

# DAVID CHARLES ABELL

## Reviews

### **PUTS *Silent Night***

*Cincinnati Opera*

It would be hard to imagine a better musical performance... Conductor David Charles Abell led a nuanced account of this complex score, obtaining playing of depth and beauty. Balance between pit and stage can be tricky in Music Hall, but singers were always audible (even in the noisiest moments), and solo playing was glorious. *Opera News*

### **SONDHEIM *Sweeney Todd***

*Théâtre du Châtelet*

An orchestra like this, stylishly and enthusiastically led by the American conductor David Charles Abell, makes all the difference in bringing out the color and tension of Mr. Sondheim's highly charged, arrestingly detailed score. *New York Times*

One must acclaim the work of conductor David Charles Abell who cracked the whip over the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris making them display a remarkable ease in this passionate repertoire. *Le Figaro*

### **BERNSTEIN *Songfest***

*BBC Symphony Orchestra*

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and conductor David Charles Abell wowed us with a concert that was intelligently programmed, lavishly resourced, carefully rehearsed, and carried off with terrific brio. *The Telegraph*

The performance of conductor David Charles Abell, with a talented team of soloists, showed that this setting of 13 American poems is an achievement of real magnitude. *Daily Mail*

### **Music of Bernard Herrmann**

*Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine*

[The orchestral colors are] magnified by David Charles Abell, a conductor whose precise gestures demonstrate a great mastery of sound intensity: the art of silence, so that a bassoon note emerges in order to later return dressed up by the orchestra, a very gradual crescendo or diminuendo to raise or maintain tension. We close our eyes, and we are in the story. *Sud Ouest*

### **A Gershwin Celebration**

*Boston Pops*

What made the evening such a delight was Abell's rapport with the audience, who were immediately charmed by his convivial manner. Best of all, the orchestra took to his leadership with precise playing that evoked the Gershwin sound with a kind-of carefree authority. Let's hope he's welcomed back soon. *EDGE Media Network*

### **ROSSINI *La gazza ladra***

*Opera North*

The third hero of the revival is the American conductor David Charles Abell. ...his speeds...were part of a carefully thought-through, intensely theatrical reading: his handling of the masterly duet-trio sequence in the first act on which the plot hinges was faultless, and he always gave [Mary] Hegarty plenty of space to sing expressively. *The Times (London)*

## **RODGERS *Carousel***

*English National Opera*

Musically, it may indeed leave you giddy: the orchestra's handling of the score, under conductor David Charles Abell, is glorious — delicate, sweeping, witty. *Financial Times*

The almost excruciating loveliness of the score is brilliantly served by David Charles Abell's symphony-sized orchestra. *The Independent*

## **Hammerstein: *The Song Is You***

*The Philly POPS*

David Charles Abell has a point to make about Hammerstein, and he makes it beautifully in his two-hour-plus all-Hammerstein revue with the Philly Pops. In stitching together a couple of dozen songs with spoken biographical details, Abell argues that here was artistic force so potent that his gift for storytelling and lyricism inspired composers like Jerome Kern and Richard Rodgers to do their very best work... The Philly Pops has evolved artistically in the past few years, and especially since Abell took over in 2020... What impressed most, though, was the overall sound, buoyed by Abell's smart taste for inventive orchestrations... *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

## **Sondheim at 80**

*BBC Proms*

The BBC Concert Orchestra under David Charles Abell excelled itself, not least in the rip-roaring big band numbers from *Follies* and *Company*, the latter providing the ultimate showstopper *Side by Side by Side*, bringing the whole company on to the stage, followed by Sondheim himself to a thunderous ovation. *London Evening Standard*

Hearing [Sondheim's melodies] offered in their original Broadway orchestrations (many by Jonathan Tunick) and despatched with opulence and pizzazz by the BBC Concert Orchestra under the passionate advocacy of David Charles Abell was an added bonus. *The Independent*

## **State Fair and the 20th Century-Fox Songbook**

*Dutton Epoch Records*

David Charles Abell hits exactly the right tempo and feel and I just love the orchestration... Again worth repeating just how 'right' David Charles Abell's handling of all these scores is... As should be clear by now, I consider this set a considerable triumph in every respect. *MusicWeb International*

## **New Year's Concert**

*City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra*

Conductor David Charles Abell, who made a very good job of introducing the items, brought a generous sense of line, often conducting the long-spanning phrases rather than each metronomic bar. *Birmingham Post*

With American conductor David Charles Abell displaying tremendous energy and enthusiasm, the familiar waltzes and polkas, principally of the Strauss family, surely never sounded better. *Birmingham Evening Mail*

## **PORTER *Kiss Me, Kate***

*Opera North*

There can be no conductor in the world with a more intimate understanding of this piece than David Charles Abell, who edited the critical edition of the score. With a full complement of saxophones and additional brass, the playing of the Opera North orchestra is so darn hot it's practically a fire-risk. *The Guardian*

Conductor David Charles Abell has also undertaken an archivist's task to reconstruct the original orchestrations with co-editor Seann Alderking. The result is a pulsating sound that feels fresh, vivid and alive yet also perfectly in period. *The Stage*

### **DOVE *Tobias and the Angel***

*Young Vic*

David Charles Abell conducted a spirited and disciplined performance, keeping tight control of his three amateur choruses deftly placed in and around the acting area. I know this is a "community opera", and all power to it, but to me it's just an opera tout court, and a very, very good one. *Opera Magazine*

Under the direction of conductor David Charles Abell, these are truly among the most gorgeous choral sounds I have heard in forty years of opera-going. *The British Theatre Guide*

Based on a highly successful 2006 stage production, this premiere recording, conducted by David Charles Abell, is superbly realized. *National Public Radio, USA*

### **Something's Gotta Give**

*Chandos Records*

This release is obviously a labour of love for all concerned, including the brilliance of the BBC Concert Orchestra under David Charles Abell who, along with [Derek] Greten-Harrison and Seann Alderking, was responsible for seeking out those magical and brilliantly evocative orchestrations for this wholly excellent collection. *ClassicalSource.com*

Conductor David Charles Abell leads brilliantly stylish accompaniments using the original orchestrations. *The Sunday Times*

### **MENOTTI *Maria Golovin***

*Festival dei Due Mondi, Spoleto*

David Charles Abell proved an attentive conductor, drawing some lovely playing from the orchestra (the highly professional Lugansk Philharmonic), and was particularly successful in letting the voices come across. *Opera Magazine*

### **STRAUSS *Die Fledermaus***

*Cincinnati Opera*

Leading the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in the pit, conductor David Charles Abell deftly caught the nuance and grace of the music. He allowed the music to breathe, and supported the cast flawlessly. The 62-piece orchestra responded with refined playing. *Cincinnati Enquirer*

### **BERNSTEIN *West Side Story***

*Glimmerglass Festival*

Another super talent incorporated into this production is conductor David Charles Abell. Like Monge, he has his own personal history with one of the originating creators, having on many occasions sat beside and been mentored by Bernstein. (Not only was Abell an original member of the choir of Bernstein's *Mass* when it played at the Kennedy Center in 1971, he grew up to be mentored by and even assisted the Maestro in the prodigious work of compiling the definitive score for *West Side Story* decades after its debut.)

Abell conducted the Glimmerglass Festival Orchestra and singers superbly and pulled the audience into following (emotionally certainly) Bernstein's musical architecture, building with insistent and unresolved tri-tones a musical world both uneasy and multi-textured. *DC Theatre Scene*

### **BOCK *Fiddler on the Roof***

*Grange Park Opera*

The inspiring conductor, David Charles Abell, has researched period orchestrations and the BBC Concert Orchestra plays them with brilliant detail. *Financial Times*

David Charles Abell conducts a vigorous account of a score whose best numbers come in the first act; to add to the aural pleasure of the evening the original, large-scale orchestrations – unthinkable in a commercial revival these days – are vividly conveyed by the BBC Concert Orchestra, and there are no microphones. *The Guardian*

### **GERSHWIN *Porgy and Bess***

*Cape Town Opera (UK tour)*

The real hero was the conductor, London-based American David Charles Abell who, with limited rehearsal time, brilliantly welded together his mainly South African cast and his Welsh pick-up band. *Daily Mail*

Conductor David Charles Abell nailed every hot-spot with keenness and self-evident love, steering the tightened narrative with a great sense of its imperative whilst relishing through his instinctive feeling for tempo-rubato the score's aching lyricism. *The Independent*

### **SONDHEIM *Into the Woods***

*Théâtre du Châtelet*

David Charles Abell supports, once again, with ease and rigour in the face of complex and relentless rhythms, and with fluid and imaginative phrasing. *Diapason*

### **SONDHEIM *Sunday In the Park With George***

*Théâtre du Châtelet*

The American conductor David Charles Abell, equally at home conducting opera and musicals, makes the orchestration stand out to the maximum, taking in the delicate instrumental colours, sustaining the melodic passages and accentuating the choral moments, perfectly seconded by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France decidedly in a state of grace. *OperaClick*

Well-sung, well-played and well-conducted (David Charles Abell at the head of a glowing Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France), the show earns bravos from the audience, dazzled by the refinement of this epic work. *La Croix*

Once again, David Charles Abell's conducting is impeccable and inspired. *Regard en coulisse*

### **KERN *Show Boat***

*Royal Albert Hall*

The music was safe in the hands of the extra-alert conductor David Charles Abell, who not only coaxed the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra into relishing Kern's gorgeous tunes, but ensured that there was not a single break in the musico-dramatic fabric, always a danger in so potentially sprawling a work. *Opera Magazine*

Under David Charles Abell, the Royal Philharmonic is powerful, subtle and lush. *The Independent*

Initially accompanied only by Jake (Seann Alderking) at the piano, [Rebecca Thornhill's] moment is finessed as conductor David Charles Abell allows shimmering pianissimo strings to steal in beneath her voice. Musico-dramatic moments like this, with conductor, orchestra, cast and director all meshing, show why this historic musical has endured. *Variety*

### **[WDAV Profile of David Charles Abell](#)**

*April, 2026*

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