



Christina Gansch • Prom 5

Mélisande

‘Every time I work on it or listen to it, I feel more pulled into its world of watery mystery and magic.’ Austrian soprano Christina Gansch is talking about her title-role in Debussy’s opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, with which she makes her Proms debut (Prom 5) in a production direct from Glyndebourne. ‘It’s just wonderful, and you have the feeling that the opera really sucks you in.’

It’s the first time the already acclaimed young singer has taken on the iconic but hard-to-pin-down role of Mélisande, an enigmatic figure who is discovered by Golaud wandering aimlessly in the woods. What has Gansch found challenging about it? ‘The most important thing has been time: Mélisande isn’t a role that you can learn quickly. Musically, there’s nothing like it. It sits quite low in the soprano voice, and it’s almost like notated speech – it feels like Debussy wanted to put fragility and maybe even vulnerability in the voice by setting it so low.’

Despite the event marking her first Prom as a performer, she’s already had plenty of Proms experiences as a listener. ‘When I came to London as a student, one of the first things my friends recommended was that I should go Promming. At first I was a bit confused about what that was. But how awesome is it that, for an international festival, anyone can just turn up and queue, and get a ticket?’