



## ***Carmen* to open 72<sup>nd</sup> season of Bregenz Festival**

### **A shining world premiere, the return of spoken theatre, and a shrunken Ring**

Bregenz, 24 Nov. 16. One of the best-loved operas around the world will open the 72nd season of Bregenz Festival on 19 July 2017: Georges Bizet's *Carmen*. The opera will play for a total of 28 evenings on the Bregenz lake stage. The following day the curtain goes up at the Festspielhaus on Gioachino Rossini's opera *Moses in Egypt*. Coming up towards the end of the festival are the Opera Studio production at the Kornmarkttheater and the world premiere of an opera commissioned by the festival at the Workshop Theatre, both starting in mid August.

In between are symphonic and poetic concerts at the Festspielhaus and the Lake Studio. Exotic opera can be experienced and marvelled at in totally different dimensions at the Workshop Theatre. Guest performances by Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater puts spoken theatre back on the playbill of the summer festival.

The 80 events of the 2017 season also include a masterclass in February, a host of concerts and the young people's programme crossculture. A total of approx. 214,000 tickets are available for the festival, which runs until 20 August.

### **Back after 25 years**

When Bregenz Festival last presented *Carmen* on the Lake Stage, it set a new visitor record for the years 1991 and 1992. Now 25 years later the opera about passionate love and spectacular bullfighting returns to the Bregenz stage in a new production by the Danish director Kasper Holten, who has attracted great attention for his productions at major theatres around the world and who is currently Director of Opera at the renowned Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in London. The stage for *Carmen* will be designed by Es Devlin while Paolo Carignani, music director of the Lake Stage production of *Turandot*, will again conduct the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. So far about 40 per cent of the 193,000 tickets available for the 28 performances of *Carmen* (not including the dress rehearsal and crossculture night) have been booked.

### **Plagues and the parting of the sea**

The opera at the Festspielhaus will be Gioachino Rossini's rarely staged opera *Moses in Egypt* (*Mosè in Egitto*). The premiere is on 20 July 2017, followed by two further performances. The biblical tale of plagues and the parting of the Red Sea will be staged Dutch director Lotte de Beer together with the theatre company Hotel Modern, who will use objects and puppets to conjure up an alternative world. The music director is Enrique Mazzola, an Italian born in Spain who conducted the third orchestral concert at last summer's festival. He will conduct the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Stage designer Christof Hetzer – acclaimed for his work on *The Tales of Hoffmann* in summer 2015 – will be returning to the Bregenz Festspielhaus for this production.

### **Insight sessions shed light on *To the Lighthouse***

The first meetings of the creative team took place in May 2014. One year later the first *insight session* allowed members of the public to look in on the process of creating an opera. That opera – *To the Lighthouse* – will now receive its world premiere at the Workshop Theatre in



summer 2017. The Opera Workshop, initiated by the festival's artistic director Elisabeth Sobotka and realised in association with the Kunsthau Bregenz, has the aim of creating new works of music theatre and of providing answers to the question, "How does an opera come into being?". For two and a half years now composer Zesses Seglias has been working on an opera based on Virginia Woolf's novel in collaboration with Ernst Marianne Binder, who supplied the libretto and will stage the opera. The theatre space will be designed by Danish artist Jakob Kolding in his first work for a theatre stage. Claire Levacher will conduct the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra. Three more *insight sessions* will light the way to the premiere, the first of them already on 28th November.

### **Mini-performers magnified at the Workshop Theatre**

There's exotic opera in totally new dimensions on the first weekend of the festival. Richard Wagner's music theatre epic *The Ring of the Nibelung*, conceived to play on four successive days, will be shrunk to a more manageable 90 minutes, the orchestration pared down and the protagonists reduced to miniature scale – they'll become insects. The theatre collective Hotel Modern, also involved in the opera production at the Festspielhaus, will conjure up a tiny operatic world of caterpillars, butterflies and grasshoppers for its staging of *The Ring* at the Workshop Theatre – with live music by the Netherlands Wind Ensemble. Thanks to live camera projections, it will be big time for the cast of mini-performers.

### **Spanish, fantastic, dramatic**

The Vienna Symphony Orchestra can be seen in concert on two evenings and one morning in the Great Hall. While the first orchestral concert, conducted by Antonio Méndez, is an opulent rendering of Spanish and Spanish-sounding music, the Sunday matinee under the baton of chief conductor Philippe Jordan will present perhaps the best known pair of lovers in the opera repertoire, with Act One of Richard Wagner's *The Valkyrie* as well as the *Siegfried Idyll*. The third and final concert promises to be dramatic and fantastical with Ernest Guiraud's *Chasse fantastique*, Hector Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* and Minas Borboudakis' *Cassiopeia* for Percussion and Orchestra conducted by Constantinos Carydis.

As well as appearing as an opera orchestra in *The Marriage of Figaro* and *To the Lighthouse*, the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra will demonstrate again how good it is as a concert ensemble on the last day of the festival, when chief conductor Gérard Korsten conducts the traditional Vorarlberg orchestra in a performance of Olivier Messiaen's *Un sourire*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Sinfonia concertante in E flat major, and César Franck's Symphony in D minor.

### **Drama is back to stay**

After an interval of four years, spoken theatre returns to enrich the Bregenz Festival programme in summer 2017. Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater will be making a guest appearance at the Kornmarkttheater Bregenz with *The Situation*, voted Play of the Year in 2016. The play has been created by the Austrian-Israeli theatre director Yael Ronen and her ensemble, which includes actors from Israel, Palestine and Syria. *The Situation* is a story about people who have left their home countries in the Middle East and now re-encounter each other in Berlin. The drama inaugurates a series of spoken theatre productions to be staged annually over the coming years.

**Da Ponte finale at the Kornmarkt**

The cycle of so-called Da Ponte operas which was launched in the 2015 season concludes next summer with what was the first of the three works to be staged. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* will be produced at the Kornmarkttheater, following on from *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. Young singers come together to celebrate the third anniversary of the Bregenz Festival's Opera Studio with a feast of comic scheming, erotic recklessness and political dynamite. Jörg Lichtenstein, director in the inaugural year of the Opera Studio, returns for the staging of this opera. Hartmut Keil will again conduct the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra. In cooperation with the international singing competition *NEUE STIMMEN*, founded by the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

The first event on the summer festival calendar will take place in the winter. Five months earlier than in the previous two years, Brigitte Fassbaender will return to the Festspielhaus to coach the young singers of the Opera Studio in preparation for their roles in *The Marriage of Figaro*. The public will have a chance to watch the multiple award winning Kammersängerin in her inspiring work with young singers at an open session on 5th February.

**Musik & Poesie: gospel and passionate women**

There are musical and poetical offerings again in the coming season at the Festspielhaus. In the Lake Studio, Canadian soprano Measha Brueggergosman – appearing at Bregenz Festival for her third summer in a row – interprets some passionate and suffering heroines from the French repertoire. Then in a Musik & Poesie Special at the Workshop Theatre the soprano, backed by a band and singers from the Bregenz Festival Chorus, will explore her African-American roots in a concert entitled *Songs of Freedom*. At 10 p.m., just as the final notes have died away at the third orchestral concert in the Great Hall, classic gospel music will resound in the Workshop Theatre.

Three days after the premiere of *Moses in Egypt*, the Middle East Peace Ensemble will give a concert combining Jewish and Arabic music with contemporary works from various countries. The ensemble's artistic director, Henrik Goldschmidt, will host and direct proceedings at this opening event in the popular Musik & Poesie series. The writer Michael Köhlmeier, born in Vorarlberg, will be making his festival debut next summer. Accompanied by the Israeli singer Dalia Schachter, he will reflect on the prophet Moses, religion and monotheism.

**Summer academy and bread rolls**

crossculture, the programme for kids and young adults, will encourage people not only to look and listen but to get actively involved. In addition to workshops and a piece of instrumental theatre by Thomas Desi, young musicians under the direction of Martin Kerschbaum will rehearse a concert programme for wind orchestra. The concert at Kunsthaus Bregenz next year will be devoted to the great tradition of Jewish music. In the closing concert of the International Summer Academy *Opus XXI*, young musicians will present a programme of contemporary music featuring works by Zesses Seglias and Miroslav Srnka among others. A series of breakfasts organised by the Friends of Bregenz Festival in association with the broadcaster ORF Vorarlberg will enable the general public to get to know some of the artists personally over coffee and bread rolls.

The 2017 Bregenz Festival runs from 19 July to 20 August. For tickets and information, visit [www.bregenzfestspiele.com](http://www.bregenzfestspiele.com) or call 0043 5574 4076.