

Fate with Baroque Gestures

A new dawn for the Baroque at Castle Damtschach:

As of today, the Carinthian mezzo-soprano Maria Weiss sings the role of "Aurora".



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It is perhaps the first scenic performance of Francesco Gasparini's componimento da camera "L'Oracolo dell Fato" and it dominates the weekend at Castle Damtschach near Wernberg.

Maria Weiss, who takes part as Aurora, feels a strong affinity to early music - as well as castles, ornaments, trouser roles and broken characters.

"They are more interesting to perform", says the mezzo-soprano who speaks five languages and received artistic training in Paris, Florence and Barcelona. Today, the internationally successful singer lives in Vienna.

At 13, Maria Weiss read Harnoncourt's „Music as Speech“ in which he makes the case for a historically informed performance – a seminal moment for the musically talented girl. Following Harnoncourt's example, she is very particular about the composers' original manuscripts: "I obtain autographs of the scores, print them on tracing paper and bind them between sheet music by the publisher". By singing the role of the equally charming Aurora who engages in a forbidden love affair with Cefalo, Weiss indulges in only one aspect of her art - indeed, the 31-year old has a thing for trouser roles as well as characters facing human tragedies, and her dream role is that of "Sesto" in Mozart's "La Clemenza". But next to singing, Maria Weiss also dances the flamenco and practices historical fencing, while her engagement in Damtschach has acquainted her with the art of Baroque gestures, a speciality of director Sigrid T'Hooft.

"L'Oracolo dell Fato" was dedicated in 1709 to Elisabetta Christina, who was later mother to Maria Theresia. It is also the empress whose virtues are praised above those of Aurora and Diana, because "Fato", who is fate personified, decides in favour of the sovereign (as was typical for the time). Ulli Nagy, artistic director of the Concertino Amarilli and also a Carinthian, discovered this rare musical piece.