

PRESS RELEASE  
OPER LEIPZIG  
MARCH 1, 2018

## OPER LEIPZIG – HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2018/19 SEASON

On Thursday, March 1, at 11 am, the Oper Leipzig introduced the program for the coming season. Prof. Ulf Schirmer, the Oper Leipzig's Intendant and General Music Director, presented highlights from the 2018/19 season, together with opera director Franziska Severin, ballet director and principal choreographer Mario Schröder, and Cusch Jung, the principal director of the Musikalische Komödie.

The season features a total of 15 new productions: five opera premieres, five ballet premieres, and five premieres at the Musikalische Komödie join 46 other works in the active repertoire.

From August 2018 to July 2019, over 400 events are planned for the coming season, divided between the opera, Leipzig Ballet, and the Musikalische Komödie. They range from opera, Spieloper, operetta, and musicals to classical and modern ballet. Included on the program are a variety of special events, such as the New Year's Eve gala, cooperations with Leipzig's other cultural institutions – such as the Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig, the Schauspiel Leipzig, and members of the independent arts scene – as well as smaller-format projects in a variety of venues throughout the city. They also include numerous offerings from the Oper Leipzig's newly labeled division »Junge Oper Leipzig«. This division is aimed at children, young adults, and families, and also features multi-generational projects. Tours, special tours, and guest performances round out the season.

### OPER WAGNER, STRAUSS, AND PUCCINI IN FOCUS | COMPOSITION COMPETITION

With the Gewandhaus Orchestra – one of the best ensembles in the world – as a musical partner, Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss continue to form the central pillars of the opera's program. The new production of Richard Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman)*, premieres on April 30, 2019 under the musical direction of Ulf Schirmer, is another step towards the Oper Leipzig's goal of having all of this native son of Leipzig's works in the house's repertoire. The Oper Leipzig will then be the only house in the world that can make this comprehensive claim. Dutch stage director and set designer Michiel Dijkema – whose stunning sets for *Faust*, *Tosca* and *Rusalka* have helped win him the hearts of Leipzig audiences – is at the helm of the new production.

In celebration of the revivals of *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, **Richards Strauss**' most well-known works are grouped together for **two themed weekends**, from January 12-13 and from April 26-2018, 2019.

Following on the heels of *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Turandot*, audiences at the Oper Leipzig can enjoy one of Puccini's lesser-known works. On September 29, 2018, the curtain will rise on the first premiere of the season: ***La fanciulla del West / The Girl of the Golden West***. With this production, Cusch Jung, the principal director at the Musikalische Komödie, will celebrate his operatic directorial debut. At Jung's side is his long-time collaborator Karin Fritz, the stage and costume designer. Star soprano Anja Kampe will debut as Minnie, while ensemble members Tuomas Pursio and Simon Neal (who is set to sing the premiere) will alternate in the role of Jack Rance. Written to fulfill a commission from the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Puccini set the opera's action in a gold mining camp in the notorious Wild West.

With the November 30, 2018, premiere of Georges Bizet's ***Carmen*** in a new production by Lindy Hume, one of opera's most-performed pieces returns to the ranks of the Oper Leipzig's repertoire. The Australian director is familiar to Leipzig audiences for her productions of *La cenerentola* and *Don Pasquale*, and with *Carmen*, Hume brings an unapologetically freedom-loving, self-confident woman to the stage. Canadian mezzosoprano Wallis Giunta – an Oper Leipzig ensemble member and International Opera Awards 2018 nominee in the "Young Singer" category – makes her debut as *Carmen*.

Joining Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka*, which premiered in the current season and is one of the most well-known Czech operas, is Bedřich Smetana's comic opera ***The Bartered Bride***, which will premiere on June 15, 2019. Set in Smetana's Bohemian homeland, the work takes the audience on a nostalgic journey through time to the era of arranged marriages. The »Dance of the Comedians« is also known as one of Smetana's most famous orchestral pieces. Christian von Götz – who directed Carl Maria von Weber's *Freischütz* during the 2016/17 season – returns to Oper Leipzig to direct this new production.

Marius Felix Lange's ***Snow White*** promises to be an entertaining operatic event for the whole family. It will premiere on March 9, 2019, in a production that marks Patrick Rohbeck's operatic directorial debut. Lange's opera for children offers a fresh approach to the Brothers' Grimm fairytale about jealousy and the obsession with beauty; it takes current themes and sets them to child-friendly music. Despite its catchiness, the opera offers a great deal of refinement and sophistication, and is guaranteed to delight the ears of adults as well.

For the first time, the Oper Leipzig is going to establish a **composition competition** on the subject of »*Heimat - What does home sound like?*« In the process, the Oper Leipzig is undertaking a musical search of sorts. In addition to promoting young composers in the field of contemporary music, the goal of the competition is to serve as a stimulus for artistic engagement with socially relevant issues. The focus is humankind's original instrument: the voice. The winning compositions – which will be chosen by a jury under the leadership of chairman Prof. Ulf Schirmer, the Oper Leipzig's Intendant and General Music Director – will be premiered in a Prizewinner Concert on June 26, 2019, at the Oper Leipzig. A detailed call for applications will appear in April 2018, on selected websites and on the Oper Leipzig homepage.

## LEIPZIGER BALLETT

### »MAGNIFICAT« WITH DUO COCOROSIE | BEETHOVEN AS PART OF THE »25 YEARS OF HOUSTON LEIPZIG SISTER-CITYHOOD« EVENING | UWE SCHOLZ GALA

With the premiere of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Magnificat* on February 9, 2019, the Leipzig Ballet continues its successful examination of Leipzig's great choral literature with the Chorus of the Oper Leipzig. The two entities have previously collaborated on Bach's *St. John Passion* and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's symphonic cantata *Lobgesang*. For this choreographic world premiere, Mario Schröder, together with the American indie folk duo *CocoRosie*, consciously breaks open the *Magnificat* and musically threads it together with the modern age. Artistically versatile sisters Bianca and Sierra Casady counterbalance Bach's work with material developed especially for the ballet performance.

With the new ballet evening *Beethoven/Ravel*, the Leipzig Ballet makes an artistic contribution to the festivities celebrating **25 years of sister-cityhood between Leipzig and Houston**. The premiere – on October 27, 2018 – also serves as the official ceremonial act to the festivities. And with this production, the two cities' signature choreographers come together. Uwe Scholz's choreographic work *Symphony No. 7* from 1991 – set to Beethoven's work of the same name – meets *Tu Tu* set to Ravel's Piano Concert in G Major, choreographed by Stanton Welch, the artistic director of the Houston Ballet. A new piece by Mario Schröder rounds out the program.

**Uwe Scholz** would have celebrated his 60th birthday on December 31, 2018. To mark the occasion, the Leipzig Ballet will honor their former principal choreographer – an exceptional talent who died far too early – with a **Gala on December 1**, 2018. Uwe Scholz's name is simultaneous with works such as *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)*, *The Great Mass* in C Major, and *Pax questuosa*. Maintaining the legacy of this choreographer is one of the Leipzig Ballet's foremost goals. And in doing so, they help keep the memory of this extraordinary artist alive. Uwe Scholz had a decisive influence on the company following Germany's reunification. His influence continues today thanks to Mario Schröder, one of Uwe Scholz's close friends. The gala will include Uwe Scholz's choreographic output set to music by Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and others.

Once again, the Leipzig Ballet will also be appearing in a numerous venues and buildings throughout the city. As a part of their continuing cooperation with the Schauspiel Leipzig (Leipzig's playhouse), French choreographer Martin Harriague's ballet evening *If You Were God* will premiere on the main stage of the Schauspiel Leipzig. Harriague began his career as a dancer with Thierry Malandain (who thrilled Leipzig audiences with his *Don Juan / Mozart à deux*). In addition to other organizations, Harriague's time with the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company was a formative experience. He has won a number of young artist prizes (in Stuttgart, Hanover, and Copenhagen, among others), and was invited to join the Ballet National de Marseilles, the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, and the Malandain Ballet Biarritz.

The Leipzig Ballet's existing cooperation with the LOFFT theater (one of the entities in Leipzig's independent arts scene) will intensify in the coming season. For the first time, an *Intershop* premiere will take place at LOFFT's new venue, at Halle 7 on the Leipzig Baumwollspinnerei campus, on June 28, 2019. The »Intershop« series is dedicated to the work of young creators of dance.

## MUSIKALISCHE KOMÖDIE

### THREE OPERETTA PREMIERES | BERNSTEIN'S »ON THE TOWN«

In the 2018/19 season, the Musikalische Komödie will take audiences all the way from the metropolises of Chicago, New York, Paris and London to Switzerland. Three operetta premieres, a musical, a family classic, and a rediscovered operetta rarity comprise the coming season's new productions.

Emmerich Kálmán's 1928 operetta ***The Duchess of Chicago*** will kick off the new season on the main stage of the Musikalische Komödie on October 20, 2018. In this royal comedy of mistaken identity, the new world meets the old – and the Viennese Waltz meets jazz – before all ends well. Ulrich Wiggers, the actor/singer/director, helms the new production. In addition to his stage career, Wiggers has been seen on the "Tatort" and "Polizieruf 110" television shows, as Frederick the Great in both the ZDF miniseries "Die Deutschen" and "Alles oder Nichts," and in the ARD series "In aller Freundschaft." His directing career intensified in 2010; he's directed productions of *Die Buddenbrooks*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and a German-language version of *Death of a Salesman*. He has directed the musicals *The Man of La Mancha*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *Into the Woods*, among others.

Also set in the USA is Bernstein's musical ***On the Town*** – an homage to the city of New York. It will premiere on January 26, 2019, under the musical direction of Stefan Klingele in a production by Cusch Jung. Jeffery Krueger, Benjamin Sommerfeld, and Andreas Rainer play Gabey, Chip, and Ozzie, three sailors on a 24-hour shore leave in the wild American metropolis. Karin Fritz is the set designer and Aleksandra Kica the costume designer.

Paul Burkhard's musical comedy ***The Firework*** will premiere on April 13, 2019. It tells the story of two brothers who couldn't be more different. Albert Oberholzer's idyllic petit-bourgeois family life is thoroughly disrupted by his circus director brother's unwelcome appearance. Catchy tunes like "Oh, mein Papa" helped *The Firework* live up to its name and gave it worldwide fame. Axel Köhler will direct. The Kammersänger/stage director/Intendant was artistic director and general manager of the Oper Halle from 2009-2016. He has directed in Dresden, Munich, Schwerin, Augsburg, Bayreuth, Leipzig, Innsbruck, Palermo and Graz.

Shortly before the season ends, actor/director Klaus Seiffert brings Leo Fall's ***Madame Pompadour*** to the main stage of the Musikalische Komödie (premiere: June 1, 2019). Not for nothing is Pompadour – Falls' third-to-last operetta – his biggest success. With a soundtrack of energetic, catching melodies, the Roaring Twenties emerge from the backdrop of bustling rococo Paris. Lilli Wünscher appears as Marquise de Pompadour, the mistress of Ludwig XV. Leo Fall will be heard again as a part of the Operetta Workshop 2019, when his ***Rosen aus Florida*** is presented. Erich Wolfgang Korngold completed the operetta at the behest of Fall's widow.

Once again, the Musikalische Komödie has a broad range of events on offer for younger audiences. ***Paddington Bear's First Concert*** – a musical story by Herbert Chappell – premieres in the Venussaal on September 27, 2018. Author Michael Bond created the lovable marmalade and bitter orange aficionado, named for the London railway station, in 1958, and he's been winning the hearts of fans the world over ever since. The Children's Chorus of the Oper Leipzig and the Musikalische Komödie will also continue their cooperation

with the Schaubühne Lindenfels with the production of *The Secret of the Black Spider*. In addition, the Musikalische Komödie has once again been invited to participate in the “Classics for Kids” festival. And last but certainly not least, they will also continue “Nachhall” – their cooperation with Leipzig’s Museum of Fine Arts – as well as offering jazz and poetry slam artists a performance platform.

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#### SERVICE

Starting immediately, we are accepting written reservations for the new season. Advance ticket sales begin on April 16, 2018, at the Opera House box office, at +49 (0)341 12 61 261, via email at [service@oper-leipzig.de](mailto:service@oper-leipzig.de) or online at [www.oper-leipzig.de](http://www.oper-leipzig.de).