Semperoper
Ballett

Semperoper Dresden: Premiere of *Nijinsky* by John Neumeier on 24 January 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Premiere poster for *Nijinsky* ©Semperoper Dresden

On Friday, 24 January 2025, the Semperoper Dresden will celebrate its second new Semperoper Ballett production of the season with "Nijinsky" by John Neumeier.

Dresden, 16 January 2025. With John Neumeier's biographical work *Nijinsky*, the Semperoper has the chance to spotlight the links between two of the ballet world's most outstanding artists and Dresden, a city that has played a leading role in the evolution of dance. In the year when the Semperoper Ballett celebrates its 200th birthday, the legendary John Neumeier is bringing his choreographed homage to the most important dancer of the 20th century, Vaslav Nijinsky, to the Saxon capital. The world premiere of this work took place in Hamburg in July 2000.

For the Dresden premiere on 24 January 2025, John Neumeier is revisiting this exploration of the dramatic life of the incomparable dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, who was born in Kiev in 1889 and achieved world fame at an early age. In the second decade of the 20th century, audiences at Dresden's Royal Opera House were captivated by the unfamiliar intensity and overwhelming expressive force of Nijinsky's dancing in his acclaimed Dresden guest appearances with the Balletts Russes, for example in the 1913 production of his world-famous choreography *The Afternoon of a Faun* (*L'Après-midi d'un faune*). In Neumeier's *Nijinsky*, the lighting, scenery and costumes are partly based on the original designs by Léon Bakst and Alexandre Benois for the historical ballets referenced in the production.

John Neumeier succeeds in translating the complex emotional states and memories associated with Vaslaw Nijinky's life into the language of dance. The ballet Nijinsky is more than just a form of documentation; it is an artistic interpretation that captures the essence of the extraordinary artist's personality. The audience is invited to embark on an emotional journey and to experience the magic as well as the tragedy of Nijinsky's life.

Since his early days, the work and life of the genius Vaslav Nijinsky have proved an inexhaustible source of ideas and a true inspiration for John Neumeier's own artistic work as a dancer and choreographer as well as ballet director, artistic director and chief choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet: "The interesting thing about the legend of 'Nijinsky' is that we speak of his presence before his technique, before his strength and elevation.

I see this presence as a form of truth, namely that someone is not acting, but really 'is'. All communication with our fellow human beings is based on this truth.'

Today the Saxon State Opera can look back on a long collaboration with the multi award-winning John Neumeier, who first appeared as a guest dancer as early as 1967, later working repeatedly with the Dresden company as a choreographer. It was the first foreign company that has been allowed to perform his choreography *Illusions – Like Swan Lake*, created for his Hamburg ensemble in 1976. After the devastating flood of 2002, the artist bequeathed his work *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the Dresden company. In the same year, the Semperoper appointed John Neumeier one of its honorary members.

On the premiere evening, the Staatskapelle Dresden will perform music by Frédéric Chopin, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Dmitri Shostakovich and Robert Schumann under the baton of Simon Hewett, the principal conductor of Stuttgart Opera and principal conductor of Hamburg Ballet, who has worked closely with John Neumeier since 2006.

Nijinsky by John Neumeier

Premiere at 7 pm on 24 January 2025 in the Semperoper.
Additional performances on 26 & 29 January as well as 1, 2, 9, 14, 20 & 23 February 2025.

Performed by the dancers of Semperoper Ballett.
The Staatskapelle Dresden will interpret the music of Frédéric Chopin, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Dmitri Shostakovich and Robert Schumann under the direction of Simon Hewett.

This production is generously supported by the Semperoper Foundation.

Tickets for the events of the Semperoper Dresden can be purchased from the Schinkelwache box office on Theaterplatz (+49 (0)351 4911 705). Alternatively, book your tickets and reserve seats 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.
High-quality photos and other press materials can be downloaded from our dedicated press page at semperoper.de/presse.

Semperoper Dresden
stefan.wollmann@semperoper.de, T +49 (0)351 4911 251 (Head of Marketing)
oliver.bernau@semperoper.de, T +49 (0)351 4911 336 (Press Officer)

www.semperoper.de/presse