



JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

9th International
Opera and Music Festival 1-24/11/2024

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Press Release, 6 March 2024

The Janáček Brno 2024 Festival and the Year of Czech Music

1 – 24 November 2024

The motto of this year's festival is No limits!... and Czech music knows no boundaries. Experience Brno and Czech music with us in the places where it was written and that inspired it! During the three festival weeks, enjoy the unique genius loci of Brno, a multicultural city full of beautiful architecture, art and gastronomy, where the idea of genetics and the masterpieces of Leoš Janáček, one of the musical geniuses of the twentieth century, were born.

"The festival programme is to reach stellar heights in 2024. In a short period of time, its standard has been raised to a level that ranks it as a first-class European cultural event. I am delighted that the importance of the festival has also been recognised by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, with which we have closed a Memorandum of Co-operation which has ensured us a predictable source of financing. This is the only way in which the standard that has been achieved can be maintained into the future."

Martin Glaser, Director of National Theatre Brno

The Year of Czech Music in Brno is to culminate in the three weeks of the Janáček Brno 2024 festival, packed with great music and theatre projects performed by leading artists from the Czech Republic and abroad.

The motto of the ninth year of the festival, No limits!..., was inspired by Janáček's opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, in which the leading character goes to the moon and travels back in time to the fifteenth century. The festival is to be officially opened by a new production of *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* performed by the Brno ensemble under the baton of chief conductor Marko Ivanović and directed by Robert Carsen, who has been responsible for productions appreciated around the world for their drama, poetry, humour and artistic refinement. British tenor Nicky Spence is returning to the festival after his stirring 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, Madrid and Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, and is another important step forward for the festival in spreading Janáček's work to world stages with leading performers,"* adds Jiří Heřman, Artistic Director of the Opera Ensemble at National Theatre Brno.

The opera series is to offer a cross-section of Janáček's work, from his first operatic success to his two masterpieces. A rare guest at the festival is to be the excellent ensemble Staatsoper Unter der Linden from Berlin, which will be bringing a wonderful production of *The Makropulos Affair* directed by Claus Guth, who was named OPER! AWARDS 2023 Best Director, and conducted by Robert Jindra, Music Director at the National Theatre. German soprano Dorothea Röschmann, winner of two Grammy Awards, is to play the role of Emilia Marty.

Jenůfa is to be presented in an interpretation by an all-female staging team led by progressive director Veronika Kos Loulová with musical staging by Anna Novotná Pešková in a co-production between the Opera Company at the Moravian Theatre in Olomouc and the National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera in co-operation with the organisation Úsměv mámy (A Mother's Smile).

The Cunning Little Vixen will be celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its world premiere on 6 November. The festival is to feature a new production by the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre directed by Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili with musical staging by Marek Šedivý. Birthday celebrations have also been prepared for the Vixen by the Brno ensemble with a production by Jiří Heřman and Marko Ivanović with special guests Kateřina Kněžíková as the vixen Sharp-Ears and Adam Plachetka in the role of the Forester. One of the festival evenings is to belong to David Radok and his interpretation of one of the most popular Czech operas – Dvořák's *Rusalka*. The festival is also to present rarely performed works as the culmination of the Year of Czech Music, such as the opera *The Charlatan* by composer Pavel Haas from Brno, which had its world premiere at the Mahen Theatre in 1938. Festival-goers will see it as directed by Ondřej Havelka and performed by the Ostrava Opera Ensemble. As has become traditional, the festival is also to feature new works by students from the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) and a programme put together by the Brno Conservatory devoted to the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová.

A large series of concerts is also to focus entirely on Czech music and reflect the centenary of the first Year of Czech Music declared in 1924. In addition to an emphasis on the work of Leoš Janáček, it is also to feature symphony and chamber concerts and recitals presenting not just works by four great composers of Czech music whose share the "mythical" number four in the years in which they were born or died – Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček and Josef Suk, but also works by other composers such as Janáček's favourite student Pavel Haas and younger generations of composers such as Miloslav Ištvan, Luboš Fišer and Josef Berg.

Jakub Hrůša, who recently added the title Conductor of the Year 2023 in the German Opus Klassik Awards to his long list of decorations, is also returning to the festival, this time with the Bamberger Symphoniker, to present a purely Czech programme comprised of Janáček's *Taras Bulba*, Suk's *Ripening* and Dvořák's *Piano Concerto* performed by the peerless pianist Daniil Trifonov. "This was also the programme of the opening concert of the Year of Czech Music in January 1924, then performed by the orchestra of the Brno National Theatre, the Brno Conservatory and members of the orchestra of the German Theatre," says Jiří Zahrádka, dramaturge of the concert series.

A concert by the orchestra of National Theatre Brno's Janáček Opera conducted by Robert Kružík with violinist Jan Mráček and the Czech Philharmonic Choir is devoted to composers associated with Brno, and is to feature a programme including Janáček's *The Wandering of a Little Soul*, Miloslav Ištvan's *Incantations of the Time* and Bohuslav Martinů's *Bouquet of Flowers*. The festival's special guest is to be the Staatskapelle Berlin, which is to perform both in the production of *The Makropulos Affair* and at a separate concert with its new chief conductor Christian Thielemann.

The concerts at Villa Tugendhat and Villa Löw-Beer will be joined this year by concerts at Villa Stiassni, which is to present a programme by Simona Šaturová and Marek Kozák, a recital by Pavla Vykopalá, Karel Dohnal and Eliška Novotná, a piano concert by Jan Jiraský, and *Slavonic Dances* interpreted by Duo Ardašev. Chamber concerts will once again be filling the spaces of the Mahen Theatre and the Reduta Theatre with leading performers such as Josef Špaček, the Pavel Haas Quartet and Adam Plachetka. The British Navarra String Quartet with tenor Nicky Spence and pianist Lada Valešová will be presenting an essential work of Czech songwriting – the piano quintet with tenor solo *Fata Morgana* by Pavel Haas.

The programme is also to include choral and folklore concerts given by, for example, Martinů Voices led by Lukáš Vasilek with a programme consisting of compositions by Leoš Janáček, Bohuslav Martinů, Antonín Dvořák, Jan Novák and Luboš Fišer. The Gaudeamus choir with the orchestra of Ensemble Opera Diversa will be filling the Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary with spiritual compositions by Leoš Janáček

and other Czech composers. The folklore concerts *Bedazzled by Song* and *Janáček Everywhere* will be remembering Janáček's close relationship with Moravian folk music. Magdalena Múčková's project will be complementing a wide range of songs performed by regional musicians with demonstrations of Moravian dances and a parade of traditional costumes.

A number of accompanying events have also been prepared alongside the main programme, such as the traditional exhibitions at the Leoš Janáček Memorial and theatre buildings, educational events for schools, and literary introductions before opera productions.

The unique nature of the festival Janáček Brno 2024 is underlined by its visual aspect, which Petr Sís has prepared specifically for the festival in line with the motto *No limits!...* *"I had the feeling that as the wind swirled over Wallachia and Lachia, it captivated the young Leoš Janáček to carry him through life. He was a cloud of lyrical individuality in the musical sky, and the landscape of his feelings is perhaps incommunicable in its own way..."* The artist also produced the festival graphics dedicated to the hundredth anniversary of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Before the festival begins!

On July 3, even before the main festival program begins, we will be celebrating Leoš Janáček's 170th birthday. As part of an all-day preview event with a programme designed for the whole family, we will not only be celebrating the composer's birthday but will also be bringing the programme to a close in the evening with an open-air screening of a recording of the production of *Jenůfa* from London's Royal Opera House in Covent Garden on the "piazzetta" in front of the Janáček Theatre. Free admission.

Support your favourite festival!

In addition to buying tickets, fans can also support the festival by making a patronage contribution and "adopting" a Golden, Silver or Little Fox. They will then be considered valued patrons of the festival and, depending on the size of the contribution they make, will receive a number of benefits both during and after the festival.

This year, the festival is also offering new VIP tickets for selected performances which, in addition to promising the best seats in the house, provide the opportunity of drinking a toast in the VIP lounge or with the performing artists.

A festival pass is also available to festival-goers which will give them a 25 % discount when they purchase tickets for three or more performances and a 30 % discount when they purchase tickets for five or more performances.

The festival is held with the financial support of the Statutory City of Brno, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Leoš Janáček Foundation and the South Moravian Region. The general partner of the festival is the Bohemian Heritage Fund, and its principal media partners are Czech Television and Czech Radio.

Visitors can find up-to-date information about the festival and the possibility of purchasing tickets on-line at www.janacek-brno.cz.

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VILLA TUGENDHAT

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Contact media:

Šarlota Gunišová

Tel: +420 720 050 682

E-mail: gunisova@ndbrno.cz

www.janacek-brno.com