

Press Release

Bern, 11. April 2024

Contract extensions for the Artistic Director and the Section Directors – Alevtina Ioffe will be the new Chief Conductor of Bern Opera from summer 2025.

The Board of Trustees of Bühnen Bern has extended the contracts of Artistic Director Florian Scholz, Director of Drama Roger Vontobel, Opera Director Rainer Karlitschek and Dance Director Isabelle Bischof for a further four years until summer 2029. Florian Scholz will also remain Concert Director of the Berner Symphonieorchester. This means that Bühnen Bern can continue on its successful course with a well-coordinated team. Co-Opera Director and Chief Conductor of the Opera Nicholas Carter will step down in summer 2025 after four years in Bern. With the internationally sought-after conductor Alevtina Ioffe, an outstanding successor has been appointed.

By the end of February 2024, Bühnen Bern had already recorded around 14,000 more spectators than in the same period last season. This clearly exceeds even the pre-corona level: A proof that Bühnen Bern is increasingly attracting a new audience in addition to its loyal regular clientele. Both artistically and in terms of expected income, the institution is currently on course for success.

In view of these positive results, the Board of Trustees of Bühnen Bern offered the existing team a contract extension, which was unanimously accepted. Werner Luginbühl, President of the Board of Trustees: "I am delighted that we can continue the work of the existing team, which is currently very successful both artistically and in terms of audience response. The Board of Trustees is thus creating the conditions to ensure that the people of Bern can continue to be offered a diverse and enriching cultural offering with concerts, opera, drama and dance at the highest level in the future and ensures the necessary stability and continuity for the entire operation with its 500 employees."

Florian Scholz, Artistic Director of Bühnen Bern: "It is a great pleasure to be able to continue on the path we have taken here in Bern with a highly motivated staff. Our artistic work is bearing



fruit and we are convinced that we will continue to make our orchestra, dance and theater flourish in the coming years in the service of the canton, the city and the municipalities."

Alevtina Ioffe becomes new Chief Conductor of the Opera

After four intensive and musically very successful years, Co-Director of the Opera Nicholas Carter will step down as Chief Conductor and Co-Director of the Opera in summer 2025, but will remain associated with the company for further artistic collaborations in addition to his projects and activities elsewhere. The Russian conductor Alevtina Ioffe has been appointed as the new Chief Conductor of the Opera from summer 2025.

Artistic Director Florian Scholz on the appointment of Alevtina Ioffe: "We are proud and grateful that in Alevtina Ioffe we have been able to appoint an internationally acclaimed artist. While it is not easy for us to say goodbye to our current Chief Conductor of the Opera, we know that she will fill the large shoes he leaves behind with a new artistic perspective. She is an exceptional talent and a stroke of luck for our opera."

Commenting on her appointment as the new Chief Conductor of the Opera, Alevtina Ioffe says: "Since 2022, I have been looking for a place where I can realize my artistic vision in a peaceful and inspiring environment. When I got to know the Berner Symphonieorchester at a concert in the Golden Hall of the Wiener Musikverein, I immediately felt a special connection. I am truly excited to start my journey in Bern soon and I am sure that our collaboration will bring new creative energy to this wonderful institution!"

Alevtina Ioffe was born in Moscow, where she studied choral conducting, classical singing and piano and graduated from the Moscow Conservatory. Since 2022 she lives in Berlin and regularly conducts at the Komische Oper Berlin, the Staatstheater Stuttgart and the Göteborg Opera. She has also made guest appearances with major European and US orchestras, such as the Orchestre National de Lille in France, the Orchestra Della Toscana in Italy and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. In Germany, she conducted the Staatskapelle Weimar, and in Switzerland she will conduct the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in October 2024 and the Berner Symphonieorchester.

For ten years, until 2021, she was Music Director of the State Opera and Ballet Theater for Young Audiences "Natalia Sats" in Moscow. Between February 2021 and July 2022, she was Music Director of the Mikhailovsky Theater in St. Petersburg, making her the first woman to head a major musical institution in Russia.

Alevtina Ioffe will introduce herself to the Bernese public at the big **Open-Air Concert** on the Bundesplatz on **24.08.2024**. Her contract begins in summer 2025 and is initially valid for four years.