

## PRESS RELEASE

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**The Paris Opera is honored to pay tribute to Gerard Mortier, who would have turned 80 on Saturday 25 November, by announcing the winners of the 2023 Mortier Award and the Next Generation Mortier Award to Ariane Mnouchkine and Jeffrey Döring.**

The Mortier Award 2023 is awarded to **Ariane Mnouchkine** who will be honoured for her life work. The Mortier Next Generation Award, endowed with 30,000 euros by the Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent Foundation, is awarded to **Jeffrey Döring**, who will also receive a scholarship from the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, where he will be able to work on developing the award winning project.

The awards ceremony will be held on 29 February 2024 at the Paris Opera.

During his five years (2004-2009) as director of the Paris Opera, Gerard Mortier, visionary and daring, was able to give the institution an artistic project that still resonates today.

"Many of us know him as a man of letters, a brilliant, visionary, committed, uncompromising man who liked to shake up conservatism, recalls Alexander Neef. But he was also attentive, courteous, demanding and generous. He was all that for me, and much more. Throughout my years at his side, at the Salzburg Festival and then at the Ruhrtriennale and the Paris Opera, I benefited from the kindness and generosity of Gerard Mortier, who was very sensitive to the idea of supporting a new generation of opera directors."

Born on 25 November 1943 in Gand (Belgium), Gerard Mortier not only placed the art form of opera at the heart of artistic debate, but also at the centre of socio-political discourse. He felt his mission was to liberate opera from dead weight and rejuvenate it with new connotations. "Making theatre means breaking daily routine, questioning the acceptance of economic, political and military violence as normalcy, awakening communities to questions of human existence which cannot be regulated via laws, and affirming that the world can be better than it is. Creating theatre, then, is a mission, almost a sacred office, without the need for religious revelation. Theatre is a human religion," he noted in his *Dramaturgie d'une passion*.

**The Mortier Award** was initiated in 2014 by Heinz Weyringer, artistic director of the Ring Award, a directing and stage competition, and Albrecht Thiemann, former managing editor of the international specialist journal *Opernwelt* (Berlin). Its first honouree was Gerard Mortier himself, then Markus Hinterhäuser (2017) and Alexandre Kluge (2021);

**The Mortier Next Generation Award**, which carries a cash value of 30,000 euros, was founded by Serge Dorny, former artistic director of the Opéra de Lyon and artistic director of the Bavarian State Opera as of the 2021/22 season, as well as the initiators of the Mortier Award. Its first recipient was the Polish dramaturge and director Krystian Lada, who received the award in 2019 in Mortier's native city of Gand, followed by Ulrike Schwab (2021). The Next Generation Award is also supported by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Berlin Institute of Advanced Study), which offers honourees a residence of several months (Mortier Next Generation Fellowship).

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