

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt

**LE GRAND MACABRE**

Opera in two acts by György Ligeti

Text by Michael Meschke and György Ligeti after Michel de Ghelderode

Sung in English with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Thomas Guggeis

Director: Vasily Barkhatov

Set Designer: Zinovy Margolin

Costume Designer: Olga Shaishmelashvili

Lighting Designer: Joachim Klein

Video: Ruth Stofer, Tabea Rothfuchs

Chorus Master: Tilman Michael

Dramaturge: Maximilian Enderle

Nekrotzar: Simon Neal

Piet the Pot: Peter Marsh

Prince Go-Go: Eric Jurenas

Venus / Chief of the Gepopo: Anna Nekhames

Astradamors: Alfred Reiter

Mescalina: Claire Barnett-Jones

White Minister: Michael McCown

Black Minister: Ian MacNeil

Amanda: Elizabeth Reiter

Amando: Karolina Makuła amongst others

Oper Frankfurt's Chorus and Extras; Frankfurt Opern und Museumsorchester

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

Noisy, sonambulant and downright weird – that's the endgame piece, performed for the first time in 1978 at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, by **György Ligeti** (1923-2006), dressed in a motley cloak beneath which mischief reigns. Belgian Michel de Ghelderode's play *La Balade du Grand Macabre*, a kind of absurd mystery play written in 1934, provided the composer and his librettist with the tragicomedy material for their opera. As a commentary on avant garde music in those days the Romanian born but since 1956 in exile living Hungarian called his work, tongue in cheek, an „Anti-Anti-Opera“ – actually a return to opera in the traditional sense, but „dangerous, exaggerated, completely nuts and smutty“. Inspired by pop art, layers of all kinds of borrowed bits of music, distorted quotes and dry-comic text combine to produce an over the top cocktail. The music's the driving force for a strange out of control world theatre, which contains possibly the best piss up in operatic history.

A grim reaper announces that the world will end at midnight. The clock's ticking. The impending catastrophe has put an end to the happy-go-lucky atmosphere in the imaginary principality. While two lovers want to end their lives having orgasms, the self-appointed prophet of doom Nekrotzar has roped in tipsy Piet the Pot and the astronomer Astradamors as helpers and goes to the palace, where the terrifying news has already reached the much loved prince and scheming ministers by way of the chief of the Gepopo, the secret police.

Conductor of this first ever performance in Frankfurt is the new General Music Director **Thomas Guggeis**, who started the season off with a New Production of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Director **Vasily Barkhatov**, who was born in Moscow, made his House Debut in 2022/23 with another Frankfurt First: Tchaikovsky's *The Sorceress*. Subsequent productions have included Weinberg's *The Idiot* at the Theater an der Wien and Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Future plans include *Turandot* at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples and *Eugene Onegin* at Theater Bonn. British baritone **Simon Neal** (Nekrotzar) is a regular guest at Oper Frankfurt, where roles have included the Forester (*Cunning Little Vixen*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Achilles (*Penthesilea*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), Sebastiano (*Tiefland*) and the title role in Enescu's *Oedipe*. American countertenor **Eric Jurenas** (Prince Go-Go) appeared at Oper Frankfurt for the first time in 2018, as Natascha in Eötvös' *Tri Sestry*, returning in 2020/21 for Arsamene in Handel's *Xerxes*. British mezzo-soprano **Claire Barnett-Jones** (Mescalina) made her debut here in 2018/19, as Madame Flora in Menotti's *The Medium*. Nearly all the other roles are being sung by Members of Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble: **Peter Marsh** (Piet the Pot), **Anna Nekhames** (Venus / Chief of der Gepopo), **Alfred Reiter** (Astradamors), **Michael McCown** (White Minister), **Iain MacNeil** (Black Minister), **Elizabeth Reiter** (Amanda) and **Karolina Makuła** (Amando).

**Premiere:** Sunday November 5th 2023, at 18hrs in the Opera House

**Further performances:** November 10th, 18th, 24th, 26th (18hrs), 30th, December 2nd 2023

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.30hrs

**Tickets cost:** € 16 to € 190 (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](http://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](mailto:holger.engelhardt@buehnen-frankfurt.de).