



PRESS RELEASE FROM
THE NORWEGIAN OPERA & BALLET

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The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet Announces New Directors

The Board of the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet today announced the appointments of Annilese Miskimmon as Artistic Director of Opera and Karl-Heinz Steffens as Music Director.

General Director Nils Are Karstad Lysø expresses his delight at the appointments of Miskimmon and Steffens, who will take up their positions starting in autumn 2017 and 2016, respectively:

— With these two competent and complementary leaders, the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet solidifies a strong foundation for its future artistic development, states Lysø.

Annilese Miskimmon comes from the position of General Manager/Artistic Director of the Danish National Opera, where she has been since 2012. From the 1st of August 2017, she will take over as Artistic Director of the Norwegian National Opera; starting in 2016, she will function as an artistic advisor, planning future opera seasons.

— It's a great honour to be chosen by the Board as the new Director of Opera. I thank them for this wonderful opportunity. Opera is a team sport, and I look forward to creating beautiful, exciting productions with all of my future colleagues. I intend to continue the fine international work of Per Boye Hansen, and inspire both present and future opera-goers of Norway with innovative and accessible opera, says Miskimmon.

Karl-Heinz Steffens is an internationally acclaimed conductor and the Music Director of the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. He becomes the artistic leader of the Norwegian National Opera Orchestra and takes up his post as Music Director of the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet on the 1st of August 2016.

— I'm thrilled and honored to become the next Music Director of the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet. I met the orchestra six months ago when we did Mahler's

Seventh together, and it was a marvelous concert. I am very happy to be part of such a wonderful leadership team and look forward to making great opera and great ballet in this amazing house, says Steffens.

Biographies:

Annilese Miskimmon (b. 1974) has been General Manager/Artistic Director of Den Jyske/Danish National Opera since 2012. She was born in Bangor, near Belfast, Northern Ireland, earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Christ's College, Cambridge, and a Postgraduate of Arts Administration from City University at the Barbican, London. She was Consultant Associate Director for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and from 2005 to 2013 was the Artistic Director of Opera Theatre Company Ireland. She has worked extensively in many prestigious international opera houses. Future directing plans include *Madama Butterfly*/Puccini for the Glyndebourne Festival and Tour, her debuts for the Royal Swedish Opera Stockholm and the Liceu Barcelona and *I puritani*/Bellini for Den Jyske/Danish National Opera. She is a passionate supporter of new work, recently commissioning a new symphony opera for the Aarhus 2017 European City of Culture based on the film *Brødre* (Brothers) by Susanne Bier. She has an international reputation for invigorating neglected masterpieces as well as re-inventing classic opera in a way that delights and ensures accessibility for modern audiences. This includes major recent projects for Den Jyske Opera, such as Democratic Opera and the DJO Opera Virgins initiative.

Her critically acclaimed work has been nominated or won awards including the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards, UK Theatre Awards, South Bank Arts Awards, Canadian Dora, and Irish Times Theatre Awards. She is an active member of Opera Europa and a regular press, radio, and tv commentator and conference speaker.

Karl-Heinz Steffens (b. 1961) studied clarinet with Ulf Rodenhäuser at the State University of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart. After his first engagement as a clarinetist at the Staatstheater Kassel, Steffens became one of the world's most highly regarded instrumentalists, serving as Principal Clarinet of the Frankfurt Opera, the Bavarian Radio Symphony and the Berlin Philharmonic, as well as maintaining an active solo career. In 2001, he was appointed Professor in Clarinet at the Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin, where he taught until 2008.

In 2007, Karl-Heinz Steffens relinquished his post as Principal Clarinet of the Berlin Philharmonic and his international solo career and devoted himself to conducting and to taking up the position of General Music Director of the Staatskapelle and Opera Halle (2007-2013). At the start of the 2009/10 season, he took up a further appointment as Music Director of the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Ludwigshafen.

Since then, Steffens has been in huge demand as a guest conductor internationally. The past two seasons have seen his debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre

Philharmonique de Radio France, Danish Radio, Helsinki Philharmonic and Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra. Alongside his regular appearances with numerous orchestras, Steffens, this season, will make his debut with the Gulbenkian Orchestra, the orchestras of Teatro Regio and Maggio Musicale and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.

Additionally, Karl-Heinz Steffens is a prolific conductor of opera. At the invitation of Daniel Barenboim, he debuted in 2008 at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden with *Fidelio*, which led to regular annual appearances there with *Tosca*, *La Traviata*, *The Bartered Bride* and, this season, *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

In January 2012, Steffens made his greatly acclaimed debut at La Scala Milan conducting *Don Giovanni*, which he also conducted at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. In the following years he returned to Milan with *Götterdämmerung* and *Così fan tutte*.

In spring 2013, Steffens's critically acclaimed East-West German music theatre project of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* (2010-2013), in cooperation with Hansgünther Heyme, successfully culminated in a performance of the complete cycle in both Halle and Ludwigshafen.

In May 2016, Steffens will give his debut performance at the Opera House Zurich with *Così fan tutte*.

Alongside extensive cycles of the symphonies by Beethoven, Schubert and Bruckner, his CD recordings with the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz under the motto "Modern Times" are internationally acclaimed. For its recording of the most important orchestral works by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, his orchestra was awarded the ECHO Klassik 2015 as "Orchestra of the Year" by the Deutsche Phono-Akademie.

Attached photo: © Erik Berg, The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet.

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