

Annilese Miskimmon - Biography

Annilese Miskimmon was born in Belfast and holds both British and Irish nationality. She has a M.A (Cantab) in English Literature from Christ's College, Cambridge and graduated in Arts Management from City University at the Barbican, London.

In 2005 she became the Artistic Director of Opera Theatre Company - the National Touring Opera of Ireland- while still maintaining a freelance international directing career.

Glyndebourne Festival and Tour appointed her Consultant Associate Director from 2002-2005.

She has worked extensively in the largest international opera houses including Opera National de Bordeaux; Opera Bologna; La Monnaie, Brussels; Le Chatelet, Paris; Canadian Opera Company, Toronto; San Francisco Opera; Den Norske Opera, Oslo; Oper Frankfurt; Nationale Reisopera, Netherlands; English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival and Welsh National Opera.

Conductors she has worked with include; Leo Hussian, Christian Curnyn, Simon Rattle, Vladimir Jurowski, Mark Elder, John Eliot Gardiner, Leonard Slatkin, Andrew Davis, Paul Daniel, Rinaldo Alessandrini and Carlo Rizzi.

She works regularly with BBC Radio 3, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Concert Orchestra in the Barbican and at the Proms. She is interviewed and commentates on opera regularly on national and international television and radio. Her *La Traviata* for Welsh National Opera was the subject of a BBC documentary series.

Future plans include *La Traviata* for Scottish Opera and *Falstaff* at Opera Holland Park. Her Buxton Festival production of Thomas's *Mignon* is one of 3 nominations for the prestigious South Bank Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2012.

In summer 2011 her productions of Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz* at Opera Holland Park in London and Thomas's *Mignon* at Buxton Festival were critically acclaimed as landmark productions in restoring neglected repertoire to the operatic canon and were included as highlights of the operatic year in both *The Independent* and *The Observer* newspapers.

Her hugely successful production of Weber's *Der Freischutz* opened in Salzburg's Landestheatre and her production of Gounod's *Romeo et Juliet* sold out Opera Ireland's season in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.

Her work in musicals includes Bernstein's *On the Town* for BBC Concert Orchestra/Paul Daniel at the Royal Festival Hall in London. She also directed the world premiere of Roger Waters of Pink Floyd's French Revolution based musical *Ca Ira* in Rome.

Her commitment to new work includes the Irish, U.K and French premiere of the Russian Grigory Frid's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. After an acclaimed Irish tour the production was funded by Culture Ireland (the state agency for the promotion of Irish art worldwide) to travel to France, Belgium and the U.K. Previously Culture Ireland has funded her work to travel to the UK, mainland Europe and the USA.

The British Council funded her to direct *Le nozze di Figaro*, at Beijing Music Conservatory with Welsh National Opera.

Other diverse projects include Weill's *Der Protagonist*/Royal Palace and John Cage's *Songbooks* for the BBC Symphony Orchestra/Slatkin at the Barbican.

Her critically acclaimed work has been nominated for awards including the South Bank Sky Arts Award, Royal Philharmonic Society, Canadian Dora, Guardian Theatre, Irish Times and Manchester Evening News Theatre awards. She was awarded the Margot Simon Award by Glyndebourne in recognition of her professional achievements with the company. She was nominated for the 2011 Leonardo da Vinci International Art Award.

She has worked extensively with young professionals and students in Ireland (including at the Royal Irish Academy of Music where she has directed *La Finta Giardiniera*, *Così fan Tutte* and *Gianni Schicchi*) and in the UK (at the National Opera Studio, British Youth Opera, the Royal Opera House Jette Parker Scheme) and abroad at Le Chatelet, Paris.

She has successfully combined her international main-scale directing work with the highest standards of touring and site-specific opera that is the core of OTC's relationship with their audience- now the largest of any opera company on the island. It is this achievement that has led to Opera Now magazine's declaring that OTC is "Ireland's premier opera company."

Recently her productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Romeo et Juliet*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Handel's *Alcina* were nominated for the Irish Times Best Opera Production. OTC has been the only opera company repeatedly awarded Culture Ireland grants to take up international invitations to tour. In 2010, her dedication to young professional talent was also recognised with a nomination for the Irish Times Judges Special Award for Commitment to Irish Talent.

She created the OTC Young Associate Artists Programme, the only one of its kind in Ireland. This has identified and supported young Irish singers at the beginning of the career in all areas of professional life. Graduates of the programme have been given the tools to achieve places at the top vocal schools such as Juilliard in New York and the Royal Academy, Guildhall and National Opera Studio in London and also work with companies such as Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

During her tenure she has developed innovative productions alongside outreach and community projects with schools, colleges, older people, young professional artists and leading social and educational justice organisations such as An Cosán in Dublin. Her site-specific productions of *Pelleas et Melisande* (in Dublin City Hall's Georgian rotunda) and *Fidelio* (in the Victorian Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin) have won widespread acclaim for their artistic achievement. In 2009 she was invited by Guinness to celebrate their 250th anniversary with a production of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in their Storehouse in Dublin, the most visited tourist attraction in the country.

International work with young industry professionals includes that with the young singers at the National Opera Studio in London, Irish Vocal Masterclasses and Floral Opera; and with young designers at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Other outreach work includes numerous school/college projects with the education departments at WNO and Glyndebourne including two devised pieces for young people in conjunction with Le Chatelet, Paris.

She is an active member of Opera Europa, establishing the European Opera Day nationally for Ireland.

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