

Maria Kliegel, Violoncello

"She has at her disposal all the necessary attributes: a fantastically light, yet not perfectionistically moribund technique, entrancing intensity, glamorous and nonetheless endearing charisma." - **Der Tagesspiegel / Berlin**

After studying with Janos Starker at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA, Maria Kliegel won, amongst others, the 1st Grand Prix of the "Concours Rostropowitsch Paris" (in 1981). Mstislav Rostropowitsch thereupon engaged the services of his prize winner as a soloist with the Orchestre National de France for several tours through France and invited her to his orchestra in Washington D.C. He became one of her most important mentors.

Maria Kliegel – La Cellissima – since then an artist in demand throughout the world - started an unusually successful record career on the Naxos label in 1991 alongside her stage triumphs .

In this way, her recording of Dvorak's and Elgar's cello concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra London has been maintaining its success as a bestseller for many years now. Or the composer Alfred Schnittke declared her recording of his 1st cello concert his reference work in 1992. In reviews and essays, the international trade press is constantly confirming the top quality of the violoncellist and praises many interpretations as exemplary and directional.

Frequent honours followed, including 2 *Grammy* nominations. In the meantime, Maria Kliegel leads the market in cello literature with some 1 million CDs sold throughout the world.

In her multimedia book and DVD project Schott Master Class – Cello: *Mit Technik und Fantasie zum künstlerischen Ausdruck* about cello techniques and "famous – infamous" passages (played and analysed) published in 2006, she pursues completely new paths; and within the shortest time received 2 prestigious prizes for it: in Duesseldorf the special *Digita* prize (best German educational software) and in Berlin the European Media Prize *Comenius EduMedia – Siegel*. This was the starting point for the production of the English version Cello – Master Class "*Using Technique and Imagination to achieve Artistic Expression*", released on the Naxos label in 2010.

Contemporary composers like to dedicate their works to the cellist. Wilhelm Kaiser Lindemann, for example, composed at her request *Hommage á Nelson M.* for cello and percussion. This musical reference to the civil-rights activist Mandela finds great attention internationally. After the premiere of this work in Capetown, South Africa in 1997, President Mandela reacted profoundly emotionally by inviting the artist to a private concert in his residence.

For her spontaneous commitment to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and her untiring efforts for other relief projects, in 1999 La Cellissima received the Order of Merit of the State of North-Rhine Westphalia from the hands of the First Minister at that time, Wolfgang Clement. Since 1986 she has been professor at the Cologne Academy of Music and in 2001 established with Ida Bieler (volin) and Nina Tichman (piano) the *Xyryon Trio*, which undertook the artistic supervision of the *Andernach Music Festival at Namedy Castle* in 2007.

Maria Kliegel plays a cello made by Carlo Tononi, Venice, ca. 1730