

## Living the Dream

**Dorothea Herbert's 2021-22 season lifts off this autumn with Glyndebourne debut and first album release**

**German soprano stars in Glyndebourne Touring Opera's new staging of Beethoven's *Fidelio* while debut recording, *Die stille Stadt...* includes beguiling songs by Alma Mahler, Franz Schreker and Erich Wolfgang Korngold**

"Dorothea Herbert gave her house debut in Chemnitz with *Fidelio*'s Leonore. What a stroke of luck!,"  
*Der neue Merker*

Dorothea Herbert is set to realise a cherished ambition this autumn when she makes her debut at Glyndebourne. The German dramatic soprano joins Glyndebourne Touring Opera as Leonore in Frederic Wake-Walker's new production of *Fidelio*, scheduled to open on Friday 8 October. The chance to perform at the Sussex opera house is sure to stir strong emotions in a singer who auditioned for the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus without success during her student days.

"It's a dream come true to sing a role that is so precious to me at Glyndebourne," she comments. "I've wanted to sing at this wonderful place for so many years. There really are no words for it, other than to say that I'm over the moon! Unfortunately the tour has been cancelled because of Covid. But that means our *Fidelio* bubble will have the great joy of performing nine times at Glyndebourne."

Herbert's voice is ripe for Leonore. It has gained of late in presence and acquired rich new colours, part of a gradual evolutionary process. "I have always been happy to wait and allow the voice to develop in its own time," she observes. "Now is the perfect moment for me to sing this role at Glyndebourne."

In recent seasons Dorothea Herbert has underlined her rising star status with critically acclaimed interpretations of Wagner's Senta, Verdi's Amelia, Weber's Agathe, Mozart's Donna Anna and Strauss's Salome. Her debut in the title role of Dvořák's *Rusalka* in March 2020 prompted *Opernmagazin* to praise her 'strikingly beautiful timbre', while the *Westdeutsche Zeitung* hailed the culture, passion and charm of her performance as Wagner's Sieglinde at Theater Krefeld last October.

Herbert sang Leonore for the first time last year in Chemnitz having studied the role with the great Christa Ludwig. "She was my mentor for many years and was so incredibly supportive until her death just a few months ago. She invited me to sing Leonore's aria to her in June but sadly she passed away before we could meet again. But she had already taught me so much about its interpretation, feeling and colours and how to get its emotions across. I'm performing the role Christa taught me to sing in the year she died and in a place that is so dear to me. I will give all my heart!"

Singing from the heart has been a fact of Dorothea Herbert's life since childhood. She recalls how her six-year-old self, desperate to audition for the Tölzer Knabenchor, was infuriated to be told that the illustrious choir was for boys only. "I said this was unacceptable! Can you imagine that from a small child? So they suggested I join the children's choir at the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in Munich. I was accepted and was already singing on stage by the age of eight."

Herbert's innate ability to connect with powerful emotions and convey them with total conviction and honesty helped shape the programme of her debut recording. The album, set for international release on 10 September 2021 on the Dutch independent label 7 Mountain Records, explores themes of quietude, silence, hope, introversion and sadness, conditions fresh from the recent experience of so many around the world. *Die stille Stadt...* presents Herbert's personal choice of songs by Alma Mahler and Franz Schreker together with Erich Wolfgang Korngold's five Op.27 songs, three Op.22 songs and the aria 'Glück, das mir verblieb' from his opera *Die tote Stadt*. The album opens with Alma Mahler's intense setting of Richard Dehmel's poem *Die stille Stadt* and includes her sublime 'Licht in der Nacht'. Herbert reflects on the nature of stillness with songs as diverse as Schreker's 'Wohlühl ich, wie das Leben rinnt' and 'Die Dunkelheit sinkt schwer' before exploring Korngold's *Unvergänglichkeit* Op.27, with its themes of love's eternal power to heal and renew. The recording, made in company with American pianist Peter Nilsson, was conceived in response to last year's Covid-enforced closure of theatres and concert halls.

Herbert needed a creative project to sustain her during a period of great uncertainty. She began by compiling her ideal programme of songs, then applied for and received funding from the Deutscher Musikrat's post-pandemic Neustart Kultur initiative. Klaus Bertich, Dutch National Opera's former head dramaturg, offered invaluable advice on her proposed album's running order.

"I don't think this would have happened without the pandemic," she notes. "Because so many productions were cancelled at once, I suddenly had time to build an album programme and to record it. Of course the title *Die stille Stadt...*, 'The quiet city', refers to what we have gone through and are still facing thanks to Corona. This collection of songs takes the listener on a circular journey, from Alma Mahler's vision of a quiet town just before dark to Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* which, despite its title, is a work full of hope. It tells us that death is not the end, that it is part of the continuing cycle of life."

Music, suggests Dorothea Herbert, has saved many from falling into despair during lockdown. "I've listened to so much music since the pandemic began," she says. "That in turn gave me inspiration for the CD. The album is very important to me. Making it is another dream come true. These songs, like Beethoven's *Leonore*, remind us that we humans are all vulnerable and in the same boat. My profession is about giving people joy and comfort, which is why I hope this album touches listeners at the deepest level."

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### **Die stille Stadt...**

**Release on 10 September 2021 on 7 Mountain Records**

**Dorothea Herbert** soprano | **Peter Nilsson** piano

**A. Mahler** 'Die stille Stadt'; 'Meine Nächte'; 'Ansturm'; 'Ekstase'; 'Der Erkennende'; 'Licht in der Nacht'  
**Schreker** 'Wohl fühl ich, wie das Leben rinnt'; 'Unendliche Liebe'; 'Vernichtet ist mein Lebensglück'; 'Die Dunkelheit sinkt schwer'; 'Traum'; 'Spuk'; 'Stimmen des Tages'  
**Korngold** Op.27; Op.22; 'Glück, das mir verblieb' from *Die Tote stadt*

**8, 11, 13, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 31 October 2021**

**Glyndebourne, Lewes**

**Ben Glassberg** conductor | **Frederic Wake-Walker** director | **Dorothea Herbert** Leonore | **Callum Thorpe** Rocco | **Carrie-Ann Williams** Marzelline | **Gavan Ring** Jaquino | **Dingle Yandell** Don Pizarro | **Jonathan Lemalu** Don Fernando | **Glyndebourne Tour Orchestra** | **The Glyndebourne Chorus**

**Beethoven** *Fidelio*