

## Press Release

27 August 2020

### 2020 Konrad Wolf Prize goes to Alexander Lang

This year's Konrad Wolf Prize of the Akademie der Künste goes to the director and actor Alexander Lang. The presentation of the award worth EUR 5,000 will take place on 29 October 2020 in Berlin. The jury comprised Akademie members Christian Grashof, Klaus Völker and Jutta Wachowiak.

The jurors are honouring an artist whose work had a large hand in shaping the direction of renewal in East German theatre. Starting out as an actor at the Deutsches Theater, as a director there from 1976 onwards he established a new, authentic approach to performing the classics, which contributed to raising the profile of East German theatrical realism in European theatre in the long term. "After the era of Wolfgang Langhoff, this was a new heyday for the Deutsches Theater. With a dedicated ensemble, which included not only stage designer Volker Pfüller, but also the actors Margit Bendokat, Christian Grashof, Katja Paryla, Dieter Montag, Roman Kaminsky, Kurt Böwe, Dietrich Körner, Inge Keller and others, he staged performances of comedic wit and enlightening phantasticism. Old plays blossomed into new life, their explosive potential was exploited to perfection, the actors became angry yet inspired fortune-tellers..." (from the jury statement by Klaus Völker).

**Alexander Lang**, born in Erfurt in 1941, lives in Berlin. He graduated from the Berlin State Drama School in 1966. After engagements at the Maxim Gorki Theater and Berliner Ensemble, he went to the Deutsches Theater in 1969, staying there until 1986 and again from 1993. From 1972 to 1977 he played Ferdinand in Friedrich Schiller's *Intrigue and Love*, Paul Bauch in Volker Braun's *Die Kipper* and title roles in Heinrich von Kleist's *Prince of Homburg* and in Heiner Müller's *Philoktet*. His stage productions include *Der entfesselte Wotan* (Ernst Toller) in 1978, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (William Shakespeare) in 1980, *Danton's Death* (Georg Büchner) in 1981, *Die traurige Geschichte von Friedrich der Grosse* (after Heinrich Mann) in 1982, *Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe* (after a play by Bertolt Brecht) in 1983, *Herzog Theodor von Gothland* (Christian Dietrich Grabbe) in 1984, *Winterschlacht* (Johannes R. Becher) in 1985, 'Trilogie der Leidenschaften' – *Medea* (Euripides), *Stella* (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) and *The Dance of Death* (August Strindberg) in 1986, *Le Cid* (Pierre Corneille) in 1993 and *Torquato Tasso* (Goethe) in 1996.

As a guest director at the Munich Kammerspiele, he was invited to the Berliner Theatertreffen with Schiller's *Don Carlos* in 1985 and with Racine's *Phèdre* in 1988, and as drama director of the Hamburg Thalia Theatre with Koltè's *Rückkehr in die Wüste* in 1989. From 1991 to 1993 he was a member of the board of

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directors of the Berlin Schillertheater and his productions *The Robbers* (Schiller) and *Märchen in Deutschland* (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, with Bernhard Minetti) were selected for the 1991 Theatertreffen. Since 1989 Lang has worked increasingly as a guest director, among other things at the Comédie Française (*Prince of Homburg*, Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* and Goethe's *Faust*), the Munich Residenztheater and Kammerspiele, the Maxim Gorki Theater, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Schauspiel Leipzig and Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar.

Alexander Lang was involved in several East German film and television productions. In *Solo Sunny* (1980), the last film that Konrad Wolf was to complete, Lang played the philosopher Ralph opposite Renate Krössner's Sunny. He has been a member of the Akademie der Künste since 1986.

Named after the film director and longstanding president of the East German Akademie der Künste, the **Konrad Wolf Prize** is awarded each year for outstanding artistic achievements in the fields of the performing arts or film and media art. It was most recently awarded to the documentary film director Heidi Specogna (2019), the cultural magazine *Lettre International* (2018), and the Hungarian director Márta Mészáros (2017).

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