

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Constanze Hochwartner



Austrian artist **Constanze Hochwartner** is an international touring solo organist and pianist as well as part of the Duo Steiner-Hochwartner. Her 2021/2022 season involves tours throughout Scandinavia, the United Kingdom and the USA. Solo performances on the organ as well as duo concerts in Austria, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland.

Constanze received her first piano lessons at the young age of three, before being accepted into a class for gifted students in 2005 at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria. After graduating from high school, she switched her focus from piano to organ and started her studies in concert performance for organ with Univ. Prof. Ulrich Walther. Simultaneously, she studied instrumental and vocal pedagogy with an additional focus on piano and graduated in the Fall of 2017. In October 2019 she finished her Master's degree studying with Univ. Prof. Karin Tafeit (organ) at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz. She has also been mentored by Univ. Prof. Gunther Rost.

Constanze has given solo performances around the globe, including organ concerts in Europe, the United States and South America. She performed as a soloist in the Graz Cathedral in 2015 and 2016 and at the "Grazer Orgelfrühling" 2016 in the Herz Jesu-Kirche in Graz. In June 2017 she gave a recital in the parish church of St. Xaver in Leoben and concerts with the brass ensemble of the University of Music and Performing Arts.

In 2017, Constanze began collaborating with trombonist Peter Steiner and formed the Duo Steiner-Hochwartner. For their debut 2017/2018 season the Duo maintained an ambitious international performance schedule, including an 8-week USA tour (40 concerts), a concert at the Wartburg Festival (Eisenach, Germany), and a series of concerts in Europe (Austria, Italy, and Switzerland). The 2018/2019 season highlights include a 3-month World Tour with both solo organ recitals and performances with the Duo in South America, Asia, Europe and the United States. Other performances with the Duo during the 2018-2019 season included a tour in Japan and two additional USA tours. Her 2019/2020 season involved a world tour including solo performances on the organ as well as Duo concerts in Asia, Australia, Europe and the USA.

Constanze's debut album **SAPPHIRE**, in collaboration with Peter Steiner, was released in July 2019 under the Berlin Classics label. Their CD Release Tour brought them to Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States. Her

second album BINARY STAR, on which Constanze plays organ, was released in May 2021, again under the Berlin Classics label and in collaboration with Peter Steiner.

www.constanzehochwartner.com

How old were you when you began playing your instrument? Did you start playing another instrument before your current one?

I started playing the piano when I was 2 ½ years old & added the organ at age 17.

What equipment do you primarily use?

Yamaha AvantGrand N1X & Viscount Chorale 2

What are some of your favorite highlights of your career?

I enjoy every little moment of it.

What are some of your favorite and most influential albums that you have heard?

Friedrich Gulda (sämtliche Klaviersonaten) Ludwig van Beethoven – my parents own the whole collection on vinyl. I remember listening to those already at a very young age.

Martha Agerich & Mischa Maisky (Schubert Arpeggione & Schumann Fantasiestücke)

Cameron Carpenter – All you need is Bach & If you could read my mind

Who inspired you to play your instrument?

My brother inspired me to start playing an instrument. He started playing the cello when he was 5 and I was constantly standing next to him trying to grab that bow and also make music.

What are some of the silver linings of the pandemic that you have found?

more time to practice, more time with my family, more time for myself

What are some of your favorite solos written for another instrument?

Haydn Cello Concerto in C major, ASchubert Arpeggione Sonata, Dvorak Cello Concerto, Dittersdorf Double Bass Concerto, Alexander Arutjunjan Concerto for Trumpet & Peaslee Arrows of Time

Do you have any tips on becoming better at transcribing?

Practice it 😊

How have your practice habits changed over the years?

Over time I realized how important basics are. Now they are 70% of my daily practicing.

Do you like to sing when you practice? Why or why not?

I love singing along especially when working on chamber music pieces. But I am basically singing and humming all day. Music is part of my everyday life.

What is your definition of success?

Enjoy what you are doing and always strive to be better than you were the day before.

What qualities do you think are important for being successful in life?

Being dedicated

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I like to read, listen to music, go for a hike, workout, play with my little sister & niece and spend time with my family & friends.

How do you stay motivated when you get frustrated or down? Do you have any tips to help stay motivated?

1. Focus your mind on why you even intended to do it in the first place.
2. Set goals which are achievable on this particular day.
3. Envision the feeling of success you are going to have after reaching your goals.

4. Create an environment that makes you feel good.
5. Start with something that makes you feel comfortable and helps you to transition easily to your actual work.
6. Plan on including enough breaks.
7. Reward yourself once you finished everything and reached your goals.

Do you meditate? If so, what benefits do you get from meditating?

Better sleep, less thoughts in my head when going to bed

How has being a musician changed you as a person?

I can't even remember a moment in my life when I "wasn't" a musician. Music is like food and sleep to me just a basic need in my everyday life. I grew up in a family where everyone played an instrument and made music every day. My mum sang with us already at an early age and I don't remember the time in my life when I did not play an instrument. I think I was always meant to be a musician and will always be no matter what paths I might take in the future or where my career leads me.

Discuss your early musical experiences. Why did you pursue music?

Living in Vienna, going to the State Opera, Musikverein or Konzerthaus on a regular basis & simply growing up with older siblings that also played instruments as well as having dedicated and loving parents who always supported me and my dreams made it easy for me to make my dream job my actual job.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

5-6 hours

Do you have a website? If so, what is the address?

www.constanzehochwartner.com

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Czerny & Chopin

Do you use any apps when you practice?

ForScore on my iPad

Where is your favorite place that you have traveled to?

I love exploring the world and find something special in every place I visit but one of the most inspiring countries is definitely Japan.

Who are some of your musical heroes?

Martha Agerich, Mischa Maisky, Friedrich Gulda, Cameron Carpenter, Jacqueline du Pré, Mitsuko Uchida

Who are your main influences in your life?

Especially my parents, but also my successful & hard-working older siblings.

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

My older brother is a cello and double bass teacher.

Where are some of your favorite places that you have performed?

I can't choose – it's always exciting to perform a live concert. The vibe is simply amazing and can't be compared to anything else.

What are you most proud of in your life?

Being part of a wonderful family & having amazingly successful and kind siblings.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Still doing what I love most and still striving to get better every day.

What are your favorite things to do that make you happy?

Spend time with my family, play the piano/organ, share my passion for music with Peter, go for hikes

What are you listening to currently?

Peter Steiner practicing next to me 😊

What projects are you working on right now?

Album No.3 in collaboration with my partner in crime :D

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

practice performing in front of people, run-throughs, half tempo practicing

Do you ever get anxious for a performance? What advice would you give for dealing with nerves?

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE 😊 Come up with a pre-performance routine that calms you down. Enjoy playing – mistakes are human. No one is perfect.

What life lessons have you learned through music?

Music unites all of us.

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent. – Victor Hugo

Who are your favorite composers?

Schubert, Beethoven, Mozart, John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Max Reger, Johann Sebastian Bach, Tchaikowsky, Haydn, Puccini, Verdi, Marcel Dupré

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

Tchaikowsky - Piano Concerto No.1, Gunnar de Frumerie - Variations and Fugue for piano, Max Reger – Phantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H op. 46, J.S.Bach - Präludium und Fuge a-Moll BWV 543, Marcel Dupré - Prelude and Fugue in B major op. 7 no. 1, Louis Vierne - Toccata in B flat minor, August Gottfried Ritter - Sonate no. 2 op. 19, Louis Vierne - Organ Symphony No.2 in E minor

What is your favorite food?

Linsen mit Knödel