

# Colin Ainsworth, Tenor

## REVIEWS

### **The Toronto Star – Glenn Sumi – April 10, 2025**

“The soloists are excellent, particularly Ainsworth, whose clarion tenor and strong stage presence make him a natural leader.”

### **La Scena Musicale – Gianmarco Segato – April 11, 2025, *David et Jonathas***

“As David, tenor Colin Ainsworth was exemplary in meeting all these requirements. Followers of opera in Canada have had many opportunities to hear Ainsworth over his long career, and I wonder if he is somewhat taken for granted? As David, he delivered clarion tone, secure and beautiful throughout its range. His diction is pristine, making the surtitle translations almost superfluous. He moves with confidence and unabashedly inhabits his conflicted character who embodies heroism, loyalty, love and grief. The mainly lyrical nature of Charpentier's vocal writing perfectly suits his instrument. The company is lucky to have such a persuasive artist on its regular roster of soloists.”

### **barczablog.com – Peter Barcza – April 10, 2025**

“It's a thrill hearing the powerful tenor voice of Colin Ainsworth, a stalwart performer for Opera Atelier.”

### **The Dance Debrief – Deanne Kearney – April 10, 2025**

“The production features a large and impressive cast, with tenor Colin Ainsworth leading as David. His voice carries lots of power and warmth, paired with expressive acting that makes every moment land. Ainsworth truly continues to prove himself as an operatic legend in Canada.”

### **Opera Canada – John Gilks – April 10, 2025**

“OA stalwart Colin Ainsworth is very good in the haute-contre role of David. He sings stylishly and with enough oomph for the hall. He also has tons of experience of making this stylistic approach work dramatically.”

### **OPERAWIRE.COM – John Carroll – January 2020, *Eugene Onegin***

“With his tall, lean frame and blonde curls, Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth was a dapper, conflicted Lenksy. He worked up a frenzy of jealous angst in the name day dance scene, then pulled inward for the tragic duel and the melancholy 'Kuda, Kuda' aria. The profound self-reflective pathos of this aria was made more moving through Ainsworth's exquisite vocal control, launching the second verse with a haunting, clean-lined pianissimo.”

### **BACHTRACK – Thomas May – January 2020**

“With his tender high tenor, Colin Ainsworth made a memorable impact in his leave-taking scene before the duel...”

**The Seattle Times – Gavin Borchert – January 2020**

“As Olga’s fiancé, the impetuous poet Lensky, Colin Ainsworth’s tenor is as clear and warm as a sunny August day.”

**Opera Warhorses – William Burnett – January 2020**

“‘Eugene Onegin’ contains Russian opera’s greatest tenor aria Kuda, kuda vi udalilis. Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth performed the aria sympathetically. Always in character, Ainsworth showed comfort portraying a young man, whose jealous reactions to Onegin’s outrageous attention to his fiancée was wholly believable.”

**Stage Door Review – April 8, 2019, *Idomeneo***

“For this production Pynkoski has assembled an especially starry cast. Colin Ainsworth, long an OA favourite, powerfully brings out the pain that the guilt-stricken Idomeneo suffers. Ainsworth’s voice, once so pure and high, has noticeably darkened over the years but has gained more depth of colour and expression. In this his first Idomeneo, he is best in the arias of delight such as “Vedrommi intorno” and “Torna la pace”.”

**Greek Press – James Karas – April 12, 2019**

“The cast is exemplary starting with Opera Atelier stalwart, tenor Colin Ainsworth as the unfortunate Idomeneo. He is a haunted man who has made a terrible choice. Ainsworth has a finely tuned voice and his Idomeneo expresses vocal finesse and delivery of character as much as is permitted in opera seria.”

**Mooney on Theatre – April 15, 2019**

“Tenor Colin Ainsworth gives an excellent reckoning of Idomeneo, satisfyingly muscular in both acting and musicianship. His slightly darker tenor suits his regal demeanor, while giving him the sprightliness needed for Idomeneo’s emotional range.”

**Baroquiades.com – Bruno Maury – December 9, 2018, *Pygmalion/Actéon***

« Colin Ainsworth s’affirme comme le haute-contre vedette de cette charmante production. Sa diction est signée, sa projection ferme et sonore, sans excès incongru. Sa vaillante prestance de chasseur, chaussé de hautes bottes et couvert d’une élégante cape (Agréable vallon, paisible solitude, empli de panache et superbement relayé par l’orchestre) va vite se muer en prière puis en effroi lorsqu’il entrevoit sa transformation (Mon cœur, autrefois intrépide). Relevons aussi sa gestuelle particulièrement expressive, en particulier dans ce passage de la transformation en cerf. Mais c’est évidemment le rôle de Pygmalion qui lui offre ses plus brillants morceaux : le timbre se fait charmeur pour invoquer le Fatal amour, cruel vainqueur avec de chaleureux reflets. Les airs qui s’enchaînent dans la seconde partie de la pièce seront salués d’applaudissements nourris et mérités : tout particulièrement L’Amour triomphe, et Règne Amour, soulignés par des traversos enchanteurs et repris par un chœur enthousiaste. »

**Le Figaro – Thierry Hilleriteau – December 3, 2018**

« Colin Ainsworth, star de la troupe, révélant surtout son potentiel de haute-contre à la française chez Rameau, avec son grand air L’amour triomphe. »

**ResMusica – Steeve Boscardin – December 3, 2018**

« La distribution assume parfaitement ces deux univers à commencer par Colin Ainsworth qui interpelle par la clarté de son timbre de haute-contre et la limpidité de sa diction. Que ce soit la

plainte d'Actéon, ou le pyrotechnique « lance tes traits » de Pygmalion, rien ne semble résister au ténor qui malgré la vaillance de sa projection, ne manque pas de nuances. »

**Greek Press – James Karas – October 30, 2018**

“The production of the two gems is a visual and aural delight. Tenor Colin Ainsworth sings Actéon, the chaste but impassioned worshipper of Diana and the equally passionate but perfectly human Pygmalion. He modulates his voice beautifully to the demands of Baroque opera and we enjoy every note of it.”

**barczablog.com – Peter Barcza – October 29, 2018**

“Pygmalion is in a different style from Actéon, but again starring Colin Ainsworth, who seems to sing more notes than everyone else put together(!), a remarkable amount of flawless coloratura. Where he roamed into haute-contre territory for the role of Actéon the Rameau score seems to require more voice, a great deal of impressive singing.”

**Schmopera – Jenna Simonov – October 26, 2018**

“...all supporting the heroic and human sound of tenor Colin Ainsworth, who sings the title roles in both operas. The double-bill is a great arc for Ainsworth, moving from the submissive, apologetic pleas of Actéon, into the full-bodied Pygmalion; Ainsworth delivers an extended monster aria of coloratura and awesome high notes, seemingly without a drop of sweat.”

**Ludwig van Toronto – Steven Bonfield – October 26, 2018**

“Ainsworth has the kind of voice that makes you think of several composers and their diverse styles all at once, ranging from Lully to Gluck to Mozart and well beyond. He was brilliant and brought to life the many instructive elements of story-telling found in the courtly entertainments of Louis XV. What a time it must have been to experience such unvarnished praise of living a life steeped in an eros at once thought of as creative as it would have been extolled for its pure pleasure. There were no brakes here on Ainsworth as he disgorged a virtuoso series of scales, trills, and breath-defying virtuosity in his prayer to Venus and his celebratory aria to end the work, the very acme of Rameau’s musical depictions.

Colin Ainsworth sang ebulliently and quintessentially in mid-century style, his tenor a perfect transliteration of the original and rare haute-contre. Ainsworth’s voice is a true gift to audiences, and here he literally became the vocal embodiment of Gledhill’s movement power, just as Mireille Asselin’s *Amour* (Cupid) personified the divine Eros characterization with her command and ease of line and pure grace.”

**Toronto Star – John Terauds – October 26, 2018**

“Tenor Colin Ainsworth, a frequent Opera Atelier collaborator, is the star attraction in both operas, showing off his lyric voice to great effect.”

**Musical Toronto – April 2017, *Medée***

“With iron-clad dramatic singing all the way from Colin Ainsworth’s ignominious Jason, who cannot stand to suffer another moment of his devoted Medea, played with considerable puissance...The casting was through and through perfect, with Mr. Ainsworth’s Jason roving from petulant to truculent and showing that the hero of the Golden Fleece was, in reality, a reprobate player and user of his wife Medea, casting her aside after he had found enough use for her spells to abet his heroism, and wishing that he could be “loved just a little less.” Mr. Ainsworth even brought a churlishness to his upper-timbre when he complained in Act III that he

could not bear Medea's complaints any longer about his faithfulness, knowing full well that his betrothal to Créuse will follow in the very next scene, breaking Medea's heart.

When I saw Mr. Ainsworth perform the role again Sunday afternoon, he was even better than Saturday's opening night, looking consummately self-assured and in complete harmonic control, not only relying on his trademark lyricism but reaching professionally for much more in timbre and vocal acting. Audiences will appreciate his strident depictions: a heroism of convenience fraught with self-deception that reaps its consequences, and finally, Mr. Ainsworth's striking counterpoise of shock and incredulity relative to a delirious Medea who murders Jason's sons, her own children in effect, giving in to a vengeance that yields a cathartic consummation of Euripidean tragedy."

#### **The Globe and Mail – April 2017**

"Colin Ainsworth, an Opera Atelier favourite, is at his best playing Medea's Jason as an arrogant, vain, powerful, love-racked but ultimately cynical hero, allowing Ainsworth's lovely tenor voice to take on new colourings and depths."

#### **StageDoor.com – April 2017**

"Principals mezzo soprano Peggy Kriha Dye and tenor Colin Ainsworth give outstanding performances. The two who appeared opposite each other for OA in Gluck's Orphée et Eurydice in 2007 and in Lully's Armide in 2012, have a palpable chemistry. Their individual energies are astonishing. Their combined energy is explosive. The couple's words of love turning into words of recrimination have all the realism of any married couple under extreme pressure.

The voices of both singers have continued to mature. Ainsworth's unusually high, pure tenor and Dye's darker voice, scintillating with flecks of light, have both gained immensely in power and expressivity. Ainsworth's beautifully floated high notes in his words of Jason's love to Médée and to her rival Créuse contrast with the full-voiced forcefulness of his anger toward his opponents."

#### **Opera Going Toronto – Ian Ritchie – April 2017**

"Appearing as Jason, tenor Colin Ainsworth is a powerhouse, channelling his big lusty instrument with almost rash abandon, impulsive and dangerous. Fearlessly employing a somewhat more unvarnished tone than Kriha Dye, the versatile Toronto-based singer actor positively shreds his frequent strapping duets with her, flinging us headlong into the midst of their crumbling partnership with his potent contribution to their first tart encounter, D'où vo' vient cet air sombre? ("Whence come you with this black brow?") This is an on-stage team of some considerable ferocity."

#### **barczablog.com – Peter Barcza – April 2017**

"It started with the haircut. Colin Ainsworth, the sweet faced tenor of the eternally youthful demeanor channeled something seriously badass tonight, beginning with the hair and the beard."

#### **The Toronto Star – April 2017**

"Especially electric are the scenes between Jason (tenor Colin Ainsworth), Créuse (soprano Mireille Asselin) and Médée (soprano Peggy Kriha Dye), all of whom are, at various points, visually triangulated."

#### **The Seattle Times – May 2016, *The Flying Dutchman***

"Colin Ainsworth is a lyrical Steersman and a highly effective actor."

**Bachtrack – May 2016**

“The Steersman (Colin Ainsworth) became a much more active participant, returning in the final scene to watch the planned wedding party disintegrate into chaos, to which he contributed unhinged laughter.”

**Toronto Star – October 2015, *Armide***

“The two lead roles of Armide and Renaud are once again played by Peggy Kriha Dye and Colin Ainsworth, who triumphed in the parts in 2012. It’s a pleasure to report that they’re even better this time around, possessing all the vocal beauty they had originally...Ainsworth is now so much more than the storybook hero, equally conflicted about his emotions and how they betray his military allegiances.”

**The Globe and Mail – October 2015**

“Colin Ainsworth was a winning Renaud, her enemy turned lover, alternately boisterous and bucolic, very effective in his love scenes.”

**Musical Toronto – October 2015**

“Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth’s soft grained, warm tenor made an engaging Christian hero Renaud, and his slim figure and bare chest weren’t lost to the audience.”

**Stage Door – October 2015**

“All the singers have fully mastered the declamatory style that dominates the work. Both principals, mezzo soprano Peggy Kriha Dye and tenor Colin Ainsworth give outstanding performances. The voices of both have noticeably matured. Ainsworth has always been blessed with an unusually high, pure tenor. Now it thrills with remarkable power and expressivity.”

**Stage Door – October 2015**

“Her lover Renaud, played by Colin Ainsworth, showed off a voice that continues to grow in size & expressiveness, at times bigger than we’ve ever heard him, yet at times very soft & subdued.”

**ResMusica – Michèle Tosi – June 2015**

« Voix lumineuse également, d’une grande élégance et d’une parfaite clarté d’émission, du ténor Colin Ainsworth/Castor à qui Rameau confie un très bel air concertant (Acte IV, scène V) et une ariette vocalisante – « Quel bonheur règne dans mon âme! » – superbement chanté au cœur du divertissement du premier acte. »

**ResMusica – Michèle Tosi – June 2015**

“I found Colin Ainsworth’s voice exceptionally warm and sweet, giving a positive spin to the role of Jupiter. This was a Jupiter made human, a believable person as opposed to the threatening, all-powerful Thunder-Thrower.”

**Opera Going Toronto – Ian Ritchie – January 2015, Street Scene**

“Appearing as Sam Kaplan, tenor Colin Ainsworth brought a powerful, supremely appealing blend of strength and vulnerability, physicality and reserve to the intricate character. Ainsworth’s instrument is seriously robust with an enormous reach but there is a delicacy, a fine-tooled exquisiteness much in evidence here, too. The delivery is impressive. Lonely House, arguably the ultimate expression of Weill’s Broadway style, a heady cocktail of jazz and blues, was sung with heartrending poignancy by this fine Canadian artist.”

**Schmopera – Jenna Simonov – January 2015**

“Tenor Colin Ainsworth was perfect as Sam Kaplan, in my opinion one of the saddest characters in the opera repertoire. His “Lonely House” was a highlight for me, and Colin used that grainy, honest sound of his as well as a gorgeous falsetto moment at the end. After his Act I love(ish) duet with Rose, he ended the act with a wide, familiar smile that had us all on Sam’s side. It made that awful line he says after his final duet with Rose even worse: ‘Oh Rose, this is the end of my world.’”

**The Georgia Straight – Janet Smith– January 2015, *Don Giovanni***

“Tenor Colin Ainsworth, as Donna Anna’s fiancé Don Ottavio, took the stage for the supremely taxing “Il mio tesoro”: he tapped its power not through loudness, but through a largo tempo and hushed, heartfelt emotion that brought the audience members to breathless silence. He also helped pull off a sparkling, beautifully modulated masked trio with Szabó and Wall near the end of Act 2, aided here by Bedford’s detail-oriented craftsmanship with the orchestra.”

**Opera Going Toronto – February 2014, *Hippolyte et Aricie***

“Singing Rameau’s title roles, tenor Colin Ainsworth as Hippolyte and soprano Meredith Hall as Aricie fill the St. Lawrence Centre’s Jane Mallett Theatre with enchantment. Ainsworth has a big expansive instrument of a type not commonly associated with early opera. The impact of his spinto-like dynamism brings a compelling urgency to the role of a prince trapped in a swirling whirlpool of fate. It is a credit to Ainsworth’s mastery of passagio, the balance of head and chest voice, that Rameau’s countervailing lyricism is never sacrificed even during moments of full power delivery.”

**Chicago Tribune – John von Rhein – April 2014, *St. Matthew Passion***

“Other newcomers were the intense, commanding tenor Colin Ainsworth.”

**Cincinnati Enquirer – December 2013, *Messiah***

“Ainsworth opened the Advent portion of the work with a gentle “Comfort ye” and an agile “Ev’ry valley,” exhibiting fluent coloratura.”

**The Globe and Mail – April 2013, *Magic Flute***

“Colin Ainsworth’s clear, bright tenor made Prince Tamino, ostensibly the opera’s hero, a little less of a stick and more of a man than is usually the case.”

**Ludwig-Van.com – John Terauds – Nov 2013, Britten *St. Nicholas***

“Ainsworth’s solos are a particular highlight in this programme. His years of stage experience have given him the tools to make the most out of every phrase and accent. His voice is in glorious form, filling the cavernous Yorkminster Park church with ease.”

**The Toronto Star – Richard Ouzounian – April 2013, *Magic Flute***

“Colin Ainsworth establishes once again, from his very first notes, that vocal purity is the best attribute a tenor can possess. Add perfect leading man looks and a wonderful sense of bewildered charm and you have the quintessential Tamino.”

**The Toronto Sun, John Coulbourn – April 2013**

“...tenor Colin Ainsworth dons the role of the reluctantly heroic Tamino in such a way that it’s hard to believe it wasn’t tailor-made for him...”

**Calgary Herald – Stephan Bonfield – November 2012, *Otello***

“Colin Ainsworth was in strong lyric voice all night as the disgraced Cassio.”

**Musical Toronto – John Terauds – August 2012, Vaughan-Williams’ *On Wenlock Edge***

“For the songs, the Nash Ensemble, one of England’s gifts to chamber music, was joined by Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth. Together, they wove a delightfully scenic path through the thicket of tragedy and elegy that runs through the poetry. Ainsworth, whose voice has broadened and perhaps even darkened a bit over the past few years, coloured the text as deftly as did the instrumentalists in Vaughan Williams’ original arrangement for piano quartet. There really was no nuance left unexplored, turning the performance into pure magic.”

**Calgary Herald – Kenneth DeLong – January 2012, *Moby Dick***

“Colin Ainsworth was also first class in his portrayal of the Greenhorn, his singing plangent in tone when needed, but also sweetly seductive in the portrayal of the Greenhorn’s inner uncertainties; he was particularly in his effective duets with Queequeg.”

**Chicago Classical Review – Lawrence A. Johnson – April 2011, Charpentier’s *Medée***

“The clear standout in the cast was Colin Ainsworth as Jason. The Canadian tenor possesses an ardent, youthful voice ideal for this repertoire, and he provided some of the finest singing of the evening. Dramatically, Ainsworth also plumbed a surprising emotional intensity in the weak, vacillating Jason, with his devastated agony in response to Medea’s horrific act lifting the opera out of its stilted conventions.”

**Chicago Tribune – John von Rhein, Charpentier’s *Medée***

“The Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth, as the opportunist Jason, sang off the words expressively, displaying a clear, full, beautiful, forwardly placed French lyric tenor sound.”

**Monday Magazine – Ian Cochran – November 2009, Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress***

“Lyrical tenor Colin Ainsworth’s Tom Rakewell maintains a glimmer of his callowness even as he descends into debauchery and madness.”

**Victoria Times Colonist – Kevin Bazzana, 2010, Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress***

“The clear, articulate voice and boy-next-door quality that made the tenor Colin Ainsworth so appealing as Tamino in *The Magic Flute* last season are also well suited to the role of Tom Rakewell, and as an actor Ainsworth is convincing and affecting at every stage of the duped, doomed hero’s ‘progress’.”

**International Opera Review – Bernard Jacobson, 2010, Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress***

“...in Colin Ainsworth’s Tom Rakewell we were treated to a tenor who confounds our expectations of the type by being tall, slim, and intelligent.”

**Straight.com – Lloyd Dykk – June 2009, Orff’s *Carmina Burana***

“Everything is memorable about this joyously bewildering collection, which says only that life is a matter of luck and change, but two sections are especially so: ‘Olim lacus colueram’ (‘Once I Lived on Lakes’), a swan song performed by the excellent tenor Colin Ainsworth in slightly strangled tones, as the bird laments the end of its freedom while turning on a spit...”

**Opera Canada – Bill Rankin – Summer 2009, Bizet’s *Les Pêcheurs de Perles***

“In fine voice, Ainsworth’s ‘Je crois entendre encore’ had everything opera lovers delight in – a beautiful melody sung with exquisite control and emotional directness.”

**Edmonton Journal – Elizabeth Withey – February 2009, Donizetti’s *La Fille du Régiment***

“Toronto-area tenor Colin Ainsworth, who played the besotted Tonio, earned his operatic stripes on Saturday with an early aria featuring – yowzers – nine high Cs. He nailed them, though, and the dapper Ainsworth even made it look fun. The audience of 1,850 rewarded him with heartfelt applause.”

**The Globe and Mail – Ken Winters – December 2008, Handel’s *Messiah***

“Colin Ainsworth was quite marvellous in all he sang. From his serene opening recitative, Comfort ye my people, to his passionate and convincing great succession of recitatives and arias beginning Thy rebuke hath broken His heart, to the ferocity of his aria Thou shalt break them, he sang with real distinction. I doubt you’d hear better anywhere, with his perfect enunciation, his sound at once lyrical and virile, and his spot-on coloratura.”

**San Francisco Classical Voice – Georgia Rowe – September 2008, Rameau’s *Pygmalion***

“In his Bay Area debut, Colin Ainsworth impressed as a Pygmalion of remarkable strength and agility. The Canadian tenor sang 'Fatal Amour' with firm, ringing tone and ardent phrasing. His large voice was always audible, yet his soft singing was just as clear. In his concluding ariette, 'Regne, Amour' (Reign, love), the juiciest line, 'Epuise ton carquois' (Empty your quiver), was both softly floated and pointedly direct.”

**The Globe and Mail – Ken Winters – July 2008, Schubert’s *Die Schöne Müllerin***

“Ainsworth’s voice, a finely focused lyric tenor firm and steady throughout its range, is ideally suited to the work. His enunciation of Wilhelm Muller’s text was a model of clarity...his vocal technique encompassed every note of the score with ease.”

**The Record – Stephen Preece – July 2008, Schubert’s *Die Schöne Müllerin***

“The most immediate impression was Ainsworth’s striking physical appearance –with his long blond hair and broad smile – though as the music began, it was all about his wonderfully engaging vocal talent. The wildly expansive piece tested the full range of vocal expression, from the most tender, achingly-wistful sigh, to the full-throttle gesticulation of giddy glee; Ainsworth conquered all with confident technique, tone and temperament.”

**The Globe and Mail – Colin Eatock – April 2007, Gluck’s *Orphée et Euridice***

“Central to any staging of the Orpheus myth – especially Gluck’s 1774 version, created for the greatest tenor in Paris – is a character who must literally sing his way in and out of Hell. Happily, Opera Atelier has a firm foundation for its production in Colin Ainsworth. This young Canadian tenor proved himself entirely equal to the taxing role of Orpheus: in the aria [L’espoir renâit dans mon âme] – a fiendishly difficult vocal marathon – he displayed rock-solid technique, excellent diction, and a virile tone...Ainsworth looked every inch the part...Ainsworth was consistently simpatico with conductor Andrew Parrott. In the aria J’ai perdu mon Eurydice, they charted a course through shifts in tempo and dynamics that wrung every drop of emotion from this famous lament.”