

Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt

## WRITTEN ON SKIN

Opera in three parts by George Benjamin and Martin Crimp (text)

Sung in English with German and English surtitles

Conductor: Erik Nielsen

Director: Tatjana Gürbaca

Set and Lighting Designer: Klaus Grünberg

Costume Designer: Silke Willrett

Dramaturge: Maximilian Enderle

Protector: Bo Skovhus

Agnès: Elizabeth Reiter

First Angel / Boy: Iurii Iushkevich

Second Angel / Marie: Cecelia Hall

Third Angel / John: Michael McCown

Frankfurt Opern- and Museumsorchester

With generous support from the Frankfurt Patronatsverein – Sektion Oper

A rich man wants to immortalize himself in an illustrated book. Which gradually confronts him with a disturbing truth. *Written on Skin* is a c. 90 minute long opera in three sections which **George Benjamin** (\*1960) was commissioned to write by several European opera houses, the World Premiere of which took place at the 2012 Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. It is infused with deep sensual complexity and one of the 20th century's most successful operas. The text was written by British dramatist **Martin Crimp** (\*1956), with whom Benjamin also created a chamber opera before: *Into the Little Hill*. *Written on Skin* is based on the „eaten heart“, a medieval legend about the troubadour Guillem de Cabestanh: who met a violent death for having an affair with his benefactor's wife.

The story: The Protector has everything he could wish for: money, estates and – in his own words – his wife Agnès' „still, obedient body“. The illustrations in the book make him start losing his grip on reality. Fascinated by the book and the young painter's tenderness, Agnès begins an affair with him. When the Protector finds out he kills the boy, then forces his unsuspecting wife to eat his heart.

The first ever performance in Frankfurt is conducted by **Erik Nielsen**, who worked at Oper Frankfurt for 10 years as coach then Kapellmeister until 2012, building up a repertoire of more than 80 operas ranging from Monteverdi to Lachenmann. He conducted a New Production of *Aida* here in 2023 and was Chief Conductor of the Tirol Festival in Erl from 2022 to 2024. *Written on Skin* is staged by the internationally sought-after director **Tatjana Gürbaca**. Since her first opera, *Turandot* in Graz in 2001, she has worked at many leading houses including those in Amsterdam, Vienna and Zurich. She made a name for herself in Frankfurt for rarely performed works. Luigi Dallapiccola's *Ulisse* in 2022 met with great acclaim from press and public. This was followed in 2024 by Fromental Halévy's *La Juive*: „Terrific opera, terrific applause“, wrote the Frankfurter Rundschau. The Protector is sung by **Bo Skovhus**. His many appearances at leading Opera Houses made this Danish singer internationally famous. He's been appearing on stage for nearly 40 years in roles including the title role in Aribert Reimann's *Lear*, Beckmesser (Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Titus (Michael Jerrell's *Bérénice*) and Mandryka (Strauss' *Arabella*). His wife Agnès is sung by **Elizabeth Reiter**. This American soprano, a Member Oper Frankfurt's Ensemble since 2013/14, enjoyed great success earlier this season as the female robber Fiorella in *The Bandits* and Despina in a New Production of *Così fan tutte*. Countertenor **Iurii Iushkevich**, who made his house debut last season as Nireno in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, sings First Angel / Boy. The cast for this first ever performance in Frankfurt is completed by **Cecelia Hall** (Second Angel / Marie) and **Michael McCown** (Third Angel / John), both long-standing Members of the Ensemble.

**Premiere / First ever performance in Frankfurt:** Sunday March 1st 2026, at 18hrs in the Opera House

**Further performances:** March 5th, 7th, 13th, 15th (15.30hrs), 21st, 29th (19hrs), April 5th (18hrs) 2026  
Unless otherwise stated, all performances begin at 19.30hrs

**Tickets cost:** € 16 to € 190 (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](http://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](mailto:holger.engelhardt@buehnen-frankfurt.de).