



ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW OPERA AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Royal Opera's artistic directors, **Antonio Pappano**, Music Director, and **Kasper Holten**, Director of Opera, today outlined their artistic plans for new operas to be presented at the Royal Opera House from 2013 to 2020. More than 15 new operas will be presented, both on the main stage and in the Linbury Studio Theatre. Four composers will also be given an unprecedented challenge to work on an epic operatic event for 2020.

Pappano and Holten talked of The Royal Opera's plans to extend the established tradition of commissioning British composers, and also include work by leading international artists such as **Luca Francesconi**, **Kaija Saariaho**, **Georg Friedrich Haas** and **Unsuk Chin**. The aim is to continue relationships with a number of the companies who have already worked at the Royal Opera House, as well as to introduce a whole new roster of national and international co-commissions and collaborations.

More projects will be added to the plans over the next few years, especially for the Linbury Studio Theatre from 2015.

Kasper Holten commented 'New work is not and should not be at the periphery of our programme, but right at the core of what and who we are. And this is something we do, not because we must, but because it is something that we are passionate about. We hope that opera audiences

will share our curiosity and come with us with open minds along this journey. There is not and should not be a guarantee of success for every single piece, only for innovation and risk-taking. But we can guarantee that we will put all the forces of The Royal Opera behind them all, whatever the scale, and whether the new work is aimed at adults or young people. To have a smaller theatre inside a major opera house is a rarity, and the combination of the Linbury Studio Theatre and our large stage gives us a unique platform for developing new work, which will only be strengthened through national and international partnerships.'

Antonio Pappano added: 'Our efforts are being focused on working with the composers who really excite us, both for the Linbury Studio Theatre and for the main stage. We have worked hard to find the composers we feel have a real flair and passion for opera, and we are very excited about being able to roll out our vision for new work on all scales.'

2012/13

Alongside the current revival of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* and the highly anticipated UK premiere of George Benjamin's *Written on Skin*, which The Royal Opera has co-commissioned for the main stage, The Royal Opera will produce the UK stage premiere of **Gerald Barry's** *The Importance of Being Earnest* in a production directed by **Ramin Gray**. **Tim Murray** conducts the Britten Sinfonia and the cast which includes **Ida Falk Winland, Stephanie Marshall, Hilary Summers, Paul Curievici, Benedict Nelson, Simon Wilding** and **Alan Ewing**, who reprises his role as Lady Bracknell from the concert performances at the Barbican last year. The production will be staged in the Linbury Studio Theatre.

2013/14

There will be a number of new productions created specially for the Linbury Studio Theatre in the 2013/14 Season.

Acclaimed Australian composer **Ben Frost** adapts **Iain Banks**'s cult novel *The Wasp Factory* in a production that he himself directs. This opera has been commissioned by Bregenz Festival's Art of our Times programme, and is a co-production with the Royal Opera House, Hebbel-am-Ufer, Berlin, Holland Festival and Cork Midsummer Festival.

For Christmas 2013, **Julian Philips** is composing a new opera for family audiences to a libretto by **Edward Kemp**, which will be directed by **Natalie Abrahami**, with designs by **Tom Scutt**.

We are working with the British electronic pioneer, composer and sound artist **Matthew Herbert** to make a new piece in 2014 inspired by the Faust story. Running alongside The Royal Opera's revival of Gounod's *Faust*, Matthew's production integrates cutting-edge technology into the fabric of the musical score.

Composer **Luke Bedford** and Scottish playwright **David Harrower** will create a companion piece taking a very different route through the Faust legend. Both works are for the Linbury Studio Theatre.

The Royal Opera will present the first UK performances of renowned Italian composer **Luca Francesconi**'s *Quartett*, based on the play by **Heiner Müller**, which is itself inspired by characters from *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. *Quartett* had its world premiere at La Scala, Milan, in 2010 and will be shown in a new version in London by The Royal Opera. The Royal Opera's new production is co-produced with London Sinfonietta and Opéra de Rouen, and directed by **John Fulljames**.

During the 2013/14 Season The Royal Opera will launch an annual collaboration with **Aldeburgh Music** and **Opera North** – supported by Arts Council England – to commission first operas from composers who have a flair for operatic creativity that, with careful nurturing, could develop into the composition of major operatic works. In the first year of the project, we will commission two operas that will be produced in Aldeburgh, Leeds and the Linbury Studio Theatre in March 2014. Further commissions will follow in 2015 and 2016.

2014/15

The Royal Opera's 2014/15 Season will open with a revival of **Mark-Anthony Turnage's** *Anna Nicole* in the main auditorium, followed by a new opera in the Linbury Studio Theatre by **Philip Glass**, based on Kafka's *The Trial*, co-commissioned with Music Theatre Wales and Houston Grand Opera.

A new chamber opera by German/Danish composer **Søren Nils Eichberg**, working with librettist **Hannah Dübgen**, is commissioned for 2015 in the Linbury Studio Theatre. The opera is a taut thriller, which asks us to question what we can really trust – which emotions are real and which are virtual.

2015 – 2020

A new opera for children by **Mark-Anthony Turnage**, to be directed by **Katie Mitchell**, is scheduled for December 2015, also in the Linbury Studio Theatre.

The new operas already planned for this period include an adaptation of **Max Frisch's** play *Count Oederland* by **Judith Weir**, working with librettist **Ben Power**. This is a collaboration with Scottish Opera and Oper Frankfurt, scheduled for performance in the Linbury Studio Theatre.

More new work in the Linbury Studio Theatre during this period is being developed and will be added to our plans and announced later.

For the main stage there is a commission from German composer **Georg Friedrich Haas**, based on **Jon Fosse's** novel *Morgon og Kveld* (*Morning and Evening*) with libretto by the author. The Royal Opera will be collaborating with Deutsche Oper Berlin on this piece, which will open in London in November 2015 and in Berlin in April 2016.

Thomas Adès's next large-scale opera, based on Buñuel's film *The Exterminating Angel*, is a commission from The Royal Opera and a number of international partners including the Salzburg Festival. The librettist is **Tom Cairns**, who also directs. *The Exterminating Angel* will be performed at the Royal Opera House in spring 2017.

Another important main stage commission is currently being negotiated for late spring 2018.

There will be a new main stage opera from **Unsub Chin**, who adapts *Alice Through the Looking Glass* with librettist **David Henry Hwang** for 2018/19. This follows the extraordinary success of Unsub's first opera *Alice in Wonderland*, which has now been produced around the world.

2020

For the year 2020 The Royal Opera has challenged four leading composers from different countries in Europe to each create a large-scale new opera for 2020. The vision is for four distinct operas, each one in part inspired by the composer's response to a set of questions developed in collaboration with the philosopher **Slavoj Žižek**: **'What preoccupies us today? How can we today stage ourselves? What are the collective myths of our present and future?'**

Each composer will work independently of the other teams but in collaboration with The Royal Opera's artistic leadership.

The four composers invited at this stage are **Kaija Saariaho** (Finland), **Mark-Anthony Turnage** (UK), **Luca Francesconi** (Italy) and **Jörg Widmann** (Germany).

All four commissions will have their premieres on the main stage during 2020.

New Relationships

From 2013, The Royal Opera is developing some new relationships to enable an increased engagement with emerging composers and librettists.

The Royal Opera will work with the **Guildhall School of Music & Drama** in offering a range of training opportunities for emerging opera-makers including composers, writers and directors. This new relationship will begin with a conference about libretto writing to take place at the Guildhall School in April 2013. Subject to validation, the conference will mark the launch of a new Masters Programme in Opera Making in association with the Royal Opera House and a new doctoral studentship in opera composition, the culmination of which will be a new opera for performance in 2016.

Also in 2013 we will be working with **Sound and Music** for the first time to deliver a seminar day on Saturday 16 March enabling emerging composers to think about writing for opera.

Opera development

The Royal Opera will continue to make a significant investment in artists and ideas as we develop works towards production. There will be an ongoing programme of opera development, including workshops and readings, some visible for the public, others not, depending on the needs for each project. Projects currently being developed include some of the commissions mentioned above, and work by **Chris Mayo**, **Sasha Siem** and **Soumik Datta**, as well as by digital artists **Kleis&Rønsholdt** and **Tal Rosner**.

The Royal Opera House has invited composers **David Bruce** and **Elsbeth Brooke** to be composers in residence during the 2012/13 Season, with a view to the future development of participatory work and/or opera for young people.

Partnerships with UK opera companies

We are keen to work with as many partners as possible on new work, enabling it to be seen by as wide an audience as possible across the UK.

As well as collaborating in the future with all the large-scale regional companies, The Royal Opera will continue to play a significant role in working with mid-scale touring companies. Plans are in place for Music Theatre Wales to bring their TMA award-winning production of **Mark-Anthony Turnage's** *Greek* and **Salvatore Sciarrino's** *Luci mie traditrici* to the Royal Opera House in autumn 2013 and to return with the Philip Glass co-commission described above. The Opera Group will bring **HK Gruber's** *Gloria: A Pigtales* to the Royal Opera House in 2014. Further projects in collaboration with other UK companies will be added for later seasons.

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