

OPENING NIGHT INVITATION

RICHARD WAGNER

TANNHÄUSER

MARCH 17, 2018



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Ladies and Gentlemen,
Esteemed colleagues,

You are cordially invited to attend the German premiere of Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg* in a production by Calixto Bieito, under the musical direction of General Music Director Ulf Schirmer on **Saturday, March 17, 2018, at 6 pm** at the Oper Leipzig.

A world of pleasure and carnal desire beckons from the Venusberg. Meanwhile, purity and chastity await in the heights of the Wartburg. But Tannhäuser feels at home in neither realm. And scandal breaks out at the Singers' Contest at the Wartburg when Tannhäuser sings an ecstatic song of praise to the carnal pleasures of the Venusberg, comparing them to love's true nature. In doing so, he breaks one of the cardinal rules of the contest. At the last minute, Elisabeth comes to his defense, begging the crowd to give Tannhäuser the chance to atone for his transgression. In order to find salvation, he must make a pilgrimage to Rome. But when he returns from the holy city – stripped of all illusions – he discovers that Elisabeth has left the mortal world. Can he still find grace?

Catalan director Calixto Bieito turns our focus to the struggle between base human instincts and social conventions. Tannhäuser finds himself torn between reality and illusion, caught between artistic freedom and social constraint. Bieito's production borrows heavily from Richard Wagner's basic idea, in which the artist opposes meaningless convention and the rejection of human nature in a soulless society. Bieito's production – a coproduction of the Opera Vlaanderen and the Teatro La Fenice di Venezia – was a wild success when it premiered in Ghent and Antwerp during the 2015/2016 season. It appeared last season in Venice and Bern. Rebecca Ringst and Ingo Krügler – Bieito's long-time artistic partners – are responsible for the set and costume designs.

Burkhard Fritz made his celebrated debut as Tannhäuser at the premiere in Ghent, and he'll appear again here in the title role. A native of Hamburg, Fritz is one of today's leading young heldentenors, equally at home – and successful – in the Italian and French repertoire. Swedish soprano Elisabet Strid – one of Leipzig's beloved guest performers – bows as Elisabeth. She was mostly recently seen as Salome at the Oper Leipzig. Ensemble member Kathrin Göring will make her scenic debut as Venus, and Mathias Hausmann takes the stage as Wolfram von Eschenbach.

The chorus master for this production is the Oper Leipzig's new chorus director, Thomas Eitler-de Lint. Born in Austria, Eitler-de Lint studied in Vienna, and has worked in Koblenz and Bremen, as well as for various radio choruses and at the Bayreuth Festival. He was most recently the chorus director at the Staatstheater Darmstadt.

This invitation is valid for members of the media with a reporting assignment only. You will receive one press ticket and one guest ticket (18 Euro) for the premiere. Please contact me for further information, or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steffi Gretschel
Oper Leipzig Press Officer

Gewandhaus
Orchester / **OPER
LEIPZIG**

RADIO / FILM / PHOTOGRAPHY DATE

ORCHESTERHAUPTPROBE

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018, 4 PM

PREMIERE

SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2018, 6 PM

FURTHER PERFORMANCES

March 24, April 2, May 27, 2018 (all performances feature an introductory talk 45 minutes before curtain)

TANNHÄUSER

RICHARD WAGNER

Grand romantic opera in three acts | Text by the composer | Dresden Version | In German with supertitles | Coproduction of the Opera Vlaanderen and the Teatro La Fenice di Venezia

DIRECTION

Musical Director ULF SCHIRMER

Stage Director CALIXTO BIEITO

Stage Designer REBECCA RINGST

Costume Designer INGO KRÜGLER

Chorus Master THOMAS EITLER-DE LINT

Dramaturgy BETTINA AUER, CHRISTIAN GELTINGER

CAST

Tannhäuser BURKHARD FRITZ | Elisabeth ELISABET STRID | Venus KATHRIN GÖRING |

Wolfram von Eschenbach MATHIAS HAUSMANN | Hermann, Landgrave RÚNI BRATTABERG |

A young shepherd DANAE KONTORA | Walther von der Vogelweide PATRICK VOGEL |

Biterolf RANDALL JAKOBSSON | Heinrich der Schreiber KYUNGHO KIM | Reinmar von Zweter SEJONG CHANG

CHORUS OF THE OPER LEIPZIG | GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA