

DRAWN BY THE GLITTER OF GOLD

PREMIERE OF »LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST«

On Saturday, September 29, at 7:00 pm, the curtain will rise on the 2018/19 season's first premiere: Cusch Jung directs Giacomo Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* (*The Girl from the Golden West*) for the Oper Leipzig. Prof. Ulf Schirmer, Intendant and General Music Director, conducts the Gewandhaus.

Puccini set this, his seventh opera, in a gold mining camp in the Wild West. Loneliness and isolation define the miners' raw, masculine existence, ruled as it is by a clearly defined pecking order. Here, far from home and hearth, the men's search for gold becomes a search for true meaning in life. Surrounded by the miners, Minnie the barmaid (Meagan Miller) is the personification of hope for a new life. For Sheriff Jack Rance (Simon Neal) and the gold miners, she embodies their hopes and dreams. But then a stranger with a dark past arrives (Gaston Rivero as Dick Johnson), threatening the camp's order.

La fanciulla del West (*The Girl from the Golden West*) was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and was premiered there in 1910. As he did with *La Bohème* and *Madame Butterfly*, Puccini creates a richly contoured world for his Wild West opera, complete with its own atmospheric musical idiom. With *La fanciulla del West*, Puccini innovated with a through-composed, large-scale musical form, in which he moved seamlessly from duets to musical dialogue. In doing so, he distanced himself from traditional Italian opera and focusing more on the psychological expressiveness of his music.

Director Cusch Jung, the principal stage director of Leipzig's Musikalische Komödie, was handpicked by Intendant and music director Prof. Ulf Schirmer to spearhead this production of *La fanciulla del West* (*The Girl from the Golden West*). It marks Jung's directorial debut at the Opera House. Meagan Miller, who has already celebrated international success as Minnie, appears in the title role. The American soprano last appeared in Leipzig in 2018 as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. Simon Neal (whom audiences in Leipzig met this past spring when he thrilled audiences as Dr. Schön in *Lulu*) and Gaston Rivero (last seen in Leipzig breaking hearts in *Don Carlo*), will both debut new roles.

Tickets (15 € – 78 €) available at the Opera House box office, at Tel: +49 (0)341 12 61 261 (Mon – Sat 10:00am – 7:00pm), by email: service@oper-leipzig.de or online at www.oper-leipzig.de.

Premiere: Saturday, September 29, 2018, 7:00 pm

Further Performances: October 3, 6 & 28/ November 10 & 24/ December 2, 2018

Giacomo Puccini

La fanciulla del West (The Girl of the Golden West)

Opera in three acts | Text by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini, after the play *The Girl of the Golden West* (1905) by David Belasco | In Italian with German supertitles

Direction:

Musical Director: **Ulf Schimer**

Stage Director: **Cusch Jung**

Set and Costume Design: **Karin Fritz**

Chorus Master: **Thomas Eitler-de Lint**

Dramaturgy: **Christian Geltinger**

Cast:

Minnie **Meagan Miller**, Wowkle **Christiane Döcker**, Jack Rance **Simon Neal**, Dick Johnson **Gaston Rivero**, Nick **Patrick Vogel**, Ashby **Randall Jakobsh**, Sonora **Jonathan Michie**, Trin **Matthew Peña**, Sid **Franz Xaver Schlecht**, Jake Wallace **Sejong Chang**, Bello **Viktor Rud**, Harry **Tyler Clarke**, Joe **Sven Hjørleifsson**, Happy **Jakob Kunath**, Larkens **Roland Schubert**, Billy Jackrabbit **Artur Mateusz Garbas**, José Castro **Jean-Baptiste Mouret**, ein Postillon **Tae Hee Kwon**

Chorus of the Oper Leipzig

Gewandhaus Orchestra