



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Samuel Edward Ramey (1942 – Present)

“A basso of extraordinary dramatic and lyric gifts” according to Time magazine, Samuel Ramey has spent more than three decades at the forefront of bass-baritone operatic performances in countless productions worldwide. Ramey’s amazing range and versatility have allowed him to portray a wide variety of characters on stage, on television and in film.

Born Samuel Edward Ramey in Colby, Kan., Ramey grew up involved in music in both high school and college. He attended Kansas State University and studied under Arthur Newman at Wichita State University before serving as an apprentice with Central City and the Santa Fe Opera. Ramey moved to New York where he received his big break with the New York City Opera.

Ramey debuted in “Carmen” in 1973 as Zuniga. In a short time, he established himself as a principal bass, and continued performing different roles to expand his repertoire. Ramey traveled internationally, performing in Berlin at the Hamburg State Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Vienna State Opera, and a number of others in major European cities. After several years of performing, Ramey debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in Handel’s “Rinaldo” in 1984.

The operatic gift Ramey possesses is truly unique, as he has the ability to embrace the bel canto of Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti; the lyric and dramatic roles of Mozart and Verdi; and the heroic roles of the Russian and French repertoire. He has performed in protagonist, antagonist, comedic and solemn roles, but his voice is extremely powerful when playing devils and villains. Ramey has performed the role of Méphistophélés in Gounod’s “Faust” more than 200 times in more than 20 different productions.

In addition to his stage performances, Ramey has sung solo, produced aria albums and symphonic works, and released crossover discs of popular American music. With all of Ramey’s successes, he has become the most recorded bass in history. He has won three Grammy Awards and has garnered exposure through video recordings of a variety of his performances at the Metropolitan Opera. Ramey is also frequently seen on PBS.

In 1996, Ramey performed “A Date with the Devil” in concert at New York’s Avery Fisher Hall, singing 14 arias from the core of his repertoire, which he now performs worldwide. Ramey has also appeared numerous times in sold-out solo recitals at venues across the globe, including Carnegie Hall in New York. Despite all of his success and international acclaim, Ramey shows no signs of slowing down.

During the 2005-2006 season, appeared in “Tosca” with the Los Angeles Opera, “Boris Godunov” with the Houston Grand Opera, “L’amore dei tre re” at Carnegie Hall, and “Atilla” in Naples. Ramey performs more than 70 productions a year and often tours for several months at a time. In 1995, Ramey was chosen “Kansan of the Year,” and in 1998 awarded the rank of Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture.

