

# LIZ MOHN

## Liz Mohn's Commitment to Music

### NEUE STIMMEN

In 1987, following conversations with Herbert von Karajan and August Everding, Liz Mohn initiated the Bertelsmann Stiftung's **NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition**. It was the start of a success story. The "European Singing Contest" with 36 candidates in its founding year has since developed into one of the world's leading singing competitions. In 2015, approx. 1,400 young talents from 72 nations applied to participate in the contest. The international singing competition – and Liz Mohn's cultural philanthropy – celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.

NEUE STIMMEN is held every two years with the aim of tracking down the most promising opera talent from around the world, promoting them, and helping them to start a national or international career.

The competition involves preliminary-round auditions in more than 20 cities around the world, orchestral accompaniment in the semi-finals and finals, and an internationally renowned panel of judges. Both concerts are covered in the media by live video streaming, among other things, and recorded for posterity on CD. Under the heading "Creating Careers," NEUE STIMMEN offers talent from all over the world effective, long-term encouragement and support in the form of individual career coaching and seminars on contain important topics related to the singing profession. In addition, many participants are given the opportunity to draw attention to their talent in concerts in Germany and abroad. The competition also systematically promotes networking between the singers and the attending music directors, festival directors and agents, and facilitates an exchange between people of different nationalities, cultural and religious backgrounds.

The International Singing Competition and thus Liz Mohn's cultural commitment celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. For many artists who are now internationally renowned, participation in the competition has paved the way to their careers. They include Vesselina Kasarova, René Pape, Nathalie Stutzmann, Roman Trekel, Hanno Müller-Brachmann, Dietrich Henschel, Angelika Kirchschrager, Anna Samuil, Franco Fagioli, Maxim Mironov, Marina Rebeka, Christiane Karg, Nadine Sierra and Elsa Dreisig.

With the **NEUEN STIMMEN International Master Class**, which has taken place biennially in the years between the contest since 1997, Liz Mohn and the Bertelsmann Stiftung want to promote and support especially talented young singers above and beyond the competition itself. Key skills and perspectives for a successful, prudent career are taught under the artistic direction of Prof. Gustav Kuhn. The Master Class final concert at the Bertelsmann Stiftung for around 300 guests from business, culture and society is traditionally hosted at the Gütersloh Theater.

Launched in October 2012, the most recent project in the NEUEN STIMMEN family, the **Lied Master Class**, is dedicated exclusively to Lieder singing. It is directed by internationally renowned artists such as the soprano Edda Moser and Kammersängerin Angelika Kirschschrager, who also host the final recitals at the Gütersloh Theater and the Berlin Konzerthaus. The longtime partnership with the Konzerthaus strengthens the goal of providing comprehensive support for young singers and enables them to perform at an internationally renowned venue.

## Musical Education

Liz Mohn sees music as an important component of a well-rounded education, because singing and making music support the development of sensory, motor and linguistic self-expression and thus personality development. Music provides positive learning experiences regardless of age, background, language and education. With music as an integral part of the daily routine at daycare centers and schools, we can stimulate creativity, promote artistic potential and preserve and develop our cultural diversity. This is the rationale behind two projects that Liz Mohn has launched in the Bertelsmann Stiftung's "Music Education" department: **MIKA - Musik im Kita-Alltag** (Music in the Daycare Routine), **Mobile Musikwerkstatt** (Mobile Music Workshop), **Musikalische Grundschule** (Musical Elementary School), and **Musik, Sprache, Teilhabe** (Music, Language, Participation).

The aim of the **MIKA – Musik im Kita-Alltag** project is to develop new methods for giving children in daycare centers access to music as part of a holistic education and development process. A comprehensive approach to strengthening music in early childhood education is developed at the levels of [teacher] training and coaching as well as in daycare practice, and in cooperation with universities, vocational schools, and daycare institutions. The **Mobile Musikwerkstatt** is a project in which volunteers visit educational institutions of all kinds to create music experience rooms, e.g. sound labs, instrument-building workshops, or intercultural and cross-generational musical workshops.

The **Musikalische Grundschule** school development concept was developed in cooperation with the Hessian Ministry of Culture, and is now being put into practice at over 420 schools in five federal states. At these schools, music is included in the teaching of all subjects, for example, German or math. It thus becomes a learning principle and element in designing the overall school routine. The **Musik, Sprache, Teilhabe** pilot project, initiated in Lower Saxony with many partners, seeks to establish music as a medium for language acquisition and participation, thereby improving the educational opportunities especially of children with a refugee background.

Besides strengthening musical education through operating projects, Liz Mohn and the Bertelsmann Stiftung are advocates for strengthening the role of the arts in society, and for mainstreaming them as an important dimension of education. For this reason, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and six other foundations have formed the **Rat für kulturelle Bildung e.V.** (Council for Cultural Education), which works to bring up the potential of cultural education in the social and political discourse.

## The Liz Mohn Foundation for Culture and Music

In addition to her musical activities at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Liz Mohn founded her own Foundation for Culture and Music in November 2005. Her aim is to do greater justice to the role that culture and music play in the development of an individual's personality and in our society. In 2007, Liz Mohn and Daniel Barenboim jointly initiated the **International Opera Studio** at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin. In a two-year training program, as many as nine talented young singers are simultaneously prepared for a career in musical theater while advancing their musical, artistic and personal development. The studio offers young talents a chance to perform small and medium-sized parts at the State Opera while also receiving individual lessons, workshops and master classes. In 2016, the collaboration between the Liz Mohn Kultur- und Musikstiftung and the State Opera was extended through 2022. Opera Studio graduates include Elsa Dreisig, Rachel Frenkel, Evelin Novak, Fernando Javier Radó, Viktor Rud and Gyula Orendt.

Since 2008, Liz Mohn and her Foundation for Culture and Music have supported 124 exemplary integration projects across Germany with a funds totaling about €500,000 through the annual “**Cultural Diversity with Music’ Ideas Initiative.**” In administering this initiative Liz Mohn seeks to strengthen the interaction between children and teens of different nationalities. The idea is to spark the development of new project ideas and motivate as many protagonists as possible to take action.

In 2012, the Liz Mohn Foundation for Culture and Music initiated a **musical theater project with Gütersloh daycare centers and elementary schools.** The project aims to let children explore the arts intensively, facilitate the transition from kindergarten/daycare to elementary school, and improve cooperation between the two institutions.

**For more information:** [www.neue-stimmen.de](http://www.neue-stimmen.de), [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de); [www.kultur-und-musikstiftung.de](http://www.kultur-und-musikstiftung.de)

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