

# MEGAN KAHTS (MEZZO SOPRANO)

– Biography, April 2023

Lyric mezzo soprano Megan Kahts is a rising star from South Africa, trained at the esteemed University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, where she has been based for over a decade. Known for her solid musical devotion, interpretive intelligence and for the warmth and flexibility of her high mezzo soprano, she sings internationally as an opera and concert singer, specialising in the performance of both Early and Contemporary Opera,

## **Latest Developments**

After having graduated from the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna as a soprano, Megan Kahts sang her first professional roles in the higher tessitura before exploring and slowly building her true vocal home in the mezzo soprano repertoire. She made her debut as a mezzo singing Costanza in Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* in Baden in 2018. Last season she made her debuts as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Ruggiero in *Alcina* for Cape Town Opera; in the summer of 2023 she will make her debut at the Bregenzer Festspiele in a newly composed opera by Fabian Panisello for the Neue Oper Wien.

## **On the Operatic Stage**

Megan was engaged for her first operatic roles as a young student in Vienna, Pretoria, Germany and elsewhere in Austria (singing Norina, Gretel, Adele, Cleopatra, Susanna etc. – all as a soprano), and has since then received critical acclaim in particular for the productions she has sung for the Neue Oper Wien and for Teatro Barocco in Laxenburg and Altenburg, where she embodied the roles of Susanna, Despina and Bastienne by Mozart, as well as Hasse's Tisbe (from *Piramo e Tisbe*) and Haydn's Costanza (from *L'isola disabitata*). The Neue Oper Wien won the coveted *Österreichischer Musiktheaterpreis* in 2018 for their production of *Pallas Athene weint* by Krenek, in which Megan Kahts sang the role of Timaea, the Queen of Sparta, accompanied by Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchestra under the baton of Walter Kobera. She sang the role of Martha in the first performance of Wolfram Wagner's opera *Maria Magdalena* for the Festival Retz in 2019. Her recent portrayals of the roles of Cherubino and Ruggiero for Cape Town Opera have helped solidify her mezzo soprano path.

## **On the Concert Stage**

Equally at home on the Opera stage as she is on the Concert stage, Megan Kahts regularly gives Lieder recitals for various concert series (Wiener Lieder Herbst, Schubertiade Dürnstein, Imperial Talents Vienna, Johannesburg Mozart Festival, Songmaker's Guild etc), most recently on tour through South Africa together with star German pianist Daniel Heide. As a "singing musician", she is a sought-after singer of sacred music and oratorio repertoire, regularly performing the alto solo parts in Mozart, Haydn and Schubert masses in Vienna's St Augustin and St Stephan's Cathedrals, as well as other oratorio parts in concert halls across Europe. She has embarked on a postgraduate programme in Historical Performance Practice under tenor KS Michael Schade and conductor Stefan Gottfried, in order to further hone her skills and scope of knowledge in Baroque singing technique and musicianship. Megan Kahts sang the world premiere of Peter Klatzow's Three Sonnets, composed for her recital debut for the Songmaker's Guild in Cape Town. Her devotion to the German Lieder treasury, in particular with pianist Stephan Matthias Lademann, lies at the core of her musicianship.

## **Education and Awards**

At Vienna's MDW, Megan Kahts studied singing under Claudia Visca, Lied and Oratorio under KS Robert Holl and Opera under Beverly Blankenship and Peter Marschik, completing two Master's degrees in Opera and Concert singing respectively, both with distinction. She further honed her craft by participating in masterclasses with great artists and renowned pedagogues, most notably Michelle Breedt, Elly Ameling, Jeanette Favaro-Reuter, Annely Peebo and Alfred Burgstaller.

Between engagements, she was a prize winner at the Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg Singing Competition and at the first Aria Borealis Bodø Competition for Baroque Singing; as well as having won the First Prize at the International Hugo Wolf Lied Duo Competition in Sofia, Bulgaria and the Third Prize at the International Lied Duo Competition in Enschede. She won the Second Prize at the UNISA South African Bursary Competition and the First Prize at the Phillip Moore National Music Competition in Johannesburg. She gained rich and diverse insights from the world's top interpreters of Song during her special time as a young scholarship holder at the Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien.

## **Musical Roots**

Megan Kahts has performed in theatres and concert halls worldwide, her favourites including the Wiener Musikverein, Wiener Kammeroper, Schlosstheater Laxenburg, Stift Altenburg, MüPa Budapest, Teatro Sociale of Trento, National Theater of Sarajevo and the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall. She began her musical education at the age of eight, studying piano and music theory. At the age of 11, she made her concert debut as a singer with the Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban, South Africa, singing the "Alleluia" from Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate*. At the same age she accepted a recording contract surprisingly offered to her directly after a concert performance, and henceforth, she released two CDs as a teenage soprano, for which she recorded repertoire from musicals, operas, oratorios and the treasury

of South African song. She has performed with various South African orchestras, in all the major South African concert halls, and has been featured on various television programmes. In Austria, Megan Kahts has sung at prestigious events including the Kitz Race Party of the *Hahnenkamm Rennen* and in 2019, she sang alongside star South African tenor Levy Sekgapane at the Opera Jewels Gala concerts at Montecasino in Johannesburg. Having studied composition and continued with her piano studies into her early twenties, her approach to opera and concert singing alike will always be that of a chamber musician.

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