

– PRESS RELEASE –

Göttingen, March 16, 2022

Handel Festival explores “New Horizons”

Brand new concert series and well established events under George Petrou

George Petrou takes over the artistic direction of the early music institution in Lower Saxony with **New Horizons**, the theme of this year's Göttingen International Handel Festival which takes place from May 12-22. At today's press conference, alongside Managing Director Jochen Schäfsmeier, he unveiled his program for year one following the Festival's centennial anniversary.

Despite the Festival's theme, no one has to miss out on the traditional popular events including top-notch concerts starring superb artists and the Festival opera. On the contrary, this year's selected opera, **Giulio Cesare in Egitto** (HWV 17), is one of Handel's best-known and most popular stage works. One hundred years after Oskar Hagen rediscovered the masterpiece, George Petrou brings it back to Göttingen as both conductor and director – in a co-production with the Nederlandse Reisopera. With Yuriy Mylenko in the title role and Sophie Junker as Cleopatra, audiences can experience two outstanding Handel voices. Including the public screening on May 20 and the family version on May 22, the opera will be staged eight times in an extraordinarily elaborate production; the premiere is on May 13.

A day earlier, George Petrou will open the Göttingen Handel Festival with its signature ensemble, the FestspielOrchester Göttingen (FOG). Featured works include four concerti grossi from op. 3 and the title cantata **Aminta e Fillide** (HWV 83). World-class performances continue on May 14 with the Handel oratorio **Belshazzar** (HWV 61), conducted by Václav Luks and performed by Concerto Köln and the NDR Vocal Ensemble.

The **Gala Concert** on May 19 showcases Julia Lezhneva, a current star on the scene, and others such as Jeanine de Bique, Bruno de Sá, Erik Bosgraaf and Dmitry Sinkovsky follow suit in Lower Saxony. The Göttingen Handel Festival will spotlight the stars of tomorrow with ensembles such as Cembraless, I Zefirelli and L'Apothéose, all of which are part of the European Union's Eeemerging+ program. Events such as **Handel goes Tinder**, **Handel jazzt! Peel me a grape**, or **Handel & Hendrix** (with the B'Rock Orchestra conducted by Dorothee Oberlinger) demonstrate just how contemporary early music really is.



With more than 50 events at 26 venues, the Festival is building on its “former glory” in terms of quantity alone; and to rekindle cravings for culture after more than two years of restrictions, events such as **Good Morning, George!**, **Lunchkonzert** and **Café George** are heading straight for the people in the city and region – the first two events are even free of charge. “For a week and a half in May, Göttingen belongs firmly in Handel's grip”, emphasizes Petrou, “so what could be more natural than to let his music be heard around the clock during that time?” The **göttingen händel competition** is also being enhanced with the special prize 'Music and Space', which recognizes a concert design specifically tailored to a new venue in the region. This allows ensembles and audiences to become acquainted with venues in the district and South Lower Saxony from a completely new perspective.

This combination of innovation and tradition also breathes new life into the series “Händel 4 Kids!”: Popular events such as the **Sing Along service** and the play **Handel's Hamster** are being supplemented by **The Rolling George**, a mobile stage built aboard a truck. This way, the intriguing detective story about a missing piece of music can be enjoyed by children and youths at no less than four different locations. Petrou and Schäfsmeier are particularly looking forward to the **Audiowalk**, a digital concert space that will be set up along the Göttingen city wall. Via a QR code, the plot of this year's Festival opera *Giulio Cesare* will be told by children for children at eight different stations. This ambitious project is the prelude to a one-and-a-half-year collaboration with the Albani School in Göttingen, which will ultimately lead to a production of its own at the 2023 Festival.

The public advance ticket sales start on Thursday, March 24, 2022; the coveted tickets will be available on the Festival website www.hndl.de – relaunched today as well – and also at GT Ticketservice (Wiesenstraße 1), Tourist Information Göttingen (Markt 8) and at the Deutsches Theater Göttingen (Theaterplatz 11).

New Horizons from May 12–22, 2022

Tickets available from March 24 at www.hndl.de

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