

Press release

27 January 2021

Joana Maria Gorvin Prize goes to Andrea Breth

The director Andrea Breth is receiving the 2020 Joana Maria Gorvin Prize. Awarded every five years by the Akademie der Künste on behalf of the Joana Maria Gorvin Foundation, the prize recognises the “outstanding achievement of a female theatre artist in the German-speaking world”. Its founder Maximilian B. Bauer, Joana Maria Gorvin’s husband, has stipulated that the jury be made up of five male members of the Performing Arts Section. The 2020 jury comprised Jürgen Flimm, Christian Grashof, Volker Ludwig, Klaus Völker and Jossi Wieler.

After the previous winners Pina Bausch (1995), Anny Schlemm (2000), Anja Silja (2005), Jutta Lampe (2010) and Kirsten Dene (2015), this is the first time a theatre director will be honoured. The jury justifies its choice as follows:

"Andrea Breth, who can look back on a goal-driven but never opportunistically ambitious career, is a theatrewoman who impressively succeeds in making theatre present. In her productions, she brings the past into the present and anchors the present in the past in order to also envisage future events and to assert theatre as a place of dreaming. As a director, she gives everything to her actors; the actors are not vicarious agents of a directorial style; when she has done a thorough job, the traces of her precise work, work that is always unreservedly committed to her feelings, are obliterated.

The prize is endowed with EUR 10,000. A public ceremony is scheduled to take place in early September at the Akademie der Künste in Hanseatenweg.

Andrea Breth, born in Rieden in 1952, grew up in Darmstadt. While studying literature in Heidelberg, she was assistant director at the theatre there from 1972 to 1973, before moving to Bremen with the artistic director Peter Stoltzenberg, where she staged her first production, *Die verzauberten Brüder* by Evgeny Schwarz, in 1975. This was followed by directing work in Wiesbaden, Bochum and Hamburg, at the Freie Volksbühne Berlin in 1980, an engagement at the Theater Freiburg from 1983 to 1985 – and with Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba* in 1985 her first invitation to the Theatertreffen and selection as Director of the Year in the critics’ poll of *Theater heute*. She staged productions at the Schauspielhaus Bochum from 1986 to 1989, and at the Burgtheater in Vienna from 1990 to 1992. She was invited to the Theatertreffen with *South* by Julien Green in 1987, with Gorky’s *The Last Ones* (both Bochum) in 1990, and with O’Casey’s *The End of the Beginning* (Vienna) again in 1992. Breth was artistic director of the Schaubühne from 1992 to 1997, in-house director from 1999 to 2006 and subsequently a regular guest at the Burgtheater Vienna, and at the Salzburg Festival as well from

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2002. By 2005, five more of her directing works had been selected for the Theatertreffen, after *Last Summer in Chulimsk* by Alexander Vampilov (Berlin 1993) some of the productions of classic works that have shaped her oeuvre: *Hedda Gabler* (Berlin, 1994), *Uncle Vanya* (Berlin, 1999), *Emilia Galotti* (Vienna, 2003) and *Don Carlos* (Vienna, 2005). In 2000 she made her debut as an opera director in Leipzig with Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Breth is currently directing in Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt, Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence, at the Ruhrtriennale, in Stuttgart, Brussels and Berlin, where her most recent productions have been *Life x 3* by Yasmina Reza at the Berliner Ensemble and *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* by Alban Berg at the Staatsoper. Her previous awards include the Fritz Kortner Prize in 1987, four Nestroys, most recently in 2019 for her life's work, the Theaterpreis Berlin in 2006, the Schiller Prize in 2015 and the FAUST Theatre Prize (Best Direction of Musical Theatre) in 2015. She has received the Austrian Cross of Honour for Art and Science 1st Class as well as the Grand Order of Merit and the Grand Cross of Merit with a Star of the Federal Republic of Germany. Breth has been a member of the Order Pour le mérite since 2018 and a member of the Akademie der Künste since 1992.

Joana Maria Gorvin, born in 1922 in Sibiu (Hermannstadt), Romania, she attended the drama school of the Berlin State Theatre under Gustaf Gründgens from 1938 onwards and, after a first engagement in Potsdam, was also admitted to the State Theatre ensemble in 1943. There she met the director Jürgen Fehling, with whom she shared a close artistic and personal relationship until his death in 1968. After 1945 she performed in Berlin, first at the Hebbel Theatre, then at the Schiller and Schlossparktheater, under the direction of Fehling, O.E. Hasse, Fritz Kortner and Karl-Heinz Stroux in the leading plays of Western post-war drama. She often acted in Vienna in the 1950s (also obtaining Austrian citizenship in 1955), and with Gustaf Gründgens in Hamburg in the 1960s. Her last major role was in *Schlusschor* by Botho Strauss at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz in Berlin in 1992. Joana Maria Gorvin was married to Maximilian B. Bauer from 1971. She was a member of the Akademie der Künste from 1979 until her death on 2 September 1993 in Klosterneuburg, Austria.

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