

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt

DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES

Opera in three acts by Francis Poulenc

Libretto by the composer based on Georges Bernanos

Arrangement for chamber orchestra made by Takeshi Moriuchi

Sung in French with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Giedrė Šlekytė

Director: Claus Guth

Set Designer: Martina Segna

Costume Designer: Anna Sofie Tuma

Choreographer: Ramses Sigl

Lighting Designer: Olaf Winter

Chorus Master: Tilman Michael

Dramaturge: Konrad Kuhn

Le Marquis de la Force / M. Javelinot, a doctor / 2nd Commissioner / Officer / Prison guard: Davide Damiani

Blanche de la Force: Maria Bengtsson

Le Chevalier de la Force / Father Confessor to the Carmelites: Jonathan Abernethy

Madame de Croissy: Elena Zilio

Madame Lidoine, the new Prioress: Ambur Braid

Mère Marie de l'Incarnation: Claudia Mahnke

Sœur Constance de St. Denis: Florina Ilie

1st Commissioner / Thierry, servant: Hans-Jürgen Lazar and others

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

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

The events **Francis Poulenc** (1899-1963) deals with in his three act opera *Dialogues des Carmélites*, which was performed for the first time, in Italian, at La Scala Milan in 1957 – the first performance in French followed in the same year at the Paris Opera – are based on historical fact: in 1794 the Carmelites of Compiègne sang „Veni creator“ as they went to the guillotine, one by one. The French author Georges Bernanos took up the German writer Getrud von le Fort's 1931 novel for a screen play in 1947. Poulenc used his dialogues as the basis for his opera's libretto. The work climaxes in the execution scene, the shattering effect of which leaves nobody unmoved. A corona friendly arrangement for chamber orchestra has been made by Oper Frankfurt's head coach **Takeshi Moriuchi**.

The heavily pregnant Marquise de la Force's coach got caught up in a violent uprising. The shock brought on a premature birth, and she died. Her daughter Blanche has been plagued by mysterious panic attacks since an early age. Did the circumstances of her birth trigger this off? Blanche, now a young woman, seeks assylum in a Carmelite convent and believes she has found a way of life she can lead at last. In the convent she witnesses how the strong in faith but terminally ill prioress is overwhelmed by fear at the hour of her death. Not long afterwards revolutionary guards accuse the nuns of conspiring against the new regime. All convents are to be disbanded. The Carmelites, meeting for the last time, take a vow to remain true to their faith until death. Blanche was the only one who managed to escape before they were all arrested. But she suddenly reappears at the hour of execution, to share her sisters' fate: faced with the guillotine she appears to have lost all fear.

The Lithuanian conductor **Giedrė Šlekytė** is appearing in Frankfurt for the first time, after planned performances of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Bizet's *Carmen* fell foul of the pandemic. The internationally sought-after director **Claus Guth** has produced many highly praised productions in his home town of Frankfurt, the most recent being Handel's *Rodelinda* (2019) which was borrowed from the Teatro Real in Madrid. The Italian baritone **Davide Damiani** (Le Marquis de la Force, and others) is back following on from his appearances in the Křenek triple bill. Another regular Guest in Frankfurt is the Swedish soprano **Maria Bengtsson** (Blanche), who was recently heard here singing Strauss' *Arabella* (2017) and in two recitals (2020). The Italian mezzo-soprano **Elena Zilio** (Madame de Croissy) was last heard here in 2017, as Filipjewna in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. All other roles are being sung by **Members of Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble**.

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt: Sunday July 4th 2021, at 18.00hrs in the Opera House

Further performances: July 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th 2021

These performances all begin at 19.30hrs

Tickets cost: € 15 to € 155 (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