



ROYAL
OPERA

31 JANUARY 2017

***THE ROYAL OPERA ANNOUNCES A NEW OPERA BY GEORGE
BENJAMIN AND MARTIN CRIMP***

World premiere on 10 May 2018 at the Royal Opera House

Co-commissioned and co-produced with Dutch National Opera (July 2018), Hamburg State Opera (April 2019), Opéra de Lyon (May 2019), Lyric Opera of Chicago (2020/21 Season), Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona (March 2021) and Teatro Real, Madrid (April/May 2021).

The Royal Opera is delighted to announce the world premiere of **George Benjamin**'s new opera, *Lessons in Love and Violence*, which will be presented on 10 May 2018. George Benjamin's third opera follows the very successful model of his second opera *Written on Skin*, with six commissioning partners from five different countries coming together with The Royal Opera to commission this new work. Since its world premiere in 2012, *Written on Skin* has been performed more than eighty times around the globe, in five different productions (with a sixth production coming next year in the USA), with numerous broadcasts, internet and television relays. The opera has also been recorded for CD and DVD.

George Benjamin will once again work with British playwright **Martin Crimp**, who provided the text for his opera *Into the Little Hill* (commissioned by the Festival d'Automne à Paris and first performed in London in 2009 in the Royal Opera House's Linbury Studio Theatre) and who went on to provide the text for his first full-length opera *Written on Skin*, which received its world premiere at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in July 2012, followed by the UK premiere at the Royal Opera House in March 2013.

Kasper Holten, Director of Opera, for The Royal Opera said:

'I remember sitting in Aix-en-Provence for the first night of *Written on Skin* and feeling that everyone present was at once deeply moved and aware that something very special had just happened. And in a time where quality and courage are so often under pressure, it has been

For all Royal Opera House press releases visit www.roh.org.uk/press



astonishing to see these virtues triumph as this masterpiece has travelled the world with a speed unparalleled in modern operatic history.

I am truly grateful that George, together with Martin Crimp, is writing his next major opera for us at Covent Garden, with six major partner opera houses around the world, and it has been a fascinating journey for me to be in conversation with George and Martin from the very first moments of discussion about this new piece. I think they have found an extraordinary subject and given it a treatment that feels deeply original and should make for an evening of exciting music theatre. I can't wait to witness the result of that journey in May 2018 at the Royal Opera House.'

Inspired by the fast-moving scenes and vulnerable, complex characters of Elizabethan drama, this new opera by George Benjamin and Martin Crimp considers what space, if any, exists for love and human affection inside the dangerous machinery of power.

A king, compelled to choose between love and political hard-headedness, makes a fatal decision, allowing his country to slide into civil war, and setting his own wife and son implacably against him. But when the son in turn has been given bruising lessons in realpolitik and the surgical use of force, he performs in front of his mother — albeit with the object of restoring peace — a terrifying act of violence.

As with *Written on Skin*, George Benjamin will conduct all performances at the Royal Opera House. British director **Katie Mitchell**, returns to work with George Benjamin, having directed the world and UK premieres of *Written on Skin*. At the Royal Opera House she has also directed *Clemency* and *Parthenogenesis* for ROH2 and *Lucia di Lammermoor* for The Royal Opera. Designs are by **Vicki Mortimer**, who designed *Written on Skin* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Katie Mitchell.

The cast will feature French baritone **Stéphane Degout**, most recently seen at the Royal Opera House as Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) alongside Canadian soprano **Barbara Hannigan**, who created the pivotal role of Agnès in *Written on Skin*. Joining them will be British tenor **Peter Hoare**, whose recent roles for The Royal Opera include Normanno (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Dr Caius (*Falstaff*); Hungarian-Romanian baritone **Gyula Orendt** (who created the title role in The Royal Opera's production of *Orfeo* at the Roundhouse in 2015); and British tenor **Samuel Boden** who made his Royal Opera debut in 2014 singing the title role in *L'Ormino* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe. Also joining the cast are British soprano **Jennifer**

For all Royal Opera House press releases visit www.roh.org.uk/press



France, Icelandic bass-baritone **Andri Björn Róbertsson**, and Hungarian-Canadian mezzo-soprano **Krisztina Szabó**, all making their debuts at Covent Garden.

SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCES

10, 12, 15, 18, 24, 26 May 2018

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Press contact: Ann Richards 020 7212 9132: ann.richards@roh.org.uk

25, 27, 29 June 1,3,5 July 2018

Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam

Press contact: Jet Ellebroek tel: +31205518288: j.ellerbroek@operaballet.nl

7,10, 13, 17, 20 April 2019

Hamburg State Opera

Press contact: Dr Michael Bellgardt tel:+49 40 35 68 406:

michael.bellgardt@staatsoper-hamburg.de

14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 May 2019

Opéra de Lyon

Press contact: Sophie Jarjat tel: +33 4 72 200 45 82: SJarjat@opera-lyon.com

2020/2021 Season – North American Premiere

Lyric Opera of Chicago

Press contact: Holly Gilson tel: 312-827 5939: hgilson@lyricopera.org

March 2021

Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona

Press Contact: Nora Farrés Soley tel: +34 93 485 9948: nora.farres@liceubarcelona.cat

April/ May 2021

Teatro Real, Madrid

Press Contact: Graça Ramos tel: +34 91 516 06 48: gramos@teatro-real.com

NOTES TO EDITORS : WRITTEN ON SKIN

Commissioned by the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Dutch National Opera, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse and The Royal Opera. World premiere took place in July 2012. Since then it has been performed more than eighty times in five different productions. There has also been a tour of the work by the Mahler Chamber Orchestra as a concert piece. It has been heard in Aix-en-Provence, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bolzano, Bonn, Cologne, Detmold, La Plata (Argentina), Lisbon, London, Madrid, Munich, New York, Paris, St Gallen, Stockholm, Tanglewood (USA), Toronto, Toulouse and Vienna. Further performances are planned in Moscow at the Bolshoi Theatre (April 2017), and in Hamburg and Tokyo, with a new production opening in Philadelphia in 2018.

For all Royal Opera House press releases visit www.roh.org.uk/press



PRESS OFFICE CONTACTS

Ann Richards/David Brownlie-Marshall/Matthew Horne/Rhys Edwards

Opera Press Office, The Royal Opera

Tel: 020 7212 /9132/9504/9149/020 3772 6458

ann.richards@roh.org.uk /david.brownliemarshall@roh.org.uk/

matthew.horne@roh.org.uk/rhys.edwards@roh.org.uk