

## From mythology to musical history: Innsbruck Festival of Early Music celebrates women on International Women's Day

Innsbruck, 8 March 2025 – The Innsbruck Festival of Early Music is celebrating International Women's Day throughout the summer: the mythological figure of «**Ifigenia**» and her fight for self-determination are the focus of two opera productions with all-female directors – «**Ifigenia in Aulide**» by Antonio Caldara (premiere on 8 August) and «**Ifigenia in Tauride**» by Tommaso Traetta (premiere on 27 August). **Christina Pluhar's** concert «Wonder Women» (13 August) pays tribute to often forgotten female composers of the past. **Eva-Maria Sens** celebrates her 10th anniversary with the Innsbruck Festival in March. In an industry where men still predominantly hold leadership positions, the fact that she has been Artistic Director since autumn 2023 is also a strong signal.

One of the protagonists of the Innsbruck Festival 2025 is the mythological figure of «Ifigenia». Her story, which has lost none of its topicality to this day, is subject in two complementary opera productions: the myth tells of victimised roles, women in waiting positions who are at the mercy of the system in which they live. Nevertheless, positive aspects also find a voice: a process of self-determination overthrows the system of oppression. Both 'Ifigenia' operas will be directed by women: **Anna Fernández** and her **puppet company PerPoc** immerse the first part of the story – «Ifigenia in Aulide» by Antonio Caldara – in detailed baroque aesthetics. The special art of puppetry offers a unique visual experience on the opera stage of the Innsbruck Festival (performances on 8, 10 and 12 August). The second part of the story – «Ifigenia in Tauride» by Tommaso Traetta – is directed by **Nicola Raab** (performances on 27 and 29 August). **Claudia Isabel Martin** completes the line-up of female directors with her production of this year's Barockoper:Jung – Antonio Vivaldi's «Il Giustino» (performances on 17, 19, 21 and 22 August).

Another example of the musical exploration of female perspectives in the Innsbruck Festival 2025 programme is the «Wonder Women» concert conducted by **Christina Pluhar** on 13 August. The Austrian lutenist and her ensemble **L'Arpeggiata** will perform the often forgotten voices of historical female composers. «The project pays tribute to the wonderful female composers of the 17th century,» explains Pluhar. «At the same time, it celebrates female musicians of all eras who had to hide their talent behind that of their husbands or gave up their careers prematurely. Even today, equality is still a long way from being achieved.»

What resonates on stage as an artistic statement on gender equality is reflected in the organisational structure of the Innsbruck Festival itself – a sign that the festival is addressing issues of gender equality both programmatically and institutionally. In autumn 2023, **Eva-Maria Sens** took over as Artistic Director. Her first post at the Innsbrucker Festwochen, however, was in March 2015. She has thus been making a significant contribution to the international significance of the Innsbruck Festival for 10 years. Her career is an example of the change that the Innsbruck Festival is actively promoting: greater visibility for women in the arts and culture.

From 25 July to 31 August 2025, the 54 Innsbruck Festival events will ask the question «Who's pulling the strings?» in a variety of ways, including the question of equal participation of women in all areas – in front of, behind and on stage. The Innsbruck Festival thus sends out a clear signal

in favour of the visibility of female talent in the cultural world and demonstrates that equality is not just an abstract ideal, but can be lived in practice.