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Siemens strengthening opera in Egypt

- **Siemens Arts Program engaging for first time in Alexandria, Egypt, with a production of Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni"**
- **German-Egyptian education project set to provide fresh momentum for opera tradition in Alexandria**
- **Don Giovanni premiering at Bibliotheca Alexandrina on May 18, 2023**

Siemens intends to further expand its cultural commitment in Egypt and is supporting an exceptional opera production in Alexandria for the first time. Together with the German cultural institution Goethe-Institut, the Egyptian conductor Nayer Nagui and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina library, the Siemens Arts Program is making the Egyptian premiere of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" possible. The performance will take place at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2023.

"One purpose of our activities is to promote diversity and equal opportunity in the cultural sphere, too," said Stephan Frucht, Artistic Director of the Siemens Arts Program. "Our approach to continuing education, which is an approach that places a strong emphasis on sustainably developing musical theater, also plays a major role for young people in Egypt. In the process, intercultural skills become a universal capacity that encourages people to embrace peaceful and cooperative togetherness."

German opera director Manuel Schmitt is directing the production. Set and costume designer Bernhard Siegl, who is also from Germany, is overseeing the design of the stage-set and costumes. He will also be training Bibliotheca staff in both areas. With this German-Egyptian education project, the production team aims to provide fresh momentum for Alexandria's opera tradition, develop further expertise within Bibliotheca Alexandrina's choir and foster talented young singers. The project is also

seeking to build local skills in the directing of operas and in stage-set and costume design, all with an eye to fostering sustainable, continuing development in the area of musical theater.

“This staging of ‘Don Giovanni’ is the only opera production at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina this year and marks a highlight among the few opera performances in Egypt,” said director Manuel Schmitt. “For me, the coming together of two very different cultural spheres – the Central European with the Egyptian – makes rehearsing and performing ‘Don Giovanni’ in Egypt a very special and important cultural endeavor. The language of Mozart and Da Ponte becomes a common language for people who have very different cultural backgrounds and thus also view this opera from very different perspectives. This grappling with the operatic work and the themes it addresses is a fundamental component of the staging work. In this project, the context-based portrayal of sexuality, violence against women, masculinity and femininity, and the questioning of identity roles, as well as similar topics, are to be discussed from the viewpoints of two cultural traditions and then lead to a multicultural performance.”

For the ensemble of soloists, the Siemens Arts Program initiated an international casting call to fill the roles of Donna Anna and Leporello. The casting jury chose Mexican baritone Antonio Azpiri and Serbian/Bulgarian soprano Isidora Moles. The jury consisted of conductor Nayer Nagui, director Manuel Schmitt and the Siemens Arts Program.

“Alexandria has always been a cosmopolitan city where opera, musical theater and concerts of all kinds have always been present and have created a strong community engaged in cultural activities,” said director Nayer Nagui. “Projects like these bring back this ‘Belle Époque’ while including young artists give the city a future and sustainability.”

Sabine Erlenwein, Head of the Goethe-Institut in Alexandria, adds: “This production of ‘Don Giovanni’ stands for strengthening international artistic and cultural exchange. The collaborative synergy between the German director, German set and stage designer, the international singers, and the choir of the Bibliotheca Alexandria under the baton of conductor Nayer Nagui will make the work to stage

‘Don Giovanni’ an exciting and creative experience for everyone involved. The process of staging the opera is something very special – as is the prospect of being able to thrill thousands of Egyptian opera fans with Mozart’s music.”

For more information on the Siemens Arts Program:

www.siemens.com/artsprogram

This press release is available at: <https://sie.ag/40hrUd0>

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