

Press Release

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Prolight + Sound 2020: 'Opus – German Stage Prize' for Rigoletto in Bregenz

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A version of one of the most popular Italian operas that redefines the limits of the possible has been enchanting visitors to the 'Seebühne' (Lake stage) in Bregenz since the beginning of the 2019 season. The production of Rigoletto by Munich-based director Philipp Stölzl has been selected for this year's 'Opus – German Stage Award'. The centrepiece of the opulent and technically elaborate set are the moveable parts of a colossal clown, which reflects the fate of Rigoletto. Another part of the set, a tethered balloon, floats up to 45 metres above Lake Constance.

The presentation of the Opus has been part of the Prolight + Sound trade fair in Frankfurt since 2002. The award is one of the most important distinctions for outstanding stage productions and honours extraordinary achievements in the use of technology for the settings of theatre productions, concerts, open-air events, etc. The jury and the trustees of the award comprise representatives of the German Media and Event Technology Association (VPLT), the European Association of Event Centres (EVVC) and other experts from the sector, as well as representatives of the trade press and Messe Frankfurt. The presentation ceremony will be held during an evening event during Prolight + Sound on 2 April 2020.

Rigoletto: Philipp Stölzl brings a giant clown to life

A 35-tonne moving head with a removable nose, a 338 square metre collar controlled by a cable winch, two movable hands made of steel, wood and polystyrene, a tethered balloon filled with 1,300 cubic metres of helium: alone the dimensions of the set are breath-taking. And no compromises have been made when it comes to the event technology, too: over 300 spotlights, 60 of them moving lights, ensure the right atmosphere while the total output of the stage's sophisticated sound systems amounts to no less than 220,000 watts. Nevertheless, the bubbling, artistic imagination of director and stage designer Philipp Stölzl was the decisive factor in the choice of Rigoletto in Bregenz as this year's Opus winner. Thus, the jury was highly impressed not only by the extremely sophisticated hydraulic control of the life-like clown parts but also, in particular, by the integration of the opera dramaturgy in the technical aspects. In Bregenz, the technology is not just there for technology's sake but goes hand-in-hand with the implementation of an artistic idea.

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Rigoletto is the result of a process that took three years from the planning stage to the final corrections. Just building the stage took ten months and involved no less than 46 equipment suppliers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The target-oriented collaboration between the various technological disciplines has produced an impressive, all-embracing holistic musical and theatrical experience. Philipp Stölzl and his team took a calculated risk in scenic, artistic and technical terms. And mastered it in an outstanding way.



The opulent production of Rigoletto brings the parts of colossal clown to life

In its first season in Bregenz, Rigoletto was a huge success with capacity audiences throughout. Stölzl's gigantic and colourful spectacle begins its second season on 23 July 2020.

Further information about Prolight + Sound can be found at www.prolight-sound.com.

Background information on Messe Frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With more than 2,600* employees at 30 locations, the company generates annual sales of around €733* million. We have close ties with our industry sectors and serve our customers' business interests efficiently within the framework of our Fairs & Events, Locations and Services business fields. One of the Group's key USPs is its closely knit global sales network, which extends throughout the world. Our comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services. Headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com

* provisional figures 2019

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