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My Song For You – Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura Between Two Worlds
at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York



Exhibition: *My Song For You- Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura Between Two Worlds*
October 20, 2020
Austrian Cultural Forum New York

Curated by Susanne Korbel

EXHIBITION OPENING: OCTOBER 20, 2020 12PM EST

September 10, 2020 (New York, NY) – The Austrian Cultural Forum New York (ACFNY) is pleased to invite selected NY-based media representatives to attend in person the online opening of and live talk about *My Song For You – Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura*. This exhibition honors the stage and film careers of the dream couple Kiepura/Eggerth, who together escaped Nazi-occupied Austria in 1938, having created a musical legacy that would revolutionize opera and operetta. The show is curated by Susanne Korbel and is presented by the *exil.arte* Center at the [University of Music and Performance in Vienna \(mdw\)](#). The opening event will be on October 20, 2020 at 12 PM EDT in the ACFNY hall with an invited audience, and will be streamed online via Zoom and on **the ACFNY's Youtube** channel.

My Song for You is an exhibition remembering the musical legacies of Marta Eggerth (1912-2013), the Hungarian-born soprano, and the Polish tenor Jan Kiepura (1902-1966). Following the "Anschluss" with Nazi Germany in 1938, Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura were forced to turn their backs on Vienna, the city where they had met, fallen in love and both had come to fame. Eggerth and Kiepura moved to the United States, where they shared the same fate with countless other European artists, librettists, composers and musicians. Many followed them into exile, but many others were arrested, imprisoned and murdered. Much of their work, known as *exil arte*, were lost or destroyed, **including many of Eggerth and Kiepura's movies**. Having lost so much and especially dear friends and colleagues,
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Kiepura and Eggerth's careers continued in the United States with Jan Kiepura singing leading tenor roles at the Metropolitan Opera and both starring in *The Merry Widow* on Broadway. They went on to become the leading exponents of *The Merry Widow*, having performed it some two thousand times in five languages, as well as many other operettas and concerts. They had devoted followings amongst the émigré community and captivated new generations of audiences to opera and operetta. Their legacies remained vivid in the memories of millions throughout Europe.

The exhibition at the University of Music and Performance in Vienna presents the collection of posters, videos, correspondence and memorabilia of Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura, and also captures the stories of around 100 of the couple's friends and colleagues, including Fritz Grünbaum, Emmerich Kálmán, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Lotte Lehmann, and Billy Wilder.

The live-streamed opening ceremony will take place simultaneously at the [University of Music and Performance in Vienna \(mdw\)](#), and at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York at noon EDT on October 20, 2020. The ceremony will include welcome statements from Wolfgang Sobotka, the President of the Austrian Parliament, Ulrike Sych, the President of the [University of Music and Performance in Vienna \(mdw\)](#), Gerold Gruber, founder of exil.arte and head of the exil.arte Center of the mdw, as well as curator Susanne Korbel. They will be joined in New York by ACFNY Director Michael Haider and Marjan Kiepura, Marta Eggerth's and Jan Kiepura's son, his wife Jane Knox-Kiepura, and the New York City based opera expert, [Ken Benson](#). In Vienna, Ramon Vargas of the Vienna Staatsoper will give a performance. The entire opening event from Vienna and New York will be in English.

The one- hour ceremony at the ACFNY will be followed by a private Q&A session with the NYC- panelists and a socially-distanced light lunch and refreshment offering.

Media representatives and music critics interested in physically attending the ceremony at the ACFNY are invited to contact MaryKat Hoesser, Head of Communications at the ACFNY, at mary-katerina.hoesser@bmeia.gv.at by October 10, 2020.

Due to the current COVID-19 related restrictions and safety measures, only a very limited number of representatives will be admitted.

ABOUT GUEST SPEAKERS

Ken Benson frequently acts as lecturer, interviewer and writer on the subject of opera. A long time regular panelist and host of the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts, he has also interviewed opera icons such as Stephanie Blythe and Jonas Kaufmann, and given lectures on **Wagner's Ring Cycle on the stage of the Met**. For 25 years, Benson headed his own Division as Vice-President at Columbia Artists Management, Inc., where he developed the careers of some of the leading singers and stage directors of the time, and earned the respect of his colleagues in opera companies, symphony orchestras, recital series and festivals throughout the US and internationally.

Dr. Gerold Gruber studied musicology and art history at the University of Vienna as well as singing at the mdw-University of music and performing arts Vienna. Since 1984 he has been a member of the Institute for Musicology and Interpretation Research at the mdw. His work focuses on Austrian music of the 18th - 21st century, methods of musical analysis and music by ostracized composers. In 2006 he founded the exil.arte society which became a research center and one of the main research centers of the mdw in 2016 (with archive and exhibition space).

Jane Knox-Kiepura was born in Melbourne, Australia and grew up in Europe. She received her BA in International Studies, Magna Cum Laude from Marymount Manhattan College in New York. Mrs. Knox-Kiepura enjoyed assisting

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Marta Eggerth, at the “Austrian Forum” in New York with her husband, pianist Marjan Kiepura in the 1980’s. She was Producer of Marta Eggerth’s dual CD “My Life My Song”. She also co-produced and narrated “Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura in Film and Song” at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City. She has made many appearances with Marjan as writer and narrator.

Pianist Marjan Kiepura, son of Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura, has focused on the music of Frederic Chopin and has given concerts in the USA and Europe. His Chopin CD entitled “Images of a Homeland” has received broad international acclaim. He also accompanied his mother in concerts. Referred to as the “Guardian of the Heritage” by The New York Theater Wire; Mr. Kiepura has embarked to preserve the legacy of his famous parents. He and his wife Jane have produced CD reissues, radio programs and given presentations for opera and music groups. .

Dr. Susanne Korbel researches and lectures at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz specializing in Cultural Studies, Migration Studies, and Jewish history. In 2020, she published her first book entitled Auf die Tour! Jüdinnen und Juden in Singspielhalle, Kabarett und Varieté – Habsburgermonarchie und Amerika um 1900. She has held fellowships in Jerusalem, New York, Southampton, and Tübingen, and taught as visiting faculty at the Andrassy University Budapest and the University of Haifa.

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