

## Press Release of the Salzburg Festival 2020

### Oper! Awards: Salzburg Festival Wins “Best Festival”



At the 2020 Oper! Awards, the Salzburg Festival was named “Best Festival”: Helga Rabl-Stadler and Markus Hinterhäuser. photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

(SF, 1 December 2020) The Salzburg Festival had reason to rejoice last night: at the 2020 Oper! Awards, it was named “Best Festival”. The Oper! Awards were initiated by the magazine *Oper!* and a selected circle of music critics, and were presented for the first time in 2019. This year’s award ceremony took place virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The **jury** issued the following statement regarding its decision in the “Best Festival” category:

“Art, according to the Festival’s founding father Max Reinhardt, is ‘a celestial body of its own’ – but one that ‘draws its light from the world of reality’. Confronted by a very real pandemic, the Salzburg Festival this year built on this insight. It declared art to be a ‘basic staple and central to the meaning of life’, deferred the decision about a would-be cancellation to the last possible starting date for rehearsals – and then went all in to make it all happen. Thus, the condensed 30 festival days became a beacon of happiness and lit up the entire culture business: yes, we can, despite everything else!” (Eleonore Büning)

“Thank you for this prize, which gives us strength in times of powerlessness. We accept it with gratitude as a second birthday gift. The first gift for our centenary was one we gave ourselves, by holding the Festival. For this, we are grateful to all our staff and all artists. Our artistic director Markus Hinterhäuser succeeded in presenting a programme which would have done the Festival proud even without the coronavirus pandemic. And Lukas Crepaz, our executive director, developed a prevention plan which enabled us to give 110 performances over 30 days without a single case of coronavirus. May the success of this year and this wonderful award give us energy for the 2021 Festival,” says Festival President **Helga Rabl-Stadler**.

“I am grateful for the honour of this award. We have been given this honour, which we accept on behalf of all our staff and all artists, for a summer which was different than we had imagined.

It was a summer which cost us much effort, but which was also worth any effort. All our work was done with the feeling that the Salzburg Festival must take place. Not just because of the 100-year anniversary, but because there is nothing more essential than calling people from all over the world together; people who listen to music, who watch a play, in order to create a precious community. This Festival was a very special one, as it created a true community of enthusiasts – among the artists, the audience and us. We were rewarded with such affection and empathy. The award gives us courage for what still lies ahead, and it should encourage anyone who is and will be faced with a similar situation. Thank you very much for this prize, which is an honour and a true joy,” says Artistic Director **Markus Hinterhäuser**.

The Festival is particularly pleased that “for its performances at the Salzburg Festival even during times of coronavirus” (thus the jury), the Vienna Philharmonic was named “Best Orchestra”. After all, the Vienna Philharmonic has proven once again this past summer that it is the artistic heart of the Salzburg Festival.

In 2019 The Salzburg Festival was named “Festival of the Year” by *Musical America*. It also won the distinction of “Best Opera Festival” at the 2013 Opera Awards in London.

Kind regards,

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