

Finding a home in music – how Manon Parmentier built her career and life in Germany with EURES support

How pianist Manon Parmentier found her way to the Heidelberg Opera with the help of EURES and discovered her musical home in Germany

Germany is home to more opera houses than any other country – more than 80 in total. For musicians working in opera, it is truly a land of opportunity. French pianist and répétiteur Manon Parmentier had already worked in France and Austria before she decided to move to Germany. One of her most pressing questions at the time: How would she bring along her large acoustic piano, which had accompanied her on every step of her journey for over ten years?



First steps and new opportunities

Manon knew that moving abroad required careful preparation. “The improvement of your language skills is the first step to make the search for a job abroad easier,” she says. While studying musicology in Austria, she had already learned German. She also adapted her CV, checked the recognition of her diplomas, and built contacts through speculative applications and auditions in several cities.

“Leaving my comfort zone, adapting, getting to know another culture and other people has always accompanied me on my professional path and is important to me,” she emphasizes. Her first success came in Heidelberg, where she initially worked as a language coach and solo accompanist for a French opera production. Shortly afterwards, she auditioned and was offered a permanent position at the theatre.

Support from EURES

One major challenge remained: Moving her piano.

“As a pianist, I have owned an acoustic piano for ten years. It moves with me every time I relocate. But the transport costs are very high. During a conversation with a colleague at the opera in Nancy, I learned that I could apply for financial support for moving from one EU country to another.”

Through France Travail (formerly Pôle emploi), she got in touch with EURES Adviser Martin Geißler from the [ZAV Artist Placement Service](#) in Stuttgart. He supported her with the formalities and made financial support for relocation via the **EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS)** possible.

“The biggest obstacles were administrative problems,” Manon recalls. “France and Germany have been real political, economic, and cultural partners for years, but the administrative cooperation between the two countries is sometimes very complicated.”

Starting a new chapter together

In 2023, Manon finally moved from Strasbourg to Mannheim together with her husband, an opera singer. “I also moved in with my husband, and of course it is a nice feeling when you start a new chapter,” she shares. Both receiving permanent contracts at German theatres made the move even easier.

i EURES TMS

The EURES-Targeted Mobility Scheme (EURES TMS) supports cross-border professional mobility within Europe with financial grants and personal advice.

There are support modules for both job seekers and employers.

[Information on EURES TMS](#)

Feeling at home in Germany

Two years later, Manon reflects positively on her move: While she says it might still be too early to call Heidelberg “home,” she feels very comfortable there. “[...] I feel good here. The city is very beautiful, the surrounding nature is inspiring, and the many cultural offerings in the region are attractive.”

In her free time, she enjoys hiking in the Odenwald, cycling along the Neckar, visiting castles and concerts, and exploring local restaurants. One highlight was a recital she performed with her soprano friend Milena Bischoff: “We had a song recital together, and she came to visit to rehearse and, of course, to discover the area.” A selfie on Heidelberg’s Old Bridge still reminds her of that day.



Manon Parmentier and Soprano Milena Bischoff on Heidelberg's Old Bridge „Alte Neckarbrücke“

Inspired by artistic variety



Soiree "The Crown" in the „Alter Saal“ of the Heidelberg theatre - Manon Parmentier and Soprano Theresa Immerz. Photographer: Susanne Reichardt.

At the Heidelberg Theatre, Manon thrives on the artistic work: “What I find very interesting in my work is rehearsing a role completely with the singers, from the first coaching sessions in a music room for two up to the premiere on stage with orchestra, lights, and costumes.”

She also notes a clear difference compared to her experiences in France: “In France, the singers are already prepared and already know their part, because there are no ensembles. (...) That is a very big difference compared to the repertoire theatres in Germany, where I work on many different operas at the same time.”

Sustainable Integration

Manon’s story shows that successful labour mobility does not end with signing a contract in another country.

For her, integration in Germany succeeded because professional fulfilment, a supportive environment, and the courage to try new things came together.

The cultural variety, professional diversity, and personal happiness make Heidelberg and Mannheim places where she enjoys living and working.

EURES TMS, the guidance of EURES-adviser Martin Geißler, and her own openness paved the way for this success story.



Martin Geißler and Manon Parmentier

Manon's tips for a successful start

For others considering a move to Germany, Manon offers clear advice:

- Learn the **language** – it makes not only work but also social life easier.
- Build a **professional network** early and maintain contacts.
- **Be patient** – many opportunities arise through recommendations.
- **Stay flexible** and open to new experiences – for Manon, this meant, for example, spontaneously playing the harpsichord or stepping in for performances at short notice.
- **Start apartment hunting early** and react proactively to new online listings.

Dear Manon, we wish you all the best on your further journey in Germany!