DOSSIER / EN

Emily Hehl

Stage Director



CONTACT

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REPRESENTED BY KANTTILA MANAGEMENT

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01 / PROFILE

Biography

> *“Brilliantly performed... and pictorially brought to life by the young director Emily Hehl in a strikingly tableau-like staging: In this way, a footnote of musicology is catapulted into vibrant theatrical life.”*
>
> Eleonore Büning, VAN Magazin

Emily Hehl, a visionary director recognized for her thoughtful approach and multidisciplinary collaborations, has rapidly ascended as a prominent figure in the world of opera and theatre. Her most recent productions include *La Bohème* at Landestheater Coburg and *Rigoletto* at Theater Freiburg. In the 2023/24 season, Ms. Hehl directed *Les Deux* at the Theater im Palais Graz and opened the inaugural season of the new artistic administration at the Aalto Theater Essen with Verdi’s *Macbeth*. Her work that season also included the German premiere of Augusta Holmès’ *La Montagne Noire* at Oper Dortmund, which was nominated as a “rediscovered work” at the International Opera Awards. Earlier projects include her direction of Benjamin Britten’s *Curlew River* at Landesbühnen Sachsen and her contribution to the world premiere of Bernhard Lang’s *Der Hetzer* at Oper Dortmund, collaborating with Kai Anne Schuhmacher on its scenic development.

In Brussels, Ms. Hehl has been closely involved with Needcompany, engaging in diverse projects across the performing arts. Notable productions arising from this collaboration as an Associate Director with Jan Lauwers include Mozart’s La Clemenza di Tito and Ligeti’s Le Grand Macabre at the Wiener Staatsoper, described as “bold and surreal staging... A musical triumph, enthusiastically applauded by the audience” (BR-Klassik) and praised for its inventive visual and narrative layers. At the Salzburg Festival, she worked on Intolleranza 1960, noted for its “immersive and politically charged storytelling” (BR Klassik), which resonated with contemporary social issues. Additionally, Ms. Hehl contributedv to AMOPERA, a meta-opera developed in partnership with Klangforum Wien, which was recognized as “a cutting-edge blend of dystopian themes and musical innovation” (Der Standard).

From 2024-2026, Emily Hehl served as stellvertretende Oberspielleiterin at Wiener Staatsoper.

02 / CURRICULUM VITAE

Academic education

03/2020-08/2025

Bachelor of Arts

Direction for opera and spoken theatre, performing arts · Theaterakademie August Everding, München · Head of programme Prof. Sebastian Baumgarten

since 10/2019

Law studies

FernUniversität Hagen · Distance-learning programme for the First Examination in Law, intended qualifications Bachelor of Laws and first state law examination

2010-2017

General university entrance qualification

Gymnasium Isny · Final grade 1.0



03 / PROFILE

Professional experience

Director

Freelance opera director. Productions include Rigoletto in Freiburg, La Bohème in Coburg, Macbeth in Essen, La Montagne Noire in Dortmund and Curlew River at Landesbühnen Sachsen.

Artistic leadership · Needcompany

Since 2021, involvement in concept development, budgeting, contractual aspects of international co-productions, curatorial work for festivals and exhibitions, and touring. Artistic collaboration with Jan Lauwers, Grace Ellen Barkey and Maarten Seghers.

Collaborating institutions and festivals · Needcompany

Impulstanz Wien · Festival Grec de Barcelona · Teatre Nacional de Catalunya · Schwetzinger Festspiele

Teaching

Opera productions and workshops, including at Kunstuniversität Graz and Fondazione Mascarade Opera in Florence.

Pianist

Piano studies at Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. Work as a répétiteur, musician and performer in Needcompany productions.

Assistant director

Assistant to Jan Lauwers, Achim Freyer, Barrie Kosky, Christof Loy, Kirill Serebrennikov, Milo Rau, Tatjana Gürbaca and Sebastian Baumgarten, including at Komische Oper Berlin, Opéra de Dijon, Opernhaus Zürich, Salzburger Festspiele, Aalto-Theater Essen and Theater an der Wien.

Deputy Head of Stage Direction · Wiener Staatsoper

2024-2026: scheduling and artistic responsibility for repertoire operations and production planning, including contractual, staffing and administrative matters.

04 / SELECTED

Productions

03/2026 Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn

Laissez durer la nuit · Händel, Vivaldi et al.

World premiere · Co-direction Raphael René Jacobs · Musical direction Gabriella Teychenné · Set design Raphael René Jacobs · Costumes Esther-Helin Bienroth

01/2026 Theater Freiburg

Rigoletto · Giuseppe Verdi

Musical direction Artem Lohinov · Set design Agata Skwarczyńska · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

11/2025 Landestheater Coburg

La Bohème · Giacomo Puccini

Musical direction Daniel Carter · Set design Raphael René Jacobs · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

10/2024 Theater im Palais Graz

Les Deux
world premiere

Arrangements Andrey Doynikov · Dramaturgy Gan-ya Ben-gur Akselrod

01/2024 Oper Dortmund

La Montagne Noire · Augusta Holmès

German premiere and first staging since 1895 · Nominated for the International Opera Awards 2024 · Musical direction Motonori Kobayashi · Choreography Adriana Naldoni · Set design Frank Philipp Schlössmann · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

04 / SELECTED / CONTINUED

Productions

09/2023 Aalto-Theater Essen

Macbeth · Giuseppe Verdi

Opening of the season and the new artistic administration · Musical direction Andrea Sanguineti · Choreography Teodora + Agata Castellucci · Set design Frank Philipp Schlössmann · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

04/2023 Landesbühnen Sachsen

Curlew River · Benjamin Britten

Choreography Geosmin Yang · Set design Djamilja Brandt · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

07/2022 Olympiapark München

Performance about Olga Korbut

50th anniversary of the Munich 1972 Olympic Games · Choreography Nicole Kötterl · Set design Pia Lanzinger

03/2022 Prinzregententheater

DIĒS · Jane Dickson · world premiere

Choreography Geosmin Yang · Set design Anna Knöller · Costumes Emma Gaudiano

05 / COLLABORATIONS

Directorial collaborations

03/2026 Wiener Staatsoper + Needcompany

La clemenza di Tito · Mozart

Musical direction Pablo Heras-Casado · Direction and set design Jan Lauwers

11/2023 Wiener Staatsoper + Needcompany

Le Grand Macabre · Ligeti

Musical direction Pablo Heras-Casado · Direction and set design Jan Lauwers

07/2023 Impulstanz Wien + Needcompany

Billy's Joy · Victor Afung Lauwers · world premiere

Project by Jan Lauwers, Grace Ellen Barkey, Maarten Seghers, Elke Janssens and Emily Hehl

11/2022 Klangforum Wien + Needcompany

AMOPERA - a dystopian ballad

Project by Jan Lauwers, Grace Ellen Barkey, Maarten Seghers, Sarah Maria Sun, Holger Falk, Bas Wiegers, Sophie Schafleitner, Christoph Walder, Elke Janssens, Emily Hehl, Paul Blackman, Tim Anderson and Pauli Jämsä

09/2021 Oper Dortmund

Der Hetzer · Bernhard Lang · world premiere

Taking over rehearsal work within a concept by Kai Anne Schuhmacher

07/2021 Salzburger Festspiele + Needcompany

Intolleranza 1960 · Luigi Nono

Musical direction Ingo Metzmacher · Direction and set design Jan Lauwers

06 / PRACTICE

Assistant direction & internships

09/2025 Wiener Staatsoper
Die verkaufte Braut · Smetana
Musical direction Tomáš Hanus · Direction Dirk Schmeding

09/2025 Wiener Staatsoper
Don Carlo · Verdi
Musical direction Philippe Jordan · Direction Kirill Serebrennikov

02/2025 Wiener Staatsoper
Norma · Bellini
Musical direction Michele Mariotti · Direction Cyril Teste

03/2024 Opernhaus Zürich
Amerika · Haubenstock-Ramati
Musical direction Gabriel Feltz · Direction Sebastian Baumgarten

08/2020 Salzburger Festspiele
Everywoman · Milo Rau / Ursina Lardi
Co-production with Schaubühne Berlin · Design Anton Lukas · Direction Milo Rau

01/2020 Theater an der Wien
Egmont · Christian Jost · world premiere
Musical direction Michael Boder · Direction Keith Warner

12/2019 Opernhaus Zürich
Don Pasquale · Donizetti
Musical direction Enrique Mazzola · Direction Christoph Loy

06 / PRACTICE / CONTINUED

Assistant direction & internships

10/2019 Opernhaus Zürich
Belshazzar · Händel
Musical direction Laurence Cummings · Direction Sebastian Baumgarten

08/2019 Salzburger Festspiele
Oedipe · Enescu
Musical direction Ingo Metzmacher · Direction and set design Achim Freyer

06/2019 Opernhaus Zürich
Nabucco · Verdi
Musical direction Fabio Luisi · Direction Andreas Homoki

05/2019 Komische Oper Berlin
M - Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder · Eggert · world premiere
Musical direction Ainars Rubikis · Direction Barrie Kosky

03/2019 Opéra de Dijon
Les Boréades · Rameau
Musical direction Emmanuelle Haïm · Direction Barrie Kosky

01/2019 Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater
Jekyll & Hyde · Wildhorn
Musical direction Michael Ellis Ingram · Direction Kay Kuntze

01/2019 Komische Oper Berlin
La Bohème · Puccini
Internship · Musical direction Jordan de Souza · Direction Barrie Kosky

06 / PRACTICE / CONTINUED

Assistant direction & internships

12/2018 Aalto-Theater Essen
Der Freischütz · Weber
Internship · Musical direction Tomáš Netopil · Direction Tatjana Gürbaca

10/2018 Staatsoper Hamburg
Szenen aus Goethes Faust · Schumann
Internship · Musical direction Kent Nagano · Direction and set design Achim Freyer

09/2018 Opernhaus Zürich
Die Gezeichneten · Schreker
Internship · Musical direction Vladimir Jurowski · Direction Barrie Kosky

08/2018 Staatstheater Mainz
Die 3 Musketiere · Bolland & Bolland
Internship · Musical direction Axel Goldbeck · Direction Roland Hüve

03/2018 Staatstheater Braunschweig
Pique Dame · Tschaikowsky
Internship · Musical direction Adrian Müller · Direction Philipp Kochheim

2017-2018 Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater
Voluntary cultural service in opera
Support for all opera productions in the season

07 / FURTHER DETAILS

Awards

International Opera Awards 2024

La Montagne Noire · Nomination for Best Rediscovered Work

Scheffelpreis 2017

Literarische Gesellschaft

Scholarships

Deutschlandstipendium · Richard-Stury-Stiftung



08 / LANGUAGES

Languages

German native · English fluent · French B2 · Italian and Flemish A2