

Nicole Cabell

Soprano

"... A faultlessly gleaming soprano, a technique with no loopholes, and bags of confidence. It should do no harm that she is also tall, slim and glamorous ... whatever this soprano chooses to sing, her voice makes wonderful music with it"

Richard Fairman, Financial Times

Nicole Cabell, the 2005 Winner of the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff and Decca recording artist, is one of the most sought-after lyric sopranos of today. Her solo debut album, "Soprano" was named "Editor's Choice" by Gramophone and has received an incredible amount of critical acclaim and several prestigious awards: the 2007 Georg Solti Orphée d'Or from the French Académie du Disque Lyrique and an Echo Klassik Award in Germany.

Nicole Cabell's current season includes some exciting role debuts: first as Violetta in *La Traviata* with Michigan Opera Theatre, then as Medora in *Il Corsaro* with Washington Concert Opera. She will reprise the role of her triumphant San Francisco Opera debut: Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. In concert, Ms. Cabell will make her Paris debut in Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*, will appear several times in Spain, first with the Orquesta de Galicia in a *Barber/Mahler* program, then on tour with the RPO and Charles Dutoit in Poulenc's *Gloria*. In London, she will be heard with the RPO in the same Poulenc piece as well as with the BBC Orchestra in Elgar's *The Apostles* with Sir Andrew Davis. Further concert appearances include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Boston Symphony and Bernard Haitink at Tanglewood, the Dallas Symphony and Jaap van Zweden in Vail, CO and the Baltimore Symphony and Marin Alsop, a *Barber/Brahms* program in Nashville with GianCarlo Guerrero and an evening of *French Opera Arias and Duets* with Stephen Costello and the Lyric Opera of Baltimore. Nicole Cabell will appear in recital in Chicago. Future projects include a debut with the Paris Opera and returns to the Cincinnati Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre.

Last season started with Ms. Cabell's much-anticipated role and company debuts as Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at the San Francisco Opera. The rest of her season featured another favorite role, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, which she sang for her debut at the Teatro del Liceo in Barcelona and for her return to the New National Theatre in Tokyo. Further opera engagements included Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Cincinnati Opera. In concert, Miss Cabell sang the Mozart *Requiem* at Carnegie Hall, Bach's *B minor Mass* in Chicago and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Cleveland Orchestra on tour in Miami.

Ms. Cabell's previous season showcased her command of Mozart's music, as she sang the Countess in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* in Montreal, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in Tokyo. She was also heard in some of her favorite roles in the French repertoire: Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* with the Palm Beach Opera and Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at the Santa Fe Opera. In concert, she appeared in New York, London, Chicago, Cincinnati, Toronto, Atlanta, San Diego and St Petersburg.

Prior to that, Nicole Cabell returned to the Metropolitan Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Micaela in *Carmen*, to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden for Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, and made an exciting role debut: Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Oper Köln and the Deutsche Oper, Berlin. She also returned to the Cincinnati Opera as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. In concert, she appeared with the Edinburgh Festival as the Mater Gloriosa in Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, followed by *Gala Opening Concerts* in Kuala Lumpur with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and their music director, Claus Peter Flor. Nicole Cabell sang solo recitals in Toronto and Louisville, KY.

Other engagements include Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera and at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, as well as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She also made debuts with the New Orleans Opera as Juliette in *Romeo et Juliette* and with the Atlanta Opera as Pamina. In concert, she debuted with three major orchestras: the New York Philharmonic in *Opera Aria Concerts* in New York and in Vail with Bramwell Tovey, the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Kurt Masur and the Cleveland Orchestra with its music director, Franz Welser-Möst, in Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Nicole Cabell returned to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* with Markus Stenz, sang Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, first with the Singapore Symphony and John Nelson, then with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia and Antonio Pappano in Rome. In recital, she was heard in Urbana, IL and Savannah, GA.

Nicole Cabell's previous season brought her to the Metropolitan Opera for her house debut in two of her most acclaimed roles: Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, followed by Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. With her home company, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, she sang Leïla in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and an *Opera Concert* at Millennium Park conducted by the company's Music Director, Sir Andrew Davis. Other opera engagements included two role debuts: the Countess in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Cincinnati Opera and *Micaëla* in *Carmen* with the Deutsche Oper, Berlin. In concert, Nicole Cabell was heard in Copenhagen, Prague, Munich, Frankfurt, Dortmund, Ottawa, Indianapolis and Raleigh. Miss Cabell appeared twice in recital at Carnegie Hall, first for Marilyn Horne's 75th birthday gala concert, then as part of Jessye Norman's *Honor Festival*, apart from solo dates in Toronto, Berkeley and Cincinnati. A more unusual event in the soprano's season was a series of cabaret concerts at the Orange County Performing Arts Center.

Miss Cabell's 2007/2008 season began and ended with performances of the role of Musetta in *La Bohème* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Washington Opera. Other notable opera appearances included Pamina with Opera Pacific and a concert of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* with the Bayerischer Rundfunk. Nicole Cabell was heard in concert in London, Munich, Lyon, Oslo and Pittsburgh as well as in Christmas concerts with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall. She appeared in recital in Atlanta's Spivey Hall, Omaha, St Louis and Tryon.

Other recent engagements included many exciting debuts, most notably with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Eudoxie in concert performances of *La Juive*, the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall in Poulenc's *Gloria*, the Santa Fe Opera as Musetta in *La Bohème*, the Opéra de Montpellier as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin as Juliette, Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, as well as the release of her first solo CD for Decca, "Nicole Cabell, Soprano". Another important recording project was the title-role of Donizetti's *Imelda de' Lambertazzi* for Opera Rara, which she also performed in concert in London. Notable concert appearances included *Carmina Burana* and *Honey and Rue* with the Oslo Philharmonic and Andre Previn, an all-Bernstein evening at Harvard with Judith Clurman, the Gorecki *3rd Symphony* with the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä and a return to the Indianapolis Symphony for a concert of *Opera Arias* with Mario Venzago. Miss Cabell also appeared in recital in London, Tokyo, Hammond, LA, and for the opening of the new hall at Mount Vernon, VA.

Prior to that, Nicole Cabell made a number of debuts, especially in opera with the Palm Beach and Madison Operas for Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, with Michigan Opera Theater as Musetta in *La Bohème* and, last but not least, with the Spoleto Festival USA for Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*. She appeared in recital in New York City as part of Marilyn Horne's Birthday Gala at Carnegie's Zankel Hall as well as in Chicago, Buffalo and Bradford, PA. On the concert stage Miss Cabell was heard in Louisville in both the Poulenc *Gloria* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with Raymond Leppard in both cases, in Milwaukee in a program of *Shakespeare-themed pieces* with Nicholas McGegan, in crossover concerts with the Pasadena Pops and in Montreal Opera's annual gala. She also sang in a *Classical Christmas* program with the Indianapolis Symphony. Later in the season, Nicole Cabell returned to Rome for concerts of Britten's *Les Illuminations* and Mahler's *4th Symphony* with James Conlon and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. In the summer, Miss Cabell made her London concert debut at the Proms in Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis; she returned to the Ravinia Festival for a crossover concert with James Conlon, to the Bard Music Festival for a recital of Franz Liszt Lieder and a concert of music by Halévy and to the Pasadena Pops for evenings of music from around the Mediterranean. She also made her St Louis debut with more crossover concerts with the Compton Heights Band.

While a member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Lyric Opera Center for American Artists (now known as Ryan Opera Center), Nicole Cabell had the opportunity to sing the title-role in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in student matinees as well as to cover the roles of Marzelline in *Fidelio* and Rita Billingsly in the world premiere of

William Bolcom's *A Wedding*. Miss Cabell made her extremely successful Orchestra Hall debut with the Chicago Symphony in concerts of Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with Sir Andrew Davis conducting. She also made her European debut in concerts of Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome with Antonio Pappano and Thomas Hampson; she appeared with the Florida Orchestra as the Soprano Soloist in Mahler's 4th *Symphony* with the Florida Orchestra and Stefan Sanderling and in Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* with the Baltimore Symphony. Nicole Cabell was heard in recital in Little Rock, AK.

The preceding year she sang Barbarina and covered Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and appeared as Isabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Lyric Opera, having sung with the same company the role of Crobyle in *Thais* in the fall of 2002. In concert, she made her debut with the Oregon Symphony as the Soprano Soloist in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with Carlos Kalmar and repeated Barbarina with the Chicago Symphony and Daniel Barenboim at the Ravinia Festival. In the summer, Miss Cabell was also heard live on *A Prairie Home Companion* in a celebration of Ravinia's 50th season and sang the role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* with the Grant Park Festival.

In concert, Nicole Cabell was a featured soloist in Ravinia's All Gershwin Concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of David Alan Miller, and participated in Ravinia's opening day concert, accompanied by Welz Kauffman. Miss Cabell has appeared as a soloist in Chicago's Grant Park Festival and Lyric Opera Center for American Artists Rising Stars in Concert.

Awards include first place in both the Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition and the Women's Board of Chicago Vocal Competition. Nicole Cabell was a semi-finalist in the 2005 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and earned first place in the American Opera Society competition in Chicago. She is the 2002 winner of the Union League's Rose M. Grundman Scholarship, and the 2002 Farwell Award with the Woman's Board of Chicago. Nicole Cabell holds a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance from the Eastman School of Music.

Website: www.nicole-cabell.com

N I C O L E C A B E L L

Soprano

2013-2014 Season

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Personal Direction: Michael Benchetrit

12mb13

Press Acclaim for..... **NICOLE CABELL**

As Violetta in **La Traviata** with Michigan Opera Theatre:

“It is pretty difficult to describe in words what Nicole Cabell, who plays Violetta, is able to do with her voice. She is a magnificent soprano and one of the best to perform at MOT over the last couple of years. There have been plenty of beautiful vocalists, but she has definitely left a mark on the opera house with her unique ability.

Cabell plays the role with a wonderfully complex performance that is cold but warm, soft but strong and with octaves that threaten to break every piece of glass in the building. She spews sensuality and wraps every gentleman in the audience around her silk glove covered fingers.

During the first act of the opera, Cabell holds back ever so slightly as to give the audience a warm-up for what is to come. Her character’s desperation, pain and the effects of her illness become more evident in the last two acts of Verdi’s three-act opera. She lets her voice take flight to tightly embrace the audience in which they have no choice but to melt for poor Violetta who changed her life for her man, only to be rejected by his family.”

Samantha White, *Royal Oak Daily Tribune*, November 21, 2013

“Most impressive is the eloquent singing. American soprano Nicole Cabell made a striking debut in the challenging role of Violetta on Saturday, drawing a portrait a fallen woman with a rich inner life through vibrant singing and animated acting. [...]

But any “Traviata” is ultimately about Violetta. What was best about Cabell, who is just 36, was how thoroughly she inhabited the role. She captured the vivacious spirit of a woman who won’t be tied down in the fireworks of “Sempre libera,” and then slowly morphed into the world-weary wisdom of a woman who understands full dimensions of love. Her voice was strong, agile and plush. [...] She always put over the emotions. In the end that’s what matters most.”

Mark Stryker, *Detroit Free Press*, November 17, 2013

“Cabell, who was singing her first Violetta, is still ripening in the role. She has a radiant, expressive soprano, and she employed it to great effect in the second and third acts.”

George Bulanda, *Detroit News*, November 18, 2013

As Giulietta in **I Capuleti e I Montecchi** with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City:

“Nicole Cabell was absolutely on par with DiDonato’s level of professionalism and artistry. She created a unique and memorable Juliet with her first recitative and aria, “Eccomi in lieta vesta... Oh quante volte.” With the famous romanza, Cabell immediately burned her voice into the minds and hearts of the Kansas City audience, and it is no doubt that she will be welcomed back to this Lyric stage. Cabell boasted breathtaking and effortless control across her range and smartly integrated style-specific

and meaningful ornamentation to melodic lines. In recitatives at the start and end of Act 2, the audience saw the depth of her superb acting capabilities, where communicative facial expressions relayed Juliet's despair at the devastation she saw and felt. Cabell also exhibited a remarkable agitation upon learning that her lover had swallowed fatal poison, and "Morte io non temo" was unbelievable thanks to Cabell's vocal flexibility, which resulted in lilting, sinuous lines.

There has not been a better matched vocal duo than DiDonato and Cabell on the Lyric stage for some time. The pair portrayed well a young couple navigating their own love story amid fear, anxiety, and expectation. A liquid, lovely melding of two stellar voices, both with such purity of timbre and impressive control, was on tap with "Deh, tu bell'anima," the lovers' poignant goodbye (in what is often referred to as the "tomb scene" but here played out in the same bunker setting). It is difficult to put into words how stunning this number was: with two such distinct voices, we heard layer upon layer of lush vocal color, ideally matched, but where each woman's unique resonance truly set her voice apart.

DiDonato's and Cabell's "Si, fuggire" helped the audience to early on determine just how far along Romeo and Juliet's romance had already come, but with the modern spin of this Lyric production, one is left wondering just why a young woman so devoted to her lover would not leave with him. [...] Nonetheless, their bedroom duet was heart-wrenching, with DiDonato so perfectly frustrated and Cabell so utterly captivating."

Sarah Tyrrell, *KCMetropolis*, September 18, 2013

"Cabell is riveting in her opening aria ("Oh! quante volte"), in which she mourns her plight while marveling at the beauty of her wedding dress. With power and control over a wide range, her voice has a dazzling clarity, even muscularity, and her movements and expressions slide easily through emotions large and small. She is even more compelling in her beautiful, almost Verdian Act II aria, "Morte io non temo, il sai," one of Bellini's finest lyrical moments."

Paul Horsley, *Classical Voice North America*, September 27, 2013

As Donna Elvira in **Don Giovanni** with the Cincinnati Opera:

"Nicole Cabell's Donna Elvira is simply wonderful. Her essentially lyric soprano continues to blossom and grow in size and hue ever closer to a true spinto sound, never better than in her gorgeously sung 'Mi Tradi'. She looks great and acts with keen intelligence – she would just as soon pluck out the Don's eyes as bed him – and straddling pathos and high comedy with aplomb."

Rafael de Acha, *Seen and Heard International*, June 15, 2013

As Giulietta in **I Capuleti e I Montecchi** with the San Francisco Opera:

"[...] The production is wonderful, both vocally and musically. Singing radiantly and joyously, separately and together, Joyce DiDonato as Romeo and Nicole Cabell as Juliet were outstanding on opening night Saturday. [...] Cabell's local debut was striking and memorable.

In addition to vocal challenges of the score, Cabell also had to put up with the director's instructions. [...] Through it all, she sang like an angel, her voice soaring through the big hall effortlessly.”

Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*, October 1, 2012

“The production that opened Saturday night at the San Francisco Opera [...] offers two extraordinary vocal performances in the principal roles from soprano Nicole Cabell and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, and so long as you concentrate on them - and forgo any hope of a coherent theatrical experience - you can derive all the available rewards. [...] Cabell, in her company debut, brought tonal clarity and eloquent phrasing to the role of Juliet - never more touchingly than in the expansive romance with which she begins her assignment.”

Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 30, 2012

“Joyce DiDonato and Nicole Cabell steal the show at San Francisco Opera

Run, ye lovers of fabulous voices.

Run as quickly as you can to War Memorial Opera House. That's where mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and soprano Nicole Cabell will astonish you as Romeo and Juliet in ‘The Capulets and the Montagues’ by Vincenzo Bellini. These two singers are wiping the floor with the rest of the cast in San Francisco Opera's production of the famous story of hot love doomed by a blood rivalry in old Verona.

For sheer sumptuous gorgeousness, Cabell's voice is hard to beat: ‘Oh! Quante volte,’ Juliet's (or, more properly, Giulietta's) song of longing for Romeo, was exquisite, filled with soaring and silky arabesques. This is Cabell's debut with San Francisco Opera -- and her first time singing this role, anywhere. Remarkable.”

Richard Scheinin, *Mercury News*, September 30, 2012

“In the case of the two female leads, who carry the bulk of the evening and upon whom Bellini lavishes his most magnificent writing, you need voices that seize the heart, stun the senses, and ultimately take your breath away. Anything short of that, and anyone with a sense of what the music demands feels a sense of disappointment.

In mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato (Romeo) and soprano Nicole Cabell (Juliet), we had, on paper, two extremely gifted artists whose solos and duets promised to be a highlight of the opera season worldwide.

[...] Cabell, too, sang beautifully. Her duets with DiDonato were a special high point, their voices blending almost as magically as the fabled duo of Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne (or, later in their careers, Montserrat Caballé, and Horne). She also joined DiDonato in showing a fine understanding of bel canto nuance and shading, and sang with increasing elasticity as the night progressed.”

Jason Victor Serinus, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, September 30, 2012

“Great singing is about the only reason to stage *Capuleti*, and the two stars of this show, soprano Nicole Cabell and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato more than fill the bill. Both have the vocal agility, range, and breath control to make Bellini’s long lines and florid outbursts sound easy to sing.

In her company debut, Cabell brings a luscious, dark, and voluminous soprano with plenty of spin to Giulietta, the kind of voice more often found in Puccini than in bel canto. She executed Giulietta’s music with the requisite grace and pathos, not to mention a beautiful trill and fine high notes.”

Lisa Hirsch, *Classical Review*, September 30, 2012

As Leïla in **Les Pêcheurs de Perles** with the Santa Fe Opera:

“As the virgin priestess Leila, soprano Nicole Cabell is simply radiant, floating exquisite high notes and trilling to perfection.”

Mike Silverman, *Associated Press*, August 5, 2012

“Nicole Cabell was born to sing the role of Leila. Her charismatic presence proved ideal for the mysterious priestess whose exotic beauty sparks turmoil between Nadir and Zurga. Dramatically she charted the role’s changes with fine insight, from remote icon, to romantic object and angry defender of her condemned lover.

Vocally, Cabell’s pure, flexible soprano was balm for the ears, bringing an airy, graceful lightness to the sinuous lines and ardent passion to her love duets with Nadir. The clear highlight of the evening was Leila’s Act 2 cavatina, rendered with glowing tone, delicate shading and extraordinary depth of feeling. Cabell sings from the heart and with that gorgeous voice, carries us right along with her.”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *The Classical Review*, August 1, 2012

“Vocally, the cast is uniformly terrific. Each one of them looks the part, and with the sympathetic assistance of director Lee Blakeley, is able to breathe some life into the stock characters. The standout on Tuesday was Nicole Cabell as the conflicted priestess, Leila. She is the much-longed-for lyric coloratura soprano with a burnished creamy sound. Her voice is textbook *bel canto* perfectly placed and the softest sound projected clearly to the very back of the hall. As I listened to her perfect yet impassioned singing in tuneful but still early Bizet, I couldn’t help but make a list of meaty roles I would love to hear her sing.”

Gregory Sullivan Isaacs, *TheaterJones*, August 1, 2012

“Distinguished singing inhabits this production. Léïla is portrayed by soprano Nicole Cabell, whose lush, velvety tone suggests the covered richness of a mezzo-soprano — a balance of pitch and timbre that fits French repertoire especially well.

From a dramatic standpoint, it’s not an easy role to tame. Early on, she was limited to wandering about the set veiled, wearing an elaborately ornamented, rather stiff, red dress

that sets her unbridgeably apart from the community of divers and villagers. When she turned from vestal virgin to love interest, however, she secreted a potent sensuality that rivaled the steaminess of her tropical surroundings, and she spun out the long lines of her big aria with supple allure.”

James M. Keller, *The New Mexican*, July 1, 2012

“Nicole Cabell made her SFO debut as Musetta back in 2007, as vivacious and worldly a soubrette as they come. Now singing Leila, she’s called upon to choose between two roles: the selfless priestess of Brahma upon whose chastity—demanded by the boys, naturally—the safety of the pearl divers depends or the flesh-and-blood woman who loves and is loved by the unfortunate and unfortunately named Nadir.

Cabell sings like an angel—not one of the pallid, fluttery persuasion that gets mislabeled ‘the French style,’ but with warmth and full-throated ease, undaunted by the florid fillips the role insists upon. For an object lesson in graceful vocal purity, just pay attention to Cabell’s dreamy second-act aria, ‘Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre.’”

John Stege, *Santa Fe Reporter*, July 11, 2012

“Cabell showed mastery of the mixture of lyrical and coloratura elements that infuse the music sung by Leila, so typical of mid-19th century French soprano roles. Her great aria *Comme autrefois* was executed beautifully.”

Opera Warhorses, August 1, 2012

As the Soprano Soloist in **Ein deutsches Requiem** with the Cincinnati May Festival:

“The two soloists, soprano Nicole Cabell and bass-baritone John Relyea, made memorable festival debuts. Cabell projected a radiant voice and genuine emotion in her solo, ‘Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit’ (“Ye now have sorrow”).”

Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati.com*, May 19, 2012

As the Soprano Soloist in **A Child of Our Time** with the BBC Symphony:

“Nicole Cabell and the chorus provided what is perhaps the most magical moment. An exquisitely floated and shaded – with fulsome, though never excessive vibrato – soprano solo, ‘How can I cherish my man in such days...?’ persisted whilst the chorus movingly ‘stole in’ beneath, with the spiritual ‘Steal away’.”

Mark Berry, *Boulezian*, March 24, 2012

“Nicole Cabell’s coloratura tone stood out a mile from this line-up, but added to the dramatic intensity, especially of the numbers she sang with the chorus.”

Gavin Dixon, *Seen and Heard International*, March 24, 2012

In **Concert with Michael Feinstein** at Dominican University:

“Nicole Cabell opened the show with a haunting operatic voice that was a perfect match to Feinstein because of her recent Ravinia All-Gershwin concert.”

Jeff Nunn, *Windy City News*, March 14, 2012

As Juliette in **Roméo et Juliette** with the Palm Beach Opera:

“Nicole Cabell shines brilliantly in Palm Beach Opera’s ‘Romeo et Juliette’

Cabell, a California native whose career has taken her to the stages of the Metropolitan, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Royal Opera House, is as big a star as any that has appeared on South Florida opera stages in recent years. Her Juliette was a gorgeously sung, emotionally affecting performance that showed the enthusiastic, life-loving girl of the first act acquire a terrible maturity by the final scene.

The famous aria *Je veux vivre dans ce rêve*, in which Juliette expresses the sweetness of youth, was all that you could wish for. As she whirled around the stage in a daffodil-colored gown, the soprano filled the house with radiant sound, producing runs and ornaments not just effortlessly but joyously. It was an unforgettable few minutes that any opera house in the world would have been proud to present.

Cabell brought an easy and unaffected stage manner that allowed the young Juliette’s personality to come through, producing a broad smile of happiness in loving and being loved as Roméo knelt to hand her bouquets. And her dramatic emotional range was vast. She brought an edge of pain to her scene on the balcony, as she ponders the fate that allowed the members of two feuding families to fall in love. And Cabell showed the young Juliette bravely working up her nerve to take the sleeping potion, singing *Amour, ranime mon courage* with desperate determination.”

David Fleshler, *South Florida Classical Review*, February 25, 2012

“As Juliette, lyric soprano Nicole Cabell had not only a commanding stage presence, but also a delicately beautiful voice that suited her character to perfection. She was more interested in musicianship than in vocal pyrotechnics, but she had both.”

Marcio Bezerra, *Palm Beach Daily News*, February 25, 2012

“Nicole Cabell is a modern Juliette; no weepy willow but a very strong and determined young woman who understands how she must compromise in a culture stacked against her gender. Cabell’s voice is sumptuous and strong; her duets with Chacón-Cruz were, to be blunt, scorching.”

Jeff Haller, *ConcertoNet*, February 27, 2012

As the Soprano Soloist in **A Child of Our Time** with the Collegiate Chorale:

“Ms. Cabell, who has made the oratorio a signature work, was the standout among the four soloists, singing with an alluring, honeyed voice and expressive commitment to text.”

Vivien Schweitzer, *The New York Times*, February 5, 2012

“I have never heard Cabell sound better, perhaps enhanced by the superb acoustics of the Hall. Her voice delicately wove the often wrenching and complex text. Just the right touch of vibrato accompanied her voice as it rang out, particularly at the top.”

Susan Hall, *Berkshire Fine Arts*, February 5, 2012

“Nicole Cabell's lyric radiance gave the evening a special glow; the attractive soprano who was Cardiff Singer of the World in 2005 has a shimmering timbre with which she lent hopeful light to the sometimes darkish proceedings of the Tippett oratorio. When the choral and orchestral forces threatened the singer's solo line with intimidating volume, Ms. Cabell wisely refused to push her tone and simply let it float with silvery assurance. Her singing seemed to draw the audience into the music on a personal level.”

Oberon's Grove, February 4, 2012

As Pamina in **Die Zauberflöte** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Pamina is the ideal Mozart role for [Nicole] Cabell, and the Ryan Opera Center's star alumna fulfilled every requirement. Thanks to her creamy soprano, poised line and expressive phrasing, the heroine's lovelorn aria, ‘Ach, ich fühls,’ was infused with delicate pathos, while the Pamina-Papageno duet went like a dream.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, December 7, 2011

“The anchor here is Chicago-based soprano Nicole Cabell, the Ryan Center alum who continues to develop as a serious artist well beyond being a pretty voice and face. As Pamina, the promised bride of the hero-prince Tamino, Cabell takes us on her character's journey of maturity, vocally and theatrically matching each of her setbacks and joys.”

Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 7, 2011

“Nicole Cabell is the one known quantity in this cast. The popular singer's lyric instrument is eminently well suited to Mozart's heroine and in her first local appearance as Pamina, Cabell proved what a really superb Mozartean she has become. Rich and exquisite in tone, Cabell's is one of the most beautiful soprano voices of our time, and she sang with extraordinary gleam, expressive nuance and faultless technique throughout.

If in the early going her Pamina seemed more coquettish than innocent, Cabell's portrayal grew in dramatic depth as the evening unfolded. She rose to the considerable challenge of *Ach, ich fühl's* superbly, singing with a seamless legato and bringing a stark, affecting despair to Pamina's pain when she thinks Tamino has abandoned her. Cabell was also alive to the opera's comedy and brought an ennobled radiant presence to the final scene.”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*, December 7, 2011

“Pamina remains one of Cabell's most congenial roles and the soprano's creamy-voiced singing was a pleasure to hear throughout.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 2012

“The rest of the cast [...] remains first-class: Nicole Cabell's gloriously sung Pamina...”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*, January 9, 2012

As the Soloist in Ravel's **Shéhérazade** with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra:

“The evening's soloist, soprano Nicole Cabell, provided a radiant contrast in her performance of Ravel's ‘Sheherazade.’”

Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 16, 2011

As the Countess in **Le Nozze di Figaro** with Opera de Montreal:

“Nicole Cabell offers noble singing, dreamy legato and luminous high notes. She will surely grow to become a Marschallin and possibly an Ariadne or a charming Arabella.”

Louis Bilodeau, *L'Avant-Scène Opera*, September 17, 2011

“Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro is a musical masterpiece full of melodic arias and ensembles, one after the other. A great production requires five top singers in the main roles, and by assembling an exceptional cast of brilliant young singers, the Opéra de Montréal's season opening production is a hit.

Leading the way was American soprano Nicole Cabell in the role of the Countess. From her opening Act II aria Porgi, amor, her sumptuous voice and buttery legato filled Salle Wilfrid Pelletier; the experience was exceeded by an even more beautiful Act III aria, Dove Sono.”

Wah Keung Chan, *Montreal Gazette*, September 18, 2011

“Nicole Cabell captivates both the eyes and the ears with the richness of her timbre and a powerful, round voice that is capable of singing pianissimo. Her two great arias - Porgi amor and Dove sono - received prolonged applause from the audience.”

Jacques Héту, *ResMusica*, September 20, 2011

As Clara in **Porgy and Bess** in concert with the Tanglewood Music Festival:

“What resonated most, though, were the pleasures of an August evening as extolled in the opening hit, “Summertime.” A radiant interpretation was given by soprano Nicole Cabell, the first of many fine performances.”

Joseph Dalton, *Times Union*, August 27, 2011

“And the Tanglewood Festival Chorus was perfectly diaphanous in the vocalizing that supports the opening rendition of ‘Summertime’ (sweetly floated by Nicole Cabell).”

Zachary Woolfe, *The New York Times*, August 28, 2011

“Nicole Cabell made in Clara's signature ‘Summertime’ a dreamy and tragic affair.”

Andrew I. Pincus, *Berkshire Eagle*, August 29, 2011

“Nicole Cabell as Clara, Marquita Lister as Serena, and Gwendolyn Brown as Maria all gave fine performances.”

Jeremy Eichler, *Boston Globe*, August 30, 2011

As Pamina in **Die Zauberflöte** with Cincinnati Opera:

“As the princess Pamina, Cabell was stunning. She radiated the innocence of the princess, while projecting a voice of supple beauty, elegance and richness. Her lament, ‘Ach, ich fühl's’ was mesmerizing for its touching beauty and depth of expression... Together, Cabell and the hero, Tamino, sung by tenor Shawn Mathey, had believable chemistry.”

Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 29, 2011

As Mimi in Act III of **La Bohème** in concert with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra:

“As Mimi, soprano Nicole Cabell (Atlanta Opera’s Pamina last season) has a voice of rare beauty and fullness, with an opulence across her range.”

Pierre Ruhe, *ArtsCriticAlt.com*, April 29, 2011

As the Soprano Solo in Bach’s **St Matthew Passion** with Soli Deo Gloria, Chicago:

“It was luxury casting to have Nicole Cabell as soprano soloist. This was the popular opera singer’s debut in this work, and Cabell’s radiant vocalism was stellar throughout, finding a well-calibrated balance between expressive ardor and spiritual glow.”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*, April 21, 2011

“Distinguished contributions also came from [...] soprano Nicole Cabell.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 2011

As Micaëla in **Carmen** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Musically and histrionically, Micaela is a natural fit for Cabell, the superstar graduate of Lyric's Ryan Opera Center. The character showed vulnerability and, later, determination as the emissary from Jose's mother struggled to rescue him from Carmen's clutches. Cabell was charming in Act 1 and both delicate and vibrant in the famous third-act aria.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 2011

“The most significant cast change is Ryan Center alum and local favorite Nicole Cabell as Jose’s abandoned hometown girl Micaela. Though the role often is thankless and dully sung, the California-born soprano gives it life throughout the performance, especially in her Act 3 aria and prayer.”

Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 13, 2011

As Micaëla in **Carmen** with the Metropolitan Opera:

“As Micaëla, the girl next door, Nicole Cabell seemed particularly gentle and virtuous in Carmen’s seductive shadow, singing with a lovely, fluid soprano and touchingly conveying the character’s vulnerability. She and Mr. Jovanovich offered an affecting rendition of their Act I duet.”

Vivien Schweitzer, *The New York Times*, November 5, 2010

“The evening’s finest singing came from Nicole Cabell in the role of José’s hometown sweetheart Micaëla. Cabell’s consistently well-rounded, glowingly resonant tone reminded me of Anna Netrebko’s Micaëla at the Mariinsky Theater early in her career. And Cabell invested the big aria with a due sense of foreboding.”

George Loomis, *The Classical Review*, November 5, 2010

“Best were Brandon Jovanovich’s taut, muscular tenor as Carmen’s soldier lover Don Jose, and Nicole Cabell’s interestingly dark lyric soprano as his ex, Micaela.”

James Jorden, *New York Post*, November 8, 2010

“Nicole Cabell made a highly sympathetic Micaela, with a slight but attractive flutter in her tone; [...] she enacted her part very well.”

David Shengold, *Opera News*, February 2011

As Leïla in **Les Pêcheurs de Perles** with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden:

“Despite the excellence of all around her, it was Nicole Cabell who was the clear star of the evening. Her voice is gorgeous, cut from the finest velvet. It was in the second act that Cabell had her chances to shine, and she took each and every one of them. Her recollection of past times (‘Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre’) was perhaps the highlight here, culminating in one of the finest vocal trills I have been privileged to hear. Interesting that Pappano gave prominence to the horns at this point, a hunting pair that suddenly seemed to wrench us into the world of Weber’s *Freischütz*. In the final act, it was notable that, while one revelled in Finley’s strengths, when Cabell entered it was evident that she was finer still.”

Colin Clarke, *Seen and Heard*, October 14, 2010

“In terms of the complete package, though - presence, acting, looks and above all an instrument of real individuality - Nicole Cabell was the one who had it all. Measured at first, keeping the voice just a little under wraps, she spun one line of dizzying rapture in the recitative before her exquisite Act Two aria, in effect a duet with the Royal Opera’s principal horn, and more poured forth in Léïla’s duets with the two men who loved her. Cabell is down to play good girls like Mozart’s Ilia and Pamina, but I wonder whether she might be prepared to make a temporary sacrifice of the upper bloom though not the agility and give us a definitive soprano Carmen.”

David Nice, *The Arts Desk*, October 5, 2010

“But what a persuasive cast they were, especially with Pappano’s sensuously shimmering accompaniments allowing them to float real pianissimos. Nicole Cabell hasn’t been much seen in Britain since winning the Cardiff Singer of the World competition five years ago. Her sumptuously creamy voice has grown in intensity, and her slimline-Callas looks are no handicap when playing nubile priestesses. She still covers her timbre a little cautiously, but *Comme autrefois* was gorgeously delivered, and in her big Act III duet with Gerald Finley’s Zurga the sparks really flew.”

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, October 5, 2010

“Nicole Cabell, a popular winner of Cardiff Singer of the World in 2005, sang with cultured ease and grace.”

Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph*, October 5, 2010

“Nicole Cabell was the absolute jam on the evening’s cake, singing a most beautiful, technically immaculate ‘Comme autrefois’ at the start of Act II on jaw-droppingly long lines of quite masterly breath control, with warm, womanly sound and a textbook cadenza, including a real, no-substitutes-accepted trill to boot. Coupled with an effortless vocal placement and well-integrated registers, I thought she was excellent and a most sympathetic, involved performer.”

Stephen Jay-Taylor, *Opera Britannia*, October 5, 2010

“As Leïla, Nicole Cabell has infinite presence, her rich-blooded voice producing moments of mesmerising depth, but also interacting well with the frequently uplifting music.”

Sam Smith, *Watsonstage.com*, October 5, 2010

“Nicole Cabell, a vision in ultramarine, masqueraded without difficulty as a Sri Lankan beauty. And her phrasing was sensuous enough to have her thrown out of the priesthood.”

Barry Millington, *This is London*, October 5, 2010

“Léïla's ambiguous, hieratic glamour suits Nicole Cabell.”

Tim Ashley, *The Guardian*, October 7, 2010

“The singers really only got into their stride after American soprano Nicole Cabell had entered as the priestess, with whom both Zurga and Nadir are in love. Her name *Leïla* was the original title of the opera, which was to be set in Mexico, but later changed to the more exotic location of Sri Lanka. Ms. Cabell won the Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2005, and she sang beautifully here — she was the star of the evening, definitely a soprano to watch out for.”

Mark Ronan, *Mark Ronan’s Theatre Reviews*, October 5, 2010

In concert with tenor David Lomeli in Bad Kissingen:

“The American soprano Nicole Cabell is on this evening of arias and duets by Dvorak, Verdi, Massenet, Gounod, Cilea, and Puccini... far more than just the sidekick, which is already evident

in the Traviata duet "Un di, felice". Her gloriously round and dark voice compliments tenor David Lomeli's almost glistening bright voice."

Mathias Wiedemann, *Main-Post*, July 16, 2010

In **Gala Concerts** with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra:

"The concert hall was filled to the brim and the audience were enthralled by American soprano Nicole Cabell on centre stage."

Halim Said, *New Straits Times*, September 30, 2010

As the Mater Gloriosa in Mahler's **Symphony No. 8** with the Edinburgh Festival:

"Upper Circle punters were blessed with the soprano Nicole Cabell's Mater Gloriosa, spinning a transcendent line from the gods in a magnificently handled finale."

Sarah Irwin Jones, *The Times*, September 5, 2010

"The soaring presence, high in the Gods, of ethereal soprano Nicole Cabell as the Mater Gloriosa, was spellbinding."

Kenneth Walton, *The Scotsman*, September 7, 2010

"Whatever the reason, from the stunning opening impact of the full-force Festival Chorus and soprano Erin Wall's sensitive 'Veni Creator Spiritus' to the transcendental 'Komm Hebe dich' by Nicole Cabell from the heights of the Upper Circle, it was an emotion-packed evening."

Iain Gilmour, *Edinburgh Guide*, September 8, 2010

In a program of **Italian and French Opera Arias** with the New York Philharmonic:

"The concert offered a substantial lure in the form of Nicole Cabell, a stellar soprano making her Philharmonic debut. Ms. Cabell, adorned in a different gown for each half of the program, was consistently alluring, her bright, creamy sound deployed with a beguiling ease. In Gustave Charpentier's 'Depuis le jour' (from 'Louise'), the Jewel Song from Gounod's 'Faust' and Donizetti's 'Prendi, per me sei libero' (from 'L'Elisir d'Amore') Ms. Cabell was ideal, with an attentive partner in Mr. Tovey. Warmly received throughout, Ms. Cabell drew the audience to its feet with her encore, Puccini's 'O Mio Babbino Caro' (from 'Gianni Schicchi')."

Steve Smith, *The New York Times*, July 7, 2010

As Pamina in **Die Zauberflöte** with the Atlanta Opera:

"The Princess Pamina, Nicole Cabell, was the gem on stage. She's been an international star-in-the-making since she won the 2005 Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff, Wales, and her voice is world-class: at once creamy and radiant and full-sized. Her aristocratic poise was ideally complemented by the dashing tenor. I hope the Atlanta Opera engages Cabell again soon."

Pierre Ruhe, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 25, 2010

“The proficient young cast was headed by soprano Nicole Cabell as Pamina. Her sublime timbre and breathtaking phrasing rightly earned the ardent affection of her Tamino.”

Stephanie Adrian, *Opera News*, July 2010

As the Countess in **Le Nozze di Figaro** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Cabell’s Countess makes Lyric Opera’s stellar ‘Figaro’ complete

With a new Countess added to the superb cast of *Le nozze di Figaro*, the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s season-closing production of Mozart’s comedy is now the complete, evenly balanced ensemble show it deserves to be.

The Countess Almaviva is a newish role for Cabell, one the Ryan Opera Center alumna debuted with Cincinnati Opera last June. Yet judging by the first half I caught of Monday night’s performance, it appears the part fits the American soprano like a well-tailored glove.

The tall, slender Cabell has the elegant presence and regal bearing for the put-upon wife of the philandering Count, and on Monday night she appeared equally at ease with the comic as well as dramatic elements. Vocally her high, creamy soprano was heard to fine effect in a lovely if somewhat carefully phrased *Porgi amor*, though her singing will no doubt become freer and more expressive with repeated performances.”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*, March 16, 2010

“Cabell, with her creamy sound and poised line, effectively conveyed her character's pathos and resolve, and she was warmly applauded.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 2010

“Nicole Cabell jumped into the production with aplomb. Her Countess was young, moody, but not without humor, reacting well facially to all around her. How enchanting to hear a Countess showing no vocal problems, not even in the treacherous arias.”

David Shengold, *Gay City News*, April 6, 2010

As Musetta in **La Bohème** with the Metropolitan Opera:

“The soprano Nicole Cabell brought a luminous voice and perky sensuality to Musetta.”

Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, February 21, 2010

“Another standout was soprano Nicole Cabell, brittle and feline as the gold-digging Musetta.”

James Jorden, *New York Post*, February 22, 2010

“Nicole Cabell concentrated on projecting Musetta's good nature and lyrical sentimentality rather than her bad temper and shrewish outbursts -- all to the good.”

Peter G. Davis, *Musical America*, February 22, 2010

“Singing in a limpid, unforced lyric soprano, Nicole Cabell, the new Musetta, the flashy grisette, or ‘goodtime girl,’ suitably makes a spectacle of herself, in her red dress, singing her seductive waltz song, the center of attention even amid the multi-level splendors of Franco Zeffirelli’s Café Momus and busy environs, populated by hundreds of company members, and still breathtaking after 28 years. Cabell captures the audience’s rapt attention even with the offstage bit of a bis of ‘Quando m’en vo,’ near the beginning of Act Three.”

Bruce-Michael Gelbert, *Q on Stage*, February 25, 2010

“It was all the more remarkable that Cabell's Musetta at times made you forget Netrebko's presence entirely. A thoroughly impressive singer and gifted comedienne, Cabell presented a Musetta who was spoiled and manipulative, yet impossible to dislike — a comically self-absorbed narcissist to whom people are drawn in spite of themselves. Her "Quando me'n vo" had expertly coquettish phrasing that was indulgent, to be sure, but only within the limits of character. Cabell's tone is liquid gold. It was fully credible that Zeffirelli's vast Latin Quarter crowds came to a screeching halt when she sang.”

Joshua Rosenblum, *Opera News*, May 2010

As Adina in **L’Elisir d’Amore** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Nicole Cabell offered a superb Adina; a splash of cream in her middle register (at times almost eerily reminiscent of the young Mirella Freni) has grown richer, and her performance was graced with liquid trills in the Act I ensemble and point-on articulation of the passagework in ‘Il mio rigore dimentica,’ here taken at a very rapid clip.”

Mark Thomas Ketterson, *Opera News*, April 2010

“... The aloof Adina, his employer (soprano Nicole Cabell, here at her most radiant and charming). [...] Cabell once again proved herself one of today's foremost masters of the art of bel canto singing. Seamless, limpid lines and sparkling coloratura came effortlessly to her, and she blended beautifully with Filianoti in their duets. Moreover, the soprano was fully into the caprice and compassion of her character.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, January 25, 2010

“American soprano Nicole Cabell more than held her own as Adina in this otherwise all-Italian cast. In fact, as the two-hour, two-act opera went along, it seemed that Cabell, a noted Ryan Center alum, had found a part that suits her perfectly. Her clear tone, easy coloratura runs and inviting theatrical sincerity called to mind a young Beverly Sills.”

Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun Times*, January 25, 2010

“Nicole Cabell also gave a first rate performance as Adina. She displayed all her character’s necessary self-confidence – she’s rich and the most beautiful girl in the village after all - and made a particularly strong impression in the opening aria ‘Della crudele Isotta,’ in which she recounts the story of *Tristan and Isolde* to her audience. Her vocal confidence was also very evident in ‘Chiedi all’aura lusinghiera,’ her duet with Filianoti and was even more notable in the later duet ‘Esulti pur la barbara.’ Her

ensemble work with the other principals was also solid, with her concluding aria ‘Il mio rigor dimentica’ as fresh and emotionally resolved as anyone could hope.”

James L. Zychowicz, *Seen and Heard*, February 1, 2010

“Cabell’s flexible, high-lying soprano was made for this role, and she sailed through the coloratura passages with ease, her gleaming soprano and high notes cutting easily through the ensembles.”

Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*, January 24, 2010

“Award winning soprano Nicole Cabell has delighted Lyric audiences in several performances, going back to her time as a member of Lyric’s Ryan Opera Center, and her performance as Adina is no exception. She possesses a lovely lyric soprano, and her voice is well suited to the Bel Canto repertoire.”

R. Todd Shuman, *Operaonline*, January 27, 2010

As the Soprano Solo in **Mahler’s Symphony No. 4** with the Chicago Symphony:

“Nicole Cabell, the radiant soprano soloist in the final movement, described the delights of paradise with an apt sense of childlike wonderment.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, December 5, 2009

As Juliette in **Romeo et Juliette** with the New Orleans Opera:

“Soprano Nicole Cabell, making her New Orleans debut, was the lovely and idiomatic Juliette. A fine actress, Cabell was completely believable as the young girl of Verona. Vocally, the role held no terrors for the soprano who tossed off a light and sparkling ‘Je veux vivre’ and a dramatically thrilling ‘Amour, ranime mon courage.’ Cabell’s captivating soft grained vocal quality blended well with that of Groves and their duets were among the evening’s many vocal pleasures.”

George Dansker, *Opera News*, March 2010

“Making her New Orleans debut, soprano Cabell is a lovely Juliette with a rich, warm voice. She won over the audience from the outset, handling Juliette’s famous waltz aria, with all its technical challenges, with a fearless bravado. In her expansive coloratura runs, there is a clarion, bell-like tone, but one that also is darker and velvety smooth, adding a depth and power that signals even greater roles for her future. Cabell is no soubrette simply spreading her wings with this role.”

Ted Mahne, *Times-Picayune*, November 21, 2009

As the Soprano Solo in **Mahler’s Symphony No. 2** with the Singapore Symphony:

“The vocal soloists were also excellent. Blame Mahler for scoring so little for the soprano, for Nicole Cabell’s diamond-like voice emerged from and shone through the choral firmament laser-like, one of many moments to die for.”

Tou Liang Chang, *Straits Times*, September 21, 2009

As the Soprano Solo in Tippett's **A Child of Our Time** with the Edinburgh Festival:

"Nicole Cabell's warm soprano soared gloriously above *Steal Away*."

Sarah Irwin Jones, *The Times*, September 2, 2009

In a **Venetian Night** Concert with the Grant Park Music Festival:

"The program shone the spotlight on two compelling young singers -- tenor Russell Thomas and soprano Nicole Cabell, an alumna of Lyric's training program who is forging a stellar international career for herself. They took center stage with the Grant Park Orchestra led by Spanish conductor Juanjo Mena in a rousing concert of arias from Gounod's 'Faust' and 'Romeo et Juliette,' Donizetti's 'The Elixir of Love,' Puccini's 'La Bohème' and Verdi's 'La Traviata.'

Chicago opera lovers knew Cabell was a talent to watch from her earliest days at Lyric's training program, where she was in residence from 2002 to 2005. She has returned to Lyric in starring roles since then, and Saturday's concert offered a preview of what audiences will be hearing when she takes the Civic Opera House stage in January for five performances as Adina in 'Elixir of Love.'

Cabell's soprano has a rich luster, and her seamless phrasing brings unusual depth and elegance to the characters she portrays. In the duet 'Una parola, O Adina,' from 'Elixir,' she had no trouble fending off Nemorino's unwelcome attention with gusts of high-flying, ornamented melody. But this Adina was not merely a flighty flirt. The dark undercurrent in Cabell's singing conveyed a thoughtfulness that made the capricious young woman endearingly human. In the duet 'Va! Je t'ai pardonné' from Gounod's 'Romeo et Juliette,' her sumptuous tone conveyed all the passion and terror of young love."

Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 27, 2009

"Cabell and Thomas prove a charismatic operatic duo at Grant Park

Saturday's audience also was especially eager to hear one of the evening's two soloists, soprano Nicole Cabell. A Chicago favorite since her days in Lyric Opera's training program from 2002 to 2005, Cabell won the prestigious BCC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff, Wales, in 2005 and her career has soared. Chicagoans caught their first glimpses of Cabell as a shrewdly wide-eyed Barbarina in Lyric's 2003 production of *The Marriage of Figaro* and her comically commanding Rooster in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in 2004. More recently she has returned to Lyric in leading roles: Musetta in 2007, Leila in *The Pearl Fishers* in 2008 and, next season, Adina in *The Elixir of Love*.

Cabell's lustrous soprano is strong and supple, with a hint of dark shadow in its depths. She is a sophisticated performer in the very best sense, finding just the right balance of passion and impeccable phrasing. A tall, slim beauty with an expressive face,

she was equally convincing as the wily Adina, headstrong Rosina, shy Mimi and teen-aged Juliette.

Her evening got off to a distracting start, when a brief, noisy rain shower descended during the Jewel Song from Gounod's Faust. She managed to keep her cool, however, swirling through Marguerite's delighted flights while the audience scrambled for umbrellas.

As the cool-headed Rosina, Cabell brought irresistible charm to Una voce poco fa from The Barber of Seville. Nonchalantly navigating Rossini's perilous climbs and precipitous drops, she was the very image of a self-possessed woman who knows exactly what she wants and is well on the way to getting it.

Fine as Cabell and Thomas were in their solo arias, their duets were even more engaging. Thomas is a large man, but he brought a touching youthfulness to his moments on stage with Cabell. Seeming to hang on her every word and gesture, he was intimately responsive, a young man longing to remain beside his beloved.

The romantic interplay was sweeter though no less intense in the arias and duet for Mimi and Rodolfo from Act I of La boheme. Cabell was a thoughtful Mimi. Her description of life as a young seamstress in a Parisian garret carried a sense of weight and wisdom. Thomas sent the audience into a frenzy with his ringing, open-throated top notes in Che gelida manina.

This was sumptuous singing, and Mena drew equally full-bodied playing from the Grant Park Orchestra."

Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Classical Review*, July 26, 2009

As Clara in **Porgy and Bess** at the Hollywood Bowl:

"A concert performance by the Los Angeles Philharmonic of 'Porgy and Bess' began at the Hollywood Bowl on Sunday night as the opera always does, with 'Summertime.' Nicole Cabell sang the lullaby with full voice and fine emotion."

Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 2009

In a **Concert of American Crossover Music** at the Rheingau Festival:

"The gala concert took place on a high-tech stage at the Cuvéehof, in front of a sold-out audience seated in tightly-spaced rows. The MC Herbert Feuerstein introduced his American star Nicole Cabell, along with the musicians of the German State Philharmonic of Rhineland-Palatinate and their Finnish conductor Ari Rasilainen. Nicole Cabell, as Feuerstein quotes the New York Times, possesses a voice 'of liquid gold'. She can enthral audiences at London's Royal Opera House Covent Garden as well as at the Opéra de Montpellier. For many of her listeners at the Festival, her singing literally got under their skin. Feuerstein believes that the young California-born beauty is on her way to taking the international music scene by storm. The proof is that in 2005 she won in

Cardiff the 'Singer of the World' award followed by the 'Echo Klassik' in Germany. She sings with commitment and much feeling the song 'I Got Rhythm', from the early Gershwin musical 'Girl Crazy'. The concert takes its title from this catchy tune.

In the happy and relaxed atmosphere of such an incredibly beautiful summer night, these medleys from musicals from the first half of the 20th century work wonders: Cole Porter songs like 'So in Love' from 'Kiss Me Kate', Gershwin's ubiquitous 'Summertime' or Bernstein's 'I Feel Pretty' from 'West Side Story' truly melt all hearts."

Ingeborg Toth, *Wiesbadener Kurier*, July 7, 2009

As the Countess in **Le Nozze di Figaro** with the Cincinnati Opera:

"Cabell made an elegant Countess, in her role and company debut. She effortlessly projected an aura of resignation with occasional bursts of fire, displaying a voice of richness and enormous beauty. Her deeply felt "Dove sono" was a showstopping moment, in which she conveyed her suffering and hope with believable emotion, performing alone onstage amid glowing lighting."

Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 12, 2009

"The Almas were the opera's stars. Nicole Cabell sang the Countess with much vocal richness, delicately delineating the long lines of her two arias."

Charles H. Parsons, *Opera*, November 2009

"Stars of the show were Nicole Cabell's Countess and Teddy Tahu Rhodes's Count. Cabell's sensuous, dark soprano voice flowed with ease, delicately delineating the long lines of her two arias while projecting a gently restrained radiant personality weighed down with sorrow."

Charles H. Parsons, *Opera News*, September 2009

"The Count and Countess, soprano Nicole Cabell and baritone Teddy Tahu Rhodes, made an imposing couple. Cabell possessed the evening's most beautiful voice, showcased most affectingly in the Countess' grieving 'Porgi amor' (act two) and 'Dove sono' (act three)."

Mary Ellyn Hutton, *Music in Cincinnati*, June 12, 2009

In an **Opera Arias Concert** at the Tivoli Concert Hall, Copenhagen:

"The new diva gave it her all

The American diva Nicole Cabell lived up to her reputation as the singing sensation of tomorrow.

Her neck was covered with sparkling jewelry and her hemline was dangerously high - and yet she managed to keep the audience focused on her singing throughout her debut concert.

Prior to her arrival, there had been great speculation over her unusually beautiful singing

and her charm, and she brought a really brilliant program to the Tivoli Concert Hall.

Immediately captivating

Cabell showed from the first note that she was gifted with an easily recognizable voice, which was soon on fire.

There is a very thin dark coloring over her clear, rich voice - a sound that possesses both mystery and sweetness at the same time and that could be diminished to a thread or expanded to fill the huge hall.

She began with Mozart's Donna Elvira and ended with German romanticism, and offered everything in-between, with richness and personality.

Complex personality

Cabell's great potential is rooted both in the original beauty of her voice and in her complex personality as an artist.

Her attractive appearance, made of African-American and Asian roots, was the perfect mirror of her musical versatility, with which she moved with multicultural or perhaps cosmopolitan elegance through classic Viennese, German, French and Spanish romantic music - and yet with great passion and precision she could make time stand still in a jazzy rendition of 'Summertime' from Gershwin's 'Porgy and Bess' as an encore.

And her interpretation of Micaela's 'Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante' from Bizet's 'Carmen' was nothing short of perfect.

Singer of the World

Her young career has already had some high points :her victory at the 2005 BBC Singer of the World Competition or the release in 2007 of her solo CD 'Soprano' with Decca, or when last year she made her debut at The Met in New York and when finally she appeared with Rolando Villazón and Anna Netrebko in the film version of 'La Bohème'.

This success is probably due to two important factors (which give her a great advantage) and they were fully on display at Saturday's concert: her versatility and her acting talent.

She first appeared on stage as a true lyric soprano, and showed in the first part of the concert that, in excerpts from 'Don Giovanni' and 'The Marriage of Figaro', she and Mozart are a match made in heaven.

Drama and great force

Her approach to melody is clear and easy to grasp and she has a clear understanding of all the details.

But Cabell showed a series of other qualities at the same time such as her sense of drama, her great strength and a beautiful, sparkling coloratura as Massenet's Manon in the great opening aria 'Je suis encore toute étourdie'.

It made it difficult to anticipate what the future might have in store for her.

In 10 years, when she is 40, will she be at the Komische Oper in Berlin for some Mozart or will she sing Wagner at Bayreuth? The odds seem to favor the former, but one can wonder.

A varied gallery of characters

Cabell's second very important quality is her excellent sense of drama.

Instead of just using alternately her eyes and arms, she conveyed the nature of the arias with a precise personality through many small touches.

Even though these operas were reduced to an overture and a few arias, we still got convincing depictions of such different fates as Donna Elvira's and Zerlina's.

Or Susanna, for that matter, with her bittersweet smile and the Countess' dramatic singing. A true spectrum of Mozart's characters in only 45 minutes."

Henrik Friis, *Ibyen*, May 10, 2009

"The World's Sweetest Singer

The American Soprano sings everything from European coloratura to Afro-American music – and she can flirt with the whole Tivoli Concert Hall, too!

Four years ago, this 31-year old American won the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. Today she gets to travel all over the world. After her Tivoli Concert Hall debut, we understand why.

What a voice! It is glorious in itself. A classical European soprano voice. A voice that fills the hall. But her voice, if I may add, is also very different from her natural radiance. And once together they create the energy for the whole evening: with your eyes closed you hear the most classical of sounds – with your eyes open, you see the most exotic beauty.

She also has no trouble varying the atmosphere. She sings in Italian, French and Spanish.

Take for instance her facial expressions... The woodwinds behind her need only play in a minor key for her to express melancholy. It is dramatic. The evening truly becomes a partnership.

The second half starts. The dress is the same. But her voice is not. We prepare ourselves for French Romantic music.

The scene from 'Manon' is perhaps the evening's highlight. It is impossible to forget the way she handles the difficult coloratura... It is fantastic! Especially as she does not make a display of it; she does it with such good taste – the ornaments actually become part of the music.

If this seems too sweet, the encores set a new tone. First, with 'Summertime' from 'Porgy and Bess', an opera about African-Americans in the South. And following that, Richard Strauss' 'Cäcilie', filled with expression and musicianship.

These encores turned the evening from a successful concert to the highest art form.

She received a standing ovation and, full of gratitude, she smiled back. The American soprano was the sweetest imaginable company – a most welcome guest. And her two-hour long seduction was never too much. We will need to entice her to come back..."

Søren Schauser, *Tidende Berlingske*, May 10, 2009

In an Opera Arias and Duets Concert at Smetana Hall in Prague:

"In her concert, soprano Nicole Cabell appeared for the first time at Prague's Smetana Hall. Her debut confirmed her unquestionable talent and potential. A mix of Mozart, Rossini and French arias showed a cross section of the 30-year old California native's repertoire. Nicole Cabell also sang 'Les Filles de Cadix', a famous song by Léo Delibes, and a fiery zarzuela aria from 'La Marchenera', both with Spanish colorings.

Although physically, we would imagine this attractive brunette to be performing the roles of 'femmes fatales', her voice and gestures seem to be more along the lines of the gentle Susanna, the soulful Bess or the lyrical Manon; as a matter of fact, in this role from Massenet's opera she seemed to truly *be* herself.

She managed to toss off the technically difficult coloratura of Rosina's 'Una voce poco fa'. Her high notes sounded delicious and her legato flowed as smoothly as honey. She also had no problem dominating the orchestra.

A nearly sold-out Smetana Hall rewarded the singer with long applause; yet, standing ovations came only after her aria from 'Rusalka'. Nicole Cabell sang this aria as her second encore, after a duet from Gershwin's 'Porgy and Bess'. It was a risk well worth taking. Her pronunciation, which we Czechs are so touchy about, was near perfect. And the sincere simplicity of this dark-hued Rusalka was disarming."

Dita Kopa•ova Hradecka, *Lidove Noviny*, May 4, 2009

“Magical Voice of Cabell

At Wednesday’s gala concert, the audience heard the art of an up-and-coming American opera star, soprano Nicole Cabell.

The Prague Symphony Orchestra and the conductor Ivan Repuai• accompanied this tall African-American artist. Her guest of the evening was Slovak baritone Aleš Jeniš. The first half was full of arias from Mozart’s ‘Le Nozze di Figaro’ and Rossini’s ‘Barber of Seville’ and with her beautiful voice the versatile American proved that casting her in the recent film version of ‘La Bohème’ was the right decision. Her virtuosity was also manifest in the famous ‘Una voce poco fa’ from ‘Barber’.

The second half was even better. We heard arias from Berlioz, Massenet, Gounod and Delibes; i.e. French repertoire. Standing ovations came after two arias from ‘Porgy and Bess’ and the ‘Song to the Moon’ from ‘Rusalka’ which Cabell interpreted with impressive Czech diction, her magical voice and much emotion.”

Pravo, May 2, 2009

As Adina in **L’Elisir d’Amore** at the Metropolitan Opera:

“... I would rather hear young American artists in their prime like Cabell and Pittas, with fresh, piquant lyric voices and ingratiating presence, than international luminaries like Gheorghiu and Villazón in less than top form. Special kudos go to Cabell, as the educated and independent landowner, for her warm ‘Prendi; per me sei libero’.”

Bruce-Michael Gelbert, *Qonstage.com*, April 20, 2009

“The sunny singing and felicitous acting however was the highlight of this jolly event, especially in the case of **Nicole Cabell**, the last minute substitute for Angela Gheorghiu in the role of Adina. Gheorghiu’s shoes are two very formidable objects to fill, but Cabell proved herself one of the happiest surprises of the season. Besides having an exceptionally beautiful voice, Cabell shares many other virtues with her ailing colleague: Her acting is graceful, her phrasing flawless, and her ability to appear both vulnerable and absolutely dauntless is quite winning. Most of all, she shares with Gheorghiu a transparency which allows one to look behind the characteristic sweetness and good humor of Adina and her music, and find a mysterious, vulnerable and absolutely authentic human heart positioned in its depths.”

Raymond Beegle, *Classical Voice*, April 15, 2009

“Following Angela Gheorghiu, the youthful Nicole Cabell, whom we had discovered as Adina in Montpellier in 2006, was simply delightful and perfectly cast in this repertoire.”

François Lesueur, *Concertclassic.com*, April 16, 2009

In the **“Honor! The Voice” Recital** at Carnegie Hall, March 2009:

“Ms. Cabell was sparkling and seductive in Liszt’s ‘Lorelei’ and Strauss’s ‘Cäcilie’. [...] Ms. Cabell, Ms. Brown and Mr. Owens were stylish and appealing in numbers from ‘Porgy and Bess.’ Ms. Blackwell and Ms. Cabell waged playful battle with high notes in ‘This Little Light of Mine’.”

Steve Smith, *The New York Times*, March 24, 2009

In **Recital** at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto, March 2009:

“ Thrilling soprano Cabell makes a true diva's debut

There's a special thrill in hearing a great young artist in a live performance for the first time. That was certainly the case for the solo debut of 31-year-old American soprano Nicole Cabell and her piano accompanist, Spencer Myer, 29, at Roy Thomson Hall yesterday.

In a program of art songs that began with Franz Liszt before weaving an interesting path through accessible Spanish, Argentinean and American music, the two collaborators quickly worked their magic.

What began as a disappointingly small house full of politely curious visitors quickly turned into the kind of love-in usually reserved for the world's great divas.

There are literally hundreds of very good singers in the world, but very few have that extra little something, a kind of musical fairy dust that distinguishes them from a crowd. Cabell, still fairly fresh from a 2005 win at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, is clearly one of those elect. She has a huge voice that is all thick, clotted cream down low and all ringing goosebumps up high. She has a natural musicality that caresses pleasing shapes out of musical phrases, a warm presence – and she is easy on the eyes.

Dressed up in gowns by Yorkville designer Rosemarie Umetsu – sultry black-and-burgundy in the first half, striking black-and-white in the second – Cabell already looks the part of the great diva.

Besides the sheer glory of her multi-hued vocal chords, Cabell showed a lot of versatility. Four songs by Liszt, including his famous setting of *Die Lorelei*, showed elegant restraint. In five *Classical Spanish Songs* by Fernando Obradors, the soprano added colour in both sound and expression. The dynamics were further turned up in four songs by Argentine composer Carlos Guastavino.

Cabell's diction was crisp and clear throughout, further highlighting the fun of Leonard Bernstein's *I Hate Music* cycle. The singer also picked seven songs from *Genius Child* by American Ricky Ian Gordon, which showed off even more dramatic flair.

After that, it was easy to bring the house down with the traditional spirituals, as well as a set of encores that included the *Song to the Moon* from Antonín Dvořák's opera *Rusalka*. Myer was an elegant, discreet and remarkably fluid accompanist in a wide range of styles.

It's safe to say that everyone present yesterday can't wait for a return engagement.”

John Terauds, *Toronto Star*, March 9, 2009

“The American soprano Nicole Cabell is a glamorous 31-year-old with an important voice: gleaming, focused and of a lovely timbre throughout its range; an instrument to be cherished.”

Ken Winters, *The Globe and Mail*, March 10, 2009

In **Recital** at Hertz Hall in Berkeley, March 2009:

“ **All-American Songstress**

The American song repertoire is often an afterthought for recital singers, but soprano Nicole Cabell made it the centerpiece of her program Sunday afternoon at Hertz Hall on the UC Berkeley campus. It was a wise choice, one that showed the young artist's voice to advantage.

Presented by Cal Performances, Cabell sang American songs by Leonard Bernstein and Ricky Ian Gordon and a selection of American spirituals, as well as works by Franz Liszt, Fernando Obradors, and Carlos Guastavino, and, as encores, music by Giacomo Puccini and Richard Strauss. Pianist Spencer Myer was the accompanist.

Advance word had expectations running high for Cabell, a rising star in the opera world whose debut recording, *Soprano*, was released in 2007. The California-born artist, who comes from a family of law enforcers (her grandfather was the first African-American police chief in Los Angeles), won the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2005 and has been on a clear trajectory ever since. She seems to be everywhere these days — making her Metropolitan Opera debut as Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, expanding her repertoire with roles including Adina in *L'Elisir d'amore* (at the Met) and Leila in *Les Pecheurs de perles* (at Chicago Lyric Opera, her home company.) She appears on recordings of *La Bohème* (as Musetta) and *Porgy and Bess* (Clara).

Cabell boasts a secure, flexible soprano instrument, one she deploys with laser-beam accuracy. The sound is warm and full in the lower and middle registers, crystalline at the top. Her lithe figure and poised stage presence are assets, too; making her entrance in a flattering flounced silk gown in a lovely shade of indigo, Cabell looked beautiful, classy, and appropriate.

Cabell returned for Bernstein's five-song cycle, *I Hate Music*. The settings — “My Name Is Barbara,” “Jupiter Has Seven Moons,” “I Hate Music,” “A Big Indian and a Little

Indian,” and “I’m a Person Too” — are witty and wordy, and she struck the right note of glib charm in each.

Seven songs from Gordon’s *Genius Child* marked the afternoon’s high point. Written for soprano Harolyn Blackwell on texts by the great African-American poet Langston Hughes, they are lilting, pensive, poignant, and exuberant, and Cabell, with excellent support from Myer, sang them with ease and fluidity.

That ease extended to the spirituals — *Oh, What a Beautiful City; My Lord, What a Morning; and Ride On, King Jesus* — that closed the second half. Cabell’s voice bloomed in these moving, quintessentially American works.

Cabell gave two lustrous encores: *O Mio Babbino Caro* from Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Cacelie* by Richard Strauss.

Georgia Rowe, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, March 3, 2009

In **Recital** at Memorial Hall in Cincinnati, March 2009:

“ **Soprano Cabell dazzles audience** ”

When Nicole Cabell unleashed her dazzling flights of coloratura in Rossini’s most celebrated aria from “The Barber of Seville” on Wednesday night in Memorial Hall, the audience understandably went wild.

Here was a stunning young singer, on the verge of superstardom, who offered “Una voce poco fa” in a performance that was both intelligent and fresh. Her concert portrayal had just the right amount of unexaggerated humor and fun, while her elaborate vocal trills, runs and leaps sparkled effortlessly.

The aria was the showstopper in Cabell’s program, mostly consisting of art songs and spirituals performed with an excellent pianist, Spencer Myer. The recital, presented by Cincinnati Opera in Memorial Hall, was the first stop in the soprano’s first cross-country tour. It offered a taste of what opera lovers will see when Cabell, a graduate of Lyric Opera of Chicago’s young artist program, makes her role debut as the Countess in Mozart’s “The Marriage of Figaro.”

But it was only a taste. If there were one criticism -- the only one -- it would be that there was just one opera aria on her program. It left some of the nearly 300 opera fans wanting more, even though she delivered a second aria – a luscious “O mio babbino caro” from Puccini’s “Gianni Schicchi” – for her encore.

Cabell, a native of Southern California, has a magnetic stage presence. She opened with three songs of love and longing by Franz Liszt, unveiling a voice of arresting richness, refinement and beautiful line. Although she seemed to be a bit restrained at first, her phrasing was thoughtful and she communicated the mood of each song – two sung in German, one in French. The lullaby-like “Oh! Quand je dors” (Oh, while I sleep) to texts

by Victor Hugo, was beautifully felt.

Five Songs by Catalan composer Fernando Obradors were a stark contrast. In these, you could almost feel the heat of Barcelona, home of the composer, whose lifetime had a similar span to Maurice Ravel's, and whose music is just as evocative.

Singing in Catalan, Cabell performed them with flair and a range of vocal color. "To Love" was both seductive and humorous. Others, such as "My only Laureola," were rapturous, phrased with subtlety and imagination. The finale, "Chiquitita la novia" (A tiny bride) began with a wordless, improvisatory vocal cadenza, sung against trills in the piano. Myer was a superb partner in this fragrant music.

Cabell opened her second half with Leonard Bernstein's witty song cycle, "I Hate Music," followed by Seven Songs from Ricky Ian Gordon's "Genius Child." Gordon, who has composed music for divas such as Renee Fleming and Audra MacDonal, set the texts of Langston Hughes for his "Genius Child."

They were melodious and inventive, and the singer traveled through their varied moods with sensitivity and sumptuous vocal color. In each song, such as "Troubled Woman," "My People," and "Joy," Cabell drew the listener in, projecting a radiant and elegant presence. Myer seamlessly created atmosphere and color in this effortless collaboration.

Some of Cabell's exotic appeal may be partly because of her heritage, which includes African-American, Korean and European ancestry. She finished with a trio of spirituals, which were soaring and deeply felt."

Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 26, 2009

As Pamina in **The Magic Flute** at the Metropolitan Opera:

"And amid the kid-friendly hubbub was one decidedly adult treat: Nicole Cabell, a gifted soprano making her Met debut, brought a warm, elegant sound and a sparkling presence to Pamina."

Steve Smith, *The New York Times*, December 23, 2008

"Pamina (Nicole Cabell), in her Met debut, sang with a lovely expressive voice with beautiful vocal color, particularly in her middle and lower registers. She conveyed all the dimensions of Pamina's character and her music: innocence as she sang with Papageno; determination in the face of the power of Sarastro; abject despair when she mistook Tamino's vow-inspired silence for an absence of love; and finally, the greatest evocation of love in all opera – the first eight measures of her duet with Tamino."

Arlene Judith Klotzko, *Concertonet.com*, January 9, 2009

"Soprano Cabell shines in Mozart's 'Flute'

Since I was not present at Cabell's Met debut on the previous Monday, her appearance on this occasion was of special interest. By the time she reached her principal aria "Ah, I

feel it”, it was clear that we were in the presence of a real star. She has a voice of considerable beauty, impeccably schooled.”

Raoul Abdul, *The New York Amsterdam News*, January 1-7, 2009

“This year’s cast features several young standouts, including the up-and-coming soprano Nicole Cabell.”

The New Yorker, January 5, 2009

“As Pamina, soprano Nicole Cabell, making her Met debut, was a vibrant presence and made creamy, rich sounds when she sang.”

Joshua Rosenblum, *Opera News*, March 2009

As Musetta in the Robert Dornhelm film of **La Bohème**:

“Soprano Nicole Cabell is glamorous and spirited as the flirtatious Musetta, the on-again, off-again sweetheart of Marcello.”

Mike Silverman, *Associated Press*, September 21, 2009

“Then in comes Nicole Cabell as Musetta with marvelously telegenic smiles. Her Act 3 confrontation with sometime-lover Marcello (Boaz Daniel) is anything but youthful sparring: They're serious.”

David Patrick Stearns, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 13, 2009

“This film version of ‘La Bohème’ also offers a real surprise: Nicole Cabell as Musetta. In the opera house she is a very proper soprano. But when the camera comes close, her luscious lips and slanted almond-colored eyes show a provocative sensuality, an aura of uninhibited voluptuousness, which in a fascinating way brings to mind Emile Zola’s ‘Nana’. Next to this kind of animal, Anna Netrebko never seemed so pure.”

Frederik Hansen, *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 24, 2008

“However, the Dream Couple isn’t the only convincing element here, but also Nicole Cabell in the role of Musetta. Whether as the man-devouring vamp or as the generous and devoted friend of Mimi, who practically gives her last shirt to her, the young soprano pulls all the stops and is indeed one of the discoveries of this movie.”

Kunstkinos.de

“Nicole Cabell’s Musetta brings some much-needed brio to proceedings.”

David Bellan, *Oxford Times*, December 17, 2008

“The American singer Nicole Cabell brings much frivolity and uninhibited vanity to the role of the seductress Musetta.”

Thorsten Funke, *Critic.de*, October 7, 2008

“... A particularly vivacious and alluring Musetta by African-American soprano Nicole Cabell.”

Philip French, *The Observer*, December 21, 2008

“Nicole Cabell (Musetta) is perfect as the great operatic 'tart with a heart'. As far as I'm concerned, it's a role which is made or broken on the 'Waltz', and I have rarely heard it sung better than here. She is also particularly moving when asking Marcello to sell her earrings to buy Mimi some medicine.”

Alan Titherington, *Myreviewer.com*, March 25, 2009

As Leila in **Les Pêcheurs de Perles** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“In her role debut as the priestess torn between love and her vows of chastity, the lithe and beautiful Nicole Cabell wrapped her radiant soprano around Leila's fragrant music with taste and intelligence. The voice had an appealing float plus finespun phrasing that proved how well-schooled Lyric's star alumna is in matters of French vocal style.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, October 8, 2008

“Cabell brought an abundance of liquid, womanly tone to Leila's music, the vibrato imparting a lovely shimmer to the line. The display writing was airily dispatched, though one senses Cabell's instrument reaching for a meatier repertory than her youthful lyric-coloratura fare has thus far provided.”

Mark Thomas Ketterson, *Opera News*, January 2009

“Soprano Nicole Cabell (Leila) showed depth and richness on each vocal level and her Act 2 duet with Cutler was a highlight.”

Bryant Manning, *Time Out Chicago*, October 7, 2008

“Beautiful soprano Nicole Cabell is outstanding with a searing emotional devotion that pierces the heart.”

Betty Mohr, *Southtown Star*, October 10, 2008

“Each of the four principals in this production demonstrates a strong sense of character portrayal and interpersonal emotional involvement in both singing and acting. The talents of this cast are essential to the success of the music and drama, since the solo and duet pieces are interwoven by Bizet to highlight individuals interacting with each other or with the chorus throughout the opera. [...] In the role of the priestess Nicole Cabell sings with beauty of tone and flexibility, her range secure in all the scales and coloratura required at this point of the score. One senses her creation of a character with voice, since she remains stationary at first during her prayer. As Nadir awakens and hears again the once familiar voice, he moves toward the base of the rock. Leila reveals her identity by lifting momentarily the veil: the mutual recognition — and Nadir's fervent request — prompts Leila to continue her song. Here Cabell's performance excels in varying and decorating the repeated lines, her effortless coloratura including several skillfully executed trills. [...] When she is alone, Leila senses that Nadir must be in the immediate area, and she begins her cavatina “Comme autrefois” (“As in the past”). In this piece Cabell exhibits ravishing lyrical control as she combines memories of the past with hints of an imminent reunion. Her song is answered from outside the temple by Nadir so that music serves

fittingly as their reintroduction to physical contact. Once they embrace, their duet is a confession of love and loyalty as well as a realization of the conflicts that will follow on their renewed bond. Both Cabell and Cutler give full expression to the complexity of emotion and commitment awaiting them. [...] Leïla now enters the tent to ask that he pardon Nadir, yet the rage of Zurga returns when he realizes that she still loves his rival. The exchange here between Cabell and Gunn becomes one of the dramatic highlights of the performance.”

Salvatore Calomino, *Opera Today*, November 7, 2008

“Soprano Nicole Cabell, an alumna of the Lyric's Ryan Center for American Artists who has exploded onto the world opera scene, portrays Leila, the the two men's love interest. [...] But there's much more marvelous music, including Leila's Act 2 aria, ‘Comme autrefois,’ for which Cabell received a rousing ovation at Monday's opening night.”

Bill Gowen, *Chicago Daily Herald*, October 7, 2008

In a **Concert of Opera Arias and Ensembles** with the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Lyric alumna Nicole Cabell, soon to appear in Lyric's fall performances of ‘The Pearl Fishers,’ also worked her superstar charm on the throng with her luminous and affecting account of Micaela's aria from Bizet's ‘Carmen.’ Cabell and fellow Lyric alumna Elizabeth De Shong also teamed up for a meltingly lovely rendition of the famous duet from Delibes' ‘Lakme.’”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, September 8, 2008

As the Soprano Solo in Tippett's **A Child of Our Time** at the Edinburgh Festival:

“Nicole Cabell's warm soprano soared gloriously above Steal Away. If you didn't have a lump in your throat by the final spiritual, you probably needed to check your pulse.”

Sarah Urwin Jones, *The Times*, September 2, 2008

“...Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, which featured a dream solo quartet of Nicole Cabell, Jane Irwin, John Mark Ainsley and John Tomlinson.”

Luther Wade, *Opera News*, November 2008

“... The superb solo quartet of angelic soprano Nicole Cabell, ...”

Kenneth Walton, *The Scotsman*, September 1, 2008

In an **all-Puccini Concert** in Lübeck with the NDR Orchestra:

“Nicole Cabell has a wonderful, pure and clear voice, which soars effortlessly up to a high C. She gave ample proof of this in the Finale to Act I of ‘La Bohème’. Liù's aria from ‘Turandot’ and the warhorse ‘O mio babbino caro’ from ‘Gianni Schicchi’ were also sheer delight.”

TD, *HL Live*, August 22, 2008

As Musetta in **La Bohème** with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden:

“Things picked up in the Second Act with the arrival of Nicole Cabell's Musetta. It's a role that's been in her repertoire a while and it showed. Acted with a sure sense of timing and a deft comic touch, she livened up the stage with her imaginative portrayal: her truly modern, scathing caricature of publicity-seeking self-obsession gave the production a dash of contemporary relevance missing elsewhere. There's a darkness to the voice that's unusual in a role often filled with brighter (or shriller) singers, and what we heard was enough to suggest that Cabell's Mimì will be something to look forward to.”

Hugo Shirley, *Musical Criticism*, July 14, 2008

“As Musetta the American soprano Nicole Cabell made a strong impression, not overdoing the goings-on in Act 2 and singing the Waltz Song most musically.”

Michael Kennedy, *Opera*, September 2008

“Nicole Cabell is effectively making her Covent Garden debut - having previously appeared with the company in concert. While her voice isn't large, it is beautifully focused and her hyperactive Musetta gives the fun-loving vamp a neurotic edge. She looks gorgeous too.”

David Gutman, *The Stage*, July 14, 2008

“The other Bohemians were led by Nicole Cabell, showing off her classy, though not yet large, soprano as Musetta, surely a candidate for lyrical Mozart roles such as Pamina or Ilia in due course.”

Richard Fairman, *Financial Times*, July 16, 2008

“Nicole Cabell provided a highly impressive Musetta, an interpretation nicely balancing seductiveness, humour and empathy.”

Christian Hoskins, *MusicOMH*, July 15, 2008

“The dramatic heart of the work shifted to the Marcello-Musetta relationship from Act II. Her coquettishness and his jealousy gives way to their reconciliation in Act IV. American soprano Nicole Cabell revealed great comic timing and vocally went from strength to strength during and after her ‘Quando me'n vo’.”

Jim Pritchard, *Seen and Heard*, July 17, 2008

“There's much to delight in, especially Nicole Cabell's coquettish Musetta. This Cardiff Singer of the Year 2005 has comic pace as well as vocal poise.”

Fiona Maddocks, *Evening Standard*, July 14, 2008

As Imelda in the **Opera Rara Recording of Imelda de' Lambertazzi**:

“Flaring with defiance, then riven by compunction to family duty, Nicole Cabell's superbly realized heroine wins and breaks hearts.”

Warren Keith Wright, *Opera Magazine*, July 2008

As Musetta in **La Bohème** on Deutsche Grammophon's recording:

"As Musetta, Nicole Cabell shows many of the qualities of a well-cast Mimì."

John Steane, *The Gramophone*, Editor's Choice, June 2008

"Heading the supporting cast that surrounds the bohemian lovers is the young American soprano Nicole Cabell, an emerging star in her own right. She makes a strong impression as the flirtatious Musetta, the soft grain of her voice contrasting well with Netrebko's slightly metallic sound."

Mike Silverman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 3, 2008

"I rather like the glamour of Nicole Cabell's Musetta: sometimes the character can be two-dimensional, but Cabell's treatment of the text and beauty of tone ensure that she doesn't get painted too broadly here. 'Quando m'en vo' is an excellent vehicle for her talents and she is by no means fazed by singing alongside her well-known colleagues."

Dominic McHugh, *Musical Criticism*, May 26, 2008

"Nicole Cabell is one of the youngest members of this cast. In 2005, at the age of 27, she took top honors at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. After presenting the award to her, Joan Sutherland offered this advice, 'Take your time. Don't let people rush you.' Cabell is trying to live by those words, but her career is still moving at a fast clip. She is by no means intimidated by her world-class colleagues in this operatic performance. Cabell loves the role of Musetta, and the character is a perfect vehicle for Cabell's strong stage presence and silky soprano voice. Cabell's Musetta is flirtatious, yet vulnerable as she works to gain the attention of Marcello the painter in her famous waltz, 'Quando me'n vo.'"

Julie Amacher, *Minnesota Public Radio*, June 24, 2008

"Nicole Cabell's Musetta is also noteworthy: there's not just winking in her waltz, there's vulnerability too."

Geoff Brown, *Times Online*, May 16, 2008

"The rest of the cast is strong, especially American Nicole Cabell as Musetta."

Bradley Bambarger, *The Star-Ledger*, July 21, 2008

"Nicole Cabell is Musetta. She is more coquettish than minxish, which is fine. And she does not inject the role with too much ham — which is welcome."

Jay Nordlinger, *The Sun*, June 13, 2008

"The rest of the cast (especially Nicole Cabell as Musetta) is also of a high level..."

Nicolas Blanmont, *La Libre*, May 21, 2008

As the Soprano Solo in Grieg's **Peer Gynt** with the San Diego Symphony:

"Nicole Cabell brought unusual strength to the 'Peer Gynt' vocal solos, sung in the original Norwegian. If the richness of her voice and beautifully-arched phrasing called to

mind Richard Strauss's 'Four Last Songs,' I gladly forgive lavishing such vocal allure on lesser musical vehicles.”

Kenneth Herman, *San Diego.com*, April 28, 2008

As the Soprano Solo in Tippett's **A Child of Our Time** with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra:

“Yet even the nether reaches must have heard, and enjoyed, Nicole Cabell's gold-and-silver soprano. Davis's former protégée from the Lyric Opera, Chicago, made direct contact straight away, burning up the emotions in her first aria, How Can I Cherish My Man.”

Geoff Brown, *The Times*, April 9, 2008

“... When Nicole Cabell carried her aching melisma into the rapt opening of 'Steal Away', the release was extraordinary.”

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, April 9, 2008

In **Solo Recital** in Omaha:

Sensational soprano revels in Ravel and proves her prowess singing Previn

“Vocal recitals may be dying elsewhere in the country, but in Omaha, they're entering a golden age.

The Tuesday Musical Concert Series is responsible for that happy situation. For more than 100 years, the area's oldest musical organization has brought the world's top singers and concert artists to Omaha. On Tuesday at the Joslyn Art Museum, it presented soprano Nicole Cabell.

One of the fastest-rising stars in opera, Cabell gained international recognition several years ago, when she won the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff, Wales. Since then, she has appeared with many of the world's great opera companies. She'll make her Metropolitan Opera debut next season.

For her Omaha recital, brilliantly performed with pianist Spencer Myer, Cabell chose a program that tested the full range of her technique and emotions.

In songs by Franz Liszt, Maurice Ravel and Carlos Guastavino, Cabell demonstrated not only a virtuoso vocal technique, but also an expert command of language; she traversed German, French and Spanish during the first 30 minutes of the concert alone.

She was no less impressive during the second half, singing the American songs of André Previn and Ben Moore with immediacy and emotional intensity.

Liszt, the great 19th-century Hungarian composer, is mostly known today for his orchestral tone poems and sparkling piano music. Cabell proved that he was also an affecting songwriter.

His song "Die Lorelei," based on the poetry of Heinrich Heine, sounds as if it could be part of a thrilling Wagner opera. The music is emotional and dramatic, and it requires the soprano to sing in full chest voice one minute, full head voice the next.

Cabell moved effortlessly from the bottom of her chesty range to the top, without stripping vocal gears. And she nailed the music's high notes, creating a sound that was positively luminous. Myer, for his part, tossed off Liszt's dazzling piano figurations as if they were child's play.

Ravel's "Five Greek Folk Songs" were more lyrical and playful than the Liszt piece. Cabell sang them with a silvery tone and with phrasing that was so impressionistic that the words almost seemed to blend together, like the overlapping impasto of a Monet.

She ended the first half with four short Guastavino songs. Though a 20th-century composer, Guastavino was an unapologetic romantic, and Cabell sang his music with appropriate tenderness.

The highlight of the second half was Previn's "Take My Mother Home," an extended blues-like number that Cabell sang with tearful emotion. She ended the program with American spirituals, singing them with an unusual mix of authentic Southern diction and absolute operatic polish."

John Pitcher, *Omaha World-Herald*, April 2, 2008

In **Solo Recital** in Tryon, NC:

When the recitalist is a singer, the relationship between performer and audience is unique. It feels like dialogue. It feels personal. It feels a little dangerous.

Nicole Cabell, lyric soprano, closed Tryon Concert Association's season March 29 with warmth, ease, and charisma. She is soulful without affectation, beautiful without a hint of arrogance, and competent beyond comment. Her voice is even from top to bottom with high notes that are round like river rocks, yet densely soft like gold ingots.

Cabell sang to us in a way that felt more direct than the usual singer, which helped her sell an unusual program of Actual Songs to a group geared up for at least one dazzling warhorse of an aria. (I don't fault opera singers for choosing to sing Songs rather than Arias in recital. It's a valid expansion that can be just as rewarding, not to mention more interesting for the accompanist who often gets to play an Actual Piano Part rather than a reduction of an orchestral score.)

Three songs by Franz Liszt opened the program. It's too easy to forget that Liszt wrote many beautiful songs with "Es Muss ein Wunderbares sein," "Die Lorelei," and "Oh! quand je dors" certainly among the most beautiful.

Argentine composer Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000) eschewed the avant-garde style of his time and wrote accessible, emotionally appealing music well-suited to Cabell's gorgeous sound and finely tuned sensitivity. Myer's technical skill was a blessing in these pieces as it would prove to be for the remainder of the evening.

Three Toni Morrison poems set to music by Andre Previn (from their six-song cycle "Honey and Rue") opened the second half. Captivating texts, tricky rhythms, and devilish leaps were handled with ease. "Take My Mother Home" was the loosest we would hear the fastidious Myer as he shifted effortlessly from stiff recitative into convincing bluesy playing.

Ben Moore's three songs were similarly modern and equally captivating. Hearing such an unforced and incredibly beautiful sound at both top and bottom of such a wide range was intriguing – certainly enough to make anyone's imagination run wild.

Three spirituals – "Oh! What a Beautiful City," "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," and "Ride On, King Jesus" – were a fitting ending for this sophisticated and challenging recital.

After her standing ovation and a swooshing Strauss encore, I headed for home thinking of the many possibilities and changes ahead for such a young and gifted singer. I plan to stay tuned.

Rita Landrum, *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, April 11, 2008

As Pamina in **Die Zauberflöte** with Opera Pacific:

"Nicole Cabell, 2005 winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition (which also launched the careers of baritones Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Bryn Terfel), made her company debut as Pamina.

A soprano with aristocratic poise, warmth and lyric line, Cabell also proved an actor of sensitivity and credibility. Her despairing aria when she mistakes Tamino's silence for a change in his love for her ("Ach, ich fühl's") was detailed and touching."

Chris Pasles, *The Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 2008

"The chief vocal reason to see this "Flute," and it's quite enough, actually, is Nicole Cabell. The Ventura native, winner of the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, more than lives up to her advance notices. It's a golden, creamy, evenly gauged voice from top to bottom; the music just pours out of her. It's a lightish soprano at this point, but there's a depth and richness in it that allowed her to sing Pamina with eloquent, subtly shaded phrasing and exquisite diminuendos. She seems to be a natural actress too,

lending the role a girlish earnestness; when she eventually helps Tamino through his trials, she's a trooper. It's really a kind of "oh, my goodness" performance."

Tim Mangan, *The Orange County Register*, January 24, 2008

In **New Year's Concerts** with the Orchestre de Lyon:

"With her dark, velvety timbre and her powerful dramatic soprano voice beautifully supported by an even and balanced vocal line, Nicole Cabell was seductive in arias by Gounod, Verdi and Offenbach."

A. M., *Le Progrès*, December 31, 2007

In a **Christmas Concert** with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall:

"Cabell lent a rich lyric soprano to a vibrant performance of the Johann Sebastian Bach-Charles Gounod 'Ave Maria.' With the choir, a precise and sonorous ensemble, she sang, by turns, the melody or high harmony above the choristers, in 'The First Nowell,' and capped a fervent, fluid 'Angels We Have Heard on High,' by Edward Shippen Barnes and James Chadwick, with the choir, with a bright final high note. Cabell brought a touch of class to an audience sing-along, with the chorus and Severinsen, on trumpet, of Irving Berlin's 'White Christmas.'"

Bruce-Michael Gelbert, *Q On Stage*, December 15, 2007

As Musetta in **La Bohème** at the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

"Thank goodness for soprano Nicole Cabell, whose sexy spitfire of a Musetta energized every scene she was in."

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 2007

"High points in this production, which has four more performances through November 23, include soprano Nicole Cabell as the flirtatious singer Musetta: her honeyed voice is rich but never heavy, and she's scintillating in the aria 'Quando Me'n Vo,' moving with a dancer's ease and emoting with an actor's conviction."

Barbara Yaross, *Chicago Reader*, November 8, 2008

"Soprano Nicole Cabell as Musetta, the vixen with the heart of gold, dazzled Marcello as well as the audience with her seductive aria 'Quando m'en vo.' She was totally in character whether vamping Kelsey's sturdy Marcello or looking after the dying Mimi."

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 2007

"The great Café Momus scene comprising Act 2 belongs to Musetta, the Paris courtesan with a heart of gold. Portrayed by American soprano Nicole Cabell, the scene includes Musetta's waltz ('Quando m'en vo') in which the entire Bohemian neighborhood joins in: brass band, adults and children (kudos to the Lyric Opera Chorus and Chicago Children's Choir).

Cabell, a 2005 alumna of the Lyric's Ryan Opera Center, is making her featured Lyric Opera debut with these performances (she sang several roles as a member of the Opera

Center). The California native has the kind of star quality, and best of all the vocal resources, that bodes well for a long and successful international career.”

Bill Gowen, *Chicago Daily Herald*, October 4, 2007

“American soprano Nicole Cabell, an alumna of Lyric's Opera Center and main prize winner of the 2005 BBC-Cardiff Singer of the World competition, was a lively Musetta.”

Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 3, 2007

“With her clear, almost effortless soprano voice, Nicole Cabell gave a fine reading of the famous waltz-aria that dominates the act. While addressing all the comic demands of the role, Ms Cabell gave a fine interpretation of the number without any of the affectations that some singers bring to it.”

James L Zychowicz, *Seen and Heard*, October 20, 2007

As Musetta in **La Bohème** at the Washington Opera:

“As Musetta, Nicole Cabell made her Momus entrance in full vixen regalia, wielding a whip — to use, of course, on a crawling Alcindoro (Michael Nansel). The soprano proceeded to enliven things with a bright, expressive voice and a good deal of theatrical presence.”

Tim Smith, *Opera News*, December 2007

“Nicole Cabell sang the role of Musetta with agility and brilliance.”

Tim Page, *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2007

As Musetta in **La Bohème** at the Santa Fe Opera:

“There were two splendid singers in the cast. Cardiff Singer of the World for 2005 Nicole Cabell was a smashing Musetta (not that she smashed plates in the Café Momus, like other Musettas). The voice was a pleasure to hear, creamy from top to bottom, and her trim figure and fetching manner made her thoroughly convincing.”

George Loomis, *Musical America*, August 27, 2007

“Puccini's *La bohème* boasts a sparkling Musetta by the Cardiff “Singer of the World” (2005) soprano Nicole Cabell. She was in lovely, creamy voice and, abetted by her svelte figure, was every inch the endearing flirt.”

George Loomis, *Financial Times*, August 22, 2007

“Fast-rising star Nicole Cabell's Musetta moved like a cat as she uncoiled her pretty, gleaming soprano, the voice of temptation come to life. Yet she also revealed the sympathetic woman beneath the surface layers of luxury as well as the flirt on the make.”

Craig Smith, *The New Mexican*, June 30, 2007

In her first solo CD, **Soprano**:

“Here's an hour of enchantment from the American soprano who won the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World. There she swept the board with her final item, Teresa's taxing but rewarding aria from *Benvenuto Cellini*. Here it forms the centrepiece of a recital that takes her with extreme accomplishment through a varied programme.

Perhaps the French pieces suit her best of all, and she seems happy singing in the language. She delivers Juliette's Waltz Song with insouciance with insouciance, then follows it with a deeply soulful account of Juliette's last-act aria. "Depuis le jour" is right up there among the best of the past, with the high note towards the end, touched with pure lightness. The dash of the bolero from *Les filles de Cadix* is as fitting as it should be.

But Cabell can do many other things so well as to satisfy the most fastidious connoisseur of fine singing. Her bel canto skills are disclosed in Julietta's opening aria from *Capuleti*, with the even legato a pleasure to encounter. Norina's flighty aria from *Don Pasquale* is done with just the requisite allure.

The two popular Puccini arias again show off her clear, clean tone and secure technique, even if one would sometimes like a bit more light and shade in her bright voice.

It's big leap from there to Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, but once more Cabell gives every evidence that she knows what she is about and the aching phrases hanging in the air. The Menotti aria is well sung but musically nothing special; ‘Summertime’ gets a lovely reading.

Sir Andrew Davis and the LPO find the right mood for each piece in turn and the recording is faultless. Who knows, maybe **Decca** has a new Sutherland in view.”

Alan Blythe, *The Gramophone*, Editor's Choice, May 2007

“Nicole Cabell's CD debut, as winner of the 2005 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, shows versatility as this American lyric soprano's strength. She encompasses Tippett and Menotti with the same voice of liquid gold as her conventional pieces by Charpentier and Donizetti. In her three Puccini arias she can sculpt slow legato phrases with a sensuality that twine them around you. Yet her rapid floridity is fearless in the long arias by Bellini and Berlioz. Her Gershwin “Summertime” is refreshingly direct. An outstanding launch.”

Ian Dando, *NZ Listener*, April 28-May 4 2007

“Events moved fast once the American soprano Nicole Cabell won the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World contest in June 2005 with a lyric voice one part silver, one part gold and another part intoxicating red wine.

She signed an exclusive contract with one of the ritziest of record companies, Decca. Over Christmas week of that year the microphones sprouted to catch her in a motley programme with the London Philharmonic, featuring her Cardiff show stopper from *Benvenuto Cellini*, Gershwin's *Summertime*, Charpentier, several Italian diva jewels, even a little Tippett.

The CD catches her at a moment in her career. If we miss the ultimate in polish, we get plenty of raw promise, and that promise can be exceptional. Try her glissando down to the close of *Summertime*: an occasion for the tingling of spines.

Listen to her float the last line of *Quando me'n vò*, from *La Bohème*. In general the romantic yearning in Puccini's music suits her; she glows especially in the arias from *Gianni Schicchi* and *La Rondine*, luxuriating in the long, ambulating melodies, phrased with considerable skill.

Andrew Davis, who's conducted her often at Lyric Opera of Chicago, conjures luscious accompaniments from the London Philharmonic; the horn player Timothy Brown well deserves a bow of his own.

In repertoire Cabell is plucky. How often does Puccini walk with Tippett? What other recitalist embraces Menotti? Her track from his opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* isn't the CD's most successful, but you have to applaud someone not content with trodden paths.

Presenting Cabell's trophy at Cardiff, Joan Sutherland warned her: "Don't do too much too soon." Words worth pondering; and from some angles maybe she's already recorded too soon.

But when that voice is kept focused, its power and heat are undeniable. Nicole Cabell, soprano, is not going to go away."

Geoff Brown, *The Times*, March 16, 2007

"Last month we had the opportunity to hear a singer we had never heard before, soprano Nicole Cabell, performing the role of Clara, in Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*, and we were impressed with her sound.

Now comes a new, recording under the DECCA label featuring Ms. Cabell in a debut album (due in May, 07) under her own name. The singer comes highly recommended, having won the BBC's Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in 2005, listing credits and reviews worthy of a talent in clear ascendancy – which she obviously is. For this debut CD she chooses some of what she likes best. "I wanted to sing not simply pieces that I love," she is quoted in her acknowledgement, "but the music that I believe fits my voice." A lyric soprano with punch, Ms. Cabell, glides effortlessly through a series of well-known arias in English, French and Italian, culling some of the best from composers such as Puccini, Gounod, Gershwin, Bellini, Donizetti. With superb accompaniment from Maestro Davis and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ms. Cabell gives a strong accounting of herself and leaves no doubt that no matter how many times one hears "O

mio babbino caro,” (*Gianni Schicchi*) or “Quando m’ en vo,” (*La boheme*) which she will be performing in concert this month with Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazon, there’s still room for hearing and enjoying it anew from a different voice with a slightly different interpretation. Everything one reads about this voice is true: smooth legato, florid passages and delightful coloratura – and we might add with this debut CD, a nice selection of music that will satisfy most tastes with its even thematic presentation. Our personal favorite? Charpentier’s soulful “Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée (*Louise*), but then, there are many favorites on this CD.”

OperaOnline.US

In Poulenc’s **Gloria** with the Orchestra of St Luke’s at Carnegie Hall:

“In the Gloria, the choir was joined by the talented American soprano Nicole Cabell, who made her Covent Garden debut this season and is engaged to sing at the Met in upcoming seasons. Her voice had a dark radiance, effectively penetrating the huge sound projecting from behind her.”

Feast of Music, March 20, 2007

As Imelda in **Imelda de’ Lambertazzi**, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London:

“What more could anyone want? Well, a starry as well as a star-crossed Imelda, of course. And there she was in the person of the soprano Nicole Cabell, mourning in mellifluous melody for all mothers; ardently and stylishly declaring her love for Bonifacio; and finally, with Richard Lester’s solo cello, sighing and sobbing her last as she expires.”

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, March 14, 2007

“In the title role, Nicole Cabell sang with limpid tone and sensitivity.”

Rupert Christiansen, *Daily Telegraph*, March 12, 2007

“Nicole Cabell’s Imelda was mistress of the beautifully spun line.”

Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*, February 15, 2007

In **Solo Recital** at St John’s Smith Square, London:

“It’s a voice that wraps itself around you. That is how Marilyn Horne described the lyric soprano of the Californian Nicole Cabell, who took first prize at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the Year in 2005 and who presented her solo calling card to London on Wednesday in her Rosenblatt Recital.

The voice does, indeed, have something of the pashmina about it: long, sinuous phrasing, warm tone and a sophistication that touches everything she sings. Cabell does no more and no less at present than simply sing the music that fits her voice best: Puccini, French opera and American song.

Every register of her voice is illuminated through her generous smile; there's a sudden sense of lift-off into coloratura and an irresistible glide through every second of schmaltz. But this audience was enthralled by her Musetta *Quand m'en vo' soletta per la via*, by her Rondine *Chi il bel sogno di Doretta* and by her Gounod Juliette *Je veux vivre*. She also brought close focus to three songs by Liszt, consummately accompanied by Simon Lepper.

And it was good to hear Ben Moore's responses to Keats's nightingale in his setting *Darkling I listen*, followed by a tricky, witty performance of *Amor*, one of William Bolcom's superb *Cabaret Songs*."

Hilary Finch, *The Times*, February 23, 2007

The Rosenblatt Recital Series, which presents concerts around London from artists ranging from the well-known to the brand-new, last week showcased Nicole Cabell, the glamorous 29-year-old winner of the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World competition.

Accompanied by pianist Simon Lepper, the American soprano tackled an impressive variety of repertoire. Her greatest strengths, it seems, lie in poetry and contemplative song. Three Liszt songs – 'Es muss ein Wunderbares sein', 'Die Lorelei' and 'Enfant, si j'étais roi' – held the audience spellbound as the voice seemed to become one with the accompaniment and indeed the piece. Later in the concert, Ben Moore's Keats setting 'Darkling I listen' created a similar magic.

'Padre, germani, addio' from *Idomeneo* was imbued with urgency, while Bolcom's 'Amor', was delivered with mischievous sparkle and wit.

In other offerings from American music theatre, Cabell proved herself as an entertainer; she struck just the right balance between schmaltz and musicality, a rare gift when presenting a mixed recital programme to a largely classical audience.

Ruth Elleson, *Opera Today*, March 1, 2007

As Ilia in **Idomeneo** with the Deutsche Oper, Berlin:

"The only singer who excelled was the young American Nicole Cabell as Ilia, a princess in love with Idamante. Her sound was delicate and agile, her phrasing intelligent and secure, and her stage manner touching. Against the background of this particular production, Cabell's success was all the more impressive."

Warwick Thompson, *Bloomberg*, December 19, 2006

"Nicole Cabell was the star of the evening, an appealing Ilia whose love for Idomeneo's son helps lead to redemption. She was lithe and evocative in voice, movement and facial expression, a perfect partner to Mihoko Fujimura, cast as Idamante, her love."

George Jahn, *Associated Press*, December 18, 2006

“... And immediately, Nicole Cabell appeared on stage; she is a young soprano that one is more than willing to describe as an up-and-coming star. [...] Mihoko Fujimura and Nicole Cabell then sing about life, about the precedence of love over the inexorable consequence of holy decrees. They sing with such glowing intensity that they could convince people contemplating suicide that life has a meaning. [...] Enthusiastic applause greeted the singers, first and foremost Nicole Cabell.”

Harald Jähner, *Berliner Zeitung*, December 20, 2006

“Furthermore, there was Nicole Cabell’s enchanting Ilia, whose rosy timbre and secure soprano voice lent the evening its only ray of light.”

Christine Lemke-Matwey, *Tagesspiegel*, December 20, 2006

“It's not that the music was bad. Quite to the contrary, several of the singers were superb, especially soprano Nicole Cabell as Princess Ilia.”

Anne Applebaum, *Slate.com*, December 19, 2006

“Only Nicole Cabell as Ilia brought vocal glamour to the stage.”

Axel Brüggemann, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, December 20, 2006

“Nicole Cabell, as the Trojan princess Ilia, displays a beautiful timbre.”

Julia Spinola, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, December 18, 2006

As Juliette in **Roméo et Juliette** with the Deutsche Oper, Berlin:

“One could have expected to see the General Director [Kirsten Harms] appear in front of her audience at the Deutsche Oper in the darkest of moods in order to announce the sad news that the star-singer of the evening, Angela Gheorghiu, would not be taking part in the concert, as she had canceled literally at the last moment due to illness. Yet Ms. Harms appeared to be beaming - and quite rightly so. She had been able to secure the services of Nicole Cabell for the role of Juliette for this concert performance of Gounod's ‘Roméo et Juliette’. This turned out to be happy news. Miss Cabell came, sang and triumphed - and this in every respect. One does not just listen to Nicole Cabell with pleasure; she is also a joy to behold.”

Klaus Geitel, *Berliner Morgenpost*, December 9, 2006

“One forgot quickly that Angela Gheorghiu canceled at the last moment, as the American Nicole Cabell knew, after a timid start, how to fill with her voice the large space of the Deutsche Oper. Cabell, who is at the start of a world-class career and already has a contract with Decca and a debut at the Met, is still quite young and sang Juliette with the same wide-eyed innocence and pleasure in her (vocal) power of seduction that Claire Danes had in spades in Baz Luhrmann’s film.”

Wolfgang Fuhrmann, *Berliner Zeitung*, December 10, 2006

“Angela Gheorghiu's misfortune turned out to be **Nicole Cabell's** triumph. Cabell stepped in to sing the lead role in a concert performance of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at Berlin's

Deutsche Oper with just a few hours notice last month when the Romanian superstar was too sick to perform.

The appearance added to the growing reputation of Cabell, a young American soprano who has earned plaudits around the opera world since winning the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2005. The *Berliner Zeitung's* review of Cabell's Juliet was typical of the way the German press greeted her appearance: "One quickly forgot that Angela Gheorghiu canceled at the last moment, as the American Nicole Cabell knew, after a timid start, how to fill with her voice the large space of the Deutsche Oper."

Deutsche Oper officials first reached out to Cabell the night before the cancellation, after Gheorghiu showed signs of illness and concern grew about her ability to sing. Cabell had just finished a run of performances of *L'elisir d'amore* in Montpellier, France, the day before and she was sightseeing with a friend who had flown in from California. Cabell had hoped to enjoy a few days of R-and-R before going to Berlin to rehearse the controversial Hans Neuenfels production of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. Instead, she cut short her Montpellier vacation and—with her friend from California in tow—raced to Berlin to rehearse Juliet.

Oddly, it was the second time in a month that Cabell was called on to substitute for a headliner. In early November, Broadway star Audra McDonald had to bow out of a Cincinnati Opera fundraising gala because of illness. Cabell, in the middle of series of performances of Górecki's Third Symphony with the Minnesota Orchestra, flew to Cincinnati for the gala and then returned to Minneapolis to continue her engagement there. Next up for the young soprano is a CD on the Decca label, with the London Philharmonic and Andrew Davis, which is due out in a few weeks."

Michael Markowitz, *Playbill.com*, January 15, 2007

"The young American Nicole Cabell triumphed as [Angela Gheorghiu's] replacement with a warm and high-placed soprano."

Frank Kallensee, *Märkische Allgemeine*, December 9, 2006

"The American Nicole Cabell was also impressive, as she stepped in at the opening last week for an ailing Angela Gheorghiu."

Corina Kolbe, *Netzeitung*, December 13, 2006

As Adina in **L'Elisir d'Amore** with the Opéra de Montpellier:

"The American soprano Nicole Cabell was a vocally splendid Norina. [...] The freshness of a voice that never once shows a sign of strain, the art of coloratura and of articulation, finally a voice that offered scintillating high notes, all of the above did wonders in the old Opéra-Comédie in Montpellier."

J. Bonnaud, *OPMUDA*, January 2007

"On the Montpellier stage, Nicole Cabell was the highlight of the performance. The winner of the 2005 Cardiff Vocal Competition, this young soprano showed a luminous and silken timbre, a strong technique and made the character of Adina, the coquette with

a heart of gold, her own. Acting and singing with the ease of those who dream big and see far, this artist showed a powerful musical intuition. Her first solo album with Decca is about to be released and she just replaced Angela Gheorghiu in a concert performance of 'Roméo et Juliette' in Berlin, where she will also sing Ilia. She can surely expect the brightest of futures."

François Lesueur, *Concertclassic.com*, December 2006

"The American Nicole Cabell is in a class of her own; she lends Adina a real vocal and dramatic presence, charm, grace and especially a sense of style with perfectly mastered effects."

Pierre Cadars, *Opéra Magazine*, January 2007

"How delicious is the American soprano Nicole Cabell! What elegance, what ease in her Bel Canto salvos, what beauty in the phrasing of these Donizetti melodies, which seem to be written for flutes."

J.V., *Le Midi Libre*, December 2, 2006

"And yet, Nemorino's fiancée, Nicole Cabell's Adina, showed so much spontaneity and youthful freshness that she made this romantic pastorale worth seeing.

This energetic American soprano sings with a smile at the ready and with astounding ease, all the while charming everyone around her with this touch of sex-appeal that hides the tenderness of loving feelings. Nicole Cabell creates a zesty and witty character who is willing to do anything to win her dear Nemorino's affection back.

Her juicy middle voice makes even more poignant the simplicity of this uncomplicated soul, who goes from the sharpest piques to the most elegiac cantilenas."

Jean-Christophe Care, *L'Hérault du Jour*, December 3, 2006

"The coquettish Adina, Nicole Cabell, is an interesting find. The voice is produced with ease, well supported and full of charm. She shows great command in the coloratura passages and at the top as well as in the middle of the voice."

Isabelle Stibbe, *Anaclase.com*, December 3, 2006

"A special mention should go to Nicole Cabell's beautiful soprano (as Adina) who displayed delicate coloratura and a powerful timbre."

Robert Sabatier, *La Gazette*, December 8-14, 2006

As the Soprano Soloist in Gorecki's **3rd Symphony** with the Minnesota Orchestra:

"The young soprano engaged by Vänskä for these performances, Nicole Cabell, displayed Thursday night at Orchestra Hall not only a remarkably rich sound that was firm and full, from the low notes of the second movement all the way up to high G, but also a close identification with the text, which speaks so tellingly of mortality and redemption."

Michael Anthony, *Star Tribune*, November 3, 2006

“But Vanska, the Minnesota Orchestra and soprano Nicole Cabell — the winner of last year's high-profile BBC "Singer of the World" competition — made it clear that this is a work best experienced in concert.

There are few deeper sorrows than that of a mother in mourning, and it is such sadness that suffuses Gorecki's piece. While Cabell's rich voice was ideal for its demands — dark, yet hopeful, immersed in its mood yet transcending it — this was as much a showcase for orchestra as soloist, particularly during the hypnotic closing of its first movement, when the cellos and basses whispered of loss and grief.”

Rob Hubbard, *Pioneer Press*, November 3, 2006

As Clara in Decca's recording of **Porgy and Bess**:

“The real find here is Nicole Cabell, a beautiful soprano who twists ‘Summertime’ into the bold opening aria that Gershwin probably hoped for.”

Daniel Felsenfeld, *Time Out New York*, October 5-11, 2006

“The other two soprano roles are in the safe hands, and voices, of Nicole Cabell as Clara, with a languorous “Summertime” and Monique McDonald...”

Patrick O'Connor, *The Gramophone*, December 2006

“Nicole Cabell as Clara and Robert Mack as Sporting Life produce the best performances.”

Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*, September 22, 2006

“One thing about *Porgy* that never changes is the need for great singing, and in that respect the Nashville Symphony's recording doesn't disappoint. Nicole Cabell (Clara) sings with a remarkably silky soprano, a voice that's incredibly sensuous in ‘Summertime’”.

John Pitcher, *Nashville Scene*, October 26, 2006

In **La Juive** at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden:

“No less impressive was Cardiff Singer of the World Nicole Cabell as Princess Eudoxie: a shame it's a small part, but she shone in her classy Act III aria, showing dexterity in the demanding coloratura passages, particularly the cadenza.”

Dominic McHugh, *MusicOMH*, September 20, 2006

“As Rachel, Marina Poplavskaya [...] was neatly balanced by the bubbles and froth of her more privileged rival, the Princess Eudoxie (Nicole Cabell, in an auspicious Royal Opera debut).”

Neil Fisher, *The Times*, September 21, 2006

“Last year's Cardiff Singer of the World winner, Nicole Cabell, was alluring as the coquettish Princess Eudoxie.”

Fiona Maddocks, *Evening Standard*, September 20, 2006

"[...] Mark my words, stardom beckons.

It already has for BBC Cardiff Singer of the World winner Nicole Cabell. In the "decorative" coloratura role of Princess Eudoxie, whose "haute couture" vocal lines are as richly embellished as the jewels she craves, Cabell provided the kind of glamour and awareness that wins recording contracts. She just has - with Universal - and company executives were no doubt salivating at the quality of her show-stopping aria in act three."

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, September 23, 2006

"But the real discoveries of the evening, beyond this unjustly neglected score, were the two sopranos both after the same man. In the title role, Russian Marina Poplavskaya proved herself more than ready to take on Donna Anna later this season, while American Nicole Cabell rose to some hypnotic coloratura."

Anthony Holden, *The Observer*, September 24, 2006

"But the big news on Tuesday night was the joint appearance of two young stars-in-the-making, the delightful American soprano Nicole Cabell (the most recent BBC Singer of the World, already armed with a Decca contract), fluting away insouciantly as Rachel's love rival, Princess Eudoxie, and even more so the sensational Marina Poplavskaya, still a member of the RO's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, as the Jewess."

Hugh Canning, *The London Times*, September 24, 2006

"...excellent performances from Cabell, Poplavskaya, Schmunck, and the chorus..."

Anna Picard, *The Independent*, London 24 Sep 2006

"But what gave this performance its class was the casting of Marina Poplavskaya and Nicole Cabell as Rachel and Princess Eudoxie. Both sopranos are on the springboard of a great career. ... both communicated a sense of drama. Cabell, confident but not cocky, adorned her coloratura with warmth, intelligence and glorious musicianship."

Andrew Clark, *The Financial Times*, September 20 2006

"The bell-like voice of the bubbly Royal Opera debutant, Nicole Cabell, excelled as Eudoxie and Dario Schmunck did not disappoint in his cruel high-lying role. Both had sufficient heft to project over a consistently noisy orchestra in the ensemble scenes."

Jim Pritchard, *Seen and Heard*, September 26, 2006

In Concerts of Music by Liszt and Halévy at Bard College:

"But long before Liszt opted for the monastery late in life, he had a more serious, contemplative side, demonstrated by the appealing song "Die Lorelei," expressively and elegantly sung by the superb young soprano Nicole Cabell on Friday. Listeners were also treated to Ms. Cabell's velvety voice in the weekend's final concert, on Sunday, where she sang "Tandis qu'il sommeille" from "La Juive," by Halévy."

Vivienne Schweitzer, *The New York Times*, August 15, 2006

In Britten's **Les Illuminations** at the BBC Proms:

“One concert last week stood out for the number of attractions on offer. It was as if a card-player who had been having a poor run suddenly found himself dealt four aces in one hand. [...] The fast-rising American soprano Nicole Cabell, winner of the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World, made her debut. Cabell is impressive for the technical ease of her lyric voice and her aptitude in a variety of musical styles. In Britten's *Les illuminations* she sang in good French, projecting enough of the underlying emotional ambiguities to make the songs come alive in this large hall.”

Richard Fairman, *Financial Times*, August 10, 2006

“Most impressive, however, was soprano Nicole Cabell, winner of last year's BBC Singer of the World competition. Britten's *Les Illuminations* has been part of her repertoire for a while now, and her full, rounded tones were perfectly suited to this sultry music, carried effortlessly above Andrew Davis's sensitive string accompaniment. The magical descent with which she ended *Phrase* was worth admission alone, her projection to the audience exemplary.”

Ben Hogwood, *MusicOMH.com*, August 4, 2006

“The 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World, Nicole Cabell, found the implicit sex in the ‘murmurs and visions’ of *Les Illuminations*, plumbing the contradictions between the sound and sense of Arthur Rimbaud's verse.”

Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*, August 7, 2006

“... Nicole Cabell (the luminous, sensual soloist)...”

Barry Millington, *The Evening Standard*, August 3, 2006

In a **Crossover Concert** at the Ravinia Festival:

“But its central glory was Nicole Cabell, the extraordinarily gifted young American soprano who was making her first Ravinia appearance since winning the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition last year.

The Lyric Opera's star alumna has it all -- striking natural beauty, a killer smile, a statuesque frame a supermodel would envy, and, of course, that gorgeous voice.

She put her radiant soprano to crowd-pleasing use in a clutch of American musical theater classics from "Kismet," "Street Scene," "Showboat" and other shows, accompanied by the CSO and, in a brief cabaret turn on a darkened stage, by Ravinia President and CEO Welz Kauffman at the piano.

Cabell was best in songs such as "Harlem on My Mind" and "And This is My Beloved," where her artistic poise, absolute sincerity of expression and alluring femininity were at one with the musical material. I would gladly have done without hearing orchestral

excerpts from Verdi's "Aida" to have heard Cabell sing a few operatic arias. Maybe next time."

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, July 3, 2006

As Juliette in **Roméo et Juliette** with the Spoleto USA Festival:

"This year's surprise was the soprano Nicole Cabell, the 2005 winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, who sang the female lead in Gounod's 'Roméo et Juliette' at the Galliard Municipal Auditorium (opened May 26). Her bold sound and natural, flowing musicality made the most treacherous coloratura arias sound effortless. Equally impressive was her acting prowess, especially in the opening party scenes, where she projected an awkwardness and hunger for new experience exactly right for a young girl who does not want marriage forced upon her. Her love scenes had rapture to spare; her wrist-slitting suicide splashed blood and eloquence in equal measure."

Jack Sullivan, *Opera*, December 2006

"This was the Carolinas' first look at Chicago-based soprano Nicole Cabell after her 2005 triumph as BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. The soprano displayed creamy coloratura and a warm dramatic tone, plus stamina enough to deliver the long Act IV monologue and Act V duet with firm control. She's an expressive actress, with a long, high-cheekboned face that would have interested Modigliani, and she supplied the action with the sense of doom directors Clarac and Deloeil wanted from the start."

Lawrence Toppman, *Opera News*, August 2006

"The surprise discovery at this year's Spoleto was soprano Nicole Cabell, the 2005 winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, who sang the female lead in Gounod's 'Romeo et Juliette'. Her bold, sensual voice – which had octane to spare in the most strenuous coloratura arias – combined with a natural, flowing musicality. Her acting was equally compelling, especially in the opening party scenes, where she projected a simultaneous enchantment and awkwardness exactly right for a young girl bursting with life who does not want marriage foisted upon her, as she makes clear in her effervescent but painful aria, "Je veux vivre dans ce rêve." Cabell is a commanding presence, and it is a measure of tenor Frederic Antoun's abilities that his Romeo was not overshadowed by this stunning Juliette. Indeed, the sexual chemistry between the lovers - a stark contrast to the total non-chemistry in Spoleto's 'I Capuleti e i Montecchi' two years ago - was a needed counterpoint to Gounod's decorous melodies and ever-so-tasteful harmonies."

Jack Sullivan, *American Record Guide*, September-October 2006

"Spoleto's Juliet is a joy to behold

Heroine in festival's operatic production has voice that justifies hype

It sounds at first like typical marketing hype: The British Broadcasting Corp. calls its vocal contest Singer of the World. Next thing you know, somebody will dream up a competition that declares its winner an idol.

But Nicole Cabell, who won the BBC's prize in 2005, makes the contest's name sound a lot more reasonable. When she's on stage at Spoleto Festival USA as the heroine of Charles Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet," it's hard to imagine who in the world could make Juliet more compelling.

Cabell's Juliet exudes the passion of young love. Her voices sparkles and glows. No matter how high Gounod's rapturous melodies soar, Cabell exults in them. No matter how fiercely she opens up in the music's big moments, her voice's shine is undimmed. Even an operatic Juliet needs more than voice, of course. Cabell, youthful and svelte, is instantly believable as a girl swept up in romance.

Her broad smile must gleam all the way to the back row of Charleston's Gaillard Municipal Auditorium, where the production opened Friday night. Her lustrous eyes capture a wealth of feelings -- especially the darker ones that Spoleto's staging, big on death wish, plays up."

Steven Brown, *The Charlotte Observer*, May 28, 2006

"Juliette is Chicago-based soprano Nicole Cabell. She was the 2005 winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, the top prize for emerging opera talent. Cabell is tall and beautiful with a distinctive voice. Hers is a bright sound with bite. She also has the all-important middle and low notes that extend her repertoire possibilities beyond the chirper status. Her voice is gilded with a dusky overcoat that adds sensuality and gives sophisticated colour to her freshness. Her formidable coloratura placement is pitch perfect. Cabell's connection with text is also an actor's dream."

Paula Citron, *The Globe and Mail*, May 29, 2006

"2005 'Singer of the World' Nicole Cabell showed herself a finely detailed tragic actress, with truly a lovely sound and presence. [...] She phrased with utmost musicality and feeling; the difficult potion aria was absolutely thrilling."

David Shengold, *Gay City News*, June 15, 2006

As Pamina in **Die Zauberflöte** with the **Madison Opera**:

"The musical performance was crowned by the passionate, womanly Pamina of Nicole Cabell, recent winner of the BBC/Cardiff Singer of the World. Cabell's "Ach, ich fühl's" was a lovely piece of vocalism, intelligently shaped with meticulous attention to dynamic shading, her vibrant lyric soprano exquisitely floated above the staff."

Mark Thomas Ketterson, *Opera News*, July 2006

"Not enough can be said about the performances of Jo and Cabell, both of whom elicited enthusiastic responses from the audience. [...]"

Cabell brought warmth and grace to her role along with her magnificent soprano, which floated effortlessly throughout the performance. Cabell is at the very beginning of what will likely be a brilliant operatic career, something few in Friday's audience would likely dispute."

Michael Muckian, *The Capital Times*, April 22, 2006

“Of the primary hero and heroine, lyric soprano Nicole Cabell had slightly the better of it, primarily because she has the most brilliant of the arias, which she sang with sweet and mellow power (if that is not a contradiction).”

John Aehl, *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 22, 2006

At **Marilyn Horne’s Birthday Gala Recital** at Zankel Hall, New York:

“Nicole Cabell is a highly touted soprano with a lovely sweet voice like honey...”

Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, January 30, 2006

In a **Classical Christmas Concert** with the **Indianapolis Symphony**:

“Cabell was introduced during the *Messiah* excerpts. Possessing a full-bodied, well-projecting operatic soprano voice, this native Californian never crosses that boundary into the wobbly opulence so common among lesser singers. Her breath and vibrato control during the recitatives were astonishing enough — and she is young enough — that she seems destined to become one of our future international divas (hopefully without developing the “prima donna” complex shown by some). She’s already within a hair’s breadth (or a diva’s breath) of being there.

Another Leppard arrangement followed, *Lullaby for the Children of Christel House*, adapted from Joachim Raff’s (1822-1882) *Octet for Strings*, with Cabell joining the choir. Finally, Leppard offered his arrangement of a sequence of six traditional carols he calls *Past Three O’Clock*, for voice and orchestra. Some of these are interconnected with chimes, coupling Christmas color with Cabell’s superlative voice.

The concert had to be encoored with the universally loved *Sheep May Safely Graze* from Bach’s Cantata #208. And a Karen Moratz-Robin Peller flute duo provided luscious playing to complement Cabell’s luscious singing.”

Tom Aldridge, *Nuvo.net*, December 21, 2005

In a **Gala Concert** with the Opéra de Montréal:

“The event of the evening was brief, but intense, and came from another soprano: Nicole Cabell, who seems to have literally fallen from heaven, and who sings the aria from ‘La Rondine’ better than Angela Gheorghiu with high pianissimo attacks that sound almost unreal.”

Christophe Huss, *Le Devoir*, December 5, 2005

As Musetta in **La Bohème** with **Michigan Opera Theater**, Detroit:

“A recent Cardiff Singer of the World, soprano Nicole Cabell, was a deluxe Musetta. She’s clearly a singer to watch — a spirited actress with movie-star looks and brilliant high notes, who nearly stopped the show with the famous “Quando me’n vo”.

John Koopman, *Opera News*, February 2006

“What's good about MOT's "Boheme" is very good, and it starts with soprano Nicole Cabell's electrifying Musetta. When Cabell sweeps into view in the Act II Christmas Eve scene in Paris' Latin Quarter, the stage lights up with a quality missing altogether in the opening act. Call it presence or charisma; it's a luminous spirit that seizes the imagination -- even before Cabell has sung a note. But when she does, notably in a brilliant turn through Musetta's famous waltz-song, the whole production rises to another level.”

Lawrence B. Johnson, *Detroit News*, November 7, 2005

“As Musetta, Nicole Cabell offered lots of Mae West sassiness and ravishing phrasing.”

Mark Slater, *Detroit Free Press*, November 6, 2005

In Concert with the Lyric Opera of Chicago at Millenium Park, Chicago:

“Can any of today's name-brand divas bring such exquisite legato phrasing to "Depuis le jour" (from Charpentier's "Louise") as soprano Nicole Cabell? No wonder this star graduate of Lyric's apprentice program won all hearts at this year's BBC Singer of the World contest in Wales.”

John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 2005

At a Concert of Broadway Repertoire at Bard College:

“And there was Nicole Cabell, who showed why she won the Cardiff Singer of the World competition in June with a light and outrageously beautiful soprano that traced the downward arc at the end of Gershwin's "Summertime" in chills along the listener's spine. She was one of several fine singers [...] in the sprawling Broadway set (Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Frank Loesser, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, etc.) that formed the centerpiece of the "American Jewish Composer" concert on Sunday afternoon.”

Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, August 16, 2005

Winning the 2005 BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff:

“At last the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World has landed a good catch. [...] The winner was Nicole Cabell from the US. At 27, she was the youngest of the five finalists, and already has a faultlessly gleaming soprano, a technique with no loopholes, and bags of confidence. It should not do any harm that she is also tall, slim and glamorous. Not many young singers would have dared to serenade the line-up of judges at this competition with such esoteric fare - a solo from Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, one of Ilia's heart-stopping arias from Mozart's *Idomeneo* and a nimble Gallic showpiece from Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*. But whatever this soprano chooses to sing, her voice makes wonderful music with it. The judges said this was the closest result for years, but Cabell was surely always going to be the winner.”

Richard Fairman, *Financial Times*, June 22, 2005

“Call it what you will — star quality, audience awareness, the wow factor — that, in the end, is what swings a jury. And when, at the weekend, they swung in favour of a 27-year-old American soprano called Nicole Cabell, there weren’t too many dissenting voices.

Cabell walks away with £10,000, a BBC and a Welsh National Opera engagement — and a memo, at the very least, in the diaries of opera intendants worldwide.

Earlier in the week, there had been murmurings. Cabell is from the Chicago Lyric Opera Centre, an institution not unknown to an erstwhile director of WNO. And she had already won a Marilyn Horne Foundation Recital. Horne was on the jury. And then, I suspect, there was the sour grapes factor: though it’s hardly Cabell’s fault if she has the glamour quotient of Shirley Bassey and Nefertiti combined.

When Cabell opened that great smiling mouth, what we heard was liquid gold: the real thing. Her finals programme, accompanied by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Carlo Rizzi, showed her sense of warm humanity, projected confidently within a technique strong enough to take it, in *How can I cherish my man* from Tippett’s *A Child of our Time*. Ilia’s aria *Se il padre perdei* from *Idomeneo* revealed Cabell as a stylish Mozartian. And she was spellbinding in her final cadenza from *Entre l’amour et le devoir* from Berlioz’s *Benvenuto Cellini*.”

Hillary Finch, *The Times*, June 21, 2005

“Windy City Wonder Blows Away the Competition

... There can be little argument over who deserved to walk away with the first prize.

I didn’t hear her during the heats, but, on the strength of her performance in the final, this year’s laureate, 27-year-old Chicagoan Nicole Cabell, has dazzling star potential.

Her gorgeous soprano is rich and even, rising to a sumptuous top. Although she sings with a broad generous passion rather than a finely detailing brush, there were moments of spine-tingling beauty in arias from Tippett’s *A Child of our Time* and Mozart’s *Idomeneo*; “*Entre l’amour*” from Berlioz’s *Benvenuto Cellini* proved a harder nut to crack.

That she looks a complete smasher - tall and willowy, with a smile to die for - will do her career no harm whatsoever. Anyway, I can’t wait to hear and see Miss Cabell again.”

Rupert Christiansen, *Daily Telegraph*, June 21, 2005

At the Song Prize Finals at the **2005 BBC Singer of the World Competition** in Cardiff:

“Following her rapturous reception by the audience for Concert 3 in the Main Prize competition, it was fairly obvious that American soprano Nicole Cabell would win equal approval in this concert. She is a striking figure on stage: tall, slim and beautifully groomed (hers have been the most elegant ‘frocks’ by far in the whole contest, for those interested in such things) she also has a voice of superb power and flexibility. Her programme consisted of pair of songs by Ravel (*Cinq mélodies populaires grecques*, *Nos 1 and 2*) two pieces by Obradors (*Canciones clásicas españolas Vol 1 Nos 1 and 6*) and two items from Dvorák (*Gipsy Songs Op 55 No 4* , ‘Als die alte Mutter,’ and *No 5* ’

Reingestimmt die Saiten.')

The unusual *Daybreak in Alabama* by Ricky Ian Gordon completed her set, complementing the same composer's *Dream Variations*, which she had sung in her Song Prize heat. The voice is certainly beautiful (faintly reminiscent of Renée Fleming sometimes) and she can do almost anything she chooses with it. This is what gives her such extraordinary audience appeal."

Bill Kenny, *Seen and Heard*, June 20, 2005

As the Soprano Solo in Tippett's **A Child of Our Time** with the Chicago Symphony:

"The players and chorus were fully engaged in the effort; two of the vocal soloists — soprano Nicole Cabell and bass-baritone Christian van Horn, standing in at the last minute for Wayne Tigges — beautifully, atmospherically contributed to it."

Alan G. Artner, *Chicago Tribune*, June 4, 2005

"Soloists Nicole Cabell, Guang Yang, Scott Ramsay and Christian Van Horn, all members or alums of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, navigated their difficult lines well for the most part. Soprano Cabell and bass-baritone Van Horn, a last-minute substitute, were particularly strong."

Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 4, 2005

As the Soprano Solo in Mahler's **Fourth Symphony** with the Florida Orchestra:

"Soprano Nicole Cabell treated listeners with her sumptuous vocals on a text of innocence and heavenly pleasure."

Kurt Loft, *Tampa Tribune*, May 22, 2005

As the Soprano Solo in Brahms' **Deutsches Requiem** with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia:

"The celestial flight of the Lied for soprano was given to Nicole Cabell, a young and beautiful American whose European debut this was; hers is an emotional and lyrical voice for this piece, but through her "wiedersehen" ("I shall see you again") touched by grace, the audience was left with sincere emotion."

Giorgio Pestelli, *La Stampa*, May 10, 2005

"The soloists were an extraordinary, moving and extremely well-controlled Thomas Hampson as well as a wonderful and most musical Nicole Cabell."

Dino Villatico, *La Repubblica*, May 9, 2005

"... The melting sweetness of Nicole Cabell..."

Pietro Acquafredda, *Il Giornale*, May 10, 2005

In the **Rising Stars concert** at the Lyric Opera of Chicago:

“Nicole Cabell, now in her third year at Lyric, has been a singer to watch from the very start. Her ample, agile voice has a satiny edge, noticeable even in the flirtatious flights of the aria "Entre l'amour et le devoir" from Berlioz's "Benvenuto Cellini." In the Act II duet from Strauss' "Der Rosenkavalier," Cabell's lustrous tone was a lovely contrast to the brighter, more silvery soprano of Lauren Curnow.”

Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 2, 2005