

Tom Johnson
Riemannoper
EISENHAND

Zum letzten Mal:

2., 3., 6., 7., 8., 11., 14.,
16. und 17. Februar 2006,
um 20.00 Uhr im Eisenhand



Porträt

I FOLLOWED MY DREAM

A Conversation with Soprano Ruth Bormann

Ruth Bormann is pleased to have this opportunity to express her gratitude for her time at the Landestheater, Linz, which she has very much enjoyed. Much ties her to this city, not only professionally.

Ruth was born in Florida and grew up in Minnesota. She comes from a home where culture was much valued. Her father is a retired Speech Communication professor, her mother is also an academic communication specialist. Ruth went to Yale University, where she majored in archeology and minored in music. Through work with Joan Heller, a wonderful voice teacher, she changed her major to music and went on to earn a Master's Degree in Voice from the Yale School of Music.

W. A. Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*, 1995,
mit Thomas Sigwald



Following Yale, Ruth studied privately with Marlena Malas in New York.. She then went to the Banff Festival in Canada, and studied there for 2-1/2 years, because they offered a rich variety of courses: she studied Lied, then Music Theater, then Opera. Colin Graham brought her from Banff to the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. She also attended Tanglewood, Norfolk and the Ash Lawn Highland Festivals. She was a Regional Metropolitan Opera finalist and performed in musicals in New York.

While very successful in musicals, among them in the Broadway musical *Teddy & Alice*, Ruth wanted to pursue a career in opera. That meant heading to Europe, for at that time 6,000 people yearly earned degrees in voice, and in America there were only four opera houses with fixed ensembles. At thirty, Ruth landed in Vienna. Her first audition was successful, for *Fedora* in *The Circus Princess*, in St. Poelten. *Violetta* in *La Traviata* in Bregenz followed.

Her third audition, in Linz, earned her a place in Linz's fixed ensemble.



Ruth has now been here for 14 years. "You never imagine you'll stay in one theater so long, you're never sure year to year if your contract will be extended, and so you always live with the feeling that your bags are packed." Ruth met her husband, baritone Ian Vayne, during the production of *Ernani*. They worked together in Linz for two years. Then Ian Vayne was fest in Dessau, with the Sydney Opera and lastly in Mannheim. Now he's working in the United States and now it's time for a new beginning in Ruth's life. "We come to crossroads at moments in our lives, where we must make a choice. I have invested much time, energy and especially love in my work and life here in Linz. I have found dear friends here and a grateful public, met my husband and born my son, who is now five years old." Her son misses his father, and she her husband. She wants "to put down roots, to buy a small house", to live a normal family life.

Sadly this is not possible in Linz, since her husband's business commits him to live in the United States. Therefore, though she loves her work here very much, she's made the difficult decision to leave Linz and move back to the United States, in order to live as a family.



22 years she's been a professional singer. Now the future is uncertain. Ruth Bormann hopes to find a teaching position and knows that it will be difficult to find one, though her credentials are excellent.

And what roles has she most loved singing? "Almost all are roles in my type, coloratura soprano: Violetta in *La Traviata*, Elvira in *Ernani*, Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, all "Three

Ladies" in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and most recently Fata Morgana in *The Love of Three Oranges*, under the direction of Beverly Blankenship, who I value highly."

When asked what makes a good stage director, Ruth Bormann answers:

"A good director understands the intentions of the librettist and composer. He/she allows the singer to give their best in the role, to feel free enough to embody it, and let their own personality flow through it."

She had an extraordinary experience singing Suor Angelica. "In the last twenty minutes of the piece, in every performance, I completely lost myself. I was carried to a place where I became Suor Angelica. If I'd looked in a mirror, I would have seen the character, not myself." I will never forget that experience. I want to encourage my son John to follow his dreams.



Another high point in her career, which moved her very much, ("Wow, I'm standing on the stage of the Staatsoper") was a jump-in in 1995 at the Vienna State Opera as Cardillac's Daughter in Hindemith's *Cardillac*. The reviewer wrote that she had a pure voice and a good figure to offer. The Vienna State Opera agreed, and hired her to perform the role in all performances in the following season.

One wouldn't, and this is a compliment, describe Ruth Bormann as a diva, she's much too unpretentious for that. But she can play one, and that's what she's doing now in the Riemann Opera. On February 17 she gives her farewell performance.

