



Semperoper
Dresden

PRESS RELEASE/ INVITATION

»Now, Your Serene Highness, here I am, Olala!« – Premiere of »The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein« in the production by Josef E. Köpplinger on 29 February 2020

Dresden, 31 January 2020. On Saturday, 29 February 2020, the Semperoper Dresden invites its audience to visit the court of the capricious sovereign of Gerolstein, who with a weak spot for uniforms keeps the whip hand over her court and its minions, much to the chagrin of her belligerent generalissimo.

For the new production of »The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein«, Semperoper head Peter Theiler invited **Josef E. Köpplinger**, director of Munich's Gärtnerplatztheater, to travel to Dresden to stage Offenbach's tale of the Grand Duchess and her pint-sized court with his typical visual flair. »From the outset I was enthusiastic about Peter Theiler's courageous and astute decision to bring Jacques Offenbach's »The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein« to the Semperoper for theatre mirrors life. And in an age when societies are beginning to see everything as either black or white, our wonderful cast will make this opéra bouffe as colourful and imaginative as possible,« says the director, known for his amusing and deeply satirical productions.

In the title role, celebrated Strauss interpreter **Anne Schwanewilms** switches to operetta to play a self-assured woman who normally gets what she wants but is now forced to do battle with the good Wanda, sung by soprano **Katerina von Bennigsen**, for the heart of Fritz, here played by Gärtnerplatz ensemble member **Maximilian Mayer**. Alongside the handsome soldier Fritz, who achieves military rank through the Duchess's favour, comes Prince Paul, betrothed to the Duchess, performed by **Daniel Prohaska**. In the role of the bellicose General Bumm, bass-baritone **Martin Winkler** sends his mini-army into battle. The soldiers are given their marching orders by British star choreographer and director **Adam Cooper**, also well known from Stephen Daldry's award-winning film »Billy Elliot – I Will Dance«. Under the baton of **Jonathan Darlington**, the Staatskapelle Dresden will interpret Jacques Offenbach's sophisticated and brilliantly rhythmical score, supported by the voices of the Saxon State Opera Chorus.

Premiered in 1867, the year of the Paris World Fair, and in the shadow of the dawning Franco-Prussian War, which was to usher in the demise of the Second Empire, Offenbach's musical sideswipe at militarism, protection and opportunism has today lost none of its power. Together with Dresden's State Operetta, the Semperoper invites all Offenbach fans to discuss the composer's unique oeuvre with experts over a petit déjeuner in the morning of the premiere. Rarely heard music by Jacques Offenbach will round off the »Breakfast with Jacques Offenbach« in the foyer of the Staatsoperette Dresden.

Jacques Offenbach »The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein«

Premiere at 6 pm on Saturday, 29 February 2020, in the Semperoper

Additional performances on 3, 6, 20, 24 & 26 March and 1 & 7 July 2020

A free talk about the work begins 45 minutes before curtain-up in the opera cellar.

With Anne Schwanewilms, Katerina von Bennigsen, Sigrid Hauser, Martin Winkler, Maximilian Mayer, Daniel Prohaska, Jürgen Müller, Martin-Jan Nijhof, Josef Ellers and the Saxon State Opera Chorus. The Staatskapelle will be conducted by Jonathan Darlington.

Tickets for the performances available online or from the Schinkelwache on Theaterplatz (T +49 (0)351 4911 705). For more details, check out our website: semperoper.de

Extra

»Breakfast with Jacques Offenbach«

From 11 am to 12.30 pm on Saturday, 29 February 2020, in the foyer of the Staatsoperette Dresden, Kraftwerk Mitte 1, 01067 Dresden. Entrance is free

An Offenbach discussion with Jonathan Darlington, Peter Hawig, Frank Harders-Wuthenow, Jean-Christophe Keck, Josef E. Köpplinger, Andreas Schüller and Valentin Schwarz.
Hosted by Heiko Cullmann and Kai Weßler

Please send your application for review tickets (with your editorial assignment, details of the medium and expected publication date) as well as press enquiries and interview requests to presse@semperoper.de.

Photos in print quality as well as text in digital form available from www.semperoper.de/presse

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