



Biography - Wiebke Lehmkuhl, Contralto

Born in Oldenburg, Germany, alto Wiebke Lehmkuhl received her vocal training from Ulla Groenewold and Hanna Schwarz at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg. After guest engagements at the Kiel Opera and the Hamburg and Hanover State Operas, Wiebke Lehmkuhl received her first permanent engagement at the Zurich Opera House while still a student. In 2012 she made her debut at the Salzburg Festival under Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Her extraordinary versatility gives Wiebke Lehmkuhl a broad repertoire ranging from Monteverdi, Handel and Bach to Romantic oratorios, Mahler and Wagner, making her a much sought-after soloist on the international concert podium and opera stage. She is a regular guest with major orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Tonhalle Zurich, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony, Orchestre de Paris and Swedish Symphony, where she has worked with conductors such as Kirill Petrenko, Klaus Mäkelä, Daniel Hardig and Riccardo Chailly. She is also a welcome guest at festivals such as the Schleswig-Holstein, Rheingau and Lucerne Festivals.

Wiebke Lehmkuhl has appeared at the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals. She made her debut at the Nederlandse Opera in Amsterdam in Handel's *Jephta*. Her absolute key role, however, is without doubt Erda in Wagner's *Rheingold* and *Siegfried*: "And with Wiebke Lehmkuhl's Erda, an operatic miracle happened in the third act: a performance that had long been very good with very good singers was raised to a lonely world level by a very special singer. Weighing every word and yet weaving every word into the legato line, the registers of her dreamlike alto voice melting together like ebony - this is how Wiebke Lehmkuhl's grandmother deserves the crown of the evening. (Peter Krause, "OPERN-KRITIK: GRAND THÉÂTRE DE GENÈVE - SIEGFRIED - Poesie statt Politik", www.concerti.de; 15 February 2019) This role has since taken her to the stages of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Opéra de Bastille in Paris and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, with conductors such as Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Marek Janowski and Philippe Jordan. She will also be heard as Erda at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden under Antonio Pappano in the new London Ring, which opens in the 23/24 season with *Rheingold*. She then accepted an invitation from the Opéra nationale de Paris to sing Cornelia in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*.

In the concert repertoire, Wiebke Lehmkuhl's heart beats above all for Baroque music, and in particular for Johann Sebastian Bach. She has been invited to perform the alto arias from the *St John Passion* with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Trevor Pinnock. However, the works of Gustav Mahler and Ludwig van Beethoven are always in the foreground. In Lisbon and Valencia, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* and the Rückert Lieder are on the programme. Wiebke Lehmkuhl returns to the Teatro alla Scala di Milano for Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* under Riccardo Chailly, before closing the season with the Missa Solemnis at the Auditorio Nacional de la Musica Madrid under David Afkham.

Wiebke Lehmkuhl has made numerous recordings, including J.S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*

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with the Gewandhausorchester zu Leipzig under Riccardo Chailly (Decca) and C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat* with the RIAS Kammerchor and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin under Hans-Christoph Rademann (Harmonia Mundi).