



Semperoper Dresden: First premiere of the 2024/25 season is Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*

PRESS RELEASE



Premiere poster for *Mefistofele*, © Semperoper Dresden

The Semperoper Dresden's series of premieres for the 2024/25 season begins with a new staging of Arrigo Boito's opera Mefistofele by Eva-Maria Höckmayr. The cast featuring Krzysztof Bączyk in the title role, Pavol Breslik as Faust und Marjukka Tepponen as Margeritha will be joined by actress Martina Gedeck, appearing for the first time on the Semperoper stage.

Dresden, 17 September 2024. The Semperoper is launching its 2024/25 season of new productions with Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*, one of the most significant operatic interpretations of Goethe's classic tragedy on the Faust legend. Making her Semperoper directorial debut, Eva-Maria Höckmayr has created a visual stunning staging of this great Italian opera, which deals with the age-old problem of good versus evil.

At 6 pm on Saturday, 28 September 2024, the curtain rises on the Semperoper's very first new production of this Season, *Mefistofele*. A charismatic roster of performers will be led by Pavol Breslik as Faust and Finnish soprano Marjukka Tepponen (who only recently joined the Semperoper ensemble) as Margherita. They are joined by Polish bass Krzysztof Bączyk as the diabolical title character and the celebrated German actress Martina Gedeck performing the role of the Woman, which was created especially for the Dresden production.

The Staatskapelle Dresden will be directed by Italy's Andrea Battistoni, chief conductor of the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and a recognised expert on Boito's work. Maestro and orchestra will together bring to life a score that features many impressive choral passages. Alongside the leads, audiences can look forward to celebrated soloists such as Clara Nadeshdin, Nicole Chirka and Omar Mancini. The aesthetically stunning scenery is the work of stage designer and video artist Momme Hinrichs, co-founder of the artist duo fettFilm.

Arrigo Boito based his first and only completed opera on Goethe's *Faust*. Consisting of a prologue, four acts and an epilogue, the work explores the universal tragedy of human existence. In Boito's interpretation, the action centres on the great hellish seducer: dominating the stage, this "spirit of perpetual negation" captivates the audience with his diabolical finesse and, not least, his skills as a whistler.

Arrigo Boito later enjoyed acclaim as a composer with a revised version that appeared in 1875. Drawing on the musical innovations of Wagner, *Mefistofele* is today regarded as one of the most important Italian operas of the 19th century. The great choral scenes and the complex vocal parts demand the utmost skill and dedication of all performers.

This new staging by Eva-Maria Höckmayr presents a multi-layered interpretation to the Semperoper stage. Furthermore, this version introduces a female character (here played by actress Martina Gedeck) who dissects the devilish art of seduction. Quoting Goethe's texts with sharp humour, she takes a sideways glance at the eternal battle between good and evil. The production also invites the audience to delve into the human soul and explore philosophical questions around sin, redemption and the power of the seducer.

Mefistofele by Arrigo Boito

Premiere begins at 6 pm on Saturday, 28 September 2024, in the Semperoper.

Additional performances in October 2024.

With Krzysztof Bączyk, Pavol Breslik, Marjukka Tepponen, Nicole Chirka, Omar Mancini, Dominika Škrabalová, Clara Nadeshdin, Jongwoo Hong and Martina Gedeck.

The Staatskapelle Dresden will be conducted by Andrea Battistoni. Also on stage: the State Opera Chorus and the Semperoper Children's Choir.

Generously supported by the Semperoper Foundation.

Tickets can be purchased from the Schinkelwache box office on Theaterplatz (+49 (0)351 4911 705). Alternatively, book your tickets and seat reservations via the Semperoper's online ticket shop, which offers a 3D-seating plan.

Please send any requests for review tickets (along with details of the editorial brief and likely publication dates) to presse@semperoper.de.

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