National Theatre

ENGLISH VERSION



Season 2020—21

Season
2020/21



THE STATE OPERA, photo: F. Šlapal





Dear and respected audience,

We have compiled a rich and variegated programme for the 2020/21 season. We will stage new productions, whose premieres had to be transferred from the previous season, as well as the productions we prepared for the current season. We have done our best to retain the original menu as fully as possible, notwithstanding the restrictions that have affected our operation in the past few months.

We will get together again at the State Opera, following its overall refurbishment. The first production to be premiered after the venue's reopening will be Richard Wagner's globally celebrated opera *Tristan und Isolde*, whose first night will take place in November 2020, conducted by Karl-Heinz Steffens and directed by Keith Warner.

The National Theatre historical building will host performances of the evening titled *Phoenix*, a triple bill made up of brand-new choreographies specially created for the Czech National Ballet by Douglas Lee, Alejandro Cerrudo and Cayetano Soto.

As of March 2021, our programme will include a stage adaptation of František Hrubín's fairy tale in verse *Beauty and the Beast*, directed by Daniel Špinar, the artistic director of the National Theatre Drama company.

We firmly believe that theatres will remain open throughout the current season. We hope that you will again begin planning your visits in advance and, first and foremost, that every evening spent with us will fill you with joy. Sharing experiences is the most precious thing that we can give to each other.

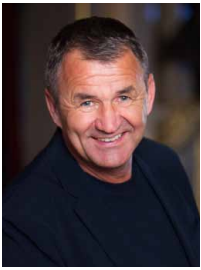
Prof. Jan Burian
General Director of the National Theatre



TURANDOT – Michal Lehotský, Iveta Jiříková
photo: H. Smejkalová

opera





Dear audience,

As I write, the whole world is in an exceptional state. Rarely have we known less about our future. I can't predict what the situation will be like at the time you read this. But one thing I am more sure of than ever. We need to experience art together. We have of late seen many creative attempts to communicate via digital platforms. For me, it has primarily demonstrated the need for us to come together to share experiences, a ritual that has characterised our civilisation since Ancient Greece.
In that sense, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to a new season. The reopening of the State Opera ushered in a new era for Prague opera. We can present eight new productions in three steps. This is the first time I have the privilege as artistic director to make my mark on the programming and, together with my two music directors, Jaroslav Kyzlink and Karl-Heinz Steffens, and a very capable team, to set out a new course for opera in Prague.
Our beloved "Golden Chapel", the prime destination for all lovers of Czech music worldwide; the spectacularly renovated State Opera, a home to the great operas of Verdi, Wagner and modern composers; and the unique Estates Theatre, the natural home for Mozart – all this on a level that will draw the existing and new local audiences, as well as place Prague where it rightfully belongs on the international opera map. That is what we hope to achieve over the next few seasons.
As you read through the programme, you will discover many new names. Both Czech and foreign artists are presented to our audience for the first time, and our large and professional company is facing new challenges. It is important that the National Theatre is an arena for the Czech Republic's leading artists and young talents. At the same time, opera is an international art form and we should attract the very best international singers, conductors and directors.
Our original intention was to stage as the first premiere at the newly refurbished State Opera a production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The programming for the State Opera is linked to its long and rich tradition, and the *Meistersinger* was the very first opera performed at the New German Theatre, back in 1888. Yet, as it is a work requiring such an extensive apparatus and involvement of so numerous a cast, its preparation and performance would during the current coronavirus pandemic be too great a risk. Accordingly, we opted for another Wagner opera, one that, due to it chamber nature, is more suitable – *Tristan und Isolde*, which in terms of music and ideas is deemed to be one of the most valuable operas there are. We have been fortunate indeed to have engaged Keith Warner as the stage director for the new *Tristan* production. His merits are many, including the recent adaptation of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at Covent Garden in London.

The young Czech director Barbora Horáková will debut in Prague, her native city, with Verdi's *Rigoletto*. She has already made her mark internationally, including with productions in Vienna, Dresden, Hannover, Leipzig, Oslo and London.
Franz Schreker's opera *Der ferne Klang*, a drama set in an artistic milieu, received its Czech premiere during Alexander's Zemlinsky's tenure as music director at the New German Theatre in 1920, but has not been performed in Prague since. The young Russian director Timofey Kulyabin has ambitions to shed new light on the myth of the self-sacrificing artist genius.
As the final premiere at the State Opera, we will be presenting the very first Czech production of György Ligeti's burlesque *Le Grand Macabre*, one of the few operas written over the past 50 years that have found its way to the repertoire of the majority of the world's major theatres. The director and set designer is the multi-talented Briton Nigel Lowery. The opera will be conducted by the young Czech rising star Jiří Rožeň.
The National Theatre Opera will start the season with a new *Carmen*, directed by Grischa Asagaroff, who has gained invaluable experience from working for many years at the opera houses in Vienna, Zurich and elsewhere.
Calixto Bieito, one of the most sought-after directors internationally, will come to Prague to stage *Katya Kabanova*. The cast will feature superb Czech singers. It will be Bieito's third experience with Janáček, after his acclaimed productions of *Jenůfa* and *From the House of the Dead*.
The final opera production to be premiered this season at the National Theatre has been undertaken by the Czech theatre magician Vladimír Morávek. Jaromír Weinberger's *Schwanda the Bagpiper* and will for the first time in 88 years be staged by the National Theatre, where it received its world premiere.
The Estates Theatre will host a new cycle of Mozart and Da Ponte operas, in co-production with the Nationaltheater Mannheim. The first to be presented is an adaptation of *Don Giovanni*, staged by the renowned Swedish director Alexander Mørk-Eidem and conducted by Rinaldo Alessandrini, who has committed himself to conducting the entire cycle.
The season will be rounded off by a new opera festival, within which all its new productions will be performed, from 12 to 27 June 2021. *Musica non grata* is a programme that will be launched by the opening concert of the State Opera, featuring great works by Alexander Zemlinsky, Bohuslav Martinů and Vítězslava Kaprálová. Over the next four years, we will focus on the musical life of Prague that was silenced by the Nazis. Each year, the programme will include performances of stage works, operas in concert, symphonic and chamber music, to be given by both of our companies in collaboration between our two music directors.
"My God, what a city it was, 19th-century Prague!" – these words of Pavel Kohout's were the first to be heard in the reopened State Opera. And we will do our utmost to ensure that people will say the same about opera in Prague in the future.
Welcome to the fascinating world of opera!
Yours



Per Boye Hansen
Artistic Director of the National Theatre Opera and the State Opera

PREMIERE

Georges Bizet

Carmen

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink
Stage director: Grischa Asagaroff
Set and costume designer: Luigi Perego
Choreographer: Petros Gallias
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Georges Bizet's *Carmen* is a staple of the repertoire of the majority of opera houses worldwide. It is extremely popular owing to the music, abounding in torrential rhythms, engrossing melodies and bewitching songs of the beautiful Gypsy, as well as to the overwhelming power of the passions depicted in the story. *Carmen* is actually one of the first verismo operas that preceded the "manifesto" of the Italian artistic movement. Its style, and the death of the title heroine, which were at variance with the established opéra comique conventions, seem to have been the reason why the work did not give rise to much public enthusiasm at and in the wake of the world premiere in Paris in 1875. Yet *Carmen* soon triumphed in other European cities.
The opera was first presented in Prague in 1880, at the Estates Theatre. The National Theatre staged in on 3 January 1884, shortly after its opening, as the very first foreign opera. In our new production, the story of Don José, a soldier who falls madly in love with the Gypsy Carmen, will be retold by the German director Grischa Asagaroff, who has worked at numerous leading opera houses, including those in Vienna, Zurich, Munich, Dresden and Houston. The score will be explored and the production conducted by Jaroslav Kyzlink, the music director of the National Theatre Opera.

Premiere performances: 8 and 10 October 2020 at the National Theatre

THE STATE OPERA

PREMIERE

Richard Wagner

Tristan und Isolde

Conductor: Karl-Heinz Steffens
Stage director: Keith Warner
Set designer: Boris Kudlička
Costume designer: Kaspar Glarner
Video designer: Alex Uragallo
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

A masterpiece generating "a dangerous fascination, a spine-tingling and blissful infinity" – thus Friedrich Nietzsche characterised Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*. Created between 1857 and 1859 to his own libretto, the composer was inspired by Gottfried von Strassburg's epic *Tristan und Isolt*, based on a Celtic legend. Just like Tristan, Wagner too drank the elixir of love. During the time of his exile in Switzerland, he repaid the wealthy businessman Otto Wesendonck's generous help (including financial support) not only by dedicating to him several works but also by enchanting his wife Mathilde. The ensuing affair, which certainly does not shed good light on Wagner's character, resulted in a magnificent opera, *Tristan und Isolde* (as well as songs, in which Wagner set Mathilde's poems and which are closely related to the Tristan atmosphere). Interest in premiering the opera was shown by the Hofoper in Vienna, which, despite over 70 rehearsals, ultimately proclaimed that *Tristan und Isolde* was unperformable. It was only after King Ludwig II of Bavaria became a sponsor of Wagner's that enough resources could be put together to stage the opera. The world premiere finally took place on 10 June 1865 in Munich, conducted by Hans von Bülow.
The new adaptation of *Tristan und Isolde* will be created by an international team: the German conductor Karl-Heinz Steffens, the current music director of the State Opera; the UK's Keith Warner, one of the most renowned contemporary theatre directors, who has recently staged Wagner's *Ring* for the Royal Opera in London; and the Slovak set designer Boris Kudlička, who has worked with the State Opera and the National Theatre Opera on a number of occasions.

Premiere performances: 26 and 29 November 2020 at the State Opera

PREMIERE

Leoš Janáček

Katya Kabanova

Conductor: Christopher Ward
Stage director: Calixto Bieito
Set designer: Aída Leonor Guardia
Costume designer: Ingo Krügler
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Although many in his homeland still consider Leoš Janáček a difficult modernist, all over the world he has long been esteemed as a truly singular classical genius. His opera *Katya Kabanova*, based on A. N. Ostrovsky's drama *The Storm*, deeply impresses every perceptive viewer due to its immense emotionality, attesting to Janáček's extraordinary empathy. The title heroine, with her dreamy, amorous and heart-wrenching states of mind, is placed in stark contrast with the savage behaviour of those around her. The desperate Katya ultimately finds the solution to her inner conflict between desire and social obligation in the water of the river Volga. The National Theatre in Prague first performed Janáček's opera a year after its world premiere in Brno in November 1921. More than a decade since our most recent adaptation, we are now preparing a new production, under the baton of the British conductor Christopher Ward, whom the National Theatre audience know from performances of Britten's *Billy Budd* and Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, and the Spanish stage director Calixto Bieito, famous for his unorthodox interpretations of classic operas, who has already explored Janáček's operatic world with his productions of *Jenůfa* in Stuttgart and *From the House of the Dead* in Nuremberg.

Premiere performances: 10 and 15 January 2021 at the National Theatre

THE STATE OPERA

PREMIERE

Giuseppe Verdi

Rigoletto

Conductor: Vincenzo Milletarì
Stage director: Barbora Horáková Joly
Set design: Sophia Schneider
Costumes: Annemarie Bulla
Lighting designer: Michael Bauer
Video designer: Sergio Verde
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Revenge, love, self-sacrifice and murder are what the tragic story of Rigoletto revolves around. The title hero, the hunchbacked court jester with derision on his lips and anxiety in his heart, is well aware that it is wrong to serve the licentious Duke of Mantua, and he tortures himself over the curse placed on him. The opera's premiere, on 11 March 1851 in Venice, was a great triumph, particularly the Duke's cynical aria "La donne è mobile" (Woman is fickle), which was sung in the streets the next morning. Giuseppe Verdi saw that he had composed a true blockbuster … When in 1850 he was commissioned to write a new opera for La Fenice, he decided to base it on Victor Hugo's controversial play *Le Roi s'amuse (The King Has Fun)*, although he knew he would imperil himself due the sensitivity of the subject. Deeming Hugo's depiction of the escapades of King François I of France utterly unacceptable and insulting, the Paris censors banned the play immediately after its premiere, in 1832 at the Théâtre Français. Almost two decades later, Verdi's intention to create an opera according to Hugo's work met in Italy with an equally hostile response, with the Venetian censors referring to it as "immoral" and an "affront to royal majesty". The parties ultimately arrived at a compromise: the setting would be changed, the French King would become the Duke of Mantua, yet the most essential aspects – the characters' natures and the dramatic situations – would remain. The new adaptation of *Rigoletto* will be undertaken by Barbora Horáková Joly, a Czech opera director working in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Spain and France, the holder of the UK's International Opera Award 2018 in the Newcomer category. In her production, she will present Verdi's celebrated opera as a world where all values have collapsed, a world between life and death, beauty and ugliness, reality and nightmare.

Premiere performances: 28 and 30 January 2021 at the State Opera

PREMIERE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Don Giovanni

Conductor: Rinaldo Alessandrini
Stage director: Alexander Mørk-Eidem
Set designer: Christian Friedländer
Costume designer: Jenny Ljungberg
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

If we were to name the works that connect Prague with the global music and theatre, the top position among them would undoubtedly be occupied by W. A. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. And if we were to name the places at which Mozart in person premiered an opera of his and which still function as theatres, the one and only candidate in the world would be the Estates Theatre in Prague. The National Theatre Opera has proudly cherished this unique tradition for decades. Perhaps surprisingly, *Don Giovanni*, the world-famous "opera of operas" created for Prague, has to date never been staged at the National Theatre by a non-Czech director. Accordingly, the new production of the Mozart opera at the unique Estates Theatre is actually at variance with the long tradition – this time, an adaptation of *Don Giovanni* will be created by the Swedish-Norwegian stage director Alexander Mørk-Eidem in tandem with the Italian conductor and early music specialist Rinaldo Alessandrini. They are afforded wide scope for the portrayal of the world-famous profligate, who so easily magnetises women and wins their hearts. Is Giovanni an incorrigible slave to his instincts, or is he a provocateur, rebel, revolutionary even, is he a human or symbol, or is he a mere catalyst around whom Mozart thoroughly depicts the constantly changing universe of female emotions? To what degree will the new *Don Giovanni* at the Estates Theatre break with tradition in this regard?

Premiere performances: 18 and 21 March 2021 at the Estates Theatre

THE STATE OPERA

PREMIERE

Franz Schreker

Der ferne Klang (The Distant Sound)

Conductor: Karl-Heinz Steffens

Stage director: Timofey Kulyabin

Set design: Oleg Golovko

Costume designer: Vlada Pomirkovanaya

Lighting design: Taras Mikhalevsky

State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Love that falls victim to creative obsession and the tragic fate of a girl who, owing to her family's poverty, becomes a prostitute are the key themes of the late-Romantic opera *Der ferne Klang (The Distant Sound)*, an almost Freudian study of the chimeric artistic ideal and the degradation of women in a heartless and indifferent world. The work's premiere, on 18 August 1912 in Frankfurt, catapulted the Austrian composer Franz Schreker, the son of a Czech Jewish photographer and an Austrian Catholic aristocrat, among the top music avant-gardists. He maintained his position until the 1930s, when the Nazis added him to the list of "degenerate artists" and his music was withdrawn from public performances. At the beginning of the opera, Fritz, a composer driven by the ambition to write a great piece of music and discover the mysterious perfect "distant sound", which will bring him fame, abandons his beloved Grete. She wants to kill herself, yet the mystic nature saves her life. Ten years later, Grete is a celebrated courtesan in Venice. Fritz is among the guests at her party, and proceeds to spurn her love again. Another five years later, Grete attends the premiere of Fritz's first opera, which goes down badly with the audience – she perceives that he is still seeking his "distant sound". Fritz and Grete ultimately reunite, whereupon he finally hears the desired sound. Yet it is too late... Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* received its Prague premiere in 1920 at the Neues deutsches Theater (today's State Opera). After a long time in obscurity, over the past two decades Schreker's music has attracted renewed attention – due to the scores whose structure is akin to the film cut technique, due to the fascinating oscillation between traditional harmony and atonality, due to the original dimensions of expression, the traits that today put Schreker on a par with Gustav Mahler. The mysterious story about that which is within our reach yet beyond us is returning to Prague after 101 years. In his interpretation, the Russian stage director Timofey Kulyabin will question the real nature of creative genius.

Premiere performances: 8 and 10 April 2021 at the State Opera

PREMIERE

Jaromír Weinberger

Schwanda the Bagpiper

Conductor: Zbyněk Müller / Jan Chalupecký
Stage director: Vladimír Morávek
Set designer: Martin Chocholoušek
Costume designer: Sylva Zimula Hanáková
Motion supervisor: Lucie Poláčková Mertová
Lighting designer: Vladimír Morávek
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

"Czechs, German, citizens of the world – gather round! See a fairy tale in two acts and five scenes. What is it about? About lime-trees in bloom. About Queens of Darkness who fail to do what they desire to do. About bandits who do great good. About the Devil who loses a card-game. Dorotka is here. And Švanda can do incredible things – with that instrument of his. Long live the Czech bagpiper! Long live Dorotka! Horses, varlets, men with scythes, a soup for lunch, an astronomical clock stolen from the Devil, carriages, carts, bells of all tunes, thunders and thunderbolts, ominous figures, bats and an infernal marriage game. In the end, they all shout: Hail!"

That is how the stage director Vladimír Morávek invites audiences of all generations, particularly children and their parents, to attend an extraordinary performance of the opera *Schwanda the Bagpiper* by the Czech (and later on, American too) composer Jaromír Weinberger. Along with Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček and Martinů, he was one of the select few Czechs whose music gained global acclaim. In the mid-1920s, during the time of the first Czechoslovak Republic, Weinberger and the humourist Miloš Kareš wrote a loose sequel to J. K. Tyl's tall story *The Strakonice Bagpiper*. Švanda is married to his beloved Dorotka, yet he feels restless at home. And so, when the bandit Babinský tells him what is there to enjoy abroad ... What follows is a crazy story, something like an opera-comic strip, giving an account of the adventures of Švanda the bagpiper and his bandit companion, who experience merry, as well as rather torrid moments. And whenever it seems that our heroes are done for good, "the best of the Czech nature" prevails – craftiness and love of music. Weinberger's fabulous – and truly folksy – opera garnered ovations at many theatres in Europe. As translated by Max Brod (a friend and associate of Franz Kafka and Leoš Janáček), in 1931 *Schwanda the Bagpiper* was even staged at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Premiere performances: 22 and 24 April 2021
at the National Theatre

THE STATE OPERA

PREMIERE

György Ligeti

Le Grand Macabre

Conductor: Jiří Rožeň

Stage director and set designer: Nigel Lowery

State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabr*e will receive its Czech premiere. The one and only opera written by the Hungarian-Austrian composer, one of the major representatives of the 20th-century avant-garde, is a truly remarkable work, one that in many a respect surpasses that which is commonly expected from a piece of this genre. Loosely based on the Belgian avant-garde dramatist Michel de Ghelderode's play *La balade du grand macabre*, Ligeti provocatively branded it "anti-anti-opera". *Le Grand Macabre* presents an extremely bizarre apocalyptic vision of a world gone mad, teeming with characters of such telling names as Nekrotzar or Piet The Pot... Ligeti's spectacular operatic fresco, set in a fictitious city bearing an equally telling name, Breughelland, not only shocks by featuring harsh, spine-chilling and perverse images, it is also striking in terms of the score, with the musical idiom encompassing conventional instruments, but also giving scope to a large variety of unprecedented sounds, produced by car-horns, electric doorbells, a sledgehammer, an alarm clock, paper bags, a tray full of crockery, a saucepan, a pistol and other items. *Le Grand Macabre* had its world premiere in Stockholm in 1978. Later on, Ligeti made considerable revisions to the opera in preparation for a production at the Salzburger Festspiele in 1997. In this second version, the "anti-anti-opera" will be staged in Prague by the multi-talented British director and designer Nigel Lowery, and conducted by the young Czech rising star Jiří Rožeň.

Premiere performances: 17 and 19 June 2021 at the State Opera

National Theatre Opera and State Opera concerts

MUSICA NON GRATA – CONCERT OPENING THE 2020/21 SEASON

30 August 2020 at the State Opera

ADVENT CONCERTS

29 November, 6, 13 and 20 December 2020
at the National Theatre

NEW YEAR CONCERT

9 and 10 January 2021 at the State Opera

MOZART'S BIRTHDAY 2021

27 January 2021 at the Estates Theatre

MATINÉE MARKING THE 197TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEDŘICH SMETANA'S BIRTH

27 February 2021 at the National Theatre

STATE OPERA CONCERT

18 April 2021 at the State Opera

NATIONAL THEATRE OPERA CONCERT

27 May and 2 June 2021 at the National Theatre

Opera is Fun

A cycle of entertainment and educational programmes for children and parents

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Umberto Giordano

Andrea Chénier

Conductor: Petr Kofroň
Stage director: Michal Dočekal
Set designer: Martin Chocholoušek
Costume designer: Kateřina Štefková
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

A gem of Italian verismo opera, Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* was presented at the National Theatre in Prague in 1897, a mere year after its world premiere at La Scala in Milan, and three months following its first performance in Hamburg, conducted by Gustav Mahler. Subsequently, it was not seen on our stage for almost 120 years. Owing to the torrentially dramatic music and extreme emotionality, as well as the atmosphere of the story set in the time of the French Revolution, it is one of the pinnacles of the period's opera. The style of *Andrea Chénier* is markedly Italian, with its sonic colour and melody akin to that of Puccini and the forcibility of the crowd scenes reminiscent of Verdi's late operas. Bearing witness to its being close to Puccini is the librettist, Luigi Illica, the author of the texts for *La bohéme, Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, who adapted for Giordano the fictional story of the French poet André Chénier, one of the last victims of Robespierre's Reign of Terror in 1793 and 1794. Giordano's opera depicts the drama of a love triangle, featuring the young aristocrat Maddalena, the servant Gérard and the poet Chénier. As a result of the revolutionary events, the initially innocent flirtation turns into a desperate and wild passion – the persecuted Maddalena writes secret love letters to Chénier; Gérard, who has become a major representative of the Jacobin regime, abuses his power for his personal interest in Maddalena; while the dreamer Chénier, the omnipresent Terror notwithstanding, keeps believing in liberty, inspiration and love. Yet love amidst the tumult of a revolution is a dangerous matter indeed.

Bedřich Smetana

Dalibor

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / Jan Chalupecký
Stage director: Jiří Nekvasil
Set designer: Daniel Dvořák
Lighting designers: Jiří Nekvasil and Daniel Dvořák
Costume designer: Zuzana Bambušek Krejzková
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Bedřich Smetana's third opera, *Dalibor*, is closely connected with the history of the National Theatre, as is his later *Libuše*. The former received its premiere on 16 May 1868 at the New Town Theatre in Prague, within the celebrations of the laying of the foundation stone of the National Theatre. The story of the knight Dalibor reflects the historical events during the rule of Vladislav II, King of Bohemia (1456–1516), yet the plot is rather centred around a romantic legend of a knight who in jail learns how to play the violin. The myth served as the basis for Wenzig's libretto. Initially, *Dalibor* was not received overly positively and met with a lukewarm response on the part of the audience. Nevertheless, following its acclaimed 1886 revival at the National Theatre, it would be regularly staged and given almost 1,100 performances. The opera also gained success abroad, including in Vienna, Moscow, Berlin and Edinburgh. One of the first productions beyond Bohemia was the 1897 staging in Vienna, conducted by Gustav Mahler, an ardent champion of Smetana's music. *Dalibor* is a romantic tragedy, with passions being the main driving force – first Dalibor's wild desire to avenge the death of his close friend and subsequently Milada's endeavour to avenge the death of her brother. Their spite is replaced by mad love for each other, which, however, is thwarted by the forces Dalibor had initially set in motion against himself.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Leoš Janáček

Jenůfa

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink
Stage director: Jiří Nekvasil
Set and costume designer: Daniel Dvořák
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Along with Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* and Dvořák's *Rusalka, Jenůfa* is among the three most popular and most frequently performed Czech operas worldwide. Leoš Janáček was deeply impressed by the realistic drama of the same name by the Czech author Gabriela Preissová, who initially rejected the composer's intention to set her play to music. The long and complicated genesis of Janáček's *Jenůfa* was ultimately crowned by a great triumph at opera houses at home and abroad. With his profound sense for earthy drama, as well as great compassion, the composer depicts human relationships formed by the harsh milieu of a self-contained rural community, with its inhabitants' lives being exposed to the constant gaze of others. This conservative environment affects the fate of the young Jenůfa, and above all governs the behaviour of her stepmother Kostelnička, who at any cost strives to retain her reputation as a virtuous, moral woman and the villagers' respect. Paradoxically, she does so by secretly murdering Jenůfa's extramarital child.

Sergey Prokofiev

L'amour des trois oranges (The Love for Three Oranges)

Conductor: Christopher Ward
Stage director: Radim Vizváry
Set designer: Boris Kudlička
Costume designer: Natalia Kitamikado
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

The Italian playwright, satirist and mystifier Count Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806) inadvertently gave rise to a peculiar moment in the history of 20th-century opera: while in 1920 Giacomo Puccini began recasting Gozzi's fairy-tale-based play *Turandot* into his final opera that, despite its excesses, was still written in the spirit of good old Romanticism, another opera based on a scenario penned by Gozzi – *The Love for Three Oranges* – was awaiting its premiere. Sergey Prokofiev conceived the piece as sheer parody, traducing everything "heart-felt" and "seriously meant". In 2019, when the National Theatre staged its modern-time premiere of *The Love for Three Oranges*, a century had passed since the opera's coming into being. Hardly a reason for celebration, the fact may rather lead to raising the question of how it is possible that one of Prokofiev's best-known and most acclaimed works, an opera teeming with "jest, irony, satire, as well as profound ideas", manifesting pure and eternal joy at dallying with human imagination and seeking "sense" and "nonsense", has not, with a single exception, been staged by Czech theatres. Prokofiev wrote *The Love for Three Oranges* in the wake of his emigrating from the Bolshevik-ruled Russia to the USA as a sui generis highly cosmopolitan work: based on an Italian play, in a Russian adaptation, set to a French libretto, for an American audience. Gozzi created his original, predominantly prosaic play *L'amore delle tre melarance* as a crazy fable in the commedia dell'arte style, with the aim to ridicule his competitors Goldoni and Chiari. Its Dada vein and the playful story so impressed the Russian avant-garde artist Vsevolod Meyerhold that he named after Gozzi's comedy his own magazine, in whose very first issue he published the play's modern adaptation. Prokofiev happened to have the text in the US, and since an opera set to a Russian text was out of the question, he opted for a French libretto, which he based on Meyerhold's translation. No less intricate and quaint than the genesis of Prokofiev's opera is the opera's story, depicting as it does a hypochondriac, orange-loving prince.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Bedřich Smetana

Libuše

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / Jan Chalupecký
Stage director: Jan Burian
Direction and motion supervisor: Petr Zuska
Set designer: Daniel Dvořák
Costume designer: Kateřina Štefková
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir
Charles University Choir

Smetana earmarked *Libuše* for being performed on the festive occasions relating to the life of Czech society, which after 1860 had begun markedly and palpably emancipating itself in terms of culture, politics and economics. Such an occasion was an extremely significant event in the history of Czech society – the opening of the National Theatre, first temporarily in 1881, and definitively two years later. An event that at the symbolic level widely transcended the narrow universe of Czech theatre-making and became one of the inherent harbingers of the attainment of independence in 1918. Accordingly, the centenary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic was a momentous anniversary for the National Theatre itself, thus affording it the opportunity to create a new production of *Libuše* as a natural contribution to the celebrations. There are several genre attributions by means of which we try to characterise *Libuše*, with one of them being a "scenic ritual of conciliation and purgation". At variance with the expectations placed on an opera dramatist, Smetana does not sharpen the conflicts and antimonies in *Libuše*, deliberately seeking instead the path to their timely pacific settlement. Whether it concerns the main action-forming dispute between two brothers about the inheritance after their late father, the antagonisms between a man and a woman, rigorous justice and friendly amiability, between those of "plebeian" and "noble" decent, between the motifs of light and darkness, all the conflicts in Smetana's opera are redeemed in the central character of Princess Libuše, who is not just a mythical sovereign foretelling glory for the Czech nation but, first and foremost, a cathartic fabulous symbol of womanhood and motherhood, clemency and peaceful life.

Antonín Dvořák

Rusalka

Conductor: Robert Jindra / Zbyněk Müller
Stage director: Jiří Heřman
Choreographer: Jan Kodet
Set designer: Jaroslav Bönisch
Lighting designer: Daniel Tesař
Costume designer: Alexandra Grusková
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Dvořák's *Rusalka* is a true gem of Czech opera, a masterpiece that has won over audiences worldwide. The composer's ardent melodies, both tender and highly dramatic, his masterful work with musical motifs and full-blooded orchestration, as well as Jaroslav Kvapil's fabulous libretto, evoking Erben's immensely impressive ballads, make *Rusalka* a work of fascinating beauty addressing audiences of all ages. *Rusalka* is customary deemed a "mere" fairy-tale. There is no doubt that the fantastic story and the characters of the nymphs, the water goblin or the witch are of a fairy-tale nature, yet in its fantastic scenes Dvořák's paramount operatic work bears an enciphered yet profound message about the fundamental order of powers, elements, energies and passions in the natural, therefore also human, world.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Bedřich Smetana

The Bartered Bride

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / David Švec
Stage director: Magdalena Švecová
Choreographer: Ladislava Košíková
Set designer: Petr Matásek
Costume designer: Zuzana Přidalová
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Bedřich Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, the founding work of modern Czech opera, soon exceeded the domestic framework and became a permanent part of the world's repertoire. The 20th National Theatre production of the evergreen of Czech theatre and music is, for the first time in our history, directed by a woman. Magdalena Švecová has chosen neither the path of provocative or scandalous interpretation, nor that of conventional imitation of obsolete models. She has grasped *The Bartered Bride*'s grotesque yet highly moving story with tenderness, intelligent humour and hyperbole, as well as an understanding for the long-gone order (disorder) of human lives in the Czech village. The production's forcibility is enhanced by Zuzana Přidalová's costumes, inspired by plant and animal motifs, and Ladislava Košíková's stylish choreography charged with energy and replete with naturalness.

Leoš Janáček

The Cunning Little Vixen

Conductor: Robert Jindra / Jakub Klecker
Stage director: Ondřej Havelka
Set designer: Martin Černý
Costume designer: Kateřina Štefková
Choreographer: Jana Hanušová
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir

Leoš Janáček's celebrated "philosophical revue" on animals and people, desire, disillusionment with life and wise atonement with eternal Nature. *The Cunning Little Vixen*, inspired by Rudolf Těsnohlídek's newspaper serial story, transposed with great understanding, feeling and hyperbole into operatic form, is a piece possessing significant potential to captivate the audience. Owing to its wit, profound ideas and emotionality, the work speaks to adults, while children are enchanted by its picturesque nature and exquisite scenery. *The Cunning Little Vixen* is one of the most famous Czech operas and part of the standard global repertoire. The stage director Ondřej Havelka playfully and poetically renders the amusing realm of animals and the world of odd people while getting deep beneath the surface, showing that interpersonal relations are not as idyllic as they may appear.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Antonín Dvořák

The Jacobin

Conductor: Zbyněk Müller / David Švec
Stage director: Jiří Heřman
Set designer: Pavel Svoboda
Lighting designer: Daniel Tesař
Costume designer: Alexandra Grusková
Choreographer: Lucie Holánková
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir

Antonín Dvořák's *The Jacobin* is one of the most popular and most frequently performed Czech operas. The story, depicting life in a small Czech town on the one hand and the return of a "suspicious" émigré to his homeland on the other, is owing to Dvořák's musical genius borne in an ambiguous atmosphere of melancholy, sentiment, humorous bird's-eye view and self-irony. As in many other similarly tuned Czech dramatic works, here too all the accumulated and pointed conflicts end up in humble, conciliatory and amicable lesson-learning. Besides the traditional title of the opera, *The Jacobin*, the stage director Jiří Heřman foregrounds the libretto's lesser known original name, *Mother's Song*, which actually far more appositely indicates that which Dvořák's opera is all about – tenderness, noble-mindedness, loving care, as well as the ability of music to soften even the most hardened of hearts. The playful and poetic production takes the audience to the familiar school milieu, with the pupils guided by the good-natured teacher Benda. There is enough room in school-desks for children and adults alike.

Giacomo Puccini

Turandot

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / Zbyněk Müller
Stage director and set designer: Zuzana Gilhuus
Costume designer: Boris Hanečka
Choreographer: Martin Dvořák
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Choir
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir

Giacomo Puccini's final opera, *Turandot*, may be deemed to be the "last of the Mohicans" of the Golden Age of Italian Romantic opera. The greatest of Verdi's heirs, the composer, however, did not get bogged down in this tradition, but went on to boldly develop and enrich it with the flavours of the new artistic styles that emerged in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries. Consequently, his *Turandot*, written between and 1921 and 1924, does not feature many Romantic traits. Puccini based the opera on the eponymous commedia dell'arte play by Carlo Gozzi, an author much admired by the early 20th-century avant-garde artists. The subject hails from Persia or Mongolia, whose cultures were mainly marvelled at by votaries of the decorative style, while the libretto's story is set in medieval Beijing and foregrounds fairy-tale, or better said, mythological, elements, favoured by the Symbolists. The theme of passionate love, essential for Romantic opera, is veiled in mysterious motifs of ice, fire, the Moon and the Sun, while an erotic flame enigmatically blazes along with intense, unrelenting hatred, which we would rather expect to be present in works inspired by decadence or psychoanalysis. Yet all that which, notwithstanding its modernism, gives *Turandot* the Romantic opera hallmark is Puccini's musical idiom, which too encompasses plenty of "eccentric" facets – ranging from Oriental paraphrases, through a brutal orchestral sound, dissonant harmonies to wildly complex chorus and ensemble scenes – but what prevails is Puccini's masterful melodic invention in the spirit of the legacy of his great Italian opera predecessors, yet utterly original – by and large, Puccinian.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Giuseppe Verdi

Un ballo in maschera

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / Jan Chalupecký
Stage director: Dominik Beneš
Motion supervisor: Béla Kéri Nagy
Set and costume designer: Marek Cpin
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Giuseppe Verdi often found inspiration for his operas in the works of renowned writers and dramatists, including William Shakespeare, Friedrich Schiller, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, fils, and Eugène Scribe, one of the most distinguished 19th-century playwrights and librettists. In tandem with Charles Duveyrier, Scribe penned the libretto for the 1855 work *Les vêpres siciliennes*, and in 1857 his text for Daniel Auber's 1833 French opera *Gustave III, ou Le bal masqué* served as the basis for Antonio Somma's libretto to Verdi's new opera, which would enter history under the title *Un ballo in maschera*.
The circumstances under which the opera came into being and was staged were affected by political events and subsequent censorship, as a result of which Verdi and Somma had to change the piece's original title, *Gustavo III,* as well as the names of the characters, the setting and the time. Accordingly, the King of Sweden, an ardent theatre lover, became the English governor in Boston, USA, etc. In this transformed version, the opera received its premiere on 17 February 1859, at the Teatro Apollo in Rome. A Prague audience first saw the piece in 1866, in German translation, at the Estates Theatre, and in 1869, the opera was performed in Czech translation at the New Town Theatre by the Provisional Theatre company, whose production was taken over by the National Theatre and presented in June 1884.

Giuseppe Verdi

Aida

Conductor: Maurizio Barbacini / Richard Hein
Stage director: Petar Selem
Set designer: Hafiz Abdel Farghali
Costume designer: Josef Jelínek
Choreographer: Otto Šanda
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

To inaugurate the Suez Canal, Ismail Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, commissioned an opera from the composer whose *Rigoletto* opened the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo in 1869. Giuseppe Verdi dedicated great care to preparing the new work and even visited Egypt so as to have his own idea of the country. He even had Ancient Egypt "Aida trumpets" made in Milan. Yet he only completed the opera after the Suez Canal was opened (17 November 1869), and the premiere took place on 24 December 1871 at the Teatro del'Opera in Cairo. The dramatic charge of the story of the Ethiopian Princess Aida and the Egyptian warrior Radames grows out of the inner torment of a woman who has to decide between being loyal to her country or dedicating herself to a man who is one of the oppressors of her nation. The dilemma of choosing between love and duty is also faced by Radames, who ultimately betrays his homeland because of Aida. The current State Opera production premiered in 1994. The renowned Egyptian painter Hafíz Abdel Farghali gave a genuine Egyptian colour to the sets which, together with Josef Jelínek's exquisite costumes, contributed to the tremendous success of the State Opera production.

THE STATE OPERA

Ludwig van Beethoven

Fidelio

Conductor: Lothar Koenigs

Stage director: Vera Nemirova

Set and costume designer: Ulrike Kunze

State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Fidelio by Ludwig van Beethoven has been referred to as the composer's solitary dream. Even though he intensely wished to create an opera, and having considered more than 50 subjects, Beethoven ultimately merely wrote just a single piece in the genre. The libretto to *Fidelio* was furnished to the composer by his friend Joseph Sonnleithner, who translated into German and adapted the French text *Leonora ou l'amour conjugal*, penned by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly. The story of the political prisoner Florestan and his brave wife Leonore, an apotheosis of marital love and fidelity, as well as the idea of justice and pan-human brotherhood, presently impressed Beethoven. Nonetheless, setting a profound ethical message not for symphony or chamber rendition but for a theatre stage, with which he had no previous experience, proved to be a truly formidable task. The premieres of the first, three-act, version in 1805 and the shortened, two-act, version two years later (both at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna) were flops, with only the opera's third version, first performed on 23 May 1814 at the Theater am Kärntnertor, having met with triumph. In 1814, *Fidelio* was first staged in Bohemia, conducted by the then Kapellmeister of the Estates Theatre, Carl Maria von Weber.

Engelbert Humperdinck

Hänsel und Gretel

Adapted by: Matěj Forman, Andrea Sodomková and Radek Malý
Czech libretto: Radek Malý

Conductor: Jiří Štrunc / Richard Hein
Stage director: Matěj Forman
Set designers: Matěj Forman and Andrea Sodomková
Costume designer: Andrea Sodomková
Choreographer: Veronika Švábová
State Opera Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir

The opera, inspired by the Grimm brothers' popular fairy tale, is the work of the German composer Engelbert Humperdinck and his sister Adelheid Wette, who wrote the libretto. Premiered in Weimar on 23 December 1893, with Richard Strauss conducting, *Hänsel und Gretel* was an immediate success, with its popularity growing rapidly, and it soon became a sensation beyond Germany. In 1905, the piece was staged at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The National Theatre production of *Hänsel und Gretel*, performed in Czech under the title *Jeníček a Mařenka*, is directed by Matěj Forman, primarily known to Prague audiences as the designer of the magical sets for the highly acclaimed productions he has created in recent years for the National Theatre Opera together with his brother Petr. Matěj and his team's conception of the musical fairy tale was inspired by the world of itinerant theatre.

THE STATE OPERA

Giacomo Puccini

La bohème

Conductor: Enrico Dovico / Jiří Štrunc
Stage director: Ondřej Havelka
Set designer: Martin Černý
Costume designer: Jana Zbořilová
Choreographer: Jana Hanušová
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

In the final decade of the 19th century, new subjects taken over from contemporary realistic literature began appearing in Italian opera. Émile Zola's Naturalism, purged of Romantic idealisation, strove to depict the world with all its attendant suffering, while the same path was also taken by Italian verismo, focusing on themes whose action, replete with passion, many a time led to a violent ending. The apices of verismo include Giacomo Puccini's operas *Manon Lescaut, La bohème, Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. The Paris-based painter and writer Henry Murger's book *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, published in 1851, was a great success and Puccini immediately sensed the enormous dramatic potential in the work. The moving story of the love between the poet Rodolfo and the tender Mimi, who is not destined to live long, and of the friendship of four young Montmartre artists was an ideal theme for an opera. It premiered on 1 February 1896 at the Teatro Regio in Turin, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. The first night met with a lukewarm response, yet two months later in Palermo *La bohème* was received rapturously. As he did again later in *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, Puccini demonstrated his mastery of musical rendition of local colour; Claude Debussy allegedly said that he did not know of anyone who musically depicted the Paris of the time better than Puccini had. The inspired and elegant *La bohéme* adaptation, directed by Ondřej Havelka, was nominated for Production of the Year 2008 in the traditional Divadelní noviny poll.

Giuseppe Verdi

La traviata

Conductor: Karl-Heinz Steffens / Jiří Štrunc
Stage director: Arnaud Bernard
Set designer: Alessandro Camera
Costume designer: Carla Ricotti
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Giuseppe Verdi's *La traviata*, to the libretto based on Alexandre Dumas's novel *La Dame aux camélias*, about Marie Duplessis, the famous courtesan and idol of Parisian society in the 1840s, is actually the very first significant opera to a contemporary social theme. The work's premiere in 1853 in Venice was, however, a fiasco: the audience was appalled that the heroine was a courtesan who, what's more, was portrayed in a positive light. Yet Verdi's opera soon started garnering plaudits and is now one of the most popular repertoire titles the world over. *La traviata* was staged by the New German Theatre in Prague (today's State Opera) in Prague from the very beginning of its existence, when it took over the production from the German Estates Theatre. The opera primarily afforded the opportunity to host celebrated foreign singers, including the legendary Australian soprano Nellie Melby in 1900. The present *La traviata* production, premiered in 2006, was created by an international team headed by the French stage director Arnaud Bernard.

THE STATE OPERA

Giuseppe Verdi

Macbeth

Conductor: Jiří Štrunc

Stage director: Martin Čičvák

Choreographer: Tomáš Krivošík

Set designer: Hans Hoffer

Costume designer: Marija Havran

State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Rampant ambition, inordinate lust for power and mysterious oracles – these are the ingredients of the psychological opera thriller and the first of the three unique creative unions between Giuseppe Verdi and William Shakespeare. Throughout his life, the Italian master was an ardent admirer of the celebrated Elizabethan playwright and when in the summer of 1846 he sought the subject for his tenth opera, he chose *Macbeth*. A supreme dramatist, Verdi recognised how much potential the tale of the corrupting force of power offered. Piave's libretto consistently respected the play's storyline. In *Macbeth*, Verdi started pursuing the path towards musical drama, in which singing is subordinate to the situation and reflects the characters' psychology and inner emotions, with the dramatic content being far more important than bel canto. Immediately after its premiere, on 14 March 1847 at the Teatro alla Pergola in Florence, *Macbeth* set out on its triumphant journey across Europe and was staged in the original form until 1865, when Verdi substantially revised it for the Paris performance at the Théâtre-Lyrique.

Giacomo Puccini

Madama Butterfly

Conductor: Vincenzo Milletarì
Stage director: Jiří Heřman
Set designers: Jiří Heřman and Jan Lukášek
Costume designer: Alexandra Grusková
Motion supervisor: Lucie Hayashi
Lighting designer: Daniel Tesař
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Madama Butterfly is indisputably one of the most popular and most artistically valued operas of all time. Notwithstanding the fact that it has perhaps the simplest plot of all Puccini's operas: a "Yankee", Lieutenant F. B. Pinkerton, enchanted by the picturesque Japanese milieu and the 15-year-old Cio-Cio San, nicknamed "Butterfly", decides to marry and spend the honeymoon in Nagasaki. He soon abandons his young wife, but after a long time returns so as to take away the child Cio-Cio San has given birth to in the meantime. In this work, Puccini eschewed intricate action and boisterous dramatic events, opting instead for an intimate story and highlighting the psychology of the characters, fleshing out by his music the tiniest details, oscillations and extreme emotional surges, the essential contrast between the Japanese and "Western" mentality, which he also aptly renders by means of many a time surprisingly modified quotations of the US national anthem, as well as giving a forcible depiction of the local colour of Japan, where the story is set. The opera is named after the short story *Madame Butterfly* by the American lawyer and author John Luther Long, which served as the basis for a drama by the New York impresario and playwright David Belasco, which in turn directly inspired Puccini to compose his celebrated opera. Following the poor reception of the original version at La Scala, Puccini went on to revise *Madama Butterfly* four times, between 1904 and 1907, before it became a global hit.

THE STATE OPERA

Giuseppe Verdi

Nabucco

Conductor: Jiří Štrunc

Stage director, set, lighting and video designer: José Cura

Costume designer: Silvia Collazuol

State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Verdi's third opera, *Nabucco*, treating the *Old Testament* story of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, has been an essential title on the repertoire of every opera house possessing a large choir. In the piece, the chorus plays a very bold role, singing, among other things, one of the best-known opera scenes there is, "Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate" (Fly, thought, on golden wings). The audience at the opera's premiere, on 9 March 1842 at La Scala in Milan, demanded that the scene be repeated, as would subsequently be the case during performances on other stages. A number of myths have arisen as to the mission of the famous Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves. It is still not clear whether Verdi, a great patriot dreaming of a united Italy, composed it deliberately as a political proclamation. One way or another, in Verdi's time the chorus would become a symbol of the Italians' resistance to Austria's supremacy, and would even serve as a political appeal in modern times. *Nabucco* marked the onset of Verdi's new operatic style. While still reflecting the respective influences of Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini, the purely virtuoso passages quintessential for the bel canto era gave way to arias and ensembles fully aimed at enhancing the dramatic tension and drift. *Nabucco* was first presented in the Czech lands in German translation on 3 March 1849 at the Estates Theatre in Prague. The current production has been staged by the celebrated Argentinean tenor José Cura, with whom the State Opera company had previously collaborated, in the autumn of 2001 during a tour of Japan with the production of Verdi's *Aida* (José Cura portrayed the role of Radamès) and in January 2015, when he appeared at the State Opera in performances of Verdi's *Otello* (in the lead role).

Charles Gounod

Roméo et Juliette

Conductor: Richard Hein
Stage director: Sláva Daubnerová
Set designer: Juraj Kuchárek
Costume designer: Martin Kotúček
Motion supervisor: Stanislava Vlčeková
Lighting designer: Daniel Tesař
Video creator: Lukáš Kodoň
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

In his youth, the French composer Charles Gounod said that "one can only make a successful music career by composing operas". Of the 13 operas he wrote, two went on to gain global recognition: *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*. Since its premiere at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris on 27 April 1867, Gounod's setting of the immortal story of the Verona lovers has enjoyed ever-increasing popularity. The librettists Jules Barbier and Michel Carré did not draw upon Shakespeare's feted tragedy directly but its French adaptation by the poet Gérard de Nerval. Hence, the action also contains a few situations not found in Shakespeare's play, for instance, Juliette's aria "Ah! Je veux vivre", which Gounod additionally composed upon the request of the French soprano Marie Miolan-Carvalho, the first to portray the role. Owing to Bedřich Smetana, a great champion of Gounod's music, *Roméo et Juliette* got to Prague merely two years after its world premiere, and its Czech staging at the New Town Theatre, with Smetana conducting, was the very first in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The National Theatre in Prague first presented a production of Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette* on 6 January 1886.

THE STATE OPERA

Antonín Dvořák

Rusalka

Conductor: Marek Šedivý / Jiří Štrunc
Stage director: Zdeněk Troška
Set designer: Milan Ferenčík
Costume designer: Josef Jelínek
Choreographer: Dana Morávková
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra

Antonín Dvořák based his most beautiful opera on the fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* by the famous Danish author Hans Christian Andersen. Pursuant to the story, the Czech poet Jaroslav Kvapil wrote one of the most poetic librettos there is. No wonder then that the fruit of the co-operation between the two creators, who were close both as artists and friends, was a magical, dreamy story of great, unfulfilled desire of the water nymph Rusalka, a work in which Dvořák's musical genius reached its apex. The fairy-tale atmosphere inspired the composer to create singular, impressionistic music replete with melodic imagination and masterful instrumentation, a suggestive expression of the play of waves and the reflection of moonlight on the surface of a lake, as well as the magic of a fairy-tale dream. Since its premiere in 2005, the production of *Rusalka* directed by the popular Czech film-maker Zdeněk Troška has been one of the most successful titles performed at the State Opera.

Giacomo Puccini

Tosca

Conductor: Hilary Griffiths / Jiří Štrunc
Stage director: Martin Otava
Set designers: Josef Svoboda and Daniel Dvořák
Costume designer: Josef Jelínek
State Opera Chorus and Orchestra
Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir

The State Opera production uses Josef Svoboda's legendary scenery for the opera's adaptation dating from the period of the Fifth of May Grand Opera (today's State Opera), premiered on 4 May 1947, six days prior to the designer's 27th birthday. In June 1999, Svoboda's sets, ranking among the most remarkable in Czech post-war theatre, were revived by his pupil Daniel Dvořák, the then director of the State Opera. The scenery's faithful copy, created by means of state-of-the-art technologies, has contributed to the production's extreme popularity. In 2020, the State Opera will perform *Tosca* furnished with Svoboda's fabulous sets again to mark the centenary of the celebrated artist's birth. When it comes to the genesis of Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, it dates back to 1889, when the composer saw in Milan a performance of Victorien Sardou's drama *La Tosca*, starring Sarah Bernhardt in the lead role. Yet complicated negotiations between his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, and Sardou, as well as Puccini's being busy with *Manon Lescaut* and *La bohéme*, postponed the work on *Tosca*, which would only be completed in 1899. The world premiere of the opera, on 14 January 1900 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, was a resounding success, although some scorned it, including Gustav Mahler, who referred to the work as a "Meistermachwerk" (sham masterpiece), and Richard Strauss, who dismissed it in even harsher terms. Today, the opera about the diva Tosca, her lover, the painter Cavaradossi, and the malicious police chief Baron Scarpia, set in 1800 in Italy during the time of Napoleon's war against Austria, is one of the most popular operas worldwide.

THE ESTATES THEATRE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Die Zauberflöte

Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink / David Švec

Stage director: Vladimír Morávek

Set designers: Miroslav Huptych and Martin Ondruš

Costume designer: Tomáš Kypta

Motion supervisor: Leona Qaša Kvasnicová

National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

Long Vehicle Circus

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's final stage piece was intended for the common people visiting the Theater an der Wien, where it was premiered on 30 September 1791. The creators drew upon the tradition of the old Viennese magic opera, one of the types of singspiel, a popular genre combining sung and spoken passages in which alongside human characters a variety of supernatural beings and animals appeared, and stage machinery effects were employed. *Die Zauberflöte* has become the best-known example of this genre not only owing to the fairy-tale story in which by means of a magic flute and his comical companion, Papageno, Prince Tamino seeks the way to Princess Pamina, the daughter of the Queen of the Night, but also thanks to the references to Masonic symbolism and, naturally, Mozart's engrossing music. A year after its premiere in Vienna, the singspiel was presented in Prague at today's Estates Theatre on 25 October 1792. The new production, staged by the renowned Czech director Vladimír Morávek, is a spellbinding spectacle.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Don Giovanni

Conductor: Jan Chalupecký / Zdeněk Klauda
Stage director: Jiří Nekvasil
Set designer: Daniel Dvořák
(revival of Josef Svoboda's original sets)
Costume designer: Theodor Pištěk
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

The Estates Theatre has revived the legendary 1969 production of *Don Giovanni*, directed by Václav Kašlík, with the sets designed by Josef Svoboda. The scenery involves the architectural elements of the auditorium itself, utilising the proscenium boxes as part of the stage, thus capitalising on the historical fact that the venue hosted the world premiere of the "Opera of Operas". *Don Giovanni* received its very first performance on 29 October 1787 at the Estates Theatre, conducted by Mozart himself.

THE ESTATES THEATRE

Gioachino Rossini

La Cenerentola (Cinderella)

Conductor: David Švec
Stage director: Enikő Eszenyi
Set designer: Kentaur
Costume designer: Bianca Imelda Jeremias
Motion supervisor: Tamás Juronics
Lighting designer: Csontos Balázs
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

One of the most frequently performed works of Gioachino Rossini, a master of the bel canto style, premiered on 25 January 1817 at the Teatro Valle in Rome. The libretto, penned by Jacopo Ferretti, is based on Charles Perrault's fairy tale *Cendrillon*, first published in 1697 within the collection *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*. Similarly to the other creators inspired by Perrault's fable, Ferretti and Rossini interpret the story of Cinderella in their own way, presenting a broad scope of situations, ranging from the moving to the comical, as well as rewarding types of characters and splendid musical numbers, one of the most famous being Cinderella's aria "Nacqui all'affanno...", a staple of many a world-renowned diva. Guaranteeing a singular and intriguing spectacle is the production by the acclaimed Hungarian stage director and actor Enikő Eszenyi, who previously created in Prague well-received adaptations of Shakespeare plays for the Estates Theatre (*The Comedy of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and who also appeared in Robert Wilson's *1914*.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Le nozze di Figaro

Conductor: Enrico Dovico / Zbyněk Müller
Stage director: Magdalena Švecová
Set designer: Andrej Ďurík
Costume designer: Kateřina Štefková
Lighting designer: Přemysl Janda
Motion supervisor: Tomsa Legierski
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

There is just one still functioning theatre in the world at which Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart personally conducted performances of his operas: the Estates Theatre in Prague, on whose stage Mozart's music has been played ever since 1783, when it presented *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. In the wake of the resounding success with which his *Le nozze di Figaro* met in Prague three years later, the composer paid his first visit to the city in January 1787 so as to give the world premiere of his *Symphony No. 38* in D major and to conduct a production of an opera, which earned the audience's immense enthusiasm and resulted in his being commissioned to create another opera, *Don Giovanni*. Along with Mozart's inspired music, Beaumarchais's brilliant play, which served as the basis for Lorenzo da Ponte's no less fabulous libretto, featuring splendidly portrayed characters, replete with entanglements, disguises and humorous situations, is the reason why *Le nozze di Figaro* has never ceased to enchant audiences and performers alike. Magdalena Švecová is the very first woman in the history of the National Theatre to have directed a production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, thus presenting a female view of the forms and transformations of love, infidelity and jealousy, in what is the 20th production of the title by the National Theatre.

THE NEW STAGE

Miloš Orson Štědroň

Don Hrabal

Conductor: Jan Chalupecký
Stage director: Linda Keprtová
Set designer: Martin Černý
Costume designer: Tomáš Kypta
Motion supervisor: Ladislava Košíková
Lighting designer: Daniel Tesař
National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra

The opera *Don Hrabal* presents the celebrated Czech (Czechoslovak) author as a lonely Mohican, a dreamer seeking beauty in the everyday and the ordinary, a brilliant storyteller and witty commentator. By the medium of the three essential women in his life, Hrabal concurrently reveals his innermost feelings, freely guiding us through them against the backdrop of the history of the second half of the 20th century. Assisting him on his voyage is a chorus of his beloved cats and a flock of pigeons, with the latter bearing witness to his very final moments before his fall out of the window of the Bulovka hospital in Prague. The contemporary Czech composer Miloš Orson Štědroň also writes the texts he sets to music, thus creating remarkable music-theatre crossover projects. He has systematically focused on great Czech figures (Ivan Blatný, Jaroslav Hašek, František Kupka, Josef Gočár, Jan Hus, Johann Gregor Mendel, Václav Havel, Jan Zábrana, Josef Škvorecký).

Ivan Acher

Sternenhoch

Conductor: Petr Kofroň
Stage director: Michal Dočekal
Choreographer: Lenka Vagnerová
Set designer: Marek Cpin
Costume designer: Eva Jiřikovská
Lighting designer: Ondřej Kyncl
Sound designer: Eva Hamouzová

Ladislav Klíma's grotesque expressionistic novel *The Sufferings of Prince Sternenhoch* has now like an inextinguishable fire stricken the fifth generation of seekers of earthly and cosmic forces. Stricken, inspired, burnt and ignited. The prose's unique combination of the low and the high, the comical and horror-like atmosphere, philosophy of the uppermost spheres and everyday lewdness served as a sufficient breeding ground for a music creator with a penchant for morphing genres, a creator who likes to alternate darkness with the grotesque, and feels a close affinity to the author of the novel in terms of making use of the time entrusted to us on earth. Ivan Acher thought about setting Klíma's work to music back in 1993, after he had read it at a hermitage in the mountains. Yet the dream of a young man, who had just abandoned his studies, ran across reality, and a sober view left the idea among unattainable visions. The expressionistic nature of Ladislav Klíma's book and the subject of a fictitious story abounding in murders, dreams about murders, tattle and high philosophising of the five main characters directly urges the application of trained voices within the new context of the sonic potential of electronic composition. Composition that, notwithstanding an experimental approach, has not altogether deserted the domain of historical music yet utilises it in novel acoustic options, blending sampling, electronics and live instruments. The production of Acher's *Sternenhoch*, directed by Michal Dočekal, has become a true contemporary opera sensation, lauded by the critics and enjoying an unceasing demand on the part of the audience and music festivals. The Divadelní noviny readers voted it Production of 2018.



STERNENHOCH – Vanda Šípová and Sergey Kostov
photo: P. Borecký



LUNCH AT WITTGENSTEIN – Zuzana Stivínová and Lucie Juřičková
photo: P. Neubert

drama





Dear audience,

The past couple of months have shown that the things we consider to be set in stone are far from being solid and that we must always be prepared for the unexpected. Over the extraordinary theatre-less break, we could to ponder that which is essential in life, what health, freedom, as well as society, stand for – and what art and culture mean to us. We are delighted to be able, at long last, to get together at the National Theatre, which we believe you missed just as much as we did.
Reshuffling of plans has affected the make-up of our programme: performances of the productions whose rehearsing we did not manage to finish in the spring have been postponed to the autumn, and everything we promised to present at the beginning of the current season will take place in the future. Nonetheless, during the first months we will redeem our debts. Consequently, we will launch the 2020/21 season with the premiere of an adaptation of the French dramatist Vincent Macaigne's play *Je suis un pays (I am a Country)*, directed by Jan Mikulášek. From the very beginning of September, you will have the opportunity to see a piece about the contemporary world, our believing in fairy tales, a piece intimating that we should not give up. Shifted from the previous season too has been the premiere of my dramatization of F. M. Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*. We believe that the Russian classic about the ability to tell the truth is compelling at any time and in any era. The New Stage will host the Czech premiere of yet another debt – the young German author Katja Brunner's *Ghosts Are Only Humans Too*, a play focused on ageing and solitude. In the wake of the social isolation and distancing we experienced until recently, the subject seems to be even more acute than it was before. The drama will be staged by Kamila Polívková.
And now, let us pay attention to the titles which will be presented as planned. At the National Theatre historical building, we perform plays that are part of the canon of Czech and global literature, staged by the most distinguished domestic directors. Over the past few years, we have thus presented productions that have enjoyed great popularity, while your responses have assured us that you have been keen on modern adaptations of such "treasures" as *Marysha* and *A Bouquet*. This season, we will add to them a production of František Hrubín's fairy tale in verse *The Beauty and the Beast*, which I will direct. Published in 1972, it was most recently – for the first and last time – staged at the National Theatre (then the Tyl, today the Estates, Theatre) eight years later. Hrubín's poetry transcends reading for children, with *The Beauty and the Beast* rather being a metaphorical tale of the power of love, pointing out that a repulsive, or different, physical appearance cannot stand in the way of deep affection.

We believe that the production's performances at the National Theatre will be attended by theatre-lovers of all generations. Interconnection between the past and the present will be the subject of the production *The People versus Kramer*, to be directed by Petra Tejnorová, whose creations you may have seen at the New Stage and who will now be making her debut at the Estates Theatre. Her domain is, among other things, telling stories anchored in reality, closely linked with the respective setting. *The People versus Kramer* will centre on the history of the Estates Theatre, particularly the infamous episode dating from 1920, when the Czechs took over the building by force, yanking it from the German actors, who at the time were renting it. The violent seizure turned into a political event with repercussions for the Czech theatre-makers – President T. G. Masaryk would then not grant to the National Theatre subsidies for a new building. Ample surviving archival materials shed light on our history, as well as the consequences of ill-judged behaviour in a turbulent era.

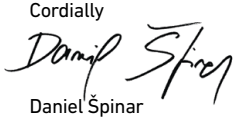
The third new production to be seen at the Estates Theatre will perhaps delight the fans of "immortal" classics. We will present a new adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing*, one of the most sparkling Shakespeare plays, a comedy about love, scheming and misunderstanding. Such a text will undoubtedly also please the actors, who relish taking up the challenge of appearing in the Bard's plays. I hope that the production, whose direction I will undertake, will make all comedy fans happy.

At the New Stage, we will present a brand-new play, titled *Eyewitness*, to be staged by Jiří Havelka, concentrating on memory, reconstruction of a story and reliving it at the present time. The third production to be premiered at the New Stage will be of a play created for our company within the New Drama Studio, which has been run by the National Theatre Drama since the beginning of 2019. The playwright and dramaturge Ondřej Novotný has given his text the concise title *The Father Watches Over the Daughter*. As directed by Jan Frič, the production will focus on parenting, asking the question of what being a father – and a man – means nowadays.

Should our titles not suffice, you can look forward to seeing performances by foreign and Czech companies within the *Prague Crossroads* festival, which provides the opportunity for the audience to keep abreast of the current trends in theatre internationally.

During the state of emergency in the spring, we set up the discussion platform *#kulturajenarod*, which we intend to keep pursuing, as we deem it important to continue to raise questions of what the nation is and why our culture is of essential importance for us. Those who like traditional discussions are invited to attend our regular *ND Talks*. Furthermore, other special events will be held under our heading *New Blood*. We are fully aware that in the sixth season our blood is not as "new" as it was in 2014 when we commenced our jobs – yet I believe that it will keep pulsating when we will see each other at the theatre.

Come to drama performances in order to enjoy new experiences!
Cordially



Daniel Špinar
Artistic Director of the National Theatre Drama

PREMIERE

Vincent Macaigne

Je suis un pays (I am a Country)

Czech translation: Zdeněk Bartoš
Stage direction: Jan Mikulášek
Dramaturgy: Marta Ljubková
Set design: Marek Cpin
Costumes: Kateřina Štefková
Lighting design: Přemysl Janda
Video: Dominik Žižka

Je suis un pays (I am a Country) is the first published play by Vincent Macaigne, a distinguished French actor, theatre and film director, screenwriter and playwright. Based on an eponymous production, which the artist presented to acclaim within a tour of Europe, it deals with the myth of the birth of a nation and state. Telling a story of a kingdom and a family saga, the play begins when everyone wants to kill the ruler, symbolising a dictatorship whose knell rang long ago. Although set in an unknown country, an unknown monarchy, there are constant references to the contemporary world. In his work, Macaigne employs quotations of Nicolas Sarkozy's speeches and Thomas Bernhard's plays, hints at Donald Trump, while mentioning perhaps all the countries on our planet. The land depicted in the play is fictitious and remote, but one that is dangerously connected with us. Macaigne reveals a society that is not capable of transforming, turning in a vicious circle of damnation and failure. The play features numerous pop songs, with its characters including charming journalists, debonair news presenters, as well as witty and smart politicians.
In the final analysis: notwithstanding the topics being politics and the incorrigible human spirit, entertainment is essential. The play presents a fairy tale of a kingdom whose people must murder one another before attaining well-being.

Cast: Pavel Batěk, Robert Mikluš, Zuzana Stivínová, Petr Vančura, Anna Fialová, David Matásek, Jiří Panzner (guest) and Štěpánka Pencová (guest)

Czech premiere performances: 8 and 26 September 2020 at the Estates Theatre

THE NEW STAGE

PREMIERE

Katja Brunner

Ghosts are Only Humans Too

Czech translation: Viktorie Knotková
Stage direction: Kamila Polívková
Dramaturgy: Nina Jacques
Set design: Antonín Šilar
Costumes: Ivana Kanhäuserová
Music: Ivan Acher
Lighting design: Daniel Tesař

Old people. Their last homes are in homes. At one time, they possessed energy, led private and social lives – and now their bodies only feign to be that which they used to be. Slivers of experience, talks that do not get beyond the edge of the bed, bruises, which can be explained as the result of the nursing staff's "affection". Dreams turn into nightmares, one is being consumed from within. The young German playwright Katja Brunner (born in 1991) lays bare that which is not pleasant to listen to – the voice of helplessness, penetrating our ears uninvited and with great urgency.

Cast: Pavlína Štorková, Johanna Tesařová, Jan Bidlas, Vladimír Javorský, Jiří Štěpnička, Alois Švehlík, adka Fidlerová (guest) and Zoja Oubramová (guest)

Czech premiere performances: 27 and 29 October 2020 at the New State

PREMIERE

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky

The Idiot

Czech translation: Libor Dvořák
Dramatization and stage director: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Ilona Smejkalová
Set design: Henrich Boráros
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Jakub Kudláč
Lighting design: Martin Špetlík

After returning from a sanatorium, the young Prince Myshkin, an impoverished epileptic, faces such unexpected and strange encounters that his mental illness relapses. Failing to understand his infinite kindness and guilelessness, the people he comes across erroneously assume that he lacks intelligence and is indeed an idiot. But is it not those worldly characters who are actually sick? Dostoyevsky brings into the corrupted society full of schemers, careerists and self-seekers an atypical hero, into whom he projected his idea of a good and beautiful man, sincere and innocently credulous. A man who keeps hoping and loving.

Cast: Patrik Děrgel, Igor Orozovič, Tereza Vilišová, Vladislav Beneš, David Prachař, Alena Štréblová, Pavla Beretová, Jindřiška Dudziaková, Petr Vančura, Lucie Polišenská, Ondřej Pavelka, Lucie Juřičková, Robert Mikluš, Filip Rajmont, Radúz Mácha, Magdaléna Borová and others

Premiere performances: 19 and 20 November 2020 at the Estates Theatre

THE NEW STAGE

PREMIERE

Jiří Havelka et al.

Eyewitness

Stage director: Jiří Havelka
Dramaturge: Marta Ljubková
Set design: Martin Černý
Costumes: Andrea Králová

"History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation," writes the British author Julian Barnes in his novel *The Sense of an Ending*. We tend to believe eyewitnesses, deeming their testimonies to be veritable. But how reliable is our memory? A number of studies have proved that it is not reliable at all: memories can "change". Literature includes a host of stories dealing with the fickleness, elusiveness of that which we retain in our mind from a variety of vantage points. Eyewitnesses are expected to give a true account of an event, but what they remember may be at total variance with reality ... The production is about storytelling, recollection and great personal as well as historical errors.

Premiere performances: 4 and 5 February 2021 at the New Stage

PREMIERE

Petra Tejnorová et al.

The People versus Kramer

Stage director: Petra Tejnorová
Dramaturges: Nina Jacques and Jan Tošovský
Set design: Lucia Škandíková

A significant, albeit infamous event in Czech history, when in November 1920 a frenzied mob stormed the Estates Theatre and drove out its German tenants, has become the basis for the research carried out by Petra Tejnorová and her staging team. The episode was paid considerable attention to in the period media, and there is also a record of a lawsuit, by means of which Leopold Kramer, the director of the German theatre company that had the Estates Theatre rented, claimed its rights, which were denied under the pressure of the public opinion. The bending of law and revising of history is what interests us. Have we advanced in respect of observing justice over the century since the foundation of the independent Czechoslovak Republic? Or do we still need to build our identity on delusions about ourselves and false perceptions of others? Does it prove that a nation lacks self-confidence or is it something that is intrinsic to the human species in general? And does it not, in the current era of easy-to-fake media, expose us to a danger greater than ever was in the past?

Premiere performances: 18 and 19 February 2021 at the Estates Theatre

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

PREMIERE

František Hrubín

The Beauty and the Beast

Stage director: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturge: Ilona Smejkalová
Set design: Lucia Škandíková
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Choreography: Václav Kuneš
Lighting design: Karel Šimek
Sound design: Michal Cáb
Music: Matěj Kroupa

In 1972, the Czech poet and playwright František Hrubín published the fairy tale in verse *The Beauty and the Beast*, included in the last collection he completed. Inspired by a widely known ancient Indo-European myth, he imbued it with his singular vision of the world. The story of a girl who falls in love with a monster, perceiving his inner self more than his – apparently – hideous face and body, is intended for children and adults alike. The timeless archetypal legend of the power and magic of love enthrals all generations.

Premiere performances: 4 and 5 March 2021 at the National Theatre

PREMIERE

William Shakespeare

Much Ado About Nothing

Czech translation: Jiří Josek
Stage director: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturge: Ilona Smejkalová
Set design: Lucia Škandíková
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Lighting desing: Karel Šimek
Music: Jiří Hájek

A comedy at the Estates Theatre at long last! This time written by the Bard himself. *Much Ado About Nothing*, a great game of gossip, love, infidelity, deception, a work teeming with irony and fierce verbal sparring, is one of Shakespeare's funniest, most lambent, as well as most "amorous" plays. Beatrice does not trust men, Benedick does not want to marry. A witty plan hatched by their friends sets in motion a carousel of misunderstandings, which ultimately lead to the final happy wedding … A true attraction for the audience, the title also provides a great opportunity for our actors to show their skills and qualities.

Premiere performances: 13 and 14 May 2021
at the Estates Theatre

THE NEW STAGE

PREMIERE

Ondřej Novotný

The Father Watches Over the Daughter

Stage director: Jan Frič

Dramaturge: Jan Tošovský

Set design and costumes: Jana Hauskrechtová

A seemingly banal situation in the life of a father in the 21st century – taking his daughter to a playground – served for the dramatist Ondřej Novotný as a springboard for his humorous, ironic, yet also serious, essay on the theme of fatherhood and manhood in today's turbulent times. By means of depicting his encounters with his wife, father, friends and passers-by, the author paints a plastic picture of the mental landscape of a man who bears a host of autobiographical traits, yet may be identified with by everyone who is or plans to be a father. Besides trivial, often comical parenting situations and conflicts at the children's playground, the play deals with weighty topics with a social overreach, such as fear of the future, the contradiction between freedom and safety, as well as the issue of elderly people's loneliness. Novotný created his play within the New Drama Studio, which the National Theatre Drama company has run since the beginning of 2019.

Premiere performances: 27 and 28 May 2021 at the New Stage

With English surtitles

Karel Jaromír Erben

A Bouquet

Stage direction: SKUTR (Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský)
Dramaturgy: Ilona Smejkalová
Stage adaptation: SKUTR (Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský) and Ilona Smejkalová
Set design: Jakub Kopecký
Costumes: Simona Rybáková
Music: Petr Kaláb
Motion supervision: Jan Kodet

A stage adaptation of the most popular of the Czech classics. First published in 1853, under the title *A Bouquet of Czech Folk Tales*, it was the one and only collection of poems by Karel Jaromír Erben (1811–1870). Inspired by Czech legends and tall stories, it garnered success back at the time of publication and went on to inspire numerous artists. The book, featuring symbolism bound with nature, everyday rural life and tradition, comprises passionate and erotic tales teeming with supernatural beings and macabre phantoms. *The Wedding Shirts, The Water-Goblin* and *The Noonday Witch*, magical myths of love and spine-chilling fables, have been adapted for the National Theatre by the SKUTR creative tandem of the stage directors Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský, who have gained acclaim with their production of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, staged at the Estates Theatre. The two artists have a penchant for the subjects treated by Erben – ritualised archetypal themes, such as love and death, the relationships between the mother and the child, man and woman, humans and nature, have appeared in their productions in a myriad of forms and contexts.

Cast: Iva Janžurová, František Němec, Jana Preissová, Taťjana Medvecká, Jana Boušková, Jan Bidlas, Csongor Kassai (guest), Pavlína Štorková, Pavla Beretová, Igor Orozovič, Magdaléna Borová, Lucie Polišenská, Radúz Mácha, Petr Vančura and Anna Fialová

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

With English surtitles

Alois and Vilém Mrštík

Marysha

Stage direction: Jan Mikulášek
Dramaturgy: Marta Ljubková and Jan Tošovský
Set design: Marek Cpin
Costumes: Kateřina Štefková
Sound design: Michal Cáb
Lighting design: Ondřej Kyncl

Few among the audience do not know how the story of a girl married against her will and driven to an act of despair works out. Were it a crime drama, this knowledge would be a detriment. Fortunately, however, there are stories that are worthy of retelling. In our production too, Marysha kills Vávra with a poison poured into his coffee. But what is Marysha like? And what about Vávra? *Marysha*, a masterpiece of the Czech rural realism (written in a truly outstanding language), today an indisputable part of our dramatic repertoire, entered the National Theatre through the backdoor, when in 1894 Ladislav Stroupežnický decided to stage its premiere within the cycle of afternoon people's performances. Since then, the National Theatre has created ten productions of the play (with the most recent being J. A. Pitínský's 1999 adaptation).

Cast: Pavla Beretová, David Prachař, Matyáš Řezníček, Vladimír Javorský, Taťjana Medvecká, Martina Preissová, Filip Rajmont and Kateřina Císařová (guest)

With English surtitles

William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Czech translation: Jiří Josek
Stage direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Milan Šotek
Set design: Henrich Boráros
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Ondřej Gášek
Choreography: Radim Vizváry
Lighting design: Martin Špetlík

Hermia is to marry Demetrius, yet she loves Lysander. The two lovers plan to elope, but they reveal their intention to Helena, who feels affection for Demetrius and convinces him to pursue them. The action is entered by Oberon, who receives from Puck a magic flower, evoking love in people... The chaotic story takes place during a midsummer night, when every slumber may bring forth a new dream. But where do such dreams end up – what do we actually remember from them? When the world around us begins spinning, it is hard to say where its boundaries are. The Bard's classic comedy, which returns to the stage with each generation; a fantastic show of motifs, plots, mysteries and secrets, which true theatre-goers must see at least once in their lifetime.

Cast: Pavla Beretová, Lucie Polišenská, Patrik Děrgel, Jiří Suchý z Tábora (guest), Michal Kern (guest), Pavel Batěk, Pavlína Štorková, Martina Preissová, Jan Bidlas, Ondřej Pavelka, Alena Štréblová, Michaela Tomešová (guest), Eva Vrbková (guest) and Petr Šmíd (guest)

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

With English surtitles

Sophocles

Oedipus Rex

Czech translation: Petr Borkovec and Matyáš Havrda
Text editor: Nina Jacques, Ilona Smejkalová and Jan Frič
Stage direction: Jan Frič
Dramaturgy: Nina Jacques and Ilona Smejkalová
Set design: Dragan Stojčevski
Costume design: Kateřina Štefková
Music: Jakub Kudláč
Light design: Tomáš Morávek
Choreography: Marek Zelinka

King Oedipus could be envied by many for his good fortune – after defeating the Sphinx by solving her riddle, he became a respected ruler of Thebes and established an extensive family. By and large, he was a darling of the Gods! Yet an abrupt downfall followed. The learned past is always part of the present, and hence the gifts of Fate can only be assessed retrospectively … The Ancient Greek playwright Sophocles' tragedy retells the old fable of the cruel lot of the man who unknowingly kills his father and marries his own mother, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Oracle of Delphi. It is a story of a king who must install order, even at the price of his self-destruction.

Cast: Pavel Batěk, Jana Stryková, Igor Orozovič, David Prachař, Jana Preissová, Alena Štréblová, Taťjana Medvecká, Lucie Polišenská, Martina Preissová, Filip Kaňkovský, Petr Vančura and others

With English surtitles

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice

Czech translation: Eva Kondrysová
Stage adaptation and direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Ilona Smejkalová and Milan Šotek
Set design: Lucia Škandíková
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Choreography: Petra Parvoničová
Music: Jiří Hájek
Lighting design: Ondřej Kyncl

"*It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.*" Thus reads the first sentence of the best-known novel by the English author Jane Austen (177 –1817). The story, set in the countryside, ironically depicts the relationships within a family, and just as humorously treats the central problem of the parents – how to marry off all five of their daughters. Mrs. Bennet deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality and marriage in the society of the landed gentry. The stiff provincial atmosphere is stirred by the handsome, rich – and eligible – Mr. Bingley and his friend, the taciturn, entertaining and waspish, Mr. Darcy, who move to their neighbourhood. If Bingley likes the eldest Bennet daughter, the beautiful Jane, what will happen to the second, Elizabeth? Is it possible to fall in love against one's will? The stage adaptation of the lambent, funny and forcible novel affords the opportunity to dazzle to both the male and female members of the National Theatre Drama company, while Austen's intelligent humour, which has captivated readers for more than two centuries, will certainly allure to the theatre women ... and men alike. After all, it is a truth universally acknowledged ...

Cast: Magdaléna Borová, Jana Pidrmanová, Lucie Juřičková, Pavel Batěk, David Prachař, Šimon Krupa (guest), Iva Janžurová, Jana Preissová, Alena Štréblová, Kateřina Winterová, Filip Rajmont, Patrik Děrgel, Matyáš Řezníček, Jindřiška Dudziaková, Denisa Barešová (guest), Marie Štípková (guest), Anna Peřinová (guest) and Lucie Valenová (guest)

THE ESTATES THEATRE

With English surtitles

Stefan Zweig

Beware of Pity

Czech translation: Božena Koseková
Stage adaptation and direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Jan Tošovský
Set design: Andrej Ďurík
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Jiří Hájek
Lighting design: Přemysl Janda
Projekce: Jan Adamus

"Everything started with inaptness, an entirely fortuitous blunder ..." On the eve of the first world war, Anton Hofmiller, an Austro-Hungarian cavalry officer stationed in a sleepy town at the edge of the Empire, is invited to a glamorous party at the home of a rich local landowner. The exhilarated young man asks his host's lovely daughter for a dance, only to discover that sickness has left her painfully crippled. The embarrassed Hofmiller flees, yet on the very next day he attempts to remedy the dreadful faux pas. Subsequently, he becomes entangled in the trap of his own "compassionate gestures", ultimately raising the girl's affection.
The masterpiece of the Austrian novelist and essayist Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), based on a piercing description of the psychology of human behaviour, was adapted for the stage by Daniel Špinar.

Cast: Radúz Mácha, Pavlína Štorková, Jana Stryková, Vladimír Javorský, Vladislav Beneš, Filip Rajmont, Taťjana Medvecká, Patrik Děrgel, Jiří Štěpnička, Jindřiška Dudziaková and others

With English surtitles

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Faust

Czech translation: Radek Malý
Stage direction: Jan Frič
Adaptation: Jan Frič, Marta Ljubková and Jan Tošovský
Dramaturgy: Marta Ljubková and Jan Tošovský
Set design: Dragan Stojčevski
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Jakub Kudláč
Lighting design: Martin Špetlík
Sound design: Kryštof Blabla
Videoprojection: Janek Růžička and Jan Truhlář
Special effects: David Krejčík

The most demanding, impossible to perform, complex – in two parts to boot... A play as the uppermost challenge placed before us by Goethe, as well as the dramatic tradition spanning centuries and including numerous adaptations of the myth about trespassing human limits. We raise the question of what makes Faust our contemporary, what temptations he would have to face today. And how much of the classical opus can actually be transferred to the stage at the beginning of the 21st century. A brand-new treatment, a brand-new Faust.

Cast: Martin Pechlát (guest), Saša Rašilov, Pavlína Štorková, Veronika Lazorčáková, Martina Preissová, Ondřej Pavelka, Lucie Polišenská / Eva Salzmannová (guest), Alena Štréblová, Radúz Mácha, Robert Mikluš / Jiří Suchý z Tábora (guest), Pavel Batěk and others

THE ESTATES THEATRE

With English surtitles

Thomas Bernhard

Lunch at Wittgenstein

Czech translation: Zuzana Augustová
Stage direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Marta Ljubková
Set design: Lucia Škandíková
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Matěj Kroupa and Jan Hrovatitsch
Lighting design: Karel Šimek

What cannot be formulated in sayable propositions can only be shown – that is how we may paraphrase one of the statements of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, which served as inspiration for Thomas Bernhard, one of the major Austrian authors, for writing his play *Ritter, Dene, Voss*, which we have adapted under the title *Lunch at Wittgenstein*. Three siblings epitomise the essence of the entire world, bringing to light their minor private hells, past injustices, shadows of the dead ancestors. The compelling psychological drama for three superb actors, which Czech theatres have to date tended to shun, provides a great opportunity for us to win over the National Theatre audiences to contemporary global art.

Cast: Zuzana Stivínová, Lucie Juřičková, Saša Rašilov and Jan Hrovatitsch (guest)

With English surtitles

Maurice Maeterlinck

The Blue Bird

Czech translation: Šárka Belisová and Alena Morávková
Stage direction: Štěpán Pácl
Dramaturgy: Jan Tošovský
Set design: Andrej Ďurík
Costumes: Iva Němcová, Lucia Škandíková and Tereza Kopecká
Music: Jakub Kudláč
Motion cooperation: Veronika Knytlová

The Blue Bird as the desire for ephemeral, ungraspable happiness. An adventurous voyage towards the soul of the things and beings around us, the seeking itself being the destination – only during this seeking can the two central characters come to comprehend that human relations and compassion are that which can bring us the Blue Bird of Happiness.
The best-known text written by the Flemish symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck, a Nobel Prize-winner, is one of the most impressive allegories of global literature, reaching out both to adults and children. The author's fertile imagination, reviving the world around us, inspires theatre-makers to opulent staging and affords a great spectacle to everyone who likes being enchanted.

Cast: Pavlína Štorková, Filip Kaňkovský, Jan Bidlas, Radúz Mácha, Lucie Juřičková, Pavel Batěk, Saša Rašilov, Anna Fialová, Ondřej Pavelka, Martina Preissová, Johanna Tesařová, Vladislav Beneš, Patrik Děrgel and others

THE ESTATES THEATRE

With English surtitles

Jáchym Topol

Nightwork

Stage direction: Jan Mikulášek
Dramaturgy: Jan Tošovský, Marta Loubková
Dramatisation: Jan Mikulášek, Marta Loubková
Set design: Marek Cpin
Costumes: Kateřina Štefková
Lighting design: Ondřej Kyncl

The theatre adaptation of the third novel by Jáchym Topol (b. 1962), *Nightwork*, evokes the gloomy atmosphere in a Czech border village at the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1986 by the Warsaw Pact armies – a turning point in our history. Two brothers, Ondra and Kamil, have been "tucked away" there by their father, who pursues an unidentified secret mission and cannot take care of his sons. Consequently, the boys become the village's "property", and serve as the channel through which the exacerbated collective memory flows. Within several August days, depicted by Topol in his singular imaginative style, we seem to find ourselves in the vicinity of all the major events that a typical Czech village might have experienced – war, displacement, collectivisation, but also witch hunts, pogroms, carnival orgies. In Topol's novel, history and timelessness intersect in an alarming, nerve-wrecking dance.

Cast: Johanna Tesařová, Lucie Juřičková, Tereza Vilišová, Jindřiška Dudziaková, David Prachař, Pavel Batěk, Filip Kaňkovský, Matyáš Řezníček, Robert Mikluš (guest), Karin Bílíková (guest), Václav Vašák (guest), Oskar Hes (guest), Martin Dědoch (guest), Jan Nedbal (guest), Kateřina Dvořáková (guest) and Veronika Lapková (guest)

With English surtitles

Molière

The Misanthrope

Czech translation: Jiří Zdeněk Novák
Adaptation: Jan Frič and Marta Ljubková
Stage direction: Jan Frič
Dramaturgy: Marta Ljubková
Set design: Pavla Kamanová
Costumes: Ján Tereba
Video: Erik Bartoš
Music: Jakub Kudláč
Motion cooperation: Jindřiška Křivánková
Lighting design: Martin Špetlík

Along with *Tartuffe* and *The Miser, The Misanthrope* presents the fundamental comedic archetype by which the global drama has been enriched by the genius of French classicism. The Misanthrope hates people. But is it really the case in the play by Molière (1622–1673)? It is true that Alceste despises hypocrisy in society, in which flattery is followed by slander and everyone pursues nothing but his or her own benefit? On the other hand, Alceste loves Célimène, who is the very personification of the false morals he scorns. "*And you don't find pretty creatures repulsive?*" his friend Philinte asks. Is it possible, or desirable even, to tell truth and nothing but? Does not sincerity sometimes turn into insolence? And is Alceste capable of living in this truth of his at all? Notwithstanding their being inspired by traditional folk theatre, Molière's comedies never eschew the existential dimension. *The Misanthrope* returned to the National Theatre repertoire after more than three decades of absence, in a provocative interpretation by the stage director Jan Frič.

Cast: Vladimír Javorský, David Matásek, Igor Orozovič, Kateřina Winterová, Jiří Suchý z Tábora (guest), Jan Bidlas, Jana Stryková, Alena Štréblová and Martin Belianský (guest)

THE ESTATES THEATRE

With English surtitles

Rebecca Lenkiewicz

The Night Season

Czech translation: Jitka Sloupová
Stage direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Milan Šotek
Set design: Dragan Stojčevski
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Music: Victoria Parker
Lighting design: Přemysl Janda

There was once a father, who had three daughters and one mother-in-law. They live in the Irish countryside. His wife has fled to London. The mother-in-law is considerably confused, yet extraordinarily spontaneous. One of the daughters keeps parting and getting together with the same boy, another does not know what to do about herself, and the third falls in love with an actor who has arrived to shoot a film about W. B. Yeats and whose presence rouses the tragicomic family from lethargy, making its members to reveal old secrets. The extraordinarily gifted British playwright's bitter comedy, imbued with poetics and fine humour, affords great opportunities to seven members of our company to showcase their dramatic skills.

Cast: Jana Preissová, Ondřej Pavelka, Tereza Vilišová, Veronika Lazorčáková, Lucie Polišenská, Igor Orozovič and Pavel Batěk

With English surtitles

Rudolf Medek, Jiří Havelka, Marta Ljubková

Colonel Švec

Stage direction: Jiří Havelka
Dramaturgy: Marta Loubková
Set design: Pavla Kamanová
Costumes: Andrea Králová
Music: Martin Tvrdý
Video: Josef Lepša
Motion supervision: Marek Zelinka

At the beginning of World War I, Josef Jiří Švec, an ardent patriot and Russophile, joined the Czechoslovak Legionnaires in Russia. He was one of the thousands of his compatriots who went to fight for the future Czechoslovak Republic, as well as democracy in Russia. They left behind diaries and numerous photographs. Yet Švec has turned into a legend – on the eve of the foundation of Czechoslovakia, he killed himself so as to arouse his demoralised unit to further desperate struggle. His heroic deed served as the subject for Rudolf Medek's play that a decade later became a hit at the National Theatre, but also gave rise to fierce political controversy. The tale of the Czechoslovak Legionnaires in Russia was again adapted for the stage in 1948, following which the Communist authorities decided that this part of history should be deleted from our collective memory. Our production serves to remind us of the legionnaires' heroism, their fight for honour and independence, yet it also somewhat refers to us all, in a country that over the centenary of its existence has experienced many a turbulent events and twists ...

Cast: Filip Kaňkovský, Matyáš Řezníček, Igor Orozovič, Pavel Batěk, Jan Bidlas, Alois Švehlík, Ondřej Bauer (guest) and others

With English surtitles

Karel Hugo Hilar, Daniel Špinar

For Beauty

Stage direction: Daniel Špinar
Dramaturgy: Marta Loubková
Set design: Lucia Škandíková
Costumes: Linda Boráros
Lighting design: Karel Šimek
Music: Matěj Kroupa

One of the most influential Czech theatre-makers, the playwright, dramaturge, stage director, critic and essayist Karel Hugo Hilar (1885–1935), born Karel Bakule, joined the National Theatre in Prague in 1921, at the height of his creative powers. As historians have put it, he entered "a very turbulent and hostile territory". Hilar himself wrote: "*The endeavour to attain style in modern theatre is an endeavour to make it turn inwards. The coming to understand that the art's only objective is to create beauty*". Our new production will pay tribute to a great spirit, a truly distinguished figure, an artist who advanced Czech art miles forward and whose words are just as exciting today as they were a century ago. By no means a dry biographic interpretation, its aim is to conduct a live dialogue with those who have established the Czech theatre tradition. Let us try to imagine what it would be like to be in K. H. Hilar's skin ...

Cast: Martina Preissová, Jana Stryková, Alena Štréblová, Kateřina Císařová (guest) and others

With English simultaneous interpretation

Ascanio Celestini

Speech to the Nation

Czech translation: Tereza Sieglová
Adaptation: Petra Tejnorová, Jan Tošovský and Ian Mikyska
Stage direction: Petra Tejnorová
Dramaturgy: Jan Tošovský
Set design: Dragan Stojčevski
Costumes: Adriana Černá
Music: Ian Mikyska
Video-technical cooperation: Dominik Žižka and Erik Bartoš
Lighting design: Tomáš Morávek
Interactive design: Aleš Zemene

The Italian writer, dramatist, director and actor Ascanio Celestini (b. 1972) has been ranked among the followers of the trend represented by the famous versatile artist Dario Fo. A representative of narrative theatre, toying with the language, words and their meanings, his witty, provocative, often moving and stirring texts hone in on the contemporary world, its antagonisms and invisible nooks – be they social inequality, child labour, the impending environmental disaster or corruption in government.
Speech to the Nation is a book comprising over 40 of Celestini's short essays, which also served as the basis of the author's own theatre performance. The stage director Petra Tejnorová's production of the same name will be a variation on the book's theme.

Cast: Lucie Juřičková, Tereza Vilišová, Saša Rašilov, Filip Kaňkovský, Jidřiška Dudziaková, Petr Vančura and others



SPEECH TO THE NATION – Tereza Vilišová, Maxime Mededa
photo: J. Hromádko



LEONCE & LENA – Laura Balogová Laušmanová, Jiří Waňka, Kristina Kornová, Marek Svobodník, Giovanni Rotolo, Magdalena Matějková, Miho Ogimoto, Adam Zvonař, Lenka Hrabovská, Mathias Deneux, Daria Lazucová, Louise Corpechot, Dmytro Tenytskyy
photo: S. Gherciu

ballet





Dear audience,

Drawing from the experience gained at the National Theatre in Prague over the past 137 years, the Czech National Ballet (CNB) has assumed a new approach to compiling its repertoire. We are happy to present the new season, during which our company will give three premieres and perform eleven productions.

The Czech National Ballet has attained international recognition on tours, spreading its good name abroad, while its repertoire has made it comparable with the most renowned companies worldwide.
We have continuously enhanced our performance quality in three major dance styles, presenting academic classical and neo-classical works, while also placing emphasis on contemporary ballet.
True artistic vibrancy cannot be achieved without new creations. Bearing that in mind, the first new production will be *Phoenix*, which will receive its world premiere on 12 November 2020 at the National Theatre. A triple bill made up of brand new works was conceived for our company by Douglas Lee, a distinguished international choreographer; Alejandro Cerrudo, a resident choreographer of the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago company and the first resident choreographer of Pacific Northwest Ballet; and Cayetano Soto, an award-winning artist, a former Ballet BC resident choreographer.
At the present time, the CNB repertoire includes a number of remarkable story ballets: *La Fille mal gardée*, *Swan Lake*, *Onegin*, *Kafka: The Trial*, *The Nutcracker – A Christmas Carol*, *Leonce & Lena*. In the forthcoming season, we will stage a new production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, a milestone in the more than three-century classical technique, created by Marcia Haydée after Marius Petipa, rescheduled from the previous season to 25 February 2021 at the State Opera.

Mixed bills afford a splendid opportunity for us to present to the audience works by true masters. Such productions as *Kylián – Bridges of Time* have met with an enthusiastic audience response. In compliance with this direction, the next premiere, on 6 May 2021 at the State Opera, will be of a triple bill made up of masterpieces by Forsythe, Clug and McGregor.
It will encompass exceptional contemporary choreographies: *The Second Detail*, by William Forsythe (a legendary modern dance innovator); *Handman*, by Edward Clug (the artistic director and choreographer of the Slovene National Theatre); and *Eden/Eden*, by Wayne McGregor (CBE, a multi-award-winning artist, one of the major contemporary British choreographers and stage directors, whose singular idiom integrates dance, film, visual arts, digital technologies and natural sciences).

The current Czech National Ballet repertoire includes the titles *Leonce & Lena* (Estates Theatre), *Kafka: The Trial* (Estates Theatre), *Swan Lake* (State Opera), *La Fille mal gardée* (State Opera), *The Nutcracker – A Christmas Carol* (National Theatre), *Kylián – Bridges of Time* (National Theatre), *Onegin* (National Theatre) and *Solo for the Two of Us* (New Stage).

Owing to the reopening of the State Opera after years of refurbishment, in the 2020/21 season we will finally be again performing at all the four National Theatre venues.
We cordially invite you to enjoy our wide array of productions. Rest assured you that our dancers will put all their energy, heart and soul into their performances, which will shift the borders and create scope for authentic experiences. Our passion is a foundation for our giving. It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. We need an audience that allows us to reflect the beauty of everyday people. Without you, dear audience, we are unable to see the richness of dance as a specific art form speaking its own language.

Yours sincerely



Artistic Director of the Czech National Ballet

PREMIERE

Phoenix

Choreographies: Douglas Lee, Alejandro Cerrudo, Cayetano Soto

National Theatre Orchestra

The new production, titled *Phoenix*, is made up of three brand-new choreographies created for the Czech National Ballet. It affords our dancers the opportunity to perform original works, to evolve their skills and embrace new choreographic voices. The Czech National Ballet repertoire will thus be enriched by pieces conceived by distinguished contemporary choreographers.

Douglas Lee is a freelance British choreographer. His works have been premiered by the Stuttgarter Ballett, the Norwegian National Ballet, the New York City Ballet, the Nederlands Dans Theater and other companies. His *Snow Was Falling*, created for the Perm Opera Ballet, received the coveted Golden Mask for the best choreography of 2016. Lee is known to Prague dance lovers too – his *Mask Duet* was presented within the *Velvet Gala* evening in November 2019 at the Estates Theatre.

Alejandro Cerrudo was previously engaged with the Victor Ullate Ballet, the Stuttgarter Ballett and Nederlands Dans Theater 2. He is resident choreographer at the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago company. His miniature *Paco Pope Pluto* too was included in the *Velvet Gala* in 2019 in Prague.

Cayetano Soto *"Like a Pedro Almodovar Film, Soto subverts beauty to convey something else"* says the Washington Post. Award Winner Choreographer, Cayetano Soto former Ballet BC Resident Choreographer is a cutting-edge and bold creator with an unique voice in Contemporary Ballet. He has received commissions from Opera Ballet van Vlaanderen, Ballet du Capitole, Compañia Nacional de Danza, Stuttgarter Ballett, Ballett Zürich and Nederland Dans Theater, among others.

World premiere: 12 November 2020 at the National Theatre

THE STATE OPERA

PREMIERE

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The Sleeping Beauty

Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Choreography and stage direction: Marcia Haydée
Scenario: Charles Perrault
Sets and costumes: Pablo Nuñez
State Opera Orchestra

The Sleeping Beauty, based on Charles Perrault's popular fairy tale *La Belle au bois dormant*, is one of the cornerstones of the global ballet repertoire, and musicians consider it to be the best of P. I. Tchaikovsky's ballet scores. The Czech National Ballet will for the very first time be staging the piece's enthralling version created in 1987 by the celebrated Brazilian prima ballerina and choreographer Marcia Haydée for the Stuttgarter Ballett. The world-famous production encompasses everything lovers of grand classical titles may expect: a dramatic story with a happy ending, magnificent dance parts, virtuoso solo performances, as well as exquisite sets and costumes.

Czech premiere: 25 February 2021 at the State Opera

PREMIERE

Forsythe | Clug | McGregor

Choreographies: William Forsythe, Edward Clug, Wayne McGregor
State Opera Orchestra

The mixed bill comprises works of three contemporary dance innovators, ranking among the most globally renowned, extremely gifted choreographers of the present time, all of them inventors of new, singular movement idioms.

The Second Detail

Choreography: William Forsythe
William Forsythe is a towering figure of contemporary global dance. Blending ballet and visual arts, and displaying both abstraction and forceful theatricality, his vision of choreography as an organisational practice has inspired him to produce numerous installations, films, as well as computer-based creations, incorporating the spoken word and experimental music. *The Second Detail* is simultaneously playful and rigorous, set to an aggressively percussive score by Forsythe's frequent collaborator, the Dutch composer Thom Willems. Created for the National Ballet of Canada in 1991, the choreography, characterised by the neo-classical symmetry of ensemble formations, is unceasingly challenging.

Handman

Choreography: Edward Clug
In 2016 Clug created for Nederlands Dans Theater 2 (NDT 2) the choreography Handman, for which in 2017 he received a nomination for the coveted Benois de la danse prize. Edward Clug, currently serving as the artistic director of the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor, gained international acclaim as a choreographer with *Radio and Juliet* in 2005. A sought-after artist, he has created works for the Nederlands Dans Theater, Ballett Zürich, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Stuttgarter Ballett, Latvian Ballet, Les Grand Ballet Canadiens, Wiener Staatsoper, West Australian Ballet, Companhia Nacional de Bailado in Lisbon, Aalto Ballet Essen, Ballett Augsburg, among others.

Eden / Eden

Choreography: Wayne McGregor
The award-winning British choreographer and stage director Wayne McGregor is internationally renowned for trailblazing innovations in performance, integrating dance, film, visual arts, digital technologies and natural sciences. In *Eden / Eden*, he focuses on the impact of technology on the aesthetics of the environment and the human body alike. The work is set to Steve Reich's spoken libretto/music score for the third act of his video opera *Three Tales*, devised by Reich and his wife, the filmmaker Beryl Korot.

Premiere: 6 May 2021 at the State Opera

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Kylián – Bridges of Time

Bella Figura | Gods and Dogs | Petite Mort | Six Dances (Sechs Tänze)

Choreography: Jiří Kylián
Music: Lukas Foss, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi,
Alessandro Marcello, Antonio Vivaldi, Giuseppe Torelli /
Dirk Haubrich, Ludwig van Beethoven /
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Sheer beauty, aesthetic delight, perfect art.
The unique production *Kylián – Bridges of Time* features works by Jiří Kylián, the celebrated Czech choreographer, a true icon of global dance. It presents on stage the very essence of his personality, that which makes the audience hold their breath, quickens their pulse, brings tears to their eyes and compels us to ponder pure beauty and perfect art. The mixed bill includes four of Kylián's opuses – *Bella Figura, Gods and Dogs, Petite Mort* and *Six Dances*, all of them dance-theatre gems that adorn the National Theatre repertoire.

Dance does not only serve to express joy, sorrow and emotional states of mind, it can also be a prayer, a ritual, therapy or intellectual structure. In limitless ways, dance is capable of depicting the abstract and reality alike. And when done professionally, it is as though the dancer were saying: I am a work of art! (Jiří Kylián)

Onegin

Choreography: John Cranko
Music: Kurt-Heinz Stolze, based on P. I Tchaikovsky's works
Sets and costumes: Elisabeth Dalton
Lighting design and visual supervision: Steen Bjarke
Costume supervision: Diana Eckmann
Staged by: Jane Bourne, Filip Barankiewicz
Artistic supervision: Reid Anderson
Music preparation: Václav Zahradník
Conductor: Václav Zahradník / Sergey Poluektov
National Theatre Orchestra

Onegin is a true gem among narrative dramatic ballets, one of the major works of the globally celebrated choreographer John Cranko, who brought in it to perfection his extraordinary art of telling stories through dance. It is based on A. S. Pushkin's world-renowned novel in verse about the ill-fated love between Tatiana, a shy country girl, and Onegin, a world-weary aristocrat. The fateful encounter of a pure soul and a self-centred cynic, and their painful bypassing each other has engrossed readers and audiences for centuries. The production visually evokes the atmosphere of Pushkin's book, with the romantic impression being enhanced by the wonderful costumes, expressive acting and brilliant dance parts. Besides wonderful duets of the love-smitten Onegin and Tatiana, the ballet features impressive ensemble scenes. Cranko's *Onegin* is deemed to be a treasure of the global ballet legacy and has been included in the repertoire of leading theatres worldwide. Who would not want to immerse in Tatiana and Onegin's love and sorrow ...

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The Nutcracker – A Christmas Carol

Scenario: Youri Vàmos, based on Charles Dickens's and E. T. A. Hoffmann's stories
Choreography: Youri Vàmos
Staged by: Joyce Cuoco, Youri Vàmos, Alexey Afanasiev
Sets and costumes: Michael Scott
Lighting design: Klaus Gärditz
Conductor: Sergey Poluektov / Václav Zahradník
National Theatre Orchestra

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* is one of the staples of the classical ballet repertoire. Ever since its premiere in 1892, it has enjoyed enormous popularity and has been adapted into numerous versions. The Hungarian choreographer Youri Vàmos, the former artistic director of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf, drew inspiration from E. T. A. Hoffmann's fantasy tale *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* and Charles Dickens's story *A Christmas Carol*. Set in 19th-century London, the ballet presents a story depicting the magic of Christmas, which transforms the natures of people. The bewitching ballet enhances the holiday atmosphere, attracting children and adults alike.

La Fille mal gardée (The Wayward Daughter)

Music: John Lanchbery, based on Ferdinand Hérold's score
Choreography: Frederick Ashton
Staged by: Jane Elliott
Sets and costumes: Osbert Lancaster
Lighting design: Jean-Pierre Gasquet
Music prepared by: Václav Zahradník and Michal Klimeš
Conductor: Václav Zahradník / Sergey Poluektov
State Opera Orchestra

Some of the finest dancers worldwide have appeared in Sir Frederick Ashton's masterpiece, which has been staged at more than 35 theatres around the world, including the Paris Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet and National Ballet of Canada. It is based on a 1789 French ballet created by Jean Dauberval. John Lanchbery adapted and arranged the music from Ferdinand Hérold's 1828 score. Taking place in a pastoral setting inspired by Ashton's love for the Suffolk countryside, the cartoon-like set design, featuring maypoles and dancing hens, evokes a wonderful summer atmosphere full of sunshine. *La Fille mal gardée* is one of Ashton's most virtuoso choreographies, challenging for the dancers in the series of energetic pas de deux and solos that express the youthful

THE STATE OPERA

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Swan Lake

Choreography: John Cranko
Staged by: Birgit Deharde, Andria Hall, Filip Barankiewicz
Set design: Martin Černý
Costumes: Josef Jelínek
Lighting design: Pavel Dautovský
Projections and animations: Lunchmeat studio
Music preparation: Václav Zahradník
Conductor: Václav Zahradník / Sergey Poluektov
State Opera Orchestra

Will Prince Siegfried choose love, will he keep his oath to his beloved White Swan Princess? Or will he forget about Odette, opt for carrying out his royal duties and be enthralled by one of the beautiful foreign princesses? And what about the bewitching Black Swan/Odile and the evil sorcerer Rothbart, who cast a spell on Siegfried? Even though it would seem the story is about love, it is primarily the soul that is at stake. *Swan Lake* is a cornerstone, an iconic challenge, sheer beauty. One of the most feted classical ballets, set to Tchaikovsky's sublime music, it is a milestone on the path to perfect art. The Czech National Ballet is the very first large company to have been granted the approval to stage Cranko's *Swan Lake* beyond the Stuttgarter Ballett – what is more, with the original sets and costumes. The adaptation honours tradition, while at the same time bearing the traits of Cranko's dramatic talent and extraordinary sense for rendering the story's essence.
The National Theatre has been closely related to the ballet's history. The first to choreograph the music of *Swan Lake* in Russia, in 1877, was a Czech native, Václav Reisinger (the first director of the Czech National Ballet). The Czech choreographer Augustin Berger was extremely honoured when, after seeing his staging of Act 2 of *Swan Lake* in Prague in 1888, Tchaikovsky said that he had experienced "a moment of absolute happiness". The current production is the immortal ballet's 13th staging at the National Theatre in Prague.

Kafka: The Trial

Choreography: Mauro Bigonzetti

Music: Antonio Bononcini, Dietrich Buxtehude, Henryk Górecki, Carlo Gesualdo, Tarquinio Merula, Claudio Monteverdi, Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky

Sets and lighting design: Carlo Cerri

Costumes: Mauro Bigonzetti

Video projections: Carlo Cerri, OOPStudio

In the dark of sleep, a door opens and a woman enters dressed in sheets of paper, symbolising the fate and the case that will rage against the protagonist …

Thus is the incipit of *Der Prozess (The Trial)*, a ballet by the distinguished Italian choreographer Mauro Bigonzetti, who has been loosely inspired by Franz Kafka's eponymous 1914 literary masterpiece. The modern production, abounding in dramatic twists and turns, reproduces the story of Josef K., who wakes up on his 30th birthday and finds beside his bed three police agents who want to arrest him for reasons that he doesn't understand. The disoriented and incredulous protagonist is carried into a judicial machinery that drags him into a whirl of weird events. The Czech National Ballet's repertoire title *The Trial* is inspired by a Kafka novel that is an indisputable facet of the Prague milieu.

THE ESTATES THEATRE

Leonce & Lena

Choreography: Christian Spuck
Music: Léo Delibes, Martin Donner, Amilcare Ponchielli,
Alfred Schnittke, Johann Strauss II, Johann Strauss I,
Josef Strauss, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, Hank Cochran,
Eartha Kitt, The Mamas and the Papas
Music prepared by: David Švec
Sets and costumes: Emma Ryott
Assistant designer: Chris Dudgeon
Lighting design: Martin Gebhardt
Conductor: David Švec / Valentina Shuklina
National Theatre Orchestra

The renowned German choreographer Christian Spuck's 2008 ballet *Leonce & Lena*, created for the Aalto Theater in Essen, is based on Georg Büchner's 1836 play. A satire veiled in humour tells the story of Leonce, Prince of Popo, a melancholic, dreamy young man, and Lena, the beautiful Princess of Pipi, who had their political marriage arranged upon their birth. They revolt against the decision made by their fathers. On the eve of their planned wedding, Leonce and Lena flee to Italy, where they happen to meet in an inn and fall in love with each other. Following their return to the Kingdom of Popo, their identities are revealed, yet Leonce and Lena no longer perceive their marriage as being forced upon them by their parents, but as a result of the intervention of providence. They ultimately accept their predetermined roles as King and Queen.

Solo for the Two of Us

Music: Jaromír Nohavica, Beata Bocek

Subject, choreography and stage direction: Petr Zuska

Sets: Jan Dušek

Costumes: Pavel Knolle

The title of Petr Zuska's production, *Solo for the Two of Us,* refers to several levels at once. It may mean a solo for a relationship between a man and a woman. Or a solo for a human being and his/her demon concealed somewhere within. A solo for an adult and the little child he/she once was and which he/she has lost en route somewhere. And it is also a solo for Jaromír Nohavica and Beata Bocek, two fabulous contemporary musicians and performing poets, whose individual creations have naturally positioned them on the borderline between the Polish and Czech identity and psyche.



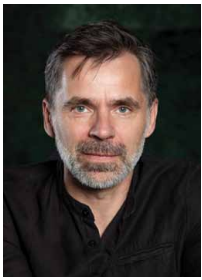
SWAN LAKE – Alina Nanu
photo: S. Gherciu



THE GARDEN
photo: H. Smejkalová

laterna magika



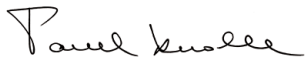


Dear audience, Laterna magika fans,

The 2020/21 season will kick off with the premiere of *Bon Appétit!* As you probably know, we planned to present the new project in April, yet had to postpone it due to the coronavirus crisis. In line with a new plan, we will open the new season with the production's preview on 21 August. The premiere performances of *Bon Appétit!* are scheduled to take place on 10 and 11 September.
In the production *Bon Appétit!*, Laterna magika joined forces with the Czech National Ballet, showcasing a synthesis of artistic expressions and the two companies alike, with the dancers forming a single small "ensemble". The project was led by the choreographer Jan Kodet, who together with SKUTR (a tandem of the stage directors Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský), the set designer Jakub Kopecký, the composer Ivan Acher and the costume creator Simona Rybáková refined a genuine dance feast for all the senses.
In September, we will also pay a belated tribute to Josef Svoboda, a world-famous set designer and one of the founders of Laterna magika, born in May 1920. Audio-visual installations by the young scenographer Martin Ondruš recalling Svoboda's artistry will be displayed at the New Stage's videogallery.
Laterna magika will bid goodbye to *Cocktail 012 – The Best of.* On 31 October and 1 November, you will have the last opportunity to enjoy this exclusive selection of popular numbers from our past shows, including the famous *Breakneck Ride* from 1963, one of the emblematic creations that was presented even on Ed Sullivan show back in the 60s. The mixed bill encompasses different dance genres from classical ballet to contemporary dance and is completely language barrier free.
During the course of the current season, we will gather strength for further work. Even though we have bidden farewell to *The Little Prince*, the Laterna magika repertoire continues to include titles for the whole family. *The Garden* evokes memories of childhood and the excitement adults have often forgotten. Our dancers rediscover the garden they left a long time ago, yet it is worth trying out what it was like when the world was one great adventure.

For over 43 years, our repertoire has been adorned by Evald Schorm's *Wonderful Circus*, an immortal production applying the original Laterna magika principles. Entertaining for children and perhaps moving for adults, it has enthralled three generations of theatre-goers.
Intended for the youngest viewers is Maria Procházková's *As Far as I See*, showing that children's joy and imagination cannot be reduced and restrained. What is more, we offer performances with a projection with sign language upon request.
We will continue to perform *Human Locomotion*, a production created by the SKUTR directors' tandem and the choreographer Jan Kodet. The retelling of the dramatic fate of the inventor Eadweard Muybridge is accompanied by projections made up of his own photographs, and his widely renowned series of people and animals in motion.
The visually pure and impressive *Cube* explores the stage space and its feasibilities, playing with and inciting the imagination of the audience, who cannot tell whether they see illusion or reality. After some of the performances, you will have the opportunity to take part in discussions with the production's creators.
Selected performances of the shows *As Far as I See* and *Wonderful Circus* will be followed by an accompanying programme, titled *Meet Laterna*, within which the audience are invited to the stage in order to try out the Laterna magika magic themselves.
A number of productions come with creative workshops, led by theatre specialists. During the season, you will also be able to meet artists at a variety of events the National Theatre organises or participates in, such as the Golden Prague festival, the International Dance Day and other projects. Moreover, Laterna magika gives dance lessons for the public – the New Stage Studio / People in Motion. Professional dancers can attend training lessons with our company members.

We look forward to seeing you, either in the auditorium, on the stage or in the ballet studio!



Pavel Knolle
Head of the Artistic Ensemble of Laterna magika

PREMIERE

Bon Appétit!

Stage direction: SKUTR (Martin Kukučka, Lukáš Trpišovský)
Choreography: Jan Kodet
Music: Ivan Acher
Sets: Jakub Kopecký
Projections: Erik Bartoš and Jakub Kopecký
Costumes: Simona Rybáková

Life is like a table on which thousands of bowls are positioned. Each of the bowls contains something different: love, colour, taste, aroma. Of whom? A partner? A place? A city? A path? Life is passion. Passion for the table, for the bowls.
And it is only up to you to decide for which you will reach.
The restaurant called the World is just opening for you!
A new dance-theatre production, created by the choreographer Jan Kodet, in collaboration with the SKUTR directors' tandem and the composer Ivan Acher, with Laterna magika and the Czech National Ballet dancers. Bon appétit!

The production has been created in collaboration between Laterna magika and the Czech National Ballet.

Premiere performances: 10 and 11 September 2020 at the New Stage

THE NEW STAGE

As Far as I See

Script, animation and stage direction: Maria Procházková
Music: Marek Doubrava
Sets: Jan Novotný
Costumes: Simona Rybáková
Choreography: Zdeněk Prokeš
Motion supervision: Barbora Mandys Pauerová
Camera: Martin Štěpánek
Editing: Marek Opatrný
Sound: Jan Čeněk

The production created by the scriptwriter, stage and film director and animator Maria Procházková is intended for the whole family. The youngest spectators can immerse in the universe of imagination and fantasy of the little girl Agátka, her everyday adventures. Her visions are brought to life by means of playful projections, as well as dance mime numbers, supplemented by elements of black light theatre. The production also pays tribute to the Czech animated film legacy. While the children attending the show easily identify themselves with the lead character of the little Agátka, their parents can look forward to the superlative acting of Linda Rybová and Tomáš Měcháček.

Cocktail 012 – The Best of

Subject and dramaturgy: Václav Janeček and Zdeněk Prokeš
Camera and editing: Jan Loukota
Music and sound: Stanislav Abrahám
Sets and costumes: Miloslav Heřmánek
Editing and post-production: Matěj Hájek

The Best of Laterna magika! Within a single evening, the production features scenes from the company's past and present repertoire pieces, bringing to bear the large scale of themes and means of expression it has applied. Some of the reconstructed numbers from popular shows are truly unique, such as the *The Breakneck Ride* from the 1963 *Variations* programme, yet we also recall newer repertoire works, including the highly acclaimed mixed dance bill *Riddles*. The production also encompasses extracts from the company's recent pieces, which may inspire the audience to attend brand new performances linking up to their poetics. The second part of the evening consists of *Code 58.08*, a short multimedia show created by young artists. Two dancers-guides take the audience on an excursion to places connected with the history of Laterna magika, of the backstage premises and futuristic landscapes.

THE NEW STAGE

Cube

A performance within the Laterna LAB project

Stage direction, sets and costumes: Pavel Knolle
Scenario: Pavel Knolle, Štěpán Pechar and David Stránský
Choreography: Štěpán Pechar and David Stránský
Music: Jan Šikl
Dramaturgy: Jan Tošovský
Video projection and mapping: Jan Hladil and František Pecháček
Assistant choreographer: Zuzana Herényiová
Camera and editing: Marek Brožek

The show *Cube* is part of the successful *Laterna LAB* project, primarily inspired by original Laterna magika productions, blending together film images and live performance. It makes use of the current video mapping from several projectors placed in different spots. The visual composition draws upon the motif of the "cube", in all kinds of possible variants that surround us: houses, urban structures, building materials, pavements, dice, ice and sugar cubes ... Owing to its structure and the potentialities provided by 3D visualisation, the Rubik's Cube will represent one of the main motifs. By means of a very simple basic scenography and detailed, accurately focused projection, it is possible to markedly change its perspective, movement and surface, thus affecting the overall space, dynamism and time. A modern and precise choreography enhances the film illusion and, vice versa, the film illusion supports the performer's movement on the stage.

Laterna magika's *Cube* received the prize for the best production at the BABEL FAST theatre festival in Romania in 2019. Jan Hladil and František Pecháček were awarded a commendation for their projections and video mapping in *Cube* at the BALLET 2019 contemporary dance creation competition.

Human Locomotion

Stage direction: SKUTR (Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský)

Choreography: Jan Kodet

Sets and costumes: Jakub Kopecký

Music: Petr Kaláb

Projections: Lunchmeat studio and Jakub Kopecký

The multimedia production *Human Locomotion,* combining movement theatre, contemporary dance and video projection, depicts episodes from the life of the famous British photographer and inventor Eadweard Muybridge, whose pioneering work in photographic studies of motion and early work in motion-picture projection played a significant role in the development of visual technology. The production pays tribute to a man whose work has had a profound impact on the development and current form of visual media. Against the backdrop of his famous series of studies of human and animal locomotion, it also portrays Muybridge's turbulent personal life. The show features Laterna magika dancers and three superb actors, portraying Muybridge, his wife Flora and Major Larkyns, who fell victim to Muybridge's jealousy:
Marek Daniel, Zuzana Stavná / Hana Vagnerová
and Jakub Gottwald / Jan Kodet / Alexandr Sadirov.

THE NEW STAGE

The Garden

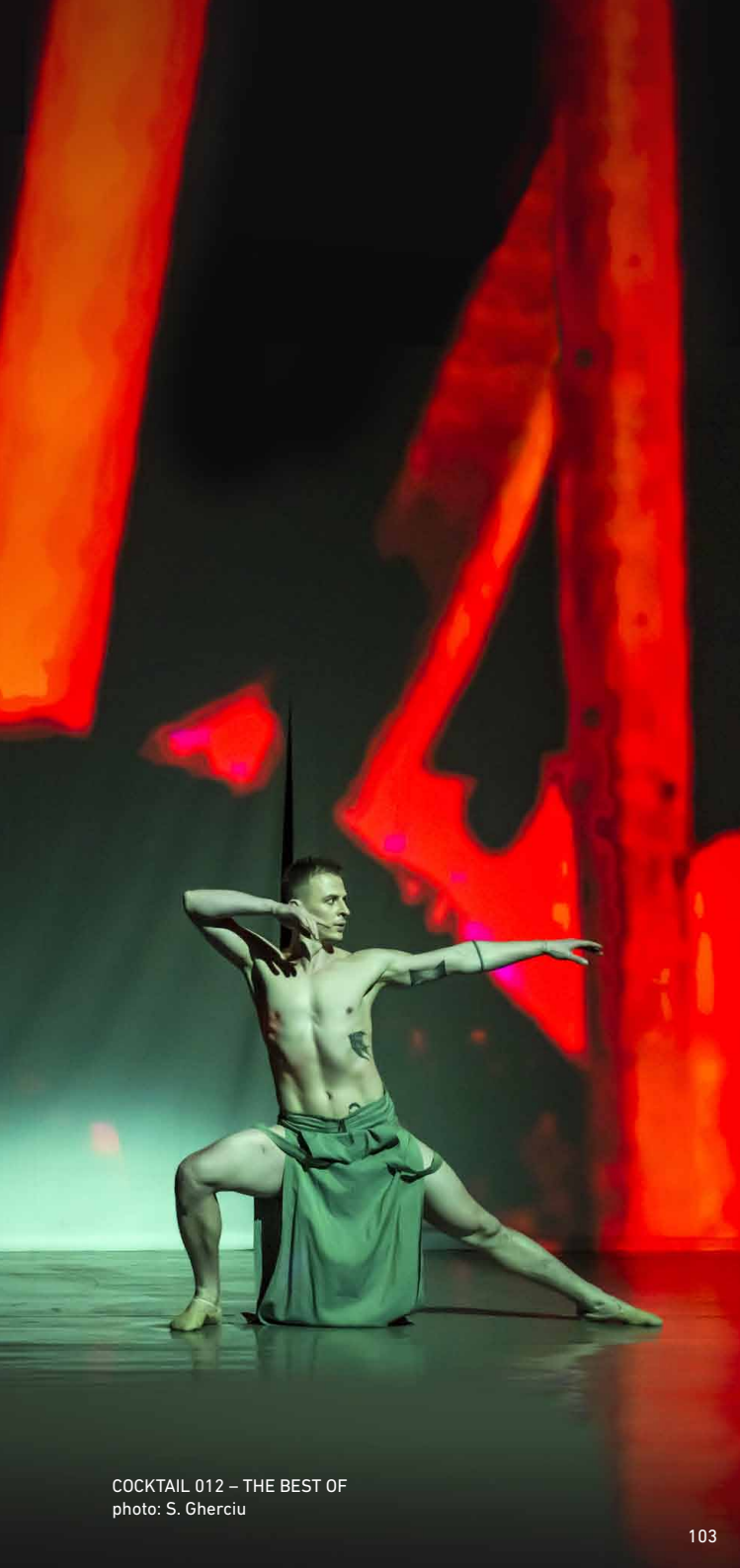
Script: Pavel Knolle, David Stránský, Štěpán Pechar and Lukáš Trpišovský
Stage direction: Pavel Knolle
Costumes: Jan Brejcha, Pavel Knolle, Mikoláš Zika
Choreography: David Stránský and Štěpán Pechar
Dramaturgy: Lukáš Trpišovský
Music: Jan Šikl
Sets: Jan Brejcha, Mikoláš Zika
Animations and projections: Erik Bartoš
Film and animation designer: Tereza Bartůňková
Lighting design: Jan Dörner

At the end of the street, behind a high wall, beyond a rusty gate. Just a few steps to make. A blackthorn shrub. Wild roses. Tall grass. A rusty stove. The smell of rain. Ants. A gnome. A buried bird. A magnifying glass for kindling a fire. A spleeny tomcat. A tent with a hand torch, a biscuit and car lights on the tarp. A huge bathtub, full of water. Fireflies, pyjamas and a jar of jam. A message buried in the ground. An old plum tree, planted by the grandma. A scythe and bare feet. Wind in the eyes and glowing stones. Grass in a palm and a high whistle. The taste of iron of the tongue and … your memories.
There, at the end of the street, behind a high wall and a rusty gate is your garden!
An original project for the whole family marking the anniversary of the foundation of Laterna magika, a performance inspired by Jiří Trnka's book and the staging team members and dancers' reminiscences of the gardens of their childhoods.

Wonderful Circus

Stage direction: Evald Schorm, Jan Švankmajer and Jiří Srnec
Sets: Josef Svoboda
Costumes and masks: Zdenek Seydl
Camera: Emil Sirotek
Music: Oldřich František Korte, Vlastimil Hála, Jaroslav Krček, Jiří Srnec
Choreography: Karel Vrtiška, Jiří Hrabal, Vlastimil Jílek, Josef Koníček and František Pokorný
Edit: Alois Fišárek
Sound composition: Ivo Špalj

And the Seducer created Venus: join two clowns, who will guide you on a journey seeking a picture of ungraspable beauty. *Wonderful Circus,* a popular family spectacle, is Laterna magika's most frequently staged production, and the oldest theatre show in Central Europe (premiered in 1977, more than 6,400 performances to date). It is also the most typical example of Laterna magika's principles, a work of an outstanding creative team, owing to whom it has become a living legend of Czech theatre-making and has enthralled generations of spectators and artists alike. The stage is transformed into a circus big-top, as well as an open landscape, and the audience is drawn into the course of events on stage by a panoramic picture and popular tricks blending together appearance and reality. The performance has a tinge of poeticism and nostalgia, with the story coupling humour and melancholy, thus appealing both to children and adults.



COCKTAIL 012 – THE BEST OF
photo: S. Gherciu



Photo: J. Jabůrková



information

Ticket sales
Tickets for Opera, Drama, Ballet and Laterna magika performances can be purchased up to six months in advance. Ticket sales always begin on the first calendar day of the month, at 9 am, with the exception of January, when the sales start on 2 January.

Tickets can be purchased at the National Theatre box offices, within the ColosseumTicket sales network and online on the National Theatre website.
You can pay in cash, via card online, bank credit transfer, cash on delivery and gift vouchers. Payment in foreign currencies is not possible.

We reserve the right permanently or temporarily not to allow making reservations for selected productions or to offer tickets for selected performances solely in the direct sale mode.

Information and Customer care department
Mon–Sun 10am–6pm, info@national-theatre.cz,
tel. +420 224 901 448.

Box offices
Main National Theatre box office (in the New Stage foyer), Národní 4, Prague 1, Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat–Sun 10am–6pm
Estates Theatre, Železná 24, Prague 1, Mon–Sun 10am–6pm
State Opera, Legerova 75, Prague 1, Mon–Sun 10am–6pm

On New Stage performance days, the main National Theatre box office is open until the beginning of the final performance. The other evening box offices – in the theatre foyers – are open 45 minutes prior to performances. Operation of the box offices, e-shop, ticket reservation department and information and tickets sale department is limited during the theatre holidays in July and August. You are recommended to check their operation hours on our website. Group orders can be sent through purchase order forms to www.narodni-divadlo.cz or by email, usually no later than 2 weeks prior to the day of the respective performance.

Group orders
Orders of 10+ tickets, invoicing, corporate customers
Ostrovní 1, 112 30, Praha 1, sales@national-theatre.cz,
Tel. +420 224 901 319.

Tickets and sales information

Official authorised dealers and warning against illegal dealers
Tickets for National Theatre performances are on offer throughout the Czech Republic within the ColosseumTicket and other sales networks (listed at www.narodni-divadlo.cz). Tickets offered by other than the authorised dealers are sometimes highly overpriced, and they can also be fakes or invalid copies. Should a person present an invalid ticket, he or she will not be allowed to enter the auditorium.

Ticket prices
Prices of tickets significantly differ, depending on the auditorium seats. The National Theatre applies dynamic price setting, whereby the price of tickets for performances in high demand may increase with the impending date of the respective performances.

Gift vouchers
The National Theatre offers gift vouchers in the value of CZK 300, 500, 1,000 and 1,500. A voucher is valid one year from the date of its purchase and can be used for all performances and goods offered at the box office and on the website of the National Theater. Gift vouchers can be purchased and used at all the National Theatre box offices, or online. Once expired, the validity of gift vouchers cannot be renewed nor prolonged.

Subscription and ticket packages
Subscription includes groups of performances on specific dates set up into wholes according to the genre, focus and character of performances, sold in advance exclusively to subscribers. The National Theatre also affords other advantages to subscribers – up to 40% discount on tickets, 30% discounts for Czech Philharmonic Orchestra concerts, transfer of seats into the next season, etc. Unlike in the case of standard subscription, holders of ticket packages can select specific performance dates within the respective package.

predplatne@narodni-divadlo.cz,
+420 224 901 487 (Mon–Sun 10am–6pm)

On weekend days, you can contact the National Theatre information line:
info@national-theatre.cz, +420 224 901 448
(Mon–Sun 10am–6pm)

Tickets and sales information

Basic ticket price discounts

Discounts cannot be combined with each other or with the advantages provided to subscribers and purchasers of ticket packages, and cannot be applied to standing room and seats with reduced visibility. Discounts do not apply to private events, performances by guest companies and performances with a special price.

Discount can be applied when purchasing tickets at the National Theatre box offices. When purchasing tickets online, you can only apply the discounts that can be selected in the basket via the "Select discount" function.

The theatre staff are entitled to ask the visitors to present a document attesting to their entitlement to a discount prior to entering the auditorium. In the case that the discount is not justified, the theatre-goer will be asked to pay the difference between the discounted and the full price of the ticket, otherwise he/she will not be allowed to enter the theatre. Tickets are checked electronically by scanning their barcodes.

A 50% discount for senior citizens aged 65+ on allocated seats for all National Theatre performances. The discount applies to the following seats: on the first and second galleries at the National Theatre historical building and at the Estates Theatre; on the second balcony, rows 4–7, and the second balcony, side seats, at the State Opera; the seats on the right and left sides at the New Stage, and the whole auditorium at the New Stage for (Drama) performances in whose case the auditorium is reduced. Two tickets can be purchased against one card (a senior citizen and his/her attendant).

A 50% discount for persons with cards attesting to special health impairments (1 ticket) and persons with special health impairments requiring an attendant (2 tickets).

50% discount for persons of up to 26 years of age and for ITIC holders on tickets for the first and second galleries at the National Theatre and the Estates Theatre, for the second balcony, rows 4–7, and the second balcony, side seats, at the State Opera, for the seats at the New Stage on the right and left sides of the auditorium for Laterna magika, Ballet and Opera performances, and the whole auditorium at the New Stage for Drama performances. One ticket can be purchased against one card.

Tickets and sales information

A 30% discount on morning and afternoon performances for children of up to 12 years of age.

A 30% discount on National Theatre repertoire performances for holders of Czech Philharmonic Orchestra subscription cards (only applicable to tickets purchased at the box offices against presenting valid subscription cards); no more than 2 discounted tickets can be bought against one subscription card.

A special price for secondary arts school and university students for selected seats. These tickets cannot be reserved and may only be purchased 30 minutes prior to performances.

Special discounts on selected performances during the season (for senior citizens, students, schools, members of loyalty clubs, on special occasions, etc.), which are anounced every 25th day of the month.

Further information
More detailed information about the discounts and the terms and conditions for sales of tickets, gift vouchers, subscription cards, ticket packages and goods, and about the rules of personal data processing and about National Theatre events, including the ND+ programme, is available at **www.narodni-divadlo.cz.**

The Benefactor's Club

The Benefactor's Club was founded in 2009 and since then, it annually brings together more than 100 donors who support the National Theater with annual donations starting from CZK 2,500. For the kind support, National theatre prepares a unique program and an exceptional position in the auditoriums of the National Theatre for the benefactors.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE
Season 2020/21

Revised version, June 2020

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