

Premiere

GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO

Dramma per musica in three acts by George Frideric Handel

Text by Nicola Francesco Haym

Sung in Italian with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Simone Di Felice

Director: Nadja Loschky

Set Designer: Etienne Pluss

Costume Designer: Irina Spreckelmeyer

Lighting Designer: Joachim Klein

Chorus (recorded): Tilman Michael

Conceptional collaborator: Yvonne Gebauer

Dramaturge: Mareike Wink

Giulio Cesare: Lawrence Zazzo

Cleopatra: Pretty Yende

Cornelia: Cláudia Ribas / Zanda Švėde (April, May 2024)

Sesto: Bianca Andrew

Tolomeo: Nils Wanderer

Achilla: Božidar Smiljanić

Curio: Jarrett Porter

Nireno: Iurii Iushkevich

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

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

Giulio Cesare in Egitto by **George Frideric Handel** (1685-1759), with a libretto by Nicola Francesco Haym, was one of his most successful operas during his lifetime, helped by the brilliance of its music and action. It was also the perfect vehicle for sumptuous, decorative staging, so loved by Handel's contemporaries, and a distinctive psychological exploration of each character. The success of the World Premiere on February 20th 1724 at the Haymarket Theatre in London was also due to the fact that Handel, who was also artistic director, had some of the best singers in the world on stage. The previous *Giulio Cesare* opened in Frankfurt in 2012, directed by Johannes Erath.

Egypt, 48 BC: Pompey, Giulio Cesare's political enemy, fled to the court of the Egyptian King Tolomeo who, hoping to curry favour with Cesare, insidiously murdered Pompey. Cesare promises Pompey's widow Cornelia and her son to find the murderer. Meanwhile Tolomeo's sister Cleopatra intends to persuade Cesare to give her the Egyptian throne. As planned, Cesare falls for her charms, but when he hears that Sesto has been taken prisoner and Cornelia carried off he tries – despite being threatened by Egyptian soldiers – to hurry to their aid. Under arrest, on her brother's orders, Cleopatra finds out that her beloved has fallen in battle. But Cesare lives and, with Sesto's help – who managed to kill Tolomeo – frees the women. Cesare crowns Cleopatra rightful Queen of Egypt under Roman dominion.

Italian born **Simone Di Felice**, a Kapellmeister at Oper Frankfurt since 2017/18, conducted a New Production of Handel's *Orlando* and performances of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*, which he also led at the Opéra National de Paris in the autumn of 2022, in Frankfurt last season. This season he conducted works including *Don Pasquale* in the Bockenheimer Depot. American countertenor **Lawrence Zazzo** returns to Oper Frankfurt as Giulio Cesare. He is regarded as one of the most thrilling performers of his fach. Roles in Frankfurt have included Handel's Tamerlano and Arsamene in *Xerxes*. He has sung at the Hamburg, Munich, Berlin and Vienna state operas, Zurich Opera, the Opéra National de Paris, Covent Garden in London and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. South African soprano **Pretty Yende** (Cleopatra) made her very successful debut at the Met in New York in January 2013, singing Comtesse Adèle alongside Juan Diego Flórez, since when she has returned for many roles. Recent engagements have included Juliette and Olympia (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*) at the Opéra National de Paris, Amina (*La sonnambula*) at the Vienna State Opera, Gilda (*Rigoletto*) at Covent Garden in London and Violetta Valéry (*La Traviata*) at the Staatsoper in Berlin. The other roles are taken by Guests, Members of the Ensemble and Opera Studio, including **Cláudia Ribas** and **Zanda Švėde** (Cornelia), **Bianca Andrew** (Sesto), **Nils Wanderer** (Tolomeo), **Božidar Smiljanić** (Achilla), **Jarrett Porter** (Curio) and **Iurii Iushkevich** (Nireno).

Premiere: Sunday March 24 2024, at 18hrs in the Opera House

Further performances: March 29th, April 6th, 11th, 14th, 20th, 27th, May 4th, 8th, 10th, 18th 2024

All performances begin at 18hrs.

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.

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.