

## Johan Simons

Director

*During the whole two hours it is stone-still at the Münchner Kammerspiele.  
Then, standing ovation*

Tagesspiegel, HIOB, Münchner Kammerpsiele

Johan Simons was born in 1946 and grew up in the Netherlands. Aged 7, he lived through the disastrous floods of 1953, an experience which has influenced his entire artistic career. After training as a dancer at the Rotterdam Academy and as an actor at the Theatre Academy in Maastricht, he became an actor of The Hague Comedie in 1976. It was there he directed his first production. Simons took up the position of Artistic Director of Bochumer Schauspielhaus at the beginning of the 2018-19 season, and was Artistic Director of NTGent 2015-2018.

Simons was Artistic Director of the Ruhrtriennale 2015-2017. In 2015 he directed the world première of *Accattone* (Pasolini text and the music of J S Bach placed in a new relation to each other) with Philippe Herreweghe, and *Das Rheingold* with Teodor Currentzis in the Jahrhunderthalle Bochum. In 2016 he directed *Alceste* with René Jacobs, as well as *Die Fremden*, a musical theatre piece based on Camus' *L'étranger* and including music by György Ligeti and Claude Vivier. This was followed in 2017 with the world premiere of a new music theatre work – *Cosmopolis*, based on the novel by leading American novelist Don DeLillo, with music by Eric Schleichim and his ensemble B!ndman.

Other operatic productions to date include *Simon Boccanegra* in Paris, *Boris Godunov* in Madrid, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Dutch National Opera and *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* for the Salzburg Festival. He is also in demand as a guest director at German-language theatres, including the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, the Munich Kammerspiele and the Vienna International Festival. In the 2019-20 season he directs Don Carlos, to open the new season at Opera Vlaanderen.

Recent theatre work includes *Radetzky Marsch* by Joseph Roth at the Vienna Burgtheater (2017), *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand at the Thalia Theatre Hamburg, and *Penthesilea* at the 2018 Salzburg Summer Festival.

Johan Simons was director of the Münchner Kammerspiele from 2010 to the end of the 2014-15 season. During his tenure several of his productions (*Cleansed/Crave/4.48 Psychose* and *Die Straße. Die Stadt. Der Überfall*) were invited to the Theatertreffen. Other work in Munich includes *Winterreise* (Elfriede Jelinek), *King Lear* (Shakespeare), *Uncle Vanya* (Chekhov) and *Danton's Death* (George Büchner).

In 2013, Theater Heute magazine voted the Münchner Kammerspiele Theatre of the Year and in 2014 Simons was awarded the German Theatre Prize 'Der Faust' for his production of *Danton's Death*. That same year he was also awarded the Berliner Theaterpreis and The Netherlands' highest artistic honour, the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Prize, for his services to theatre in his own and other countries.

Johan Simons and Paul Koek founded the Theatergroep Hollandia in 1985, which in 2001 merged with Zuidelijk Toneel in Eindhoven to form ZT/Hollandia; Simons was Artistic Director until the company was dissolved in 2005. In 2005 he was asked to provide the Publiekstheater in Belgium with a new artistic image – he renamed the theatre NTGent, and during his years leading this company (2005-2010), as well as featuring the work of young theatre directors, Simons entered into co-productions with the Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Volksbühne Berlin and Opéra national de Paris (Bastille). In 2015 he returned to take up this position of Artistic Director once again.