

# MEMORANDUM

100 JAHRE



SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE 2020

## **MEMORANDUM**

Of the Salzburger Festspielfonds and the Salzburg Festival's Board of Directors on the occasion of the Salzburg Festival's centenary on 22 August 2020

Published by **Provincial Governor Wilfried Haslauer** as legal representative of the Salzburger Festspielfonds and the Salzburg Festival's Board of Directors

**Helga Rabl-Stadler, President**

**Markus Hinterhäuser, Artistic Director**

**Lukas Crepaz, Executive Director**

## Preamble

“To wake up the ear, the eyes, human thinking”

Luigi Nono

## The Salzburg Festival is a festival for the arts.

**More than ever before**, putting on a festival in the 21st century means confronting the realities of a rapidly changing world. The festivals of the future not only have to keep up with the times; they also need to act intelligently and creatively. More than ever, they must be able to face the facts of a digital world, and they need to offer an alternative model to the ideas of unrestrained technical reproducibility.

Much more needs to be done by the Salzburg Festival in order to guarantee its fundamental characteristics and unique nature. It must focus even more on widening minds and perceptive abilities, and on promoting the understanding of meaning and reality, in order to engender a social experience of community in an individualized society. Even more so in the future than today, festivals will have to function as communicators of learning and global memory, and as an archive of world knowledge. Or in the words of Robert Musil, they should add a “sense of possibility” to our sense of reality: a sense of what could or should happen.

## Fundamental Principles

**The Salzburg Festival** is celebrating its centenary this year. Exactly one hundred years ago, on 22 August 1920, Max Reinhardt’s production of Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Jedermann* was performed for the first time on the Cathedral Square, thus founding the Salzburg Festival. The ‘Play of the Rich Man’s Death’ has been an integral part of the Festival ever since, with only a few exceptions. The centenary has prompted the Salzburger Festspielfonds (Salzburg Festival Fund) and the board of directors to reflect on some fundamental principles as the Salzburg Festival enters its second century:

1. Following the horrific experience of the First World War, the Salzburg Festival was founded one hundred years ago at a time of hardship and bitter poverty, but also political radicalism, in order to focus on the power of the mind and human creativity as a common bond between people of different nationalities, identities, religions and ethnic backgrounds. The idea of reconciliation and peace was therefore at the heart of the Festival’s programming from the very beginning.

Max Reinhardt’s and Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s concept for a festival is still a model for bringing artistic inspiration to a society that is increasingly more bewildered than it would like to admit and increasingly more open-minded than it is given credit for.

**The Salzburg Festival is expressly committed to this crucial artistic and political function: to be a project of peace that allows and encourages different perspectives, interpretations and approaches in a spirit of tolerance and humanity, and excludes nobody from the idea behind the Festival.**

2. The history of the Salzburg Festival testifies to the resilience of art and culture, and even more so in times of crisis, including after the First World War and during the 1920s, after the Nazi regime's economic sanctions against Austria from 1934 to 1937, and immediately following the Second World War and the ensuing period of reconstruction. Even today – with the Festival's centennial season overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic – the Salzburg Festival is serving as an example for the power of art.

Difficult times place tough demands on artists and also on audience members, without whom no festival can happen, since “the best must not only be on stage but also in the auditorium, if the perfect miracle of which theatre is capable on a propitious evening is to occur” (Max Reinhardt).

**The Salzburg Festival will continue its efforts to give art the value it deserves in our society – even under the most adverse conditions – and to make art accessible to the public in accordance with this aim.**

3. For centuries, Europe's history has been characterized time and again by suffering and destruction, caused by radical nationalist thinking. The Salzburg Festival sees art as a gift for the whole of humanity.

Salzburg is situated in the heart of Europe not only in a geographical sense, meaning that the Salzburg Festival is first and foremost a European festival. But within Europe – and notwithstanding its global renown – it is also an Austrian festival, infused by the local spirit of Salzburg. At the same time, on an international level the Salzburg Festival is unrivalled and unequalled in terms of its reach and impact.

**The Salzburg Festival continues to regard itself as an international festival: international through its programming, through the artists who perform here, and through audience members who come from all over the world.**

4. The Festival's founders – Max Reinhardt, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Richard Strauss, Franz Schalk, Alfred Roller, and others – regarded the highest possible artistic standards as the key to the Salzburg Festival's success, with Hofmannsthal declaring “the very best of everything!” Great art touches on existential, fundamental questions. And art is the means by which answers to these fundamental questions must be sought in Salzburg.

**Alongside the three genres (opera, drama, concerts), the Salzburg Festival remains steadfast in its dedication to artistic excellence, which is given priority over commercial**

**concerns. The Salzburg Festival lives by this commitment to the highest levels of quality as the key factor in its success.**

5. The history of the Salzburg Festival is primarily a tale of impressive artistic feats in the performance of opera, drama and concerts. The Festival has a responsibility towards the greatest expressions of artistic creativity from across all eras, which provide a festival with its substance: from Monteverdi to the music of our time, and from Greek tragedy to contemporary drama. As a way of interacting with and serving these works, the Salzburg Festival wants to transcend their historical moment and chart the connections between them, creating a unique and special experience: artistic expression conceived for Salzburg and only possible here.

**The Salzburg Festival is committed to preserving and promoting works of European culture. It is also an important responsibility of the Festival to offer a platform to contemporary artists, composers and authors, and to provide them with the best possible performance conditions.**

6. For a number of years, the Salzburg Festival has offered special programming for children and young people in order to introduce young audiences to theatre, opera and classical music.

**The Salzburg Festival sees it as an important responsibility to enhance these activities, inspiring future generations to take an interest in music and theatre, and to spread awareness of the need for artistic dialogue.**

7. Many internationally renowned artists either began their careers in Salzburg or experienced their breakthrough at the Festival. In turn, they provide the Salzburg Festival with its artistic profile and charismatic appeal.

**Advancing the careers of artists – with the highest standards of performance as the prime concern – is a crucial task for the Salzburg Festival; Salzburg should always be a catalyst for renewal in terms of content, personnel and artists.**

8. The Salzburg Festival is firmly anchored in the city and province of Salzburg. In addition to its main cultural mission, the Festival is also very conscious of its economic significance for the city and province.

**The Salzburg Festival wants to continue as an important driving force in Salzburg: artistically, culturally and also economically, generating employment and incomes.**

9. The Salzburg Festival sees itself as a major employer: for its experienced and highly qualified permanent staff, for artists, and for the seasonal workforce active in a wide range of areas: the backstage and technical crew, staff for the production workshops and ticket office, ushers and security personnel.

**The Salzburg Festival wants to remain a model employer for its highly skilled members of staff.**

10. After the first hundred years of activity within its buildings, it is time for the Salzburg Festival to write the next chapter in its architectural history. The festival venues are in need of extensive renovation, reorganization and extensions in order to meet the challenges of the future in respect to staff safety, fire prevention, operational activities, working conditions for artists, and the standards which the audience rightly expects from a festival of world renown. The Festival Quarter with its historic buildings is unique in its architectural ensemble and distinctive location, thus forming the foundation for the special atmosphere that sets the Salzburg Festival apart.

**In addition to all its artistic, programmatic and organizational responsibilities, the Salzburg Festival sees the realization of major investment projects in the Festival Quarter, in cooperation with the federal government, province and city of Salzburg, as an essential goal for the next ten years.**

\*

**“An artwork is an organized dream,”** according to the Hungarian author György Konrad. The artwork that is realized in the form of a festival is such a complex and organized dream. The Salzburg Festival does not have to be constantly dreamed anew or reinvented. But it must always be guided into a new present, and this new present can only emerge from our recognition of the past.

For the Salzburger Festspielfonds and the board of directors, one hundred years of the Salzburg Festival is a joyous occasion and at the same time a mandate and a responsibility to continue in our work to preserve, strengthen and broaden the international significance of the Salzburg Festival.

**For their financial support, we thank**

The REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

The STATE OF SALZBURG

The CITY OF SALZBURG

The SALZBURG TOURISM PROMOTION FUND

The FRIENDS OF THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL



[www.salzburgfestival.at](http://www.salzburgfestival.at)