



DRESDNER
MUSIKFESTSPIELE

Press Release, May 29, 2023

The Dresdner Musikfestspiele present the world premiere of David Chesky's »White Rose Trilogy« with a visual concept by Barbara Luisi

Commemorating the resistance fighter **Sophie Scholl** and her execution by the Gestapo 80 years ago, the **Dresdner Musikfestspiele** presents a world premiere by the American composer **David Chesky** on June 2, 2023 at the **Festspielhaus Hellerau**. The »**White Rose Trilogy**« is a cycle of works in three movements for orchestra and chorus, reflecting the fate of this member of the resistance through musical and visual means. The American conductor **Eric Jacobsen** leads the **Dresden Symphony Orchestra** and the **Sächsisches Vokalensemble** in this world premiere. The actress **Luise Aschenbrenner** from Dresden will recite the individual names of the members of the White Rose group in the second movement. **Barbara Luisi** created the visual concept for the staging, illustrating the situation of the resistance group for the audience with a video installation and a stage set to enable an emotional contact with the audience.

»I wrote this as a homage to Sophie Scholl and the students of the Munich University. The trilogy develops as follows: the first part is the evocation of the terror; you feel this darkness coming over them. The second part is the actual announcement of the names of the students and professors accused. And the third part is Sophie's ascension to heaven to become a saint in a philosophical manner. For me she represents some beauty that this world does not have, somebody who believes in truth and freedom, and would give their life for it,« says David Chesky about his composition.

»Developing this project for the Dresdner Musikfestspiele was a challenge, because this is not a concept for an opera, but a concert performance. Still, I tried to infuse the dark and weighty music by David Chesky with a little lightness through my interpretation of the White Rose, in the sense of many emotional images, which speak to the intellect and the heart alike. The audience becomes involved by having the opportunity to read the leaflets in the original versions, feeling personally what happened then, and what can happen again today,« says Barbara Luisi about her visual concept for the performance.

The evening begins with Johann Sebastian Bach's motet »Fürchte dich nicht, ich bin bei dir« BWV 228, which combines verses from the Biblical Book of Isaiah with Paul Gerhardt's chorale »Warum soll ich mich denn grämen«. The final piece in the concert is the brief orchestral work »Ascending Bird« by Colin Jacobsen/Siamak Aghaei. The concert takes place in cooperation between the **Dresdner Musikfestspiele** and **HELLERAU – European Centre of the Arts**.

The 46th Dresdner Musikfestspiele takes place from May 18 to June 18, 2023.

For further information, please contact:

Nicole Czerwinka

Press and Public Relations

Tel. +49 (0)351 478 56-43



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czerwinka@musikfestspiele.com