

OPENING NIGHT INVITATION

VIKTOR ULLMANN

DER STURZ DES ANTICHRIST – THE FALL OF THE ANTICHRIST

21 March 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Esteemed colleagues,

What leeway does the individual have in the fight against a dictatorial regime? Against the background of the National Socialists' seizure of power, Viktor Ullmann and his lyricist Albert Steffen search for the answers to this question in the opera *Der Sturz des Antichrist – The Fall of the Antichrist*. The Oper Leipzig will present the work in a production by Balázs Kovalik. Stephan Mannteuffel will design the set and costumes, and Matthias Foremny will conduct from the podium of the Gewandhausorchester. And you are cordially invited to join us for the premiere on **Saturday, 21 March 2020**.

An artist (Stefan Rügamer), an engineer (Kay Stiefermann) and a priest (Dan Karlström) are held captive by an authoritarian regent (Thomas Mohr), who wants to use their skills for his own purposes. He instructs the engineer to build a spaceship, so that the laws of gravity, and therefore the laws of nature, can be rendered ineffective. He orders the priest to turn stones into bread, in order to satisfy the people's hunger. And he commands the artist to praise the regent and his accomplishments in his new works. While the mechanic and the engineer quickly agree, the artist refuses. He is sent to prison, in the hopes that it bend his will. There, in conversation with an old guard (Sebastian Pilgrim), he finds new strength to resist. Ultimately, the dictator – possessed by delusions of grandeur – throws himself to the depths.

Composer Viktor Ullmann originally wrote his opera *Der Sturz des Antichrist*, based on the drama of the same name by anthroposophist Albert Steffen, as a commission for the Vienna State Opera. The opera's instrumentation is opulent in its late-Romantic style. Viktor Ullmann himself called it a *Bühnenweihepiel*, or stage consecration play, in reference to Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*. What seems to be an allegory about the political situation leading up to 1933, when the opera was composed, was intended by Ullmann to be the musical reincarnation of anthroposophical teaching. Ullmann was murdered in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1944. *Der Sturz des Antichrist* was first performed 60 years after it was written.

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

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Grünzweig
Oper Leipzig Press Officer

RADIO- / FILM- / PHOTO DATE

Wednesday, 18 March 2020, 5:00pm

PREMIERE

Saturday, 21. March 2020, 7:00pm, Opera House

FURTHER PERFORMANCES

29 March (with a "Kantinengespräch – Cantina Chat" immediately following) / 02 Apr. / 27 Jun. 2020
(all performances with an introduction 45 minutes before curtain)

DER STURZ DES ANTICHRIST

VIKTOR ULLMANN

Opera (for a stage dedication) in three acts | Text by Albert Steffen | In German with German supertitles

DIRECTION

Musical Direction **Matthias Foremny**

Stage Direction **Balázs Kovalik**

Set and Costume Design **Stephan Mannteuffel**

Lighting Design **Michael Röger**

Thomas Master **Thomas Eitler-de Lint**

CAST

The Regent / Demon of the Regent **Thomas Mohr** | The Priest / The imperfect Angel **Dan Karlström** |
The Engineer / The Ghost of the Engineer **Kay Stiefermann** | The Artist **Stephan Rügamer** | The Guard /
Old Man **Sebastian Pilgrim** | Town Crier **Martin Petzold**

Chorus of the Oper Leipzig

Supernumeraries of the Oper Leipzig

Gewandhausorchester