

matthias kuhn
musician

„He lets the music breathe“

CURRICULUM VITAE MATTHIAS KUHN

Matthias Kuhn performs a wide range of musical activities as a conductor and a cellist with prestigious ensembles both in Switzerland and abroad. In recent years he has performed at the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, the Biennale Zagreb, the Theaterspektakel Zürich and the festival MESS Sarajevo. He has also realised numerous projects in Berne, at the cultural centre Zentrum Paul Klee and the Municipal Theatre among others.

Matthias Kuhn has helped to shape the musical scene in Berne and surroundings in many ways for years: He has been the principal conductor of Medizinerorchester Bern (Bernese Doctors' Orchestra) – a position he also filled from 2004 to 2006 in the Akademisches Orchester (Academic Orchestra) in Freiburg i. Br., Germany. In 2006/07 Matthias Kuhn was moreover put in charge of an opera production as a visiting lecturer at the Y Institute of Transdisciplinarity at the Hochschule der Künste Bern HKB (Berne College of Arts).

His artistic work crosses boundaries between different genres. Thus he dedicates himself to chamber music, as a visiting conductor with Camerata Berne, the chamber orchestras of Berne and Basle, the Collegium Novum Zürich as well as the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn, Germany. He is one of the persons responsible for the programming of the Berne-based chamber ensemble "La Strimpellata" whose permanent conductor he also is. As a cellist, in particular, Matthias Kuhn is predominantly devoted to chamber music, together with his duo partners Eva-Maria Zimmermann or Alexander Ruef (piano) and Romano Giefer (harpichord).

In equal measure he has, however, worked with symphony orchestras such as the Bern Symphony Orchestra with which he regularly performs as a visiting conductor. With the OPUS Orchestra he debuted in opera with the much publicised world premiere of Christian Henking's „Leonce and Lena“ at Stadttheater Bern (Berne's Municipal Theatre) in 2004. He has moreover worked with the symphony orchestras of Basle, Biel and St. Gall, with Targu-Meres Philharmonic (Rumania), as well as the Philharmonie Südwestfalen and the Württembergische Philharmonie in Germany.

Full of curiosity Matthias Kuhn likewise switches back and forth between different musical eras. He is equally dedicated to historically informed performance – for instance in concerts with the Neue Orchester Köln, the Freitagsakademie, the Affetti Musicali or in the framework of the Händel Festspiele Karlsruhe – as to contemporary music. He has performed contemporary compositions with Collegium Novum Zürich, basel sinfonietta, the piano quartett Charmillon which he co-founded, as well as with La Strimpellata and the SONEMUS Ensemble Sarajevo among others.

As varied as his activities are the musical influences that have shaped him: In addition to his studies in Berne and with Prof. Dr. P. Gülke in Freiburg i. Br., Germany, he has worked with renowned artists such as Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, Lorin Maazel, Isaac Stern und Leon Fleisher in the framework of masterclasses and festivals. He has moreover been awarded the S.&N. Kay-Fellowship for conducting at the Tanglewood Music Festival where he studied with Seiji Ozawa, André Previn and Jorma Panula.

REVIEWS

"He lets the music breathe"

(Bieler Tagblatt, 13.8.2001, F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Italian Symphony)

"In the Freiburger Konzerthaus, conductor Matthias Kuhn managed to strongly bring out this psychologising view. Choir and orchestra, perfectly prepared and responding accurately under Kuhn's direction, merged to a powerful unity of sound. It would be hard to get to the heart of this monumental piece more conclusively."

(Badische Zeitung, 14.2.2007, G. Verdi: Missa da Requiem)

"Matthias Kuhn conducted the piece with great reliability, succinct precision and unequivocal gesture. In this performance the Bernese conductor has emphatically proven his considerable talent."

(Der Bund/Schweizer Musik Zeitung/Opernwelt, April 2004, Ch. Henking: Leonce und Lena)

"...and the musical director of this production was their principal conductor, Matthias Kuhn. He did an excellent job and had the dynamic balance, the tempi and the coordination with the stage at all times attentively but flexibly under control."

(Musik&Theater, June 2004, Ch. Henking: Leonce und Lena)

"In a positively serene way (and with very precise, concentrated baton technique) Kuhn answered the question of whether Brahms' Second is „a buoyant and sweet" piece or rather a „sad and plump" one. Kuhn conclusively put the two options side to side."

(Badische Zeitung, 30.11.1998, J. Brahms: Symphony Nr. 2)

"The cello part stands for short bright moments of particular expressivity that also require extremely demanding fingering techniques. Kuhn equally convinces in both."

(Der Bund, 22.9.2008, P. Nørgård: Der göttliche Tivoli)

"The musicians' fresh, cheerful approach, combined with Kuhn's very dynamic and accentuated interpretation, made for a highly enjoyable, precise performance."

(Der Bund, 22.1.2009, J. Haydn: Symphony Nr. 103)

"How they listened to each other, how they passed themes to each other – that was masterly."

(Der Bund, 27.10.2003, F. Chopin: Sonata for cello and piano / piano trio)