Alexander Polzin

Sculptor, Painter, Stage Designer and Director

Alexander Polzin was born in East Berlin in 1973 and completed his training as a stonemason before beginning an international career as a sculptor and painter. His sculptures and paintings have been seen around the world, and he has an interest in the art of monuments in public spaces. He collaborates with writers, composers, musicians, choreographers and scientists, and in the last decade his artistic curiosity has led him towards stage design for dance, opera, and theatre. He has also taken his vision further in serving as a director.

He is currently preparing stage designs for Verdi's Rigoletto, which opens at Israel Opera in July 2024. His most recent stage design was for Mitridate (Malmö Opera/The Royal Theatre in Copenhagen/Concerto Copenhagen/Skånes Dansteater), an innovative three-way creative collaboration with director Ralf Pleger and choreographer Fernando Melo. Polzin first worked with Pleger on Wagner's Tristan und Isolde at La Monnaie in May 2019 (later staged at Teatro Comunale di Bologna in January 2020), collaborating on the artistic concept as well as designing the sets.

Previous stage design includes Verdi's Aida at La Monnaie (2017), Gluck's Iphigénie en Tauride for Grand Théâtre de Genève (2015), Wagner's Parsifal for the Salzburg Festival and Beijing Music Festival (2013) and Verdi's Falstaff at L'Opéra des Nations (2016). Polzin has designed the sets for four productions at TeatroReal,Madrid,includingSotelo'sElpúblico (2015),Wagner'sLohengrin(2013),Rihm'sTheConquest of Mexico (2013) and Jurado's La Pagina en blanco (2011).

As well as working with opera, Polzin has created visual representations of orchestral repertoire, including for Bernstein's The Age of Anxiety with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and Grieg's Peer Gynt for Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, both in 2014. He made his directing debut at the Tiroler Festspiele Erl with Fidelio in 2014.Polzin has co-created various projects, including The Art of Being Human with viol player Laurence Dreyfus and choreographer Sommer Ulrickson, exploring how music, dance and visual art can work together. The project will premiere at the Boulez Saal in March 2023. He also co-created Love in Fragments, working alongside cellist Alban Gerhardt, violinist Gergana Gergova and Ulrickson. Inspired by Roland Barthes' book A Lover's Discourse, the artists investigate aspects oflove through music, movement and art. The production premiered in 2019 at the 92Y in New York.

As a sculptor and painter, Polzin's works have been exhibited in galleries and arts venues around the world, including the Getty Center, San Francisco International Arts Festival, Madrid's Teatro Real and Berlin's Institute of Advanced Studies. His representations of the human form and the subtexts they contain are ideally suited to public spaces and have been seen in a vast array ofcivic centres and galleries. His public sculptures include The Fallen Angel for Collegium Helveticum, Zürich; Giordano Bruno Monument in Berlin's Potsdamer Platz; Socrates for Tel Aviv University, The Couple, for Opéra national de Paris and his memorial sculpture to Paul Celan in the Anne Frank Garden, Paris.

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