

*Kirsten Schötteldreier*

*Int. Voice- & Performancecoach*

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**Kirsten Schötteldreier** is a Voice and Performance Coach from Germany, that was educated in classical singing and directing at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. After her studies she was taught by reknowned singers like a.o. Brigitte Fassbender, Astrid Varnay, Hilde Zadek and Galina Vishnevskaya. While she started her career as a classical singer, Kirsten has been always teaching for the past 25 years, further becoming an internationally engaged voice-, performance- and production-coach in the past decade. Working with renowned singers as well as with young talents, she accompanies professional artists in their vocal development. As a coach, Kirsten has helped individual singers prepare for main roles at theatres and festivals such as the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera and the Bastille Opera in Paris, and collaborated with conductors like Zubin Metha, Phillip Jordan, Andris Nelsons, Hartmut Haenchen and Thomas Guggeis. She prepares singers for auditions and competitions vocally and

help make their performance more authentic and stronger . Kirsten also works as a production coach preparing and engaging with full casts, such as for the performance of Tannhäuser at the Latvian National Opera in Riga and Ariadne auf Naxos and Flying Dutchman at the Reisopera/ Netherlands.

**From 2017 to 2021** she was the main voicecoach of the Young Ensemble of the Theater an der Wien. From **September 2022** Kirsten will be "Coach in Residence" for the new opera studio of the Opera de Lyon, which she was co-casting too. In this new founded Operastudio Kirsten will not only oversee the vocal work and role preparation, but also help shape her new role as an "artistic & casting adviser".

Finally, Kirsten has been giving Masterclasses and workshops for students and voicetachers and initiated her own annual masterclass for professional singers since 2013, where she started working with conductors as well. However, Kirsten's work is very diverse and not only focusing on singing, as she is also working on voice-issues on an emotional and personal level, which has led her to do speech- and communication-workshops for people from all walks of life, from young adults with a traumatic past to management professionals .

## Teaching methods

Kirsten has developed her own teaching methods, that combine traditional vocal techniques such as Bel Canto and Functional Voice Training with transformative breathing techniques and motion sequences that were drawn from Qigong, which is a system of coordinated body-posture, movement, breathing, and meditation. Qigong is rooted in Chinese philosophy, medicine and martial arts, and is traditionally used for many different purposes from exercise and relaxation to self-healing and meditation. Kirsten got first in touch with Qigong for personal health reasons, and soon learned that the positive effects it had on her own wellbeing were also improving her breathing and vocal qualities. After partaking in multiple intensive Qigong courses in countries such as Malaysia, Italy, Spain and Russia, she got trained in high-level Qigong and Tai Chi exercises and techniques. Kirsten integrates these techniques by letting people use adapted exercises to loosen up their fine muscles and bringing them into a state of groundedness, relaxation and focus. The method has a certain playfulness to it and is there to bring a person into a natural "flow". The effect of this is that people come into a harmonized state of mind which lets them focus more on their own voice and are less distracted by the world around them and their own minds. While Kirsten mostly has learned that these techniques function as they do through practice and experience, there is a philosophical basis to be found for it as well. Within the philosophical school of thought of Taoism there exists the idea that human behaviour must be kept in balance with the cycles of nature, in essence becoming one with the unintended rhythms of the all.

When translating this to vocal techniques, the idea is that singers get into a state of mind that unlocks their potential skills and helps them use their voice in a more natural way. Students learn techniques that are easily applicable when consequently applied, which constantly returns them to this state of mind in which vocal training becomes easier, as well as offering them support in stressful situations such as during performances or when vocal problems occur. Furthermore, Kirsten's

method attempts to relieve excessive pressure off the vocal cords and instead incorporates the whole body in to the singing, which lifts certain vocal restrictions and offers the student to grow their voice sustainably and without harm to their instrument. This inadvertently has led Kirsten to work more with singers that are developing more into dramatic role-types, as these roles are typically more straining on the voice. At the same time it also benefits singers in more lyric role-types, as singers can more easily use the edges of their vocal chords since they have developed a more flexible breathing system to support it, and for the same reason have no more audible breaks between their registers.

**Kirsten also initiated and worked als musical director** in musictheatreperformances. In f.e. " Weltatem , a VR-Opera, she a.o. worked in a team of scientist who developed a VR-experience in which the public is learning to breath and sing, and where each breath and note is made visible and helps each singer to combine audio and video in an outrageous way. She also worked with huge community choirs and people who have never sang in there live before . The last project was a choirproject with extremely poor and on the other side very rich people to show how singing can overcome social barriers and connect.