



Description of my artistic career

Ever since I was a child, I was surrounded by music. My father, Leon Spierer, was the concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Some of my earliest memories are of hearing my father practicing the symphonic repertoire and great violin solos. When I became a teenager, I joined the all-German youth orchestra and was immediately hooked on playing in an orchestra. This love for symphonic music encouraged me to study even harder and become a professional musician. Aside from my daily studies, I took private composition lessons with the well-known German composer Reinhard Schwarz-Schilling. He opened my eyes to analysis and broadened my horizons in theory and musical form.

After getting my high school degree (Abitur), I was awarded a scholarship to the University of Houston to study violin. In my second year, I started to take conducting classes. From this moment on I knew I wanted to become a conductor. After my second year at the University of Houston, I returned to Germany and started to study conducting at the "Hochschule für Musik und Theater" in Hamburg. Due to my high level and violin playing, I was able to become a regular substitute with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. There, I had the incredible chance to learn about orchestra playing, to observe the greatest conductors rehearse and perform, and to learn about orchestra psychology and gain insights into orchestra life.

After finishing my studies in Hamburg in the summer of 1990, I obtained the position of Kapellmeister, Solorepetitor and musical assistant to the music director at the Kiel opera in northern Germany. In the summer of 1987, I was also a prize winner in the conducting competition with Leonard Bernstein at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. This prize led to receiving invitations to be a guest conductor in different cities. For example, Pamplona, Odense, Aarhus, Hamburger Sinfoniker, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Mexico City and many more. In my time as Kapellmeister in Kiel, I learned not only a lot about opera but about the German opera system; how it works on a daily basis, coaching young and experienced singers, working with guest singers, organizing rehearsals, and arranging orchestral material. In my five years at the opera in Kiel, I conducted more than 100 performances. From Mozart operas to operettas to major Puccini operas and contemporary works. I also had the chance to conduct several wonderful ballet performances, including Stravinsky's Petruschka and Firebird.

After leaving the opera company in 1995, I continued my career as a guest conductor. Invitations came from Caracas, Venezuela to conduct Puccini's Turandot, concerts at the Texas Music Festival, concerts with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in México City and Gävle Sinfonieorkest in Sweden, which elevated me to the position of music director and artistic director in 1997. Organizing and planning several seasons was a pleasure to me. A high point was the concert tour to the Netherlands in 1999, with a final concert at the Concertgebouw (a CD was made). Several guest performances in that time included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Stockholm, Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonic Ensemble Tokyo, Frankfurt Opera and Göteborg Opera.

In 2003, I was elected music director of the Giessen Opera in Germany as well as artistic director and chief conductor to the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in México City. My knowledge and experience in organizing, planning, and teaching, especially young singers and musicians, was very helpful.

In Giessen I also started a very successful collaboration with the School of Music in Frankfurt. At the beginning of every symphony concert, a student was introduced who played a short work or a movement of a concerto — we named it "Auftakt". The students were very grateful and benefitted from the rare chance to work and perform with a professional orchestra. The audience loved seeing the young performers and to witness the collaboration.

With every passing year, conducting children's concerts, working with music students, and teaching became more and more my passion. Leaving Giessen Opera after eight years as their music director, I was given the chance to conduct the children's operas and concerts at the Komische Oper in Berlin. From the well-known Italian composer Pierangelo Valtinoni, I performed all three works: Pinocchio, the Snow Queen, and the Magician from Oz, and also presented premiers of these works in Italy. I pursued my guest conducting activities at NHK Tokyo, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Orquesta Filarmónica de la ciudad de México, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, Orquesta Sinfonica de Porto Alegre, Schleswig-Holsteinisches Sinfonieorchester, Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

To this day, nothing fills me with more professional and personal joy than teaching and working with young musicians, preparing them for auditions and holding master classes in conducting. A good place to do this is at the Berlin Opera Academy, which I have been a member of since 2022.

Carlos Spierer
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