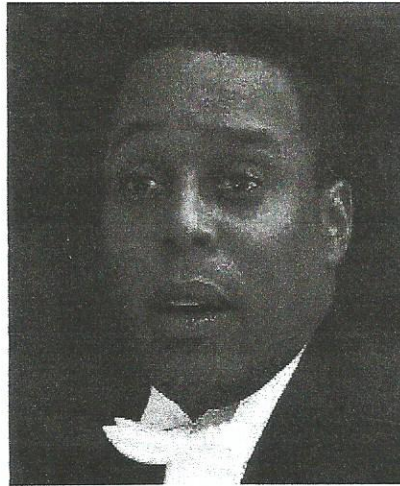


Outstanding Graduate Honoree



Derek Lee Ragin

Vocal Artist NBCS Class of 1972

Regarded as one of the foremost vocal artists of our day, Derek Lee Ragin has achieved special renown for his pioneering efforts in establishing countertenor singing as an art form in the United States. The subtlety of style, purity of tone, and emotional impact of his singing have brought new dimensions of expression to the countertenor's art. Mr. Ragin is better known for his portrayals on the operatic stage than for the many concerts he has appeared in. His repertory is amazingly broad, encompassing works by Baroque composers such as Handel, as well as twentieth century ones, like Benjamin Britten and György Ligeti.

Derek Ragin was born in West Point, New York and grew up in Newark, New Jersey. As a child, he was strongly attracted to music. He began his formal voice training with the Newark Boys Chorus School, and studied as a piano and music education major at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. At Oberlin, he also took secondary voice lessons with Richard Anderson. He had talent, impressing friends with his playful imitations of famous operatic sopranos. At their behest, he auditioned for the countertenor role of Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He went on to perform it at the Oberlin Opera Theater production that year with great success. After leaving Oberlin, Ragin worked with singer Max van Egmond for a summer session at BPI and went to Europe to pursue his career in Baroque opera.

His career as a singer flourished with an official operatic debut in 1983 at the Innsbruck Festwoche der Alten Musik in Cesti's *Il Tito*. After vocal study in Amsterdam he won first prize in the ARD International Music Competition (1986). Two years later he debuted at the Met singing Nireus in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. After further impressive debuts (1990 Salzburg Festival in Gluck's *Orfeo*), Ragin's recordings began to achieve acclaim. His CD of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* on the Harmonia Mundi label won a Gramophone award in 1992, and his Telarc recording of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, *Missa Brevis*, and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* won a Grammy award in 1995.

For the movie *Farinelli*, about eighteenth century castrati Carlo Broschi who used the stage name of Farinelli, Ragin sang the vocal parts, and the film received a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film in 1995.

Ragin appeared at the 1998 Tanglewood Festival with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra for a successful reprising of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. In 2005 Naxos issued a CD featuring Ragin in works by Benjamin Britten.

Currently, Derek lives in New York City and continues to record and perform for audiences worldwide.