

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt

KRÓL ROGER (KING ROGER)

Opera in three acts by Karol Szymanowski

Libretto by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and the composer

Performed in Polish with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Sylvain Cambreling

Director: Johannes Erath

Set Designer: Johannes Leiacker

Costume Designer: Jorge Jara

Lighting Designer: Joachim Klein

Video: Bibi Abel

Chorus and Extra Chorus Master: Tilman Michael

Children's Chorus Master: Markus Ehmann

Dramaturge: Zsolt Horpácsy

King Roger: Łukasz Goliński

Roxana: Sydney Mancasola

Shepherd: Gerard Schneider

Edrisi: AJ Glueckert

Archbishop: Alfred Reiter

Deaconess: Judita Nagypová

Oper Frankfurt's Chorus, Extra Chorus and Extras

Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester

The Polish composer **Karol Szymanowski** (1882-1937) produced *Król Roger (King Roger)*, the second and better known of his two operas, which received its World Premiere on June 19th 1926 at the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw. Despite its very unusual sound language it was not long before the work was being performed abroad. The libretto was written by the composer and his cousin, the poet Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, around their protagonist, King Roger II, descended of Norman noble lineage, who ruled in Sicily during the 12th century. The work, based on, amongst others, Euripides' *Bacchae*, depicts a hero caught between the strict Christian church and a way of life more interested in pleasure. This is in keeping with views of the Mediterranean World, which had always fascinated Szymanowski. Interest in the work has never completely petered out, although this New Production is the first time the opera has ever been performed in Frankfurt.

A young shepherd, a disciple of the god Dionysos, causes confusion at King Roger's court. The ruler soon becomes drawn into conflict between upholding Christian beliefs and the enjoyment of life. The archbishop's resistance is worn down and the people, along with their queen, Roxana, Roger's wife, start joining the seductive young man's cult. Emotions forge ahead in a frenzied dance. In the end Roger, with his Arabic advisor Edrisi's blessing, wants to follow the shepherd too. While the Queen and people can be heard in the distance paying homage to the new cult, Roger greets the rising sun with a hymn.

Conductor of this New Production is **Sylvain Cambreling**, back in Frankfurt where he was General Music Director and Artistic Intendant from 1993 to 1997. Before and after his time in Frankfurt this French musician was General Music Director of the Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in Brussels (1981–1991) and Chief Conductor of the SWR Symphony Orchestra Baden-Baden and Freiburg (1999-2011). He became General Music Director of the Staatsoper in Stuttgart in 2012 before taking over the post of Chief Conductor of the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra in 2018/19, after Jeffrey Tate's death. Director **Johannes Erath** works regularly at Oper Frankfurt, most recently on the very successful World Premiere of Arnulf Herrmann's *Der Mieter / The Tenant* in 2017/18. Recent projects have included Goldschmidt's *Beatrice Cenci* at the 2018 Bregenz Festival and the World Premiere of Micha Hamel's *Caruso in Cuba* at De Nationale Opera in Amsterdam. The Polish bass-baritone **Łukasz Goliński** has sung the title role in Szymanowski's opera before, at the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw, the Royal Opera in Stockholm and, more recently, with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome under Antonio Pappano. He also covered it at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London earlier in his career. Led by **Sydney Mancasola** (Roxana) and **Gerard Schneider** (Shepherd) all the other roles are being performed by **Members of the Ensemble**.

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt: Sunday June 2nd 2019, at 18.00hrs in the Opera House

Further performances: June 6th, 9th (18.00hrs), 15th, 19th, 22nd, 27th, 29th 2019

Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.30hrs

Tickets cost: € 15 to € 165 (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