarolle a model of supple phrasing." [DOM SÉBASTIEN - Opera Orchestra of New York]

— F.Paul Driscoll, **Opera News**

"Stephen Powell's splendid baritone and style-attuned artistry enriched the marvelous part of the poet/warrior Camoëns-long lines, tapered dynamics, and the breath control to end the evening on a thrilling long-held final note." [DOM SÉBASTIEN - Opera Orchestra of New York]

— David Shengold, **Opera**

"Stephen Powell ... embraces the ennui-stricken Onegin with a striking blend of austerity and vulnerability. Powell's baritone is ideal for the role: a voice of velvet capable of caressing phrases or exploding in furious frustration. His Act I aria ... was a model of expressive elegance. When Powell collapsed in despair at the final curtain, you could feel Onegin's torment." [EUGENE ONEGIN - Cleveland Opera]

— **Cleveland Plain Dealer**

"The cast was headed by Stephen Powell. Powell, a perfect actor for such a role, with its equal demands for heroism and sentiment, is City Opera's finest lyric baritone, and could easily hold his own at the Met." [IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA - New York City Opera]

— **Opera News**

"... Stephen Powell [is] brilliant in the title role.... Powell plays Sweeney with reserves of power, stressing the man's despair but also those pockets of hope that keep his heart ticking and render his spirit capable of flight. The baritone sings Sondheim's lyrical passages with utmost beauty and urgency, especially Sweeney's 'Epiphany,' which rings out boldly and venomously." [SWEENEY TODD - Cleveland Opera]

— **Cleveland Plain Dealer**

"The baritone Stephen Powell (in the title role) offered a vocally assured and deeply affecting performance." [THE DEATH OF KLINGHOFFER - Brooklyn Academy of Music]

— **New York Times**

OTHER PRESS

	<p>Stephen Powell and Scott Ramsay to perform 'Sweeney Todd' with Michigan Opera Theatre <i>November 14, 2019</i></p>
	<p>Stephen Powell and Scott Ramsay announced in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2019-20 Season <i>February 28, 2019</i></p>
	<p>Stephen Powell to preview Portland Opera's 2018 season as Rigoletto <i>April 10, 2018</i></p>
	<p>Stephen Powell to be featured twice in San Diego Opera's 2018-19 Season <i>March 13, 2018</i></p>
	<p>Stephen Powell and Vale Rideout announced in North Carolina Symphony Orchestra's 2018-19 season <i>March 2, 2018</i></p>
	<p>Kara Shay Thomson and Stephen Powell included in Washington Classical Review's "Top Ten Performances of 2017" <i>January 9, 2018</i></p>
	<p>Heather Buck and Stephen Powell named one of Boston Classical Review's "Top Ten Performances of 2017" <i>January 9, 2018</i></p>



Bellemer, Powell, and Gordon in New Opera "Purchase of Manhattan" *November 19, 2014*



Britten's "War Requiem" Broadcast Live on WQXR/ NPR
April 29, 2014



Szabo and Powell on Red River Radio with Music of the Baroque

March 26, 2013



Stephen Powell to be Featured in "Peer Gynt" Broadcast
January 18, 2013



Shirvis, Smith, Hines & Powell in Aspen 'Madama Butterfly'
August 1, 2007



Shirvis and Powell Present Duo Recitals

February 15, 2006