

VOLKSBUHNE

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DES MENSCHEN UNTERHALTSPROZESS GEGEN GOTT
RADIO ORATORIO BY B.A. ZIMMERMANN BASED ON CALDERÓN
STAGE WORLD PREMIERE

Press release issued 6 November 2018



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Dear colleagues in the press,

You are cordially invited to Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Des Menschen Unterhaltsprozess gegen Gott* on 26 November. This radio oratorio based on Calderón de la Barca was produced by Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunk in 1952 and broadcast only once. Now it can be seen – with an ensemble of 130 choir members, 50 musicians and 12 actors – for the first time on a stage:

Des Menschen Unterhaltsprozess gegen Gott (The people's maintenance payments case against God)

A radio oratorio by B.A. Zimmermann based on Calderón

Preview on 25 November 2018, 20:00

World Premiere on 26 November 2018, 19:00

Volksbühne main stage

Director: Christian Filips

Music Director: Kai-Uwe Jirka

Kammersymphonie Berlin

Main choir and girls choir of the Sing-Akademie Berlin choral society

Men's sections from the Staats- und Domchors Berlin
Ensemble PHØNIX16
Faleh Khaless (Oud)

With: Susanne Bredehöft, Margarita Breitzkreiz, Samia Dauenhauer, Ariel Nil Levy, Ali Nawras, Stefan Paul, Silvia Rieger, Elias Schockel, Mex Schlüpfer and Hubert Wild, as well as Aniol Kirberg from the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts and Kenan Abouaasi and Ali Nauras from Neue Nachbarschaft Moabit

Co-production with the Sing-Akademie Berlin and Deutschlandradio

The first man against God: *Los alimentos del hombre* (1676) - Calderón de la Barca's Spanish Baroque world theatre piece - stages a duel between the first man and God: God plumps Adam down, out of paradise, elevating himself above him. Landing on Earth, Adam now has to live a miserable, human existence. Cultivating the land with farming equipment isn't Adam's thing. Thinkman and Munchman attempt to help, without success. Luckily the devil appears and advises Adam to sue God for alimony. A grand metaphysical work of theatre can begin. Support instead of riots! Alms for the godless! Absolution instead of revolution!

For Bernd Alois Zimmermann's 100th birthday, his oeuvre was examined to find a work worthy of bringing into the present. His little-known radio oratorio is a composition from the "zero hour", from bombed-out Cologne after WWII. It was a desperate attempt to de-nazify the Germans by trying to lead them back to Catholicism. A mission conducted through the ears, which then faded away. Quite a bit was mustered in the process: melodrama, opera, theatre and early attempts at electronic music mix together in the work. The four occupied zones all seem to make an appearance: a French richness of sound like in Debussy, jazz elements from the American GIs, quotes from the Ballett russes are all stylistic elements in Zimmermann's music.

B.A. Zimmermann imagined a theatre "that should be as well-equipped as a spaceship, a spaceship of the mind; in sum, an immense formation that can lend an entire cityscape its character." What's the contemporary status of the beautiful idea of such a universalism in the theatre? Can the claim to a grand world theatre - even if it's just for one city - be upheld?

More information can be found at www.volksbuehne.berlin. Tickets are available at the Volksbühne box office, by telephone on +49 (0) 30 2406 5777 and [online](http://www.volksbuehne-berlin.de). Please contact heike.sobisiak@volksbuehne-berlin.de or by telephone on +49 (0)30 24065 610 with press ticket and interview requests or with any other questions. Additional photographs and texts can be found in the [press section](#) of our website.

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Your press office

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