

Andri Joël Harison

Artistic Career

Andri Joël Harison is the youngest scion of a musical dynasty from Antananarivo (Madagascar) - and already on his way to the big stages of this world.

Born in Vienna in 1995, he discovered music for himself at a very early age, when he started playing melodious tunes on the keyboard at the age of just thirteen months. In kindergarten, he played new pieces as well as improvisations of famous Christmas songs during celebrations. Since then, improvisation has become an essential skill in his musical oeuvre.

He completed his musical education in piano with Silvia Pereyra de Geberovich at the School of Music in Simmering, in singing with Christine Wagner, as well as at the Grammar School of Music of Vienna [Musikgymnasium], where he sang in the school choirs and ensembles and performed as a vocal soloist. He completed his studies with Konrad Leitner (correpitition, opera conducting) and Johannes Wildner (orchestra conducting) at the University of Music in Vienna.

He first appeared as a conductor at the age of 15 with the premiere of his first composition for orchestra in the concert hall of the School of Music in Simmering. His orchestral piece Op. 10 No. 1 was performed by pupils of the School of Music Simmering and the Grammar School of Music Vienna.

He is a prize-winner of the seventh "International Competition for Piano for Six and Eight Hands" of the Bavarian Music Academy (2010), eight-time prize-winner of the youth music competition "prima la musica" (2007-2014), prize-winner of the 18th "Osaka International Music Competition". For this competition he composed his "Fledermaus-Fantasy"; as a result - being the only one in the current competition with his own composition - he won the "Espoir Prize". He is also a recipient of the "Heinz-Arnold Memorial Scholarship" as pianist and répétiteur at the 5th International Competition for the Richard Wagner Prize of the Richard Wagner Foundation Leipzig (2018).

As a composer, the breadth of his oeuvre so far ranges from piano works to transcriptions and symphonic music; it currently contains almost 100 works.

His most popular piano composition up to now, the above-mentioned Fledermaus-Fantasy was last performed for the first time in London in June 2019 (previously in Bratislava, Leipzig, Vienna and Osaka) to great acclaim.

Wolfgang Graff, for example, writes about Andri Joël Harison at the Austro-Japanese Friendship Concert:

„Andri Joël Harison opened the second part of the concert on the piano with Chopin's Polonaise in A flat major, op. 53. The radiant personality of the young musician furthermore enhanced this lucky feeling of the lightness of being. His own composition "Fledermaus-Fantasie" - highly virtuosic and brilliantly written over the melodies of Johann Strauss' operetta - was a great treat for the attending guests.”
(Austrian-Japanese Gesellschaft „Brücke 2/2018“, S.13)

His commissioned composition for the Tyrolean Festspiele Erl "Schlaflied" - a musical setting after a poet by Paul Celan for tenor solo and orchestra - was premiered at the Festspielhaus Erl on 15 July 2019.

So, Isolde Cupak (Online Merker) writes the day after the premiere of the commissioned composition:

„An absolute highlight was the premiere of the evening: Andri Joël Harison composed a "Lullaby" [Schlaflied] after Paul Celan, elegiac and gently reminiscent of orchestral songs by Richard Strauss. Erich Polz on the conductor's stand conjured up great cinema with the eleven-member ensemble, and Lorin Wey's tenor moved the audience to audible expressions of enthusiasm.“

(<https://onlinemerker.com/erl-tiroler-festspiele-festspielhaus-almtrieb-zweiter-tag-der-trilogie-mittag/>)

As "Music Ambassador of Vienna", he represented Austria's young musicians at the 65th Chopin Festival in Duszniki-Zdrój (Poland) in 2010. His publications to date include two solo albums and a musicological publication on the contemporary Austrian composer Josef Nejez.

His first CD, "Antologia", shows a wide variety of musical genres from the age of Viennese Classicism to the present day and demonstrates his impartiality in mastering different styles of music. On his second CD "Musician", released by Gramola, he presents works from the Viennese Classical and Romantic periods as well as a new interpretation of the Danube Waltz, the Viennese Bonbons and his own paraphrases on themes from the famous operetta "Die Fledermaus" by Johann Strauss Son.

His repertoire ranges from Viennese and classical music to contemporary works and improvisations as well as his own compositions.

His first book provides a comprehensive orientation to Josef Nejez's avocational musical activity as a composer, arranger and instrumentalist, and gives a chronological biography and thematic overview of the stylistic elements and musical style in Nejez's work. The book not only analyses his "Missa pro vita ascendente" in detail, but also considers its place within the genre history of the mass. This dignified work is not only guided by research interest, but is also intended as a supplement to the introductions to Austrian church music in the second half of the 20th century.

Joël Harison, Andri: Josef Nejez – His life and work, with special consideration to his Missa pro vita ascendente Op. 100. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2020. (ISBN 978-3-339-11800-4 | Published in German)

In 2019 Andri Joël Harison conducted the choir and orchestra of the Vienna Tonkunstvereinigung.

Since September 2020 he has been a member of the Young Artist Program [Opernstudio] of the Vienna State Opera as pianist and répétiteur.

„The Young Artist Program [Opernstudio] of the Vienna State Opera offers me, as a pianist and répétiteur, the extraordinary opportunity, on the one hand, to work with outstanding young singers of my generation and to accompany them in their artistic development and, on the other hand, to get to know the core repertoire of one of the most traditional opera houses in the world from scratch. Both activities serve as preparation for my future career as an opera conductor.”
(Andri Joël Harison)

Besides his activities at the Vienna State Opera, he is currently working on his first opera "Noëmi" as well as his five songs (for soprano solo, choir and orchestra) and his symphonic poem.

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