

RICHARD OLLARSABA
BASS-BARITONE



Praised for his "expressive, resonant voice" (*Sun-Times*) and his "powerful, beautiful and well controlled sound," (*Opera Lively*) bass-baritone **Richard Ollarsaba** [o-yar-SA-ba], is quickly gaining ground in the operatic and concert arenas. He recently finished his residency with the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he recently stepped into the title role in their 2014 production of *Don Giovanni* as well as the Major-Domo in *Capriccio*. Previous productions at LOC include *Anna Bolena*, *Tosca*, *The Passenger*, *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Parsifal*, and *La traviata*. In his time in Chicago, Richard performed at the Grant Park Music Festival and the Ravinia Festival and with such ensembles as Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, and Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

Last season, Richard was seen in Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *Der Rosenkavalier* and took part in the world-premiere of *Bel Canto* as well as making his debut with Wolf Trap Opera as Fallito in Gassman's *L'Opera Seria*. Engagements for the 2016-2017 season include his return to Lyric Opera of Chicago for productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Les troyens*, and *Carmen*, covering the role of Timur in *Turandot* with Opera Philadelphia, and returning to Wolf Trap Opera as Luciano in *Bastianello*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, and Asdrubale in *La pietra del paragone*. Future seasons include engagements with Minnesota Opera, Virginia Opera, Intermountain Opera, and the Dallas Opera.

Richard was a resident artist with Minnesota Opera in 2012-2013, where he performed the roles of Rochefort in *Anna Bolena* and Timur in *Turandot*. While in Minnesota, Richard performed with the esteemed St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in performances of Handel's *Messiah* under the baton of the SPCO former Principal Conductor and Music Director, Hugh Wolff. He returned to Minnesota Opera to perform the role of Escamillo in *Carmen*, wrapping-up their 2014-2015 season. The previous season, Richard debuted with Tulsa Opera in the same role for their production of *Carmen*. "As Escamillo the bull fighter, Richard Ollarsaba makes you believe he could halt a charging bull with the power of his voice [...] the way he conveys the suspense of a corrida in "Votre Toast" (better known as the "Toreador" song) is most effective" (*Tulsa World*).

Richard is a 2016 Luminarts Foundation Competition winner, a 2015 winner of the American Opera Society of Chicago Scholarship Competition, the 2014 winner of the American Opera Society of Chicago Scholarship Competition, and a 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions grand finalist. He has participated as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center (soloist in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, 50th Anniversary Gala PBS telecast) and Music Academy of the West.

Richard earned his Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music and holds a post-graduate certificate and Master of Music degree from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In North Carolina, Richard debuted with Piedmont Opera in the role of Ferrando in *Il trovatore* and subsequently was seen in productions of *Don Giovanni* as Masetto and Robert Ward's *The Crucible* as Reverend Hale. He reprised the role in *Il trovatore* in his debut with North Carolina Opera. Richard was 1st place winner in the Charles A. Lynam Vocal Competition, earning him featured solo performances with the Greensboro Symphony in which he was applauded for his "wonderful artistry and beautiful moving voice" (CVNC).

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OPERA ROLES

Pistola	Falstaff	Dallas Opera	2019
Pistola	Falstaff	Opera Omaha	2018
Pistola	Falstaff	Intermountain Opera	2018
Raimondo	Lucia di Lammermoor	Virginia Opera	2018
Figaro	Le nozze di Figaro	Minnesota Opera	2017
Luciano	Bastianello	Wolf Trap Opera	2017
Angelotti	Tosca	Wolf Trap Opera	2017
Asdrubale	La pietra del paragone	Wolf Trap Opera	2017
Escamillo (cv)	Carmen	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2017
Panthée (cv)	Les Troyens	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2016
Raimondo (cv)	Lucia di Lammermoor	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2016
Timur (cv)	Turandot	Opera Philadelphia	2016
Fallito	L'Opera Seria (Gassman)	Wolf Trap Opera	2016
Don Giovanni	Don Giovanni	Intermountain Opera Bozeman	2016
Alidoro (cv)	La cenerentola	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2015
Figaro (cv)	Le nozze di Figaro	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2015
Escamillo	Carmen	Minnesota Opera	2015
Angelotti	Tosca	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2015
Biterolf (cv)	Tannhäuser	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2015
Enrico VIII (cv)	Anna Bolena	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014-15
Rochefort	Anna Bolena	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014-15
Haushoffmeister	Capriccio	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014
Don Giovanni	Don Giovanni	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014
Le Gendarme	Les Mamelles de Tirésias	Civic Orchestra of Chicago	2014
Escamillo	Carmen	Tulsa Opera	2014
Publio (cv)	La clemenza di Tito	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014
Don Basilio (family perf)	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2014
Dr. Grenvil	La traviata	Lyric Opera of Chicago	2013
Timur	Turandot	Minnesota Opera	2013
Ferrando	Il trovatore	North Carolina Opera	2012
Reverend John Hale	The Crucible	Piedmont Opera	2012
Wurm (cv)	Luisa Miller	Chautauqua Opera	2011
Don Alfonso	Così fan tutte	Fletcher Opera Institute	2011

CONCERT & ORATORIO

Bass Soloist	Verdi: Requiem	Salisbury Symphony	2017
Bass Soloist	Bach: St John Passion	Madison Bach Musicians	2017
Bass Soloist	Bach: B minor Mass	Apollo Chorus of Chicago	2017
Bass Soloist	Handel: Messiah	St. Paul Chamber Orchestra	2015
Bass Soloist	Schubert: Mass No. 5 in Ab	Apollo Chorus of Chicago	2015
Featured Soloist	Selected Works	Artist Series and Concerts of Sarasota	2014
Bass Soloist	Mozart: Mass in C-minor	Apollo Chorus of Chicago and	2014
	Dvorak: Te Deum	Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra	
Bass Soloist	Schubert: Mass No. 6 in Eb	Grant Park Music Festival	2013
Bass Soloist	Bernstein: Songfest	Ravinia Festival	2013
Bass Soloist	Beethoven: Symphony No. 9	Macon Symphony Orchestra	2013
Bass Soloist	Beethoven: Choral Fantasy	Boston Symphony Orchestra	2012
Bass Soloist	Stravinsky: Les Noces	Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra	2012
Featured Artist	Selected Arias	Greensboro Symphony Orchestra	2012

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CRITICAL ACCLAIM

WOLF TRAP OPERA – LA PIETRA DEL PARAGONE (2017)

"As Asdrubale, Richard Ollarsaba used his sizable, creamy bass-baritone to keen effect. He proved an astute comic actor, too, especially in Act I, cavorting in disguise as a turban-topped, snake-cuddling creditor (part of the Count's scheme to see if anyone will stick with him if he were penniless)." -Tim Smith, *Opera News*

"The count Asdrubale (Richard Ollarsaba, who did well in "L'Opera Seria" here last year, evoking a young Ruggero Raimondi in looks and manner, with a meltingly smooth bass-baritone) . . . were clearly the people of most substance onstage."
-Anne Midgette, *The Washington Post*

WOLF TRAP OPERA – L'OPERA SERIA (2016)

"Some of the evening's most prismatic, theater-filling vocalism came from baritone Kihun Yoon as the passionate librettist Delirio and bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba as the duplicitous impresario Fallito."

-Tim Smith, *Opera News*

HARRIS THEATER - BEYOND THE ARIA (Dec '15)

"Richard Ollarsaba more than held his own with his starry colleagues [Thomas Hampson and Heide Stober]. In two Viktor Ullmann settings, the young bass-baritone displayed a dark, deep-pile voice, delivering a jaunty "Vorausbestimmung" and a hearty paean to Bacchus in "Lob des Weines." His two contemporary settings proved a highlight of the evening. In Chris De Blasio's "Walt Whitman in 1989" he offered a poignant rendering of the AIDS-inspired setting. (The composer died of the illness at age 34.) . . . Ollarsaba's performance of Steven Mark Kohn's "The War Prayer" was mesmerizing. The singer showed the poise and communicative power of a seasoned artist, singing with commanding, stentorian tone and delivering all the passion, tenderness and biting irony of Mark Twain's antiwar text."

- Lawrence A. Johnson *Chicago Classical Review*

MINNESOTA OPERA - CARMEN (May '15)

"Richard Ollarsaba (as toreador Escamillo) visually and aurally lives up to his barihunk reputation."

- Basil Considine, *Twin Cities Daily Planet*

RYAN OPERA CENTER - RISING STARS (Mar '15)

"One of the highlights was the conclusion of the first half, the first-act duet from Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*. Tracy Cantin and Richard Ollarsaba were at the top of their form, with consummate finesse and power. Cantin elicited a rich sound at all dynamic levels, and Ollarsaba matched her intensity and even intensified it. Both stylishly brought out the dramatic and musical dimensions, and (since it was an excerpt), made one want to hear more."

- James L. Zychowicz, *Seen and Heard International*

"Bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba went head to head with Cantin as Duke Alfonso in the "Lucrezia Borgia" duet and more than held his own. He then came right back on the second half with a wonderfully animated take on the prologue to Alban Berg's "Lulu" - an excerpt that was ideal for his expressive, resonant voice."

- Kyle Macmillian, *Sun-Times*

"...Ollarsaba strutted impressively through the Animal Trainer's wry prologue to Alban Berg's "Lulu"..."

- John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

"The final selection in the first half of the evening was the duet for *Lucrezia Borgia* and Don Alfonso from Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* sung by Tracy Cantin and Richard Ollarsaba. As Lucrezia begs mercy for Gennaro, both Ms. Cantin and Mr. Ollarsaba were swept up in the emotional confrontation of this exciting duet. Cantin's languorous variations on "Clemenza," as she sought a hearing were rebuffed by Ollarsaba's equally assertive "No, non posso." When accused by Alfonso of an inappropriate attachment to the youth, Cantin's protestations resounded on ["giuro,"] here and in the remaining exchange with clearly focused top notes. The concerted passage was especially effective for the both singers: Ollarsaba's accusatory "tu sei" varied over several lines, reached impressive heights while Cantin's decoration on the name "Borgia" proved to be every bit a spirited vocal match."

- Salvatore Calomino, *Opera Today*

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO - ANNA BOLENA (Dec '14)

"Richard Ollarsaba, a Ryan Center young artist, showed impressive maturity and vocal strength as Rockford, Anne's Brother, holding his own with Hymel in the tenorial male bonding of the prison scene."

- Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*

ARTIST SERIES CONCERTS OF SARASOTA - OPERA AND MORE (May/June '14)

"Ollarsaba's performance of "Il modo di prender moglie," a comic song in Italian by Schubert, was charming, funny and strong, with more overtones of the Count in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" than the prolific Lieder composer. His renditions of Copland's "Zion's Walls" and Steven Mark Kohn's "Farmer's Cursed Wife" were stylish and hearty..."

"Ollarsaba seemed as at home with the Broadway tunes as he was with opera. His performance of the Toreador Song from Bizet's *Carmen*...which took the singer an octave and a fifth, from bottom to top, was stirring, as was his rendition of "The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha*."

- June LeBell, *YourObserver.com*

CIVIC ORCHESTRA OF CHICAGO/ROC - LES MAMELLES DE TIRÉSIAS (May '14)

"The robust-voiced bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba was a hunky hoot as the Policeman."

- John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

TULSA OPERA - CARMEN (May '14)

"As Escamillo the bull fighter, Richard Ollarsaba makes you believe he could halt a charging bull with the power of his voice the way he conveys the suspense of a corrida in "Votre Toast" (better known as the "Toreador" song) is most effective."

- James D. Watts, Jr. *Tulsa World*

RYAN OPERA CENTER - RISING STARS (Mar '14)

"A comparable set of performances was offered by bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba. In his rendering of Figaro's Act IV aria, "Tutto è disposto ... Aprite un po' quegli'occhi" ["All is prepared ... open your eyes a little"], Ollarsaba demonstrated excellent sense of color and the ability to use his resonant sound as a means to suggesting varying emotional states. Even within the single word "Ingrata" the expressive range that Ollarsaba attached to individual vowels communicated both distress felt by the character portrayed and a growing sense of irritation. Ollarsaba's later contribution was also by Mozart, this time in the trio ensemble, "Soave si il vento," from Act I of *Così fan tutte*...As Don Alfonso, Ollarsaba's upper register and fluid *legato* connecting multiple pitches outlined an impressive backdrop for the myriad emotions expressed..."

- Salvatore Calomino, *Opera Today*

"Richard Ollarsaba was likewise commanding in "Aprite un po' quegli'occhi" from the final act of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Ollarsaba's rich, resonant voice was suited well for the part, and he delivered the aria with the maturity of a seasoned bass-baritone - modulating his voice when appropriate, and enunciating [the] text with letter-perfect clarity. As a first-year member of the program, Ollarsaba shows remarkable talent, and he seems poised for a memorable career."

- James L. Zychowicz, *Seen and Heard International*

"...whose beautiful, rich, baritone voice rang through my ears. He was an avid and likable performer."

- Jennifer Lunz, *Splash Magazines*

"Also serving with distinction among the male contingent [was] Richard Ollarsaba [who] had what it takes to put a 'face' to the title character Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro,' in Figaro's fourth-act recitative and aria."

- John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

"Richard Ollarsaba was both poignant and stirring in Figaro's fourth act scene from Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro'."

- Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun-Times*

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO - LA TRAVIATA (Nov '13)

"Standouts among the comprimarios included Richard Ollarsaba's velvety Grenvil and an uncommonly alluring Flora from *J'ai Bridges*."

- Mark Thomas Ketterson, *Opera News*

"Ryan Opera Center member Richard Ollarsaba was a notably rich-voiced Dr. Grenvil."

- Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO - PARSIFAL (Nov '13)

"John Irvin and Richard Ollarsaba sang especially well as the first and second Grail Knights."

- John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL - MASS IN Eb (Aug '13)

"The soloists were all Ryan Opera Center members (soprano Emily Birsan, mezzo Julie Anne Miller, tenors John Irvin and Adam Bonnani and bass-baritone Richard Ollarsaba). Though solo voices could have been better blended, all acquitted themselves worthily, particularly Birsan and new Ryan member Ollarsaba."

- Lawrence A. Johnson, *Chicago Classical Review*

RAVINIA FESTIVAL w/ DAL NIENTE ENSEMBLE - SONGFEST (Jul '13)

"Ollarsaba was fully inside the aching tenderness of Walt Whitman's homosexual confession, 'To What You Said,' a poem unpublished during the poet's lifetime."

- John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

MINNESOTA OPERA - TURANDOT (Apr '13)

"Richard Ollarsaba's understated portrayal of the exiled Timur was tremendously affecting."

- Larry Fuchsberg, *Star Tribune*

ST. PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA - MESSIAH (Dec '12)

"Ollarsaba stood out as having the best handle on Handel. His booming baritone voice has a power and a confidence ideal for Handel's forceful exclamations."

- Rob Hubbard, *Pioneer Press*

GREENSBORO SYMPHONY - FEATURED SOLOS (May '12)

"The program included the 'Catalogue Aria' from *Don Giovanni*, as well as 'Aleko's Cavatina' from *Aleko* by Rachmaninoff, and 'Come dal ciel precipita' from Verdi's *Macbeth*. Richard performed all three absolutely perfectly. He was vocally flawless, and also showed his gifts of interpretation. Instead of a concert stand-and-deliver stance, he rather acted the arias, being funny during the 'Catalogue', pungent in Aleko's Cavatina - with great dramatic impact when delivering the line "Zemfira nyevyerna! Moya Zemfira okhladyela!" (Zemfira is unfaithful! My Zemfira has grown cold towards me!) - and ominous in the *Macbeth* piece. The latter with its higher tessitura was also a good showcase for his range. Mr. Ollarsaba had no trouble singing above the orchestra, and produced a powerful, beautiful, and well controlled sound."

- Luiz Gazzola, *Opera Lively*

"The evening began with magnificent singing by Richard Ollarsaba in the form of three bass arias. Mozart's comic 'Catalogue' aria from *Don Giovanni* gave the large audience a taste of the bass-baritone's substantial and rich timbre. His winning presentation revealed his acting chops as well...The second aria, from Rachmaninoff's opera *Aleko*, featured Ollarsaba's romantic side, as the character sings of his grief over his lost love. The third aria from Verdi's *Macbeth*, revealed the dramatic side of the singer, who as the character Banco, senses his own impending murder. The audience was justly smitten Ollarsaba's wonderful artistry and beautiful and moving voice."

- Timothy H. Lindeman, *CVNC*

A.J. FLETCHER OPERA INSTITUTE - MARIA STUARDA (Jan '10)

"Bass Richard Ollarsaba already has a sable quality to his tone which aided in his characterization of the manipulative power behind Elizabeth, Lord Cecil, Chancellor of the Exchequer." - William Thomas Walker, *CVNC*

A.J. FLETCHER OPERA INSTITUTE - MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR (Feb '12)

"The big delight of the production, and I do mean 'big' in so many senses, was the magnificent Falstaff of bass Richard Ollarsaba. His full, rich sound, with plenty of boom, was ideally at one with his truly full assumption of the character. What superb timing! What wonderful gestures! What 'comic gravitas'!" - William Thomas Walker, *CVNC*