

ECHO OF DUTCH COURAGE

IHOS Music Theatre and Opera artistic director Constantine Koukias will base himself in Amsterdam from the end of April, but has vowed to return to Tasmania.

IHOS was among a number of organisations to be hit by Arts Tasmania funding cuts, but rather than bemoan his fate Koukias has sought new opportunities.

In mid-April the company will stage its latest production, *Echo*, which Koukias said explored the neurologically disjointed and emotionally isolating inner experience of dementia.

The production has been made possible through the Salamanca Arts Centre's HyPe program, which is funded by the Australia Council, the Hobart City Council and Arts Tasmania to support the creation of innovative, contemporary hybrid theatre in Tasmania.

In July Koukias will oversee the European premiere of his work *Kimisis*, which had its world premiere in Hobart in 2010 as part of MONA FOMA.

The 15-minute performances feature digital media and a set especially designed by architects Elvio Brianese and Peta Heffernan, who are also working with Koukias on *Echo*.

Koukias said that while he was based in Amsterdam IHOS would be in caretaker mode in Tasmania, but he was determined to return to the state.

"It is not the first time in the company's 21 years that we have lost funding, and IHOS is not folding," he said.

"I can't even count the times we have been through tough situations. But these things come and go in cycles and things will improve.

"I will maintain the Tasmanian connection and will be coming back for festival commissions and other productions in mid-2014."

In preparation for the move to Amsterdam, Koukias will hold an auction of items from his personal collection.

They include limited-edition posters from IHOS operas including *To Traverse*

Water, Prayer Bells, Mikrovion and *The Barbarians*, plus a one-off copy of a poster printed for *Tesla*, which was premiered at the 2003 Ten Days on the Island.

There are also posters and photos dating from the 1920s to the present, including one of John Coltrane and several of Maria Callas, lithographs by Tasmanian artist Barbie Kjar, a 1920s Thomas Edison ediphone, a working 1935 wireless radio, two 1890s Mason & Hamlin harmoniums, an 1850s marionette, objets d'art and ephemera.

The auction will be held at St James Church Hall, 462 Elizabeth St, Hobart at 6pm on Saturday. Auction items will be available for viewing from 4pm.

PENNY THOW



Constantine Koukias