



**Ruth Staffa**  
Dramatic Soprano

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## **Biography of RUTH STAFFA, Dramatic Soprano**

The German dramatic soprano RUTH STAFFA, born in Wiesbaden, studied Fine Arts at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin. She received her Masters of Art under Rebecca Horn. After graduation she studied Opera and Concert Singing at the Hochschule für Musik & Theater Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in Leipzig under KS Prof. Achim Wichert and graduated with a diploma in opera and concert singing.

During her studies she was awarded a scholarship from the Richard Wagner Association, Leipzig. Master classes under Hilde Zadek, Hanna Ludwig, Sena Jurinac, Yevgeny Nesterenko and Charles Spencer were a great inspiration for her artistic development. Her current vocal mentor is the German Heldentenor KS Reiner Goldberg.

While still a student, RUTH STAFFA gave her operatic début as Ariadne in Ariadne auf Naxos (R. Strauss) in a production of the Rheinsberg Chamber Opera under the baton of Christian Thielemann and the direction of Erhard Fischer.

Other roles as a young dramatic and dramatic soprano followed: Mother in Hänsel und Gretel under the baton of Marc Piollet in Neues Theater Halle, Tosca under the direction of Bernd Mottl at the Staatstheater Cottbus, Fidelio-Leonore under the baton of Jan Zbavitel at the National Theatre Brno, Sieglinde in Die Walküre conducted by Ulf Schirmer/Wolfgang Bozic and directed by Gisbert Jäkel at Opernhaus Graz. She sang Ortlinde in Die Walküre at the Semperoper Dresden (conducted by Semyon Bychkov/Lothar Zagrosek, directed by Willy Decker) and at the Deutsche Oper Berlin (conducted by Donald Runnicles, Direction: Götz Friedrich).

In 2007, RUTH STAFFA was the cover for all three Brünnhildes (Die Walküre, Siegfried, Götterdämmerung) in a production of Ring des Nibelungen under the artistic direction of Gustav Kuhn at the Tiroler Festspiele Erl.

In the 2008/2009 she had her début as Amelia in Un ballo in maschera (G.Verdi, sung in German) under the baton of Eckehard Stier at the Theater Görlitz.

During the seasons 2010/2011 to 2013/2014, RUTH STAFFA was a member of the ensemble of the Staatstheater Mainz, in which she expanded her repertoire, i.e., her Italian repertoire for Verdi with the roles Lady Macbeth and Amelia, which she performed in Italian under the baton of Andreas Hotz and Florian Csizmadia, and Helena in Mefistofele by A. Boito.

This period was shaped by the German director Tilman Knabe. Under his direction RUTH STAFFA's German repertoire grew. Her début in the high dramatic roles of Isolde in Tristan and Isolde (R. Wagner) and Elektra in Elektra (R. Strauss) were a great success. Prior to this, she had covered for the Elektra of Janice Baird at the Oper Leipzig under the direction of Peter Konwitschny and the baton of Ulf Schirmer.

At the Styriarte Summer Festival 2013 in Graz, Austria, she successfully jumped in for Christiane Iven as Isolde in a Tristan und Isolde concert under the baton of Michael Hofstetter.

After covering singers like Deborah Voigt (Musikverein Wien, Tove), Janice Baird (Elektra, Oper Leipzig) and Lioba Braun (Isolde, Staatstheater Nürnberg) RUTH STAFFA has covered Catherine Foster as Elektra in the season 2015/2016 at the Staatstheater Wiesbaden (direction: Rebecca Horn, conductor: Vassilis Christopoulos).

RUTH STAFFA could prove her suitability for the Wagner and Strauss repertoire during the season 2017/2018 again also as a stand-in at short notice for Elektra in "Elektra" (R. Strauss) at the Theater Ulm as well as Ortlinde in "Die Walküre" (R. Wagner) at the Theater Chemnitz.

In concert RUTH STAFFA has sung Tove in the Gurrelieder (A. Schoenberg) under the baton of Georges Prêtre, covering Deborah Voigt in the Musikverein Wien. She has performed the Vier letzte Lieder (R. Strauss) in Gdansk, Polonia. As a guest singer at the Theater Magdeburg, RUTH STAFFA's repertoire has included Poulenc's Gloria and Bruckner's Te Deum conducted by Joachim Tschiedel. She has given recitals of Schoenberg's Brettli-Lieder and songs of Verdi at the Opernhaus Graz.

RUTH STAFFA has been in several radio broadcasting productions with the Austrian ORF and the German MDR.

At the beginning of the season 2018/19 RUTH STAFFA achieved a great audience success as an extremely short-term jump-in for Isolde in a resumption of the legendary Bayreuth "Tristan and Isolde" production of Heiner Müller / Erich Wonder in the State Theatre Linz, Austria, under the musical direction of GMD Markus Poschner.

## REPERTOIRE OPERA

Ludwig van Beethoven	FIDELIO: <i>Leonore Alban</i>
Berg	WOZZECK: <i>Marie</i>
Arrigo Boito	MEFISTOFELE: <i>Helena</i>
Engelbert Humperdinck	HÄNSEL UND GRETEL: <i>Mutter/Hexe</i>
Pietro Mascagni	CAVALLERIA RUSTICA: <i>Santuzza</i>
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	LA CLEMENZA DI TITO: <i>Vitellia</i>
Giacomo Puccini	TOSCA: <i>Tosca</i> TURANDOT: <i>Turandot</i>
Richard Strauss	ELEKTRA: <i>Elektra</i> ARIADNE AUF NAXOS: <i>Ariadne/Primadonna</i> DER ROSENKAVALIER: <i>Marschallin</i> (in preparation) FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN: <i>Färberin</i> (in preparation)
Giuseppe Verdi	UN BALLO IN MASCHERA: <i>Amelia</i> MACBETH: <i>Lady Macbeth</i> AIDA: <i>Aida</i> IL TROVATORE: <i>Leonora</i>
Richard Wagner	DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER: <i>Senta</i> DIE WALKÜRE: <i>Sieglinde Or tlinde Brünnhilde</i> SIEGFRIED: <i>Brünnhilde</i> GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: <i>Brünnhilde</i> LOHENGRIN: <i>Ortrud</i> PARSIFAL: <i>Kundry</i> TANNHÄUSER: <i>Venus/Elisabeth</i> TRISTAN UND ISOLDE: <i>Isolde</i>
Carl Maria von Webern	DER FREISCHÜTZ: <i>Agathe</i> OBERON: <i>Rezia</i>

## REPertoire Concert

Ludwig van Beethoven	AH PERFIDO! Szene für Orchester und Sopran op. 65
Hector Berlioz	LES NUITS D'ETE LA MORT DE CLEOPATRE
Johannes Brahms	VIER ERNSTE GESÄNGE
Anton Bruckner	TE DEUM
Gustav Mahler	DAS LIED VON DER ERDE LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLLEN
Francis Poulenc	GLORIA
Maurice Ravel	DEUX MELODIES HEBRAIQUES
Arnold Schönberg	BRETTL-LIEDER GURRELIEDER (Tove, Waldtaube)
Franz Schubert	DIE WINTERREISE
Richard Strauss	VIER LETZTE LIEDER
Giuseppe Verdi	LIEDER MESSA DA REQUIEM
Richard Wagner	WESENDONCK LIEDER ADIEUX DE MARIE STUART TOUT N'EST PAS QU'IMAGES FUGITIVES

## REVIEWS OF RUTH STAFFA, DRAMATIC SOPRANO

### R. WAGNER: TRISTAN AND ISOLDE STAATSTHEATER MAINZ

*“The singers remain sovereign throughout the performance. With effortless ease they set the scene, especially RUTH STAFFA whose gruelling role poses no significant difficulties to her. With inexhaustible energy, she levitates between wrath and ecstatic love with the most delicate nuances and brilliant high notes.”* FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

*“RUTH STAFFA gives Isolde a personal, unique tone colour: a rich soprano, certainly in the right repertoire... STAFFA is (a new member of the ensemble) the most relaxed, most sovereign singer of the evening: She is definitely one with her role.”* OPERNWELT

*“In this way, the opera experienced an oppressive modernity in which the ensemble set triumphal accents. Above all, RUTH STAFFA, who was vocally brilliant, whose expressive soprano covered the entire spectrum of the interpretation, and who also developed as an actress an Isolde, which was poignantly present.”* MAIN ECHO

*“RUTH STAFFA (as Isolde) and Alexander Spemann (as Tristan) surpass so much which can be heard in much more prestigious opera houses.”* DEUTSCHLANDFUNK KULTUR HEUTE

*“Most amazing is the performance of the new member of the ensemble RUTH STAFFA as Isolde... RUTH STAFFA’s fantastic soprano expression of female anger within the power games of her male adversaries, blows away the director’s absurd attempt to squeeze Wagner’s entire opera ‘A Plot in Three Acts’ into a kind of colourful entertainment story which emphasises external processes, rather than focusing on the protagonists inner conflict between a hateful world of deception and the nocturnal side of her soul.”* WIESBADENER KURIER

*“The house ensemble of the Mainz theatre made music and sang exquisitely. RUTH STAFFA leads the way as she lets her young dramatic soprano shine. Not once does she falter during her demanding performance.”* MANNHEIMER MORGEN

*“Among the soloists, we are struck by RUTH STAFFA who was born in Wiesbaden and is part of the Mainz Opera Ensemble this season. Her betrayed Isolde, driven by indignation and humiliation, is a furious, rebellious terrorist craving retaliation. Her performance is one of unbelievable vocal intensity and brilliance.”* WWW.RMT.DE

*“RUTH STAFFA, new to the Mainz ensemble, delivers a spectacular evening. Her dramatic soprano remains constant throughout this difficult performance and is carried by attractive gleaming. Her ‘Liebestod’ is hard to be surpassed.”* WWW.OPERNNETZ.DE

*“RUTH STAFFA is an asset to the Mainz ensemble. Her strong vocal presence and passionate performance of Isolde corresponds in radiance with the excellent tenor Alexander Spemann as Tristan.”* MAINZER RHEINZEITUNG

*“RUTH STAFFA’s distinguished performance of Isolde in this scene is marked by an exquisite fusion of bombastic heights with a pleasant middle register. RUTH STAFFA is becoming a highly dramatic soprano who can easily master vocal parts, such as Brünnhilde, befitting her luminous and bell-like timbre. RUTH STAFFA excels in her performance of the Liebestod. Her voice sails with the orchestra in the most wondrous fashion. She sings these intoxicating melodies with virtual instrumental colour.”* DER NEUE MERKER

## **R. WAGNER: TRISTAN AND ISOLDE** STYRIARTE GRAZ

Concert under Michael Hofstetter (7.7.2013)

*“Undoubtedly, RUTH STAFFA has greatly inspired the original concept with her tradition-orientated interpretation of Isolde. This is not a lyrical, but a high-dramatic voice of the old style. Her top notes, her power are impressive.” DER OPERNFREUND*

*“The concert version of the first part of the second act of ‘Tristan und Isolde’ (with a few key bars from the finale) is by Wagner himself. Among the competent vocalists, RUTH STAFFA, the short-term jump-in vocalist, left the best impression with her powerful and never shrill high notes, followed by Herbert Lippert who endowed Tristan with almost impeccable heroic tenor brilliance.” KLEINE ZEITUNG KÄRNTEN*

## **R. STRAUSS: ELEKTRA** STAATSTHEATER MAINZ

*“RUTH STAFFA as Elektra... showed great stamina with a superb and vocally strong soprano, despite the director’s demands for far too many sideline activities. It is, therefore, all the more impressive how her colourful voice unfolded with such beautiful and clear high tones, without any shrillness.” DER OPERNFREUND*

*“The soprano RUTH STAFFA, in the leading role, is outstanding in every stage of the performance. Her vigorous vocal perseverance through the demands of the part, deserves strong recognition... Throughout, she remains convincing with radiant high tones. RUTH STAFFA’s interpretation is all the more valuable, in that she is able to create softer, withdrawn tones, where other soprano singers merely produce tones... The ovations went to RUTH STAFFA... deserved.” WWW.CAPRICCIO-CULTUREFORUM.DE*

*“RUTH STAFFA is a dramatically brilliant Elektra.” DARMSTÄDTER ECHO*

*“Powerful voice... powerful body: RUTH STAFFA’s Elektra... her stage presence is simply stunning.” FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU“*

*“... the singers... are convincing, especially RUTH STAFFA who has been the focus in Mainz as a Wagner singer. She endows Elektra with an overwhelming dramatic power, always aggressive in her fundamental revenge-obsession and brilliant in her vocal expression.” OPERNNETZ*

*“The singers performed on a high level. In the role of Elektra, RUTH STAFFA was a great success. She impressed the audience with her dramatic soprano material... She mastered both the grand vocal outbursts and the wide range of lyrical and soulful moments.” DER OPERNFREUND*

*“... As lead singer, RUTH STAFFA leaves us with some very memorable vocal moments in the duet with Orestes overflowing with longing for another world...” FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG*

*“The strengths of RUTH STAFFA lie in the sensual rich middle register, in the honest tones, in the positive emotionality, in the courageous femininity. It is not by accident that her Mainz Isolde was a great success. Thus, the green illuminated dream sequence of a judgement day in Agamemnon’s incantation becomes the densest part of her interpretation and the magical moment of the evening.” OPERNGLAS*

## **G. VERDI: UN BALLO IN MASCHERA STAATSTHEATER MAINZ**

*“As Amelia, RUTH STAFFA gives a remarkable soprano spinto performance. Vocally sovereign in every situation, she sang with great abandon and profound expression – even managing to distract us from the unsuitable costumes. She was celebrated by the audience alongside Heikki Kilpelainen...” OPERNGLAS*

*“The soprano of RUTH STAFFA as Amelia is a paragon of emotional expression.”*  
MANNHEIMER MORGEN

*“RUTH STAFFA’s performance of Amelia had great dramatic impetus, not lacking in beautiful pianos which she was able to elicit from her soprano voice.” DER OPERNFREUND*

*“The musical accomplishments have a touch of brilliance ... RUTH STAFFA gives us a powerful, darkly timbratic, voluminous, but never too expansive Amelia...” RHEIN MAIN PRESSE*

*“RUTH STAFFA took on the role of Amelia with dramatic passion and vocal sovereignty.”*  
FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

*“RUTH STAFFA as Amelia gained increasing momentum with her full soprano and offered great vocal fire.” FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU*

*“One can only congratulate the state theatre to its soloists... And RUTH STAFFA, the spectacular Isolde of Mainz, gives us an Amelia which friends of the opera should definitely not miss: a true ‘Hochdramatische’ who cultivates a full piano voice – rare and impressive.”*  
MAINZER RHEINZEITUNG

## **R. WAGNER: DIE WALKÜRE OPERNHAUS GRAZ**

*“RUTH STAFFA’s intense and feminine Sieglinde is spectacular and her acting memorable.”*  
WIENER ZEITUNG

*“RUTH STAFFA as Sieglinde is a model of clear articulation.” SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN*

*“The superb performance composed of novices in all the parts, makes the evening unforgettable: RUTH STAFFA’s extraordinary Sieglinde...” DIE FURCHE*

*“RUTH STAFFA’s physical and vocal performance was the perfect match for Mr. Schreibmayer’s Siegmund. The fearlessness with which she slipped, so completely, into the composed nature of the role was a highlight. The roaring applause after the first act was well-deserved.”*  
NEUE ZEIT

## **BEETHOVEN: FIDELIO NATIONAL THEATER BRNO (Janáčkova Opera Brno)**

*“... First and foremost, we must name RUTH STAFFA, not merely for her lead role, but for her overall performance. She has a slightly dark timbre, rich in colour, with a soft balanced sound. Her voice is pure and unbroken, without any limits in the high notes. Her voice and dramatic performance make her the ideal young dramatic Leonore for a house this size.”*  
DER NEUE MERKER



## **G. PUCCINI: TOSCA STAATSTHEATER COTTBUS**

*“Under the direction of Reinhard Petersen, RUTH STAFFA and the Cottbus Orchestra were absolutely sensational in the following scene between Tosca and Cavaradossi... RUTH STAFFA’s breath-taking voice captured the audience. Not only did the pure harmony of her voice make this scene so memorable, but her precise interpretation of its elaborate content down to every last half-sentence and every last phrase. Tosca’s voice is alive with flattery, seduction, sadness, and images of future happiness. The orchestra carries the atmosphere to great heights... For this aria (Vissi d’arte) Bernd Mottl has RUTH STAFFA leave the gruesome Scarpia scene and stand in front of the curtain like a star. And, RUTH STAFFA sings this aria at an artistic level befitting the scene, in a luminous piano, with clairvoyance and sudden comprehension. Applause from Scarpia, standing ovations from the auditorium.”* NOR DDEUTSCHER & OSTDEUTSCHER RUNDFUNK

*“RUTH STAFFA sings her way into the hearts of the audience with a luminous and intense voice which retains its beauty, even in its most technically extreme moments.”*  
LAUSITZER RUNDSCHAU

## **RECITAL VERDI-LIEDER / SCHÖNBERG: BRETTL-LIEDER OPERNHAUS GRAZ**

*“The soprano RUTH STAFFA scored with two fine recitals, one of Verdi songs, another of Schoenberg’s Brettl-Lieder.”* INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE