

Julia Lezhneva, Soprano

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"... sublime cantilenas with ornaments woven in like silver threads, trampoline-springing staccati and evenly swinging trills ... Even more haunting, how she knew how to use the *messa di voce*, the rising and falling of the tone, as an expression of emotional tremor." (FAZ, May 2021) *The Süddeutsche Zeitung* sees her as a "...magician: she can almost make her voice disappear, performing the most ludicrous vocal feats and garland fireworks".

Julia Lezhneva's international career began with a bang when she caused a sensation in 2010 at the Classical Brit Awards in London's Royal Albert Hall with Rossini's *Fra il padre* at the invitation of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

Just a decade later, she is discovering a broad repertoire with various orchestras, conductors, operas and oratorios. She made her highly successful debuts with the Berliner Philharmoniker in October 2019 and at the Musikverein Vienna in December 2019. She returned to the Mozartwoche Salzburg in January 2020, this time under Sir András Schiff in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*; in January 2023 she sang in *Don Giovanni*. In June 2023, she appeared for the first time at La Scala in Milan in Porpora's *Carlo il Calvo*.

In December 2020, she made her celebrated debut with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Herbert Blomstedt. Her debuts with the LA Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony are on her calendar for the 2024/25 season.

Orchestras such as the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB), the Orquesta Nacional de España, the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the Kaohsiung Philharmonic and the Seoul Philharmonic regularly invite Julia Lezhneva and she regularly works with renowned conductors such as Adam Fischer, Giovanni Antonini, Herbert Blomstedt, Emmanuelle Haïm, Paavo Järvi, Vladimir Jurowski and Andrea Marcon.

Julia Lezhneva is a welcome guest at the Salzburg Festival, the Schwetzingen Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Dubrovnik Festival, the Festival de la Vézère, the Sion Festival, the Nordland Music Festival and at Bayreuth Baroque.

Julia Lezhneva's debut in Handel's *Alcina* (Morgana) at the Hamburg State Opera in September 2018 was celebrated to great acclaim and she was immediately invited back for Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and further performances of *Alcina*. In 2021, she sang the role of Poppea in a new production of Handel's *Agrippina* (stage director: by Barrie Kosky), in 2022 Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and in May 2024 she will sing Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Before that, she will make her debut at the Liceo in Barcelona in March 2024 in a staged performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

In winter 2019, she made her debut in Bach's Christmas Oratorio (conducted by Vladimir Jurowski); in the same season, she sang in Handel's *Messiah* and *La Resurrezione*, Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans*; as well as Haydn's *Creation* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*. In October 2024, she will appear for the first time with Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir in Handel's *Esther*.

Born in 1989 in a family of geophysicists on Sakhalin Island off the Pacific Coast of Russia, Ms. Lezhneva began playing piano and singing at the age of five. She graduated from the Gretchaninov

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Music School and continued her vocal and piano studies at the Moscow Conservatory Academic Music College. At 17 she came to international attention as the winner of *the Elena Obraztsova Opera Singers Competition*, and was invited to share the stage with Juan Diego Flórez at the opening of the *Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro* in the following year. In 2009, she won first prize at the *Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition* in Helsinki and the following year took first prize at the *Paris International Opera Competition*, as the youngest contestant in each competition's history. *Opernwelt* magazine named her "Young Singer of the Year" in 2011 for her debut at La Monnaie in Brussels. The following year she performed at the Victoires de la Musique Classique in Paris.

Julia Lezhneva's teachers and mentors include Dennis O'Neill, Yvonne Kenny, Elena Obraztsova, Alberto Zedda, Richard Bonyng and Thomas Quasthoff.

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