

NAXOS

Fabrice **BOLLON**

The Folly **(Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam)**

Borth • Emanuel-Marial • Gionfriddo • Jung

Hess-Gagnon • Fortuna-Bollon • Comer

Choirs of the Theater Freiburg

Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg • Fabrice Bollon



Fabrice
BOLLON

(b. 1965)

The Folly

Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam

Opera in five acts (2021)

Libretto by Clemens Bechtel (b. 1964)

Based on excerpts from texts by Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466/69–1536),
Martin Luther (1483–1546), Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523) and the Bible, Gospel of John
Sung in Dutch, English, French, Basel German, German, Greek, Italian and Latin

Erasmus of Rotterdam	Michael Borth, Baritone
Stultitia (The Folly) / Pope Julius II	Zvi Emanuel-Marial, Countertenor
Petrus / Da Bibbiena, secretary to Pope Leo X	John Carpenter, Baritone
Margarethe Büsslin	Anja Jung, Contralto
A Boy	Alma Unseld, Child soprano
Ulrich von Hutten	Inga Schäfer, Mezzo-soprano
Martin Luther	Roberto Gionfriddo, Tenor
Pope Adrian VI / German envoy	Jin Seok Lee, Bass
Priests	Jörg Golombek, Tenor, Jung-Nam Yoo, Pascal Hufschmid, Bass
Companion of The Folly 1	Bonnie Frauenthal, Soprano
Companion of The Folly 2	Melissa Serluco, Soprano
Companion of The Folly 3	Charis Peden, Mezzo-soprano
Companion of The Folly 4	Yeonjo Choi, Tenor
Companion of The Folly 5	Jae Seung Yu, Bass
A Mother	Agostina Migoni, Soprano
A Priest [Father] / Precentor	Stavros-Christos Nikolaou, Baritone
A Nun	Christiane Klier, Mezzo-soprano
Pope Leo X	Johannes Kaffner, Speaker

Friederike Hess-Gagnon, Electric violin • Dina Fortuna-Bollon, Electric cello
Tilman Comer, Electric drums

Opernchor des Theater Freiburg • Extrachor des Theater Freiburg
Norbert Kleinschmidt, Chorus Master

Kinder- und Jugendchor des Theater Freiburg
Martin Frey, Leader of Children and Youth Choir

Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg • Fabrice Bollon

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Recording engineer / editing: José Cardenas • Recording technician: Jonas Gottschall (Theater Freiburg)
Musical assistance and rehearsal: Thomas Schmieger

Act I

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| ❶ | Tu solus qui facis mirabilia...
(Chorus, Mother, Nun, Priest [Father]) | 1:51 |
| ❷ | Quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine virtutum...
(Boy, Chorus, Erasmus) | 1:34 |
| ❸ | Armentatim vivunt elephanti gregatim pascuntur sues et oves
(Erasmus, Stultitia, Chorus) | 3:24 |
| ❹ | Montag Kohl und Schwarzbrot, Dienstag Kohl und Schwarzbrot
(Büsslin, Erasmus) | 0:56 |
| ❺ | Luther puts his 95 Theses on the door of the portal | 1:49 |
| ❻ | Requiem eternam
(Chorus, Boy) | 2:06 |
| ❼ | Quid hoc mali est?
(Pope Julius II, Petrus) | 2:00 |
| ❽ | Quam quam indigna res est Julium illum
(Pope Julius II, Priests) | 1:39 |
| ❾ | Exspecto quorsum evadas
(Petrus, Pope Julius II, Priests) | 2:47 |

10	Nulla ratione potest amoveri scelerosus pestilens Pontifex? (<i>Petrus, Pope Julius II</i>)	2:36
11	Palatiis regalibus, equis et munis (<i>Pope Julius II, Priests, Petrus</i>)	1:48
12	Eigenlijk kon dit door mij geschreven geweest zijn (<i>Erasmus, Büsslin</i>)	0:52
13	Sonne guate Kabis (<i>Büsslin, Erasmus</i>)	1:13
14	Was seh ich! Polyphem mit einem Buch (<i>Erasmus</i>) [<i>voices 1 and 2</i>]	1:37
15	How daring. Very unique! (<i>Stultitia</i>)	1:07

Act II

16	Ich will, dass Ihr Euch des Problems Martin Luther annehmt (<i>Pope Leo X, Luther, Chorus</i>)	3:42
17	Madonna io mi consumo, et per grave dolore corr'alla morte... (<i>Boy, Secretary of Pope Leo X, Envoy, Luther, Chorus</i>)	3:33
18	Alle diejenigen, die sich nicht auf die Lehre der römischen Kirche (<i>Envoy, Luther</i>)	1:26
19	Vecchie letrose nun valete niente se non a far l'aguaito per la chiazza (<i>Chorus, Luther, Envoy</i>)	1:43
20	Verbrannt (<i>Envoy, Luther, Chorus</i>)	2:19
21	Tu solus... (<i>Chorus, Erasmus, Hutten</i>)	3:58
22	En Archêi ên ho Logos (<i>Erasmus, Chorus, Luther</i>)	4:13
23	Tu solus qui facis mirabilia (<i>Chorus</i>)	1:40

Act III

24	Dilecte fili, salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem (<i>Pope Adrian VI, Erasmus</i>)	3:46
25	Het is ein vloek om zo beroemd te zijn als ik (<i>Erasmus</i>)	1:19

26	Beatissime pater (<i>Erasmus</i>)	1:54
27	Zeer goed (<i>Erasmus, Chorus</i>)	2:15
28	Die Wahrheit ist mächtiger als die Beredsamkeit (<i>Luther, Erasmus</i>)	2:22
29	Nehmen wir also einmal an, es sei wahr (<i>Erasmus, Luther</i>)	1:50
30	Du aber, Erasmus, gehst auf Eiern (<i>Luther</i>)	1:08
31	Zu bekennen, auch wenn die ganze Welt versinkt (<i>Erasmus, Chorus, Luther</i>)	1:10
32	Wer Christ ist, muss friedliebend sein! (<i>Erasmus, Chorus, Luther</i>)	1:00
33	Wer den Erasmus zerdrückt (<i>Luther, Chorus, Erasmus</i>)	3:49

Act IV

34	Wörter (<i>Büsslin</i>)	2:40
35	Äs stinkt zum Zimmer use ins ganze Land (<i>Büsslin</i>)	2:39
36	Laus Stultitiae... (<i>Büsslin, Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	1:59
37	Nectar – Nectar? (<i>Stultitia, Chorus, Companions of The Folly</i>)	3:08
38	The Folly is the one who rules (<i>Chorus, Stultitia</i>)	1:16
39	It is neither the lance of majestic Pallas, nor the cloud-gathering Zeus who created the human race (<i>Stultitia, Companions of The Folly, Chorus</i>)	1:29
40	The propagator of the human race is that part which is so foolish and absurd (<i>Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	1:09
41	You think politics is a matter of reflections and discussions? (<i>Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	1:04
42	War – No. The war! (<i>Companions of The Folly, Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	2:31

43	Invite an intellectual to a dance and you'll have a camel prancing about (<i>Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	3:07
44	Everybody thinks of a king as rich and powerful man (<i>Stultitia, Companions of The Folly, Chorus</i>)	1:31
45	But if you destroy the illusion, the game is spoiled (<i>Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	2:20
46	There is nothing more foolish than exaggerated wisdom (<i>Stultitia, Chorus</i>)	2:03
Act V		
47	Was hast Du ihm gesagt? (<i>Erasmus, Büsslin</i>)	3:45
48	Lieber, Hutten hielt sich hier wenige Tage auf (<i>Erasmus, Hutten</i>)	1:50
49	Einzig du hältst dich eingeschlossen in deiner Wohnung (<i>Hutten</i>)	1:49
50	Die Kriegsfahnen sind in die Höhe gehoben (<i>Hutten</i>)	1:23
51	In so vielen Briefen und Schriften und Erklärungen sage ich beständig (<i>Erasmus, Hutten</i>)	2:03
52	Uns fehlt der Friede, den die Welt gibt (<i>Erasmus</i>)	2:32
53	Do hesch. Da (<i>Büsslin, Erasmus</i>)	1:20
54	Erasmus alone	0:37
55	Waarom dit boek? (<i>Erasmus</i>)	1:27
56	O miseros, qui felicem illam piorum vitam non credunt (<i>Erasmus</i>)	3:53

With thanks to Prof Dr Karl-Heinz Braun, for all his information and knowledge about Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther and his time; to Cornelius Kopf for assistance with the Latin texts; Norah and Guylian Bollon for the Dutch texts; Thomas Hauswirth for the Basel German texts; Annika Hertwig for her analyses and texts; and the Archbishop Hermann Foundation, Edith Lamersdorf and the Sparkasse Freiburg for their support.

Fabrice Bollon (b. 1965)

The Folly – Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam

How to behave in a debate that is becoming more and more hysterical and increasingly pushing people to take up extreme positions? When, in a society that is becoming more and more divided, are you forced to nail your colours to the mast? Is it possible to maintain a neutral, seemingly objective viewpoint when the world is falling apart at the seams? These are questions we are asking again today, just as people were 500 years ago. And these questions, which the early-20th-century Austrian writer Stefan Zweig already raised in connection with Erasmus of Rotterdam, are the true subject of the opera *The Folly – Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam*. 'This stance adopted by Erasmus, his indecisiveness, or rather his unwillingness to make a decision, was simplistically branded as cowardice by his contemporaries and those who came after him, who derided his clear-headed hesitancy as lukewarm and fickle. [...] He cautiously yielded, obligingly bending like a reed to the right and the left, but only so as not to be broken and to be able to right himself again and again. [...] He kept his spiritual jewel, his faith in humanity, intact through the appalling storm of hatred in his time, and Spinoza, Lessing and Voltaire were able to light their lamps from this smouldering wick, as can all future Europeans. [...] He died attacked by both sides, lonely and alone. Lonely but, crucially, independent and free.' (*Stefan Zweig*)

The libretto draws on numerous historical sources, often written by the leading actors themselves. Nearly every one of the sometimes highly personal feuds, most of them prosecuted through an exchange of letters, was printed and made public – not always with the consent of the authors. Like the internet and social media today, one technical innovation exerted considerable influence on how societal debates were conducted: printing. It was used and abused for people's own private ends. More efficient alternative channels of communication emerged that undermined existing systems of governance. A great deal was published if the material promised to generate sales and attention – personal treatises, but also (sometimes unauthorised) translations, replies and forgeries.

Onstage, surrounded by his books and attended by his drily truculent maid Margarethe Büsslin, Erasmus of Rotterdam relives events as a lonely old man. Fictional characters from his books, like Stultitia or Pope Julius II, are every bit as real as people who were important to him: Martin Luther, Ulrich von Hutten or Pope Adrian VI. The different narrative levels coalesce, historical events take on a symbolic significance and literary creations become real. This way of telling the story may make Erasmus's opponents feel as though they have sprung from his quill pen. In actual fact, Luther and Erasmus, for example, were not all that far apart in substance. 'Both wanted to reform church institutions and the people living and working within them. [...] For both, the Christian faith stood front and centre. They believed it should be Bible-based, rooted in biblical testimony regarding Jesus Christ the Son of God and his claim on people's lives. The humanist Erasmus did this with an awareness that earlier texts were superior to later ones and contained better information [...] Erasmus was an intellectual and a rhetorician. Here he was harnessing what he considered a venerable tradition of Latin oratory. [...] Luther wasn't one to grind to a halt over fine distinctions or to tolerate the tensions arising from them' (*Prof. Dr Karl-Heinz Braun*).

Cosmopolitan humanist Erasmus lived in a world where local languages and dialects did not automatically divide, because the European intellectual elite was bound together by its use of Latin. The opera uses different languages to conjure up this multilingual world. In keeping with this idea, the music makes use of a number of early-16th-century compositions. These quotations do more than just generate historical colour: they allow past and present to merge, and comment on what is happening on stage. Josquin's motet *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia*, for example, can be heard in different guises throughout the opera. In a heavily altered form, it opens and closes Act III with a kind of angelic hymn. For the words 'The Folly is the one who rules' in Act IV, the composer uses the bars setting the words 'tu solus' from the same motet in altered form, generating a subtle irony rather in the spirit of Erasmus. Playing with various trends in contemporary music, up to and including pop, and combining them evokes the openness of the humanists in a conciliatory present.

Erasmus's works were posthumously placed on the Inquisition's *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1559. This Papal Index or *Index Romanus* was maintained right up until 1966. All, or nearly all, of Erasmus's works were burned and forgotten. 'Insofar as possible, I remain neutral in order to be all the more useful to a revival of scholarship. In my estimation modest decorum gets one further than bluster and pressure. This is how Christ conquered the world.' (*Erasmus of Rotterdam*). And this is what today makes Erasmus of Rotterdam appear the architect of a humanistic civilisation that will always require defence and reinvention.

Synopsis

The entire stage represents a huge church. In the middle but not yet visible is Erasmus's room. At the front of the stage is a portal connecting heaven and earth.

Act I

[1] The stage is still in darkness. Distant liturgical chant can be heard. A priest and a woman hand the woman's baby to a nun. [2] A boy sings Psalm 84, on which priests then sing a variation in organum. From his dwelling, Erasmus of Rotterdam expresses his irritation – in his view, service music should be plain. To him, this 'humming' sounds like cannon fire. [3] He closes the window to get some peace, picks up a book, *The Complaint of Peace*, and reads aloud while Stultitia, Folly (who cannot be seen), interjects her comments. Erasmus carries on reading in silence. [4] Margarethe Büsslin, his housekeeper, brings his meal. As always, there is cabbage and black rye bread. She leaves. [5] A shadowy figure nails a sheet of paper to the portal and disappears. The sheet of paper starts sailing through the air, and suddenly there are thousands of pieces of paper flying around in the church. Erasmus opens another book. [6] The priests and the boy start singing again, a requiem this time. They carry a coffin on stage but are suddenly obliged to halt in the portal. They can't get any further. [7]–[11] Pope Julius II angrily clambers out of the coffin and demands that Saint Peter admit him to Heaven. He boasts of his wealth and the many wars he has successfully prosecuted. The priests back him up. Peter is still not impressed and the Pope is turned down. [12] Erasmus closes the book, commenting: 'It could have been written by me'. Margarethe Büsslin grumbles about the disorder in Erasmus's room. Books, dust and dirt everywhere. [13] She picks up a book and asks what's in it. A conversation between two Romans talking about a book. She can't see the point and leaves. [14] Unseen voices whisper one of the conversations. [15] Stultitia praises Erasmus's humour, cultivation and learning. She stresses the quality of workmanship in the books – quality of which only the Basel printer Johann Froben is capable.

Act II

[16] Upstage, Pope Leo X gives orders for action to be taken against Martin Luther. Downstage, Luther vehemently criticises the Roman Catholic Church's trade in indulgences, which it is using to finance the building of St Peter's. With him are a few people holding the broadsheet from Act I and perusing it. [17] A boy sings a song in praise of Mary to entertain the Pope, while the German envoy in Rome complains that an image depicting Luther as a saint is selling like hot cakes. The Pope's secretary, Da Bibbiena, expresses concerns about the faithful. He understands that nowadays they are only reading Luther's imprecations, Ulrich von Hutten's satires and German books. Luther prays and calls the people to repentance. He is gaining more and more followers. When the boy has finished singing, Leo X hands the German envoy orders to stop Luther. The envoy goes to Luther. [18] They get into an argument and Luther defames the Pope. This means he classes as a heretic. [19] A group of children rush in, singing and dancing and making fun of the adults' constant quarrels. The argument becomes more serious. [20] The envoy gives orders for Luther's publications to be burned, whereupon the populace smashes up the church. [21] Ulrich von Hutten pays a visit to the home of Erasmus of Rotterdam. He tries to persuade his friend and teacher to come out in support of Luther, but Erasmus insists on remaining neutral. Von Hutten, in contrast, joins the war to rid Germany of Roman hegemony. [22] Erasmus is translating the New Testament from Greek into Latin. Luther, for his part, is translating it from Latin into German. [23] While both continue with their work, a chorale, *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia*, is heard in all its splendour.

Act III

[24] Pope Adrian VI urges Erasmus, who has fallen asleep in his room, to come out publicly against Luther. [25] Erasmus wakes suddenly and considers the matter. [26] He declines the invitation to go to Rome, citing the gruelling journey and the state of his health as reasons for his refusal. [27] He hates discord and loves understanding. Although he is torn, he doesn't want to take a public stand against Luther. He may not like Luther's way of approaching things, but he can see his merits. In the end he starts writing a treatise refuting Luther's theology regarding free will. [28] Luther suddenly appears behind Erasmus and reads along. [29] In their ensuing exchange of blows, Luther sets his confession against Erasmus's peace-loving neutrality. [30]–[31] While Luther would go to war to defend what he believes, Erasmus is afraid Luther's uncompromising statements will destroy the world. The humanist prizes peace and tolerance above all else. [32] Luther heaps the most appalling insults on Erasmus. Erasmus remains calm, lamenting only what is coming.

Act IV

34 In the ruined church, Margarethe Büsslin picks up fragments of the charred books. 35 She grumbles about the state of the world and the suffering and discord the books have brought about. With great difficulty, she makes out individual letters: 36 *Laus Stultitiae – In Praise of Folly*. Stultitia herself (The Folly) enters with her retinue. All are dressed in modern Carnival costumes. 37–46 She sings a panegyric. Politics, the Church and intellectuals are ridiculed: ‘What use are wise men? The whole human life is nothing but a sport of folly. Folly is the one who rules.’

Act V

47 On Erasmus’s instructions, Margarethe Büsslin has been fending off visits by Ulrich von Hutten. Von Hutten has come down with syphilis, and Erasmus is using his own poor health as a pretext for not receiving him. 48–51 Erasmus writes to a friend. In the background, Von Hutten describes Erasmus as a cowardly traitor to his own ideas. Erasmus defends his desire for neutrality and peace, denouncing the divisions in the Church and the world. Von Hutten, gravely ill and embittered, dies. 52 Erasmus describes his age as the unhappiest of all. 53 Margarethe Büsslin brings his meal. Erasmus doesn’t want it. She can hardly believe it. Up until now he’s never wanted anything other than cabbage and black rye bread. Since the Reformers are gaining the upper hand in Basel and Erasmus fears for his safety, he contemplates leaving the town and going to Freiburg. When he asks Margarethe Büsslin to go with him, she laughs at him, saying he won’t be able to get away from himself in Freiburg either. 54 Erasmus eats. He sets the meal aside and opens the same book he did at the beginning of the opera: *The Complaint of Peace*. 55 Reading aloud, he wonders: ‘Why this book?’ 56 Soldiers appear, confiscate the book along with all the others and burn them. Erasmus recites the text without the book, continuing to ask himself ‘Why this book?’ The fire catches hold in the ruins of the church. The entire stage ends up ablaze.

English translations: Susan Baxter

Erasmus and Margarethe Büsslin, Act I



Luther, Act II



Pope Julius, Act I



Petrus and Priests, Act I



Priests, Act I



Stultitia and her companions, Act IV



Photographs of the stage production by Britt Schilling

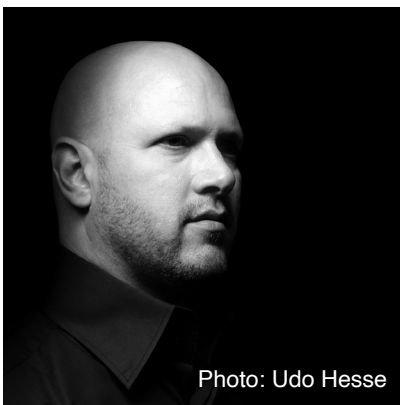
Michael Borth



Michael Borth has appeared in opera houses across Europe and leading concert halls around the world, demonstrating an extraordinary range of repertoire. Most recently, he sang the central role of Erasmus in the world premiere of Fabrice Bollon's opera *The Folly*. Borth studied singing in Weimar with Siegfried Gohritz and at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin with Roman Trekel. From 2015 to 2017 he was a member of the Centre de Perfeccionament at the Palau de les Arts, Valencia and in 2017 was invited to attend the Accademia Rossiniana of the Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro.

www.michaelborth.com

Zvi Emanuel-Marial



Countertenor Zvi Emanuel-Marial is a welcome guest at the Salzburg Festival and on the stages of notable opera houses such as the Staatsoper Berlin, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Theater Bonn, the Nationaltheater Mannheim, Staatstheater Darmstadt, Staatstheater Braunschweig, De Nationale Opera in Amsterdam, Staatstheater Mainz and Theater Freiburg. Zvi Emanuel-Marial began his musical training as a horn player. Celebrated singing teacher Marianne Fischer-Kupfer, wife of opera director Harry Kupfer, then motivated him to train his voice in the alto register, and took charge of his vocal studies. Emanuel-Marial has been awarded scholarships by the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and Bayreuth Festival.

Photo: Udo Hesse

John Carpenter



Photo: Felix Groteloh

John Carpenter completed his vocal training at Pennsylvania State University in 2014. From then until 2016 he was a member of the Bavarian State Opera Studio where he sang roles including Raimbaud in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*, Sid in Britten's *Albert Herring* and Oscar Wisting in Miroslav Srnka's *South Pole*. From 2016 to 2017 he was a member of the Berlin Deutsche Oper Ensemble, singing roles including Valentin (*Faust*), Moralès (*Carmen*) and Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*). Since the 2017–18 season he has been a member of Theater Freiburg, where his roles have included Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) and Don Giovanni, Schaunard (*La Bohème*) and Joe Pitt in Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*.

www.johncarpenterbaritone.net

Anja Jung



Contralto Anja Jung began her solo career at Theater Freiburg, where she appeared in numerous roles including Erda, Fricka and Waltraute (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Herodias (*Salome*), Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*) and Azucena (*Il trovatore*). Guest engagements have taken her to the Opéra Bastille in Paris, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Theater Kiel, Deutsche Oper am Rhein and to Dortmund, Darmstadt, Brunswick, Hanover and Leipzig. She has also appeared in concert tours performing the symphonies of Mahler, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* across Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and the United States.

Inga Schäfer



Photo: Felix Groteloh

Inga Schäfer has been a member of Theater Freiburg since the 2017–18 season, with roles including Muse/Nicklausse (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Harper Pitt (*Angels in America*), Mother (*Coraline*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*), Anna (*The Seven Deadly Sins*) and in her debut as Dido. She attended the Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen, followed by vocal studies with Rachel Robins, engagement at the Lübeck Theatre Opera Studio and further guest engagements. She has been a member of the SWR Vokalensemble and undertaken further studies of new music with Angelika Luz. She is a winner of the Anneliese-Rothenberger Promotional Prize and the New Music Prize of the Berlin Regional Competition.

www.ingaschaefer.com

Roberto Gionfriddo



Photo: Felix Groteloh

Roberto Gionfriddo completed his studies in singing in Frankfurt and Lübeck. From 1998 to 2003 he was at Lübeck Theatre, continuing at St Gallen State Theatre, Switzerland. Since 2006 he has worked with Theater Freiburg in roles including Mime in *Siegfried*, Siegmund in *Die Walküre*, Don José in *Carmen* and the Witch in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*. He has taken guest engagements at Theater Basel, Teatro Massimo di Palermo, the Bregenz Festival, Detmold Theatre and Norwich Theatre Royal. Since 2016 he has been teaching.

Jin Seok Lee



Photo: Felix Groteloh

Jin Seok Lee was born in South Korea and completed his singing studies at Hanyang University in Seoul, continuing at the Piacenza Conservatory. Success in a number of competitions led to engagements at the Baden-Baden Festival, the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv, the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona and the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi in Busseto. He has been a member of Theater Freiburg since the 2009–10 season with roles including Mefistofele, Sarastro, Zaccaria, Fasolt, Titirel, Sparafucile and Procida.

Opernchor des Theater Freiburg



Photo: Britt Schilling

Theater Freiburg Opera Chorus performs in opera, operetta and musical productions staged by Theater Freiburg, and appears in concert – supported as required by the Extrachor des Theater Freiburg – and in the theatre. Notable achievements include guest performances of *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal* at Norwich Theatre Royal in the UK and *Carmen* at the Menuhin Festival Gstaad. On record, the Opera Chorus has sung less familiar repertoire including Cilea's *L'Arlesiana*, Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* and Goldmark's *The Queen of Sheba*. At Theater Freiburg, the choir has appeared in the German premieres of Franck's *Hulda* (Naxos 8.660480-82) and Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, as well as the world premieres of Fabrice Bollon's *Oscar and the Lady in Pink* and *The Folly*.

Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg



Photo: Britt Schilling

The Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg was founded in 1887. The ensemble gives a hundred performances annually, also appearing as the opera orchestra. Composers such as Wolfgang Rihm and Reinhard Febel have written works for the orchestra, and it has played under leading conductors, including Adam Fischer and Donald Runnicles. Fabrice Bollon has been general music director since the 2008–09 season. The orchestra has been nominated several times as the orchestra of the year in *Opernwelt* magazine and was awarded the German Music Publisher's Prize in the 1998–99 and 2011–12 seasons.

www.theater.freiburg.de

Fabrice Bollon



Photo: Anna Kolata

Fabrice Bollon studied with Michael Gielen and Nikolaus Harnoncourt in Paris and at Salzburg's Mozarteum before completing his studies with Georges Prêtre and Mauricio Kagel. He has made numerous appearances with many renowned European orchestras, and from 2009 to 2021 served as general music director/chief conductor at Germany's Theater Freiburg, overseeing numerous recordings for Naxos including a remarkable interpretation of Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane* in 2018 (8.660410-12). His work in Freiburg garnered international acclaim, including Editor's Choice accolades in *Gramophone* magazine and Diapason d'Or Awards, among others. He has been chief conductor of the Staatskapelle Halle and general music director of the Halle Opera since August 2022. Bollon is also an acclaimed composer, and his operas *Oscar und die Dame in Rosa* and *The Folly* have been highly acclaimed by both critics and audiences. In 2020 his album of original compositions released on Naxos (8.574015) received a Choc de Classica award and an ICMA nomination.

www.fabricebollon.com

Drawing on historical texts, Fabrice Bollon's opera *The Folly* focuses on Erasmus of Rotterdam, the influential Renaissance reformer, cosmopolitan humanist and intellectual, who, in old age, reflects on the events of his life. Past and present converge as fictional figures from his books or real-life antagonists appear in much the same way as Bollon merges periods through his creative use of several 16th-century compositions. Set in an age of polarised extremism that reflects our own times, Erasmus's humanism requires vigilance, defence and reinvention.

Fabrice
BOLLON
(b. 1965)

The Folly – Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam

Opera in five acts (2021) • Libretto by Clemens Bechtel (b. 1964)

Erasmus of Rotterdam **Michael Borth, Baritone**
Stultitia (The Folly) / Pope Julius II **Zvi Emanuel-Marial, Countertenor**
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Kinder- und Jugendchor des Theater Freiburg

Martin Frey, Leader of Children and Youth Choir

Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg • Fabrice Bollon

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

A detailed track list, cast list and full recording details can be found inside the booklet.

The original libretto and an English translation can be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/660545.htm

Booklet notes and a synopsis in German can be accessed at www.naxos.com/notes/660545.htm

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