



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

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OLIVER MEARS TO JOIN ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Royal Opera House announced today that **Oliver Mears** will join the Royal Opera House at the beginning of March 2017 to succeed **Kasper Holten** as Director of Opera, who leaves on 11 March 2017.

Artistic Director of Northern Ireland Opera, Northern Ireland's national company since its foundation in 2010, Oliver Mears has built up the company with a focus on excellence, local context, innovation and ambitious local and international partnerships. A champion of Northern Irish and Irish composers, the company has also been determined to build new audiences for the art form, taken the lead in creating work with communities across Northern Ireland and initiated the country's first dedicated Young Artists Programme.

As a director he has staged productions for Northern Ireland Opera including *Tosca* – which won the *Irish Times* Theatre Award for Best Opera in 2012 – *L'elisir d'amore*, *Der fliegende Holländer* – which was nominated for Achievement in Opera Award, Theatre Awards UK 2013 – *Macbeth* (with Welsh National Opera), *Salome*, *Agrippina*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Turn of the Screw* (also Novaya Opera, Moscow). His production of *Noye's Fludde* featured as part of the London Cultural Olympiad before travelling to Beijing and Shanghai.

He has also directed productions for the Young Vic, Aldeburgh Music, Opera North, Nederlandse Reisopera, Pimlico Opera, Nevill Holt Opera, Scottish Opera and Bergen National Opera. As Artistic Director of Second Movement, he directed productions across London in site-specific venues, while his production of Martinů's *The Knife's Tears* for the company travelled to Brno and Prague as part of the 2010 Janáček Festival.

Announcing the appointment, **Alex Beard, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House** said: 'I am delighted that **Oliver Mears** is to join the Royal Opera House. He has successfully established Northern Ireland Opera as an important part of the UK opera scene as its founding Artistic Director, conceiving and delivering a range of innovative and impressive projects on and beyond the stage. It's a very exciting appointment.'

These sentiments were echoed by **Antonio Pappano, Music Director of The Royal Opera**: 'I have been very impressed by Oliver Mears all through the selection process. He is fiercely intelligent, very knowledgeable about what is going on in the world of the performing arts, in particular theatre and opera, and he has genuine passion for our art form. I look forward to a very productive collaboration with him and wish him all success.'

Oliver Mears said 'I have had a wonderful time at Northern Ireland Opera over the last six years and am proud of the company's growth and artistic excellence. I'm thrilled to be joining The Royal Opera to work alongside Antonio Pappano, Peter Katona, Cormac Simms, John Fulljames and the team – we have already had some inspiring conversations and I look forward to the future working together.'

-ENDS-

NOTES FOR EDITORS

BIOGRAPHY

Oliver Mears gained a Double First in English and History at Lincoln College, Oxford, and began his career assisting playwright Howard Barker. While working at many of the leading opera houses of the world including the Royal Opera House

and La Scala, Milan, he became one of the founding Artistic Directors of London-based opera company Second Movement, directing many site-specific opera productions, including several UK stage premieres and a tour to Prague and Brno of Martinů's *The Knife's Tears*.

He has been Artistic Director of Northern Ireland Opera (Northern Ireland's national company) since its foundation in 2010.

As director, he has staged many productions for Northern Ireland Opera including *Tosca* – which won the *Irish Times* Theatre Award for Best Opera in 2012 – *L'elisir d'amore*, *Der fliegende Holländer* – which was nominated for an Achievement in Opera Award, Theatre Awards UK 2013 – *Macbeth* (with Welsh National Opera), *Salome*, *Agrippina* (winner of Best Production, Dublin Theatre Fringe Festival Awards), *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Turn of the Screw*. His production of *Noye's Fludde* featured as part of the London Cultural Olympiad 2012 before travelling to festivals in Beijing and Shanghai, while his production of *The Turn of the Screw* travelled to the Buxton Festival and Novaya Opera, Moscow.

He has also directed productions for the Young Vic, Aldeburgh Music, Opera North, Nederlandse Reisopera Holland, Pimlico Opera, Nevill Holt Opera, Early Opera Company, Scottish Opera, the National Opera Studio, and Bergen National Opera. In 2012 he was nominated for an 'Achievement in Opera' award by the UK TMA Awards for his leadership of NI Opera, and was nominated in the 'Best Newcomer' (Director) category at the 2013 International Opera Awards.



Oliver Mears © Sim Canetty-Clarke

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