

OPER KÖLN / COLOGNE OPERA PRESENTS NEW SEASON 2021.22

Cologne, 21st of June 2021. Birgit Meyer's last season as Intendant/director of the Oper Köln gets to the heart of her vision »**WE ARE OPER KÖLN – OPERA FOR ALL**« which she has been living and conveying over the last ten years, together with her team at the Oper Köln.

»It is with great pleasure that I welcome our audience to the new season, which will be my last one as Intendant of the Oper Köln. These have been quite eventful years, in which we always fought to set the stage and make art possible. After the StaatenHaus had increasingly proven itself as an opera venue, celebrated by the audience and press alike, the pandemic began. It taught us humility towards life, and that nothing can be taken for granted. Again, we found new ways to be visible, and we succeeded. Now I invite you to the grand finale: with new and familiar elements, our wonderful ensemble, the singers of the International Opera Studio, international guest artists, and with all the other staff members of the Oper Köln, who relentlessly work to create the fascination on stage. The upcoming year shall be an expression of this team spirit and passion, to bring unforgettable experiences to the audience.«
(Birgit Meyer, Intendant/director, Oper Köln)

Season 2021.22 will see **TWELVE NEW OPERA AND CHILDREN'S OPERA PRODUCTIONS**, among them **THREE WORLD PREMIERES, TWO GERMAN PREMIERES, TWO COLOGNE PREMIERES** and **FOUR REVIVALS**. Once again, young teams who began their international careers at the Oper Köln will present their take on contemporary works.

30 years ago, the opera house at the Offenbachplatz saw the German premiere of Cologne composer York Höller's »**DER MEISTER UND MARGARITA**« (premiere: 3 April 2022). Now young director Valentin Schwarz is working on a new production with his crew Andy Besuch (costumes) and Andrea Cozzi (set design). The team will present the new »**RING DES NIBELUNGEN**« at the Bayreuth Festival in summer 2022. André de Ridder, one of the most interesting conductors of the younger generation, will make his debut at the Oper Köln. With »**DIE VÖGEL**« (premiere: 5 December 2021) the Oper Köln will show another major work by Walter Braunfels: directed by Nadja Loschky, who gave her highly acclaimed debut with »**RUSALKA**« (revival: 6 March 2022). Gabriel Feltz will be the conductor.

The tremendously successful first opera by Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, »L'AMOUR DE LOIN«, (premiere: 24 October 2021) will be staged for the first time in Cologne, directed by Johannes Erath and conducted by Constantin Trinks. Originally planned for the season 2020.21, Hector Berlioz's opera »BÉATRICE ET BÉNÉDICT« (premiere: 30 April 2022), under the musical direction of François-Xavier Roth and in a production by Jean Renshaw, will now see its Cologne premiere in the upcoming season.

The **CHILDREN'S OPERA COLOGNE (KINDEROPER KÖLN)** has an anniversary to celebrate: **25 YEARS OF MUSIC THEATRE FOR CHILDREN, TEENAGERS, AND ADULTS IN EUROPE'S FIRST CHILDREN'S OPERA.** This will be honoured with two extraordinary productions: The Cologne »**RING DES NIBELUNGEN FÜR KINDER**« will be performed as a complete tetralogy for the first time from Sunday 26 September 2021. Moreover, the production will go on tour for the first time, to South Korea. A newly commissioned work by the Oper Köln is »**DIE GESCHICHTE VOM FUCHS, DER DEN VERSTAND VERLOR**« [**The Story of the Fox who lost his Mind**] (premiere: 20 November 2021) by librettist Martin Baltscheit and composer Johannes Wulff-Woesten. This commission is directly connected to the project »**OPER FÜR JUNG UND ALT**« [**Opera for Young and Old**], which particularly invites people with dementia and an accompanying person to attend operas at the Kinderoper Köln. The project, which has developed significantly under Birgit Meyer's leadership, will receive special recognition through the first gala dedicated to the subjects of Alzheimer's/dementia and mental health on 9 January 2022. With this gala, the Oper Köln supports Germany's first Alzheimer's prevention centre, based at the University Hospital Cologne.

During the past season, despite or because of the pandemic, eight new productions were streamed for the first time in the Oper Köln's history, and nearly 14,000 streaming tickets were sold. This clearly shows that unforeseen developments and exceptions are no problems per se, but rather creative opportunities that never cease to inspire groundbreaking productions and new approaches to the concept of opera. The film »Hochzeit mit Figaro ohne Gäste – Operschaffen in Zeiten der Pandemie« [Wedding with Figaro without Guests – Creating Opera in the Time of Pandemic] allows a unique behind-the-scenes perspective on the current situation. It can be accessed here: <https://www.oper.koeln/de/Streaming>
We are also profoundly honored that the Oper Köln's choir was recognized as "Best Choir" in the German-speaking world by the OPER! Magazine, at their OPER! AWARDS in November 2020.

For more information on the Oper Köln's upcoming program (in German), please click here: www.oper.koeln. The season brochure can be accessed here: https://www.oper.koeln/de/Spielzeit_2021_22.