

## Michael Borth Baritone

Michael Borth is a critically-acclaimed German baritone with a lot of experience and a large repertoire, ranging from baroque to 21st-century music, and from oratorio (Mendelssohn's *Paulus* at Berliner Philharmonie 2014) to contemporary opera (2024 debut in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*). In 2023 he was nominated in the category "Singer of the Year" in the music magazine Opernwelt for his portrayal of Mark Rutland in Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, as well as for Mackie Messer in Kurt Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper*.

He first considered a professional stage career when he performed in musical productions at school, in which he succeeded in leading roles.

Michael Borth studied in Weimar with Siegfried Gohritz and in Berlin at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler with KS Roman Trekel. This was followed by two years in Valencia as a member of the Centre de Perfeccionament Plácido Domingo. Michael's roles in Valencia included his debut as Albert in Massenet's *Werther* and as Benoît in *La Bohème*. He also succeeded as Il Dio in Händel's *Silla*, conducted by the famous baroque-specialist Fabio Biondi. He got important technical and artistic impulses by Thomas Quasthoff, Gregory Kunde, Plácido Domingo, Ann Murray, Juan Diego Florez, Chris Merritt, Aris Argiris and Manuela Custer.

During the past years he performed with a number of distinguished conductors such as Roberto Abbado, Emmanuel Villaume, Daniel Cohen, Josep Pons, Jordan de Souza, Jonathan Nott and André de Ridder.

From 2018 until 2023 Michael Borth was part of the soloist ensemble of the Theater Freiburg, where he debuted in many of the most prestigious baritone roles: Onegin and Don Giovanni, followed by Conte Almaviva in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. His beautiful warm voice with radiant colours and his strong stage presence impress and convince audiences and critics. He also appeared as Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and in a rarely performed opera by Erich Korngold, *Der Ring des Polykrates*. For the latter Opernglas noted in February 2020: "Michael Borth as Peter Vogel is so much fun, with his comedic appearance and powerful, clear baritone voice (...)". He sang Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*, as well as the role of Mark Rutland in Nico Muhly's opera *Marnie*, which is based on the novel by Winston Graham and the Hitchcock movie. In 2020/21 Michael sang Mr Emmet in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' chamber opera *Mr Emmet takes a walk*, adding a new facet of contemporary music to his repertoire. The excellently-reviewed production was created by Herbert Fritsch. Michael was credited by critics of covering "all the conceivable and unthinkable moods one can imagine in a Mr Emmet with a supple baritone with great tessitura."

In season 2021/22 Michael was invited by conductor and composer Fabrice Bollon to join the cast in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* for a studio recording by SWR, which was released by NAXOS in July 2023. That same season he performed the role of the Gamekeeper in a staged version of the same piece at Theater Freiburg, beautifully produced by the young stage director Katarzyna Sokolova. This was followed by role debuts as Lescaut in Massenet's Opéra Comique *Manon* and as Erasmus of Rotterdam in the world premiere of Fabrice Bollon's second opera *The Folly*; a role, that was written for Michael's voice by the composer. *The Folly* has been recorded with the original cast and will soon be released.

Alongside his work at Theater Freiburg, Michael is a regular guest at other opera houses. In 2019 he had his successful house debut at Komische Oper Berlin as Schaunard in *La Bohème*, directed by Barrie Kosky. In summer 2020 he also returned to Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, performing the role of Il Barone di Trombonok in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims*, after his successful participation at Accademia Rossiniana Alberto Zedda in Pesaro in 2017. Earlier international engagements brought him to Teatro Massimo Palermo (Starveling in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona (Sergeant in *Manon Lescaut*), where he returned to in season 2019/20 as Mandarin in Puccini's *Turandot* (broadcast live on ARTE TV). In November 2021 Michael celebrated his house and role debut as Platon Kusmitsch Kowaljow at Theater Basel in a new production of Schostakowitsch's political satire *The Nose*; Michael's second cooperation with Herbert Fritsch. In season 2022/23, Michael sang his first Papageno in a stylish and celebrated new production of *Die Zauberflöte* at Opéra national du Rhin in Strasbourg. Just before that, in October 2022, he sang Il Dio in a semi-staged production of Händel's *Silla* in Yokohama, together with the baroque ensemble Europa Galante and Fabio Biondi.

In Season 2023/24 Michael returned to Theater Basel as Donner in a new production of Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold* by Benedikt von Peter and Caterina Cianfarini; musically under the direction of Jonathan Nott. Further engagements brought Michael back to Freiburg as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* by Stravinsky, as well as his house and role debut at Landestheater Detmold in the role of Joseph de Rocher in Jake Heggie's critically acclaimed first opera *Dead Man Walking*.

Michael will come back to the title role of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in September 2024 at the Palermo Classica Festival, as well as to the role of Joseph de Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at Landestheater Detmold in Season 2024/25. In late spring 2025 Theater Basel will show Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle twice, in which Michael will appear as Donner in Das Rheingold. In November 2024 he will also perform a new program of Lieder alongside the pianist Klaus Simon at the Humboldtsaal Freiburg.