

Michael Sturminger was born in Vienna in 1963 and studied directing and script-writing at the city's University of Music and Performing Arts. Since 1990 he has been active as a freelance director in the fields of drama, music theatre and the cinema as well as writing theatre scripts, librettos and screenplays. He has been the intendant of the Perchtoldsdorf Summer Festival from 2014 until 2022 and since the autumn of 2018 he has held a chair at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, teaching courses in music-theatre direction and stage-performance.

Among the venues where Michael Sturminger has worked in the course of his career are the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, the Taipei National Theatre, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, the Zurich Opera, the Aalto Theatre in Essen, Munich's Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, the Vienna State Opera, the Vienna Volksoper and the opera houses in Graz and Cologne. He has directed productions for the Salzburg Easter Festival, Moscow's Cherry Orchard Festival, the Wien Modern Festival, the Schwetzingen Festival, the Ruhr Festival in Recklinghausen, the Prague Spring International Music Festival, the White Nights Festival in St Petersburg, the Sydney Festival, the Toronto Festival, the Grafenegg Festival and the Bregenz Festival. His production of "Salome" at the Klagenfurt Stadttheater was awarded the Austrian Music Theatre Prize in 2018 as the Best Opera Production. In October 2021 his "Don Giovanni" production premiered at the Dimitri Hvorostovsky Festival in Krasnojarsk, Siberia.

Sturminger was invited by the Bregenz Festival to write the libretto for HK Gruber's opera "Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald" and to direct the premiere production in 2014, with a later revival at the Theater an der Wien. He wrote the libretto for Bernhard Lang's "I Hate Mozart" (2006) and also staged its world-premiere production at the Theater an der Wien. "Reigen", a second piece for Lang was premiered in Schwetzingen in 2014 and revived at the Bregenz Festival in 2019. Commissioned by the Klagenfurt Stadttheater, the musical theatre "Hiob" after Joseph Roth was the third collaboration of Lang and Sturminger in early 2023.

For many years Michael Sturminger has worked with the actor John Malkovich. Their mutual projects – all of them written by Sturminger under the musical supervision of Martin Haselböck – include "The Infernal Comedy", "The Giacomo Variations" and, "Just Call Me God", which was premiered at the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie in 2017. All three works have been staged in more than eighty cities from Sydney to Santiago de Chile and from Toronto to Tbilisi and New York. "Casanova Variations", a cinematic version of their second piece, starring John Malkovich in the title role and including singers and actors like Kate Lindsey, Barbara Hannigan, Miah Persson, Anna Prohaska, Jonas Kaufmann, Florian Boesch, Veronica Ferres and Fanny Ardant has been premiered at the 2014 competition of San Sebastian international festival and won two Austrian Film Awards and a Romy Award for best the screenplay in 2015.

In 2008 Sturminger accompanied Cecilia Bartoli while she was researching and recording her album "Maria", resulting in a documentary, "Malibran Rediscovered", and a filmed recital, "The Barcelona Concert". In 2018 Michael Sturminger directed "Toulouse", a television film for ARD based on a stage play and script by David Schalko and starring Catrin Striebeck and Matthias Brandt. In 2020 he wrote and directed a further feature film for television, "Die Unschuldsvermutung",

for ORF and ARD, starring Ulrich Tukur, who plays a famous conductor with “metoo”-problems at the Salzburg Festival.

Michael Sturminger made his Salzburg Festival debut in 2006, directing Mozart’s “Il sogno di Scipione”. In 2017 he directed Salvatore Sciarrino’s chamber opera “Lohengrin” at the Salzburg Easter Festival and a new production of Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s “Jedermann” at that year’s summer Festival. The following year Sturminger directed “Tosca” with Anja Harteros under Christian Thielemann at the Easter Festival. His “Jedermann” production was revived with Tobias Moretti and numerous new ensemble members at the 100 years Anniversary of the Salzburg Festival. In 2021 Sturminger directed a complete new and successful “Jedermann” production with Lars Eidinger in the title role, which was shown on television recently. Currently Sturminger is preparing a new musical theatre play for Cecilia Bartoli and John Malkovich titled “Their master’s voice” and a third new production of “Jedermann” with Michael Maertens in the title role, to be opening the Salzburg Festival in 2023.