

# Hedwig Fassbender

## Vita

### Singing

After first studying music education, musicology, philosophy, German literature, and piano in Cologne, Hedwig Fassbender studied singing with Ernst Haefliger at the conservatory in Munich. During her five-year commitment at both Theater Freiburg and Theater Basel, she sang many roles of the standard lyric mezzo-soprano repertoire, including *Cherubino*, *Hänsel*, *Nicklausse*, *Idamante*, *Rosina*, and *Octavian*, but also "Miss Donnithorne's Maggot" by Peter Maxwell Davies which attracted a lot of attention.

With these roles she became known as an excellent singing actress and soon began to guest in productions at the opera houses in Paris, Geneva, Lyon, Nancy, Frankfurt, Munich, Bordeaux, Brussels, Zurich. Thus, she extended her repertoire to include roles like *Carmen*, *Baba the Turk*, *Mère Marie*, *Fricka*, and *Judit*.

Since 2001 she has sung "Zwischenfach" roles, including the *Foreign Princess* in *Rusalka*, *Marschallin* in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Marie* in *Wozzeck*, *Kundry* in *Parsifal* and many others. She gained special attention for her portrayal of *Kostelnička* in Janáček's "Jenůfa". In 2001, her "gripping" interpretation of *Isolde* at the Saarbrücken State Theater was met with praise from both critics and public alike. For her *Sieglinde* in Wagner's Ring Cycle in Liège, Hedwig Fassbender received a nomination for "Singer of the Year".

As her most formative artistic encounters she mentions *Kostelnička* in *Jenufa* under Kirill Petrenko, the *Foreign Princess* in *Rusalka* under Ivan Fischer, Bartók's *Judit* under Vladimir Jurowsky, *Kundry* under Adam Fischer, *The woman over 60* in "The Golden Dragon" under Peter Eötvös, "Das Lied von der Erde" under Armin Jordan and her roles during the intense collaboration with Herbert Wernicke at the Theater Basel in the 90s.

Her **discography** includes (among others) *Isolde* in the complete recording of "Tristan and Isolde" with Leif Segerstam conducting (Naxos), Mahler's "Song of the Earth" under Armin Jordan, Zemlinsky's *Maeterlinck Songs* under Vaclav Neumann and the album "Songs of Life and Love" by Richard Strauss with Hilko Dumno at the piano.

## Teaching

Hedwig Fassbender is one of the most successful voice teachers of her generation. From 1999 to 2017 she held a professorship at the Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt, serving as chair of the Department of Voice of from 2001-2011. Under her leadership in 2011, the department received the Excellence Prize from the State of Hessen, Europe's highest endowed award for excellence in teaching. Among the graduates of her class are a number of outstanding young singers, including Ruzan Mantashyan, Björn Bürger and Sebastian Kohlhepp. All alumni can be found here:

She regularly teaches **masterclasses** within the young artist programs and opera studios of the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, the Zurich Opera, the Frankfurt Opera, the Hannover Opera, the Academy at the Teater Wielki in Warsaw, and with the Opera Academy of the Paris Opera.

In 2014, she developed the **"Exzellenz-Labor Gesang// Oper"** (**ExLab Opera**), a high-intensity masterclass in musical style and performance training, which under her artistic direction has grown into a renowned institution. In 2018 she expanded the concept and introduced the **"ExLab - Art Song"**.

## Coaching

Since 2016, Hedwig Fassbender provides, as a **Certified Systemic Coach** support to artists both on and off-stage, who find themselves at a turning point in their careers. Using her knowledge gained as a vocal pedagogue and professor, she also provides assistance to those who wish to apply for a professorship at a conservatory. She has completed her training at the European Business School (EBS) with Wilhelm Backhausen and also trained with the renowned Coach Sabine Asgodom.

## Stage

Together with her daughters Katharina Wiedenhofer (dancer) and Magdalena Wiedenhofer (actress) and the stage director Célestine Hennermann she produced "KunstReGen", which had its premiere in May 2019 in Frankfurt.

## Languages

Hedwig Fassbender speaks fluent German, English, French and Italian, a little Spanish, and is currently learning Russian. She has mastered lyric diction in Hungarian and Czech.

(Updated July 2019)