Valer Sabadus

Full biography · 2026/27 season

“Uncommonly dramatic, crystal-clear, exceptionally controlled, lyrically refined”: this is how the Süddeutsche Zeitung describes the voice of Valer Sabadus.

For more than 15 years, the countertenor, who comes from a German-Romanian family of musicians, has captivated audiences at Europe’s leading opera houses and most renowned music festivals. His expressive artistry, natural vocal production and stylistic versatility have established him as a distinctive presence on the international music scene. His work ranges from masterpieces of Baroque opera to contemporary music and projects that cross musical genres.

In 2009, at the age of 23, Valer Sabadus made his debut under Riccardo Muti at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival in Niccolò Jommelli’s Demofoonte, a production that subsequently took him to the Ravenna Festival and the Opéra national de Paris.

A defining moment in his career came in 2011 with Johann Adolph Hasse’s Didone abbandonata at Munich’s Prinzregententheater. While still studying at the Bavarian Theatre Academy August Everding, Sabadus enjoyed a widely acclaimed stage success under the musical direction of Michael Hofstetter. Shortly afterwards, he recorded his first solo album, Hasse Reloaded, with the Hofkapelle München for OehmsClassics. The recording received the German Record Critics’ Award and helped pave the way for his international career.

He gained international recognition in 2012 as Semira in Leonardo Vinci’s Artaserse, in Silviu Purcărete’s acclaimed staging with Concerto Köln conducted by Diego Fasolis. Alongside the internationally celebrated countertenors Philippe Jaroussky, Max Emanuel Cencic and Franco Fagioli, he was part of an exceptional cast that brought renewed international attention to this Baroque opera. The production took him to opera houses in Nancy, Lausanne and Cologne, the Theater an der Wien, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Royal Opera of Versailles and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Among his defining stage appearances is the title role in Handel’s Xerxes, in which he enjoyed great success in Stefan Herheim’s acclaimed production at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf in 2013. He returned for revivals in 2015 and 2019.

In 2015, he made his role debut as Emperor Nerone in Claudio Monteverdi’s L’incoronazione di Poppea at the Theater an der Wien, in Claus Guth’s striking production conducted by Jean-Christophe Spinosi. He returned to the role in 2021 with the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer, performing in Vicenza, Geneva and Budapest.

Further operatic engagements have included Menelao in Cavalli’s Elena at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, the title role in Handel’s Teseo at the Karlsruhe Handel Festival, and Cavalli’s Eliogabalo and Giasone at opera houses in Paris, Geneva and Amsterdam. He has also appeared as Ruggiero in Handel’s Alcina in Basel and Hanover.

A particularly significant artistic experience was his portrayal of Orpheus in 2022 in Pina Bausch’s legendary staging of Gluck’s Orpheus und Eurydike in Wuppertal. Its singular fusion of singing, dance

and theatre opened up new perspectives on the musical and dramatic interpretation of this iconic operatic figure.

title role of Handel’s Faramondo.

Alongside his operatic career, Valer Sabadus is passionately committed to concert, oratorio and song repertoire. He works with leading ensembles including Concerto Köln, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, the Basel Chamber Orchestra, La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, the Venice Baroque Orchestra, the Hofkapelle München, L’Arpeggiata, Cappella Mediterranea, Accademia Bizantina, Il Pomo d’Oro and Les Talens Lyriques.

His musical collaborators include conductors Leonardo García Alarcón, Ivor Bolton, Ottavio Dantone, Andrea Marcon, Riccardo Minasi, Christophe Rousset, Christina Pluhar, William Christie Michael Hofstetter and Dorothee Oberlinger, as well as countertenors Andreas Scholl and Philippe Jaroussky and soprano Julia Lezhneva. He also enjoys an increasingly close artistic partnership with the Romanian conductor Gabriel Bebeșelea, with whom he is exploring repertoire beyond early music.

His concert engagements regularly take him to major festivals and prestigious venues in Europe and beyond, including the Salzburg Festival, the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, the Handel festivals in Halle, Göttingen and Karlsruhe, Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, the Dresden Music Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg and Hohenems, and the Utrecht Early Music Festival. He has appeared as a soloist at the Berlin and Cologne Philharmonie concert halls, the Semperoper Dresden, Hamburg’s Laeiszhalle and Elbphilharmonie, Munich’s Prinzregententheater and the Wiener Konzerthaus.

He has a particular passion for projects that cross genres, disciplines and cultures. Whether exploring Eastern musical traditions with the Pera Ensemble, performing Händel goes wild with L’Arpeggiata, collaborating with rapper Samy Deluxe or appearing in Closer to Paradise with SPARK – the classical band, his curiosity about new forms of expression and the meeting of different musical traditions has become a hallmark of his artistry.

His extensive discography now comprises more than 25 recordings on leading international record labels. Highlights include Artaserse, Le belle immagini, Caro Gemello, Arias – Bach/Telemann and Obbligati – Caldara with Ensemble Nuovo Aspetto, as well as the cross-genre productions Händel goes wild with L’Arpeggiata and Closer to Paradise with SPARK – the classical band. From 2013 to 2020, he was an exclusive recording artist with Sony Classical.

His many distinctions include the German Record Critics’ Award, the ECHO Klassik and the International Classical Music Award (ICMA) as “Young Artist of the Year – Vocal” in 2013. He received the Handel Prize of the City of Halle in 2020 and the Bavarian Culture Prize in 2022.

Valer Sabadus began his vocal training at the age of 17 with Professor Gabriele Fuchs at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. He completed his training in the masterclass in music theatre at the Bavarian Theatre Academy August Everding in 2013, graduating with distinction.