

Martin Sieghart

Conductor

Sieghart's performance was most impressive, especially his talent to structure the symphony to achieve a clear consistency of his interpretation of Bruckner's work. The grand chorales were well balanced, the playing of the trumpets and trombones was never realised at the expense of experiencing the horns. One even felt as if the sound came directly from the legendary Bruckner organ of St. Florian
Teruhiko Ikegami, Nikkei, Bruckner Symphony no. 4, NHK Symphony Orchestra

Music is an essential element of life for Martin Sieghart. "It is there, like my family, with me at all times," he notes. The conductor, born in Vienna in 1951 and raised in its musical culture, draws on lessons learned from past generations about expression, communication and the spiritual dimension of performance. He also owns the wisdom necessary to know that tradition unquestioned can stifle creativity. His insightful artistry arises from the combination of deep experience and a constant openness to new ideas, fuelled by an insatiable desire to explore even the most familiar of scores as if for the first time. "I come from the Viennese tradition, which of course is very rich," he observes. "But with every work, I try to find new things to say, a new way to be with the music, however many times I have performed it before. It is important for me to find orchestras who are open to and can share this love for music."

At the beginning of the 2016-17 Season, Sieghart concluded his sixteen-year tenure as Professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz. He is certain that the process of teaching young conductors has brought benefits to his own work. "It has been so valuable to think about and answer questions such as 'What can I do better here?' or 'Why do I find this passage so difficult?' To have students is to study every day yourself." Now free from regular teaching commitments, he has revitalised his career as a guest conductor, in demand not least for his visionary interpretations of the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler, but also the music of Schreker, Schmidt, Krenek and Penderecki among others.

During his early years, Sieghart studied piano, organ and cello. He was invited by Carlo Maria Giulini to become principal cellist of the Wiener Symphoniker in 1975; meanwhile, he formed a choir at Vienna's Universitätskirche and launched his conducting career there with performances of Bach's Passions and oratorios. In 1985 he became assistant conductor to Gennady Rozhdestvensky and made his professional debut the following year with the Wiener Symphoniker. Sieghart succeeded Karl Münchinger as Principal Conductor of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra in 1990; two years later he became Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Bruckner Orchestra Linz and of Linz Opera. He also developed a close relationship with Het Gelders Orkest, Arnhem during the 1990s, was appointed its Chief Conductor in 2003 and named as its Honorary Guest Conductor in 2009.

Martin Sieghart has worked as guest conductor with such leading ensembles as the Philharmonia, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Belgique, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, and the radio symphony orchestras of Berlin, Cologne, Stuttgart and Vienna. Sieghart's passion for the music of the Strauss family, informed by his native feel for authentic Viennese charm and experience as a member of the Wiener Symphoniker, led him to conduct four consecutive tours to Japan with the Wiener Johann Strauss Orchestra, a new production of

Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* for Leipzig Opera, and a Strauss evening with the Philharmonia in London. In 1997 he cofounded EntArteOpera, an annual festival devoted to compositions branded as 'degenerate' and banned by the Nazis; he also established Mozart in Reinsberg in 2002 and served as the open-air opera festival's Artistic Director until 2006.

Martin Sieghart's musical interests and versatility are mirrored in his extensive discography and the breadth of his repertoire, which embraces everything from the symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler to dances by the Strauss family and music suppressed by the Nazis. Sieghart, observed Japan's nikkei.com following a recent performance of Bruckner's *Symphony No.4* with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, "is known for his calm and measured basic tempos, which leave much room for a passionate expression of emotions." His recording of the same work with the Bruckner Orchestra Linz reinforces the view of Sieghart as an individual artist, one ever ready to take risks and challenge convention in search of profound meaning.