

Leoš Janáček: **KATYA KABANOVA**



30 October 2026, 7 p.m.

31 October 2026, 5 p.m.

→ Janáček Theatre

**An opera in three acts, libretto
by the composer Leoš Janáček
based on the drama The Storm
by Alexander Ostrovsky.**

The licence is owned by the Opera Vlaanderen, Antwerp/Gent.

The performance lasts 2 hours and 15 minutes,
including one interval (25 minutes).

PRODUCTION TEAM

Conductor – **Ondrej Olos**

Director – **Robert Carsen**

Set and costume design – **Patrick Kinmonth**

Light design – **Robert Carsen, Peter van Praet**

Choreography – **Philippe Giraudeau**

Choirmaster – **Pavel Koňárek**

ROLES AND CAST

Katya – **Kateřina Kněžíková**

Boris – **Peter Berger**

Kabanicha – **Jana Hrochová**

Varvara – **Václava Krejčí Housková**

Dikoy – **Jan Šťáva**

Tikhon – **Aleš Briscein**

Kudryash – **Vít Nosek**

Kuligin – **Tadeáš Hoza**

Glasha – **Jitka Klečanská**

Feklusha – **Hana Kopřivová**

A Woman – **Hana Mikulková**

The choir and orchestra of National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera, dancers.

SYNOPSIS

Act I

A young teacher, Kudryash, admires the wide landscape and the River Volga. The calm afternoon is disrupted by an angry outburst from the merchant Dikoy at his nephew Boris. Kudryash wonders why Boris continues to endure his uncle's brutality. Boris admits that he is unhappy in Kalinov, but he has no choice: if he wants to secure his grandmother's inheritance for himself and his sister, he must, according to her will, live with his uncle and bear all his mistreatment until he and his sister reach maturity. His misery is deepened by his hopeless love for a married woman – Katya Kabanova. Katya, too, is unhappy in her marriage. Raised in a loving family, she now has a weak, alcoholic husband and a despotic mother-in-law, Kabanicha, who rules the household mercilessly and hates Katya out of jealousy for Tikhon's love. Kabanicha orders her son to depart immediately for the market in Kazan, reproaching him for his lack of filial devotion and obedience.

That evening, at the Kabanovs' house, Katya and Varvara are embroidering. Katya recalls the happy days of her youth and confesses that she has secretly fallen in love. The carefree Varvara offers to act as a go-between. Tikhon arrives to bid farewell to his wife. Katya begs him to take her with him, or at least to bind her with an oath. Tikhon does not understand and refuses. Kabanicha supervises their parting and forces Tikhon to humiliate Katya with undignified admonitions.

Act II

Kabanicha scolds Katya for not showing enough sorrow over Tikhon's departure. Varvara brings a key to the garden gate, stolen from Kabanicha, to use for her meetings with Kudryash. She persuades Katya to take it as well. A drunken Dikoy arrives to plead for Kabanicha's favour.

Varvara meets Kudryash in the ravine behind the Kabanovs' garden. At Varvara's invitation, Boris also arrives. Katya struggles against her desire for Boris, but at last she falls into his arms.

Act III

A violent storm breaks over the town. People seek shelter in a ruined, burnt-out monastery. Kudryash takes the opportunity to suggest to Dikoy that the town should install lightning conductors, but Dikoy sees the storm as a sign of God's wrath and dismisses Kudryash's idea with insults. Varvara seeks out Boris, telling him that ever since Tikhon's return, Katya has been behaving like someone out of her mind. The Kabanov family also seeks refuge in the ruins. Terrified by the storm, Katya publicly confesses her adultery with Boris. Kabanicha triumphs. Tikhon wants to forgive Katya, but she flees.

Glasha and Tikhon search in vain for Katya. Varvara is also determined to leave the family home and agrees to elope to Moscow with Kudryash. Katya goes to the banks of the Volga having made up her mind that the only freedom from her unbearable life is death, but wishes to say farewell to Boris. He arrives with the news that his uncle has sent him to run his business in Siberia, and after his departure Katya throws herself into the depths of the Volga.

When at the beginning of 1919 **Leoš Janáček** began to consider Ostrovsky's drama *The Storm* as possible subject matter for his new opera, he was approaching his sixtieth birthday. Over the previous three years his life had changed considerably; in 1916 he had finally managed to stage *Jenůfa* at the Prague National Theatre twelve years after its Brno premiere, and two years later it was performed in Vienna, which meant a decisive step in the introduction of the composer's work abroad. In the summer of 1917 in Luhačovice he met Kamila Stössl (1891–1935), who became his dear friend and inspiration for his later work. These events were to return joy and self-belief to Janáček, and also led to a period of creative activity for Janáček, the likes of which had never before been seen.

Janáček created the libretto himself using the Czech translation of *The Storm*. He probably did this because of his recent bad experiences with the librettist of the opera *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* and his own amendments to the text of *Jenůfa*. He made significant changes to the original – he reduced the number of characters from five to three, left out the majority of the text, which described the political and moral marasmus in Russian society in the mid-19th century, and aimed his attention more at the chamber drama of the main heroine. Janáček gleefully and intensively worked on the composition of the opera as he had done with the libretto – the entire opera was written in the second half of 1920 and, after revisions had been made, was ready in August 1921. The title of the opera was the result of some deep thought on the part of Janáček. In a letter to the translator Vincenc Červinka in March 1921 he wrote: "*I have problems with the name. There are already several operas entitled 'The Storm', and this name is therefore not to be recommended. Neither is it a natural pointer to the main theme of the plot... The psychologically interesting tale is carried by Katerina. The director Schmoranz reminded me that the name Katerina could*

be interpreted as Catherine II. He suggested Katya. Both Boris and Tikhon call her by this name and I would therefore lean towards this title. What is your opinion?" In his reply on 3 April Červinka agreed with the name, but recommended that he add her surname so that it would be clear that the work is based on a theme by Ostrovsky, and this is how the name *Katya Kabanova* arose. Janáček chose Brno's National Theatre for the first performance and the world premiere. He initially considered Prague's National Theatre, but his fresh and unpleasant experiences with the first performances of *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček* (the only one of Janáček's operas to have been premiered in Prague) led him to change his mind. The premiere of the opera, produced by the head of opera, the conductor František Neumann, was set for 23 November 1923 at the Na hradbách theatre. It met with huge acclaim, which can be seen in the large number of enthusiastic reviews and references in both the Brno and Prague newspapers. One year later *Katya Kabanova* was performed at the Prague National Theatre directed by Otakar Ostrčil, followed by other domestic performances (Bratislava 1923, Ostrava 1924, Plzeň 1926). The opera soon became known abroad (Cologne 1922, Berlin 1926).

When *Katya Kabanova* was performed at the Prague National Theatre it became clear that the difficulty of achieving fluid scene changes was an issue. Janáček was also aware of the fact that the pauses between two scenes in the first and second acts affected the powerfulness of the story. He attempted to address this problem with a request to Universal Edition, which published the opera, to add a note in the piano arrangement and score stating that each scene should follow the other without a break. In Czech theatres Janáček himself watched and made sure that his wish was fulfilled. In the end he decided to solve the problem by changing the score by adding short interludes which allowed a quick break without disturbing the flow of the music and therefore the flow between each scene. Janáček probably composed the interludes in 1927, as per his letter to Kamila Stössl on 24 October 1927: "...I am now tidying up *Katya Kabanova* in two places; the workers cannot get the scene changes done quickly enough, they need more music –

I have now completed it..." Shortly afterwards, Universal Edition sent his changes to Vienna, which promised that the interludes would be included in the score. *Katya Kabanova*, with its new interludes, was performed for the first time at the German Landtheater in Prague, and the premiere took place on 21 January 1928 to Janáček's complete satisfaction. He expressed his feelings in a letter to his wife Zdeňka on 26 January 1928: "...You cannot imagine how excellently they performed it. They put everything into two acts..." Janáček was very taken by the idea of joining Acts I and II and immediately instructed Universal Edition to inform all theatres in turn that it was his wish that Acts I and II be performed as a whole. During his lifetime Janáček was able to see *Katya Kabanova* with the new interludes only once more in the spring of 1928, when a production was put on to celebrate the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Brno. It is unknown as to whether Janáček was pleased by the performance, but it is certain that he was greatly pained by the lack of interest from the public. He wrote the following in his diary: "*Katya Kab. 'Gala perf. On the opening of the exhibition' No committee members nor ministers. Hall half empty.*" Janáček was vexed by the gala concert and performance of *Jenůfa* on the following day, when he wrote "'Gala Concert' Sinfonietta. 56 in audience! Nobody from exhib. committee, nobody from the collective. Evening *Jenůfa* 'gala'– nobody in boxes, not even org. committee." This was the last time that Janáček heard his work performed in Brno, for not long afterwards he left for Luhačovice and then Hukvaldy, where he died suddenly. And what became of the interludes? They were cast aside at the next performance in Brno in 1933, when they were removed by the Director of Opera, the conductor Milan Sachs. They were brought back to life again by the conductor Sir Charles Mackerras, who placed them once more in the newly-published version of *Katya Kabanova*.

Ondrej Olos

CONDUCTOR

Ondrej Olos studied conducting at Žilina Conservatory with Milan Seidl and at Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) in the class of doc. Emil Skoták. In 2006, he received the Leoš Janáček Award for staging a chamber version of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the JAMU Chamber Opera. He staged Janáček's *Jenůfa* in the original version from 1904 as part of the Janáček Festival Brno 2008. He currently works at National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera and the Slovak National Theatre, where he has conducted such works as Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos* and *The Sicilian Vespers*, Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Šárka*, *Jenůfa* and *The Makropulos Affair*, Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il tabarro*, *Turandot* and *Tosca*, Nedbal's *Polish Blood*, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La scala di seta*, Strauss's *Salome*, Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* and *L'elisir d'amore* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*. As a conductor, he has also worked with the Greek National Opera in Athens (*The Cunning Little Vixen*, 2015; *The Makropulos Affair*, 2018; *La bohème*, 2023), Den Jyske Opera Aarhus (*Katya Kabanova*, 2013), Opéra de Rennes, Opéra de Limoges and Opéra de Reims (*Jenůfa*, 2011), the National Theatre in Prague (Mozart's Birthday Concert, Gala Concert to mark the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia, *Rusalka*), the J. K. Tyl Theatre (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and the National Theatre in Košice (*Gianni Schicchi*, *Il tabarro*, *Dialogues des Carmélites* and *Samson et Dalila*). He regularly collaborates with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Košice Philharmonic, the State Chamber Orchestra in Žilina, the Prague Chamber Philharmonic, the Brno Philharmonic,

the Moravian Philharmonic in Olomouc, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic in Zlín, the Hradec Králové Philharmonic and others. He is also a sought-after pianist and chamber musician.

Robert Carsen

DIRECTOR

Robert Carsen, director, designer and lighting designer, was born in Canada and studied acting in Toronto and the UK. His directing work has given rise to a number of acclaimed productions around the world, including *Jedermann* and *La Clemenza di Tito* at the 2024 Salzburg Festival, *Peter Grimes*, *Giulio Cesare*, *La fanciulla del West*, *CO2*, *Don Giovanni*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (La Scala), *Der Rosenkavalier* (ROH, Salzburg), *I Pagliacci/Cavalleria rusticana* (Amsterdam), *Idomeneo* (Madrid, Rome, Copenhagen), *Die Tote Stadt* (Komische Oper Berlin), *Die Zauberflöte*, *Elektra*, *Capriccio*, *Les Boréades*, *Rusalka*, *Alcina*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Lohengrin*, *Nabucco*, *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*, *Manon Lescaut* (Opéra national de Paris), *Arabella*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *The Queen of Spades* (Zurich), *Les fêtes vénitiennes*, *Platée* (Opera Comique), *Singin' in the Rain*, *My Fair Lady*, *Candide* (Théâtre du Chatelet), *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *From the House of the Dead*, *Katya Kabanova*, *The Makropulos Affair*, *Jenůfa* (Opéra National du Rhin), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Rigoletto*, *Semele*, *Orlando* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence), *Oceane*, *L'amour des Trois Oranges*, *Macbeth* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), *Falstaff* (MET, La Scala, ROH), *Wozzeck*, *Agrippina*, *Platée*, *The Turn of the Screw* (Theater an der Wien), *Rinaldo*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Glyndebourne), *Richard III* (Venice, Antwerp, Geneva, Düsseldorf, Strasbourg), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Munich, Berlin, Copenhagen), *Armide* (Paris), *Dialogues des Carmélites* (ROH, La Scala, Madrid, Amsterdam, Vienna, Toronto, Cologne, Antwerp, Theatre an der Wien, Chicago, Nice), *Tannhäuser* (Paris, Tokyo, Barcelona), *Fidelio*, *Carmen* (Amsterdam), *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Cologne, La Fenice, Shanghai, Madrid and Barcelona), *Othello*, *Falstaff* and *Macbeth* (Cologne), *La traviata* (the reopening of Teatro La Fenice), *Elektra* (Valencia, Florence, Tokyo, Paris), *Eugene Onegin* (MET, San Francisco, Geneva, Toronto, Washington), *Il trovatore* (Bregenz Festival), *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, ROH,

Madrid, Toronto), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Zurich, Munich), *Mitridate* (Brussels, Vienna), *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Chicago, Toronto, Paris, Rome, Valencia), and *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (Semper Oper). The dramas he has directed include *Oedipus Rex* for the Greek Theatre in Siracuse, *The Tempest* (Comédie-Française), *Mother Courage* (Piccolo Teatro Milan), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (New York) and *The Beautiful Game* (West End). Robert Carsen was also the director and designer of the exhibition on the life of Marie Antoinette and the Bohèmes exhibition at the Grand Palais. He designed an exhibition on the life and work of Charles Garnier for the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts and the exhibitions *L'impressionnisme et la mode* and *Splendeurs et misères* for the Musée d'Orsay. His productions of *Katya Kabanova*, *The Makropulos Affair* and *Destiny* were also staged at the Janáček Theatre. *Destiny* was Robert Carsen's first new production in the Czech Republic.

Patrick Kinmonth

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Patrick Kinmonth is an internationally acclaimed director and set and costume designer for opera, photography and dance. Kinmonth made his opera directing debut in 2008 with a lauded staging of *Madama Butterfly* for the Cologne Opera. Since then, he has directed and designed numerous productions, including *Samson et Dalila* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto* at Theater Augsburg, *Die Gezeichneten*, voted Best Opera Production of the season at the Cologne Opera, *Daphne* in Toulouse, *Solaris* at the Cologne Opera and Gassmann's *L'opera seria* at La Monnaie, Brussels. As a designer, Kinmonth's set and costumes for Robert Carsen's *La traviata* graced the re-opening of Teatro La Fenice, Venice in 2004 and now traditionally open the season. His designs for Wagner's *Ring* were created for Cologne Opera and were then taken to Venice and Shanghai. The production ran at Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona from 2013 to 2016. Further productions featuring Carsen's work include *Semele* and *Die Zauberflöte* in Vienna, London, Aix-en-Provence, Antwerp, Lyon and Zurich, and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Katya Kabanova* and *Jenůfa*. Kinmonth has also designed for Anish Kapoor (*Pelléas et Mélisande* for La Monnaie, Brussels, Rome and Barcelona), and Pierre Audim (*Zoroastre*, *Castor et Pollux*, *Tamerlano*, *Alcina* and *Orlando Furioso* for Stockholm, Amsterdam, Vienna, Paris, Drottningholm, Munich, Nancy and Nice). Kinmonth also designed Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* at the Arcola Theatre, London in 2014. Recent and current revivals of his collaborative productions include *Elektra* with Guy Joosten at Teatro Comunale di Bologna, *Götterdämmerung* at Liceu, Barcelona, *Katya Kabanova* in Brno and Turin, and *Jenůfa* in Palermo with Robert Carsen. Kinmonth enjoys collaborating in a director/designer capacity with such artists as choreographer Fernando Melo, including *A Guest House* and *Tending to Fall* for Gothenburg Ballet, *Fountain* for Gartnerplatztheater, Munich,

Middle of Nowhere for Norddans, Sweden, *Don Juan* in Lucerne and, with Pontus Lidberg, *Raymonda* for the Royal Swedish Opera. Recent and current dance creations include *Jane Eyre* with choreographer Cathy Marston for Northern Ballet, *Kinderdes Olymp* with Fernando Melo for Lucerne and *Don Quixote* with Aaron S. Watkin for Semperoper Ballet, Dresden. Kinmonth achieved international prominence as the Arts Editor of British Vogue and subsequently as curator of exhibitions of photographs by Mario Testino: Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery and Diana, Princess of Wales at Kensington Palace. He designed and curated two retrospectives of Testino's work at Today Arts Museum, Beijing, 2012 and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2012–2013. As part of a sequence of exhibitions, Kinmonth has designed and co-curated Valentino: Master of Couture, Somerset House, London, 2012, and Making Dreams: Fendi and the Cinema, Cinema Manzoni, Milan, 2013 featuring the film Amphitheatre directed by Kinmonth and Antonio Monfreda. Kinmonth and Monfreda have launched THEVISUALCLINIC.COM to provide a focus for their film and video projects. Kinmonth curated Unseen Waterloo: The Conflict Revisited at Somerset House, London. He was described as a genius by the Evening Standard for his role as co-director of the short film aMANda for Fendi. In 2016, Kinmonth curated VOGUE100: A Century of Style at the National Portrait Gallery, London, and will be directing the British Fashion Awards at the Royal Albert Hall. Kinmonth's awards include Il Premio Abbiati for *Katya Kabanova*, Teatro alla Scala (2008), *Götterdämmerung*, La Fenice (2009), and the Prix des Pays Francophone for *Elektra*, La Monnaie, Brussels (2010). He was nominated for an Olivier Award for the English National Opera's *Semele* (1999) and the Gramophone Award for Best DVD for *Katya Kabanova*, Teatro Real, Madrid (2011). Kinmonth was awarded Wall Street Journal's 2012 Innovator of the Year Award for Design for his unrestricted creativity and multiple talents as a set designer, director, painter, author, decorator and exhibition curator.

Peter van Praet

LIGHT DESIGN

Peter van Praet was head of lighting at Vlaamse Opera where he began working with Robert Carsen, for whom he then worked on revivals of *Semele* in London (English National Opera) and *Tosca* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. Since then he has designed the lighting for Robert Carsen for *Katya Kabanova* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Vlaamse Opera, *Jenůfa* at the Saito Kinen Festival, *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Salzburg Festival, *Don Giovanni* at La Scala in Milan, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropulos Affair*, *From the House of the Dead* and *Don Carlo* at the Opéra du Rhin, *Falstaff* at La Scala in Milan and the Royal Opera House in London, Giorgio Battistelli's *CO2* at La Scala in Milan, *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Royal Opera House in London, and *The Beggar's Opera* at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord. Peter van Praet also created the lighting for *Norma*, *Bluebeard* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Brussels for Christophe Coppens. He has designed the lighting for Valentina Carrasco for *Carmen* and *The Sicilian Vespers* in Rome and *Aida* and *Tosca* in Macerata, sets and lighting for *La Favorita* at the Donizetti Festival, Bergamo and in Bordeaux, *Nixon in China* at Opéra national de Paris Bastille, and *La fanciulla del West* at Teatro Regio Turin. Recently he created the lighting for *Orontea* at La Scala Milan and *The Excursions of Mr. Broucek* in Brno directed by Robert Carsen.

Philippe Giraudeau

CHOREOGRAPHY

The French choreographer Philippe Giraudeau studied dance in his home town of La Rochelle and was also a professional dancer in France and later with the London Contemporary Dance Theatre and the dance company Second Stride in Great Britain. He won the London Dance and Performance Award in 1998. In Britain he also focused on a career in the theatre and in film and television. He has worked as a choreographer with a host of world-renowned directors such as Tim Albery, with whom he collaborated on productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Widow* (MET), *From the House of the Dead* and *Boris Godunov* (ENO) and *Der fliegende Holländer* (Royal Opera House Covent Garden). He has worked with Robert Carsen on productions of *Semele*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Katya Kabanova* (Vlaamse Opera Antwerp), *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Alcina* and *Rusalka* (National Opera de Paris), *Dialogues des carmélites* (Netherlands Opera and La Scala), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Salzburg), *La traviata* (La Fenice), *Elektra* (Tokyo), *Manon Lescaut* (Vienna), *Iphigenie en Tauride* (Lyric Opera Chicago and Covent Garden), *Tannhäuser* (Tokyo and Paris), *Salome* (Turin, Madrid and Florence), *Il trovatore* (Bregenzer Festspiele), *Rinaldo* (Glyndebourne) and *Don Giovanni* (La Scala). He has devised the choreography for a production of *Jenůfa* by director Richard Jones (Amsterdam, Chicago), for *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Opera North, ENO), for Georges Neveux's play *Juliette ou la cle des songes* (Opera Garnier), for *Les Troyens* (ENO) and for *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Netherlands Opera). He has also worked with Antony McDonald on opera productions of *Aida*, *Samson et Dalila* and *Snatched by the Gods/Broken Strings* (Scottish Opera) and the musical *Wonderful Town* (Grange Park Opera). Other directors he has worked with include Stephen Langridge (*Handel's Arianna in Creta*) and John Lunn (*Tangier Tattoo*, Glyndebourne Festival; *Othello*, Salzburg Festspiele; *La damnation de Faust*, Lyric Opera of Chicago).

Kateřina Kněžíková

KATYA

A long-time resident artist at the Prague National Opera and one of the most sought-after singers in her native Czech Republic, Kateřina Kněžíková appears regularly with all the Czech and Slovak opera houses and, further afield, at La Monnaie Brussels, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Opéra de Dijon and many other venues. With a strong background in the Baroque and Classical repertoire, she has developed naturally into the lyrical repertoire, notably as *Rusalka*, *Mařenka* (*The Bartered Bride*), *Martinů's Julietta* and *Mirandolina*, *Terinka* (*The Jacobin*) and Gounod's *Marguerite*. In the 2023/2024 season she took the title role in the Prague State Opera's new production of *Rusalka*, and made role debuts in the title role in Smetana's *Libuše* and as the vixen Sharp-Ears in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in concert with the Czech Philharmonic under Jakub Hrůša. Highlights of the 2024/2025 season include her role debut as Janáček's *Jenůfa* at the Prague National Opera, her return to the Glyndebourne Festival Opera as *Katya Kabanova* and guest appearances as *Fiordiligi* (*Così fan tutte*) and Janáček's *Vixen* at National Opera Brno. Kateřina's core symphonic repertoire includes Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Dvořák's *Requiem*, the oratorios *Svatá Ludmila*, *Stabat Mater* and *Te Deum*, *Martinů's Epic of Gilgamesh* and works by Beethoven, Mahler and Mozart. She has appeared as a guest soloist with, for example, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, the Wiener Symphoniker, the Bamberger Symphoniker, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the ORF Radio Symphonieorchester Wien under renowned conductors including Jiří Bělohlávek, Manfred Honeck, John Nelson, Serge Baudo, Jakub Hrůša, Domingo Hindoyan, Robin Ticciati, Oksana Lyniv, James Gaffigan and Tomáš Netopil. In 2021, she released her first solo album "Phidylé" on the Supraphon

label, which was named Editor's Choice and Best Classical Album of 2021 in Gramophone Magazine and won the prestigious BBC Magazine Music Award in the "Vocal" category in 2022. She has also recorded for Decca, Harmonia Mundi and Opus Arte.

Jana Hrochová

KABANICHA

The mezzo-soprano Jana Hrochová studied at Prague Conservatory. Her first engagements took her to Opera Mozart in Prague between 1997 and 2000, extending her activities to ancient music (with Ars Cameralis) and folk music (with the Muzika Jara ensemble). Since 2000, she has been a soloist at National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera. Her repertoire takes in such roles as Carmen (*Carmen*), Laura (*La Gioconda*), Kate (*The Devil and Kate*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), The Fox (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Varvara (*Katya Kabanova*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Hänsel (*Hansel und Gretel*), Nicklausse (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Quickly (*Falstaff*) and Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). She sings as a guest at a number of opera houses, such as the National Theatre in Prague, the Prague State Opera, the opera houses in Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem, Liberec, Ostrava and Olomouc (Czech Republic), the National Theatre in Košice (Slovakia) and Theatre Freiburg (Germany). Her concert activities are an essential part of her repertoire and have brought her together with some of the leading Czech and foreign orchestras, such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, the Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra. She works with conductors such as Jiří Bělohlávek, Serge Baudo, Gerd Albrecht, Manfred Honeck, Ondrej Lenárd, Petr Altrichter, Jakub Hrůša, Leoš Svárovský, Tomáš Hanus, Andrej Borejko, Dennis Russell Davies and Tomáš Netopil. She recorded songs by Bohuslav Martinů for Naxos Records in 2011 and 2018. She made her BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 2016.

Peter Berger

BORIS

Peter Berger studied at Košice Conservatory. His past engagements have included the Prince (*Rusalka*) at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Don José (*Carmen*) at Teatro Regio di Torino, Werther and Manru at Teatr Wielki in Warsaw, Boris (*Katya Kabanova*) with Jakub Hrůša and the Czech Philharmonic in Prague and Hamburg, Laca (*Jenůfa*) at National Theatre Brno, the Prince (*Rusalka*), Alfredo Germont (*La traviata*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Michel (*Julietta*) and Des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*) at the National Theatre in Prague and National Theatre Brno. He sang Laca (*Jenůfa*) at the Scottish National Opera and the Danish National Opera and in Santiago, the Prince (*Rusalka*) in Santiago and Tokyo, Boris (*Katya Kabanova*) at the Danish National Opera, the Prince (*Rusalka*) in Rome and Beijing, Švanda and Laca (*Jenůfa*) at Teatro Massimo di Palermo and Don Jose (*Carmen*) in Santiago, as well as Janacek's *Glagolitic Mass* and Dvorak's *Te Deum* with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his operatic work, Peter Berger is also a prolific concert artist and has sung with the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the State Philharmonic in Košice, the Prague Philharmonia, the Brno Philharmonic, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra and Czech Virtuosi. He has performed at numerous domestic and international concerts, as well as being a permanent guest at the festival Viva il Canto in Czeszyn, Poland and at the international festival in Sopron, Hungary. His concert repertoire includes the *Glagolitic Mass*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Masses, as well as Beethoven's *9th Symphony*.

Václava Krejčí Housková

VARVARA

Since 2015, Václava Krejčí Housková has been a soloist with the National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera, where she performs such roles as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Káča (*The Devil and Kate*), Carmen, Ježibaba (*Rusalka*), Radmila (*Libuše*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Bradamante (*Alcina*), Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*), the Vixen (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Amneris (*Aida*). Václava made her debut at the National Theatre in Prague as Bizet's *Carmen* in 2014. On the Czech opera stage she has also played Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Death (*The Nightingale*) and Laura (*Jolanta*). She was nominated for a Thalia Prize for her successful stage performance as Smeton in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* in 2014 and for her role in Bizet's *Carmen* (The J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň) in 2020. She made her debut at Theater an der Wien in 2022 in a new production of Leoš Janáček's opera *Jenůfa*. She has also had international success as Bradamante (*Alcina*), which she performed in a successful production at the Theater de Versailles and in Caen. Her sacred music repertoire includes Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Dvořák's *Requiem* and *Stabat Mater*. Václava's chamber music repertoire mostly takes in Czech songs and song cycles by Janáček, Dvořák, Křička and Eben. She is a guest at prestigious Czech and international music festivals, such as the Wexford Festival Opera, the L'Été Bergerac Festival, Prague Spring, Smetana's Litomyšl Opera Festival, the Prague Proms and the Edinburgh Festival. Along with tenor Nicky Spence and pianist Julius Drake, she recorded *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* by Leoš Janáček. The CD has already garnered a number of prestigious awards, not least the BBC Music Magazine Awards 2020 and the Gramophone Classical Music Award 2020.

Jan Štáva

DIKOY

Jan Štáva has studied opera singing since early childhood under the guidance of his mother, teacher and opera singer Zdeňka Rybecká. In 2007–2012, he studied at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno in Zdeněk Šmukař's class. Since 2010, he has been a soloist at the Janáček Opera at National Theatre Brno. Since 2011, he has been a regular guest soloist at the National Theatre in Prague and the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava. Since then, he has made regular guest appearances at all the major Czech opera houses. His international appearances have taken him to the Opéra de Paris, the opera house in Montpellier, Nantes/Angers Opera and the Opéra de Toulon. His performances cover the major bass parts: Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Figaro and Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Raphael/Adam (*Die Schöpfung*), Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), the King (*Aida*), Méphistophélès (*Faust*), Colline (*La bohème*), Claudius (*Hamlet*), Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), the Marquis (*Mirandolina*), Alvise Badoero (*La Gioconda*), King Hydraot (*Armida*), Kecal (*The Bartered Bride*), Paloucký (*The Kiss*), and Figaro and Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*). His prolific concert performances have involved work with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Lyon, the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn, the Radio Symphony Orchestra Hannover, the Czech Philharmonic, the Prague Philharmonia, and others. He has appeared at numerous prestigious festivals (the BBC Proms, the Salzburger Festspiele, Prague Spring, Smetana's Litomyšl, the Prague Proms). Jan's concert repertoire includes bass parts in Bach (*Weihnachtsoratorium*, *Die Johannes-Passion*), Haydn (*Die Schöpfung*), Mozart, Dvořák and Verdi (*Requiem*).

Aleš Briscein

TIKHON

Tenor Aleš Briscein last appeared on stage in Auckland as Paul in Korngold's opera *Die tote Stadt* and then in Prague as Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*) and Fritz (*Der ferne Klang* by Franz Schreker). Important milestones in his career to date have been Boris (*Katya Kabanova*) and Anatole Kuragin (*War and Peace* directed by Calixto Bieito) in Geneva, Albert Gregor (*The Makropulos Affair*) at Deutsche Oper Berlin and Grand Théâtre de Geneve, Clare Quilty (Shchedrin's *Lolita*) in Prague and St. Petersburg, Smetana's *Dalibor* conducted by Stefan Soltesz at Oper Frankfurt, Filka Morozov (*From the House of the Dead*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper as staged by Simone Young, the role of the Drum Major (*Wozzeck*, directed by Robert Carsen) at the Theater an der Wien conducted by Leo Hussain, the title role in the opera *Der Zwerg* by Alexander von Zemlinsky in Graz, for which he received the Musik Preis for Best Male Performance of 2018, and the role of Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) at the Komische Oper Berlin. We have also had the chance of seeing him as the King's Son (*Königskinder*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Laca Klemeň and Števa Buryja (*Jenůfa*), Jiří (Dvořák's *The Jacobin*), Ladislav (Smetana's *The Two Widows*), The Prince (*Rusalka*), Conte d'Albafiorita (*Mirandolina* by Bohuslav Martinů), Jaroměr (Fibich's opera *The Fall of Arkun*), Lukáš (Smetana's *The Kiss*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Pollione (*Norma*) and in the lead role in *Lohengrin*. His concert repertoire includes such pieces as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa solemnis* and Mahler's Eighth Symphony. Guest appearances have taken him to the Tiroler Festspiele Erl, Salzburger Festspiele, the Savonlinna Opera Festival, the BBC Proms and the Semperoper Dresden.

Vít Nosek

KUDRYASH

Vít Nosek has been a guest performer at the National Theatre in Prague and the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre. He is currently a soloist at the Janáček Opera at National Theatre Brno, where he has performed such roles as Narraboth (*Salome*), Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Monostotos (*Die Zauberflöte*), Vašek (*The Bartered Bride*), Edmondo (*Manon Lescaut*) and Michálek (*The Devil's Wall*). He appeared successfully in the highly regarded production of Britten's *Peter Grimes* and performed under conductor Jakub Hruška in the opera *From the House of the Dead* at the Janáček Brno 2022 festival.