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# COLOGNE OPERA SEASON 2024/25

## THEATRE FESTIVAL

15 SEP. 2024

THIERRY TIDROW

## NILS KARLSSON DÄUMLING

PORTABLE CHILDREN'S OPERA

PREMIERE: 12 SEP. 2024

JOSEPH HAYDN

## THE CREATION (DIE SCHÖPFUNG)

PREMIERE: 05 OCT. 2024

RICHARD STRAUSS

## ELEKTRA

PREMIERE: 06 OCT. 2024

ATTILA KADRI ŞENDIL

## THE TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN (DIE BREMER STADTMUSIKANTEN)

CHILDREN'S OPERA

REVIVAL: 27 OCT 2024

OPERA BALLET VLAANDEREN, BERLIN STAATSBALLET, GAUTHIER DANCE//  
DANCE COMPANY THEATERHAUS STUTTGART

## FAST, FURIOUS & SERIOUS

DANCE: 09 NOV. 2024

GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL

## ORLANDO

PREMIERE: 17 NOV. 2024

GIUSEPPE VERDI

## NABUCCO

PREMIERE: 01 DEC. 2024

GIACOMO PUCCINI

## LA BOHÈME

REVIVAL: 22 DEC. 2024

BALLET DU GRAND THÉÂTRE DE GENÈVE, EASTMAN

## IHSANE

DANCE: 18 JAN. 2025

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

## THE MAGIC FLUTE FOR CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S OPERA

REVIVAL: 26 JAN. 2025

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

## DON GIOVANNI

PREMIERE: 09 MAR. 2025

GEORGES BIZET

## CARMEN

REVIVAL: 23 MAR. 2025

COMMUNITY OPERA

## SUPERHELDENNORMALOS

WORLD PREMIERE: 25 APR 2025



MICHAEL KRASNAY-KRAUSZ

## EINE FRAU VON FORMAT

PREMIERE: 11 MAY 2025

KAIJA SAARIAHO

## LA PASSION DE SIMONE

PREMIERE: 18 MAY 2025

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

## MARÍA DE BUENOS AIRES

PREMIERE: 24 MAY 2025

PHILIPPE MANOURY

## THE LAST DAYS OF MANKIND (DIE LETZTEN TAGE DER MENSCHHEIT)

WORLD PREMIERE: 27 JUN. 2025

GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL

## GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO

REVIVAL: 05 JUL. 2025

# PRESS INFORMATION SEASON 2024/25

The Cologne Opera will start the 2024/25 season at its interim venue, StaatenHaus again. The progress of refurbishment work being undertaken at the City of Cologne's theatres means that it will not be possible to move back to the location at Offenbachplatz as planned. The programme has been designed to be able to react to all situations though. Be it here or there: We are ready for a new and exciting season!

A total of ten premières and three revivals will be presented: This season starts with a double bill of premières: On two consecutive evenings, Joseph Haydn's oratorio **THE CREATION** (DIE SCHÖPFUNG) will be presented as a staged work, followed by Richard Strauss' groundbreaking opera, **ELEKTRA**. Other titles include **NABUCCO**, **DON GIOVANNI** and **MARÍA DE BUENOS AIRES**, as well as the biggest world première of the last ten years: Philippe Manoury has been commissioned by the Cologne Opera to compose a "Thinkspiel" based on Karl Kraus' Opus magnum **THE LAST DAYS OF MANKIND** (DIE LETZTEN TAGE DER MENSCHHEIT).

The award-winning performances of the Cologne Children's Opera and international dance companies, alongside popular and new audience formats open the theatre to young and old alike. For this, the theatre festival for the whole family at the start of the season and the extensive range of activities offered by the "Oper.Stadt.Schule" department are particular examples.

# OPERA PREMIERES

The season begins with a double bill of premières: On two consecutive evenings, the Cologne Opera is set to present Joseph Haydn's oratorio **THE CREATION** (*première: 05 October 2024*) as a staged work, and Richard Strauss' ground-breaking opera **ELEKTRA** (*première: 06 October 2024*).

Due to the ongoing investigation into the allegations against François-Xavier Roth, the musical direction of these two productions will be taken over by conductors Marc Minkowski (THE CREATION) and Felix Bender (ELEKTRA).

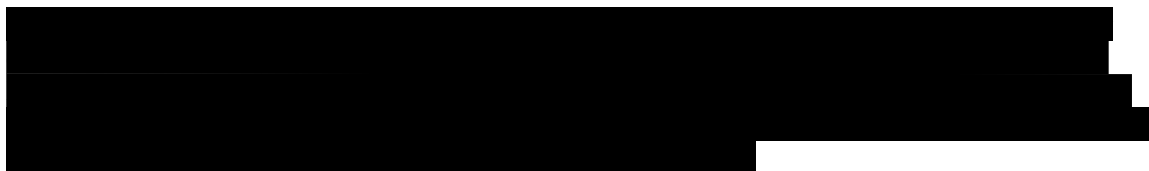
British director, designer and choreographer Melly Still will be staging and choreographing **THE CREATION**, making her debut at a German theatre. Sopranos Kathrin Zukowski and Giulia Montanari from the Cologne Opera ensemble will sing the roles of Gabriel and Eva. Tenor Sebastian Kohlhepp – last seen at the Cologne Opera as Idomeneo – will take on the role of Uriel; American bass Alex Rosen will sing Raphael and André Morsch will take on the role of Adam.

The new production of Strauss' **ELEKTRA** will be staged by the renowned director Roland Schwab, who is making his debut at the Cologne Opera. Schwab's hugely important and much-discussed recent works include his three productions for the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, MOZART-FRAGMENTE (for the Mozart Year), Eugen d'Albert's TIEFLAND and DON GIOVANNI, MEFISTOFELE by Arrigo Boito at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich and TRISTAN UND ISOLDE by Richard Wagner at the Bayreuth Festival 2022. The new production of **ELEKTRA** features two role debuts: Allison Oakes as Elektra, and Astrid Kessler as Chrysothemis. Mezzo-soprano (and professor at the Cologne University of Music and Dance) Lioba Braun will sing Clytemnestra – one of her showpiece roles.

The Cologne Opera will be adding another title to its baroque music repertoire: Handel's **ORLANDO** (*première: 17 November 2024*). The highly acclaimed production by Rafael R. Villalobos provides a cross-reference to Virginia Woolf's novel "Orlando – A Biography". Spanish counter tenor Xavier Sabata, who has already performed at the 2021 première at the Spanish Perelada Festival, will take on the title role at the Cologne Opera. The Musical direction falls to baroque specialist Rubén Dubrovsky, who is set to return to the podium of the Gürzenich Orchestra after GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO and IDOMENEO.

Giuseppe Verdi's grand opera **NABUCCO** (*première: 01 December 2024*) about Babylonian captivity, liberation and purification moves between existential questions pertaining to the individual pursuit of power and the strength of community. Ben Baur, who most recently created the stages for **SALOME** and **EIN MASKENBALL** in Cologne, will now be introducing himself as a director. Sesto Quatrini, an expert on the Italian repertoire, conducts the Gürzenich Orchestra. The leading roles will be sung by Italian baritone Ernesto Petti (Nabucco), who is particularly fond of the great Verdi roles, and much-celebrated soprano, Marta Torbidoni (Abigaille), who made her brilliant house debut at the Cologne Opera's "Festival of Beautiful Voices" ("Fest der schönen Stimmen") in November 2023. The outstanding Cologne Opera choir – led by Rustam Samedov – will also be performing in this great choral opera.

Mozart's **DON GIOVANNI** (*première: 09 March 2025*) faces society as an extraordinary yet intangible character. Everyone succumbs to his charm, but his art of seduction is just as devilish, and it is only The Stone Guest who puts an end to it. Director Cecilia Ligorio returns to the Cologne Opera after **LA CENERENTOLA** and scrutinises the „Don Giovanni“ myth from today's female perspective. Celebrated Mozart conductor Tomáš Netopil brings the musical score to life on the podium of the Gürzenich Orchestra.



The rediscovered Berlin operetta **EINE FRAU VON FORMAT** (A WOMAN OF STATURE) by Michael Krasznay-Krausz (*première: 11 May 2025*). The work disappeared from the repertoire after 1933 and fell into a long period of oblivion. At last, this gem from the "Roaring Twenties" can be brought back to the stage in a large-scale production by Christian von Götz. The three-time winner of the coveted "BR-Operettenfrosch" award is considered an expert in operetta excavations of once ostracised composers. Operetta specialist Adam Benzwi will be a congenial partner on the podium. Famous Berlin soprano Annette Dasch has been cast for the main role.

Kaija Saariaho's monodrama **LA PASSION DE SIMONE** (*première: 18 May 2025*) will be performed in cooperation with the Cologne "Acht Brücken" festival. It revolves around the figure of the French mystic, philosopher and political activist Simone Weil. This oratorio marks the fourth collaboration of the late Finnish composer and French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf, starting with the highly acclaimed opera **L'AMOUR DE LOIN**, which was performed at the Cologne Opera in 2021. Newcomer and „Götz Friedrich Prize“ winner Friederike Blum will stage this piece. Together with designer Lise Kruse, she traces the spirit of Simone Weil and allows us to immerse ourselves in her life and thoughts. Christian Karlsen, a specialist in modern music theatre and former artistic director of the Kaija Saariaho Festival in The Hague, has been brought on board to conduct.

The tango operita **MARÍA DE BUENOS AIRES** (*première: 24 May 2025*) by Astor Piazzolla, a poetic and political homage to the fascinating Argentinian capital, its people and especially its women, takes on a completely different colour in the repertoire. María – sung and played by Adriana Bastidas-Gamboa from the opera ensemble – represents the oppressed, forgotten and disappeared. The musical direction will be taken over by young Argentinian conductor Natalia Salinas, and the production will be staged by Buenos Aires-born choreographer and director Teresa Rotemberg, who lives in Switzerland.

The world première of Philippe Manoury's **THE LAST DAYS OF MANKIND** (DIE LETZTEN TAGE DER MENSCHHEIT) on 27 June 2025, based on the opus magnum of the same name by Karl Kraus, is set to close the season. French composer Manoury is known as a pioneer of electronic music. At the same time, he has enriched both the orchestral and opera canon with innovative approaches. For the Gürzenich Orchestra, he created the Cologne Trilogy with the works RING, IN SITU and LAB.ORATORIUM. Manoury and director Nicolas Stemann share their search for relevant contemporary music theatre. The result is a "Thinkspiel" in which speech and song, video and stage machinery, theatre and opera, symphonic orchestra and electronic sounds play equally important roles. The high-calibre cast with Anne Sofie von Otter, Tamara Bounazou, Christina Daletka, Olivia Vermeulen, actors Philipp Hochmair, Patrycja Ziolkowska and Sebastian Rudolph, as well as Emily Hindrichs, Dmitry Ivanchey, KS Milkenko Turk, Martin Koch and Lucas Singer from the Cologne Opera ensemble guarantees an extraordinary music theatre evening.

# 2024/25 GUESTS AT THE OPERA COLOGNE



## DIE SCHÖPFUNG

**Sebastian Kohlhepp**

© Christian Palm

## ELEKTRA



**Allison Oakes**

© Fiona MacPherson



**Lioba Braun**

© Andreas Tobias



## ORLANDO

**Xavier Sabata**

© Michal Novak



## NABUCCO



**Ernesto Petti**

© Francesco Paglietta



**Marta Torbidoni**

© Michele Monasta



## DON GIOVANNI

**Seth Carico**

© Simon Pauly

## EINE FRAU VON FORMAT



**Annette Dasch**

© Klaus Weddig



**Markus John**

© Christian Spielmann



## DIE LETZTEN TAGE DER MENSCHHEIT



**Anne Sofie von Otter**

© Mats Bäcker



**Philipp Hochmair**

© Christian Schoppe



**Sebastian Rudolph**

© Puria Safary

## GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO (REVIVAL)



**Anna Lucia Richter**

© Jessy Lee

**Sonia Prina**

© Javier del Real



# OPERA REVIVALS

Popular repertoire operas are making a return to the programme: At Christmas time, the outstanding production of Puccini's **LA BOHÈME** by Michael Hampe (*revival: 22 December 2024*) can be seen again at the Cologne Opera. For 20 years, from 1975 to 1995, Michael Hampe shaped an entire era at the Cologne Opera, as artistic director and style-defining stage director. His production from the 2015/16 season brings old Paris back to life through masterful projections, and is one of the great jewels in the repertoire of Cologne Opera.

Lydia Steier's popular production of George Bizet's **CARMEN** (*revival: 23 March 2025*) will once again enliven the StaatenHaus, with ensemble member Adriana Bastidas-Gamboa in the title role. This CARMEN revival is also set to introduce the designated General Music Director of the City of Cologne and Gürzenich conductor, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, to the Cologne opera audience.

At the end of the season, Handel's **GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO** (*revival: 05 July 2025*) – staged by Vincent Boussard and equipped with extravagant costumes by legendary fashion designer Christian Lacroix – will again be included in the repertoire following its sensational success in the 2022/23 season.

For most new productions and selected revivals, the dramaturgs present **introductions to the works**, offering a brief, informative overview of the play, the music and the production.

In addition, **soirées with public rehearsals** provide an exclusive preview of the work and production.

Furthermore, **follow-up talks** are offered on selected dates, providing the opportunity for personal feedback after a performance.

# DANCE

## FAST, FURIOUS & SERIOUS (09 AND 10 NOV. 2024)

In this contemporary dance gala, the **Opera Ballet Vlaanderen** dances excerpts from **FASE** by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker to music by Steve Reich. In 1982, this choreography with its self-contained elegance, utmost precision and feminine spirit of self-confidence signalled the breakthrough for the young choreographer. **SKEW-WHIFF** is the name for a fast-paced stage piece by Paul Lightfoot and Sol León for three male and one female dancer. It was created in 1996 to Rossini's famous opera overture LA GAZZA LADRA and will be interpreted here by the **Berlin Staatsballett**.

Following choreographies by young choreographers Philippe Kratz, Sofia Nappi, Gianni Notarnicola and Nadav Zelner the **Gauthier Dance//Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart** will take to the stage with excerpts from **CONTEMPORARY DANCE** by Hofesh Shechter. This company will also be dancing **PACOPEPEPLUTO** by Alejandro Cerrudo to songs by Dean Martin. Eric Gauthier, former dancer with the Stuttgart Ballet, director of the Gauthier Dance//Dance Company and known to TV audiences through his documentary series "Dance around the world" will guide the audience through the evening with charm and expertise.

## IHSANE (18 AND 19 JAN. 2025)

In his latest piece **IHSANE**, which will be performed for the first time in Geneva in November 2024, world-renowned Belgian-Moroccan choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui focuses on the culture and religion of Morocco, inspired by his relationship with his father, who died young and who introduced him to Islam. In Arabic, the title of the work stands for kindness, generosity and friendliness. **IHSANE** is accompanied by live musicians and performed by dancers from the **Eastman** and **Ballet Du Grand Théâtre De Genève** companies.

Hip Moroccan fashion designer Amine Bendriouich will be designing the costumes, and Tunisian violinist, musicologist and jazz musician Jasser Haj Youssef is set to compose the music.

# PREMIERES IN CHILDREN'S OPERA



## WORLD PREMIERE COMMUNITY OPERA

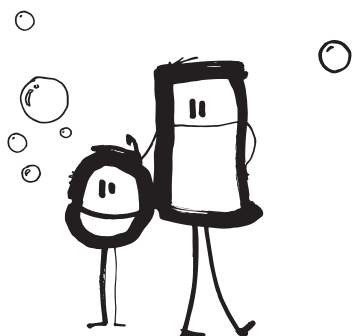
**SUPERHELDENNORMALOS** is the first community opera to be realised by the Cologne Children's Opera and the Oper.Stadt.Schule department (*première on 25 April 2025*). About 100 children and teenagers between ten and eighteen developed the play in various workshops under professional artistic and educational guidance. Finally, other children and young people will take to the stage alongside singers of the Cologne Opera's International Opera Studio and accompanied by the Gürzenich Orchestra and a professional production team. The result is an opera about the search for identity and the fears, wishes and dreams of protagonists Tamina, Max, Sammy and Wisi, in which adults are also likely to recognise themselves.

## NEW PORTABLE CHILDREN'S OPERA

**NILS KARLSSON DÄUMLING** by Berlin-based Canadian composer Thierry Tidrow is based on the children's book by Astrid Lindgren, and tells the story of the little boy Bertil, who has to spend a lot of time alone at home. In a mouse hole, he discovers a Thumbelina called Nisse, who reveals a magic spell which can make Bertil just as small as he is, and so the two become friends and help each other.

Michal Hoffmeyer stages the finely crafted portable mini-opera, which translates the world of humans and the miniature worlds of the Thumbelina into a composition for soprano and violin, and sometimes allows the audience to actively participate in the action.

*From September 2024*, the Cologne Children's Opera will be visiting daycare centres in the Cologne region with this half-hour play, as well as inclusive and fully inpatient facilities for people with and without disabilities, with special social difficulties as well as intergenerational groups of children and people with dementia. For everyone aged 3 and over.



# CHILDREN'S OPERA REVIVALS

## \* THE TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN (DIE BREMER STADTMUSIKANTEN)

Classical German fable meets cultural diversity – in Attila Kadri Şendil's **THE TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN (DIE BREMER STADTMUSIKANTEN)**, the influences of different cultures and styles appear as a natural part of our everyday lives – the casual switch between two languages as well as the musical range from grand opera to jazz to folk song-like numbers.

As to how the four headstrong characters learn to overcome their conflicts and overcome their fears will be told again in this extraordinary children's opera from last season *from 27 October 2024*. The successful production was realised thanks to a generous donation from the Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia, Hendrik Wüst.

## THE MAGIC FLUTE FOR CHILDREN

**THE MAGIC FLUTE** by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has been performed all over the world since its première in 1791. Mozart's masterpiece inspires with its combination of folksong-like and serious elements, of fairy-tale places and a scholarly, ordered world. Papageno and Tamino's search for love thus becomes a journey culminating in the hope for a self-determined future.

Under the musical direction of Rainer Mühlbach and directed by Brigitta Gillessen, the piece will be performed *from January 2025* in a version for young and old – of course with all the famous arias such as that of the Queen of the Night or Papageno. As at the première in the 2018/19 season, members of the opera studio and the ensemble will be on stage.



# OPER. STADT. SCHULE

The Cologne Opera offers a wide-ranging theatre education programme for every age group. As a partner for educational institutions, the department Oper.Stadt.Schule offers a wide range of practical theatre workshops, educational material, padlets, rehearsal visits and talks with artists to help **prepare for and after a visit to the opera.**

The long-established and popular scenic **introductions and post-show talks** as part of the children's opera performances allow the whole family to immerse themselves in the work, slip into the roles of the opera characters themselves and talk to members of the ensemble.

The exchange between generations also takes place in connection with the portable opera production. In the **UNISONO** project, pre-school children and residents of an old people's home are preparing for a joint visit to the opera over several weeks by singing, music making and acting.

The format **OPERA FOR THE LITTLE ONES**, which offers parents and their toddlers an interactive musical experience, will enter its second round in February 2025 with **EVERYTHING THAT FLIES**. In cooperation with the Cologne University of Music and Dance and the theatre and circus education centre LATIBUL, it offers visitors under the age of 2 their first encounter with classical music and theatre.

During the 2024 autumn holidays, children aged 5-9 can spend a day exploring the city forest together with an adult of their choice – this will serve as the backdrop for their own version of the **TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN**. The family workshop **IN THE FOREST WITH THE TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN** is offered on two dates in late of October.

In cooperation with the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, pupils in grades 7-13 are given the opportunity to have a unique opera experience in the **CRASHKURS OPERA**: On one morning, the pupils get to know the orchestra and sit next to their favourite instrument during a rehearsal. The rehearsed work is later illuminated in a scenic workshop.

With the new come-in workshops **IM VEEDEL**, the team brings a piece of opera to the city, visiting Cologne institutions by appointment to try out scenic theatre with the participants, singing (no prior knowledge needed), and as a group.

Once a week between November 2024 and May 2025, young adults aged 16 and over can creatively engage with Astor Piazzolla's work **MARÍA DE BUENOS AIRES** at the **OPERA, SONG AND SCENE** performance club, experiment with the material and gain valuable insights into the rehearsal process. A music theatre performance will be developed from their own associations and ideas, which will be performed in May 2025.

**THEATRE WORKSHOPS** on various opera productions are held on several dates, aiming at anyone aged 18 and over who is curious to find out more about an opera with easy steps and joy of acting. Previous knowledge or singing experience is not required.

When the curtain opens, when the lights come on and the music plays, everything has to be just right. On stage, you only see a fraction of the effort that goes into it. On **GIRLS' DAY / BOYS' DAY** on 24 April 2025, interested parties will be given a practical insight into many theatre professions in several workshops both at the Cologne Opera and the Schauspiel Köln.

Right before the 2025 summer holidays, the Cologne Opera and Schauspiel invite you to a new and extraordinary festival weekend. True to the guiding motto **TO WHOM BELONGS THE STAGE?**, citizens can conquer the theatre with half-hour performances.



# SER VICE

Tickets for performances until late February 2025 are available now.

Advance orders for the months of March to July 2025 can be made via the theatre box office.

## TICKETS AND INFORMATION

[www.oper.koeln](http://www.oper.koeln)  
Tel.: +49 221 221 28400

Information about our subscriptions, ticket orders, prices, travelling to and from the opera and other useful advice can also be found in our service booklet, which is available in the StaatenHaus, or here: <https://www.oper.koeln/en/kartenservice>.

The opening of the opera house on Offenbachplatz depends on the refurbishment progress. Dates and venues may therefore vary from March 2025.

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Production images for press purposes can be found here over the course of the season:  
[www.oper.koeln/de/presse](http://www.oper.koeln/de/presse)

Subject to change.