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PRESS RELEASE

Climate Neutral Premiere of Mary, Queen of Scots at Oper Leipzig

(22 December 2023) Thea Musgrave's musical production of the opera "Mary, Queen of Scots" has been successfully brought to the stage of the Oper Leipzig in a climate-neutral way. Audiences and the press praised Ilaria Lanzino's production, which premiered in Leipzig last weekend with an exceptional cast: the director herself stepped in to play the dangerous Earl of Bothwell on stage, while Eberhard Francesco Lorenz sang the role from the side. It was a courageous tour de force that added extra suspense to the political thriller about the young Queen Mary, performed by singer Nicole Chevalier. And Deutsche Bühne says: "The resource-saving set creates a wonderful space for great theatre."

A New Benchmark in Sustainability

The production of "Mary, Queen of Scots" sets new standards and explores the space between art and climate protection: the team around the award-winning director Ilaria Lanzino and the head of stage design at the Oper Leipzig, Dirk Becker, analysed the core area of the stage production with all its artistic contents and processes. Funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation as part of the Fonds Zero programme, the project is the first attempt to comprehensively evaluate a major opera production and calculate the carbon footprint of all rehearsals and performances, with the long-term aim of producing a general guide for production teams. As well as involving the entire theatre, audience members donated tables, which were collected by a DHL electric vehicle and used in the third act.

Oper Leipzig, the city's largest cultural institution, is considered a pioneer in the field of ecological change and aims to embed sustainability as a cross-cutting theme in all its departments. At the very beginning of his directorship, Tobias Wolff and his management team initiated the research project "Sustainable Costumes" in cooperation with the Icelandic Opera, with funding from Fedora and Opera Europa - already awarded one of the "eku - Future Prizes for Energy, Climate, Environment in Saxony" by the Saxon State Ministry for Energy, Climate Protection, Environment and Agriculture.

New Climate Calculator for Leipzig's Cultural Sector

In order to strategically address sustainability and take targeted action, cultural institutions need to be able to determine their carbon footprint, including all direct and indirect emissions. The key to a carbon neutral opera production is to collect and understand the different core indicators and emission source data for a carbon footprint. The cities of Leipzig and Dresden have developed a new web-based climate calculator specifically for the cultural sector. With this climate calculator, Oper Leipzig can collect data on the purchase of fabrics and materials for costume production, international performances, staff mobility, travel by audiences and guest artists, or services provided by third parties. Nothing will change for the public, except that opera-goers may be asked where and how they got there.

Mary, Queen of Scots – Opera in Three Acts

The conflict with Queen Elizabeth I of England and the execution of Mary Stuart are well-known themes, thanks to the dramatization by Friedrich Schiller, among others. Mary, the widowed Queen of France, is young, ambitious and full of new political ideas. She is asked to return to her native Scotland to take over the crown, but becomes embroiled in intrigue, unhappy loves and false confidants. According to award-winning director Ilaria Lanzino, Mary is not just a victim, but transforms herself on the throne, becoming more and more like the power-hungry lords in appearance, and not even shying away from murder. The choice of this opera is part of Oper Leipzig's efforts to revive lesser-known works of music from the last fifty years and thus give them a place in the repertoire.

Further Information and Tickets

The Oper Leipzig follows a 330-year tradition of musical theatre in Leipzig: the first opera house on the Brühl was opened in 1693 as the third civic music theatre in Europe after Venice and Hamburg. Since 1840, the world-famous Gewandhausorchester has accompanied all performances of the opera and the Leipzig Ballet. In addition to the present opera house on Augustusplatz, built in 1960, the Oper Leipzig also includes the Musical Comedy Theatre, a special venue for musicals and operettas. With around 680 employees, it is the city's largest in-house cultural institution and comprises five mainstays: the opera, musical comedy, ballet, its 360° education programmes, and the craft studios that work for all of the city's theatres.

Further performances of "Mary, Queen of Scots" will take place on the following dates: 27 December 2023, 12 January 2024, 28 January 2024 and 11 February 2024. Tickets for the 2023/24 season are available online or from the Leipzig Opera visitor service. Advance ticket sales for the 2024 International Ballet Festival have already begun, and ticket requests can be made online.

Exclusive travel offers for various opera and concert holidays can be booked via Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH at: <https://www.leipzig.travel/en/book/planning-a-trip/travel-offers>

- <https://www.leipzig.travel/cityofmusic>
- <https://www.oper-leipzig.de/en/nachhaltigkeit>
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