

Interview with Konstantia Gourzi

What is the idea behind opus21musikplus?

New music urgently needs to be portrayed together with new concepts. Up until now, the feeling has often been that new music has lost its sense of joy and creativity, and does not speak to young and/or open-minded audiences. New music should be fun.

What does the name of the network mean?

opus21musikplus's name is easy to explain. It consists of four parts - firstly, opus: the child, the act of creation and the work. Secondly, the number 21 signifies the 21st century, our musical present and future. Thirdly, music is for our music, which we portray in topical and appealing ways. Finally, the plus describes how we distinguish ourselves from standard types of project.

How do your international collaborations with composers and artists work?

Fortunately, this is easier in the twenty-first century than in Mozart's time. The internet, mobile phones and air travel have changed artists' lives. I have been working with like-minded colleagues from the most diverse countries and cultures for years. We are all driven by our desire to collaborate again and again, to make music and develop our ideas together.

How did the project of Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire + jazz come about?

About ten years ago I realised that although I had heard Pierrot Lunaire hundreds of times, I still did not understand it properly, and could not really get a sense of Schoenberg from the beginning of his oeuvre to the end. Searching for the cause of this difficulty, I played the score of Pierrot Lunaire on the piano, from the beginning to the end and vice versa. I only played the notes, not the rhythm or the dynamics. In doing this, I suddenly noticed that many of the chords came from a totally different musical direction. What I heard sounded like jazz chords! They were hidden by the fast tempi Schoenberg had set, but they were there.

What does being a composer and also a conductor mean?

It is a wonderful mixture! Composing helps me better to immerse myself in a new score. Conducting is immeasurably valuable when it comes to scoring my own works, to arrive quickly at answers about practical issues and questions of sound. Following both professional directions simultaneously remains a challenge of course! I always do my best to marry both harmoniously.

What does an audience particularly enjoy about an opus21musikplus concert?

They enjoy the presentation of music in ways they have never previously experienced. Each of our concerts is a new type of art form we have created ourselves, a world premiere! And every concert is a one-off experience. The audience sense this: that they have been part of something unique.

Fritz Lauterbach