

ONE TO WATCH

'An exceptional actress, rhythmically perfect'

Chen Reiss is a soprano for modern times – as much at home on the operatic stage as in the concert hall

With the release of her new album of 18th-century Viennese arias, soprano Chen Reiss is determined to prove herself as a serious artist. The 32-year-old Israeli musician has all the trademarks of the soprano diva – glamorous looks, a repertoire of great operatic heroines under her belt and a packed roster of high-profile forthcoming engagements.

Yet 'Liaisons', her most recent disc, following CD releases in 2007 and 2009 dedicated to songs and arias of Mozart, Schubert and Donizetti, reveals detailed musical insight and a particular sensitivity for recital programming. Including arias by Mozart, Salieri, Cimarosa and Haydn, the release – her first on the Onyx label – seeks to demonstrate the 'interrelationships' between these composers and their connection to Vienna. 'Mozart was always probing for universal, humanistic music,' she says in the notes, adding that he can be understood on his own terms but, equally, 'only when we appreciate that these musicians respected one another's work and were mutually enriched, do we form a picture of the time.'

Away from the recording studio, too, Reiss has excelled, performing leading roles at the Bavarian State Opera and La Scala. She has also performed on some of the world's most famous concert stages under the likes of Barenboim, Levine and Donald Runnicles. She has even tried film; she sang on the soundtrack for *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* under Sir Simon Rattle.

And the future continues to look bright for this thinking soprano. Her varied engagements range from Vienna State Opera roles to Brahms's *German Requiem* in Pittsburgh under Manfred Honeck. **©**

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The mentor

Zubin Mehta

'As a teenager, Chen Reiss sang for me at a party at the Egyptian Embassy in Israel; and recently again at a party given by the Israeli president Shimon Peres. In

between we have worked together a lot – she came to work with us and learn at the Munich Opera. She's a conductor's dream – very studious, flexible, an exceptional actress and rhythmically perfect. She has this wonderful semi-dramatic coloratura soprano with a full enough voice to sing Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She reminds me of Hilde Gueden, a soprano I adored.'

