

Premiere

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Opera in three acts by Benjamin Britten

Libretto by the composer and Peter Pears taken from William Shakespeare

Sung in English with German surtitles

Conductor: Geoffrey Paterson

Director: Brigitte Fassbaender

Set Designer: Christoph Fischer

Costume Designer: Anna-Sophie Lienbacher

Lighting Designer: Jan Hartmann

Children's Chorus Master: Álvaro Corral Matute

Dramaturge: Deborah Einspieler

Oberon: Cameron Shahbazi

Titania: Kateryna Kasper

Puck: Frank Albrecht

Theseus: Thomas Faulkner

Hippolyta: Zanda Švēde

Lysander: Michael Porter

Demetrius: Danylo Matvienko

Hermia: Tamara Gura

Helena: Monika Buczkowska

Bottom: Barnaby Rea

Quince: Magnús Baldvinsson

Flute: Brian Michael Moore

Snug: Gabriel Rollinson

Snout: Theo Lebow

Starveling: Jonathan Macker

Fairies: Members of the Children's Chorus

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

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

A Midsummer Night's Dream by **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976) was first performed on June 11th 1960 at the re-opening of the Jubilee Hall at the Aldeburgh Festival, which he founded with Peter Pears. This successful composer shaped the libretto with Pears, adapting and shortening William Shakespeare's comedy, which had often been set to music before, from five acts to three. His scoring, which started off for chamber orchestra, grew to realise the enormous descriptive potential in the work, he introduced far eastern influences gleaned from his travels to Bali and Japan in 1956. The last production of the work in Frankfurt was directed by Thomas Langhoff in 1989.

Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the Fairies, are arguing over a little boy in a wood near Athens. Oberon, wanting to take revenge, tells his servant Puck to fetch some magic juice which, if poured onto eyelids, make people fall in love with the first thing they see when they wake up. Bottom, the weaver, who's rehearsing a play with his friends for Duke Theseus' wedding to Hippolyta, is turned into a monster by Puck, in whom Titania, into whose eyes Oberon has trickled the juice, falls in love. Puck trickled his juice into the wrong eyes, unleashing a chaos of emotions among two pairs of young lovers ...

The music side of things is led by **Geoffrey Paterson**, making his debut in Frankfurt. This British conductor's highlights this season include his debut in Japan with the Nagoya Philharmonic and the World Premiere of Cheryl Frances' Lieder cycle *Scenes from the Wild* with the City of London Sinfonia. **Brigitte Fassbaender** is a regular guest at Oper Frankfurt, where this renowned singer and director's productions have included Britten's *Paul Bunyan* in 2016, Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2013) and *Capriccio* (2018). Current projects for this winner of the 2017 ECHO Klassik prize for her Life's Work, include a new *Ring des Nibelungen* at the Tirol Festival in Erl (2021 to 2023). The Persian-Canadian countertenor **Cameron Shahbazi** (Oberon) is appearing in Frankfurt for the first time. Recent engagements have taken this winner of many prizes to the International Handel Festival at the Staatstheater in Karlsruhe for the title role in *Tolomeo, Re di Egitto*, where he has also sung Lichas (*Hercules*). He sang Tolomeo in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* when making his debut in Russia this season with the Moscow Chamber Ensemble. Frankfurt-born actor **Frank Albrecht** (Puck) is back, after appearing for the first time with the company as Vespone in Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* and in Lucia Ronchetti's *Inferno* – both 2020/21. Nearly all other roles – led by the Ukrainian soprano **Kateryna Kasper** (Titania) – are being performed by **Members of Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble and Opera Studio**.

Premiere: Wednesday May 11th 2022, at 19.00hrs in the Bockenheimer Depot

Further performances: May 13th, 15th (15.30hrs), 16th, 18th, 20th, 23rd, 25th 2022

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.00hrs

Tickets cost: € 20 to € 80 (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.