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**C A N T U S C Ö L L N**

Magdalene Harer, *soprano*

Elisabeth Popien, *alto*

Hans Jörg Mammel, *tenor*

Wilfried Jochens, *tenor*

Wolf Matthias Friedrich, *bass*

**Konrad Junghänel**, *direction*

**Cantus Cölln**, an ensemble made up of vocal soloists, was formed in 1987 by the renowned lutenist Konrad Junghänel. In just a few years it managed to become one of the best vocal ensembles in the world.

The core of its musical efforts includes the German and Italian vocal literature of the Renaissance and the Baroque. Cantus Cölln's inclusion in its repertoire of pieces from the superb German tradition of these eras, musical traditions that have been rather neglected, has received wide acclaim from the public. The about 35 recorded CDs, which cover a repertory from Monteverdi madrigals, his *Vespro della beata Vergine*, Schütz’ *Psalms of David* up to motets and cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach have almost all been rewarded with international prizes. Next to numerous awards/ distinctions like such as the *Edison Awards Classical,* the *Diapason d’Or*, *ffff du Télérama*, *10 du Répertoire*, the *Choc du Monde de la Musique*, the *Grand Prix du Disque* (Académie Charles Cros) and nominies for among others the *Grammy* and the *Grammophone Award* Cantus Cölln was awarded the *Grammophone Award* just as the *Jahrespreis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik* and the *Caecilia Price* for its singular recording of Monteverdi’s *Selva morale e spirituale* in 2002 and the *ECHO Klassik* for its recording of the complete *Altbachisches Archiv* in 2004.

Critics continually emphasize the fact that the singers, of whom each has a successful solo career, impress the audience with their nearly flawless homogeneous ensemble sound, without however, losing their individual vocal timbre.

From the very beginning on Cantus Cölln aimed to reach an increasing homogenity, a “blind” musical understanding through an hardly ever changing composition of the group. For an international string quartet this should be taken for granted but unfortunately it is very often missing in the generally fast changing music market.

The ensemble is occasionally augmented for the performance of sacred music calling for larger forces such as the cantatas and motets by Bach, Psalmen Davids by Schütz and the Vespers by Rosenmüller.

During the years the repertory has spread from its early focal point “Madrigals and Motets” of the 17th century to the complete development of sacred concerts and the cantata up to high Baroque. Important criterion when choosing a programme is of course that the concerned piece of music must be suitable for the soloist way of performing - whether it gains more through it then it might lose. It is not about the “one and only” way of performing but about following a sound that fuses highest transparency possible with individual emotion and sensual sound.

Among the outstanding highlights during the development of the years were the productions of the *Vespro della beata Vergine* of Claudio Monteverdi and the one of Johann Rosenmüller which marked the beginning of a small international Renaissance of this important “German-Italien” composer. Further the productions of motets, early cantatas and the Mass in b minor of Johann Sebastian Bach met with an enthousiastic international echo. Already now the early cantatas – awarded with many prestigious prizes – belong to one of the most successful Bach-cantatas-recordings ever.

The first staged production of Cantus Cölln - „Combattimenti“ with madrigals of Monteverdi - was a coproduction between the Nationale Reisopera in the Netherlands and the Théâtre Transparant in Belgium. After the big success of the production in 1998 Cantus Cölln did a second tour in January 2000.

Very short time after ist founding, the well-known French CD-magazine "Diapason" already characterised Cantus Cölln as "one of the revelations in the domain of ancient music".

In the year 2000 Cantus Cölln was awarded the much sought after Buxtehude prize of Hanse town Lübeck for its extraordinary achievements on the field of sacred music. Last prize winner was Elliot Gardiner in 1994.

Cantus Cölln achieved its reputation through numerous performances at international festivals in Europe (Herne, Stuttgart, Utrecht, Innsbruck, Schleswig-Holstein, Salzburg, Barcelona, Breslau, etc.), and invitations to perform in North and South America, Africa, Australia and Asia. Broadcast recordings and long term regular recording plans - with Deutsche Harmonia Mundi-BMG, Harmonia Mundi France and nowaydays the German label accent - help to confirm the international renommée of this ensemble.

**Biographies**

**KONRAD JUNGHÄNEL** is one of the leading conductors in the field of Early Music. He began his career as internationally renowned lutenist. Since the period of his studies in Cologne he has regularly collaborated as an instrumentalist with René Jacobs – for recitals and opera productions – and other well-known ensembles such as *Les Arts Florissants*, *La Petite Bande* or *Musica Antiqua Köln*, being praised for his extraordinary virtuosity. Both as a soloist and a member of chamber music ensembles, Konrad Junghänel has appeared throughout Europe, in the USA, Japan, South America and Africa. For his recordings of the complete lute works by J.S. Bach as well as the works for lute solo by S.L.Weiss he was internationally awarded. Since 1994 Konrad Junghänel has a professorship at the state conservatory of music in Cologne. In 1987, his continuous work in the field of the baroque vocal music brought Konrad Junghänel to found Cantus Cölln, an ensemble made up of vocal soloists, that nowadays is one of the most esteemed ensembles of its kind worldwide. (www.cantuscoelln.com)

For more than a decade, Konrad Junghänel is appearing as much requested guest conductor in Germany and abroad, for concerts and mainly for scenic productions of the baroque and early classical period. The result of his intense rehearsal work with specialized baroque ensemble as well as with modern orchestras is unanimously recognized. Critics outline the vibrating tempi, dramatic expressiveness of his interpretation and the sounds, both slim and rich of colour, of the ensembles he conducts. In a poll of the renowned German newspaper “Welt am Sonntag” Konrad Junghänel was nominated by the critics as best conductor of the opera season 2010/2011 in the region of Northrhine-Westfalia.

The production *Combattimenti*, with madrigals by Claudio Monteverdi (direction Geoffrey Layton), ran at the Internationale Reisopera of the Netherlands and Belgium for three years. This production was followed by Francesco Cavalli’s *La Calisto* (direction Igor Folwill) in Cologne and Domenico Mazzocchi’s *La Catena d’Adone* (direction Jakob Peters-Messer) in Innsbruck and Antwerp. At the theater of Basel Konrad Junghänel conducted *Was liegt die Stadt so wüste* with music by Heinrich Schütz just as the Händel-Oratory *Israel in Egypt*, both directed by Herbert Wernicke, at the Staatsoper Hamburg *Ein geistliches Bankett*, a scenic production of Bach cantatas (direction Ingrid von Wantoch Rekowski). At the Theater Basel followed Händel’s *Semele* (direction Karin Beier), Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* (direction Nigel Lowery) and Rameau’s *Les Paladins* (direction Nigel Lowery). At the Handelfestspiele Göttingen 2006 he made his debut with Handel’s opera *Poro* (direction Igor Folwill). In autumne 2006 Konrad Junghänel conducted Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* in Potsdam (direction Uwe Eric Laufenberg), followed by the *Florentiner Intermedien* (direction Nigel Lowery) at the Saarländisches Staatstheater Saarbrücken in April 2007 as well as Mozart’s *Lucio Silla* at the Staatsoper Stuttgart (direction Olga Motta) in November. In April 2008 he has directed Händel’s *Agrippina* (direction: Peter Lund), again in Saarbrücken. After a further Mozart-Premiere in Potsdam in September 2008: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (direction Uwe Eric Laufenberg) he will be conducting Christoph Willibald Gluck’s *Armida* (direction: Calixto Bieito) at the Komische Oper Berlin in April 2009 as well as Händel’s *Teseo* (direction: Igor Bauersima) in Stuttgart in May. In November he debuted at Cologne Opera with a further Gluck-Premiere: *Orfeo ed Euridice* (direction: Johannes Erath). 2010 started by Rameau’s *Les Paladins* (direction: Arila Siegert) at Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf/Duisburg, followed by Purcell’s *Dido und Aeneas* at the Saarländisches Staatstheater Saarbrücken. In autumn, the premieres of Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* (october, direction: Dietrich Hilsdorf) and Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (november, direction: Uwe Eric Laufenberg), initialized a Monteverdi-cycle as well as a Mozart-cycle under his musical direction at the Cologne Opera. In January 2011, he directed Rameau’s *Platée* (direction: Karoline Gruber) at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf/Duisburg (January 2011) as well as *La Clemenza di Tito* (October 2011, direction: Uwe Eric Laufenberg) and *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (February 2012, direction: Bernd Mottl) at the Cologne Opera. With the very successful production of G.F. Händel’s *Xerxes* at the Komische Oper Berlin (May 2012, direction: Stefan Herheim) Konrad Junghänel also gave guest performances in Bergen, Norway. His last celebrated production was Händel’s *Jephta* in Potsdam in November 2013 (direction: Lydia Steier), which he also directed at the Wiener Festwochen in 2015. Further works amongst others in Berlin and Wiesbaden are being prepared.

**MAGDALENE HARER** completed her vocal studies with Professor Sabine Ritterbusch at the

University of Music Detmold (Germany) and graduated 2010 with honours. She is currently

completing her postgraduate studies (Solo Performance Class) at the University of Music, Drama

and Media Hannover (Germany).

Magdalene Harer is a highly demanded soloist in concert performances. She covers a wide

repertoire from the Renaissance to the great composers of the baroque, classical and romantic

period to contemporary music. Furthermore, she has given concerts in Austria, Belgium, Portugal,

the Netherlands, France, Sweden and Poland, as well as in Israel and in the United States.

She is also at home on the opera stage. Over the last years Magdalene Harer embodied characters

such as Euridice in Gluck’s Orfeo and Adele in Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss.

Moreover, she regularly works with highly distinguished ensembles such as the RIAS-chamber

choir, the Collegium Vocale Gent and the Huelgas Ensemble. She regularly collaborates with Konrad Junghänel and is member in his vocal ensemble Cantus Cölln since 2013.

**ELISABETH POPIEN** first studied protestant church music at the Cologne College of Music and graduated with the “A-Examen” in 1992. From the beginning of her studies on she has been working as a chorister and a soloist with conductors who have devoted themselves to the historical performance practice, such as Jordi Savall, Philipp Herreweghe, Sigiswald Kuijken, Peter Neumann und Hermann Max, Roland Wilson, amongst others. Simultaneously she received her vocal training from Hans-Dieter Saretzki, Düsseldorf.

Radio-, TV- as well as numerous CD- recordings stand for her artistic work. Many of the CDs are prize-winning.

In addition to her ensemble activities Elisabeth Popien also appeares as a classical oratory singer with a repertoire spreading from Baroque to Contemporary Music.

**HANS JÖRG MAMMEL** was born in Stuttgart where he received his first musical education and vocal training with the Stuttgarter Hymnus Boys Choir. He studied singing at the College of Music in Freiburg/Breisgau with Prof. Werner Hollweg and Prof. Ingeborg Most and participated in masterclasses with Barbara Schlick, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and James Wagner for singing and with Reinhard Goebel for historical performance practice.

For many years know, he has made himself a name especially as a soloist in Germany and the neighbouring countries and sang in a great number of important festivals like Utrecht, Schwetzingen, Schleswig-Holstein, Jerusalem, Wroclaw, Bruges and Vienna. Hans Jörg Mammel has worked with outstanding conductors like Thomas Hengelbrock, Sigiswald Kuijken, Ivan Fischer, Hans Zender, Daniel Reuss, Hans-Christoph Rademann, Marcus Creed, Philipp Herreweghe, Ivor Bolton und Masaaki Suzuki. His repertoire ranges from the Renaissance, passing the important composers of the Baroque, the Classical era and the Romanticism until contemporary compostions. He took part in premieres of works by Nikolaus Huber, Karl-Heinz Stockhausen and Hans Zender.

Hans Jörg Mammel very successfully sang the Orfeo in Monteverdi’s homonymous opera in Iceland. Opera productions brought him to the States Opera “Unter den Linden”, Berlin, to the Städt. Bühnen Freiburg just as to the States Opera of Munich. In addition to his concert and opera activities Hans Jörg Mammel devotes himself to the Lied where next to the great Liederzyklen of Romanticism he focuses especially on the composers of the second Berliner Liedschule. Many of the works were recorded on CD.

**WOLF MATTHIAS FRIEDRICH** studied singing at the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Musikhochschule in Leipzig with Eva Schubert and in 1980 was prize-winner in the International Dvorak Competition in Karlovy Vary. From 1982 to 1986 he was a member of the Dresden State Opera Studio. Engagements to works with musical directors such as Howard Arman, Michel Corbos, Alessandro De Marchi, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Roy Goodmann, Marek Janowski, Konrad Junghänel, Fabio Luisi, Rudolf Lutz, Nicholas McGegan, Kurt Masur, Jan Willem de Vriend, David Timm, amongst others, brought him to opera houses, concert halls and to festivals worldwide. Several radio and more than 50 CD- and DVD-productions witness his large repertoire, ranging from the early baroque up to the modernity. 2002 Friedrich ranked among the founders of the Kerll-Rosenmüller-Festival, that took place annualy from 2002 until 2006 in order to promote the musical heritage of the composers born in his home, the Vogtland, Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693), Johann Rosenmüller (1615-1684) and Sebastian Knüpfer (1633-1676) ([www.kerll-rosenmueller-fest.de](http://www.kerll-rosenmueller-fest.de)).

Opera productions, amongst others, in: Cologne (Monteverdi’s L'incoronazione di Poppea, Rinaldo by Händel; Entführung aus dem Serail as well as Don Giovanni by Mozart, Rossini: L'italiana in Algeri); Dresden: Dafne by Peranda/Bontempi, Il matrimonio segreto by Cimarosa, Matthus: Cornet, Shi: Vatermord; Schwetzingen: La Divisione del Mondo by Legrenzi, Haydn’s Armida as well as further ones in Hannover, Potsdam, Halle, Göttingen, Berlin, Edinburgh, Prag, Schwerin…