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# Deborah Warner

Stage Director

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## **Britten's Peter Grimes** **Royal Ballet & Opera, London (May 2026)**

"This first revival of Deborah Warner's production only gains in horrifying intensity. *Grimes* is a tragedy of alienation, but this staging is just as interested in the crowd as the outcast, and the effect is chilling."

- **The Arts Desk**

"Benjamin Britten's opera is reimaged in gritty and grisly fashion in Deborah Warner's powerful new take."

- **Evening Standard**

"Beauty and terror in Warner's topical staging."

Warner's production opened in Madrid in 2021 and first came to London the following year, when the thuggish villagers brandishing flags in the mob scene felt topical; they feel even more so now. [...] It's in the contrast between the ordinariness of the plastic crates and fishing paraphernalia on stage and the grace of the aerialist's movements, for example, that Warner finds insight. The anachronism in *Grimes* having a small boy as an apprentice, and the contradictions in the way the boy relates to him, with fear and yet occasionally with childlike tenderness, seem to matter less than the complexities of human nature that those contradictions suggest."

- **The Guardian**

"Revival preserves its visceral punch."

- **The Stage**

"When Deborah Warner's gritty production of Benjamin Britten's post-war opera *Peter Grimes* opened at the Royal Opera House in 2022, it was praised as a truthful, powerfully updated vision of Britten's unflinching portrait of man against society. Now it returns stronger than ever, the cast almost unchanged but with even greater impact under the galvanising baton of Jakub Hrůša, Covent Garden's new music director: the precision and tension of his reading reasserts the status of *Peter Grimes* as one of the greatest music-dramas of our time."

The success of this *Grimes* and of Warner's earlier *Billy Budd* makes me look forward with impatience to her new staging of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which has just premiered in Madrid: her ability to cut to the heart of these works is remarkable."

- **The Telegraph**

"Deborah Warner's production revived at the Royal Opera House offers a portrait of a dirty, disordered and rather plausible England."

- **The Times**

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## **Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream** **Teatro Real, Madrid (Mar 2026)**

"In this production, Warner once again displays her undeniable theatrical talent and her affinity with Britten.

Warner's theatrical language invokes the title at its most literal: darkness and the world of dreams, leaving to one side any possible interpretation of the subtext of Shakespeare's play. It is an eminently aesthetic and visual spectacle. Her night is a friendly and hypnotic place, peopled with lovely, distorted elements of nature which, far from proving unsettling, provide endless touches of wonder, thus both continuing and contrasting with the darkness of her aforementioned stagings, respectively threatening or tortured. The direction of actors and dancers, studied right down to the smallest detail, also strives for overwhelming beauty. The organic choreography and a perfectly-judged impression of magical weightlessness, embodied above all in a duplicated Puck – reciting on the ground and flying through the air – are memorable. An outstanding proposal, dominated by evocative stagecraft, appealing to the senses rather than inviting reflection."

- **Bachtrack**

"In Warner's interpretation, the enchanted forest appears as an unsettlingly modern space where the boundaries between imagination, theater, and reality dissolve, immersing the audience completely in Britten's shifting worlds."

- **Operawire**

## **Berg's Wozzeck** **Royal Opera House, London (May 2023)**

"These days, interpretations of the opera tend to lean towards either the psychological or sociological, but in her new Covent Garden production Deborah Warner finds a perhaps ideal balance.

One of Britain's leading stage directors, Warner is equally at home working in opera as in theatre, and the two converge here in Berg's music drama. She has staged *Wozzeck* before, making her operatic debut with it at Opera North in 1993, and if anything this new interpretation feels more timeless."

- **John Allison, The Daily Telegraph**

"This *Wozzeck* comes soon after Warner's *Peter Grimes* in this house, and it shares that show's stark vision of the destitute and the marginalised, as well as the director's minutely calibrated dramaturgy. The swift scene changes are well handled by designer Hyemi Shin, whose grungy, vaguely contemporary settings are offset with expressionist touches: the blood moon, a forest of bare trees. If the staging is not the "radically new vision" of the opera that Warner says she set out to make, it is as unsparing as the work needs to be."

- **Neil Fisher, The Times**