

Premiere

DON PASQUALE

Dramma buffo in three acts by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Giovanni Domenico Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti

Sung in Italian with German surtitles

Conductor: Simone Di Felice

Director: Caterina Panti Liberovici

Set Designer: Sergio Mariotti

Costume Designer: Raphaela Rose

Lighting Designer: Joachim Klein

Dramaturge: Deborah Einspieler

Don Pasquale: Božidar Smiljanić / Donato Di Stefano (October 2nd, 9th, 15th 2023)

Doctor Malatesta: Mikolaj Trabka / Liviu Holender (September 27th, October 2nd, 6th, 9th, 12th, 14th, 15th 2023)

Ernesto: Pablo Martínez / Brayán Avila Martínez (September 27th, October 4th, 8th, 12th, 15th 2023)

Norina: Bianca Tognocchi / Clara Kim (October 2nd, 6th, 9th, 12th, 14th, 15th 2023)

A Notary: Pilgoo Kang

Dancers: Mirjam Motzke, Madeline Ferricks-Rosevear

Frankfurt Opern- und Museumsorchester

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) was living in France when he was commissioned to write an opera for the Théâtre Italien in Paris. He finished it in a matter of weeks. The premiere on January 3rd 1843 was an enormous success, which the operas that followed, written by this Bergamo born composer, could not live up to. There are four protagonists, whose characterisations – as with Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* (1733) or in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1816) – are based on figures from Commedia dell'arte. The fast moving action is joined by Donizetti's music, whose melodic, colourful style – unusual for those days – was „spiced up“ with brass instruments. Due to open here in 2020/21, and seen at the 2022 Winter Festival in Erl, audiences in Frankfurt at last have the chance to see it for the first time.

The plot: Wealthy Don Pasquale, despite his age, decides to get married at last, forbidding his nephew Ernesto to wed the penniless young widow Norina and threatening to disinherit him. Ernesto's friend Doctor Malatesta hatches a plan to bring Don Pasquale back to his senses: the doctor introduces the old man to his virtuous sister Sofronia, whose veil hides none other than Norina. Pasquale is delighted with the young woman and wants to marry her immediately. No sooner are the rings exchanged than Norina reveals her true nature, and makes the old man's life hell. In order to get rid of her as soon as possible he allows Ernesto to marry the woman he loves, even promising him a monthly allowance in the hope that the other woman might drive Sofronia out of the house. When Pasquale eventually finds out about the trick, he takes it in his stride. He gives the couple his blessing and promises to behave himself.

It is led by the Italian conductor **Simone Di Felice**, a Kapellmeister at Oper Frankfurt since 2017/18 who conducts the New Production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* in March 2024. He recently conducted a new Handel's *Orlando* and performances of *Don Giovanni* for the company. **Caterina Panti Liberovici**, a director's assistant at Oper Frankfurt since 2009, staged her first opera for the company in 2016: Fioravanti's *Le cantatrici villane*, which was followed in 2020 by Rossini's *La gazzezza*, both in the Bockenheimer Depot. Ensemble Member **Božidar Smiljanić** is singing his first Don Pasquale, and can be heard in the title role of a new *Le nozze di Figaro* later in the season. This British-Serbian bass-baritone shares the role with Italian born **Donato Di Stefano**, who sang the lead when the production opened in Erl and who returns in the autumn for Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*). All the other roles – in all casts – are sung by former and current Members of **Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble and Opera Studio**, except the Columbian tenor **Pablo Martínez** and his Mexican colleague **Brayan Avila Martinez**, who sing Ernesto.

Premiere: Saturday September 23rd 2023, at 19.30hrs Uhr in the Bockenheimer Depot

Further performances: September 27th, 29th,

October 1st (15.30hrs), 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 14th, 15th (18hrs) 2023

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.30hrs

Tickets cost: € 30 to € 90 (with a 12.5% pre-booking fee when not purchased direct from the theatre)

Tickets can be obtained from the usual outlets, by telephone +49 (0)69 – 212 49 49 4 or online www.oper-frankfurt.de.

We do hope you might be able to publish this event. For further information, ordering photographs and reserving press tickets please contact Holger Engelhardt (Leitung Pressereferat) on +49 (0)69 – 212 46 727. His fax number is +49 (0)69 – 212 37 164 or you can email him on holger.engelhardt@buehnen-frankfurt.de.