

Press release, June 26, 2017

Rolando Villazón named Artistic Director of Salzburg Mozart Week

Villazón plans first *Mozart Week* for 2019

Rolando Villazón is the new Artistic Director of the Salzburg *Mozart Week*. The internationally celebrated opera singer, stage director and author takes over the direction of the renowned festival on July 1, 2017 and combines his international activities as the Mozarteum's Mozart Ambassador with the planning and realization of the *Mozart Week* in an ideal fashion. The first *Mozart Week* entirely programmed by Villazón takes place in 2019. His contract initially runs until 2023, to include five *Mozart Weeks*.

Says Rolando Villazón:

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart is one of the dearest friends of humanity as a whole. No other composer is so equally admired and beloved. I feel joyful, honored and grateful to assume the enormous responsibility of serving the great Master as the new Artistic Director of the most renowned Mozart festival in the world, the Mozart Week. That this happens in Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace and the city that has had such a wonderful impact on my life and career makes this adventure even more special. Viva Mozart!

Johannes Honsig-Erlenburg, President of the International Mozarteum Foundation, underlines the special relationship between the Mozarteum Foundation and the new Artistic Director of the *Mozart Week*:

Mozart and Villazón – this is probably the most unique and at once the most heartfelt and exciting relationship the Mozarteum Foundation could hope for. What an incredibly opportunity to re-discover Mozart in all his diversity and depth. We are grateful to Rolando Villazón for embarking on this joint adventure with his extraordinary reputation, his versatile musicianship and his courage, and are looking forward to a new era in and with the Mozarteum Foundation.

Rolando Villazón has been engaging intensively with Mozart's works and life for over half a decade. In addition to performing in staged productions in Salzburg, Milan, Vienna, Berlin and London he has recorded the complete concert arias for tenor and performed them on a European concert tour. He is the initiator and artistic driving force behind Deutsche Grammophon's acclaimed "Mozart Cycle", which includes Mozart's last seven operas conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and has received multiple Grammy-nominations and many other accolades.

Rolando Villazón burst on the international opera scene with his win in 1999's Operalia competition and has since built a uniquely versatile artistic career. He is one of the most renowned and beloved tenors of our time and is known to a large audience beyond the traditional confines of classical music. In addition to his singing career, he is a successful stage director, has already published two novels and regularly appears as a host and guest

on international TV and radio programmes.

He has been a frequent guest in Salzburg since the legendary production of "La Traviata" in 2005 and has sung in four opera productions and countless recitals and concerts. This summer, he will perform Lucarnio in a new production of Handel's "Ariodante". Other performances in the coming season take him, amongst others, to Prague, Berlin, Munich, Paris, Vienna and Montreal.

The *Mozart Week* is the world's leading Mozart Festival. Founded in 1956, it takes place annually around Mozart's birthday, on January 27, in Salzburg. During the festival, the Mozarteum Foundation assembles the world's best orchestras, ensembles, and soloists in the field of Mozart-interpretation in Wolfgang Amadé's native city, striving to offer consistently new, exciting and contemporary experiences of the great composer. The *Mozart Week* enjoys an unparalleled international reputation and draws a global audience to Salzburg every year.

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart has fascinated people all over the world for over 250 years with his music and his personality. The Mozarteum Foundation is the most important and renowned institution for the conservation and propagation of this invaluable cultural heritage and carries all of Mozart's many facets into the world. The foundation's mission is to make Mozart's music, his life and personality, accessible to all people and generations. The Mozarteum Foundation implements this mission as a non-profit organization through diverse activities in the three fields of concerts, research and museums. The foundation provides a link between tradition and contemporary culture and thus enables changing perspectives and new ideas in the engagement with the composer.

For further Information:

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