

Alexander NEEF

Director of the Paris Opera

Chairman of the Jury of the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition

Alexander Neef was born in Germany in 1974. He studied Latin Philology and Modern History at the Eberhard Karl University in Tübingen.

In 2000, he began his career as production manager at the Salzburg Festival for two seasons, before joining the artistic administration of the RuhrTriennale, a multidisciplinary festival in Germany, where he was responsible for opera, theatre and dance productions as well as concerts and events.

At the request of Gerard Mortier, then Director of the Paris Opera, he joined the latter institution from 2004 to 2008 as Casting Director. Alexander Neef then assisted Gerard Mortier in preparing his programming schedule for the New York City Opera.

From 2008 to 2020, he was General Director of the Canadian Opera Company where he developed co-productions with, among others, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, London's Royal Opera House, Madrid's Teatro Real, the Aix-en-Provence Festival and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. Alexander Neef also enabled the Canadian Opera Company to return to the world-famous BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) in March 2011 with Igor Stravinsky's *The Nightingale & Other Short Fables*, directed by Robert Lepage. Finally, he brought new energy to the COC Ensemble Studio, a training programme for young opera professionals, and in 2011 he launched the Ensemble Studio Competition, inviting the public to attend the singers' final auditions.

Alongside his management of the Canadian Opera Company, in 2018 he was appointed the first Artistic Director of Santa Fe Opera in the United States.

In July 2019 Alexander Neef was appointed Director Designate of the Paris Opera by Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic. He took up his duties as Director General ahead of schedule on 1 September 2020. During his tenure, works such as *Nixon in China* by John Adams, *A Quiet Place* by Leonard Bernstein, *Fin de partie* by György Kurtág and *Ercole amante* by Antonio Vivaldi have entered the Paris Opera's repertoire. Sensitive to interdisciplinarity and keen to open up the world of opera to new profiles, he has commissioned the staging of operas to photographer and visual artist Shirin Neshat (Verdi's *Aida* in 2025), actor and director Ralph Fiennes (Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in 2026) and choreographers Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber (Glass' *Satyagraha* in 2026). Alexander Neef has relaunched the Paris Opera's lyric troupe, which had disappeared nearly 30 years ago, and created the Junior Ballet, bringing together some 20 young dancers from around the world. He has also launched the programme ADO, France's first youth lyric orchestra created in 2023, and the Paris Opera children's choir, which will have its first season in 26/27. In 2023, he also launched the streaming platform POP – Paris Opera Play.

The President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, decided, on the proposal of Rachida Dati, Minister of Culture, to entrust Alexander Neef with a second mandate running from 1 September 2026 until the end of the 2031/2032 season. In September 2024, together with the Minister of Culture, he presented a renovation project that will begin in 2027 and involve all four sites of the Paris Opera: the Palais Garnier, the Opéra Bastille, the École de Danse in Nanterre and the Ateliers Berthier. This project aims to modernize technical and stage equipment, renovate spaces to improve conditions for audiences, artists and employees, and accelerate the ecological transition.

Alexander Neef was appointed chairman of the jury of the NEUE STIMMEN International Singing Competition in December 2025.

Alexander Neef was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in September 2018, appointed Commandeur de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres in July 2022 and Chevalier dans l'ordre national de la Légion d'Honneur in July 2025.

Status: 2025/ 2026 season