

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt

**DIE NACHT VOR WEIHNACHTEN
(THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS)**

Opera in four acts by Nikolai A. Rimsky-Korsakov

Libretto by the composer based on a story by Nikolai W. Gogol

Performed in Russian with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Sebastian Weigle

Director: Christof Loy

Set Designer: Johannes Leiacker

Costume Designer: Ursula Renzenbrink

Lighting Designer: Olaf Winter

Choreographer: Klevis Elmazaj

Flying-Choreographer and Stunt Coordinator: Ran Arthur Braun

Chorus Master: Tilman Michael

Dramaturge: Maximilian Enderle

Wakula: Georgy Vasiliev

Oksana: Julia Muzychenko

Solocha / Woman with a Lilac Nose: Enkelejda Shkoza

Tschub: Alexey Tikhomirov

Devil: Andrei Popov

Panas: Anthony Robin Schneider

Mayor: Sebastian Geyer

Ossip the Deacon: Peter Marsh

Tzarina: Bianca Andrew

Pazjuk: Thomas Faulkner

Woman with a Normal Nose: Barbara Zechmeister
and others.

Oper Frankfurt's Chorus; Frankfurt Opern- und Museumsorchester

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

Die Nacht vor Weihnachten (The Night before Christmas), one of fifteen operas written by **Nikolai A. Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908), was performed for the first time on December 10th 1895 at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. This Russian composer wrote the libretto, based on Nikolai W. Gogol's story by the same name, himself. Out of respect for Peter I. Tchaikovsky, who used the story for his *Der Schmied Wakula (Wakula, the Blacksmith)* in 1874, Rimsky-Korsakov composed his version in 1894, after his colleague died. *Die Nacht vor Weihnachten* combines a satirical-realistic portrayal of life in an Ukrainian village with fantastic and mythical elements. The villagers' carols, based on Ukrainian folk songs, provide the musical core of the work, framed by lyrical ariosi, buffo scenes and vividly descriptive orchestral interludes.

Christmas in the Ukrainian village of Dikanka: The blacksmith Wakula is unluckily in love with Oksana, a landowner's daughter. She is only prepared to marry him if he brings her the Tzarina's golden shoes. In desperation Wakula turn to the Devil for help, who flies him off to the capital to get the shoes. When he meets the Tzarina she gives him her loveliest pair of shoes. Back in Dikanka Oksana regrets her conduct and becomes aware of her love for Wakula, so nothing stands in the way of their getting married.

The music is led by Frankfurt's General Music Director **Sebastian Weigle**, who recently returned to the podium of his Frankfurt Opern- und Museumsorchester for a revival of Humperdinck's *Königskinder* after wildly acclaimed performances of *Boris Godunow* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The production is in the hands of **Christof Loy**, one of the most sought-after opera directors in the world. This regular guest in Frankfurt will also present his vision of Umberto Giordano's melodrama *Fedora*, which was first seen at the Royal Opera in Stockholm (premiere 2016). His most recent work for the house was a staged evening of Tchaikovsky *Lieder: Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*. The Russian tenor **Georgy Vasiliev** (Wakula) is making his debut at Oper Frankfurt. A soloist at New Opera Moscow, his roles this season include Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*) and the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*). His fellow-countrywoman **Julia Muzychenko** (Oksana) is also appearing at the theatre on Willy-Brandt-Platz for the first time. This soprano joined the Semperoper in Dresden's Youth Ensemble in 2019/20 and recently made her debut at the Opéra National de Montpellier singing Gilda (*Rigoletto*). The Albanian mezzo-soprano **Enkelejda Shkoza** (Solocha / Woman with a Lilac Nose), who jumped in to sing Azucena (*Il trovatore*) here in 2017/18, recently sang Geneviève (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) at the Teatro Regio di Parma. Two further Russian guests – the bass **Alexey Tikhomirov** (Tschub) and tenor **Andrei Popov** (Devil) – are joined by members of **Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble** in the other roles.

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt: Sunday December 5th 2021, at 18.00hrs in the Opera House

Further performances: December 9th, 17th, 19th (15.30hrs), 23rd (18.00hrs), 25th (18.00hrs) 2021,
January 2nd (15.30hrs), 8th 2022

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.00hrs

Tickets cost: € 15 to € 182 (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.