



Mirjam Schmidt, Conductor

Born in Mainz-on-the-Rhine, she descends from a family of Upper Austrian teachers.

Her artistic talent was discovered and nurtured early by her parents, such that already in her youth she was distinguished by numerous prizes in the category of piano / duo piano.

As a junior student in the conducting class at the Peter Cornelius Conservatory, she already obtained her initial set of tools for the conductor's trade at age 17 while also participating as a singer in the cathedral music ensembles at the High Cathedral of Mainz. Various adjunct jobs at Mainz Cathedral (conducting, vocal coaching and music management) presented challenges at a young age that gave her musicality ample opportunity to blossom early on. At this juncture her teachers included Matthias Breitschaft (conducting), Albert Schönberger (organ) and Ronald Pelger (vocal coaching and conducting).

Her professional training as a conductor and organist ensued after graduation with A-levels, and was obtained at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. Here she studied with Hans-Jürgen Kaiser, Joshard Daus and Sergiu Celibidache, whose philosophical approach to music left a deep and lasting imprint on Mirjam Schmidt.

Further milestones along her artistic course of study were courses with Eric Ericsson and internships at the South German Radio Choir in Stuttgart.

Since 1995 she has lived in Austria, where she started a family. In Vienna she devoted herself to conducting sacred music, in particular as Artistic Director of Ecclesiastical Music from 2005 to 2008 at St. Augustine's in Vienna, the former parish church of the Austrian imperial court.

She performed with such renowned soloists as Michael Schade, Annely Peebo, Alexander Kaimbacher, Adrian Eröd, Lars Woldt, Donna Ellen and Hermine Haselböck, and most rapidly acquired a wide-ranging and extensive repertoire as well a thorough command of rehearsal technique and providing musical leadership.

Beginning at the same time was her international engagement as a conductor. These activities have led her across Austria's borders to Israel (Akko), Denmark (Djursland Baroque Concerts), Italy (Festival dell'Aurora) and Slovakia (Concert Hall of the Slovak Radio, Bratislava).

In November of 2007 Mirjam Schmidt founded the ensemble La finestra d'arte, thus intensifying her preoccupation with vocal music in conjunction with orchestral music.

In the course of her artistic efforts she champions new music in manifold ways, having conducted world premieres of works by Wolfram Wagner, Kurt Schwertsik, Balduin Sulzer, Ernst Ludwig Leitner and Fridolin Dallinger, among others.

As a professor at the Conservatory for Ecclesiastical Music of the Diocese of St. Pölten and as an instructor at seminars, Mirjam Schmidt passes along the tools and artistry of her musical handiwork to her students in keeping with her guiding precept:

"Within thee must burn that which thou dost seek to kindle in others" (St. Augustine).