



Ars Choralis Coeln

Maria Jonas – Voice et musical direction

On the initiative of the IFM (Initiativkreis Freie Musik Köln/Initiative Circle Free Music Cologne) and the Archdiocese of Cologne, the schola "Ars Choralis Coeln" (ACC) was founded in 2004 under the direction of Maria Jonas.

ACC gave its debut concert at the 2004 "Romanische Nacht" in Cologne. Since then, the ensemble has succeeded in establishing itself at home and abroad. It has accepted invitations to the Schnütgen Museum, the National Art Gallery in Bonn, Essen Cathedral, and the Thuringian State Exhibition, as well as to renowned festivals, including Montalbane, the Hohenloher Musiksommer, the MDR (Middle German Radio) Musiksommer, Rheinvokal (South German Radio), the Uckermärkische Musikwochen, the Festival of Early Music in the Erzgebirge, and to the A Capella Festival (Hanover). In Europe, ACC has made guest appearances in Graz (Austria) under the auspices of the Styriarte and of the Easter festival PSALM, at Kärnten's Trigonale (Austria), the Festival Voix et Route Romane (France), at the Festival Concordia Vocis on Sardinia (Italy), in Musica w Radnu (Poland), and Musica Antiqua Perast (Montenegro).

ACC has enjoyed successful collaborations with the ensembles Sequentia, Ioculatores, Amarcord, Tenore e Cuncordu de Orosei (Sardinia), and Oni Wytars. Under the direction of Benjamin Bagby, ACC collaborated with the ensemble "Sequentia" on the CD *Krone und Schleier – Musik aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklostern* (Crown and Veil – Music from medieval women's monasteries), a co-production with the West German Radio (WDR).

In 2007, three further CDs were released: *Letare Germania* was produced for the 800th anniversary of the birth of Elisabeth of Thuringia, a Divine Office in honor of the saint from a Cologne antiphonal from the end of the thirteenth century (on the Chrismon label). The two CDs *Vita St. Elisabethae*, in conjunction with the ensembles Ioculatores and Amarcord, and *Rose van Jhericho – The Songbook of Anna von Köln*, a first recording of this Lower-Rhenish song repertoire from the milieu of the Devotio Moderna, appeared on the RAUMKLANG label. The latter, a co-production with the WDR, received two critics' awards in France: CHOC de Monde de la Musique and 5 Diapasons.

The current CD projects are to be released in 2009 on RAUMKLANG: These include the lauda program *Canto Novello* – a project in collaboration with Oni Wytars (co-production with WDR3, West German Radio), and *Hildegard von Bingen – Vespers for the Blessed Virgin*. The latter was recorded in October 2008 in the authentic environment in Eberbach Monastery. The production was sponsored by the North Rhine-Westphalia Art Foundation.

The *oeuvre* of Hildegard von Bingen will be a focus of Ars Choralis Coeln's work also in the coming year: the ensemble is to perform the *Ordo Virtutum* for the first time.

The singer Maria Jonas is one of Cologne's most creative and versatile personalities, and can be heard as a performer of Early Music and Contemporary Music. She initially studied oboe in Cologne, and was then director of a music school in Venezuela for several years. Back in Europe, she devoted herself to studying voice and Early Music, with Jessica Cash in London, Monserrat Figueras in Barcelona, and René Jacobs at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. She held a teaching position for historical singing at the Leipzig Musikhochschule, and has taught

since 1999 at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen. In the last years she accepted invitations for guest lectureships at the Colleges of Music in Belgrad, Rostock, and Tilburg (Holland), as well as at the University of Zurich. During the "Romanischer Sommer" 2008 she assumed the direction of the Klangwerkstatt (sound workshop) "Kolumba singt!"