

Press Release

The 2018/2019 Season of the Hamburg State Opera and the Hamburg Ballet John Neumeier

Hamburg, March 27, 2018 - **Georges Delnon, Artistic Director of the Hamburg State Opera, and Professor John Neumeier, Artistic Director and Chief Choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet, presented the 2018/2019 season of the Hamburg State Opera at today's press conference.**

The **Hamburg State Opera** opens the fourth season under the artistic directorship of Georges Delnon on September 8, 2018 with Mozart's ***Così fan tutte*** in a new production by Herbert Fritsch conducted by Sébastien Rouland. "During our fourth season, we continue our aesthetic line, examine great, important works of opera literature and create new musical theatre works. As we are intent on continuity, this season will be marked by the explicit desire to give the artistic profile of our theatre an unmistakable outline and notable sharpening. We renew our encounter with the theatrical magician Achim Freyer, who directs Robert Schumann's fragment ***Szenen aus Goethes Faust***. John Neumeier presents his perspective of Gluck's opera ***Orphée et Eurydice***. We look forward eagerly to the world premiere of ***Lessons in Love and Violence*** – the new opera by George Benjamin, directed by Katie Mitchell and keenly anticipated on the international opera scene. The *Italian Opera Weeks*, a format we successfully established last season, will be continued. For its opening, the Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov will present a new staged interpretation of Verdi's liberation opera ***Nabucco***," thus Artistic Director Georges Delnon describes the programmatic design of the 2018/2019 season.

For his 46th season at the helm of the **Hamburg Ballet**, John Neumeier has put together a personally meaningful programme. "For the past 45 years, I have moved dancers to move people in the Hanseatic City of Hamburg – the centre of my artistic life. During the forthcoming season, I will celebrate my 80th birthday. This occasion offers an opportunity to weave some threads of my life into the programme of the Hamburg Ballet," John Neumeier, Artistic Director of the Hamburg Ballet, explains.

With the premiere of ***Brahms/Balanchine***, John Neumeier revives two works by George Balanchine, the powerful innovator of dance. The world premiere of ***The Glass Menagerie***, based on Tennessee Williams' play of the same name, set to music by Charles Ives and Philip Glass, adds a new, profoundly American ballet to John Neumeier's impressive catalogue of works. Through his selection of revivals, John Neumeier purposefully emphasizes the stylistic diversity of the ballet genres he has worked in, with a special focus on encounters between song and dance. ***All Our Yesterdays*** (*Des Knaben Wunderhorn / Fifth Symphony of Gustav Mahler*) continues the tradition of symphonic ballet, while ***Bernstein Dances*** is conceived as a ballet revue. Beyond the scope of familiar formats, the Hamburg Ballet presents two extraordinary productions on stage at the Hamburg State Opera in February 2019. On the one hand, the company is involved in the European premiere of John Neumeier's opera production ***Orphée et Eurydice***. On the other hand, the Hamburg Ballet presents the **Benefit Gala The World of John Neumeier** with a high-carat cast: on the evening of his 80th birthday, Hamburg's ballet director and honorary citizen takes to the stage to moderate this ballet gala, the proceeds of which benefit the John Neumeier Foundation.

Subscription orders may be submitted starting immediately. **NEW!** As of the 2018/2019 season, **all tickets for the entire opera and ballet season** can be ordered starting on **Monday, June 11, 2018** (for subscribers: from Thursday, June 7, 2018 onwards). The limited contingent of tickets that was previously released for sale 28 resp. 29 days before a performance is no longer available as of the 2018/2019 season. These seats can be purchased from June 11, 2018 onwards, or as part of subscriptions. Separate ticketing rules apply to the Nijinsky Gala, the Benefit Gala *The World of John Neumeier* and the Ballet Workshops. During the theatre's summer break, the Ticket and Subscription Office will be closed from July 9 to 29, 2018.

New Productions of the Hamburg State Opera's 2018/2019 Season – An Overview

The State Opera continues its da-Ponte series with Mozart's ***Così fan tutte***, which opens the 2018/2019 season on September 8, 2018. Herbert Fritsch makes his Hamburg State Opera debut as a director; Sébastien Rouland conducts. In its fourth year, it is now a tradition that the opening night premiere will be broadcast (slightly delayed) onto a cinema screen on Jungfernstieg. The broadcast takes place as part of the Binnenalster Film Festival and in cooperation with the Filmfest Hamburg, City Management Hamburg and the association "Verein lebendiger Jungfernstieg".

General Music Director Kent Nagano and Achim Freyer continue their successful collaboration, premiering Robert Schumann's fragment ***Szenen aus Goethes Faust*** on October 28, 2018, with Christian Gerhaher in the main role.

In the new year, John Neumeier's perspective on Gluck's ***Orphée et Eurydice*** follows on February 3, 2019. Alessandro De Marchi returns to conduct the Philharmonic State Orchestra. In addition to Dmitry Korchak and Andriana Chuchman, the new ensemble member Elbenita Kajtazi will be heard in the role of L'Amour; the Hamburg Ballet dances.

For the opening of the 2019 Italian Opera Weeks on March 10, 2019, the Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov will reinterpret Verdi's liberation opera ***Nabucco***. The Philharmonic State Orchestra is conducted by Paolo Carignani, who specializes in Italian repertoire. The Hamburg State Opera thereby revives a tradition of in-house ***Italian Opera Weeks***: between March 10 and April 6, 2019, the most beautiful Italian operas in the repertoire will be performed at the State Opera by outstanding international singers. Apart from Verdi's *Nabucco* with the distinguished singers Dimitri Platanias, Alexander Vinogradov, Oksana Dyka and Dovlet Nurgeldiyev, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Franco Vassallo, Maurizio Muraro and Julia Lezhneva, and Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* with the celebrated soprano Kristine Opolais, the audience may look forward to Irina Lungu in *La Traviata* and Ramón Vargas as Gustavo III in *Un ballo in maschera*.

Lessons in Love and Violence – the new opera by George Benjamin, based on a text by Martin Crimp – will have its Hamburg premiere on April 7, 2019. Katie Mitchell directs; Hamburg's General Music Director Kent Nagano conducts. The opera is a commission and co-production by the Hamburg State Opera with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (where the world premiere takes place on May 10, 2018), De Nederlandse Opera Amsterdam, the Opéra de Lyon, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona and the Teatro Real Madrid.

As part of the 2019 International Hamburg Music Festival, the Hamburg State Opera presents the German premiere of its commissioned work ***Thérèse*** by Philipp Maintz, based on a text by Otto Katzameier. This co-production with the Salzburg Easter Festival in cooperation with Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie will be shown from May 18, 2019 onwards at the Elbphilharmonie's Small Auditorium. The State Opera's Artistic Director Georges Delnon directs; Nicolas André conducts.

All the Hamburg State Opera's new productions on the main stage during the 2018/2019 season as well as the *Italian Opera Weeks* are generously supported by the **Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera**, the production *Thérèse* is supported by **Commerzbank Hamburg** and *Orphée et Eurydice* by **Twerenbold AG**.

As a revival, the baroque opera ***Alcina*** by George Frideric Handel in Christof Loy's production will join the State Opera's playbill again starting on September 30, 2018. Two cycles of Hamburg's acclaimed ***Ring des Nibelungen*** by Richard Wagner, a production directed by Claus Guth, will be presented starting on October 30, 2018, featuring renowned vocal soloists. Hamburg's General Music Director Kent Nagano conducts.

Erzittre, feiger Bösewicht!, the State Opera's „opera piccola“ production of 2016/2017, makes a guest appearance in Shanghai in August 2018. This opera for children aged 7 and up is based on motifs from *Die Zauberflöte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and was arranged by Johannes Harneit and directed by Georges Delnon; in Shanghai, Nathan Brock conducts the performances. Members of the International Opera Studio, The Young ClassX Soloist's Ensemble and musicians from Shanghai perform. The production was made possible by the Michael Otto Foundation. The series „opera piccola“ has been supported financially by the Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera since the 2009/2010 season.

Hamburg State Opera 2018/2019 - opera stabile

„opera stabile – a living lab“ is supported by the Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera, the Hapag-Lloyd Foundation and the Deutsche Bank Foundation. The opera stabile presents ***Ring & Wrestling***, the first soap opera recounting the story of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in four entertaining episodes. Conducted by Leo Schmidhals, Dominik Günther directs this production. The performances take place in five episodes in September and October 2018.

The Hamburg State Opera's „opera piccola“ this season is Wolfgang Mitterer's ***Schneewittchen*** (*Snow White*). The children's opera for four voices and seven dwarves is directed by Birgit Kajtna. The premiere is scheduled for February 9, 2019. The piece will be performed by students from Hamburg schools and members of the Philharmonic State Orchestra under the baton of Frederick Brown. Since the 2009/2010 season, „opera piccola“ has been supported by the Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera.

Starting on May 2, 2019, the Akademie Musiktheater presents its production ***Die Nacht der Seeigel*** (*The Night of the Sea Urchins*), adding a contemporary opera to the repertoire of the opera stabile.

The International Opera Studio performs its own production of ***Moscow, Cheryomushki*** at the end of the season, starting on June 22, 2019. Vera Nemirova directs; Rupert Burleigh conducts. The International Opera Studio is supported by the Körber Foundation, the Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera, the J.J. Ganzer Foundation and the Berenberg Bank.

The 2018/2019 Season of the Hamburg Ballet John Neumeier – An Overview

The 2018/2019 season of the Hamburg Ballet has "Threads of my Life" as its motto. After 45 years at the helm of the Hamburg Ballet, John Neumeier thus summarizes a programme he has selected from a highly personal perspective. After the worldwide success of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, John Neumeier continues his exploration of the works of the American playwright Tennessee Williams, presenting the world premiere of ***The Glass Menagerie***. 75 years after Williams landed his first great stage hit with this work, John Neumeier's ballet adaptation of the same name opens the 45th Hamburg Ballet Days on June 16, 2019.

John Neumeier dedicates the winter premiere of the Hamburg Ballet, ***Brahms/Balanchine*** (December 9, 2018), to the legendary New York City Ballet director George Balanchine: "He has been, in a sense, a role model for me – not only because his many years of loyalty to the New York City Ballet are similar to my dedication to Hamburg – but because of his constant ability to renew dance. Firmly rooted in tradition, Balanchine's creativity gave classical ballet contemporary form." The production combines the opulent *Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet* with the comparatively intimate ballet *Liebeslieder Walzer* – to John Neumeier, a rarely-performed "jewel" among Balanchine's choreographies.

The exceptional highlight of the season is the evening of John Neumeier's 80th birthday, when the choreographer himself moderates the **Benefit Gala *The World of John Neumeier*** (February 24, 2019). His vision is an independent ballet institution with the high-carat collection of his foundation as its core assets. This goal in mind, John Neumeier dedicates the proceeds of the Benefit Gala to the John Neumeier Foundation.

On the season's opening weekend, the Hamburg Ballet revives ***Bernstein Dances*** (September 9, 2018), thereby paying homage to John Neumeier's personal friend Leonard Bernstein during Bernstein's centennial. The Hamburg Ballet also marks the centennial of Jerome Robbins by performing *Chopin Dances*. The classical ballets *The Nutcracker* and *Illusions – like Swan Lake* (both by John Neumeier) and *Don Quixote* (by Rudolf Nureyev) also refer to an anniversary commemorated throughout the world: the 200th birthday of the groundbreaking ballet master and choreographer Marius Petipa.

The 2018/2019 season programme illustrates the diversity of ballet genres which exemplify John Neumeier's work as an artist and choreographer. In the field of symphonic ballet, these include not only the *Beethoven Project* (world premiere on June 24, 2018), but also the revival of ***All Our Yesterdays: Des Knaben Wunderhorn / Fifth Symphony of Gustav Mahler*** (February 17, 2019). Other works that must be mentioned are the literary ballets *Anna Karenina* and *Lady of the Camellias*, the sacred-music ballet *Christmas Oratorio I-VI* and John Neumeier's genre-bending "total work of art", ***Orphée et Eurydice***, a co-production with the Lyric Opera Chicago and the Los Angeles Opera, which has its European premiere on February 3, 2019. *Orphée et Eurydice* is a production of the Hamburg State Opera including the Hamburg Ballet. Just as the production *Brahms/Balanchine*, this premiere is supported by the **Foundation for the Support of the Hamburg State Opera**.

The **45th Hamburg Ballet Days** (June 16 to 30, 2019) will be bookended by the world premiere of *The Glass Menagerie* by John Neumeier and the ***Nijinsky Gala XLV***, the festive closing of the season. The festival presents the most interesting ballet productions of the season, including the opera *Orphée et Eurydice*. Furthermore, the renowned Dutch company ***Het Nationale Ballet*** presents works by the celebrated choreographer Hans van Manen on June 25 and 26, 2019. Featured works include *Symphonies of the Netherlands* and *5 Tangos*. This is the third invitation John Neumeier has issued to this impressive guest company, following its appearances in the Hanseatic City in 1977 and 1990.

Four times per season, the Hamburg Ballet hosts its popular **Ballet Workshops**. In these matinee performances, John Neumeier explains the historical background of his ballets, offering insights into his creative process. The Benefit Workshop on December 16, 2018 merits special mention, as its proceeds go to the dance foundation **Stiftung Tanz**.

Behind this decision stands John Neumeier's determination to support dancers' careers, also beyond their successful phases. As the chairman of its supervisory board ever since the founding of the Stiftung Tanz, he has tried to offer dancers perspectives for their professional future after their active career. The positions for **aspirants of the Hamburg Ballet** also go back to his initiative: after completing their training, they are given the possibility to be introduced to a professional dancer's work at the Hamburg Ballet. During the 2018/2019 season, all six aspirant positions are financed in full by the **Friends of the Hamburg Ballet Center e.V.**

From February 25 to 27 and March 1 to 3, 2019, the School of the Hamburg Ballet celebrates the ten-year anniversary of the annual **Workshop of Creativity**. Since 2010, the theatre classes perform at the Ernst Deutsch Theater, showing their own choreographies as danced final theses. Just like the *Workshop of Creativity*, the creative format **Young Choreographers** enjoys the particular esteem of John Neumeier, the Director of the School of the Hamburg Ballet: together with their colleagues, dancers of the Hamburg Ballet develop their own choreographies in their free time, presenting them in a professional framework. After four seasons at the opera stabile, the *Young Choreographers* will now appear on a new stage. The place and dates for the new performance venue will be announced separately.

The 2018/2019 season takes the Hamburg Ballet on tour in Germany and abroad – the company will show four different ballets, a ballet workshop and a gala programme outside Hamburg. In October 2018 the company travels to the **Festspielhaus Baden-Baden** for its annual autumn residence, where it performs *Bernstein Dances*, a Ballet Workshop and *Anna Karenina*. In 2019 the Hamburg Ballet undertakes an extensive **tour of Asia**, with Hong Kong as the most important stop (*The Nutcracker*, *The World of John Neumeier*, *Beethoven Project*).

Guest Appearances of the Hamburg Ballet John Neumeier in 2018/2019 – An Overview

Ever since John Neumeier arrived in the Hanseatic City in 1973 as its ballet director, international guest performances have been part of the Hamburg Ballet's self-concept. With his artistic engagement, Hamburg's Artistic Director of the Ballet and honorary citizen has caused many a stir, year after year – making him one of the most distinguished ambassadors for the high-carat cultural life of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. Over the past 45 years, the Hamburg Ballet has given more than 1,000 guest performances in 119 different cities in 30 countries. Hamburg has every reason to be proud of this sustained presence in the world's great cultural centres.

Only last year, the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier attended the highly symbolic Russian premiere of John Neumeier's *Saint Matthew Passion* in Moscow, on the occasion of the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation. During the subsequent group photograph on stage, the President addressed the dancers, visibly moved: "Thank you very much – you are wonderful ambassadors for Germany!"

This is the standard which John Neumeier and the Hamburg Ballet apply to all their guest appearances, including those of the 2018/2019 season. The Hamburg Ballet shows four ballet productions, one ballet workshop and a gala programme in Baden-Baden and on an extensive tour of Asia, with Hong Kong as the main stop.

Baden-Baden, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden

Bernstein Dances (Ballet Review by John Neumeier)
October 6 & 7, 2018

Anna Karenina (Ballet by John Neumeier)
October 12, 13 & 14, 2018

Ballet Workshop (moderated by John Neumeier)
October 7, 2018

Hong Kong (Hong Kong Arts Festival 2019)

The Nutcracker (Ballet by John Neumeier)
The World of John Neumeier (Ballet Gala)
Beethoven Project (Ballet by John Neumeier)

The season brochures are now available online:
www.staatsoper-hamburg.de and www.hamburgballett.de

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