

Premiere / World Premiere

BLÜHEN (BLOSSOMING)

Opera in seven scenes by Vito Žuraj

Text by Händl Klaus

inspired by Thomas Mann's *Die Betrogene / The Deceived Woman* (1953)

Commissioned by Oper Frankfurt

Sung in German and English with German surtitles

Conductor: Michael Wendeborg

Director: Brigitte Fassbaender

Set Designer: Martina Segna

Costume Designer: Anna-Sophie Lienbacher

Lighting Designer: Jan Hartmann

Dramaturge: Mareike Wink

Aurelia: Bianca Andrew

Anna: Nika Gorič

Ken: Michael Porter

Dr Muthesius: Alfred Reiter

Edgar: Jarrett Porter

Vocal Ensemble:

Marika Dzhaiani, Dina Levit, Maria Zibert,

Guénaelle Mörth, Dalila Djenic, Manon Jürgens,

Kiduck Kwon, Hubert Schmid, Richard Franke,

Younjin Ko, Agostino Subacchi, Christopher Jähning

Ensemble Modern

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

Blühen / Blossoming is the second opera by Slovenian composer **Vito Žuraj** (*1979), who has enjoyed close ties with the **Ensemble Modern** since joining the International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA) in 2009. He worked with the librettist Händl Klaus for the first time on this piece, based on Thomas Mann's *Die Betrogene / The Deceived Woman* (1953), which was commissioned by Oper Frankfurt. He has written many librettos – including Arnulf Herrmann's *Der Mieter / The Tenant* (an Oper Frankfurt commission), which was performed for the first time in 2017 –, plays, lyrics and prose and won prizes for films. Vito Žuraj's works grow from a unique language, which always remains sensual. The composer reveals a new facet to his writing in *Blühen*: „This is more about taking time, and peace. The jokiness and volatility which my works are usually full of have been reduced here to short sections which needed a little lightening.“ Vito Žuraj is passionate about writing for the voice. Orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and BBC Scottish Symphony, Ensemble intercontemporain and RIAS Kammerchor have performed his works in many leading concert venues and festivals. Two days after the World Premiere there is a *Happy New Ears* concert (also in the Bockenheimer Depot) dedicated to Žuraj's works.

The story: A woman falls in love with a man young enough to be her son. She feels physically rejuvenated but at the height of her enjoyment is confronted with the news that she is terminally ill.

The conductor is **Michael Wendeborg**, equally at home in music by Bach to Schönberg, is passionately involved in contemporary music and getting new works performed. He was Chief Conductor of the Opera of Bühnen Halle (Saale) for the last two seasons, where he has been 1st Kapellmeister since 2016, for whom he recently conducted New Productions of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and Ignacy Jan Paderewski's *Manru*. After working with composers including Pierre Boulez and György Kurtág earlier on in his career he took up the post of professor for piano at the Barenboim Said Academy in Berlin in the winter of 2018/19. **Brigitte Fassbaender** is a regular guest at Oper Frankfurt. This renowned singer and director's earlier productions here were Britten's *Paul Bunyan*, his first work for the stage, in 2016, Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2013) and *Capriccio* (2018) in the Opera House and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2022) in the Bockenheimer Depot. Awarded an ECHO Klassik prize in 2017 for her life's achievements her current engagements include a new *Ring des Nibelungen* at the Tirol Festival in Erl (2021 to 2023). Nearly all the roles in *Blühen* are sung by Members of Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble and Opera Studio: **Bianca Andrew** (Aurelia), **Michael Porter** (Ken), **Alfred Reiter** (Dr Muthesius) and **Jarrett Porter** (Edgar), alongside the Slovenian soprano **Nika Gorič** (Aurelia's daughter Anna), who is working at Oper Frankfurt for the first time. They are joined by a twelve-strong **Vocal Ensemble**, which lends the work a special sound.

Premiere: Sunday January 22nd 2023, at 19hrs in the Bockenheimer Depot

Further performances: January 25th, 28th, 30th, February 3rd, 5th (15.30hrs), 8th, 10th 2023

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19hrs

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.