

STAATSOPER STUTT GART

Press Release

Stuttgart, 22 May 2023

Pilgrimage with Messiaen's Saint Francis **Anna-Sophie Mahler stages Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* at Staatsoper Stuttgart as an immersive experience in both, the opera house as well as within the City of Stuttgart**

With its new production of Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*, the Staatsoper Stuttgart presents a music-theatrical journey which starts and finishes in the opera house and in between ventures out into the City by inviting the audience on a pilgrimage: The production by Anna-Sophie Mahler premieres on 11 June at 2 pm and takes the audience from the opera house to the Killesberg open-air stage and back again. Titus Engel, Swiss "Conductor of the Year 2020", takes over the musical direction. The US baritone Michael Mayes debuts in the title role. Among others, Beate Ritter can be experienced in the role of the Angel, Moritz Kallenberg in the role of the Leper.

In the Stuttgart production, Messiaen's approx. four-hour opera with three acts and eight scenes becomes an eight-hour communal experience: The first three scenes take place on the opera stage. Afterwards, specially trained guides take the audience to Wartbergpark in Stuttgart via public transport, where the fourth scene (The Travelling Angel) can be heard on headphones whilst walking up the footpath to the Killesberg open-air stage where Anna-Sophie Mahler stages the fifth (The Music-making Angel) and sixth scene (The Bird Sermon). The journey then continues back to the opera house by either bus or tram, where the seventh and eighth scene takes place. The audience is asked to wear comfortable and sturdy shoes. In case of bad weather, an indoor alternative for all the audience members will take place.

In the spirit of the title character Francis, sustainability aspects play an important role in the new production: for the stage setting, for example, parts of other productions were reused. At the beginning of the year and following a public appeal by Staatsoper Stuttgart, over 300 hoodies were received as donations, which are now in use as costumes. In addition, the Staatsoper Stuttgart distributed knitting packages to interested people who wanted to partake in knitting parts of the stage set at home. Since the beginning of May, numerous events with various cooperation partners have also accompanied the new production with their own festival titled *Music of the Invisible - Fascination Francis*.

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PREMIERE

Olivier Messiaen

Saint François d'Assise

Sunday, 11 June 2023, 2 pm

Further performances

22, 25 June 2023

2, 9 July 2023

Conductor **Titus Engel**

Director **Anna-Sophie Mahler**

Set design **Katrin Connan**

Costume design **Pascale Martin**

Video design **Georg Lendorff**

Light design **Bernd Purkrabek**

Chorus director **Manuel Pujol**

Dramaturg **Ingo Gerlach**

Angel **Beate Ritter**

Saint François **Michael Mayes**

The Leper **Moritz Kallenberg**

Brother Léon **Danylo Matviienko**

Brother Massée **Elmar Gilbertsson**

Brother Élie **Gerhard Siegel**

Brother Bernard **Marko Špehar**

Silvestre **Elliott Carlton Hines**

Rufin **Anas Séguin**

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