

Orpha Phelan

Stage Director



“Orpha Phelan’s production packs a strong emotional punch.”

Opera Now

Irish stage director **Orpha Phelan’s** award-winning productions include Bernstein’s *A Quiet Place* at Opera Zuid in Maastricht which was awarded the prestigious Place de l’Opera prize of Best Opera 2018 in The Netherlands. For two years running she was the recipient of Denmark’s most prestigious arts prize, the Reumert Award for Best Opera Production *Powder Her Face* in 2016 and *Dead Man Walking* in 2017, both for The Royal Danish Opera. Her production of *La Cenerentola* for Irish National Opera was shortlisted for the Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards Best Production of 2020.

Recently she directed the world premiere of *Raising Icarus* by Michael Zev Gordon for the Barber Institute in Birmingham, *Don Pasquale* for Irish National Opera, and Felicien David’s rarity *Lalla-Roukh* at the Wexford Festival, which received four nominations in The Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards 2022, including Best Opera and Best Director.

In the 2023-24 season, Orpha returned to Irish National Opera to direct *La Bohème* before bringing the production to Opera de Montpellier. This coming season includes a new production of Donizetti’s *Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali* for Wexford Festival.

Orpha has enjoyed tremendous successes in Sweden at Malmö Opera with *Fiddler on the Roof*, *La bohème* (released by Naxos on DVD), *Les Contes d’Hoffman* and *Jenůfa* (released by Arthaus Musik on DVD). Notable projects include her highly acclaimed production of *Billy Budd* for Opera North and *Fidelio* for Longborough Festival Opera. She made her French debut in 2018/19 at Opera National de Lorraine with *Wuthering Heights*.

Other notable engagements include *Così fan Tutte* with Opera Theatre Company and *L’Orfeo* at The Barbican, a collaboration with Richard Egarr and The Academy of Ancient Music. Her staging of the UK premiere of Jonathan Harvey’s *Wagner Dream*, also at The Barbican, marked her first collaboration with Martyn Brabbins and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She has directed *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for Opera North and Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House, under the baton of Richard Bonyngé.

Orpha has worked on several productions at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, Opera North and Wexford Opera. She has directed workshops for Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Aldeburgh and Almeida Opera and will be working on a production with the Royal Northern College of Music in 2025. She was awarded the Audience Prize (Ring Award 2005), for her concept of *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Oper Graz, Austria and Wagner Forum Graz; she was also a winner in the European Opera Directors’ Award 2003 for her concept of *Hans Heiling* for Strasbourg Opera in association with Opera Europa.

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