



Set and Costume Designer opportunity

We are currently seeking a Set and Costume Designer for our 2025 production, *Die Rheinnixen* by Offenbach. It will be fully staged, with a new arrangement for chamber orchestra, at Battersea Arts Centre, London. It will be sung in German with English surtitles. The Stage Director is Max Hoehn (www.maxhoehn.com).

If you are interested in applying, please read the following document carefully.

About the opera:

Although there have been occasional concert performances, this production will be the first time this opera has been staged in the UK. Musically, this undeservedly neglected piece is rich and sumptuous. The Elves' Song from *Die Rheinnixen* was later used in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, where it became the Barcarolle (Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour).

About us:

Founded by sopranos Alice Usher, Béatrice de Larragoiti and Charlotte Osborn, Gothic Opera ***“excavates undead corners of the operatic repertoire and exhumes gemstones from the tombstones”*** (Mark Valencia, Opera magazine, Jan 2025).

We stage high-quality fringe performances of rarely-seen operatic works on supernatural themes in unconventional, characterful venues in London. Our experience shows that our productions not only shed new light on neglected repertoire, they also bring new audiences to opera.

Gothic Opera's critically-acclaimed productions to date are: *Der Vampyr* by Marschner (The Old Church and the Asylum Chapel, 2019, revived at Grimeborn, 2024), *Bluebeard's Castle* by Bartok (Porchester Hall, 2021), *La Nonne sanglante* by Gounod (Hoxton Hall, 2021), *Le Loup-garou* by Louise Bertin + *Le dernier sorcier* by Pauline Viardot (The Round Chapel, 2022), *Rip Van Winkle* by Robert Planquette (Hoxton Hall, 2023), and *Maria de Rudenz* by Donizetti (Battersea Arts Centre, 2024). Our productions are regularly nominated, and shortlisted, for the Off-West End Awards, where our production of *La Nonne sanglante* won in the Opera Production category in 2022.

Since its inception, Gothic Opera has continued to grow. We have built up an audience of regular attendees, and we also attract a large proportion of first-time opera-goers drawn to unusual, atmospheric activities at a spooky time of year. Our ambitions are to continue to produce high-quality performances that celebrate neglected repertoire, and to appeal to a wide, varied

audience. We have a track record of working with early-career artists and creatives, although we welcome applicants at all career stages. We are now looking for a Set and Costume Designer to join the team on a freelance basis for our 2025 production.

Appointment: ASAP - 2nd November 2025

Pay: Project fee of £2500, on a freelance basis

Working hours: Variable and flexible. Can include evenings and weekends. Attendance at ad hoc meetings and rehearsals is required at mutually agreed times. This role is designed to fit alongside other projects.

Key dates: (subject to change)

Monday 28th July: seating plan/room layout to be confirmed with Battersea Arts Centre

Monday 27th October: Get in/tech

Tuesday 28th October: Tech / stage & piano / stage & orchestra

Wednesday 29th October: Dress rehearsal

Thursday 30th October: Show 1

Friday 31st October: Show 2

Saturday 1st November: Show 3

Sunday 2nd November: Show 4 + get out

The role:

We are seeking a reliable team player with a flexible, enthusiastic attitude. The successful candidate will collaborate with the Stage Director to create **an adaptable production that responds to the following brief:**

A shell-shocked people, obsessed with nationhood, fight for their future. Germany is threatened by political extremism on all sides in a devastating civil war. In Armgard and Hedwig's broken family we see the reflection of this wider social struggle against a haunting background of ghosts and ancient German myths.

The production's concept will take its cue from the political poster art of the Weimar Republic and German silent cinema's fascination with the supernatural. The designer will have the chance to work in an iconic London space, the Grand Hall of the Battersea Arts Centre, and use these surroundings to create a unique theatrical experience.

- Max Hoehn (Stage Director)

It is also important to us that the design maintains **environmental awareness and reduces waste**. The Designer will create a production that is budget- and environmentally-conscious, re-using Gothic Opera's existing props and costumes, borrowing where possible, and hiring if needed.

The full production budget is approx £5000, which covers set design and construction, costumes, props, crew support for set builds, and any additional tech hires (excluding lighting).

The successful candidate will be a designer with at least two years' experience working in fringe theatre. They will be able to work with emotional intelligence, sensitivity, kindness and mutual respect. They will be highly pro-active, organised, able to hit the ground running, and confident to work independently. All candidates must have the right to work in the UK. An interest in site-specific work and a proven ability to work with limited budgets is desirable.

To apply, please send us:

- a CV
- a portfolio of costume and set designs (photos of previous shows, costume sketches, speculative design work, set models)
- a short cover letter that responds to the Director's ideas and tells us what drew you to this project.

Part of the submission should include evidence of previous work in period design. This could come in the form of speculative costume sketches or a record of a previous production. The production will have an early 1920s postwar look, so an interest in this period is welcome.

The email address is info@gothicopera.co.uk.

If you have applied to us before and been unsuccessful, do not let this put you off applying again this time! We are also always happy to hear from designers who have worked with us in the past.

We're very happy to answer any questions you have about the project at any stage. The deadline for applications is **5pm on Thursday 8th May**, and interviews for successful candidates will be held over Zoom in the **week commencing 19th May**. We'd love to hear from you!