



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

9 MARCH 2016

ROYAL OPERA APPOINTS NEW CHORUS DIRECTOR

The Royal Opera announced today the appointment of **William Spaulding** as Chorus Director of the Royal Opera Chorus. He succeeds **Renato Balsadonna**, who will leave The Royal Opera at the end of the 2015/16 Season to concentrate fully on his conducting career. Renato has held the position of Chorus Director since the opening of the 2004/5 Season.

Antonio Pappano, Music Director of The Royal Opera, said: 'I am very happy to announce that William Spaulding will be our new Chorus Director, from the start of the 2016/17 Season. A consummate musician, he is a vivid and intense musical personality with whom I am very much looking forward to collaborating.'

William Spaulding, born in Washington DC, is one of the leading operatic chorus masters in the world today. He studied trumpet and piano while at school, going on to further piano studies at the University of Maryland, and conducting studies at the Vienna Hochschule, where he worked with Claudio Abbado and Zubin Mehta. He began his career working in provincial German opera houses, and was appointed Associate Chorus Master of the Vienna Volksoper in 1997. Following an acclaimed production there of *Boris Godunov*, he became Principal Chorus Master at the Liceu, Barcelona, for five years. He has also worked at the National Theatre in Mannheim.

William Spaulding is currently Principal Chorus Master and (since 2012) Kapellmeister at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Critics of the leading German opera monthly magazine *Opernwelt* awarded him and his chorus the award of ‘Chorus of the Year’ three years in a row in 2008, 2009 and 2010. In 2012 Spaulding and the Chorus of Deutsche Oper Berlin won the European Chorus Prize, awarded by the Foundation Pro Europa. Under William Spaulding’s direction the chorus of Deutsche Oper Berlin has appeared twice at the BBC Proms: with *Tannhäuser* in 2013 and with Verdi’s Requiem in 2015, both times with Donald Runnicles conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Spaulding also works regularly with symphonic choruses, conducting at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, and with the MDR Chorus in Leipzig, with which ensemble he appeared in 2011, 2013 and 2014. In March 2016 he will conduct two concerts in Leipzig with the MDR Chorus. He has also worked with the RIAS Chamber Chorus, preparing them for the Grammy-nominated recording of Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* under René Jacobs. In opera he has appeared as a guest chorus director at the Royal Opera House in Copenhagen and at the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari.

As an orchestral and opera conductor, Spaulding’s credits include *Carmina Burana*, *La traviata*, Verdi’s Requiem, *Carmen*, *Nabucco* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), appearances with Vienna Volksoper and at the National Theatre in Mannheim, Beethoven’s Symphony no.9 at the Mainfranken Theatre, Würzburg, and Fauré’s Requiem, Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* and Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, 2014).

In 2010, Spaulding was appointed a member of the jury for supporting and funding choruses in Berlin by the Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit and his undersecretary for artistic affairs André Schmitz. In 2013 he served as a juror for the Conductors’ Forum (the young artists’ programme of the German

Music Council). Since 2014 he has been a member of the conducting faculty of Berlin's Hanns Eisler Conservatory.

-ENDS-

Press Contacts:

Christopher Millard

Director of Press and Communications

Tel: 020 7212 9458

Christopher.millard@roh.org.uk

Ann Richards

Head of Opera Press

Tel: 020 7212 9132

Ann.richards@roh.org.uk