

## BIOGRAPHY (short version)

Bjørn Waag studied singing, conducting, musicology and philosophy in Oslo, Munich and Berlin. He was a master student of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Ernst Haefliger. Regular venues: National Theatre Mannheim, Bremen Opera, DNT Weimar, Basel Opera, Bavarian State Opera, La Fenice (Venice), Maggio Musicale (Florence), Teatro Real (Madrid).

Opera repertoire to date: around 150 roles.

Focus on contemporary music, works by Wagner, including Alberich, Beckmesser, Wolfram, Holländer. He has performed the role of Beckmesser in *Meistersinger* in ten new productions. Composers Manfred Trojahn, Walter Zimmermann, Detlef Heusinger and others have written opera parts especially for Waag. Second focus: German lieder (initiator and president of LiedForumBasel e.V., as well as extensive tours with lieder recitals). In 1996, Waag was appointed to the Academy of Arts in Mannheim.

In 2003, Waag took over Kurt Widmer's chair at the University of Music in Basel.

Partners: Directors Claus Guth, Vera Nemirova, Elisabeth Stöppler, Jossi Wieler, Gisbert Jäkel, Jürgen Gosch, and others. Conductors: Dennis Russell Davies, Marko Letonja, Ulf Schirmer, Jun Märkl, Marcello Viotti, Lothar Zagrosek, Eliahu Inbal, Wolfgang Bozic, Michael Boder, Jeffrey Tate.

## BIOGRAPHY (long version)

After completing his initial studies in Oslo, Bjørn Waag moved to Munich and Berlin to study singing, conducting, musicology and philosophy. He was cultural editor at Norway's oldest daily newspaper, *Morgenbladet*, and a master student of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Ernst Haefliger. His first permanent engagement (Trier, 1983) took him to the opera in Bremen in 1987, followed by the National Theatre in Mannheim, the Basel Opera, the Musiktheater im Revier and the German National Theatre in Weimar, among others.

In 2003, Waag also took over Kurt Widmer's chair at the University of Music in Basel, where he taught a full major class.

In November 1997, Waag was offered membership in the Free Academy of Arts, '... in recognition of his diverse artistic work in the field of performing arts/theatre.'

He performs throughout Europe as a guest singer: at the Bavarian State Opera, the State Theatre in Stuttgart, La Fenice in Venice, the Maggio Musicale in Florence and the Teatro Real Madrid, to name but a few. He has performed in concerts and recitals throughout Europe, from Kirkenes to Palermo. A long-standing collaboration with the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Hessischer Rundfunk began in 1988.

Waag's opera repertoire comprises around 150 roles, which he has performed in over 180 productions. Contemporary music is a focal point of his work: composers

such as Manfred Trojahn, Klaus Huber, Walter Zimmermann, Roland Moser and Detlef Heusinger have written roles especially for him. He has worked with directors such as Claus Guth, Vera Nemirova, Elisabeth Stöppler, Jossi Wieler, Gisbert Jäkel, Jürgen Gosch and others, as well as conductors Dennis Russell Davies, Marko Letonja, Ulf Schirmer, Jun Märkl, Marcello Viotti, Lothar Zagrosek, Elisha Inbal, Wolfgang Bozic, Michael Boder and Jeffrey Tate.

In 2012/13, Waag played the title role in Trojahn's 'Orest' (DEA) at the Hanover State Opera in 2012/13 and has appeared in five new productions and countless repertoire performances of 'Der Ring' as Alberich and Gunther at various opera houses, most notably at the Graz Opera in 2000, directed by Gisbert Jäkel and conducted by Ulf Schirmer.

Beckmesser in Wagner's 'Meistersinger' in the first production of the work in Poland since 1932, Dr. Schön in Berg's 'Lulu' (directed by E. Stöppler), Shylock in Reynold Hahn's 'Der Kaufmann von Venedig', the Prague premiere of Thomas Adès' gigantic work "Totentanz" conducted by the composer, and a concert tour with Schoenberg's 'Überlebender aus Warschau' are a selection of his stage work in recent years. He also made his debut as the King of Egypt in Aida, Don Pizarro in Fidelio and in the title role of The Flying Dutchman. In Norway in 2020, he sang Zurga in The Pearl Fishers and the huge role of Faust/Dr Marianus in Schumann's Faust Scenes.

He regularly performs alongside Jan-Josef Liefers as Alberich/Gunther in Lortie's 'Der Ring an einem Abend' at Munich's Gasteig, the Berlin Philharmonic, Stuttgart's Liederhalle, Frankfurt's Alte Oper and other major concert halls.

Bjørn Waag has made numerous CD recordings of works by Wagner, Schönberg, Wolf-Ferrari and Laporte (K. in 'Das Schloss'), among others. The artist is regarded as a complex but profound explorer of the abysses of broken stage characters. His journey of discovery continues.