



KAREN KANAKIS, SOPRANO

Soprano Karen Kanakis is hailed for her fine vocal technique and dramatic flair. Her bright-timbered, powerful voice conveys rich emotion, displays brilliant agility, and soars to a thrilling high extension, making her ideal in both the bel canto repertoire and that of the Italian spinto soprano. Critics have called her singing “strong and smoothly superb,” “drop-dead gorgeous,” and “engaging,” and said she “lights up the stage... timing and expressions were priceless,” and “her voice and her stage presence are a delight.” Of her role debut as Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West*, critics said “her powerful voice easily penetrates the incredible wall of sound generated by the orchestra.”

Recent performances have included Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, both with Salt Marsh Opera and Union Avenue Opera, and a role debut as Magda in Puccini’s *La Rondine* with Winter Opera Saint Louis. Her portrayal of Magda earned her a second nomination for "Outstanding Achievement in Opera" from the St. Louis Theatre Circle, having previously been nominated in 2020 for her turn as Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West*.

In previous seasons she has performed Erste Dame in *Die Zauberflöte*, the title role in Puccini’s *Suor Angelica*, and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, all with Winter Opera Saint Louis. Additional operatic credits include Giorgetta in *Il tabarro*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Countess Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Violetta in *La traviata*.

Ms. Kanakis has been a featured soloist with symphony organizations performing the Verdi *Requiem*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Brahms’ *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass*, Handel’s *Messiah*, both the Mozart and Fauré *Requiem*, and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. She is a frequently sought-after solo recitalist and made her Carnegie Hall debut in the Weill Recital Hall performing a joint program with her husband, baritone Jacob Lassetter.

A regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Auditions, Ms. Kanakis performed as an Apprentice Artist with both the Des Moines Metro Opera and the Utah Festival Opera Company. She received her DMA in Vocal Performance from the University of North Texas and currently resides in St. Louis, MO.



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OPERATIC REPERTOIRE

BELLINI:

Norma – Norma
Elvira- I Puritani

BEETHOVEN:

Leonore – Fidelio

BRITTEN:

Lady Billows – Albert Herring
Ellen Orford – Peter Grimes
Governess, Miss Jessel – The Turn of the Screw

DONIZETTI:

Anna Bolena – Anna Bolena
Maria Stuarda – Maria Stuarda
Elisabetta – Roberto Devereux

LEHAR:

Hannah – Die Lustige Witwe

MOZART:

Flordiligi – Così Fan Tutte
Donna Anna, Donna Elvira – Don Giovanni
Elettra – Idomeneo
Countess Almaviva – Le Nozze di Figaro

PUCCINI:

Cio-Cio San – Madama Butterfly
Giorgetta – Il Tabarro
Floria Tosca – Tosca
Turandot – Turandot

J. STRAUSS:

Rosalinde – Die Fiedermaus

R. STRAUSS:

Ariadne – Ariadne auf Naxos
Die Kaiserin – Die Frau ohne Schatten
Chrysothemis – Elektra

VERDI:

Aïda - Aïda
Amelia – Un ballo in Maschera
Elvira – Ernani
*Alice Ford – Falstaff
Leonara – La Forza del Destino
Luisa – Luisa Miller
Lady Macbeth – Macbeth
Abigaille – Nabucco
Violetta – La Traviata
Leonora – Il Trovatore
Elena – I Vespri Siciliani

WAGNER:

Senta – Der Fliegende Holländer
Elsa – Lohengrin
Eva – Die Meistersinger
Freia – Das Rheingold
Elisabeth – Tannhäuser
Sienglinde – Die Walküre

WEBER:

Agathe – Der Freischütz



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ORCHESTRAL/ORATORIO REPERTOIRE

BEETHOVEN:

Ah, perfido! Op. 65
Symphony no. 9

BERG:

Sieben Frühe Lieder

BERNSTEIN:

Symphony no. 3

BRAHMS:

Ein Deutsches Requiem

BRITTEN:

Les Illuminations de Rimbaud
War Requiem

HAYDN:

Lord Nelson Mass

MAHLER:

Symphonies No. 2, 4, and 8

MENDELSSOHN:

Elijah

MOZART:

Exsultate, Jubilate!
Requiem

ORFF:

Carmina Burana

ROSSINI:

Stabat Mater

R. STRAUSS:

Vier letzte Lieder

VERDI:

Requiem

WAGNER:

Wesendonck Lieder



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CONDUCTORS

Robert Larson
Michael Borowitz
Karen Keltner
Gerald Steichen
Barbara Day Turner
James Caraher
Ron Spigelman
Eric McIntyre

Simon Carrington
Rick Kvam
Michael Culloton
Richard Severing
Craig Arnold
Allen Hightower
Stephen Dubberly
Jan McDaniel

REVIEWS

Falstaff's nemesis is Alice Ford, whose sharp wit punctures the absurd schemes of both her husband and Falstaff. Falstaff wants to seduce both her and her friend Meg Page, while Ford arrogantly attempts to keep their daughter Nannetta from her true love Fenton and force her into an unsuitable marriage with the ancient Dr. Caius. Lighting up the role here is soprano Karen Kanakis, whose effulgent voice and impeccable acting have enlivened many roles at both UAO and Winter Opera. Her Alice is all quicksilver wit and irresistible charm.

KDHX

The merry wives are merry indeed. Karen Kanakis, who in recent seasons sang central roles in Winter Opera's Fanciulla del West and Suor Angelica, does spot-on perfect work as Mrs. Alice Ford. She's tall and lovely. She has the glamour, grace, and carriage of a diva, a voice that just shines, and a delightful comic sense.

Broadway World

"...highlighted by Karen Kanakis, whose soaring soprano took advantage of the new Building's acoustics to deliver an affecting performance in the title role. Kanakis not only demonstrated her beautiful voice but also handled the acting elements of the tragedy with aplomb."

Ladue News

"Karen Kanakis as Sister Angelica sang with a deep warmth and lyricism that expressed the very essence of selfless devotion felt by an agonized mother."

KDHX



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REVIEWS (Cont.)

"Angelica is sung with beautiful power and discipline by Karen Kanakis (who triumphed last season as Minnie, the central role in *Fanciulla del West* at Winter Opera). Now, as Suor Angelica, her singing of "Senza mamma" drew applause considerably more extended than might be expected at a dress rehearsal preview. Ms. Kanakis is blessed with carriage and grace, and with a beauty that would be at home on the classic Greek stage."

Broadway World

"The title role is sung by soprano Karen Kanakis who last March played a marvelous Minnie, the leading role, in Winter Opera's *La Fanciulla del West*. A year off the stage did no harm to Kanakis' voice. From her first notes, she sang with deft poise, her voice well-suited to the emotional demands of Angelica's plight. She performed the ethereal "Senza mamma" with deep pathos, revealing the excruciating beauty in Puccini's Music."

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"Soprano Karen Kanakis turned in a strong performance as the Giannetta, lighting up the stage with her gossipy "Saria possibile" number at the top of Act II."

Chuck Lavazzi, Broadway World

"I want to hear that beautiful voice of soprano Karen Kanakis, in a much larger role."

Steve Callahan, KDHX St. Louis

"Karen Kanakis, the soprano who sang the role of Dorian's love interest, Sibyl Vane, got too little stage time. Her voice and her stage presence are a delight, and her performance cast Sibyl as a thinking young woman, rather than an intellectual featherweight who won roles on her beauty alone."

Denton Record Chronicle

"With admirable linguistic versatility, Ms. Kanakis sang Delibes in French and Schubert in German ...and hit some fine B's, C's, and even an E-flat. Luther College and its music students must be proud."

New York Concert Review

"Slapstick exploits from Cinderella's conniving stepsisters (Karen Kanakis ...) kept the audience laughing throughout. Timing and expressions were priceless."

The Salt Lake Tribune

"Guest soprano Karen Kanakis displayed fine vocal technique in Mozart's 'Exsultate, Jubilate,' but really won over the large crowd with 'Christmas Song' and Adam's soaring 'O Holy Night.'"

The Springfield News-Leader



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