

JAMES BONAS

DIRECTOR

‘The evening promised to be flamboyant, energetic, even sparkling: it is all of that and more’

Classic News, Company, Génération Opéra

James Bonas is a traditional storyteller for the modern era, combining imagination and intellect with a curiosity for technology and new forms, whether directing classical or contemporary theatre, opera, or dance. He read Psychology and Philosophy at Oxford University, prior to training as an actor at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and developing his career as a director.

Recent opera productions include Sondheim’s *Company* for Génération Opéra, the world premiere of Isabelle Albouker’s *L’Archipel(s)* with La Maîtrise de L’Opéra Comique, Bernstein’s *Candide* at Welsh National Opera, Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Theater Magdeburg, and – with regular collaborator, animator Grégoire Pont – the French premiere of Abrahamsen’s *Snow Queen* for Opéra national du Rhin, winner of the French critics’ Best Scenic Elements/Scenography award 2022. Other collaborations with Pont include Orff’s *Der Mond*, and Ravel’s *L’Heure Espagnole* and *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges* for Opéra de Lyon. These works enjoy regular revivals at houses across Europe and the US. Projects for 2025–26 include new productions of *Die Zauberflöte* at Göteborg Opera, Massenet’s *Manon* at Theater Magdeburg, and a revival of *Candide* with WNO, as well as further performances of *Company* throughout France.

Bonas also works in dance and enjoys an ongoing collaboration with choreographers such as Helen Pickett and Sophie Laplane. Recent projects with Pickett include *Lady Macbeth* for Dutch National Ballet, *Crime and Punishment* for American Ballet Theater, *Emma Bovary* for Canadian National Ballet and *The Crucible* for Scottish National Ballet – an award-winning narrative ballet that premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival 2019, with further runs at Sadler’s Wells, London, Kennedy Center in Washington DC and Nashville, Tennessee. With Laplane he created *Mary, Queen of Scots* for Scottish Ballet at the 2025 International Edinburgh Festival and the celebrated short film *Dive* for Scottish Ballet, which featured in dance film festivals worldwide, including the 2021 Venice Biennale, and won the Grand Jury Prize at Cinedans 2022.

An advocate for multi-disciplinary performance, Bonas collaborated with Damon Albarn as Artistic Consultant on the creation of *Le Vol du Boli* at the Théâtre du Châtelet. He regularly appears at the BBC Proms; performances include theatrical concerts with Aurora Orchestra of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*, Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, Beethoven’s *Symphony No 9* and Shostakovich’s *Symphony No 5*, as well as Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale* with the Hebrides Ensemble at the Drill Hall, Lincoln, and a collaboration with Anthony Roth-Costanzo and ENO on *Glass Handel* at the Print Works.