

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.

The young Austrian pianist, composer and conductor, born in Vienna in 1995, discovered music for himself at a very early age, when he began playing melodious tunes on the keyboard at the age of just thirteen months.

He received 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 Wien]. He completed his studies in opera correpetition and conducting with Prof. Konrad Leitner at the University of Music and Performing Arts 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 multiple national and international prize winner in Europe and overseas: "International Competition for Piano for Six and Eight Hands" of the Bavarian Academy of Music (Germany, 2010), eight-time prize winner of the Austrian Youth Music Competition "prima la musica" (2007-2014) as well as Espoir Prize winner of the 18th "Osaka International Music Competition" (Japan, 2017).

As "Music Ambassador of Vienna", he represented Austria's young musicians at the 65th Chopin Festival in Duszniki-Zdrój (Poland) in 2010.

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 well as a scholarship holder of the Bayreuth Festival through the Richard Wagner Foundations Leipzig and Frankfurt (2018).

As a composer, the breadth of his œuvre so far ranges from piano works to transcriptions and symphonic music; it currently contains around 100 works. His most popular piano composition up to now, the above-mentioned „Fledermaus-Fantasie” was recently premiered in London (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. With this piece, one is simply carried away and the radiant personality of the young musician furthermore intensified this feeling of happiness 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."

On 15 July 2019, his commissioned composition for the Tyrolean Festival Erl "Schlaflied" - a musical setting after a poem by Paul Celan for tenor solo and orchestra - was premiered at the Festspielhaus Erl.

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.“

In the same year (2019), Andri Joël Harison conducted the choir and orchestra of the Vienna Tonkunstvereinigung [Wiener Tonkunstvereinigung]. On the occasion of his conducting diploma concert in September 2020, he conducted the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra for the first time.

From 2020 to 2022 he has been a member of the newly founded Young Artist Program of the Vienna State Opera [Opernstudio der Wiener Staatsoper] as pianist and répétiteur. Within these functions, he supervised the premiere production of "Entführung ins Zauberreich" and accompanied master classes of KS Brigitte Fassbaender, KS Adrienne Pieczonka, KS Linda Watson, KS Daniela Fally, KS Camilla Nylund, KS Adrian Eröd, KS Michael Schade, KS Bo Skovhus, Lisette Oropesa, Louise Alder, Rachel Willis-Sørensen, Andrea Giovannini, Julius Drake, Helmut Deutsch and Bertrand de Billy.

„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)

On 5 March 2022, the first three songs of his latest song cycle for soprano and orchestra "The Ways of a Loving Woman" [Die Weisen einer Liebenden] (based on his own poems) were premiered in the version for soprano and piano in the Gustav Mahler Hall of the Vienna State Opera, under his direction at the piano, sung by Anna Nekhames, as part of an opera studio concert.

Andri Joël Harison is currently working on his first opera "Noëmi" (based on his own libretto) and as a coach for singers with a focus on opera and operetta.

Since the 2022/23 season, Andri Joël Harison is engaged at the Mainz State Theatre [Staatstheater Mainz] as répétiteur with conducting duties, ensemble coach and musical supervisor.

His previous publications include two solo albums and a scientific publication on the contemporary Austrian composer Josef Nejez.

Simmeringer Child Prodigy and Music Ambassador of Vienna

In a documentary by the Austrian television station ORF, he was presented at the age of 15 as a musical child prodigy of Austria - other media subsequently added the designation "Simmeringer" in addition to child prodigy, on the one hand because he was trained and supported at that time in the Simmeringer School of Music and largely contributed to its positive reputation with his successes in competitions nationally and internationally, and on the other hand because the Eleventh District of Vienna, where he grew up, is his home district.

Subsequently, he advanced to become the "music ambassador of Vienna" through his great love of Viennese music, which has remained constant to this day - especially waltzes and operettas by the Johann Strauss dynasty, Robert Stolz and Franz Lehár, as well as various Viennese songs - which he performs in an improvisational manner in his solo piano concerts.

The French media in Madagascar meanwhile even refer to him as the "Mozart of Madagascar".