

## **SELECTED PRESS REVIEWS**

### **Cosi at Tanglewood**

“Soprano Nicole Cabell as Fiordiligi punctuated this opera of ensembles with transfixing arias. Her careful reticence was another counterpoint, baring her soul amid the comedy. Cabell handled well, especially in her crystal higher register, the coloratura embellishments Mozart left as his legacy for the world’s sopranos.”

-The Berkshire Eagle

“The silken sheen of Nicole Cabell’s soprano gave Fiordiligi an instant allure, which didn’t dim amidst the supple physical comedy once she was anticly all-in with Despina’s philosophy.”

-Bachtrack

“Assembling an outstanding cast of soloists is an important ingredient for the success of any opera. Making a welcome return to Tanglewood this season in the role of Fiordiligi was the acclaimed lyric soprano Nicole Cabell, winner of the 2006 BBC Singer of the World Competition and last year’s Donna Elvira. She possesses a lovely voice of astonishing agility and triumphed over the wide intervals and precipitous leaps from the top and bottom of the opera’s taxing soprano range. Her rendition of the great second act aria ‘Per pietà, ben mio, perdona’ (‘Ah my love, forgive my madness’), gently serenaded by a haunting horn obbligato, was in turn fiercely declamatory and meltingly tender. It served as a showstopping example of her virtuosity.”

-Seenandheard-international

### **Sea Symphony, Atlanta Symphony**

“Soprano Nicole Cabell was singing gorgeously, as ever, and her voice has darkened over the years, with added texture. Her singing, especially in the final section, “The Explorers,” offered a maternal richness.”

-[artsatl.org](http://artsatl.org)

“American soprano Nicole Cabell, last heard by ASO audiences in the orchestra’s November 2019 performance of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8*, demonstrated her ease of vocal production and lovely rounded sound in her solos.”

-[earrelevant.net](http://earrelevant.net)

### **As Leontine in Cedille’s recording of Joseph Bologne *L’Amant Anonyme***

“Nicole Cabell is superb as Léontine, floating effortlessly upward in ‘Son amour’ as she recollects her anonymous suitor’s gifts before recalling her fearsome anger at his impudence.”

-Christopher Dingle, BBC Magazine, March 22 2023

“This recording features luxury casting, including the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World laureate Nicole Cabell in the lead role of Léontine, a woman deeply wounded by the infidelities of her deceased husband. (...) As the booklet essay author Mark Clague notes, this is a love triangle with

only two protagonists. That could easily cloy or collapse into absurdity, which makes one thankful for Cabell's deft handling of Léontine's quicksilver emotional state. Cabell's warm, pliant soprano is perfectly suited to the relatively high tessitura of the role, and she is equally deft at the short, lyrical lines and occasional flights of florid elaboration. Her commitment to the music's sincerity raises the Act 2 recitative into an extended scene of highly charged arioso, and in her rendering of the ariette 'Du tendre amour' one hears the complexity and nuance of Mozart's mature operas, even though *L'Amant Anonyme* predates *Idomeneo* by a year."

-Philip Kennicott, Gramophone UK, 2023

"As Léontine Nicole Cabell is by some distance the production's outstanding performer. With a soprano beautifully cultivated, richly toned, finely focused and perfectly balanced across the entire range, she delivers a performance that is deeply felt. It is unforgettable at such key moments as the wonderful accompanied recitative near the start of Act 2, and the extended Ariette "Du tendre amour".

-Christopher Ballantine, Opera UK, May 2023

"Nicole Cabell is a confident and effortlessly graceful Léontine, encompassing the role's wide register with poise, up to the top Cs called for, and an impressively controlled agitated aria in Act One."

-Curtis Rogers, MusicWeb International, May 2023

"However, the most remarkable contribution to "L'amant anonyme" comes from the American Nicole Cabell, as she navigates the considerable extensions as well as the pitfalls of the Chevalier's virtuoso demands without ever compromising the integrity of her line and honeyed tone. She is equally inventive in the spoken dialogue where, a true comedienne, she processes Léontine's falling in love."

-Bob Dieschburg, operawire, March 2023

"Soprano Nicole Cabell's clear and powerful voice helps to give agency to the character of Léontine, whose only real function in the libretto is to be loved by Valcour. It's a musically challenging role demanding a wide range that often stays in the upper register, but Cabell seems to handle it with ease."

- Anne E. Johnson, Classical Voice North America, March 2023

### **Pittsburgh Opera, Contessa Almaviva, Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro***

-“As Rosina, the Countess, Nicole Cabell returned after being heard a few years back as Mimì in *La Bohème*. As well as she sang that role, nothing could have prepared listeners for the glorious interpretation she poured into every corner of the Benedum last evening. Looking every inch the noblewoman, she sang with an exquisite legato that seamlessly glided from one register to the next. Her singing of the “E Susanna non vien – Dove sono i bei momenti” recitative and aria in Act III was a thing of astonishing beauty. Her tones were rich and mellow, and she, like Mr. Ott, received a tremendous ovation at the final curtain.”

-George B. Parous, On Stage Pittsburgh, 2022

### **Tanglewood Music Festival, Donna Elvira, Mozart *Don Giovanni***

“The mostly American cast was notable especially for its distaff portrayals. First among equals was the electrifying Nicole Cabell, a Donna Elvira for the ages in terms of vocal quality and temperament. From her first appearance to the final quintet, she not only sang with an attractive, chestnut-colored tone but pitched every note with absolute assurance, and showed no difficulty with florid passagework.

Although no director was credited, Cabell acted with great specificity throughout, always connecting with her scene partners and fully inhabiting each dramatic moment. “Ah, fuggi il traditor” was an appropriately sympathetic plea to Zerlina to not make the same mistakes she had in loving a wayward man. Her concert dress—a striking cardinal red, yet modestly ankle length—suggested both Elvira’s combustible personality and her overall sense of decorum. My companion for the evening put it best when he said it was the kind of performance that an aspirant Elvira should use as their benchmark for learning the role.”

-parterre.com, July 2022

### **Tanglewood Music Festival, Barber Knoxville, Summer of 1915**

“Soprano Nicole Cabell next did a star turn on Knoxville, Summer of 1915, Opus 24, with text by James Agee. She sang with a shimmering, colorful voice that instrumentalists spend their careers seeking to replicate.”

-Dave Read, Berkshire Links, 2022

### **Haymarket Opera, Léontine, Joseph Bologne *L’Amant Anonyme***

“Léontine is the only figure in the opera who is developed with any real depth in words and music. Cabell seized on every opportunity through her radiant singing and touching characterization to take the audience through her conflicted emotional states, from indifference and confusion to agitation and parturous surrender. Her idiomatic vocalism gave great pleasure throughout. She made a real showstopper of the heroine’s ornate second-act aria in which Léontine admits her defenses are crumbling despite her vows to resist the power of love. It was gratifying to have this delectable singing actress back on a local stage after her many distinguished seasons with Lyric Opera.”

-John von Rhein, Chicago Classical Review, June 2022

“But Haymarket gave as delightful a production of this neglected bonbon as one could imagine. It helped that the small-but-mighty company landed another impressive casting get in Cabell, a head-and-shoulders standout as the conflicted Léontine. Cabell expertly, convincingly shaded her radiant soprano so that we never forgot that Léontine, unlike many of 18th century opera’s leading ingénues, has already loved and lost. She also elucidated Bologne’s sometimes vexing vocal writing for the role, her voice thrilling to the high Cs rolled into unexpected moments with the easy panache of an improvisation.”

-Chicago Tribune, June 2022

### **Cleveland Orchestra, George Walker *Lilacs***

“His (George Walker’s) 1995 *Lilacs*, performed Friday evening with exquisite poise by soprano Nicole Cabell, won the Pulitzer Prize for music... Cabell was a late substitution for the ailing Latonia Moore, but if anyone had fears about lack of preparation time, they would have been completely blown away by Cabell’s utter assurance in this music. She conveyed not merely the notes but the thoughts behind the notes.”

-Seen and Heard International, May 2022

### **London Symphony Orchestra, George Walker *Lilacs***

“The compelling nature of this performance was in no small part due to the excellence of Nicole Cabell, whose voice is soprano velvet. Her range, too, is notably wide, and there is no sense of strain (or of hardening of tone) at either upper or lower extremity. The dark second section (‘O powerful western fallen star!’) with its motoric repetitions, its angular gestures and its nightmarish ambience (‘O the black murk that hides the star!’) is especially notable for its disquieting demeanour. Cabell took Walker’s lines to near-Expressionist regions. The softer palette of ‘In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house’ offered welcome respite (the end is just lovely) before the avian impressions of ‘Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird’ launched the playful, angular, strong finale. Here one got a sense of Cabell’s true power as a singer, every inch the LSO’s equal.”

-Colin Clarke, Seen and Heard International, March 2022

“Cabell, meanwhile, negotiated her long melismatic lines with even-toned authority that blossomed into controlled anguish as the finality of loss strikes home: “O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul”...(..) As Cabell floated the sinuous arc of the verse over keening instrumental cries – “Loud human song with voice of uttermost woe” – the ghost of lost harmonies drifted close by.”

-Boyd Tonkin, The Arts Desk, March 2022

“In between, Walker’s 1995 setting of four Whitman poems shimmered in an attentive, heartfelt rendition by the American soprano Nicole Cabell (most recently heard locally in last fall’s production of Mozart’s “*Così fan tutte*” at the San Francisco Opera). Walker’s vocal writing is lyrical but demanding, and it’s no small feat to make it sound easeful and gracious while still hitting all the notes head-on. Cabell managed it perfectly, and followed up with a gorgeous encore, Xavier Montsalvatge’s “Lullaby for a Little Black Child,” that showed off her gift for tender directness.

-San Francisco Chronicle, March 2022

What followed was “*Lilacs for Voice & Orchestra*,” a far more sorrowful expedition. Composed by George Walker as a tribute to Walt Whitman’s elegy for Abraham Lincoln, the piece is primarily carried by three vessels through three movements: lilac, star and bird. The renowned Nicole Cabell, who won BBC’s Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2005, sang in a silky timbre. What impressed me most was Cabell’s interpretative technique, from the pursed lips of a despondent look in the moments before the second section, the star, to the conniving eyebrow raise before the third, the bird. I am still in awe at how one human can fill a hall with such immense grief and clarity.

-The Stanford Daily, March 2022

### **San Diego Opera, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

“Also excellent was Nicole Cabell, whose supple and creamy coloratura soprano voice pirouetted effortlessly through the melismatic vocal role of Juliette.”

-The San Diego Union Tribune, March 2022

“The role of Juliette was admirably sung by California native, Nicole Cabell, whose professional career was launched by winning the 2005 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Her distinctive, warm and technically secure sound was complemented by an elegant stage presence. Her Act I aria, “Je veux vivre,” reflected her experience and confidence in this role.”

-operawest.com, March 2022

“Soprano and California native Nicole Cabell, a captivating Juliette, proved her mettle in her opening aria, “Je veux vivre,” owning that show-stopper with dazzling coloratura finesse.”

-sandiegostory.com, March 2022

“The smooth, rich voice of Nicole Cabell's Juliette blended well with Pati's, making it easy to believe in their love. Their duets were consistent highlights. Juliet's waltzing "I want to live" is probably the opera's best-known aria, and Cabell's soaring lighthearted coloratura showed why.”

-broadwayworld.com, March 2022

“Nicole Cabell, a Southern California native whose career has taken her to the stages of the Metropolitan, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Royal Opera House did not disappoint the opera-hungry audience. Her Juliette proved her to be a full-voice lyric Soprano (essential for the large hall), beautiful top notes and no straining. She is a physically attractive and charismatic performer who easily captured Juliette's teenage charm... The famous aria “Je veux vivre dans le rêve” (“I want to live in dreams”), in which Juliette expresses her carefree teenage life, was a highlight. As she whirled around the stage, Cabell filled the house with effortless, beautiful runs and ornamentations. Her acting was broad enough for the big auditorium capturing Juliette's innocence, infatuation, and subsequent pain with unaffected naturalism.”

-stageandcinema.com, March 2022

### **San Francisco Opera, Fiordiligi, Mozart *Così fan tutte***

“Soprano Nicole Cabell, remembered vividly for climbing the wall as Giulietta in San Francisco Opera's 2012 *I Capuleti ed I Montecchi*, held the stage with equal authority as Fiordiligi, capturing the Mozart line in rich voice and impeccable intonation.”

-opera today, 2021

“Soprano Nicole Cabell, making her role debut, sang a rich, lustrous and glamorous Fiordiligi... Not only did she show a gallant upper register, illustrating her emotional shifting nature, but she displayed the extravagant shifts from upper to lower with complete mastery... She was never afraid to move her voice or her body or her face into line with the text and its extravagant statements and this made for beauty, comedy and delight.”

-opera wire, 2021

“As Dorabella’s sister Fiordiligi, Cabell was an engaging, even playful presence, unlike the staid neo-Victorian approach to the character that we sometimes see. Cabell dispatched both of Fiordiligi’s powerhouse arias. The first, Come scoglio, is one of Mozart’s most demanding arias, ranging from A below middle C (A3) to high C (C6). Cabell was especially effective in the aria’s higher (and dramatically most powerful) range. Her performance of the second aria, Per pieta, was soulful and affecting.”

-operawarhorses, 2021

“At the performance I attended on December 3, the four principal singers were all excellent, with soprano Nicole Cabell’s Fiordiligi standing out for the richness and purity of her tone...As Fiordiligi, Nicole Cabell’s aria “Come scoglio” was a thing of sheer beauty and rock-hard conviction.”

-berkeleydailyplanet, 2021

### **Opera Theatre St. Louis, As performer and curator “I Dream a World” Juneteenth Concert**

“We have some major operatic talents visiting St. Louis right now. Will Liverman and Nicole Cabell stunned us recently in lead roles in Highway 1, U.S.A. Now they have turned their attention to curating I Dream a World-and it simply could not have been better.

Duke Ellington is represented by two of his sacred songs sung by Nicole Cabell: "Praise God and Dance" is an operatic piece entreating us to make a joyful noise with trumpet, timbrel, organ, cymbal and all the other instruments. The piano impersonates the instruments, and at one point it sounds almost like a falling carillon. Ms. Cabell does a lovely vocalise passage that seems a very skylark. "Heaven". Here we get Ellington at his sophisticated, jazzy best. Ms. Cabell steps from the opera stage to the cabaret with grace. A new touch of breathiness adds seduction to her lithe voice. In the jazz manner we're given a piano solo, where Kevin Miller could be Ellington himself.”

-Steve Callahan, Broadway World, 2021

### **Opera Theatre St. Louis, Mary, William Grant Still *Highway 1., U.S.A.***

“Nicole Cabell also shines as Mary. Her angelic voice is joined dramatically by a force of energy and determination, her performance here is amongst the best of the current OTSL season. Her onstage duels with Liverman and Gibbs vigorously propel the drama onstage.”

Rob Levy, ReviewSTL, 2021

“Cabell shows a thousand colours with her voice, joking and pleading and loving with her soprano.”

-Jenna Simeonov, Schmopera, 2021

“As always with Opera Theatre the cast is brimming with sterling vocal talents. Nicole Cabell sings Mary, and hers is a voice as fine as any I've ever heard on the OTSL stage-pure, clear,

strong and beautiful. And she has superb diction. (Her final consonants ping like BBs.) She fills the role with love and with pain. It was wonderful just being so close to such a talent.”

-Steve Callahan, *Broadway World*, 2021

### **Cincinnati Opera, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

“A fine cast of singing actors populated Verona, starting with soprano Nicole Cabell as a radiant Juliet, who brought secure artistry to the role with nuanced singing and rich characterization... As Juliet, Cabell’s portrayal was a tour-de-force and beautifully sung, from her sparkling “Je veux vivre” as the young, carefree Juliet, to her devastating soliloquy as she took the potion. Each word was deeply felt, and every movement was utterly natural.”

-Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Business Courier*, 2019

### **Pittsburgh Opera, Mimi, Puccini *La bohème***

-“Not only is their acting great, but their singing is phenomenal. Cabell is the winner of the BBC’s 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World competition, an event for opera and art singers held every two years. She has a beautiful soprano voice and is now an opera veteran of the U.S. and Europe. Her high notes seem to rise up to the Benedum chandelier.

-Rick Handler, *Entertainment Central Pittsburgh*, 2019

### **Boston Symphony Orchestra, Poulenc *Gloria***

“Thursday’s performance found the TFC in excellent form, singing with robust sound, precise rhythm, and terrific diction: every syllable of the text was cleanly enunciated. They blended pleasingly, too, with soprano Nicole Cabell, whose plush tone seemed tailor-fit to Poulenc’s soaring solo writing.”

-Jonathan Blumhofer, *The Arts Fuse*, 2019

“Thursday’s performance was marked by humor and austere beauty. Soprano Nicole Cabell brought her dark, soaring voice to the mysterious “Domine Deus” movements and final “Miserere nobis.” In the “Amen,” she found the uneasy peace buried within the final movement.”

-Aaron Keebaugh, *Boston Classical Review*, 2019

“The real treat of the performance was Cabell’s exquisite, spine-tingling pianissimo ascents in the second *Domine Deus*. She was, in a word, perfect.”

-Vance R. Koven, *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* 2019

### **Minnesota Opera, Violetta, Verdi *La traviata***

“Nicole Cabell was a stunning Violetta and showcased a sublime tone that was best showcased in pianissimo sections in Act III”

-Schmopera, May 2019

“Musically this was, however, a consistently impressive evening. Soprano Nicole Cabell's Violetta was full of vim and temperament, and she dispatched the dizzy-making coloratura of her paean to freedom "Sempre libera" with impressive abandon.”

-Star Tribune, May 2019

“Throughout the two plus hour performance, Violetta remains on stage for almost the entire opera, often singing compelling arias. In every one of these moments, Cabell beguiled, charmed and invited the audience to share Violetta's transformation from Parisian courtesan to a woman defying her upbringing.”

-Broadway World, May 2019

“Nicole Cabell’s Violetta was a sweet relief. She produced even beauty of tone from bottom to top. A lyric soprano, she wisely skipped the optional Eb in “Sempre libera,” and sold it with sheer vocal beauty.”

-[parterre.com](http://parterre.com), May 2019

“Minnesota Opera did an excellent job producing this opera. There was not a weak performer in the entire cast. Nicole Cabell, the soprano playing Violetta, was a true stand out. Her clear, beautiful voice fit the music perfectly, and she made Verdi’s challenging arias sound effortless with her stunning vocal control. Her expressive face and natural movement helped draw the audience into the story and keep them rapt from beginning to end. Cabell’s dynamic portrayal of Violetta had the audience sympathizing with and rooting for the heroine right up to her untimely death.”

-[Myah Schultz](http://MyahSchultz.com), The Wheel, 2019

### **English National Opera, Bess, Gershwin *Porgy and Bess***

“...this production features the stalwart baritone Eric Greene as the disabled, utterly decent beggar Porgy, and the richly expressive soprano Nicole Cabell as Bess, a glamorous but troubled woman who struggles to break free of an abusive relationship with Crown...”

-New York Times, 2018

“His (Eric Greene) Bess, Nicole Cabell, makes a lovely contrast, using her soft-edged lyric soprano to win sympathy for her conflicted character.”

-Richard Fairman, Financial Times, 2018

“...stunning and heartbreaking title performances of Eric Greene and Nicole Cabell...”

-Mark Shenton, London Theatre, 2018

“Her (Cabell) version of "I Loves You Porgy" is beautifully judged and shows great vocal strength in her clear soprano. Cabell is adept at demonstrating the internal fight against her feelings for Crown, knowing that she should run from him, she cannot help but be drawn to him.”

-Aliya Al-Hassan, Broadway World, 2018

### **Atlanta Opera, Micaëla, Bizet *Carmen***



“Likewise, the lithe-voiced Cabell’s steadfast Micaëla, a young girl from José’s hometown who is introduced as his chaste and demure girlfriend in the first act, is a symbolic counter to the inconstant Carmen, but in the end is not a sufficient force to deter him from his fate. Her solo aria in Act III, “Je dis que rien ne m’épouvante” (“I say that nothing frightens me”), sung fluidly by Cabell, is a gratifying standout that keeps Micaëla from being limited to a stock opéra comique role.”

-Mark Gresham, Arts Atlanta, 2018

### **Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Ravel *Shéhérazade***

“Next, soprano Nicole Cabell, the soloist in Ravel’s *Shéhérazade*, instantly demanded our attention. Last year saw Cabell, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, performing around the world at venues including the Royal Opera House in London, the Cincinnati Opera and the Atlanta Opera. Recently she has sung with symphony orchestras in Hiroshima, Japan; Nashville, Tennessee; Baltimore; and Sydney.

She is precisely what you want in a soprano, so expressive and articulate. Even though she sang in the composition’s original French, she’s such a great storyteller that any potential language barrier was fleeting. Her inflection and demeanor, sometimes soothing, sometimes inquisitive, conveyed the story to perfection.”

-Jann Nyffeler, Democrat and Chronicle, 2017

### **Cincinnati Opera, Contessa Almaviva, Puccini *La bohème***

“Cabell sang and acted an impassioned Mimì, her big lyric soprano voice soaring when soaring was needed, most notably in her third-act encounters with Marcello and in the ensuing farewell aria and duet with Rodolfo.”

-Rafael de Acha, Cincinnati Enquirer, 2017

### **Michigan Opera Theater, Contessa Almaviva, Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro***

“Nicole Cabell plays Countess Almaviva – she shares the role with Julie Adams, who sings for a date of the show – and may have the most outstanding lyric soprano to have ever graced the Detroit Opera House stage. Her voice effortlessly leaves her body and infiltrates the space with the most elegant and powerful grace and skill.”

-Sam White, Press and Guide, 2017

### **Grand Théâtre de Genève, Contessa Almaviva, Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro***

-Nicole Cabell impressed audiences a few years ago in the title role of Handel’s *Alcina*. The Countess is a great role for her: she has lovely floating top notes and phrases superbly. She displayed genuine nobility in a sublime *Dove sono*. Maybe she is already thinking of The Marschallin.”

-Antoine Lévy-Leboyer, Seen and Heard International, 2017

“Vraie star de la soirée, la Contessa royale de Nicole Cabell irradie la scène : son timbre chaud, son jeu sans ostentation, son texte clair et bien exposé en font une comtesse pléthorique. Son « Porgi amor » laisse d’abord craindre le pire tant il est pris lentement. Mais sans soucis apparent, le souffle long, son chant est un délice de timbre et de phrasé : le tout extraordinairement suspendu, elle exprime vocalement la complexité du personnage à merveille, relayée par des cordes suaves, des vents aux phrasés de velours et particulièrement le basson de Céleste Marie-Roy merveilleusement ombré.”

-Thomas Muller, *Bachtrack*, 2017

“La Comtesse de Nicole Cabell n’est pas cette figure désincarnée, vertueuse et éthérée qu’on nous sert parfois. Un timbre chaud, ambré, au service d’un chant noble, évident, qui ne laisse jamais indifférent. La mélancolie ne marque que les airs, les récitatifs respirent la vie. L’intonation est miraculeuse avec un « Porgi amor » retenu, sublime, un « Dove sono » émouvant, aux aigus lumineux, un vrai legato. L’émotion est palpable, particulièrement dans sa reprise pianissimo.”

-Yvan Beuvard, ForumOpera, 2017

“La comtesse de Nicole Cabell possède une voix de velours aux aigus lumineux, capable de « pianissimi » époustouffants et admirablement conduite sur toute la tessiture. Ses deux grands airs (« Porgi amor » et « Dove sono ») comptent parmi les moments forts du spectacle.”

-Claudio Poloni, Concertonet, 2017

### **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Ravel *Shéhérazade***

“Soprano Nicole Cabell’s appearance marked the high point of the evening. Last heard at the BSO in *Messiah* in 2005, Cabell now worked her enchantment in Ravel’s *Shéhérazade*.

Cabell’s richly burnished soprano took us away to a new realm via the music’s exotic waves, and the orchestra playing was just as evocative. After she nailed the final high note of “Asie,” concertmaster Jonathan Carney and associate concertmaster Wyatt Underhill phrased a wonderful duo leading into the coda. Emily Skala’s magical solo in “La Flûte Enchantée,” prefaced Cabell’s hushed, haunting tenderness in the final song “L’Indifférent”. Who could not be moved in hearing her sadness in the final words—“But no, you pass by/and from my doorway I watch you go on your way.”

-Samantha Buker, Washington Classical Review, 2016

### **Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Bess, Gershwin *Porgy and Bess***

“Walker and Cabell are both wonderful in this performance and they have some superb support.”

-Steve Moffatt, daily telegraph 2016

“Soprano Nicole Cabell brought out the sadness in Bess and displayed a superb sense of lyric and pace.”

-Dr Diana Carroll, Arts Hub, 2016

“Nicole Cabell's voice as Bess has a leaner, brighter and coloured centre, though still with ample warmth, with which she creates a torn, vulnerable and tragic persona.”

-Peter McCallum, The Sydney Morning Herald, 2016

### **Cincinnati Opera, Rosalinde, Johann Strauss II *Die Fledermaus***

“Heading the fine cast was soprano Nicole Cabell, who sang with a rich tone and delivered a nuanced performance as Rosalinde, wife of the philandering Eisenstein. One of the highlights was her soulful Czardas (in disguise as the Hungarian countess), which was beautifully expressive and enhanced by effortless high notes.”

-Janelle Gelfand, Cincinnati.com, 2016

“Nicole Cabell made a glorious Rosalinda, drop-dead elegant in 1930's attire, with terrific comedic timing, plus a lush and flexible voice that can take on the vocal minefield of the Act II Czardas with Hungarian flying colors.”

-Rafael De Acha, Seen and Heard International

### **Grand Théâtre de Genève, Alcina, Handel *Alcina***

“Nicole Cabell, a wonderful actress and excellent singer, basks in a great diva portrayal in the first part and offered us a completely different picture in the second. As the sorceress and superhuman Alcina, she delivers a voice with character, rich colors and good projection.”

-Federico Figueroa, Opera World, February 29, 2016

The cast was profoundly satisfying. [...] Best of all was the Alcina of Nicole Cabell. She is the real thing, a superb lyrical soprano whom opera houses must be rushing to sign. She phrases generously, was capable of a genuine dramatic presence in her “Ombre pallide,” and was greatly moving in the final “Mi restano le lagrime.”

-Antoine Lévy-Leboyer, Seen and Heard International, February 24, 2016

“With her powerful and sensuous voice, her animal presence and copper complexion, Nicole Cabell delivers a convincing portrayal of Alcina, which culminates in vibrant and mournful arias in which she alternates evil power and vulnerability, appearing to be an implacable beast or a defeated woman (“Mi restano le lagrime”).”

-Michel LeNaour, ConcertClassic, February 24, 2016

“Nicole Cabell's sensuous and human Alcina seduces through the richness of her timbre.”

-Claudio Poloni, Concertonet, February 23, 2016

“The American soprano Nicole Cabell (Alcina) triumphs as a tragedienne with her dark timbre, whose strange colors offer an unusual tone to Handelian singing. One is far from the stratospheric leaps of a Joan Sutherland or of the ethereal quality of an extraordinary Arleen Augér, the Grand Théâtre de Genève's Alcina in May 1989. And yet, if Nicole Cabell excels in a powerful middle voice, with a projection with straight tone which lends it a surprising color, her top notes are always present. Apart from her vocal qualities, the American soprano is also a wonderful actress. For instance, the way she walks, from the sorceress's regal slowness at the

beginning to the nervous and abrupt pacing of the woman left alone with her despair before a final surge of dignity makes her stand erect and walk slowly upstage as the curtain comes down.”  
-Jacques Schmitt, ResMusica, February 19, 2016

“As Alcina, Nicole Cabell offers an opulent and colorful timbre. The American soprano’s portrayal gets richer with each aria, culminating with “Ah, mio cor”, in which the sorceress gets lost in the meanders of her love spells without ever resorting to gratuitous virtuosity.”  
-Gilles Charlassier, Anaclase, February 19, 2016

“In the title-role, Nicole Cabell impresses with her low voice and her rich middle voice as well as the roundness of her timbre (from the beginning, a convincing :”Ah, mio cor”). These are qualities that one does not necessarily associate with the character of Alcina, which is often sung by coloratura sopranos.”  
-Rocco Zacheo, 24 Heures, February 18, 2016

“From her very entrance, Nicole Cabell’s Alcina strikes us with her vocal majesty and her stage presence. With her voluptuous timbre, this dramatic soprano lends her character a rare variety of colors and intensity. Her famous aria of abandonment and of anger that closes the 1st Act sent the audience out with a bang.”  
-Christophe Imperiali, Le Courrier, February 18, 2016

“Nicole Cabell’s Alcina, along with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, was by far the superlative element of the evening: whether she is about to slit her lover’s throat to prove her love to Ruggiero, or is in tears during “Ah, mio cor”, her voice carries the text and the emotion like none other on stage. Her gaze sets the scenery on fire and defines this woman torn between her love and her feelings of revenge. The aria “Ah, Ruggiero crudel... Ombre pallide” was splendid, and despite her powers, Alcina remains a woman and feels pain and despair in her feelings of love, from the sharpest tears to visceral hatred, which go with her condition of sorceress, thus making us feel powerful musical emotions.”  
-Thomas Müller, Bachtrack, February 18, 2016

“With the help of her sculptural physique and the astounding costumes by Bettina Walter (Ah, all those wigs, that first dress, half-mermaid, half wild animal skin!), Nicole Cabell makes a true diva’s entrance and ends like a woman hunted down, dressed in a simple nightgown. The character truly comes to life thanks to a voice that possesses rich colors and a powerful acting ability: “Si, son quella” makes her go through an entire range of emotional nuances.”  
-Laurent Bury, Forum Opéra, February 17, 2016

“Nicole Cabell interprets Alcina masterfully, both through her singing and her acting. With her velvet timbre, she manages to draw the audience closer to the heroine’s feelings as she makes her own degradation obvious, going from the entrance of a true queen to her ending as a woman destroyed.”  
-Michael S. Zerban, Opernnetz, February 17, 2016

**Atlanta Opera, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

“In a star performance, Nicole Cabell, winner of the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2005 delights and intrigues throughout as a lovely Juliet. The late scene in which she drinks Friar Laurence's draught has a breathtaking sense of intensity and clarity.”  
-Andrew Alexander, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 2016

“Cabell, last heard as Pamina in AO's production of *The Magic Flute*, was able to flaunt her considerable vocal skill as the ill-fated Juliette. Hers was an energetic, slightly anxious Juliette that never compromised her ability to produce a perfectly-executed phrase. Conductor Arthur Fagen kept tempos brisk and both “Je veux vivre” and the air “Amour ranime mon courage” were impressively dynamic. Cabell's honeyed, slightly muted soprano complemented León's sweet tenor, which shimmers with a tight, even vibrato, more *chiaro* than *scuro*...”  
-Opera News, 2016

### **Lyric Opera of Chicago, Hanna Glawari, Franz Lehár *The Merry Widow***

“The glamorous diva Renée Fleming has exited the environs of the Pontevedrian Embassy in Paris and the scandalously delightful Chez Maxim's. But with Nicole Cabell taking over the leading role for the final three performances of *The Merry Widow*, Lyric Opera of Chicago's lavish production of Franz Lehár's beloved operetta has lost none of its light-hearted, sophisticated fizz.

An illustrious alumna of Lyric's Ryan Opera Center, Cabell brought a supple soprano and an amused, worldly-wise demeanor to the role of Hanna Glawari, a rich young widow well aware that her fortune will draw lovers like bees to honey at Wednesday's matinee performance. A slim beauty, dazzling in William Ivey Long's elegant gowns and feathered hair ornaments, Cabell unleashed ringing top notes in the operetta's more exuberant moments. But a hint of smoke and melancholy gave emotional depth to the folk-flavored serenade, “Vilja,” and Cabell's romantic encounters with Thomas Hampson's dashing Count Danilo.

Cabell found the fine line between cynicism and clear-eyed acceptance of how the world works, and the sparks that flared between Hanna and Danilo enlivened the entire production. This merry widow was not born yesterday, but she was open to the hope that true love could arrive tomorrow.”

-Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Classical Review*, 2015

### **Michigan Opera Theater, Mimi, Puccini *La bohème***

“MOT's La Boheme features sublime Mimi by Nicole Cabell

Soprano Nicole Cabell, who graced the Michigan Opera Theatre stage last season in *La Traviata* as Violetta, is sublime as the tragic Mimi. Her vocals are ethereal, and she embodies the tragic, layered character of the poor, opportunistic tubercular fighting to survive and to love before death finally takes her.

-David Kiley, *encoremichigan*, 2015

### **Minnesota Opera, Adina, Donizetti *L'Elisir d'amore***

“You can tell the difference when a singer genuinely loves being there. They're radiant, and you can feel it no matter whether you're in the front row or in the rafters. They seem to flourish when the lights turn toward them and the maestro cues them.

Nicole Cabell is that kind of singer. The Chicago-based lyric soprano was Adina in the Minnesota Opera's production of Donizetti's "L'elisir d'amore" last week and she appeared to enjoy every lustrous moment of it, as did the audience.

Cabell made her company debut in the bel canto classic, which hasn't been seen at the Ordway in St. Paul since the theater's opening season in 1986, and she was incandescent, full of energy and sass. With a cast of strong male voices around her, led by tenor Leonardo Capalbo as the love-struck Nemorino, Cabell was the center of attention as much for her bright voice and precise technique as her stage charm.”

-Jay Furst, Post Bulletin, 2015

“Adina (soprano Nicole Cabell) is equally dazzling to watch and hear; watching Cabell move onstage, it is no surprise that her character has enraptured Nemorino and Belcore...”

-Basil Considine, Twin Cities Daily Planet, 2015

### **Jazz at Lincoln Center, Duke Ellington *Sacred Songs*, Carnegie Hall Stern Auditorium**

“The soprano Nicole Cabell wielded her voice to evocative effect in “Heaven” and “Almighty God has those Angels” in which her voice soars above the chorus at the end of that piece.”

-Vivien Schweitzer, New York Times, 2014

### **On the commercial DVD of the San Francisco Opera, Bellini *I Capuleti e I Montecchi***

“Nicole Cabell is just as good [as Joyce di Donato]. With her dark timbre the singer creates a character both willful and touching who evades any sopppiness. Her opening aria ‘Oh, quante volte’ is sung with impeccable legato, along with beautiful nuances, and the Second Act plea to her father ‘Ah! Non poss’io partir’ is full of emotion.”

-Christian Peter, *Forum Opera*, December 4, 2014

“The opportunities for delicate shading and passionate argument are seized by Nicole Cabell and Joyce DiDonato, both of whom are in excellent voice. They also fully relish their final scene, where following the Garrick precedent the lovers are re-united before their death.”

-Paul Corfield Godfrey, *Opera Web*, November 30, 2014

“Nicole Cabell is a sublime singer and actor. There is a guaranteed richness in tone, and she manages particularly well even when tackling the passages that reach well into her higher tessitura boundaries. Upon first meeting Giulietta, we see her hopping up on a cantilevered porcelain sink (extremely small, yet she manages with great dexterity), trying to climb the wall. It gives the impression of her imprisonment within the Capulet compound in search of her beloved. Lemaire's vertical faces are obtuse and tall. There's a great feeling of claustrophobia as

Ms. Cabell also claws on the room's surfaces in complete confinement and torments about love versus duty to family. This scene is handled exceptionally well."

-Christie Grimstad, *Concerto Net*, November 23, 2014

### **On the Delos CD *Chanson d'Avril***

"This disc of French songs puts a handful of composers – Georges Bizet, Henri Duparc, Franz Liszt and Maurice Ravel – in what for many listeners will be a new light. Cabell should be commended for choosing an enchanting program. Praise should also go to the liner notes, which not only give you texts and translations but readable little introductions telling you what to listen for. Angel Records did this years ago for its Seraphim introduction to German Lieder, and when I was a teenager it opened up a whole new world to me.

Cabell's set starts with four songs by Bizet that can't help but make you think of "Carmen." The song of an Arab girl, in particular, mirrors the famous "Habanera." We also have Bizet to thank for the beautiful title song. It's easy to see why Brahms admired Bizet: the music has that kind of Germanic richness. In the Duparc songs – which, as the notes point out, have echoes of Wagner – the simple but ingenious piano accompaniments are a delight.

Cabell's voice, expressive without being fussy, also wraps itself around several enchanting songs by Liszt, helping to bring out the music's wit and sensuality. Cabell shines in the famously lovely "Oh! quand je dors." After all that lyricism, Ravel's "Sheherazade" and "Cinq melodies populaires grecques" seem abstract and hysterical. But fans of these exotic songs will be happy with how Cabell treats them."

-Mary Kunz Goldman, *Buffalo News*, August 26, 2014

### **Boston Symphony Orchestra, Villa Lobos *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5***

"Nicole Cabell gave a rich weight to the wordless opening of the "Aria," and both she and the cellos — some bowed, some plucked — swung to the Brazilian rhythms of the "Dança," in which Bandeira asks birds and ducklings to sing to his beloved for him."

-Jeffrey Gantz, *Boston Globe*, September 19, 2014

### **Milwaukee Symphony, Donna Elvira, Mozart *Don Giovanni***

"Nicole Cabell combined theatrical fury with meticulously executed vocal lines and a warm, compelling sound, in the role of Donna Elvira."

-Elaine Schmidt, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 14, 2014

### **San Francisco Opera, Violetta, Verdi, *La Traviata***

"Nicole Cabell portrayed a lively, spirited Violetta, subtly consumed by merciless family politics, by misogynist societal norms, and by her own disease. [...] In her duet with Germont, she was profoundly moving; and her "Addio del passato" was the highlight of the whole opera: Cabell delivered Violetta's desperate addio to her life in the most touching and intense fashion.

-Marina Romani, *Musical Criticism*, June 14, 2014

“As Violetta, soprano Nicole Cabell produced lovely, pure-toned sound, and she imparted a fresh, alluring quality to her Act 1 aria, "Ah, fors'è lui." “

-Goergia Rowe, San Jose Mercury News, June 12, 2014

“Soprano Nicole Cabell [...] brought her considerable vocal glamour to bear on a rich and haunting account of this music.

The dark, husky colors in her voice came to the fore here, lending a mysterious and almost otherworldly urgency to Violetta's plight. And although Cabell delivered the melodic phrases of the aria with unadorned clarity, she also gave them a wonderfully volatile and unpredictable dynamic profile”

-Joshua Kosman, The San Francisco Chronicle, June 12, 2014

“Cabell’s affecting performance of Violetta's death lit up the fourth act.

[...] Cabell was excellent in the difficult death scene.”

-Janos Gereben, The San Francisco Examiner, June 12, 2014

“Luisotti’s most important partner in creating such an intensely affecting interpretation of this operatic war-horse was soprano Nicole Cabell. In her characterization of Violetta, she clearly accepted Luisotti’s preference for soft dynamic levels and relished it for all it was worth. Where lesser productions often allow the fourth act to wallow in maudlin melodrama, Cabell used her command of singing piano to give an almost clinical account of a woman with only a few more breaths left in her body. [...]

[...] both Luisotti and Cabell tease out Verdi’s talent for creating one of opera’s most memorable moments.”

-Stephen Smoliar, *The Examiner*, 13 Jun 2014

“Soprano Nicole Cabell gave a deeply nuanced performance as Violetta Valéry [...] her coloratura in the great first act aria and cabaletta [...] was nonetheless quite fine [...] the full-throated manner in which she dispensed the aria, and the nuance she brought to everything she sang, were quite exceptional. [...]

Cabell’s emotional commitment and identification with her character were beyond question.”

-Jason Victor Serinus, San Francisco Classical Voice, June 11, 2014

### **Delos Press release regarding “Chanson D’Avril”**

“Nicole Cabell Wows The Critics: *Chanson d’avril* a media hit, both at home and abroad.

In her recent review, Opera News critic Joanne Sydney Lessner positively gushed over star soprano Nicole Cabell’s 2014 album on Delos, *Chanson D’avril* You just know you’re in for a rave review in a piece that begins with “At once womanly and ingenuous, Nicole Cabell’s luminescent lyric soprano finds its ideal channel in this exploration of French chansons.”



Our appreciative reviewer then went on to find something wonderful and highly perceptive to say about almost every selection – mostly in terms of Nicole’s ability to consistently find just the right vocal color, mood, and emotional feel to match each selection, music and lyrics alike. Having used adjectives like “seductive,” “voluptuous,” “liquid,” “luxuriant” and so forth, it’s hardly surprising that Ms. Lessner has discovered and expressed precisely the same virtues in Cabell’s singing that we at Delos perceived in our planning for this album. She also pauses long enough to call attention to pianist Craig Terry’s “sensitivity and style.”

Across the Atlantic, there’s a succinct, but appreciative review of the same album by Mr. Remy Franck. His most excellent online classical music journal, *Pizzicato* is a reliable source of brief, but highly discerning CD reviews from everywhere (mostly in German, with a few English snippets). He described Cabell’s program as “interesting and creatively intelligent,” and goes on to say (my translations) that “Cabell’s voice sounds powerful and strongly expressive, with refined theatricality throughout.”

-delosmusic, 2014

### **Michigan Opera Theater, Violetta, Verdi *La Traviata***

“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

### **Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Giulietta*, Bellini *I Capuleti e I Montecchi***

“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

### **Cincinnati Opera, *Donna Elvira*, Mozart *Don Giovanni***

“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

### **San Francisco Opera, *Giulietta, Bellini I Capuleti e I Montecchi***

“[...] 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

### **Santa Fe Opera, Leila, Bizet Les Pêcheurs de Perles**

“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. Léila 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

### **Cincinnati May Festival, Brahma, Requiem**

“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

### **BBC Symphony, Tippett A Child of Our Time**

“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

### **Palm Beach Opera, Juliette, *Roméo et Juliette***

“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

## **Collegiate Chorale, Tippett *A Child of Our Time***

“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

## **Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pamina, Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***

“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 fühls* 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

### **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Ravel's *Shéhérazade***

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

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

### **L'Opéra de Montréal, Contessa Almaviva, Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro***

“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 Hétu, *ResMusica*, September 20, 2011

### **Tanglewood Music Festival, Clara, Gershwin *Porgy and Bess***

“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

### **Cincinnati Opera, Pamina, Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***

“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

### **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Mimi (Act III) Puccini, La Bohème**

“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

### **Soli Deo Gloria, Chicago, Bach *St Matthew Passion***

“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

### **Lyric Opera of Chicago, Micaëla, Bizet *Carmen***

“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

## **Metropolitan Opera, Micaëla, Bizet *Carmen***

“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

## **Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Leïla, Bizet *Les Pêcheurs de Perles***

“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 mesmerizing depth, but also interacting well with the frequently uplifting music.”

-Sam Smith, *Whatsonstage.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 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

### **Edinburgh Festival, *Mater Gloriosa*, Mahler *Symphony No. 8***

“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

## **New York Philharmonic, Italian and French Opera Arias**

“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

## **Atlanta Opera, Pamina, Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***

“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

## **Lyric Opera of Chicago Countessa Almaviva, Mozart *Le Nozze di Figaro***

“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

### **Metropolitan Opera, Musetta, Puccini *La Bohème***

“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

### **Lyric Opera of Chicago, Adina, Donizetti *L’Elisir d’Amore***

“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 rigor 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

### **Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Mahler *Symphony No. 4***

"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

### **New Orleans Opera, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

"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

### **Singapore Symphony, Mahler *Symphony No. 2***

“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

### **Edinburgh Festival, Tippett *A Child of Our Time***

“Nicole Cabell's warm soprano soared gloriously above *Steal Away*.”  
-Sarah Irwin Jones, The Times, September 2, 2009

### **Grant Park Music Festival, In a Venetian Night Concert**

“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 bohème*. 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

### **Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, Clara, Gershwin *Porgy and Bess***

“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.

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.

Her interpretation of Micaela’s ‘Je dis que rien ne m’epouvante’ from Bizet’s ‘Carmen’ was nothing short of perfect. 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.

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 etourdie’. 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.

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 Kopačova 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 Repušič 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 Caelie 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

### **Metropolitan Opera, Pamina, Mozart *The Magic Flute***

"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 "Act, ich fuhs", 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

### **Lyric Opera of Chicago, Leïla, Bizet *Les Pêcheurs de Perles***

“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 Leïla’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. [...] Leila 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

### **Edinburgh Festival, Tippett *A Child of Our Time***

"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

### **Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Musetta *La Bohème***

"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 Bamberger, 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

### **San Diego Symphony, Grieg *Peer Gynt***

“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

### **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Tippett *A Child of Our Time***

“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, Nebraska**

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

### **Opera Pacific, Pamina, Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***

“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 ‘my goodness’ performance.”  
-Tim Mangan, The Orange County Register, January 24, 2008

### **Orchestre de Lyon, *New Year’s Concerts***

“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

### **New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, In a Christmas Concert**

“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

### **Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Musetta*, Puccini *La Bohème***

“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

### **Washington National Opera, Musetta, Puccini *La Bohème***

"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

### **Santa Fe Opera, Musetta *La Bohème***

“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:

### **In her debut CD “Soprano” on DECCA**

“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, 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 Boheme* . 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 and 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 BBCs 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

### **Orchestra of St Luke’s at Carnegie Hall, Poulenc’s *Gloria***

“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’, 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

### **Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Ilia, Mozart *Idomeneo***

“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

### **Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

“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 Zeitungs'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

### **Opéra de Montpellier, Adina, Donizetti *L'Elisir d'Amore***

"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, Anaclose.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

### **Minnesota Orchestra, Gorecki *Symphony No. 3***

"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

### **The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Fromental Halévy *La Juive***

“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

### **BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Proms, Britten, *Les Illuminations***

“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* and *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

### **Spoletto Festival USA, Juliette, Gounod *Roméo et Juliette***

"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

Gaillard 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

“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 Charlesto’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

### **Madison Opera, Pamina, Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***

“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

### **Indianapolis Symphony, Classical Christmas Concert**

“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 encored 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

### **Opéra de Montréal, Gala Concert**

“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

### **Michigan Opera Theater, Musetta, Puccini *La Bohème***

“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

“Wha’ts good about MOT’s ‘Bohème’ 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’s 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 '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