



"A musician of expression par excellence, whose play carries on a specific tradition of German pianism." This was how the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung characterized the pianist Matthias Kirschnerreit and the many facets marking his play. Among other things, these include his fresh and inspirational play, his tempered breathing in phrasing, clear articulation and finely dosed agogic.

The artist himself puts it more plainly. "I'm always searching for the human message," says Kirschnerreit. "The composers have encoded so much into their work: pain, longing, jubilation, triviality and despair. The more familiar they become to me, the more my admiration for them grows, "I live, feel and suffer with them."

When studying a score, Kirschnerreit works strictly analytically – in order to open himself to his own intuition during a performance. His inner compass is always unavoidably directed at finding the ideal phrasing – precisely so and in no other way. Perhaps it is this urgency, beyond that of the universal virtues of the piano, which regularly enraptures the critics to such hymns of praise. "A Horowitz like intimacy," attested the WDR Fono Forum, "passionate and subtle." "Matthias Kirschnerreit conjures forth a portrait of the composers' souls," raved Piano News.

Born in 1962, Kirschnerreit has been performing on the stages of Germany and other European countries as well as the Americas and East Asia for more than three decades. He works in close collaboration with the Camerata Salzburg, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Münchener Kammerorchester and the New City Philharmonic Orchestra Tokyo, and the number of orchestras is continually growing. In the future, he will debut with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the Munich Radio Orchestra and the Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. Among his chamber music partners are the violinists Christian Tetzlaff and Lena Neudauer, the horn player Felix Klieser, the clarinetist Sharon Kam, the Cellist Daniel Müller-Schott as well as the Minguet Quartet and the Amaryllis Quartet.

Nearly 40 recordings document his work, beginning with the "Deutsche Musikwettbewerb" prize winner CD in 1989 on to the complete recordings of all the Mozart piano concertos together with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Frank Beermann, to his most recent album "Concertant," released in 2019, which includes all of the works for piano and orchestra by Robert Schumann, together with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under the direction of Jan Willem de Vriend.



---

Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms are the fixed stars on Kirschnerreit's horizon. He is equally devoted to the works of Mozart, Chopin and Rachmaninow, but he also wanders outside of the canonical repertoires; noteworthy are his numerous complete recordings of unknown works by renowned composers, such as the piano concerto in E minor by Mendelssohn for which he received the prestigious German music award ECHO Klassik in 2009. He recorded all of Handel's organ concerts with his own arrangements for piano. Again and again, Kirschnerreit has presented real finds, such as the piano concerts by Julius Röntgen.

Not only the focus of Kirschnerreit's repertoire identifies him as one pianist rooted in German heritage, but as well the lineage of his teachers ranging from Renate Kretschmar-Fischer on through Conrad Hansen, Edwin Fischer and Martin Krause up to Franz Liszt. He does not, however, wish to be limited to these influences: "Murray Perahia, Claudio Arrau, Bruno Leonardo Gelber and Sándor Végh also had, each in his own way, a profound impact on my work," says Kirschnerreit, "although they could have hardly been more different from one another."

His path, was anything but that of a child prodigy, on the contrary – he managed, as he puts it, to establish a career as pianist just before it was too late. Between the ages of nine and fourteen, when others were already gaining experience in competitions, he was living with his parents in Namibia, far away from any possibilities of getting the training needed for the profession of a pianist. In 1976, he returned alone to Germany and was accepted as a young student under Renate Kretschmar-Fischer at the Detmold University of Music. "It was a shock to see and hear what my peers could already play," he recalls. Kirschnerreit risked everything, leaving without actually graduating from high school. In the end, however, competition successes, such as at the Concours Géza Anda in Zürich, proved him right.

For many years now, he has been sharing his experience and convictions as a professor at HTM, the Rostock University of Music and Drama, with the next generation of musicians. Kirschnerreit is passionately committed to the initiatives "Rhapsody in School" and the cultural project TONALi. Since 2012, with the hand-picked program of his "Gezeitenkonzerte" [Tidal Concerts] he has been attracting a growing number of audiences in churches, manor houses and libraries around East Frisia. Eminent artists such as Grigory Sokolov, regularly join this "festival of friends" as Kirschnerreit calls it. At the same time, he considers these concerts necessary in order to balance out the musical event culture, which he once dubbed with amused detachment as being a "glamorous traveling circus."

Due to his work in Rostock and East Frisia, he earned himself the nickname of "coastal pianist". He resides with his family in the port city of Hamburg, and when talking soccer, he always remains a loyal supporter of the "green-white" in the maritime North.