# Xenia Puskarz Thomas Mezzo-Soprano

A recent graduate of the Opernstudio of Bayerische Staatsoper, Xenia Puskarz Thomas’ career was launched in the most prestigious of surroundings at the 2024 Salzburger Festspiele where her portrayal as Aglaja, conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, in Krzyzstof Warlikowski’s production of Mieczysław Weinberg’s *The Idiot* was met with overwhelming critical acclaim and earned her a place in the *New York Times’* Top Five Breakout Artists of the Festival selection.

Across her two seasons as a member of Bayerische Staatsoper’s elite Opernstudio, Xenia Puskarz Thomas gained invaluable and diverse repertoire and production experience including as Kuchtik in *Rusalka* under Henrik Nánási, Sandmännchen in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Titus Engel, Dog/​Woodpecker in *Cunning Little Vixen* under Lothar Koenigs, Die Vertraute in *Elektra* under Vladimir Jurowski, Mercédès in *Carmen* conducted by Daniele Rustioni and Flora in *La Traviata* under Francesco Lanzillotte. At the Cuvilliés Theater, Puskarz Thomas performed as Servia in Respighi’s *Lucrezia* under Ustina Dubitsky and the dual roles of Melanto and Minerva in Monteverdi’s *Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria under Christopher Moulds* and at Prinzregententheater as Hänsel in a semi-staging of *Hänsel and Gretel* in a collaboration with the ATTACCA Jugendorchester.

The 2024/25 season for Puskarz Thomas sees several guest returns to Bayerische Staatsoper including as Lucienne in *Die Tote Stadt*under Lothar Koenigs, Krystina in Weinberg’s *Die Passagerin* under Azim Karamov and both the Woodpecker and the Dog in Barrie Kosky’s production of *Cunning Little Vixen*. At Munich’s Cuvilliés-Theater, Puskarz Thomas portrays Saiko in Thomas Larcher’s *Das Jagdgewehr* in a new production by Ulrike Schwab and conducted by Francesco Angelico and she debuts at Tiroler Festspiele Erl as The Woman in George Benjamin’s *Picture a day like this*, conducted by Corinna Niemeyer. On the concert stage, she tours with Twelfth Night in North America, with Juillard415, the Juillard School’s Historical performance orchestra, in China and joins the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra in Handel’s *Israel in Egypt.*

Making her debut as vocal soloist aged 16 on a national tour with Queensland Youth Orchestras, Puskarz Thomas’ considerable performance experience across her years of study, includes Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Opera Queensland, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Brisbane City Opera and extensive concert work including as soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elias* with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under the baton of Duncan Ward, and in Mozart’s *Requiem* and *Missa Solemnis* with players of Bavarian State Orchestra. Her keen interest in early music has led to a close collaboration with New York ensemble Twelfth Night, recently performing Fillide in Handel’s Cantata *Aminta e Fillide* as part of the Music Before 1800 concert series and starring in ‘*Elemental’*, a curated programme showcasing works by Handel, Rameau, Vivaldi and Bach at Carnegie Hall. With Richard Egarr and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, she has performed Bach, *B Minor Mass* and, in a Juilliard production, Aristeo in Luigi Rossi’s *Orfeo* directed by Mary Birnbaum and conducted by Avi Stein.

Xenia Puskarz Thomas studied at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, graduating with first-class honours and the University Medal for Academic Achievement, before earning her master’s degree, supported by the Kovner Fellowship, from the elite Juilliard School of Music under the guidance of Professor Edith Wiens. National competition success during the last year of her studies included the Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship awarded by the Opera Foundation for Young Australians and the Tinkler Encouragement Award at the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition. During her time in Australia, Xenia was a 2019 Melba Opera Trust Scholar supported by the Amelia Joscelyne Scholarship, as well as a 2021 young artist at Opera Queensland.