

## Guaranteed success across Europe for the opera pit and new music

### The 2017/18 season of Coburg's General Music Director Roland Kluttig



Just a few weeks ago, he gave two national premières in Luxembourg with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg: Morton Feldman's only opera, "Neither", written to 87 words by Samuel Beckett, and Chaya Czernowin's new cello concerto (soloist: Séverine Ballon). In February, he will conduct the British première of Aureliano Cattaneo's violin concerto (soloist: Irvine Arditti) with the Philharmonia Orchestra as part of the London concert series "Music of Today", curated by Unsuk Chin. And in May/June 2018, as an operatic conductor, Roland Kluttig, together with the celebrated director David Pountney, will bring to the stage three short operas by Kurt Weill and Arnold Schoenberg in the three performance venues of the French Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg, Colmar and Mulhouse. Alongside his unquestioned expertise in the field of opera, the Coburg general music director has long since also established himself internationally as a much sought-after conductor for recent and even brand-new symphonic literature. And in Germany, he is preceded by a reputation as a "centre of power and gravitation" (concerti) in the field of music

theatre as well, as was recently shown once more by Kluttig's nomination as conductor of the year for 2017 by the magazine "Opernwelt". His "sensitivity, precision and passion" make him "one of the biggest talents among German general music directors" (FAZ) and allow this former scholarship holder from the Herbert von Karajan Foundation to raise every opera and concert performance to an especially high level.

Since Roland Kluttig took up his position in Coburg in 2010, it has developed into a major hub of the German opera industry that now also regularly draws international attention. For example, writing about Janáček's "Cunning Little Vixen" in February 2017, the Opera Magazine noted that "Kluttig still managed to convey much of its mysterious beauty and big-hearted ardour." Kluttig, a former assistant to Lothar Zagrosek, has also created a new highlight in the current schedule of the Coburg Landestheater with "**Tosca**" (last performance 28 January 2018). At the première, the audience applauded for 12 minutes without interruption, with the "Bayerische Rundschau" later writing: "The decisive guarantee of success is at the conductor's desk: General Music Director Roland Kluttig subtly explores the dynamics, tone colours and expressive nuances in Puccini's score and inspires the orchestra to a profoundly intense interpretation."

On April 22, 2018, the première of the Coburg production of **Antonin Dvořák's "Rusalka"** is to be presented: *"That is a favourite piece of mine – I think it is one of the most underestimated operas there is. I will be working again with Tobias Heyder (production) and Lolita Hindenberg (stage), the same proven team as for the English double presentation we did in 2016 ('Dido and Aeneas' and 'Riders on the Sea'). In the last three performances (13 May, 10 June, 27 June), Betsy Horne will be taking on the title role. I have worked with her in major soprano roles here for half a decade, and now she is getting engagements with the big houses in Berlin and Leipzig."*

Much earlier in the year, on 29 January 2018, the revival of **Mozart's "Magic Flute"** in the 2004 production by Peter Konwitschny will be launched under Kluttig's musical direction at Oper Stuttgart: *"[Peter Konwitschny]*

*was an important role model for me when I was young. He was involved in a lot of joint projects with my father (the conductor Christian Kluttig) in the 80s and will be there again for the rehearsals.*” When first presented in Stuttgart, the production received high acclaim from music critics. The “Zeit” wrote: “In his colourful human theatre, Peter Konwitschny eschews neither revue nor farce, something which the composer might, however, have enjoyed more than other recent or not quite so recent interpretations ... During the fire-and-water test, the last film runs. A life: birth, a lot of fuss, and then a tomb. That’s how quickly it happens, is what Konwitschny’s humour, now again very serious, tells us. People prove themselves and, ideally, do what they can. Konwitschny can do a lot.” The revival will feature outstanding soloists, including Lenneke Ruiten: “*The role of Pamina will be sung by this magnificent Dutch soprano, who will also take part in our Weill-Schoenberg project in France,*” says Kluttig.

In May and June 2018, Roland Kluttig will take musical charge eight times of a special operatic presentation at the French Opéra National du Rhin. The programme includes a trilogy of **Kurt Weill’s “Mahagonny-Songspiel”, Arnold Schoenberg’s “Pierrot Lunaire” and Kurt Weill’s “Die Sieben Todsünden” (“The Seven Deadly Sins”)**. British director David Pountney, who was in charge of the Bregenz Festival for a decade and has won the Austrian Music Theatre Prize among other awards, will direct the production. “*This is our first collaboration and I am greatly looking forward to it. The roles will be shared between two very different singers: Lenneke Ruiten and Lauren Mitchell, the winner of the ‘Cardiff Singer of the World’ competition in 2005.*” This opera presentation can be experienced at all three venues of the Opéra National under Kluttig’s baton: in Strasbourg (première 20 May, then 22, 24, 26, 28 May), then in Colmar (5 June) and finally in Mulhouse (13 + 15 June).

“*2018 is a kind of Kurt Weill year for me,*” Roland Kluttig quips in view of the final Coburg season première on 22 June 2018: **Kurt Weill’s “Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny”** in the production by Konstanze Lauterbach. This work is a masterly and mocking satire of bourgeois morals in a fictive, modern Sodom and Gomorrah, whose first performance in Leipzig in 1930 triggered a substantial scandal fuelled by Nazi provocateurs.

Outside of the orchestra pit as well, the Coburg general music director is also intensely active and much in demand, as is shown not only by the above-mentioned engagements in Luxembourg and London, but also his guest appearances with the **MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra** in Suhl (3 February 2018) with the Brahms Violin Concerto (soloist: Marc Bouchkov) and the Symphony No. 4 by the same composer, and with the **Munich Symphony Orchestra** in two open-air concerts in Munich (7 July, Brunnenhof) and Weilburg (3 August, Schlosshof). And then there are also his symphony concerts with his in-house ensemble, the **Philharmonic Orchestra of the Landestheater Coburg**: on 4 June, there is a specially-conceived concert with the “Pelléas et Mélisande” versions by Gabriel Fauré and Arnold Schoenberg and Alexander Zemlinsky’s “Maeterlinck Songs” (soloist: Ute Doering-Florey): “*The programme revolves completely around the poet Maurice Maeterlinck, who was very popular at the turn of the century and is today seen as the main representative of Symbolism. The works by Zemlinsky and Schoenberg have never before been played in Coburg, and the outstanding reduced version by Wellesz, a pupil of Schoenberg, makes the latter’s ‘Pelleas und Melisande’ performable by a normal symphony orchestra.*” Finally, on 9 July, Roland Kluttig will conduct Anton Bruckner’s monumental Symphony No. 8 in E Minor to close the symphonic season in Coburg, thus taking on no less than the “Everest among symphonies” (R. Osborne).

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