



INDEPENDENT OPERA

ANNOUNCES 2016 DIRECTOR FELLOWSHIP

Polly Graham to direct Karl Amadeus Hartmann's *Simplicius Simplicissimus* at Lilian Baylis Studio, Sadler's Wells

INDEPENDENT OPERA RECOGNISED AT THE 2016 INTERNATIONAL OPERA AWARDS

Philanthropists of the Year - Bill & Judy Bollinger

Polly Graham is today announced as winner of Independent Opera's (IO) 2016 Director Fellowship. Nominated for the Fellowship by Michael McCarthy (Artistic Director, Music Theatre Wales) and Isabel Murphy (Director of Artistic Administration, Welsh National Opera), Polly will stage the UK première of Karl Amadeus Hartmann's *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, in a new English translation by David Pountney, who also translated IO's 2015 production of *Biedermann and the Arsonists*. In addition to financial support, Polly will receive mentoring from Pountney and Stephen Medcalf, both panellists during the selection process. Independent Opera will present *Simplicius Simplicissimus* at the Lilian Baylis Studio at Sadler's Wells on 11, 15, 17 and 19 November 2016.

A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, Polly was Welsh National Opera's first Genesis Assistant Director (2012-2014) and her recent work there has included directing Iain Bell's *A Christmas Carol* and working as Associate Director on his new work, *In Parenthesis*. On winning the IO 2016 Director Fellowship, she said: "*Independent Opera has given me wonderful encouragement from the start of the Fellowship; in supporting the production of Hartmann's superb but little known opera, Simplicius Simplicissimus, they are allowing me to step into new territory and make work that I really believe in.*"

Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells was founded in 2005 to serve as a platform for outstanding young artists in every discipline of opera. Last year, the company celebrated their 10th anniversary with the launch of its 100th award. The new Director Fellowship, the largest of IO's annual fellowships, enabled Max Hoehn to stage the UK première of Šimon Voseček's *Biedermann and the Arsonists* with finance, support and mentoring from IO.

Described in *The Spectator* as "*lively, ambidextrous, teasing, tense: it has it all*", Max Hoehn was nominated in the Young Director category at this year's International Opera Awards for his production of *Biedermann and the Arsonists*. Of his 2015 collaboration with IO, he said: "*Staging Biedermann and the Arsonists was the most creatively fulfilling process I have had as a director. The opportunity to implement my vision for the production was not only immensely satisfying and challenging, but also a platform for the most exciting collaborations with artists at the top of their game. I can look forward to new projects with a richer understanding of the craft and the confidence that comes with winning this unique competition.*"

Joining Max Hoehn at the International Opera Awards, co-founders and patrons of Independent Opera, Bill and Judy Bollinger, were last night announced as the 2016 Philanthropists of the Year. Fondly described as opera's "Oscars", the International Opera Awards aim to raise opera's public profile, promote outstanding young talent and honour those who have made significant contributions to the operatic art form.

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