

PRESSKIT



Georges Bizet

The Pearl Fishers



10 – 26.12.2021



GTG.CH

The Pearl Fishers

Opera by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Michel Carré
and Eugène Cormon
First performed in Paris in 1863
Last performed at the Grand Théâtre
de Genève in 1950

Musical Director **David Reiland**
Stage Director **Lotte de Beer**
Scenography **Marousha Levy**
Costumes **Jorine van Beek**
Lighting Designer **Alex Brok**
Video **Finn Ross**
Choir director **Alan Woodbridge**

Leïla **Kristina Mkhitaryan**
Nadir **Frédéric Antoun**
Zurga **Audun Iversen**
Nourabad **Michael Mofidian**

Grand Théâtre de Genève Chorus

**Orchestre de
la Suisse Romande**

**10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
and 26 December 2021 – 8pm
12 December 2021 – 3pm**

Late Night: 27.11.2021
Apéropéra: 02.12.2021
Atelier public: 04.12.2021
Eclairage: 07.12.2021
Brunch: 19.12.2021
En coulisse: 21.12.2021

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The Grand Théâtre has entrusted Lotte de Beer, one of Europe's most promising directors, to wrap up this year with a performance of her flagship production *Pêcheurs de perles* (The Pearl Fishers), a rare masterpiece by Georges Bizet reimagined as a lively reality show.

The return of an opera with a score among the most beautiful and well-known in the operatic repertoire, but whose weak libretto does not lend itself to frequent stage productions. One must find the key. Cue young Dutch director Lotte de Beer, who took on this production for the Theater an der Wien in Vienna in 2014, and made it her own by breaking down this early piece by Bizet bursting with colonial exoticism and reforming it to create a dynamic universe, making a mockery of *reality shows*. Just as the exotic Ceylan of the 19th century became the Sri Lanka of the 21st century, a paradise for tropical holidays and wellness retreats, Lotte de Beer puts forward a contemporary alternative telling stories in far-flung regions and cultures.

The director retells the story within the framework of a reality show challenge where participants from Europe compete on an island without any idea of what to expect. She draws on the concept of the “vital lie” from Ibsen's theatre to convey the implausible twists

and turns in the story of Leïla, Nadir and Zurga, which are just as believable as the preprogrammed randomness of *Loft Story* or *Temptation Island*, through the friendship of two pearl fishermen secretly in love with the same woman, a priestess who has taken a vow of chastity.

To ensure this delicate and yet vocally demanding music is interpreted with style, the Grand Théâtre has entrusted the direction of the music to Belgian director David Reiland, an aficionado of music from the Second French Empire, who will conduct the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. He will be working with a trio of soloists formed by Russian soprano Kristina Mkhitarian, who audiences have been able to enjoy several times in Geneva, recently in *Les Indes galantes* (2019), as Leïla, the Canadian tenor Frédéric Antoun, a great specialist in demanding roles of the French operatic repertoire, as Nadir, and finally, Audun Iversen, the powerful Norwegian baritone in the dramatic role of Zurga.



IMAGE: THEATER AN DER WIEN © WERNER KMETITSCH



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