

ELSA DREISIG

2023/24

“You often set limits for yourself before they exist,” says Elsa Dreisig. This is certainly not true for the French-Danish native, who is rapidly establishing herself as one of today’s most captivating lyric sopranos. Since joining the studio of the Berlin State Opera in 2015 and going on to become an ensemble member, she has made role debuts at leading houses across Europe, from Paris to Zurich, from Vienna to London. As an exclusive recording artist with the label Erato, Elsa in January 2022 released her third album, *Mozart x 3*, featuring arias from W.A. Mozart’s three Da Ponte operas and three opere serie.

The composer occupies a central place in her career. At Paris National Opera, she has appeared as both Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*). In the summer of 2020, Elsa sang the role of Fiordiligi in a new production of *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival that was fully staged while most institutions had to close their doors due the corona pandemic. In 2022 she returned to the Da Ponte trilogy at the Berlin State Opera under Daniel Barenboim with her debut as Donna Elvira after her Countess debut the year before.

Elsa’s interpretations stand out through her commitment to continually uncovering new facets in a role. That also means transcending historic constructs so that the performance comes to life in a believable way. For the soprano, no female personality – whether Manon, Juliette, Violetta or Fiordiligi – should ever be a victim. “It’s the modern blood that flows in my veins and should also flow into my singing,” she explains.

And yet the ultimate goal is to “make the score heard: with a solid technique – that goes without saying – but also a body that can recreate the character in the flesh.” She likens the psychological knowledge required to a kind of inner nourishment that feeds her musical delivery. Upon debuting in the title role of Donizetti’s *Anna Bolena* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève in 2021, Elsa above all focused on the queen’s emotional state and tried to relate to her on a personal level.

In 2022 she made her first appearance as Salome in the eponymous Richard Strauss opera at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence (where audiences know her as Micaëla in Bizet’s *Carmen*). The production comes together through a collaboration with the conductor Ingo Metzmacher and the director Andrea Breth, who from the outset envisioned a young, lyrical soprano for the role. The project satisfies Elsa’s non-conventional appetite: “I don’t want to force destiny but rather take what life offers me,” she says, citing the career of Maria Callas as inspiration.

Elsa thrives on participating in what she identifies as exceptional events – even if they involve some risk. In 2017, she jumped in on a day’s notice to sing Haydn’s *Creation* with the Berlin Philharmonic under Simon Rattle. Last season, after giving concerts with two different orchestras in Copenhagen, the Berlin State Opera called on her to appear as Pamina just a few hours later. In 2023 she stepped in last minute as “Manon” at the Vienna State Opera making her house debut which would be followed by her debut at La Scala in Milan as Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro*. In the 2023/24 season she will also make her role debuts as Mimi in “*La bohème*”, Sifare in “*Mitridate*”, Elisabetta in “*Roberto Devereux*”, as Elettra in “*Idomeneo*” in a concert performance with Simon Rattle and as the Countess in “*Capriccio*” with the Vienna Philharmonic and Christian Thielemann at the Salzburg Festival.

“I hope to never rest on my laurels,” she says, “and continue to explore.”