



100 JAHRE

SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE
17. Juli – 31. August 2021

MORTIER AWARDS In memoriam Gerard Mortier

The **Mortier Award for music theatre** and the **Mortier Next Generation Award** were established to draw inspiration for music theatre's present and future from the legacy of Gerard Mortier, the opera and festival administrator and former artistic director of the Salzburg Festival, who died in 2014. The award honours figures who, like Mortier, pursue an interdisciplinary approach to renewing the art form of opera. It is therefore fitting that the polymath **Alexander Kluge** will be presented with the 2021 Mortier Award.

The Next Generation Award, with a cash value of 30,000 Euro, goes to the German stage director **Ulrike Schwab** and is sponsored by the Friends of the Salzburg Festival. On the occasion of its centenary, the Salzburg Festival – to which during his tenure, Gerard Mortier gave many impulses still resonating today (1991-2001) – and the Friends Association are honouring the two laureates in a ceremony on 17 August. Following this event, artistic director Markus Hinterhäuser joins a discussion about the future outlook for music theatre with Asmik Grigorian, Ulrike Schwab and Franz Welser-Möst, moderated by Markus Thiel.

(Mortier Awards Ceremony and Roundtable · Main Auditorium of the University · 17 August 2021, 4 pm · Registration required via www.festspielfreunde.at)

“We are very grateful to the Association of Friends of the Salzburg Festival, which finances the Mortier Award. As so often, its contribution helps implement an issue central to the Salzburg Festival, turning it into reality,” says Festival President **Helga Rabl-Stadler**.

The Mortier Award was initiated in 2014 by Heinz Weyringer, artistic director of the Ring Award, a directing and stage competition, and Albrecht Thiemann, former managing editor of the international specialist journal *Opernwelt* (Berlin). Its first honouree was Gerard Mortier himself, the second Markus Hinterhäuser.

The Mortier Next Generation Award, which carries a cash value of 30,000 Euro, was founded by Serge Dorny, former artistic director of the Opéra de Lyon and artistic director of the Bavarian State Opera as of the 2021/22 season, as well as the initiators of the Mortier Award. Its first recipient was the Polish dramaturge and director Krystian Lada, who received the award in 2019 in Mortier's native city of Ghent. The Next Generation Award is also supported by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Berlin Institute of Advanced Study), which offers honourees a residence of several months (Mortier Next Generation Fellowship).

“To me, Gerard Mortier was always one of the great magicians of music theatre. In 2013 the idea emerged of creating a prize named after him, honouring outstanding personalities who were exemplary, uncompromising champions of innovative music theatre. Gerard Mortier was a clear choice for the first honouree, and would have accepted the prize personally in 2014, but sadly, it was not to be. When I received word of his death, my urge to name the prize ‘Mortier Award’ became all the greater. On the one hand to honour his life's work, and on the

other to extend his plea for permanent renewal into the future. The Next Generation Award is an essential part of the Mortier Awards – encouraging young theatre makers to risk the unknown, and to keep questioning the foundations of opera as an art form – in the spirit of Mortier,” says **Heinz Weyringer**.



Gerard Mortier was an “impresario of the world of European theatre” (*Deutschlandfunk Kultur*). For more than three decades, he headed renowned opera houses and festivals in Europe; from 1991 to 2001 he was artistic director of the Salzburg Festival. He was born on 25 November 1943 in Ghent. – Humanist education at the Jesuit college in Ghent. – Law and communication studies. – Assistant to the Flanders Festival directorate. – From 1973 to 1980 director of artistic operations at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, the Frankfurt Opera, the Hamburg State Opera and at the Opera Garnier Paris under Christoph von Dohnányi and Rolf Liebermann. When Mortier assumed his first artistic directorship at La Monnaie in Brussels in 1981, he was returning to his native Belgium with a firmly entrenched vision: to liberate opera from dead weight and rejuvenate it with new connotations. That became his mission. “Making theatre means breaking daily routine, questioning

the acceptance of economic, political and military violence as normalcy, awakening communities to questions of human existence which cannot be regulated via laws, and affirming that the world can be better than it is. Creating theatre, then, is a mission, almost a sacred office, without the need for religious revelation. Theatre is a human religion,” he noted in his *Dramaturgie einer Leidenschaft*.

Gerard Mortier not only placed the art form of opera at the heart of artistic debate, but also at the centre of socio-political discourse. His programming choices were nourished by the conviction that opera as an art form is tasked with conveying socially relevant questions – and he invariably located his music theatre projects within their social and topographical surroundings: whether in Brussels, in Salzburg, at the Ruhrtriennale, in Paris or finally in Madrid.

His appointment as artistic director of the Salzburg Festival on 1 September 1991 made Gerard Mortier Herbert von Karajan’s heir. The “new Salzburg“ proclaimed by Mortier pursued a policy of opening: towards a broader and more modern repertoire, towards perspectives of our times, even if they were occasionally controversial.



100 JAHRE

SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE
17. Juli – 31. August 2021

JURY OF THE MORTIER AWARDS

Heinz Weyringer
Albrecht Thiemann
Serge Dorny
Markus Hinterhäuser

Winner of the Mortier Award: Alexander Kluge

“When it comes to exploring the limitless narratives of our familiar, yet foreign ‘pluriverse’ with all senses, Alexander Kluge is in his element. Whether as an iconoclastic filmmaker or a writer and publisher at home in all media, whether as a narrator grounded in experience or a theorist driven by flights of fancy, he strolls through the arts, sciences and life, moving from one brilliant idea to the next. For almost seven decades, he has given us the miraculous fruits of his sharp, associative mind. His is an intellect blessed with emotions, which never seeks solace in the cloud-cuckoo-land of speculation, but pursues the dynamic, wonderfully convoluted stuff of reality. The inextricable interweaving of images, words and sounds, space and time inherent in this process also explains Alexander Kluge’s special interest in opera and music theatre. For this most complex form of (artistic) expression contains everything that has ever occupied this polymath’s mind. It is what opens our minds, making us receptive to the fullness of our precarious existence, to which we are all too often blind and deaf,” says **Albrecht Thiemann**.

Winner of the Mortier Next Generation Award: Ulrike Schwab

“Music theatre was already an ‘emotional powerhouse’ to Ulrike Schwab when she lent her soprano voice to the female figures she embodied on stage. Empathy has remained central to the director who has been questioning the operatic canon in her brilliantly idiosyncratic creations since 2013. Take Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, for example. The ‘debaucher’ is an impertinence, not as a scandalous macho, but as an amazingly multi-faceted, *giocoso* projection of promises of earthly pleasures. Ulrike Schwab has described this work as a ‘passion’, intelligently skipping and oscillating between languages and cultures, societies and genders, performance and procession. This attitude, passionately alive to the figures, and the instinct for the insight-provoking and enriching charm of sonic ambivalence, constitute Ulrike Schwab’s artistic hallmark. That is why Mozart, but also Donizetti, Verdi, Humperdinck and Prokofiev, to each of whom she has dedicated original projects, remain entirely themselves in her creative approach, while also remaining visible as contemporaries of the future.” **Albrecht Thiemann**.

ALEXANDER KLUGE



Alexander Kluge was born in Halberstadt in 1932 and studied law, history and church music in Marburg and Frankfurt am Main. In the early 1960s he became known as both a writer and a filmmaker. He was invited to meetings of Gruppe 47 (Group 47) and gave a reading there from his collection *Lebensläufe* (*Case Histories*) in 1962. In the same year he was a signatory to the Oberhausen Manifesto, which established the New German Cinema movement. In 1966 he

was the first German in the post-war era to receive the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival for his film *Abschied von gestern* (*Yesterday Girl*) with his sister Alexandra Kluge in the lead role. Together with Oskar Negt, he wrote *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (*Public Sphere and Experience*) and *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (*History and Obstinacy*) – two books that carry forward the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas) from a philosophical and sociological perspective. From 1988 Alexander Kluge was responsible for the so-called ‘arts windows’ presented on private TV channels such as RTL, Vox, Sat.1 and Swiss Television. This collaboration with artists, scientists, opera houses, filmmakers and writers resulted in around 2000 hours of programming over 30 years. At the beginning of the 21st century he returned to writing with his two-volume *Chronik der Gefühle* (*Chronicle of Feelings*). His most recent literary works include *Kongs große Stunde* (*Kong’s Big Moment*, 2015), *Russland-Kontainer* (*Russia-Container*, 2020), *Trotzdem* (*Nevertheless*, with Ferdinand von Schirach, 2020) and *Senkblei der Geschichten* (*Fathoming Narratives*, with Joseph Vogl, 2020).

The idea of collaboration between various disciplines and the principle of different art forms sharing a common public constitute the focus of his exhibitions, which have included *Gardens of Cooperation* at La Virreina in Barcelona (2017), *The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied* together with Thomas Demand and Anna Viebrock at the Fondazione Prada in Venice (2017), *Pluriverse* at the Museum Folkwang in Essen (2017) and at Belvedere 21 in Vienna (2018), *James Ensor & Alexander Kluge: Siècles noirs* at the Fondation Vincent van Gogh in Arles (2018), *The Power of Music – The Opera: Temple of Seriousness* at the Kunsthalle Weishaupt and Museum Ulm (2019) and *The Thin Ice of Civilization* with a nine-part installation relating to opera at the Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart (2020). – Given its nature as a total work of art, opera is of special importance to him for being the sole remaining form to unify into a cohesive whole, whereas history itself disintegrates into countless stories.

Alexander Kluge has received numerous awards for his body of literary work, including the Bavarian State Prize for Literature, the Theodor W. Adorno Prize and the Georg Büchner Prize. Together with Georg Baselitz, he has published *Weltverändernder Zorn. Nachricht von den Gegenfüßlern* (*World-Changing Rage – Dispatches from the Antipodeans*, 2017) and *Parsifal Kontainer* (*Parsifal Container*, Juli 2020).

His ‘speech about the century’ was a particularly noteworthy event at the Salzburg Festival in summer 2020.

ULRIKE SCHWAB



Ulrike Schwab is a music theatre director and soprano. She studied opera singing and music theatre directing at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin, where she began early on to explore avenues for new form and language in music theatre. After graduation, she increasingly focused on the overlapping areas between opera, acting and performance. Her engagements have included appearances at the Volksbühne in Berlin, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Sophiensaele in Berlin, the Neuköllner Oper Berlin, the Musiktheater im Revier in

Gelsenkirchen and the Kampnagel in Hamburg.

Ulrike Schwab's work as a director includes Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Schlossoper Haldenstein in Chur, the music theatre evening *La commedia è finita* (loosely based on Donizetti's opera *Don Pasquale*) at the RAW site in Berlin and the world premiere of Malte Giesen's *Tako Tsubo* as part of the 'New Scenes' series in the Tischlerei studio of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. She developed her own version of Gluck's opera *Armida* for the Neuköllner Oper Berlin, where she also staged the world premieres of *Giovanni. Eine Passion (Giovanni. A Passion)*, *Wolfskinder (Wolf Children)* and *Ist die Welt auch noch so schön (As Beautiful as the World May Be)* to much acclaim. At the Radialsystem V in Berlin, Ulrike Schwab directed the world premiere of *Whole body like gone*. Her production of *The Love for Three Oranges* based on Sergei Prokofiev was shown in the Werkstatt studio of the Berlin State Opera. She will return to the children's opera of the Berlin State Opera with her own version of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* in May 2021.

From December 2020 to March 2021, Ulrike Schwab was a Mortier Next Generation Fellow at the Berliner Wissenschaftskolleg (Berlin Institute for Advanced Study).

Please address any requests for further information to Albrecht Thiemann, spokesman of the Mortier Award Initiative: albrecht.thiemann@mailbox.org

Photo Service: <https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/presse/fotoservice>

Alexander Kluge © Markus Kirchgessner

Ulrike Schwab © Dornhege Reyes

Gerard Mortier © Uwe Sickinger