

Roit Feldenkreis started in the arena of classical music in the “classical” way. As a young girl she trained in Israel and the USA to become a soprano singer with everything that entails, practice, discipline and hard work in the face of challenge. This seemingly predictable beginning has converted into a road of exploration for Roit in which she has been constantly investigating and pushing the boundaries of the classical traditions as well as cultural and geographical boundaries as an international orchestra conductor.

Prizewinner at the London Classical Soloists Conducting Competition (2014) and a leading musician in the International music arena, Roit has served for 8 years as the Founder and Music Director of the Israeli Moshavot Chamber Orchestra, a leading orchestra in Northern Israel (2011-2019), located in the prestigious Elma Arts Hall. Under Roit’s leadership, the orchestra has dedicated itself to performing innovative world-premiere compositions by living composers from Israel and around the world, as well as regularly performing family-oriented concert series to promote classical music to under-privileged youth and annual charity concerts with talented young soloists.

In 2019 Roit relocated to Barcelona with her family, where she now is an Associate Conductor with the Catalan Chamber Orchestra in Barcelona and a guest conductor collaborating with numerous orchestras in Spain and Europe. A leading entrepreneur and innovator, Roit has created in Barcelona the “Musicians Talk Music” Live Series, which hosts first-class international musicians in comprehensive, down-to-earth conversations about music with viewers from all over the world and is a sought-after lecturer in the fields of music and leadership. An innovative, creative musician, Roit promotes interdisciplinary artistic collaborations to challenge the usual norms of classical music and create a deep audience connection and appreciation.

Internationally, Roit conducted at the Montevideo Philharmonic Orchestra (Uruguay) with soprano Sivan Rotem and cellist Virginia Aldado and the Zacatecas Philharmonic Orchestra (Mexico) with pianist Tiffany Poon, Campana Philharmonic Orchestra in Naples (Italy) with soprano Luana Lombardi, London City Orchestra (UK) with pianist Jayson Gillham, National Congress Symphony Orchestra of Paraguay with flutist Adriana Aquino Navarro, Bombay Chamber Orchestra (India) with violinist Hadar Rimon amongst others. Roit is invited this season to conduct in Mexico, Cyprus and more.

To name a few Israeli orchestras whom Roit conducts regularly to date: The Israel NK Orchestra, Ra’anana Symphonette Orchestra, Be’er Sheva Sinfonietta, Ramat Ha’sharon Symphonic Orchestra, Carter’s Symphonic Orchestra, Israel Chamber Orchestra and others. She is also a dedicated music educator, creating children’s music programs and special interdisciplinary concerts.

Starting her musical career as a soprano singer, Roit Feldenkreis has performed as a soloist with the Philharmonic Choir of Israel and the Israeli Opera Choir, among others. She has also conducted choirs in Israel and around the world, including the Philharmonic Choir in Maestro Daniel Oren’s



by Ana M. Vernia

ROIT FELDENKREIS

production of Puccini's "Madam Butterfly" with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. A classically-trained soprano, Roit puts a focus on the score's melodic lines, to create a powerful orchestral melody in every piece.

A Tel Aviv University graduate, Roit holds a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting from the University's Buchman-Mehta School of Music, where she studied with Yoav Talmi and Mandy Rodan. Other conductors with whom she has studied include Noam Sheriff, Zsolt Nagy, Achim Holub, Avi Ostrovski, Ze'ev Dorman, Helmut Riling, Manfred Honneck and Julian Raichlin, to name a few.

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Sivan Rotem – "I sang under the baton of Roit Feldenkreis and The Montevideo Philharmonic two 20th century works, Roit had a great success in leading the orchestra with her clear and musical conducting."

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Ana M. Vernia Why did you choose music as your profession?

Roit Feldenkreis:

I feel that music actually chose me. I grew up as a singer with a great passion for classical music and soon dreamt of becoming a professional musician, but I thought that making a living would be too difficult. I was a good student so I thought about pursuing other fields, but ultimately always returned to my greatest love. I was lucky to receive great opportunities as a conductor and build a musical career doing what I love the most. I find that nothing else gives me deep satisfaction and joy like being a musician does.

AV Although you started in the choral world, why did you focus on conducting?

RF

Although being a soprano singer is who I am and will always remain my primary instrument, I feel that as a conductor, I get to be part of the entire piece and see the entire musical picture. I have the privilege to perform with the greatest instrument that exists – the symphony orchestra, and to shape the color and timbre of this huge instrument. Being a conductor gives me the opportunity to work with the orchestra, as well as choirs, soloists and other performers and being a soprano gives me an advantage in working on vocal pieces, which I find very rewarding. Combining all of these musical aspects is the most exhilarating experience in the world.

AV From your experience, do you consider conducting to be still a male-dominated profession?

RF

I believe that the world has changed drastically in the past ten or fifteen years and that orchestras are quickly realizing that women are more than capable in leading the world's classical

music scene on all levels. I'm extremely lucky to take part in this amazing change and to receive such wonderful opportunities. Having said that, there is definitely room for improvement, especially when taking into account the extremely small number of women who are serving as music directors of the world's leading orchestras. I have strong faith that the classical music world will continue to evolve and give female conductors their well-deserved opportunities in the "big league".

AV What has been your biggest challenge that you have faced in your musical training?

RF

I had two main challenges in my musical training. The first is finding my own musical voice and confidence. As musicians, we are used to receive criticism throughout our musical studies, as thing that makes us at times extremely vulnerable and apprehensive. We must find our own voice if we want to stay true to ourselves as artists, and not solely play or conduct in the way we have been taught by our teachers. This is a little like leaving our parents' home and becoming independent, and in my opinion, very important for all musicians. This is why I try to bring my own musical interpretation to every piece I perform and stay true to my own musical voice.

The second challenge was to try to combine my career plans and family life.


As a mother of three young children, it was almost impossible to achieve my conducting goals during the first few years while trying to gain experience and finishing my Master's Degree. I had to make sacrifices and put my career on hold for some time because I wanted to be the best mother I could be for my children. Nowadays, they are a bit older and my husband's career allows him more flexibility so everything is more balanced and it is easier for me to pursue my goals and dreams. I think this is a huge challenge for all young parents who want a career in performing arts and one that can be overcome only by extensive family support. I'm extremely grateful to have both things, an international conducting career and the family life I have always wanted and I feel they balance each other.

AV We are now in a complicated situation for art and culture, due to the pandemic we are suffering. Do you think that the support received by the institutions is sufficient? What needs does Art and Culture have at the moment?

RF

I think that the situation is extremely difficult for everyone and as I do not see the entire financial picture of each country, I can only offer my humble point of view. At the moment, many of my friends and colleagues are struggling to stay afloat, some of them unemployed since March 2020 due to the closing of many orchestras and opera houses all over the world. This, of course, is also happening in many other sectors, such as tourism and restaurants, but I will focus on the art world. I believe that many countries provide sufficient support for survival for the time being, but that art is an essential need for everyone, now more than ever. In these dark times, the one thing that can lift our spirits and give us a reason to continue fighting this pandemic, is art. Music, theater, museums, ballet and any other form of art are greatly important for the well-being of all human beings and there are proven, safe man-





ners of maintaining our culture intact during these unprecedented times.

AV Do you consider that musical training is adapted to the new times?

RF

I think that institutions and universities are doing their best to keep up with the times, but I do have some reservations as to the changes that are needed to be made in order to stay relevant in our ever-changing world. This is why in the past several years, I have been mentoring young musicians in dedicated workshops and consultations, so that they will receive the “new-world’s” set of rules. I believe that as musicians, we need to learn how to manage our own careers and be the driving force of our own goals and ambitions. I feel as though young musicians today get an inaccurate idea of what the classical music world is really like, and that this has to change. I’m excited to see that some institutions have started to incorporate career studies in their formal training with musicians such as my colleagues and myself, and are making a great effort to give young musicians the tools they need for their future careers.

AV From your international perspective, how do you see Spain with regard to music education and training?

RF

I see Spain as one of Europe’s leading countries regarding music education and training and especially love collaborating with my Spanish colleagues, who are all extremely passionate, dedicated and at the highest level of professional music-making. Orchestras and music institutions in Spain are home to some of the world’s leading musicians and I feel very blessed to

live in such a wonderful place. I hope to perform with Spain’s top-tier orchestras and become a part of the country’s leading musical influencers.

AV What recommendations would you give to current music students?

RF

I would tell them to study and play well, of course, but also to acquire the much-needed skills of the 21st century, such as management, entrepreneurship, inter-personal skills and more, so that they are free to create whatever they wish in their careers. I would also tell them that they can be whatever they wish to be and that there are many excellent tools that can help them achieve their goals in their own way.

AV Thank you very much for your time and your words for ARTSEDUCA

RF

Thank you very much for inviting me to this interview and I hope my experience will help others in their pursue of a professional music career. Follow my musical journey on Instagram @roitfeldenkreis or www.roitfeldenkreis.com