

The inner voice of the Thousand Wonder Woman

With the Waldzither abroad: Martina Rosenberger invests a lot in her songs and passion – and is rewarded much

Author: Andreas Langer

I need no Cabrio

Neither go to Rio

I'm not a bungee-jumping freak

I need no hairstylist

Neither a humorist

Music's the only thing I need

(Martina Rosenberger, "Ich brauch' kein Cabrio, 2004")

Krumbach

There was no desire for it. Nor were there any signs of it before. Instead it came totally unexpected, from nil to one hundred: the passion for music hit Martina Rosenberger out of nowhere, but with full impact.

That was seven years ago. Actually there had been the need of a proper instrument, to have some music for the baptism ceremony of her son Johannes. By chance Rosenberger revived her interest for the Waldzither – a heritage from her father- which had been abandoned for years. Before her father died in 1984 she had learnt basics of playing his instrument, on her own wish: a mind-decision forced by being conscious of "a possible loss of know-how". Nobody else seemed to be interested in the Waldzither. Nobody from her friends or acquaintances was capable to play it, neither was there any printed sheet music. With the exception of the handwritten notes of her father Rosenberger had nothing to start on her newly awakened interest. Being a professional mastergoldsmith she started a methodical research for historical backgrounds, possible spare parts, enthusiasts alike and experts. There were not many. A professor of a luthier's academy at Zwickau gave her the first glimpses to feed her inflamed interest. A cittern conference about the instruments related to the Waldzither got a crash-course for her about several centuries of music history. She literally absorbed the facts. Via newspaper advertising she started to search for contemporaries of her father in the surroundings of his childhood in Westphalia. She discovered a lot and finally published a documentation with the title "The Waldzither-Puzzle", to be followed by a second volume during the next years. She organized the first Waldzitherconference in Thuringia, and later the second and third one, joined the local music academy as a guest student, initiated the website www.waldzither.de, supported a concept for a modern tutor, communicated world-wide with cittern experts – having become an expert for the Waldzither herself meanwhile. "Martina Rosenberger, Waldzither-researcher" was printed in the English version of the program of a cittern program in Portugal. But she does not regard herself as a missionary. "It's no "quest"

to convince the world for”.

Who has not heard the sound of the Waldzither yet is nearly inevitably supposed to have a false imagination of it. It’s warm and rich, “much warmer than the sound of mandolins and definitely different from classical guitars or the Salzburg zither”, Rosenberger explains. Since 2004 she also writes songs for/with her instrument. More than 30 pieces she created meanwhile, most of them accompanied by herself playing the Waldzither.

Her lyrics are mostly in German, with the exception of several in English, written or transcribed for her international friends. With a given sense for details she claims and works out the unison of rhythm and lyric structure. Her texts are either satirical, sharp, biting, comforting or philosophical and mostly ready before writing a fitting melody. “My songs “happen” in a different way”, Rosenberger tells, “sometimes it starts with a single line, sometimes I literally have to stop my current work to write down the whole lot.” Some pieces are finished within ten minutes, others need months to be completed.

Rosenberger finds her inspirations in her daily life, in society or in her own family. Like two years ago, when her son joined her while she was singing, faked a trumpet with a sheet of rolled paper and announced: “ladies and gentleman, you’re going to listen to the ThousandWonderWoman!”.

From this bait she formed the similar named blues, that misguides the auditory into the belief of the common quarrel between both sexes until finally revealing the plot as a mother-son-special.

Like herself and her sisters in their childhood Rosenberger’s seven-year-old son and her twelve-year old daughter are already learning several instruments. Voluntarily, but to the joy of their mum: “Songs are gifts for others”, tells Rosenberger, who also practises music with other children, for example conducting the family choir of her parish.

She has not yet performed in her hometown Krumbach, what seems strange considering her ability and successful concerts in Roggenburg, Thuringia and Portugal. “It’s due to come”, she promises, but organizing and joining the recent conferences was too much time-consuming this year, not leaving space for a complete program of her own.

Her work as a goldsmith, family duties for husband and two children, plus great engagement for the Waldzither: Mrs. Rosenberger can’t be called lazy. But what she invests in her music comes back. “Music is my inner voice, a source of energy to cope with lots of other things.” A source of energy, which was discovered by chance, not by force – to dwell on unlimited exactly because of that freedom.

(Translated by Martina Rosenberger)