



■ Minton at Covent Garden: as Brangäne in ‘Tristan und Isolde’ in 1982, Sesto in ‘La clemenza di Tito’ in 1974 and the Composer in ‘Ariadne auf Naxos’ in 1976

In September she sang her first Wagner at Covent Garden: Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*. This was part of Solti’s controversial *Ring* cycle—the Valkyries being singled out for special praise. Wagnerian roles were gradually to take an increasing importance in Minton’s work: in 1966 she added a Flowermaiden in *Parsifal*, Wellgunde and Second Norn; then Brangäne in Cologne in 1971, a role she was to repeat at San Francisco, at Bayreuth under Carlos Kleiber, at Covent Garden with Solti, and at Munich with Leonard Bernstein. Her Bayreuth career grew with Fricka and Waltraute in the centenary *Ring* with Pierre Boulez; in 1979 she added Kundry at Covent Garden and Geneva—‘intensely alive in maniacal wildness’, wrote Anthony Meryn in *The Stage*. Finally she was Ortrud at Nancy in 1994—‘serious miscasting’ in the opinion of OPERA.

Minton’s brilliant career as a Straussian also started quite modestly, as Annina in Luchino Visconti’s staging of *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden in 1966. She made a sufficiently strong impression to be asked by Solti to move up to Octavian the following year, *The Stage* praising her impersonation as ‘noble’ and ‘warm’ and noting ‘the sense of innate breeding she brought to the character’. She later took her Octavian to Chicago, Cologne, Sydney (the opera’s first Australian performance, in 1972) and Melbourne, Vienna, the Met and the Paris Opéra. In 1976 she was the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Covent Garden. Returning again to Australia in 1991, she sang Klytemnestra in an *Elektra* staged by the film director Bruce Beresford at Adelaide.

While she never saw herself as a Mozart specialist, she nevertheless built a strong reputation in his major mezzo roles. She started with Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden in 1966. In 1968 she was Cherubino for the first time (with John Pritchard as conductor). Then, the following year, she gave her first Dorabella at Covent Garden, conducted by Charles Mackerras; Minton had ‘tone as ravishing as her appearance’, according to OPERA. Mackerras was in favour of decorating Mozart’s vocal lines lavishly, something to which Minton was rather resistant. Nevertheless, when she returned to the role in 1972, OPERA was clear that she was ‘the only real Mozart singer