

Press release, 4 November 2023

Janáček Brno 2024 Festival in the Spirit of the Year of Czech Music

1 November – 24 November 2024

No limits!...

As humans, we set countless boundaries, but the path to the realm of imagination is open to all, and music knows no boundaries.

“The 2024 festival programme will reach the heights of the stars. In a short time, the imaginary bar of quality has been raised to a level that meets the parameters of a premier European cultural event. I am very pleased that the importance of the festival will be recognised by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, with whom we will conclude a Memorandum of Cooperation that will ensure predictable funding. This is the only way to maintain the level achieved in the future,” commented Martin Glaser, director of the National Theatre Brno.

The motto of the 9th edition of the festival No limits!... was inspired by Janáček’s opera *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček*, in which the main character takes us to the Moon and for a journey through time to the 15th century. The opera will open the festival, directed by Robert Carsen, the creator of productions appreciated worldwide for their dramatic grasp, poetics, humour and artistic refinement, and conducted by Marko Ivanović. British tenor Nicky Spence returns to the festival after a thrilling performance of *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* last year, this time in the role of Matěj Brouček. “The new festival production is a co-production with Teatro Real and Staatsoper Berlin, and it is another important step for the festival to send Janáček’s works to the stages of the world with leading performers,” adds Jiří Heřman, artistic director of the Opera of the National Theatre Brno.

The opera series will offer a selection of Janáček’s work from his first operatic success to his two masterpieces. *Jenůfa*, version 1904, will be interpreted by an all-female production team led by the progressive director Veronika Kos Loulová and set to music by Anna Novotná Pešková in a co-production of the Moravian Theatre Olomouc and Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno. A rare guest of the festival will be the excellent Staatsoper Berlin ensemble, who will bring a great production of *The Makropulos Affair* directed by Claus Guth, awarded the Director of the Year Opera Award 2023, and conducted by Robert Jindra. *The Cunning Little Vixen* will celebrate its 100th anniversary on 6 November. The festival will present a new production by the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre directed by Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili and set to music by Marek Šedivý. Birthday greetings for *the Vixen* were also prepared by the Brno ensemble of Jiří Heřman and Marko Ivanović’s, in the form of a production with special guests Kateřina Kněžíková as the Vixen and Adam Plachetka as the Forester. One of the festival evenings will belong to David Radok and his interpretation of one of the most popular Czech operas – Dvořák’s *Rusalka*. As a culmination of the Year of Czech Music, the festival will also present some rarely performed works. These will include the opera *The Charlatan* by the Brno composer Pavel Haas, which had its world premiere at the Mahen Theatre in 1938. The festival audience will see it directed by Ondřej Havelka and performed by the Ostrava Opera Ensemble. As usual, the festival will also include new works by students of Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts and a programme dedicated to the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová.

The dramaturgy of the concert series is also entirely focused on Czech music and reflects the centenary of the first Year of Czech Music, announced in 1924. In addition to the emphasis on the works of Leoš Janáček, the symphonic, chamber and recital concerts will present not only works by Czech composers whose life dates in Czech music end with the mythical four (Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček, Josef Suk), but also other composers, such as Janáček's favourite pupil Pavel Haas, Miloslav Ištvan and others.

Jakub Hrůša returns to the festival, this time with his ensemble Bamberger Symphoniker, to present a purely Czech programme – Janáček's *Taras Bulba*, Suk's *Ripening* and Dvořák's *Piano Concerto* performed by the excellent pianist Dmitry Trifonov. "This is the programme of the opening concert of the Year of Czech Music, which took place in January 1924, then performed by the Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, Brno Conservatory and members of the German Theatre Orchestra," says Jiří Zahradka, the dramaturge of the concert series.

The ensemble of the Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno under the baton of Robert Kružík and with violinist Jan Mráček will present a programme of works by composers associated with Brno. The Staatskapelle Berlin will be a special guest and will also present a solo concert with its new chief conductor Christian Thielemann. The chamber concerts will once again sound in the famous Brno villas Tugendhat, Löw-Beer and Stiassni and theatres will welcome leading performers such as Josef Špaček, Pavel Haas Quartet, Simona Šaturová, the British Navarra String Quartet and others. The programme will also include choral and folklore concerts, such as Martinů Voices by Lukáš Vasilík.

The uniqueness of the Janáček Brno 2024 Festival is underlined by its visual design, which was prepared by Petr Sís, based on the motto No limits!... "I felt that as the wind swirled over Wallachia and Lachia, it caught the young Leoš Janáček to carry him through life. He was a cloud of lyrical singularity in the musical sky and his landscape of feelings is perhaps incommunicable in a way..." The artist is also the author of the festival graphics dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

For festival information and on-line ticket shop, please go to www.janacek-brno.com. Festival visitors will receive a festival pass, which will give them a 25% discount when buying three or more performances and a 30% discount when buying five or more performances.

The festival has been organized with the financial support of the Statutory City of Brno, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Leoš Janáček Foundation and the Region of South Moravia. Bohemian Heritage Fund is a general partner of the festival.

JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

9th International Opera and Music Festival

NO LIMITS!...

Contact for Czech media:

Markéta Mikšíková

tel: +420 702 267 991

e-mail: miksikova@ndbrno.cz

Contact for foreign media:

Šarlota Gunišová

Tel: +420 720 050 682

E-mail: gunisova@ndbrno.cz

www.janacek-brno.com