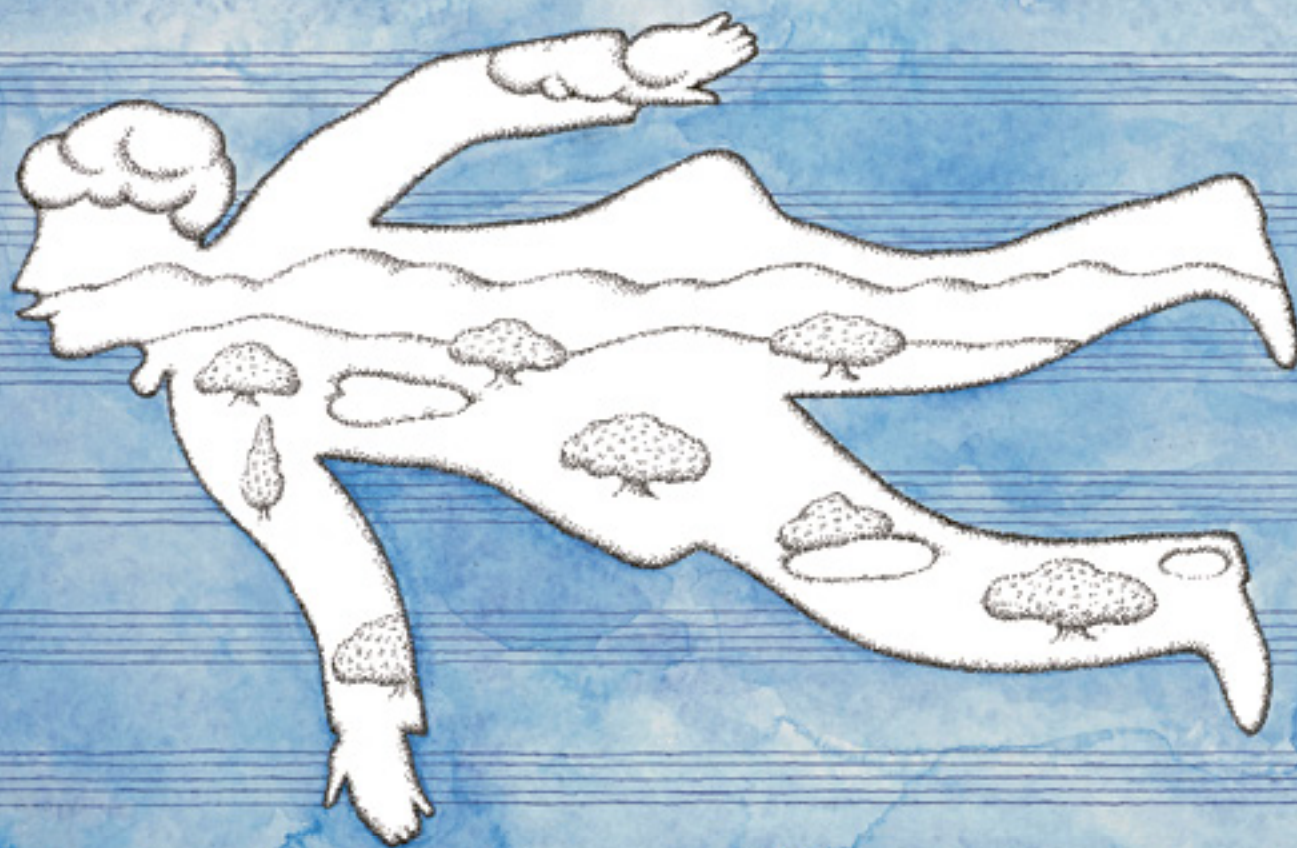


No limits...



JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

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

Festival Magazine

So is a man, a Czech man, a Czech composer just supposed to be a homebody? Shouldn't we also have some cultural splendour, artistic wealth, so that, albeit small, we could be first in the world?

Leoš Janáček

JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

Patricie Částková – Dramaturge of the Theatre Series

Jiří Zahradka – Dramaturge of the Concert Series

Festival Artistic Council

Patricie Částková – Dramaturge of Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno

Martin Glaser – Director of the National Theatre Brno

Josef Herman – Editor-in-Chief of Divadelní noviny

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Svatava Šenková – Head of the TS Brno Dramaturgy Centre

Barbara Maria Willi – Dean of the JAMU Faculty of Music

Jiří Zahradka – Musicologist

The patrons of the IFJB 2024 festival are

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Jan Grolich – Governor of the South Moravian Region

Markéta Vaňková – Mayor of the Statutory City of Brno

Andreas Kühne – Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague

No limits...

Music knows no limits, you don't need to know its language or its nationality, all you need to do is listen. We have sent it into space with the Voyager probe, and when the first man stepped onto the Moon it was to the sound of Antonín Dvořák's *New World Symphony*. The imagination of artists knows no limits either, and we can travel with them into the past or live for three hundred years, anything is possible – the only limits we set are those within ourselves.

The Janáček Brno 2024 festival will also have no limits, and even if it is dedicated this year to Czech music, we are happy to open up the interpretational borders and we look forward to the different takes on works by our Czech composers. Where will Matěj Brouček end up with Canadian director Robert Carsen and tenor Nicky Spence in a new production that opens the festival with the Brno ensemble in a coproduction with Madrid's Teatro Real and the Staatsoper Berlin Unter den Linden? Will Dorothea Röschmann find the lost formula for immortality as Elina Makropulos, directed by Claus Guth? What gift have Kateřina Kněžíková and Adam Plachetka prepared for Vixen Bystrouška's 100th birthday? What perspectives will the female production team headed by director Veronika Kos Loulová offer on Janáček's *Jenůfa*, the

first version of which was performed 120 years ago? And what does the youngest generation of students from JAMU and the Brno Conservatory have in store for us with their productions? You will find out over three festival weeks filled with opera productions given by ensembles such as the Staatsoper Berlin Unter den Linden, the local Janáček Opera NTB, the Moravian-Silesian National Opera, the Opera of the Moravian Theatre, and concerts with the Staatskapelle Berlin and Christian Thielemann, the Pavel Haas Quartet, the Navarra String Quartet, the Janáček Quartet, Simona Šaturová, the violinists Josef Špaček and Jan Mráček, and a number of other outstanding musicians. A varied accompanying programme in the shape of exhibitions, events for children, dramaturgical introductions and trips in the footsteps of Leoš Janáček will fill up every free moment between the productions and concerts.

Celebrate with us the Year of Czech Music in the very places which inspired it and travel with us beyond the borders of the imagination. The first stop is the Solar System, where halfway between Mars and Jupiter orbit the planets of Leoš Janáček, Antonín Dvořák and Bedřich Smetana.

Jiří Heřman

No limits...

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Cash and credit card sales

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+420 542 158 120 / Mon–Fri 8.30 am – 6 pm

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House of the Lords of Lipé, nám. Svobody 86/17,
+420 539 000 770 / Mon–Fri 9 am – 5 pm

Evening box office

45 minutes before the performance at the theatres' box offices

PR and marketing

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The festival magazine is available in the theatres and the NdB pre-sale.



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south moravian region

The activities of the National Theatre Brno are supported by the South Moravian Region.

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Programme

JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

9th International
Opera and Music Festival

1–24/11/2024

Opera productions

1. 11 7 pm, Janáček Theatre
**LEOŠ JANÁČEK – THE EXCURSIONS
OF MR. BROUČEK** premiere

Ceremonial opening of the festival
Conductor: Marko Ivanović, director: Robert Carsen
Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno
In a co-production with Teatro Real, Madrid
and Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin
Starring: Nicky Spence

Reprise **3. 11**, 3 pm
Echoes of the festival 3. 12 and 4. 12, 7 pm
(performance 4. 12. broadcast live on OperaVision)



8. 11 7 pm, Mahen Theatre
PAVEL HAAS – THE CHARLATAN

Conductor: Jakub Klecker, director: Ondřej Havelka
National Moravian-Silesian Theatre

10. 11 7 pm, Mahen Theatre
**LEOŠ JANÁČEK –
THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN**

Conductor: Marek Šedivý, director: Itzik Galili
National Moravian-Silesian Theatre

16. 11 7 pm, Janáček Theatre
**LEOŠ JANÁČEK –
THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR**

Conductor: Robert Jindra, director: Claus Guth
Guest performance by the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin
Starring: Dorothea Röschmann

Reprise **18. 11**, 7 pm

20. 11 7 pm, Mahen Theatre
LEOŠ JANÁČEK – JENŮFA First version (1904) in
the Mark Audus edition

Conductor: Anna Novotná Pešková, director: Veronika Kos Loulová
Moravian Theatre Olomouc
In a co-production with the Janáček Opera
of the National Theatre Brno
Produced in cooperation with the organization Úsměv mámy

Reprise **21. 11**, 7 pm

23. 11 7 pm, Janáček Theatre
**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK –
RUSALKA**

Conductor: Marko Ivanović, director: David Radok
Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno
Starring: Jana Šrejma Kačírková, Jan Štáva

24. 11 7 pm, Janáček Theatre
**LEOŠ JANÁČEK –
THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN**

Gala performance to celebrate the 100th anniversary
of the opera and the closing ceremony of the
Janáček Brno 2024 festival

Conductor: Marko Ivanović, director: Jiří Heřman
Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno
Starring: Kateřina Kněžíková, Adam Plachetka

Special Orchestral Concerts

4. 11 8 pm, Janáček Theatre
BAMBERGER SYMPHONIKER

Josef Suk – Ripening, Op. 34
Antonín Dvořák – Concerto for Piano and Orchestra
in G minor, Op. 33
Leoš Janáček – Taras Bulba
Conductor: Jakub Hruša, piano: Daniil Trifonov
Bamberger Symphoniker
Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno, choirmaster: Petr Fiala

15. 11 7 pm, Mahen Theatre
**ORCHESTRA OF THE JANÁČEK
OPERA OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE
BRNO AND JAN MRÁČEK**

Leoš Janáček – Violin Concerto
“The Wandering of a Little Soul”
Miloslav Ištvan – The Invocation of Time
for two narrators and orchestra
Bohuslav Martinů – Bouquet of Flowers
Conductor: Robert Kružík, violin: Jan Mráček
Soloists: Jana Šrejma Kačírková, Václava Krejčí Housková,
Roman Hoza and Vít Nosek
Orchestra of the Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno
Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno, choirmaster: Petr Fiala
Brno Children’s Choir, choirmaster: Valeria Maťašová
Co-performers: Hana Briešťanská and Daniel Bambas

17. 11 7 pm, Janáček Theatre
**GUEST PERFORMANCE
STAATSKAPPELLE BERLIN**

Samy Moussa – Elysium
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy – Piano Concerto No. 2
in D minor, Op. 40
Arnold Schönberg – Pelleas and Melisande, Op. 5
Conductor: Christian Thielemann, piano: Jan Bartoš
Staatskapelle Berlin
Concert dedicated to the 150th anniversary
of A. Schönberg’s birth

Chamber series

2.11 11 am, Refectory of the Augustinian Monastery
Q VOX

Compositions for quartet by Leoš Janáček and Pavel Křížkovský

2.11 7pm, Mahen Theatre

RECITAL: JOSEF ŠPAČEK AND MIROSLAV SEKERA

Jan Václav Hugo Voříšek – Rondo for Violin and Piano, Op. 8
Antonín Dvořák – Romantic Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 75
Luboš Fišer – “The Hands”, Sonata for Violin and Piano
Bedřich Smetana – From the Homeland
Bohuslav Martinů – Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 3
Violin: Josef Špaček, piano: Miroslav Sekera

3.11 11 am, Foyer of the Mahen Theatre

JANÁČEK ENSEMBLE

Jaroslav Ježek – Wind Quintet
Leoš Janáček – Wind sextet “Youth”
Gideon Klein – Divertimento for Wind Octet

3.11 7pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

NAVARRA STRING QUARTET

Josef Suk – Meditation on the Old Czech Chorale “Saint Wenceslas”, Op. 35a
Leoš Janáček – String Quartet No. 1 (After L. N. Tolstoy’s “Kreutzer Sonata”)
Antonín Dvořák – String Quartet No. 13 in G Major, Op. 106

5.11 7pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

NICKY SPENCE, LADA VALEŠOVÁ & NAVARRA STRING QUARTET

Pavel Haas – Three Pieces for Piano; The Chosen One, Op. 8
Leoš Janáček – In the Mists
Pavel Haas – Fata Morgana, Op. 6
Navarra String Quartet
Tenor: Nicky Spence, piano: Lada Valešová
Co-performers: Members of the Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB

6.11 7pm, Leoš Janáček Memorial

RECITAL: LENKA KUŽELOVÁ, DENNIS SCHNEIDERKA, JOSEF KLÍČ AND JAN JIRASKÝ

Leoš Janáček – Sonata for Violin and Piano; 1. X. 1905
Dumka for Violin and Piano
Fairytale for Cello and Piano
Violin: Lenka Kuželová, Dennis Schneiderka
Cello: Josef Klíč, piano: Jan Jiraský

9.11 11 am, Faculty of Music, JAMU

MATINEE BY JAMU

Programme organized by the Faculty of Music, Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts

9.11 3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)

BRNO CONTEMPORARY ORCHESTRA

Josef Berg – Breakfast at the Schlankenwald Castle
Alois Piňos / Dalibor Chatrný – Genesis
Miloslav Ištvan – Love, Defiance and Death
Petr Kofroň – Ghetto Brünn
Conductor: Pavel Šnajdr
Soloists: Jana Hrochová, Jan Štáva
Brno Contemporary Orchestra
Co-performers: Pavel Čeněk Vaculík, Petra Lorenc, Martin Sláma, Jakub Svojanovský

9.11 7pm, Mahen Theatre

EVENING SONGS: ADAM PLACHETKA AND DAVID ŠVEC

Bedřich Smetana – Evening Songs (5 songs)
Antonín Dvořák – Evening Songs (selection), Op. 3, 9, 31
Zdeněk Fibich – Five Songs from Evening Songs, Op. 5
Baritone: Adam Plachetka, piano: David Švec
The concert will include a CD launch.

11.11 7pm, Leoš Janáček Memorial

PIANO RECITAL BY JAMU STUDENTS

Antonín Dvořák – Two Piano Pieces (Lullaby and Capriccio)
Josef Suk – Spring, Op. 22a
Leoš Janáček – On the Overgrown Path
Piano: Kateřina Potocká, Adam Závodský

16.11 3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

PAVEL HAAS QUARTET AND BORIS GILTBURG

Josef Suk – Meditation on the Old Czech Chorale “Saint Wenceslas”, Op. 35a
Pavel Haas – String Quartet No. 3, Op. 15
Antonín Dvořák – Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81
Pavel Haas Quartet, piano: Boris Gilzburg

24.11 11 am, Leoš Janáček Memorial

MATINÉ: FENG-YÚN SONG AND LENKA NAVRÁTILOVÁ

Bohuslav Martinů – Songs on One Page (selection), Songs on Two Pages (selection)
Leoš Janáček – Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs (selection)
Antonín Dvořák – In Folk Tone, Op. 73 (selection)
Piano: Lenka Navrátilová, vocal: Feng-yún Song
The concert will be performed in Czech and Chinese.

Choral and folk concerts

2.11 3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

MARTINŮ VOICES

Luboš Fišer – Songs for the Blind King John of Luxembourg
Jan Novák – Fugae Vergilianae (selection), Rana rupta
Antonín Dvořák – Four Choruses, Op. 29
Leoš Janáček – Nursery Rhymes
Bohuslav Martinů – Five Czech Madrigals
Conductor: Lukáš Vasilek

7.11 7 pm, Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

SPIRITUAL CONCERT

Bohuslav Martinů – Field Mass
Leoš Janáček – sacred compositions
Pavel Haas – Psalm 29, Op. 12
Kryštof Harant of Polžice and Bezdržice – Qui confidunt in Domino
Jacobus Handl-Gallus – Pater Noster
Conductor: Tomáš Krejčí, baritone: Tadeáš Hoza
Ensemble Opera Diversa
Choir: Gaudeamus, choirmaster: Daša Karasová

10.11 3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)

FOLK CONCERT: BEDAZZLED BY SONG

Chamber music program focusing on the village of Brezová performed by regional singers and musicians

13.11 7 pm, Foyer of Janáček Theatre

JK VOICES – WOMEN'S CHORUSES

Leoš Janáček – Wolf Tracks; Hradčany Songs; Kaspar Rucky
Josef Suk – Ten Songs for Female Choir with Piano for Four Hands, Op. 15
Bohuslav Martinů – Three Sacred Songs (Three Legends)
Conductor: Jakub Klecker
JK Voices

22.11 7 pm, Mahen Theatre

FOLK CONCERT WITH DANCE: UBIQUITOUS JANÁČEK

Wallachian / Lachian Dances, Dances from Haná, Moravian Dances

23.11 Auditorium of the Faculty of Arts
11 am, of Masaryk University

ANNIVERSARY OF THE AWARD OF HONORARY DOCTORATE TO LEOŠ JANÁČEK

Janáček's ceremonial speech *Spondeo ac polliceor!*
Male choruses by Leoš Janáček (selection)
Moravian Teachers Singing Association
Speakers: Petr Kotík and Miloš Štedroň

23.11 3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

BRNO CHILDREN'S CHOIR: ELCE PELCE KOTRMELCE

Petr Eben – Elce pelce kotrmelce
Choirmaster: Valerie Matašová
Reciter: Pavel Čeněk Vaculík

Concerts in Brno villas

10.11 11 am and 8 pm, Villa Tugendhat

RECITAL: SIMONA ŠATUROVÁ AND MAREK KOZÁK

Leoš Janáček – Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs (selection)
Eugen Suchoň – Songs from the Mountains
Vítězslav Novák – Eclogues, part 4. "In the National Tone", Op. 11
Béla Bartók – Village Scenes
Leoš Janáček – On the Overgrown Path (selection)
Klement Slavický – Oh, My Heart So Wretched
Soprano: Simona Šaturová, piano: Marek Kozák

16.11 11 am, Villa Stiassni

RECITAL: JAN JIRASKÝ

Bedřich Smetana – Sketches, Op. 4, 5
Antonín Dvořák – Poetic Tone Pictures, Op. 85 (selection)
Josef Suk – Summer Impressions, Op. 22b
Luboš Fišer – Piano Sonata No. 4
Leoš Janáček – In the Mists
Piano: Jan Jiraský

17.11 3 pm, Villa Löw-Beer

RECITAL: PAVLA VYKOPALOVÁ, KAREL DOHNAL AND ELIŠKA NOVOTNÁ

Pavel Haas – Six Songs in Folk Tone for Soprano and Piano, Op. 1
Miloslav Ištvan – Sonata for Clarinet and Piano
Bohuslav Martinů – Songs on One Page
Antonín Tučapský – The Sorrow of Love; Five Moravian Songs
Vítězslav Novák – Two Wallachian Dances, Op. 34
Leoš Janáček – Nursery Rhymes
Soprano: Pavla Vykopalová
Clarinet: Karel Dohnal, piano: Eliška Novotná

21.11 8 pm, Villa Tugendhat

DUO ARDAŠEV: SLAVONIC DANCES

Antonín Dvořák – Slavonic Dances for four hands, Op. 46, 72
Piano: Renata Lichnovská and Igor Ardašev

23.11 3 pm, Villa Tugendhat

RECITAL: VÁCLAV PETR AND DAVID MAREČEK

Josef Suk – Ballade and Serenade for Cello and Piano, Op. 3 (Nos. 1 and 2)
Leoš Janáček – Fairytale for Cello and Piano
Antonín Dvořák – Silent Woods, Op. 68/5;
Rondo for Cello and Piano in G minor, Op. 94
Igor Stravinsky – Suite Italienne For Cello and Piano
Piano: David Mareček, cello: Václav Petr

23.11 8 pm, Villa Tugendhat

RECITAL: MARTIN KASÍK

Bedřich Smetana – Memories of Bohemia in Polka Form, Op. 12
Leoš Janáček – On an Overgrown Path (1. series)
Vítězslav Novák – Memories, Op. 6
Luboš Fišer – Piano Sonata No. 8
Klement Slavický – Three Pieces for Piano
Piano: Martin Kasík

24.11 3 pm, Villa Löw-Beer

JANÁČEK QUARTET

Vítězslava Kaprálová – String Quartet
Leoš Janáček – Quartet for Two Violins, Viola and Cello “Intimate Letters”
Vítězslav Novák – String Quartet No. 2 in D Major, Op. 35

Student and alternative projects

12.11 7 pm, Theatre on Orlí street

NEW OPERAS OF THE CHAMBER OPERA BY JAMU

Kateřina Slaběňáková: Echó and Narcissus
Kateřina Szymeczková: Oliver
Noemi Savková: Creaturing
Chamber Opera by the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts
Reprise **19.11**, 7 pm

14.11 7 pm, Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)

STAGE PROJECT OF THE BRNO CONSERVATORY OPERA STUDIO

Vitka the Fated – A Love Carol
Vítězslava Kaprálová, Bohuslav Martinů
Brno Conservatory Opera Studio
Reprise **17.11**, 11 am

22.11 7 pm, Theatre on Orlí street

ONDŘEJ KYAS – OTHER CITY

Ensemble Opera Diversa
Conductor: Gabriela Tardonová, director: Kateřina Křivánková
Ensemble Opera Diversa

Special events

Exhibitions

28.10–1.12 Dietrichstein Palace

The Cunning Little Vixen – 100 years

An exhibition dedicated to the world premiere of the opera in Brno.

1–24.11 Foyer of Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Excursions of Mr. Brouček

An exhibition of pictorial documents relating to the creation and first stage performances of Janáček's fifth opera.

1–24.11 Foyer of Mahen Theatre

Pavel Haas – The Charlatan

The exhibition is dedicated to Leoš Janáček's favourite pupil Pavel Haas and his only opera The Charlatan, which had its world premiere at the Zemské Theatre in Brno in 1938.

1.11–1.12 Leoš Janáček Memorial

The Janáček Affair

An exhibition of artistic artefacts tracing the appearance of Janáček in the works of authors from the 1920s to contemporary artists.

1–24.11 Square in front of Janáček Theatre

Little Vixen through children's eyes

Exhibition of children's artworks

Lecture introductions

Before opera productions

Start 45 minutes before the beginning of the performance

3.11 Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Excursions of Mr. Brouček /

Lecturer: Patricie Částková

8.11 Mahen Theatre

Pavel Haas – The Charlatan / Lecturer: Miloš Štědroň

10.11 Mahen Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Cunning Little Vixen /

Lecturer: Patricie Částková

16 and 18.11 Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Makropulos Affair / Lecturer: Miloš Štědroň

20 and 21.11 Mahen Theatre

Leoš Janáček – Jenůfa / Lecturer: Marta Ljubková

23.11 Janáček Theatre

Antonín Dvořák – Rusalka / Lecturer: Patricie Částková

24.11 Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Cunning Little Vixen /

Lecturer: Patricie Částková

4.11 Janáček Theatre

Bamberger Symphoniker and Jakub Hrůša /

Lecturer: Jiří Zahradka

5.11 Reduta Theatre

Nicky Spence, Lada Valešová & Navarra String Quartet /

Lecturer: Ondřej Pivoda

15.11 Mahen Theatre

Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB and Jan Mráček /

Lecturer: Martin Flašar

17.11 Janáček Theatre

Staatskapelle Berlin and Christian Thielemann /

Lecturer: Lubomír Spurný

Discussions after the performance

3.11 Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Excursions of Mr. Brouček

20 and 21.11 Mahen Theatre

Leoš Janáček – Jenůfa

18.11 Janáček Theatre

Leoš Janáček – The Makropulos Affair

JANÁČEK BRNO 2024

Information

Venues

Mahen Theatre / Malinovského nám. 1

Janáček Theatre / Rooseveltova 1

Reduta Theatre / Zelný trh 4

Theatre on Orlí street / Orlí 19

Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary / Mendelovo nám. 1

Refectory of the Augustinian Monastery / Mendelovo nám. 1

Leoš Janáček Memorial / Smetanova 14

JAMU – Faculty of Music of Janáček Academy
of Music and Performing Arts / Komenského nám. 6

Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University / Arne Nováka 1

Villa Tugendhat / Černopolní 45

Villa Stiassni / Hroznová 14

Villa Löw-Beer / Drobného 22

Zeman's Café and Patisserie / Josefská 4

Café ERA / Zemědělská 30

Tickets

Tickets on sale from 4.11 2023

Main sales point:

National Theatre Brno Customer Centre,
Dvořákova 589/11, Brno

tel.: +420 542 158 120, e-mail: obchodni@ndbrno.cz

online pre-sale: www.janacek-brno.com

Special programme organized

by TIC BRNO (tours, exhibitions, gastronomy...):

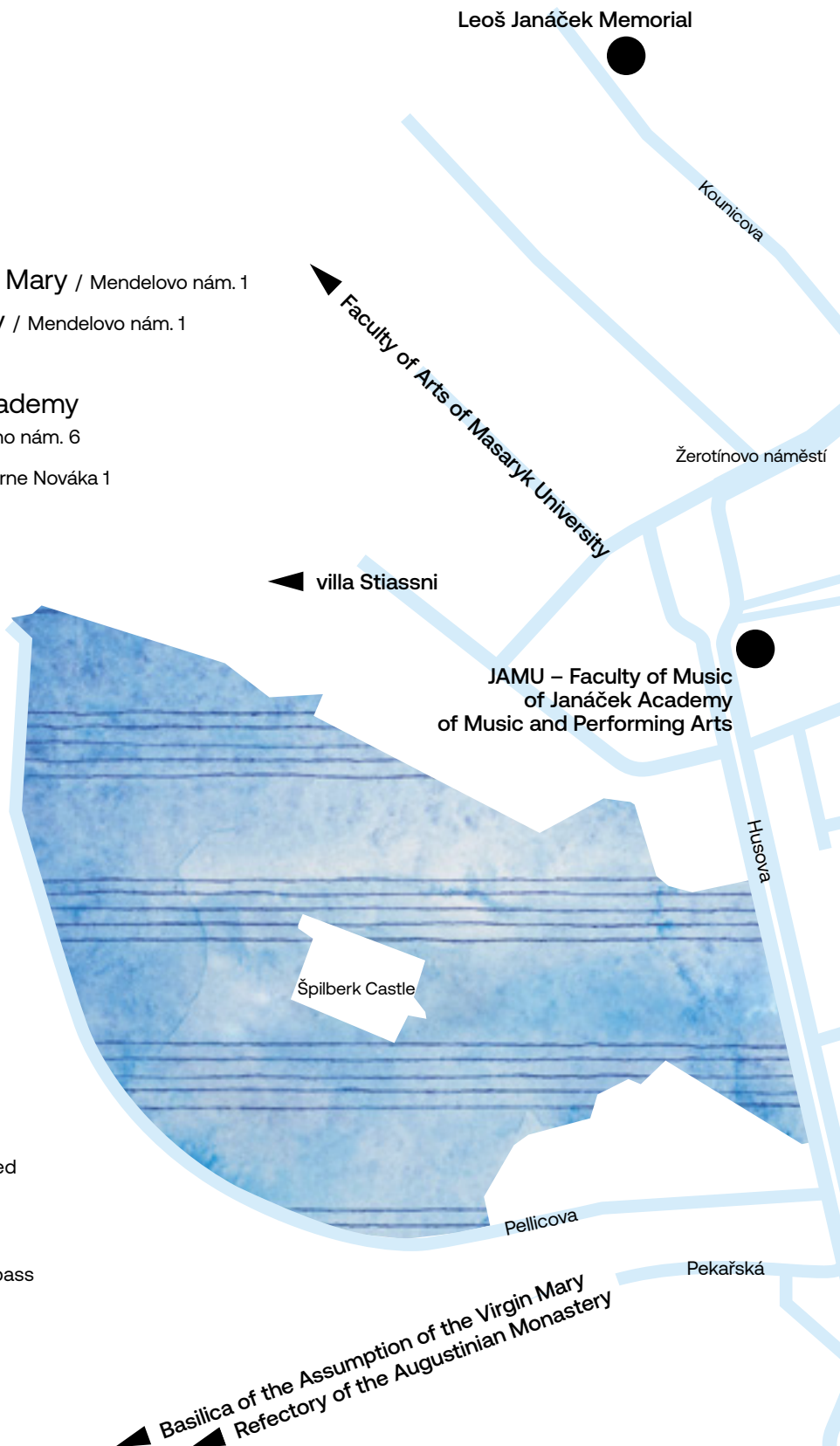
www.leosjanacek.eu/festival-jb

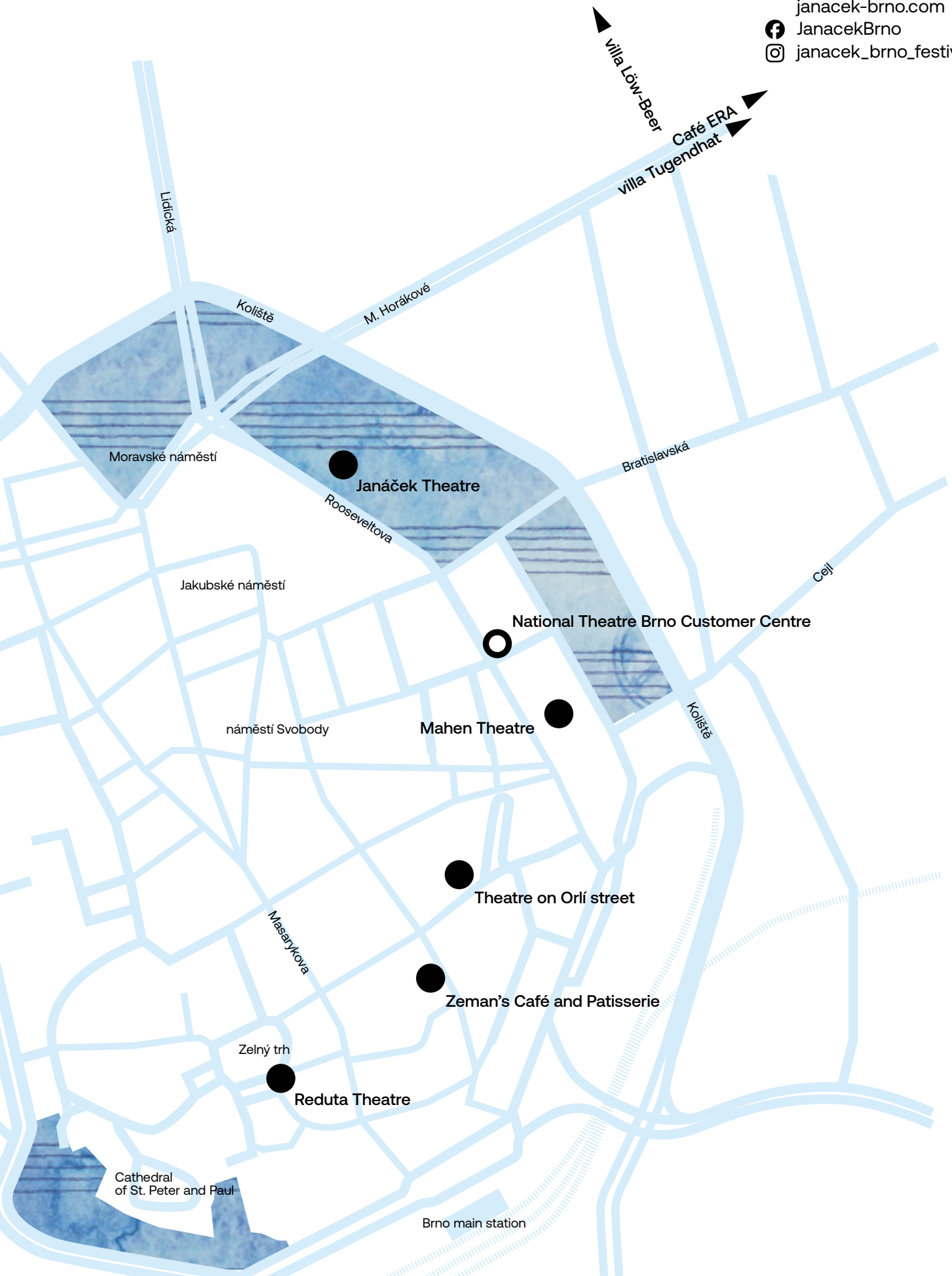
Festival Pass

Seeing more festival performances means more experiences. That's why we have prepared a discounted admission fee for you if you purchase a festival pass. When buying tickets for at least 3 performances you get a 25% discount. When buying tickets for at least 5 performances you get a 30% discount. The festival pass cannot be used for performances at Villa Tugendhat.

All information:

tel.: +420 542 158 120, e-mail: obchodni@ndbrno.cz





Moravské náměstí

Janáček Theatre

National Theatre Brno Customer Centre

Jakubské náměstí

náměstí Svobody

Mahen Theatre

Theatre on Orlí street

Zeman's Café and Patisserie

Zelný trh

Reduta Theatre

Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul

Brno main station

Lidická

Koliště

M. Horákové

villa Löw-Beer

Café ERA

villa Tugendhat

Bratislavská

Cejl

Koliště

Masarykova

Robert Carsen and Brouček on an Excursion

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

No limits! It's as though this year's festival motto came directly from Janáček's opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*. A journey into space and back into history – the first a dream which later became a reality, while we are still waiting for the latter. Or are we? All we need is our imagination, and Leoš Janáček certainly had an abundance of that, although in this case he wasn't driven by an interest in historical research or a love of astronomy, instead it was more about poking fun. This new production of *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* will not only provide a fitting opening to the 2024 festival, it will also tour internationally as it is the coproduction of three theatres – the National Theatre Brno, the Teatro Real in Madrid and the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin.

None of Janáček's operas could be labelled comic, and even though humour does appear in them, it's more of a rare spice. But in this opera about a landlord from Malá Strana, a typical small-minded Czech, Janáček's humour is overflowing, albeit well channelled. Janáček was inspired by the poet Svatopluk Čech's popular novellas about Mr Brouček, and he perfectly complemented this satire with music set to dance rhythms and the use of unusual instruments such as the glass harmonica and bag-pipes. While in the first part, the excursion to the Moon, his biting humour is aimed at a number of Prague critics, intellectuals and artists, in the second part from the Hussite period, he targets the flawed characteristics of the Czech nation in general.

The opera had a difficult gestation, with Janáček alternating between several librettists, and it would take nine years before a suitable libretto ending was found for *The Excursion of Mr Brouček to the Moon*. At the end of the work he lamented over his librettists: "But our poets! One tells them everything and yet it still turns out poorly!" Nevertheless, he soon decided to expand the opera by another part, this time an excursion to the 15th century. Together with the librettist F. S. Procházka he accomplished this quickly, and from now on Janáček would write the libretti himself. In a charming letter to Kamila Stösslová he explained what led him to choose Čech's Mr Brouček of all people: "Do you know who this Brouček is? Quite an ordinary person; he mouths off at the whole world and he spends his whole life in front of a jug of beer. He is no good for anything in the world. You ask: 'Then why choose someone like that for an opera?' So that he disgusts everyone, is ridiculed by everyone and is a warning! The Russians also had such a 'soft' person called Oblomov. In fact every other Russian was an Oblomov – and where did it lead them? A horrible revolution with rivers of blood. This is why I hold up Brouček – as a warning. There are so many of those Broučeks everywhere you look! All they care about is their stomach. So my dear Brouček gets drunk again, he falls asleep somewhere in Hradčany and has a dream: He is flying to the Moon! He lands there. What a nightmare! The people there only live off the scent of blossom! They only give Brouček blossoms to sniff! And then one of the Moon dwellers falls in love with him! Bloodless, a body like gossamer."

Over recent decades Janáček's operas have not only been coveted by leading international theatres but by artists as well, some of whom have a truly special relationship with Janáček. One such person is Robert Carsen, one of the world's leading stage directors. For many years now his productions have been amongst the most successful at the most prestigious opera houses, such as La Scala in Milan, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the French Opéra nationale de Paris, the Glyndebourne Festival in England and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. He has staged almost all of Janáček's operas, and when we look at Janáček and Carsen we have two artists who, despite being separated by almost a century, share the same, poetic, profound



STAGE DESIGN RADU BORUZESCU

Stage design for *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*



1.11 7pm and 3.11 3pm
Janáček Theatre
THE EXCURSIONS
OF MR BROUČEK

humanism and sense for stage drama, as well as a sense of humour. Not to mention their love of music, which is always the most important thing in Robert Carsen's productions: "I'm passionate about music, and I care deeply about the score in doing an opera – otherwise there's no point for me in directing opera. The music completely shapes how the piece is told. The way you feel the work emotionally is conveyed by the music."

Leoš Janáček is one of Carsen's favourite composers and his productions of *Jenůfa*, *From the House of the Dead*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *The Makropulos Affair* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* have been performed in theatres across the world. The most recent opera he directed, *Fate*, was created especially for the Brno ensemble.

"Janáček is without doubt one of my top three opera composers. His theatre is so condensed and so poetic at the same time – it really is amazing. One of the reasons why Janáček's operas are so powerful is that they satisfy you both emotionally and intellectually. They are intellectual works where you have to think about what is happening in them, and the way in which Janáček asks what is a human being, what are our desires and losses and feelings of futility. Janáček's theatre work makes you question what makes a person a person, and how hard it is to be happy. And naturally his music has incredible power. It completely absorbs you and has a direct emotional impact on you," says Robert Carsen.

The Excursions of Mr Brouček is one of Janáček's less frequently performed operas because it is difficult to find the key to joining the two different parts, as Carsen himself admits: *This opera is certainly the most astonishing, weird and crazy, mad piece, probably the maddest I have ever come across, and I have come across a few. It was quite a challenge for our team. This opera took Janáček quite a while to work on and it was finally premiered in 1917. The original idea was just to do the Brouček excursion to the Moon and then he decided to go farther. And he had many problems with librettists, as composers sometimes do. If you read the libretto, it is more or less almost incomprehensible for 75% of it. For me, it falls into the category of satire. And it's like when I directed Candide that the references which were very topical at the time and everyone would know what*

they meant, now are completely obscure, incomprehensible for people. When you do satire, you need to update the references but you still have to make the piece work for how it was written. It was made more challenging by the fact that one has to come up with a production which would work here in Brno, where the audience understands the words and is familiar with the references, but of course this production will be sent to Germany and in Spain. We had to come up with something which didn't just have "local colour" but which actually would be meaningful to an international audience.

The story of Mr Brouček – he is a piss artist as we say in English, he is drunk all the time, the action starts in or outside this pub in Prague. You see the ambience of the pub, you see all the people who are in this pub, a lot of artists and interesting people who Brouček doesn't like. In fact the novel puts Brouček in a very negative light and Janáček was rather upset because when the opera opened, people rather liked the character. There was something sympathetic to his drinking and eating sausages. So drinking beer plays an important part in this story because Brouček doesn't go to the Moon, he imagines he goes to the Moon. The traveling to the Moon and the second act, which involves traveling and war and resistance and fighting and a certain nationalism and victory, made us think of the events of 1968, the period of 1968/69 and the Prague Spring, and we also have to remember that 1969 was the Moon landing, 1968 was the time of Space Odyssey, there was Barbarella, there was Woodstock for the first time, it was the beginning of Flowerpower, it was the beginning of all these things which somehow are all in Mr Brouček. When Brouček ends up on the Moon, the people living on the Moon live by sniffing flowers.

Even though the imagination of artists knows no bounds, not even Janáček could have imagined that when man really did land on the Moon, the first music to be heard would be Czech. However, it wasn't to be Janáček's *Brouček*, but Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, a piece astronaut Neil Armstrong had liked ever since playing it with his university orchestra. And the excursion to the past? Our past is Janáček's future and at some point they come together, precisely because that's what Robert Carsen's productions are like. Clever, witty and sometimes chilling. ✕



Robert Carsen rehearsing *Fate* with the Brno ensemble

PHOTO MAREK OLBRYZEMEK

A city with a festival buzz

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

Bored in Brno? No chance! You could never be bored here. It might no longer be the Manchester of Moravia, as Brno used to be called during the First Republic, and it's true that the plan to produce airships never got off the ground, but Brno today still has plenty to offer visitors. The quality of the cafés, bars and restaurants is taken for granted here, but what is really TOP in Brno is its music, theatres and festivals.

It's obviously an advantage to have someone like Janáček as your local composer, but Brno is also the ideal combination of a place where everything's "a stone's throw away" but at the same time is a bustling metropolis. And every two years the whole town comes alive with the Janáček Brno festival, when you might bump into the Maestro in the streets, night or day. Although he's no longer with us and in his place is a life-size likeness with his dog Čipera, if you scan the QR code on his coat, you can make your journey from one concert to the next more enjoyable by listening to, for example, the wedding scene from *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the fanfare from *Sinfonietta* or the overture to *The Makropulos Affair*.

And of course it's not just as a photograph that you can come across Janáček in Brno. All you have to do is go to the Cabbage Market with its fruit and vegetables in the morning, listen to the hum of voices, and with a little imagination you can see the composer in front of you as he walks among the stall keepers, notebook in hand, writing down the cries of the Líšeň merchants.

The year 2024 is the Year of Czech Music in Brno and many other Czech composers will also be celebrated. For example, the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová, a pupil of Bohuslav Martinů and the first woman to conduct the Czech Philharmonic, was born in Královo Pole in Brno. The second half of the 20th century saw a whole host of composers emerge in Brno, including Jan

Novák, Josef Berg, Miloslav Ištván and František Emmert. Once you have finished the Janáček route, you can follow in their footsteps and discover even more fascinating places.

It's already a tradition to hold concerts in Brno's villas, and this year the beautiful Stiasstni Villa will be added to the list, while café concerts will also be a new addition to the festival. The students from the Music Faculty of the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts have not only organized their traditional morning and chamber concerts, but they are also introducing a lighter note to the festival's musical events in the form of early-evening jazz concerts in selected Brno cafés every Saturday of the festival.



2. 11 and 23. 11

5 pm, Café ERA

9. 11 and 16. 11

5 pm, Zeman's Café and Patisserie

JAZZ EVENINGS

The jazz evenings are being held in cafés which should make it onto the list of any fan of functionalist architecture. Zeman's Café (originally U Sedláčka) is the work of the Jewish Brno architect Vítězslav Korn, and its design with onyx walls, marble tiles, wood panelling and windows makes for a timeless classic, a café that has been operating in Brno continuously in its original form since 1937.

The functionalist Café ERA, located near the Tugendhat Villa, was built between 1927 and 1929 based on a design by architect Josef Kranz, who at that time was part of Bohuslav Fuchs' studio. Starting from November 5th, you can also visit an exhibition titled *Life with the Janáčeks*, showcasing original illustrations by Vendula Chalánková for the books *Marie's Cookbook* and *Máři's memories* which are based on the legacy of Janáček's long-time housekeeper, Marie Stejskalová, known as Máři. At ERA, you can also enjoy Janáček's apricot dumplings, and if you have a craving for more delicacies based on recipes from *Marie's Cookbook*, you can taste them during the festival at twelve Brno cafés and restaurants that have been recognized in the independent Gourmet Brno 2023 rating (see *Gastronomic Janáček*, p. 53). Brno is simply a place buzzing all year round and especially during the festival, as it lives with Janáček and music! ✕



PHOTO PETR ŠMÍDEK

Zeman's Café and Patisserie

LEOŠ JANÁČEK THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR

Conductor: Robert Jindra
Director: Claus Guth
Guest Performance by
Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin
Starring: Dorothea Röschmann

16 and 18. 11. 2024, 7 pm
Janáček Theatre



Berlin's The Makropulos Affair

Janáček's *Makropulos Affair* is unique in the world of opera. Based on the almost detective-like plot of a play by Karel Čapek, not only was it the first opera to feature a telephone on stage, but more importantly it was a work which asked existential questions of both its creators and audiences. How to approach it is a question for all artists and this will be the fourth production to be performed by some very special guests at the festival. For the first time, one of Germany's leading ensembles, Berlin's Staatsoper Unter den Linden, will be appearing with Claus Guth's highly acclaimed production. Czech audiences have not yet had the opportunity to see the work of this stage director, who is one of the stars of top opera houses such as the MET, Covent Garden and the Paris Opera. Two dramaturges asked what his approach was to Janáček's operas.

YVONNE GEBAUER: What have been your experiences so far with Janáček?

CLAUS GUTH: Until recently the composer Janáček was *terra incognita* for me. But then not long ago I gained an insight into this world through the opera *Jenůfa* at the Covent Garden Opera in London. And it was while working on this that I became addicted to him. You enter a unique, fascinating world, the secrets of which are only gradually revealed, but I discovered that as soon as you get to know him, you want to delve deeper. Janáček uses the words and music to create a whole which could be described as organic.

BENJAMIN WÄNTIG: In *The Makropulos Affair*, what exactly is hiding behind that affair in the title of the work?

CG: There is a long and a short answer. One dimension of the work concerns the existence of the protagonist Emilia Marty, who is given the elixir of life, the "*Makropulos affair*", by her father and has lived to be 337 years old. All of the philosophical questions raised then relate to this fact. Is eternal life worth striving for? What is the meaning of death in relation to the life previously lived? What is the meaning of the moment? What does repetition mean? All of these questions fascinate me and indeed characterize the heart of the work.

YG: And what was the long answer?

CG: The difficulty of this work lies in the fact that 95% of it deals with a very specific plot which covers its own content, which only occasionally and subversively pushes through to the surface.

YG: And what is that 95% about?

CG: On the surface it is the complicated history of a legacy, almost a detective story. I have to admit that this initially made me slightly nervous, because I always like to get straight into the theme and here

I had to go in a roundabout way. It took me a while before I was able to make my way through this jungle of a plot. The work is very convoluted. It is a story of how generations of people senselessly waste their strength on a disputes over an inheritance.

BW: So how exactly is the story of the inheritance to be told?

CG: To understand the complexities of the plot it is necessary to have an exact understanding of the story. On the other hand, when you finally understand it, this does not contribute towards a better understanding of where the work is headed. Here too it shows how the work is based on the traditions of the theatre of the absurd and of the grotesque.

YG: So what is at the heart of the story?

CG: The heart of the work is actually to be found at the very end. Initially, the viewer is fascinated by the amazing prospect of immortality, but then you experience the harsh reality through the character of Emilia Marty, because we gradually discover what eternal life really entails. This means that the world as seen through the eyes of Emilia Marty is completely absurd. From the perspective of eternity, every act seems



PHOTO HARALD HOFFMANN

Dorothea Röschmann



16.11 and 18.11

7pm, Janáček Theatre

THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR

to be empty and meaningless, and people are forever trapped in a vicious circle.

For Emilia Marty, the moment has lost its value. As soon as the finality of our life is cast in doubt, the question of the meaning of life is raised. And so Emilia Marty looks on from a distance at people and their actions. Everything is already familiar to her, everything is predictable, there is nothing which can touch her or surprise her anymore. As a result, she also loses the ability to love. She knows what she has to do to attract men, but everything has now become interchangeable for her. And from this comes a harsh coldness which everyone feels who comes into contact with her. Everyone who meets her is initially attracted to her, but gradually this turns into astonishment and then disgust.

BW: Does this mean there is an obvious development in the work?

CG: Yes, an interesting example is the character of Kristina. She is initially full of admiration for the magnificent opera singer, but later she recognizes how bitter and cold this woman is and how she despises people. The clashes between Marty and the other characters throughout the work lead to a definite process of self-discovery. And so at the end she decides to forsake the formula for eternal life.

BW: How would you describe the specific work on this opera?

CG: It's a very dense opera and the scenes have to be worked out almost bar by bar. Before rehearsals and the detailed preparation, I was asked whether we wanted the performance to have an interval or not, and I had to remind myself that it's very short, just under two hours. But because it's so dense I felt as if it was twice as long.

YG: How did you work with the motif of infinity, eternity in your production?

CG: We decided not only to show Emilia Marty constantly in action, but we would also give her moments on her own. We were interested in what state a woman would be who had lived for 300 years during such moments. We also follow her when she's not "performing", when she's exhausted and vulnerable. Then it's interesting how she changes. Whenever she appears in the scene she seems very energetic, resolute and charming. So we've created another level for her: a sterile space without feelings, a white time capsule, a spaceship, a futuristic unreal dressing room. There she prepares for each

of her roles in life – she goes through six names in this opera and always takes on a new identity. So in terms of the stage design her capsule represents a kind of centre from where she can step out into the real places where the action is taking place – an office, the entrance to a theatre stage, a hotel. From Marty's perspective these are always interchangeable, which is why we always present them as repetitions with variations. There is something interesting in each room, a strange hole in the floor or a wheelchair.

BW: What else do these rooms have in common?

CG: In all three of the rooms the action takes place in the corridors as a metaphor of life. You are always in motion but you never get anywhere. In his stage design, Étienne Pluss created passageways which seem like the cross-section of an anthill.

YG: What means did you use to express the absurdity of this world?

CG: The dancers, who play an important role in all of the acts, represent the mechanism of motion in the areas where the action is taking place. In the first act

they give clarity to how Marty sees the grotesqueness of bureaucracy, a jumble of numbers, letters and facts. In the second act, set in a fictional opera house, there is a production of *Madama Butterfly*, with Emilia Marty in the title role, and the stage is crowded with theatre employees, artists coming from the dressing rooms, visitors and autograph hunters. Alongside the pragmatic side to the matter, this place in the theatre reflects the metaphorical meaning of the entire work: how we play roles, how the world of humans appears like a theatre of the grotesque from afar – and how Marty with her knowledge of human nature manipulates people and inhabits more and more roles.

YG: How do you penetrate into Emilia's internal world of emotions?

CG: Flashbacks appear repeatedly, memories of her past – for example, a traumatic experience from childhood when they poured the elixir into her – but also presentiments of the future, when she has visions of herself as an old woman. She can no longer stop the march of time and is finally prepared to pay the price we all have to pay. ✕



PHOTO MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

The Berlin production of *The Makropulos Affair*

Brno's Janáček Year of 1924

TEXT JIŘÍ ZAHŘÁDKA

For Czech musical culture the year 1924 was marked by important anniversary celebrations, as 100 years had passed since the birth of Bedřich Smetana and 40 years since his death.

Music institutions everywhere were devoting a great deal of attention to this jubilee and in Brno it was no different. The Brno National Theatre prepared a cycle of all Smetana's operas and the composer's music was frequently heard at its symphonic concerts. It is therefore no surprise that the anniversaries of other composers were left somewhat in the shade. The most important of these were the 20th anniversary of the death of Antonín Dvořák, the 50th birthday of Josef Suk and the 70th birthday of Leoš Janáček. However, Brno did not forget its own great artist and, as with Smetana, a cycle of Janáček's opera works was also staged. In addition, Janáček's compositions featured prominently in concert productions. This "Brno Janáček Year" was launched on 21 January 1924 with the third symphonic concert, where the orchestra of the National Theatre performed Suk's *Ripening* and Janáček's *Taras Bulba*. According to the recollections of a member of the orchestra, Leopold Habrda, the composer attended rehearsals, but the fact that the concert was to celebrate his birthday was supposed to be a surprise for Janáček and was kept secret. Taking part in the gala concert was a hundred-member

orchestra of the National Theatre expanded by pupils from the conservatory and members of the German theatre orchestra. It could have been a truly festive occasion – that is, if the management of the theatre had not forgotten to invite the subject of the jubilee, Janáček. Václav Štech recalls this unfortunate situation: *"I arranged with the head of the opera for a large concert to be held in his honour, and at the theatre everything was done to add lustre to this important event. With Janáček's consent having been obtained, and having organized a celebratory performance of his opera as well as a concert, the head of opera, Neumann, came to me to collect the ticket for the box we had prepared for Janáček. So I gave Neumann what he had asked for and we expected Janáček's attendance at the theatre. The box was decked out with a lavish floral arrangement – and I had seen to it that the maestro would be welcomed not only with applause, but also with musical fanfares as he entered. I was waiting for him myself at the entrance. But Janáček didn't come. Since he often attended various performances at the theatre, his absence couldn't be interpreted as antipathy towards the theatre. Moreover, I had taken measures much earlier for Janáček to be portrayed for the National Theatre by the foremost Czech sculptor, Jan Štursa, whom I had managed to recruit for the job. Janáček was happy to sit for the sculptor – a Moravian artist – and was pleased by our attention. Yet he hadn't come to our performance. Why? That's what I was asking myself during the celebration and I was preparing to ask the head of the opera the same question. However, his answer arrived before I had even posed the question. He came to me looking crestfallen and almost in tears confessed to me that he had forgotten to hand over the box to Janáček. There had been so many musical concerns with the jubilee – the ticket had remained in his pocket. He had forgotten, oh – Lord – forgotten! Now he begged me for all the world not to tell anyone about his mistake. He would be the subject of much ridicule in Brno. Janáček would never forgive him for what he had neglected to do. I advised Neumann not to tell anyone anything about the matter, not to give himself away. There would have been unpleasant talk about it. It must be swallowed up by oblivion. That is the best remedy for such an unfortunate incident."*

The story was also taken up by some newspapers. Fortunately, Janáček did not take offence and was rather amused by the incident: *"There were 'fun and games' in Brno. There was a sort of celebration of me and the composer Suk. I couldn't even buy tickets for it – so I didn't go. They called out and kept calling out for me – and there was I, somewhere beyond Brno in the snow-covered fields!"* Immediately afterwards Janáček thanked the orchestra: *"An unfortunate incident meant that I was not with you when your efforts brought my work *Taras Bulba* to life. But the thought of celebrating some kind of 70th birthday – which I have not yet had – didn't enter my head. And I wouldn't sacrifice any of the minutes of my life, and I am sure that none of you would*



Conductor František Neumann

PHOTO THE LEOŠ JANÁČEK MZM ARCHIVE



PHOTO THE LEOS JANÁČEK NZM ARCHIVE

Concert poster for the 1924 Year of Czech Music

sacrifice a moment of his life; nor would any of you wish to take away from me any of these moments when things are beginning to go so well for us in this dear republic of ours. Do not hold it against me if I now thank you only in writing for your excellent performance: all of you and the conductor, Fr. Neumann, in particular."

Other concerts formed part of the following season. Three concerts were planned for October which were devoted entirely to celebrating Janáček's birthday; the first was arranged by the Brno Beseda, the second by the Club of Moravian Composers and the third by the Brno Conservatory. The first of them, the 2nd regular concert of the Brno Beseda's Philharmonic Society, was held on 19 October 1924 and on the programme were *Our Father*, *Amarus*, *The Čarták on Soláň* and *The Eternal Gospel*. The solos were sung by Hana Pirková and Stanislav Tauber, and the choir of the Brno Beseda and the orchestra of the National Theatre were conducted by Jaroslav Kvapil. A complimentary review, however, drew attention to the concert's low attendance, a phenomenon which unfortunately also thwarted one of the other planned concerts: *"It could not even be spoiled by the absence of part of the Czech audience who on such an important occasion evidently had no desire to demonstrate even social courtesy to the greatest representative of Moravian music, and one of the greatest figures in all of Czech music, even if a genuine inner relationship with his work is something we either cannot have or do not want to have."*

The celebrations of Janáček's birthday continued with a gala chamber concert organized by the State Music and Drama Conservatory in Brno in the Besední dům on 21 October 1924. On the programme were Janáček's piano compositions, violin sonata, *Fairy Tale* and most significantly the world premiere of *Youth*, a suite for flute (piccolo), oboe, clarinet, french horn, bassoon and bass clarinet. The musicians were members of the Brno National Theatre orchestra: Josef Bok, Matěj Wagner, Stanislav Krtička, František Jánský, František Bříza and Karel Pavlíček. Although the concert was very well received, the performance of *Youth* ended in disappointment for Janáček due to technical defects with the

instruments. The clarinetist Stanislav Krtička recalls this staging: *"At that time, after the success of Foerster's wind quintet and then the sensation of the Paris wind quintet 'Des instruments à vent', which pioneered the French method of woodwind instrument playing in this country with enduring success after the First World War, Janáček decided to write a sextet with a similar set-up of instruments, appropriately entitled Youth. He looked forward to the premiere with childlike delight. After all, the sextet recalled the years of his youth as a choral scholar in Staré Brno under Pavel Křížkovský. The work also employed the marching rhythm of the boarders-bluebirds at the time of the Prussian occupation of Brno in 1866. Members of the opera orchestra studied the sextet under the personal supervision of the composer in his classroom at the conservatory. The progress of the rehearsals gave rise to the highest expectations. The composer extended small courtesies to the performers (photographs, cigars – he himself did not smoke), and so the premiere drew closer. Unfortunately, the event was immediately struck by two mishaps, examples of force majeure which no-one could have predicted. The first concerned the oboe with the initial main melody and was easily disposed of. The second, towards the end of the work in the 4th movement, was more critical, when the clarinet broke a spring on an important key of the instrument without any hope of overcoming the defect while playing. And so, regrettably, the final part of the sextet was performed as a quintet, with one instrument silenced. With the composition drawing towards its close, the afflicted player considered it more expedient for the performance to be completed with five instruments rather than having to be interrupted again. The thunderous success of the sextet with the unsuspecting audience evidently had not the slightest effect on the composer, who was present. He angrily reproached the player for his presumed offence, without bothering about any explanation of the accident. His curt 'the spring, the spring' transformed into noisy protests delivered to the audience in bitter words: 'Mr K[r]tička made out as if he were playing and he wasn't...' and also a personal rebuke: 'I wrote a sextet, not a quintet.' Thanks to the organizers of the concert, the Maestro was at least partially appeased, when he received an assurance that the concert would be repeated in the near future."* *Youth* was also reviewed in this way by a critic who stated that the composition had been ruined by technical difficulties. A subsequent performance where the players were supposed to restore their good name after the first unfortunate performance also turned out badly.

A gala orchestral concert organized by the Club of Moravian Composers was planned for 27 October 1924. On the programme for the evening were the composer's early *Suite for Strings*, the second performance of the new work *Youth*, the premiere of the overture to Janáček's first opera *Šárka*, the *Jealousy* overture and the concert premiere of the *Lachian Dances*. Along with the National Theatre orchestra and the conductor František Neumann, the players from the orchestra were once again to appear in *Youth*. The properly staged concert, prepared in detail including printed programmes, was supposed to be the culmination of the celebrations for Janáček. However, a report appeared in the newspapers that the concert would not take place: *"By Saturday evening, however, only twenty-two tickets had been sold for this exceptionally significant concert. Due to the complete absence of an audience, it was necessary to cancel the concert."* The situation was even more embarrassing because Janáček had wanted to donate the proceeds from the concert to Bedřich Smetana's destitute daughter Zdenka Hejdušková. In the end the gala evening went ahead at a later date on 2 December 1924. The concert was a great success and a fitting conclusion to the Brno celebrations of Janáček. ✕

From Jiří Zahradka's book: *"Theatre must not be comedy for the people" Leoš Janáček and the National Theatre in Brno*

Jakub Hrůša, Daniil Trifonov, the Bamberger Symphoniker and the Masters of Czech Music

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

The celebrations of the Year of Czech Music have a longer tradition than might be expected. The first was held in 1924, i.e., a century ago. It included a concert dedicated to Leoš Janáček's 70th birthday and Josef Suk's 50th. Let us transport you back one hundred years, and now, just as then, you will hear three masterpieces – Josef Suk's symphonic poem *Ripening*, Janáček's orchestral rhapsody *Taras Bulba*, and Dvořák's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in G Minor*, the only difference being the musicians.

The festival will finally present the Bamberger Symphoniker, one of the world's leading orchestras. Its first planned guest appearance at the MFJB 2020 was put on hold by Covid, and instead there was just a streamed concert from its home concert hall in Germany. However, it is now coming to Brno to present a programme featuring three greats of Czech music – Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček and Josef Suk.

We will therefore have a wonderful opportunity to hear Czech music played by an orchestra with strong links to it, and not just because the orchestra was formed by members of the Prague German Philharmonic after 1946. Credit also goes to the excellent

Czech conductor, Jakub Hrůša, who has been its chief conductor since 2016.

Joining them for the first time in Brno is one of the stars of the piano today, Daniil Trifonov. At the age of only 33, this Russian-born resident of New York has garnered numerous awards (e.g., the Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Solo Album 2018; Gramophone's 2016 Artist of the Year and Musical America's 2019 Artist of the Year; in 2021 he was named a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government). "He has everything and more... gentleness as well as a demonic element. I've never heard anything like it," said Martha Argerich, one of the most distinguished pianists. The London newspaper the Times called him "undoubtedly the most incredible pianist of our time". Daniil Trifonov appears across the world and works with top-class orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Berliner Philharmoniker, the San Francisco Symphony and many others. He has performed solo recitals at the Royal Festival Hall, the Carnegie Hall, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Seoul Arts Center. He will be performing Antonín Dvořák's Piano Concerto at the festival concert. ✕

"The transparent orchestral textures revealed a wealth of detail in the finale, which carried irresistible life energy in its stride, ultimately galloping ebulliently to its close amid timpani fireworks. This was a brilliantly executed programme of Czech music played with genuine warmth, not least in two encores from The Bartered Bride and a Dvořák Miniature Romantic Piece with the orchestra's Concertmaster and Principal Viola."

Rohan Shotton, BBC Proms

"Listening to Daniil Trifonov's recital in Carnegie Hall, one's first thought was, this pianist is such a wizard at his instrument, he makes even the gnarliest pieces sound easy."

David Wright, The New York Classical Review



PHOTO DARIO ACOSTA

Daniil Trifonov



4.11

8 pm, Janáček Theatre

BAMBERGER SYMPHONIKER

Staatskapelle Berlin with Christian Thielemann

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

The Staatskapelle Berlin is one of the world's oldest orchestras, its origins dating back to an ensemble founded by Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg in 1570. The most important date, however, is 1742, when Frederick the Great founded the Royal Court Opera. Since then the orchestra has been associated with opera and in recent decades with Berlin's Staatsoper Unter den Linden. It has been led by conductors of world renown, such as Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Felix von Weingartner, Richard Strauss, Erich Kleiber, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Herbert von Karajan. For more than thirty years now it has been led by Daniel Barenboim, who has travelled with the orchestra across the world to present its acclaimed, uniquely warm and dark sound to concert halls in North and South America as well as Asia. Naturally, this goes hand in hand with the orchestra's exceptional performance skills. At the festival the Staatskapelle Berlin will be performing Janáček's *Makropulos Affair* as part of its opera duties, however audiences will also be presented with the rare opportunity to hear the symphonic ensemble with a very interesting programme under its newly appointed chief conductor, Christian Thielemann.



PHOTO MATTHIAS CREUTZIGER

Christian Thielemann

The German conductor Christian Thielemann is one of the best in Europe. The start of his career is linked to names such as Herbert von Karajan and Daniel Barenboim. He is most at home with the German repertoire, in particular the works of Richard Strauss and Wagner. He has also been the chief conductor of Berlin's Deutsche Oper, Dresden's Semper Oper and he led the Müncher Philharmoniker. He is also a major presence at the Bayreuther Festspiele, where he has conducted 180 performances. He also works closely with the Wiener Philharmoniker, with whom he recorded Anton Bruckner's symphonies. Christian Thielemann first appeared in front of Czech audiences at the 2016 Dvořák's Prague festival.

It's not only Czech composers who have anniversaries ending in the number four. In September it will be the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of the most famous German composers of the 20th century, Arnold Schoenberg. As a result, the concert programme offers an interesting contrast of German compositional traditions in the form of the romantic *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in D Minor* by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Schoenberg's symphonic poem *Pelleas a Melisande*, which was written when Janáček was finishing off the first version of *Jenůfa*. Although *Pelleas a Melisande* was one of Schoenberg's tonal compositions, it signified an important step on the way to the new music of the 20th century. However, the concert will be opened by a composition written three years ago in 2021 – *Elysium*, a work by the Canadian composer and conductor, Samy Moussa, commissioned by the Wiener Philharmoniker. There will be a place in the programme for Czech music in the form of the outstanding pianist Jan Bartoš, who will perform the solo part in Mendelssohn's *Concerto for Piano*. ✕

"The orchestra played with impressive dynamic contrasts, their warm sounds flowed like liquid gold. There was technical brilliance from all sections: from the pianissimo plucking by the strings to the powerful surges of the brass, there was not a weak link."

Denise Lai, La Scena Musicale



The immortal Cunning Little Vixen celebrates its centenary

TEXT VENDULA GALDOVÁ

The highpoint of the festival will be a production of one of Janáček's most frequently played operas – *The Cunning Little Vixen*. This ever-youthful opera celebrates 100 years since its Brno premiere on 6 November 1924. The work will be performed by the Brno National Theatre under the direction of Jiří Heřman, with the added bonus of Kateřina Kněžíková and Adam Plachetka in the roles of Bystrouška and the Gamekeeper. This married couple have a wealth of experience from Czech and international concert stages and opera houses – in this interview we ask them about their approach to Janáček's music, their parental view of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and performing concerts together.

Mrs Kněžíková, like Leoš Janáček you come from North Moravia – as a result do you feel closer to his music, has it been around you since you were young?

KK: I first heard Janáček around about puberty when I was singing songs from the collection *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song*. Although I had been playing piano since I was young, I didn't begin to sing until I was twelve – as a child I wanted to work in a pharmaceutical lab. I didn't go to concerts much, I first saw an opera when I was sixteen, I didn't know anything about it at that time. The fact that I lived near Hukvaldy had no bearing at all on my relationship towards Janáček. I used to often go there in my childhood but no-one told me anything about Janáček – we used to go to the castle "for the vixen". However, his music is very close to me due to folk music and the dialect, so I don't have to think about that aspect. But you could say I have a natural feel for his music and it always hits the right note inside of me.

I wouldn't be able to tell where you are from your accent.

KK: I had to relearn the shortened vowels, but if I'm around "one of us", then the typical accent returns automatically.

Your artistic work often takes you both to concert halls abroad and you've sung in the most important opera houses – baritone Adam Plachetka knows the Metropolitan Opera very well – how do international audiences and artists view Janáček's work? Is he understood abroad?

AP: To be honest, this is really the first time I've been directly involved with Janáček, so I can only judge him as a listener. But it's true that he's probably the most frequently played of our composers, so they must like him.

Even a century later, *The Cunning Little Vixen* is still one of Janáček's most performed operas – what do you think is the reason for its continued popularity?

KK: It's mainly down to Janáček's originality and inventiveness. Janáček was able to connect nature with human attributes, he gifted animals with human speech and his skill as a narrator is absolutely outstanding here. With his musical language he was able to masterfully describe how animals express themselves in the world. Pure genius.

AP: I would also say that the theme of the cycle of life is something that speaks

to everyone. And then it can also be performed as a children's fairy tale. There are so many levels here that everyone can find their own.

Due to its originality and rawness, Janáček's music is often hard to understand for artists, it's different from everything else and becomes an interpretive challenge. From the perspective of the artist, what is the most difficult thing about Janáček's work?

AP: I'm a bit of a novice in this field so you'd definitely get a more informed view from more experienced colleagues. For me personally, it's mainly the musical preparation. Janáček isn't the type of composer who is easy to read off the page, and you need to have experienced his music for it to appear natural and clear. The roles are also often broken up into shorter lines so you're learning the whole opera instead of a couple of arias.

The creators of the Brno production are looking at it through the eyes of a child and emphasize the cycle of life. Some of the productions abroad go far beyond the Moravian forests and search for how to express the subject controversially. Do you favour a more traditional approach to the work?

KK: A good opera is one in which the concept goes hand in hand with the music and the libretto. In that case it's not important whether it's "classical" or "modern". But it has to work and it can often be



24.11

7pm, Janáček Theatre

THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN

very much on the borderline. But the Brno production has been thought out to the last detail. It's a terrific aspect that the production team have presented a child's view of the opera – and I can appreciate this as a mother.

Janáček wrote *The Cunning Little Vixen* immediately after *Káťa Kabanová*, but gave it more depth than Rudolf Těsnohlídek's stories and Stanislav Lolek's original illustrations – do you sense some melancholy in the opera?

AP: The final scene in particular is filled with it. The end of the opera is a few minutes of music that I had wanted to sing long before I began to consider singing a Janáček role. I don't know if I'm exaggerating here but I would say that along with Jenůfa's prayer, the conclusion to the Vixen is one of Janáček's most iconic numbers.

One of the most intimate male roles in Janáček's operas is the character of the Gamekeeper, who you are going to be playing as part of our centenary production. Can you relate in any way to this character?

AP: Increasingly so. When I sang this final scene ten years or so ago, I was told several times that I couldn't understand it at my age. Although I don't completely agree with this, it is true that with each passing year you find more of yourself in it.

Artistically speaking, how do you approach the role of Vixen Bystrouška?

KK: *The Vixen* is a tremendous challenge – not only in terms of singing but mainly from the dramatic aspect. Bystrouška is a big personality because she grew up in the human world. Her characteristics remind me of myself. Meekness alternates with stubbornness and a fiery temper, then wisdom and gentleness with insolence. This represents an enormous challenge for the interpreter. It's a conversational type of opera, where every word plays an important role in its relationship with the music. And it's important to be aware of this when studying the part. Bystrouška undergoes a huge transformation during the opera. I want to grasp each role not only through the music, but more importantly through the relationship with the other roles. For me, it's very important to know the direction in which I want to take the preparations. I don't think it's enough just to learn a role as notes which I sing to a certain rhythm and dynamic.



Adam Plachetka and Kateřina Kněžíková

PHOTO ILONA SOCHOROVÁ

This year you also studied the role of the Fox for a concert performance with the Czech Philharmonic – what kind of an experience was that?

KK: The experience with the Fox was an interesting paradox – throughout my artistic career I felt I could sing the Vixen but it kept passing me by. In the end I performed the Fox first. Thanks to this I could appreciate the Vixen from the other side.

The final scene is very popular and touching when the Gamekeeper dreams about the young Bystrouška and the little Frog sings to him. During the rehearsals for this scene Janáček wept and said to the director Zitek: "You have to play this when I die." Your daughter made her debut as the Frog – during this scene do you feel moved or more a sense of responsibility?

KK: When the Gamekeeper appears at the end I feel as though the whole world – both the human and animal – stops. I'm moved when he looks back on his whole life. The Frog then brings light relief when it sings "that-that wasn't me". And so I am especially touched but also nervous when my daughter Adélka sings the little Frog.

Are you teaching your daughter the role yourself?

KK: I don't teach Adélka in a systematic way, but I did study this role with her. She had never had any solo training so we began to prepare a few months

beforehand. She's very used to theatres, she's responsible and almost dangerously precise – which is a big advantage with Janáček.

Brno's *Cunning Little Vixen* is set in the Dagmar children's home, the stage is full of children through which the Gamekeeper recalls his own life. You too are a father; do you recognize your own parenthood in your approach to this work?

AP: I don't know if I'd put it quite like that, but it does appear as though more of our family will be involved in the autumn productions. And so it does offer the opportunity to look at this production through the eyes of a parent.

The public puts a certain pressure and expectation on couples on stage. Do you feel there are greater demands from performing together?

KK: Most of the time my husband and I have wonderful artistic times on stage, but I also think that this can happen between colleagues who "hit it off". That's a great blessing. The expectation from the public is always great. They want to enjoy the evening they've bought tickets for and which is not part of their everyday routine. And that's our job. To bring joy and have the same expectation from each other as our audiences have.

AP: I don't feel any great pressure from performing together. In fact, I enjoy it even more. ✕

You're still so pretty!

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

The best way to bring a festival to a close is with a birthday party! Leoš Janáček already had his 170th in July and now it's the turn of one of his famous operas. However, no-one would guess she was one hundred, as she still has an impish spark in her eye and fur the colour of autumn gold, but that's the way it goes. Our vixen Bystrouška from the forests of Bílovice is celebrating her 100th birthday on 6 November 2024.

Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen* is a production that's not only associated with Brno but with our theatres in particular. It had its premiere at the Mahen Theatre 100 years ago, and it opened the newly built Janáček Theatre in 1965. The most recent production, directed by Jiří Heřman and conducted by Marko Ivanović, provided the gala opening for the Janáček festival in 2018, when the Janáček Theatre also reopened after reconstruction, and since then it has been a permanent fixture on our repertoire. It is enchanting, humorous, and filled with children and their toys, which playfully transform the Gamekeeper's home into a forest and themselves into forest creatures. And we observe the hectic pace of life through the eyes of the ageing Gamekeeper.

Each one of Janáček's operas is unique and there is nothing else in the opera genre quite like *The Cunning Little Vixen*, where the lives of humans and animals intertwine on stage. Janáček was looking for a subject which would reflect his view of the world and the eternal cycle of life, which is why his Bystrouška dies at the hands of Harašta the poacher. But there's another young Bystrouška here...life goes on. Janáček's lyrical and melodic music confirms this, with the orchestra revelling in the colours of the Bílovice forests and the creatures that live there. All of this sparkles with humour and a touch of Janáček's spiky nature, but mainly with kindness. As Janáček himself said: "I wrote it for the joy and sorrow of my later years."

Gifts are also a part of celebrations and we have several already prepared. Kateřina Kněžíková and Adam Plachetka deserve special congratulations as special guests in the roles of Bystrouška and the Gamekeeper – not only at the festival but for all of the autumn performances. Our production is full of children which is why we've asked for another gift just for the children – it will have an artistic form based on the theme *Janáček's Bystrouška through the eyes of children* and the chosen works will be displayed during the festival from 1 November – 24 November on the square in front of the Janáček Theatre. The panels will be lit and so festival audiences will be able to see the exhibition even when leaving the theatre or during an evening stroll through the town. ✕

*"I don't know of another production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* which is so capable of urgently projecting the basic themes of Janáček's opera, or a specific reading of them, onto the space itself and its 'visuals'. Because when we are normally talking about the cycle of life, we need to talk about the cycle of our desires and dreams, which we constantly return to and in vain, just as the Gamekeeper does in this production."*

Josef Herman, Divadelní noviny



PHOTO MAREK OLBRYZMEK



24.11

7pm, Janáček Theatre

THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN

A special performance to mark the 100th anniversary of the opera's world premiere and the closing ceremony of the festival

The Cunning Little Vixen as a mirror to society

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

The Cunning Little Vixen is one of those Czech operas which immediately made its mark around the world and attracts great interest from both audiences and producers. Some of them have become true cult productions – David Poutney's British version has been playing for more than thirty years. This year's festival comes to a close with the Brno production of the *Vixen*, but the programme also offers audiences a brand-new production from the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre (NDM) of Ostrava, which is the work of an international production team.

The Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili has already worked as a choreographer with the NDM but this will be his first time in the Czech Republic as a stage director. Itzik Galili was originally a dancer by profession before turning to choreography in 1990. After finishing his dancing career he founded a dance ensemble in Amsterdam which he dedicated his projects to. He came to the public's attention with *The Butterfly Effect* for which he was awarded the Public Prize at an international choreography competition in Groningen in the Netherlands. In 2008 he formed Dance Group Amsterdam, which focuses on modern dance. Apart from his group he also collaborates with leading ensembles and has created more than 130 dance works for institutions such as English National Ballet, Balet Monte Carlo, Les Grand Ballets Canadiens, Stuttgart Ballet, Bat Dor. He has also worked on the choreography for various opera productions and television programmes. In April 2006, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands presented Itzik Galili with the Order of Orange-Nassau for his services to Dutch dance. He also works with children and has written dance methods for children, including for children with learning disabilities, which are still used by several Dutch dance ensembles. He first became creatively

involved with opera in 2014 at the Metropolitan Opera, where he contributed to a production of *Prince Igor*. He quickly took to the opera genre and gradually began to be involved in directing.

What does Itzik Galili's think of Czech music and what was the key to his idea about the *Vixen*?

"I don't know very much about Czech music and the little I do know is usually connected to Leoš Janáček. I have come across him, or rather his music, several times along the way. Janáček is a very complex composer. His music arouses very strong waves of emotion in me and often moves me.

The Cunning Little Vixen is a completely new world for me. Its colours, complexity, layers, and music of course, are all like a puzzle to me which I have to solve. It's quite an exceptional opera. For more than two decades I've been involved in the transfer of words into movement and vice versa. Sometimes it's to enrich the meaning of the word as a metaphor, at other times it's to create an imaginary space for that word, for example through movement. Naturally, every foreign language is a challenge, which is a good thing.

This opera is a philosophical reflection on the cycle of life. Personally, I see it as a kind of slap, a reminder of something our society needs, a mirror which reflects our behaviour towards others, as well as the cruelty behind our comfort, and that's in every generation."

The musical staging was undertaken by the music director of the Opera NDM, Marek Šedivý, a member of the young generation of Czech composers, who has already performed Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen* as the chief conductor of the Opava Opera. ✕



PHOTO MARTIN POPELÁŘ

The Cunning Little Vixen



Pavel Haas – a talent cut short

TEXT ONDŘEJ PIVODA

“Whether the era is for good or ill, always keep a smile on your lips, there will always be time for tears in the final hours.” These words from the opera *The Charlatan*, which will be performed at the Janáček Festival on 8 November 2024, were the lifelong credo of the composer Pavel Haas. The good nature of Janáček’s most gifted pupil did not leave him even during the German occupation when, as a Jew, he faced humiliation and a cruel fate. Haas was imprisoned for nearly three years in the inhumane conditions of the Terezín ghetto before he and hundreds of thousands of others met their ends in the gas chambers of the concentration camp in Auschwitz. Eighty years have now elapsed since the violent death of Pavel Haas.

Zikmund and Olga Haas ran a respected shoe shop in the centre of Brno, though they both loved art and supported the artistic leanings of their two sons: Pavel, the elder, was born on 21 June 1899, to be followed one and a half years later by the younger son Hugo. Their mother was a Russian-Jewish immigrant who enjoyed singing Russian romances at the piano at home and who also knew Leoš Janáček from the Russian Circle in Brno. When the two sons began playing the piano as children, Pavel demonstrated a talent and interest way beyond that of the other children. In 1910 he began attending a grammar school in Brno but it soon became apparent that music was his one true love.

In 1919 the two brothers enrolled in the newly established Brno Conservatory. Due to his exceptional talent, Pavel was accepted straight into the third-year composition class, and he threw himself into his studies with a passion and tenacity. Hugo considered studying singing but in the end his theatrical inclinations won out and he never completed his conservatory studies. He would later offer this humorous account: *“I had surprising success straight away: as soon as they heard me sing they sent me directly to the drama department. The man who carried out this shrewd move was none other than Leoš Janáček, who looked at me twice and then said kindly: Well, perhaps he’ll do well in drama.”* Hugo Haas was engaged as an actor at the National Theatre in Brno and later became a star of Czech interwar theatre and film.

Pavel first studied composition under Jan Kunc and Vilém Petržella, before transferring to Leoš Janáček’s Master School a year later. It required a great amount of humility and resolve to be Janáček’s pupil. On the one hand, Janáček was a captivating, brilliant artist, while on the other, his students often bore the brunt of his volatile and explosive temperament. Haas’s recollection, published shortly after Janáček’s death, poetically encapsulates the distinctive character of Janáček’s lessons: *“Correcting and polishing the pupils’ compositions provided some unforgettable moments. Alone with the Maestro! Tapping the piano, light and heavy chord strokes, humming in a haughty, whiney*

voice, scoring out with a pencil and scraping with a knife. Then a deathly silence...and...once more... One day he would destroy with thick lines the cumbersome work of a young, frightened mind, and the next he would rage passionately over his own hieroglyphics in order to bring life back to the notes which had originally expected a death sentence. The Maestro rarely gave praise. Either he was critical or silent. And yet they were such beautiful, happy moments!”

Pavel Haas was awarded a degree from the Master School in June 1922. However, in order to make a living the young composer continued to work in his father’s shop, composing only in his free time. Although few compositions emerged at this time, all of them were characterized by their polished, refined form and original ideas. Haas’s first completely independent composition was *Fata Morgana*, a piano quintet with solo tenor from 1922–1923. Janáček’s unmistakable influence can be heard in all of these compositions in their musical expression and work with musical motifs. *Fata Morgana* in particular reflects Haas’s strong reaction to the premiere of Janáček’s *From the Diary of One Who Disappeared* in 1921, which is clear in the highly charged tenor solo. The composition was written after a romantic lyrical poem by Rabindranath Tagore, to which Janáček also wrote his male



Pavel Haas in 1939

PHOTO THE LEOŠ JANÁČEK MZM ARCHIVE



8.11

7pm, Mahen Theatre

THE CHARLATAN



STAGE DESIGN JAKUB KOPECKÝ

Stage design for the new production of *The Charlatan* in National Moravian-Silesian Theatre

chorus *The Wandering Madman* at the same time as Haas. The original synthesis of chamber and vocal genres placed Haas's *Fata Morgana* amongst the most interesting works from the emerging generation of composers.

It is clear how close Pavel Haas was to Janáček and his wife Zdenka from the fact that after Janáček's death in 1928, he accompanied Zdenka Janáčková to Hukvaldy, where she was to collect her husband's personal items. Zdenka Janáčková supposedly broke down in the Maestro's study in Hukvaldy and collapsed weeping onto the sofa. Pavel Haas knelt down beside her, embraced her and tried to comfort her as a son might.

From the mid-1920s the influences of the West European avant-garde began to appear in Haas's compositions. In particular it is possible to hear the influences of Igor Stravinsky and Arthur Honegger. Neither was the composer immune to the increasing popularity of jazz in Europe at the time. In his string quartet *From the Monkey Mountain*, which today features on the repertoires of internationally renowned string quartet ensembles, Haas spiced up the final movement with the dance rhythms of the Charleston accompanied by jazz drums. With their optimism, playfulness and fantasy, the song cycle *The Chosen One* after a love poem by Jiří Wolker, the male chorus *The Carnival*, and the popular *Wind Quintet* from the end of the 1920s, create a unique parallel to the developing poetist movement.

At the start of the 1930s, Pavel's brother Hugo found him work composing film music. The song *To nevadí (It doesn't matter)* from the comedy *Life is a Dog* by the director Martin Frič from 1933, starring Hugo Haas and Adina Mandlová, was a big hit. However, according to the recollections of Adina Mandlová, this complicated, jazz-infused music was less to the liking of "the music producers and the people on whom the financing of Czech films depended". Pavel Haas therefore left his musical mark on only two other less successful comedies.

Although the film music brought in some welcome income, it certainly couldn't satisfy the composer's artistic ambitions and he continued in the search for his own personal style. In *Psalm 29* for organ, baritone, female chorus, bells and small orchestra from 1932, he reflected on his relationship with Judaism and at

the same time – like Janáček and the *Glagolitic Mass* – achieved a strongly expressive, literally ecstatic expression in this composition such as we know from primitive religious ceremonies.

From 1934–1937 Pavel Haas focused on the composition of his only opera *The Charlatan*. He arrived at the subject after a long search and unsuccessful negotiations with a number of writers. He chose as the theme the story of the legendary travelling baroque physician, Johann Andreas Eisenbert, after the novel by the German writer Josef Winckler. His undeniable success and medical skill, though often performed using unconventional healing methods, placed this historical character somewhere between a charlatan and medical expert and was the inspiration for a number of folk legends and stories. In *The Charlatan* Haas managed to combine Janáčekian operatic language with the charm and lightness of Bohuslav Martinů's opera works to create a comic opera bursting with humour. The premiere took place at the Provincial Theatre in Brno on 2 April 1938 and brought together some of the leading artists of the day, such as the stage director Rudolf Walter, the conductor Guido Arnoldi, the stage designer František Muzika, the choreographer Ivo Váňa-Psota and the baritone Václav Bednář who sang the lead role. However, the success of the opera with the critics and public did not last long.

Following the arrival of the German occupiers in Czechoslovakia in March 1939, as a Jew, Pavel Haas faced persecution. As a result, his *3rd String Quartet*, with its solemn, mournfully pensive musical language, reflecting the atmosphere of pre-Munich Czechoslovakia, would only be heard after the war. At the start of the war, Pavel Haas tried on several occasions to escape the country and later decided to leave his family in order to protect them from racial harassment. He hid his protest against the occupiers within the *Suite for Oboe and Piano*, which quoted from the St Wenceslas and Hussite chorales, and in the monumental *Symphony*, but which he never managed to finish. In December 1941 he was sent to the concentration camp in Terezín. In spite of the suffering and humiliation he continued to compose even here. His surviving *Study* for the Terezín string orchestra conductor, Karel Ančerl, and *Four Songs on Chinese Poetry* for the baritone Karel Berman, are an exceptional testimony to the composer's indomitable artistic spirit. Haas, however, met his fate in Auschwitz, where he and a number of other Jewish artists were brutally murdered in the gas chambers in October 1944. ✕

Fata Morgana

It's not an optical phenomenon in the atmosphere that audiences can expect from this concert, but an emotive composition by Pavel Haas after a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, where once more the teacher and pupil can meet at least through their work. The encounter will certainly be an inspirational and fascinating one as Haas's piano quintet with tenor solo *Fata Morgana* was inspired by one of Janáček's works, while the song cycle *The Chosen One* is a beautiful example of the path which Haas was later to take in his composing. There will also be a performance of Janáček's *In the Mists*.

The concert, therefore, not only offers a comparison between the great Maestro and his no-less talented pupil, but it also offers some wonderful interpretations. "A tenor who combines a heroic tone and a poetic sensitivity that takes your breath away," wrote the *Times* about Nick Spence, and audiences from the last festival were able to hear him for themselves when he appeared in *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*. This time he will be partnered by the outstanding Czech pianist, Lada Valešová, who now mainly performs abroad, and the Navarra Quartet from Britain, together with members of the Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB. ✕

The Charlatan returns home

After almost ninety years, the only opera by Janáček's Brno-born pupil Pavel Haas returns to the stage. *The Charlatan* had its world premiere at the then Theatre on the Ramparts, today's Mahen Theatre. Thanks to the festival, it is returning to its place of origin for at least one performance, a brand-new production by the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre, conducted by Jakub Klecker and directed by Ondřej Havelka. The director hinted at what the opera's central theme will be: "It's interesting that we don't really know why Haas chose this subject in particular for his first opera. However, some experts on Haas's work and life believe that the reason why the composer chose the story of the real-life German doctor Eisenbart from the turn of the 17th century was Haas's love affair with the female doctor who was treating his sick mother and who the infatuated Haas eventually married. So was the motive love? The opera libretto is open to interpretation, it is ambiguous and lacks a clear central dramatic line. This might be down to Haas's literary dilettantism – he wrote the libretto himself. Or perhaps he didn't want to be too explicit? In any case, the successful surgeon and healer Pustrpalk is also consumed by a fateful love, and from the moment he loses it, he consciously commits an act which he knows will destroy him. And so our theme will be love – fateful, passionate and self-destructive." ✕



Lada Valešová

PHOTO FRANCES MARSHALL



Ondřej Havelka

PHOTO MAREK OLBRZYMEK



5. 11

7 pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

NICKY SPENCE,
LADA VALEŠOVÁ & NAVARRA
STRING QUARTET



8. 11

7 pm, Mahen Theatre

THE CHARLATAN

Navarra String Quartet: Czech music with British elegance

"A stimulating mix...even the most darkly melancholic works are suffused with the light, expressive touch of the Navarra."

Sarah Urwin Jones, BBC Music Magazine



PHOTO VENETIA JOLLANDS

Navarra String Quartet

Quartets are a regular part of the festival programme and this year another outstanding body can be added to the list – the Navarra String Quartet from Britain, an ensemble which enjoys the reputation as one of the most dynamic and poetic string quartets today. The Navarra String Quartet regularly appears at Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Berlin Konzerthaus, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, New York's Lincoln Centre, and at prestigious international festivals. Czech chamber music is nothing new to them and works by Antonín Dvořák and Leoš Janáček regularly feature on their repertoire. And so we can expect an evening filled with beautiful music and fascinating artistic perspectives. ✕



3.11

7pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

NAVARRA STRING QUARTET

The Pavel Haas Quartet plays a quintet

The string quartet named after the Brno composer Pavel Haas is practically a resident ensemble at the Janáček Brno festival. Their sparkling, heartfelt performances of works by Janáček and others are always a genuine pleasure. On this occasion, they will perform quartets by Josef Suk and Pavel Haas, while the second part of the programme will feature Dvořák's *Piano Quintet* with a special guest. The Israeli pianist Boris Giltburg regularly appears with recitals at the most prestigious international halls and works with the leading orchestras. He is known for his passionate interpretations where *"the interplay of spiritual calm and emphatic engagement is gripping, and one could not wish for a more illuminating, lyrical or more richly phrased interpretation"* (Sddeutsche Zeitung). ✕



PHOTO SASHA GUSOV

Boris Giltburg



16.11

3pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

PAVEL HAAS QUARTET
AND BORIS GILTBURG

Haas's music is a great bedfellow to Janáček

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

The first thing you notice when you meet the tenor Nicky Spence is his mischievous smile. His good humour is matched only by his abundance of talent as a singer. At the last festival he brought this to two Janáček projects – *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, where he sang the tenor role, and as Albert Gregor in a production of *The Makropulos Affair* given by the Welsh National Opera. Now he's returning to study the role of Matěj Brouček with the Brno ensemble in Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* as part of a chamber concert introducing the work of Janáček's pupil, Pavel Haas, in particular his song cycle *Fata Morgana*.

Today he is one of the stars of the international stage, but where did this Czech-music-loving tenor come from? He was born on a farm in Dumfries in Scotland and has remained loyal to his hometown, not least as a fan of the local football team. His path to opera was not straightforward – initially he wanted to play the trumpet but his family couldn't afford to pay for the tuition. Fortunately, his school music teacher noticed his talent for singing and at fourteen he won the Dumfries and Galloway Young Musician of the Year Award. His first experience of opera was aged fifteen when his neighbour gave him a ticket to see Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, and from that moment Nicky Spence was hooked.

His career began at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and in his final year he signed a five-record deal with Universal Classics. Within a few years he released his first album (*My First Love*), which was nominated for the Classical Brit Award for

young British interpreter of classical music, and he toured with Katherine Jenkins and Shirley Bassey. Since then he has sung in opera houses and concert halls around the world. He's not particularly drawn to classical Italian opera and he himself has admitted to having an aversion to the "rum-tee-tum" type of Donizetti opera and the "sillier" Verdi roles. He found his world in the repertoire of the Czech composers Leoš Janáček and Antonín Dvořák. He is also drawn to Wagner, appearing in *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Rheingold*. A large part of his repertoire is made up of works from the 20th century to the present, while he also returns to his favourite musicals. In addition to *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, his roles next season will include the title part in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, and he will be back at the Glyndebourne Festival and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, where he will sing Boris in *Kaťa Kabanová* and Laca in *Jenůfa*. He will also feature as the artist-in-residence at London's famous Wigmore Hall with the production Nicky Spence: A Celebration. In 2020 he was the recipient of the BBC Music Magazine Vocal Award and Gramophone's Solo Vocal Award for his critically acclaimed recording of Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*. In 2022 the BBC Music Magazine awarded him the prize of Personality of the Year.

He happily shares his love of music and strives to bring classical music to wider audiences. He was one of the mentors in the television series *Anyone Can Sing* and is the Scottish Opera Young Company Patron. In 2023 he was awarded an OBE for his artistic and educational activities as part of the King's Birthday Honours, and in 2024 he received the RPS Singer Award.

"The Diary of One Who Disappeared and the unforgettable and perfect Nicky Spence. Spence's declamatory vocal ability is unbelievable, realistically Janáčekian, syllable by syllable, tone by tone, he confided the inescapable call of fate."



PHOTO MARTIN SHIELDS

How does a Scottish tenor come to sing Czech opera and music?

I've always enjoyed Slavic music. My love affair with Janáček began with his *Diary of one disappeared* which seemed to fit my voice like a glove. This made me hungry to explore all of his music and especially his operas.

You've had several big Janáček roles – Laca, Steva, Albert Gregor, and now Brouček – what have they offered you as a singer and actor? And what was the biggest challenge in studying them?

Musically, I always find Janáček interesting. As the roles are so dramatically well written, the singing seems to look after itself, and while there may be vocal challenges, everything works if you submit to the compelling narrative. As an actor it's the greatest honour to sing these roles.

Now you will debut at the festival with the role of Matěj Brouček. It's a very different role from the previous ones...a grumpy landlord from Malá Strana.

Brouček isn't a glamour role and I will enjoy embracing every repugnant fold of his interesting personality. Janáček always manages to flesh out the role so they are never singular in character. I'm sure we'll find many endearing qualities and significant amounts of pathos in his human fabric.

Is there anything you have in common with Matěj Brouček?

We both enjoy beer... sometimes too much!

As well as Janáček, you'll be singing *Fata Morgana*, a work by Janáček's pupil Pavel Haas, at the festival. Was this a discovery for you or did it come as a logical continuation after Janáček?

Haas's music was a discovery to me. I became quite engrossed in his personal story and this brought quite an obsessional draw to this work for me. His music is a great bedfellow to Janáček. Quite the pair!

Who introduced you to the work of Pavel Haas?

I was introduced to Haas by my long-term colleague and friend, Lada Valesova. Her passion is infectious and I was a glad recipient of her enthusiasm.



PHOTO KI PRICE

Nicky Spence

Unlike Janáček, the work of Pavel Haas is quite undiscovered in this country and in the world. Isn't that a pity?

It's a huge pity that his life was cut so cruelly short. I think that composers always need devotees and I'm happy to introduce him to as many music lovers as will listen.

Simon Rattle said of Janáček's operas that they have a cinematic pace. Most audiences today probably see that as an advantage, but what about the singers? Do you ever miss the traditional long stretches of arias and duets to express emotions?

As so much of the story seems to unfold in real time, I really understand Simon's reference. I relish the way that Janáček's narratives play out and I often find it hard to embrace strophic or overly structured music, I'd much prefer something which feels human and gnarly.

You do a lot of promotion of classical music. Isn't Janáček the right gateway to the world of opera? Would you recommend it to an audience unfamiliar with opera?

Janáček is the perfect introduction to opera. They are stories which are as relevant today as when Janáček found them and they really resonate with the modern human condition. I really enjoy bringing first-time-buyers to see Janáček's pieces and they often exclaim "I didn't realise opera could be like that!"

What are you looking forward to in Brno?

I'm really enjoying our time in Brno. I didn't have a lot of time to explore on my last visit so I'm looking forward to having a hot date with Brno. I will also have my husband, our new baby son and wee dog with us. I'm hopeful some new friends can show us some good places to walk and enjoy. ✕



LEOŠ
JANÁČEK
JENUFA

First version (1904)
in the Mark Audus edition

Conductor: Anna Novotná Pešková
Director: Veronika Kos Loulová
Moravian Theatre Olomouc

In a co-production with Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno
Produced in cooperation with the organization Úsměv mámy
20. 11 and 21. 11. 2024, 7 pm
Mahen Theatre

→ p. 34–35

A woman with long, light-colored hair, wearing a light blue, long-sleeved dress, stands in a dark room. She is looking out an open door on the right side of the frame. The room is dimly lit, with a strong light source from the left, creating a silhouette effect on the woman and casting long shadows. The floor is covered with a patterned rug. The overall mood is dramatic and mysterious.

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK RUSALKA

Conductor: Marko Ivanović

Director: David Radok

Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno

Starring: Jana Šrejma Kačírková and Jan Štáva

23.11. 2024, 7 pm
Janáček Theatre

The Czech choral tradition at the festival

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

“*Song consists of words which have grown wings!*” was how the poet and translator Otto František Babler beautifully put it, and that was without even mentioning choral singing. Our country has a long tradition of choral singing.

The golden era for choirs was in the 19th century with the establishment of the choirs Prague Hlahol, Slavoj, Lumír, Brno Beseda and others. Amongst the initiators of Czech choral music were Pavel Křížkovský (Leoš Janáček’s teacher), Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák. In 1903 Professor Ferdinand Vlach founded the Moravian Teachers’ Choir, a legendary male chorus that Janáček, J. B. Foerster, Bohuslav Martinů and others wrote music for, a choir whose activities continue to this day with new generations of singers. The creation of an independent Czechoslovakia heralded further developments in this tradition, with a children’s choir becoming part of it, thus opening up the world of music to the youngest singers, who often sing at a high professional level. This is another reason why over the years the festival has included several series of choral concerts, offering the best choral ensembles with choral music by Leoš Janáček and other composers.

Martinů Voices

The chamber choir Martinů Voices is a choral ensemble led by Lukáš Vasilek and is known particularly for its first-class interpretations of chamber choral music from the 19th to the 21st century. It is a regular guest at some of the most prestigious Czech music festivals (e.g., Prague Spring, Dvořák’s Prague, Strings of Autumn, St Wenceslas Music Festival, Lípa Musica) and has worked with ensembles such as the Czech Philharmonic. Their CD featuring a chamber choral cycle by Bohuslav Martinů was awarded the Editor’s Choice by the prestigious British Gramophone magazine. And one of the works you will hear will be *Five Czech Madrigals* by Bohuslav Martinů performed by Martinů Voices at a concert charting Czech choral music from the 19th century, through Leoš Janáček’s exuberant *Nursery Rhymes*, Jan Novak’s choral works inspired by Latin texts, to Luboš Fišer’s *A Song for the Blind King John of Luxemburg*.



Martinů Voices

PHOTO JAKUB CABALKA



2.11

3pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

MARTINŮ VOICES



PHOTO KIVA

Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

Spiritual Concert

The Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Old Brno is associated with Janáček's childhood, his musical studies, and performances in the choir loft of the basilica. What music would have been heard here before Janáček's arrival and while he was resident here, and what happened to Czech ecclesiastical music afterwards? At the concert you will hear works by the late-renaissance composer Jacob Handl-Gallus, who was active in Olomouc, Kroměříž, Brno and Prague, and also by the slightly younger Czech aristocrat Kryštof Harant of Polžice and Bezdrůžice, along with ecclesiastical compositions by Leoš Janáček. The 20th century will be represented by Pavel Haas's *Psalm 29* and Bohuslav Martinů's *Field Mass*.



7.11

7 pm, Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

SPIRITUAL CONCERT

The Sound of a Woman's Voice

There is a long tradition of female choirs in the Czech lands, with Smetana, Dvořák and Suk all devoting compositions to them. The rapid growth in female choirs seen during the First World War was for an entirely prosaic reason – the menfolk were being recruited into the army. Janáček also turned his attention to female choruses, writing several beautiful pieces of music for the newly formed Moravian Lady Teachers' Choir. Led by its founder and conductor Jakub Klecker, the female choir JK Voices, bringing together several generations of singers who started off at the Kantiléna children's choir, will present works written for female voice by three generations of composers – Josef Suk, Leoš Janáček and Bohuslav Martinů.



13.11

7 pm, Foyer of Janáček Theatre

JK VOICES –
WOMEN'S CHORUSES

Janáček's Male Choruses

It's not only Vixen Bystrouška who is a hundred – soon it will be one hundred years since Leoš Janáček was awarded an honorary doctorate by Masaryk University. This will be commemorated in the auditorium of Masaryk University's Faculty of Arts, which witnessed this event on 28 January 1925. Janáček's male choruses will be performed by the Moravian Teachers' Choir, for whom Janáček wrote these songs. Standing in for Janáček, there will also be a ceremonial speech given by the composer Petr Kotík.

23.11

11 am, Auditorium of the Faculty of Arts of MU
ANNIVERSARY OF THE AWARD
OF HONORARY DOCTORATE
TO LEOŠ JANÁČEK



Elce Pelce Kotrmelce

A concert full of songs written by Petr Eben and his son Marek for young choristers and their listeners. It will be accompanied by a fairy tale performed by the Brno Children's Choir – an ensemble which has been training new generations of singers for twenty years now. You can also see them at a number of performances along with the Janáček Opera NTB, but here they will be venturing into a fairy-tale world together with the actor Pavel Čeněk Vaculík. ×



PHOTO MAREK OLBRZYMĚK

Brno Children's Choir



23.11

3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)

BRNO CHILDREN'S CHOIR:
ELCE PELCE KOTRMELCE

An unconventional approach to Jenůfa

TEXT VENDULA GALDOVÁ

The chilling, timeless story from rural Moravia of jealousy, abandonment, though also of hope, will be performed by members of the Moravian Theatre Olomouc in a co-production with the National Theatre Brno.

The female production team led by Veronika Kos Loulová will present *Jenůfa* in its original form from 1904, as this year marks the 120th anniversary of its world premiere. The new production offers an updated view of this world-famous opera drama – the producers will bring together Jenůfa's tragic fate with authentic testimonies from women for whom, for various reasons, the birth of their child was not initially a joyful event.

The production team decided to perform the opera under the title *Jenůfa* (in Czech it is *Její pastorkyňa* [*Her Stepdaughter*] trans. note). This was mainly in order to emphasize the main character (hence her name), while it is also the title of the work when performed abroad. The name *Jenůfa* is so strongly linked to the opera that there is no risk of confusing Czech opera goers.

Janáček's libretto, which he adapted from a play by Gabriela Preissová, contains the realistically subtle shades of the human character set within a closed society. This new production focuses mainly on the two central figures – the young woman, Jenůfa, and her foster mother, the Kostelnička. Their lives are greatly affected by stereotypes and conventions which they cannot escape. These two characters are key to the feel of the whole work: the Kostelnička commits a crime – in order to protect her child she has to kill another child. Issues of motherhood, responsibility, rebellion, but also of love, faithfulness and hope are more important for the production than the rural setting. Janáček extracted the most important elements from Preissová's play and this new production transfers his work to the present day, asking if we have progressed in any way. Moreover, the theme of motherhood develops in other strands, where a voice is given to women who have been silenced: whether in history or today when we are beginning to openly talk about, among other things, the difficult postnatal period.

All of this has given rise to an opera that fully respects Janáček's haunting music, but whose ambition is also to present an aspect of the contemporary world. A world in which we shouldn't be afraid to discuss problems and look for solutions. Janáček's first version, which we will be performing, was rejected by the National Theatre in Prague, which was why it premiered in Brno. It was not only the composer who shocked the management of this prestigious stage. Gabriela Preissová's original play was attacked by the critics at the time, who were also offended by the fact that such a thing could have been written

by a woman. The producers therefore see this tradition as an open challenge to approach this work as something alive, which might arouse both enthusiasm and controversy.

Jenůfa is directed by Veronika Kos Loulová, who has led the opera and operetta ensemble of the Moravian Theatre Olomouc since 2022. Kos Loulová took over the position of artistic director of the opera at twenty-six, making her the youngest person to hold such a post in Europe. The production team also includes the conductor Anna Novotná Pešková; the two artists met through work as part of the innovative projects from the RUN OPERUN collective, and thus share a fresh perspective on contemporary opera and the courage to overcome stereotypes. Anna Novotná Pešková has worked with many opera companies in the Czech Republic and recently joined the ensemble of the National Theatre Opera, where you can see her conduct such works as Verdi's *La Traviata* and Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*.



PHOTO TEREZA VALNER

Veronika Kos Loulová



20.11 and 21.11
7pm, Mahen Theatre
JENŮFA



Anna Novotná Pešková

This is the first Janáček opera for both artists, though both have a great affinity for Janáček's musical expression. *"His music is completely different to any other music on the planet,"* said Anna Novotná Pešková, who looks for the beauty in Janáček's music as well as its truth, rawness and originality. Revolutionary, almost provocative acts link the character of the composer and the stage director Veronika Kos Loulová. *"I really like the connection with Janáček, he was a courageous revolutionary and thanks to this I feel I am not going against him in this work, instead we complement each other well."*

The production team is made up solely of women, which they themselves do not see as provocative but as something natural. Such a set-up raises issues which do not normally come up in the world of opera. All of the team members enjoy working with historical subjects in contemporary interpretations and so we can expect a production based on a deep respect for Janáček's music but with an unconventional social emphasis. Anna Novotná Pešková described the idea behind the production, *"I think one of the big goals in our Jenůfa is to find new forms – for example, between scenes we're going to put in texts we're working on with clients from the centre Smiling Mums. In other words, we're trying to find a new way to follow in Janáček's footsteps without compromising his beautiful music. In fact, we want to show it the greatest respect and in the best possible light."*

Veronika Kos Loulová went on to comment on the position of women in art, *"I feel a great affinity with the author of the play, Gabriela Preissová, who baffled the critics, even though she laid the foundation for realism in Czech drama and so opened the way for others such as the Mrštík brothers and their Maryša. The critics also thought it was shameful that such a play was written by a woman."*

Janáček altered the original score from 1904 several times, mainly under pressure from the conductor of the National Theatre in Prague, Karel Kovařovic. After twelve years and several

revisions, the opera finally met with success in Prague and then internationally. Today, opera houses are gradually returning to the first version which was successfully premiered in Brno on 21 January 1904. *"While we were studying this version in detail we began to discover how much the raw, unedited work spoke to us with all of its truthfulness, which is so vital for our concept,"* said the stage director, explaining why they chose the first version of the score for their production.

One of the fundamental and timeless themes which Janáček raised was the issue of motherhood. The birth of a child is generally seen as the start of the most beautiful period in life, but if it is connected with depression or anxiety, it can turn into a horrible nightmare. When creating the concept for their production, at the instigation of the director of the Moravian Theatre, David Gerneš, the theatre approached the organization Smiling Mums, which focuses on specialist assistance for women with postnatal depression and other mental-health problems associated with motherhood.

Renata Banášová, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, explained what the voluntary organization Smiling Mums does: *"The core is made up of peer consultants – trained women with experience who can directly support mothers who have similar problems. Over time we have been joined by a number of experts – psychiatrists, psychologists, gynaecologists and GPs. We are trying to bring greater attention to this issue and develop it further."* The representatives of this organization hope that the cooperation with the Moravian Theatre will raise the profile of this issue outside of their target group and help spread awareness of their activities to those in need. *"A lot of our clients have been able to find the courage and strength to pass on their experience and their story in an effort to help other women in similar situations."*

Veronika Kos Loulová approaches both this difficult theme and the enormity of Janáček's timeless work with respect, enthusiasm and a clear vision: *"It opens up a sensitive topic in front of us and we have to deal with it properly, but we also have to ensure it remains balanced throughout the whole work so that we have an excellent production at the end of our combined journey. It is an incredible honour to be part of the festival with this opera!"* ✕

Janáček – Martinů – Ištvan

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

Although none of them were born in Brno, thanks to their music they are all associated with the town. We have in mind here three composers – Leoš Janáček, Miloslav Ištvan and Bohuslav Martinů. The first two are connected to Brno through their artistic as well as personal lives, while for Martinů it is more through his music – in particular through the Brno opera and the world premieres of his works that were performed here. Like Janáček, Miloslav Ištvan was not only a composer but also a long-serving teacher – he taught for more than thirty years at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts.

The theme for the concert programme will be human existence, something which all three composers touched on in their compositions. We don't know why Janáček never finished the violin concerto *The Wandering of a Little Soul*, but he would later use its melancholic music in the overture to *From the House of the Dead*. Fragments of the concerto have been reconstructed by Miloš Štědroň, thereby providing generations of violinists with a wonderful composition. At this concert it will be performed by the outstanding violinist, Jan Mráček, who is not only the concertmaster at the Czech Philharmonic, but he has also appeared as a soloist with orchestras such as the Bamberger Symphoniker, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, and London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. With his own unique humour he says of Janáček: "It's probably OK for me to say that Janáček and I are friends. But taken from a professional point of view – I don't like to play him. But don't worry – I don't like playing him until I've learned him properly."

Ištvan's composition for symphony orchestra and reciters, *The Invocation of Time*, where he reflects on the transience of life, is one of the most moving compositions from the mid-1960s. Its text is based on a montage of poetry extracts by Oldřich Mikulášek, parts of the Bible, and the writings of an anonymous baroque writer. Ištvan composed *The Invocation of Time* at a period

when he was interested in the method of collage, in this case with stylistically different elements: renaissance in combination with an unusual selection of instruments (strings, brass, guitar, piano, drums). The recitation parts will be taken on by members of the NTB drama section – Hana Briešťanská and Daniel Bambas – who Brno audiences will know from Martinů's *The Miracle of Our Lady*.

Bohuslav Martinů wrote the cantata *Bouquet of Flowers* in 1937, commissioned by Prague Radio. It was written just a year before the world premiere of *The Miracle of Our Lady*, and as with other works by Martinů from this period, it reflects the composer's interest in Bohemian and Moravian folk culture. The balladic texts were taken from collections by Karel Jaromír Erben and František Sušil, and the theme of death provides a strong link, although it wouldn't be Martinů if his music didn't offer some hope at the end. The soloists will be Jana Šrejma Kačírková (soprano), Václava Krejčí Housková (alto), Vít Nosek (tenor) and Roman Hoza (baritone).

As a symphonic ensemble, the orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB has enjoyed a wonderful tradition with the Mahen Theatre, stretching back more than a century. The baton will be taken up by the conductor Robert Kružík, one of the great talents from the younger generation of conductors. ✕



Robert Kružík and the orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB

PHOTO MAREK OLBŘZYMEK



15. 11

7pm, Mahen Theatre

ORCHESTRA OF THE JANÁČEK OPERA
OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE BRNO
AND JAN MRÁČEK

Music in Brno after Janáček

TEXT MILOŠ ŠTĚDRŮN

A remarkable era came to an end with the death of Leoš Janáček on 12 August 1928.

Whenever any European figures appeared in Brno back in the second half of the 19th century, the majority of them would have been German artists invited by Brno's Germans – such as Max Reger, Johannes Brahms, Joseph Joachim, Clara Schumann, Karl Goldmark, Rosé-Quartett, Ferruccio Busoni, Leo Slezak, Artur Nikisch, Ferdinand Loewe, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Wilhelm Backhaus. However, prominent figures were also invited by Brno's Czechs, including Jan Kubelík, František Ondříček, Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Vítězslav Novák (around whom a cult began to form in Brno at the start of the 20th century), and Oskar Nedbal; a tradition which would later provide the basis for concert and theatre activity in the 20th century. With the foundation of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1918 in particular, Czech culture caught up with and then surpassed German culture. The 1920s saw the rise of the musical avant-garde, which brought a number of important artists to Brno, while the Club of Moravian Composers led by Janáček strove to rid Brno of its provincial tag and become a place where the most up-to-date music in Europe could be heard.

We might remind ourselves briefly that the Club of Moravian Composers managed to bring musicians of the calibre of Béla Bartók to Brno. During the period of Janáček's celebrated opera premieres – *Káťa Kabanová*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Šárka*,

The Makropulos Affair – the head of opera, František Neumann, invited the leader of German modernism, Arnold Schoenberg, to Brno for the premiere of his *Gurrelieder*. The performance of the nearly two-hour long *Gurrelieder* at the then Theatre on the Ramparts on 8 March 1925 was an event of European significance. Purely by chance, a few days before this premiere Béla Bartók had given a concert and also met Schoenberg, someone he had greatly admired ever since the publication of his *Harmonielehre*.

In addition to Arnold Schoenberg, František Neumann was also responsible for introducing to Brno excerpts from Berg's opera *Wozzeck*, a brand-new opera that was making its way across Europe at the time. There was also a production of the "jazz" opera *Jonny spielt auf* (*Jonny Strikes Up*), with Janáček figuring amongst its detractors. In reality it is a verist-expressionist opera with the jazz merely providing a kind of ornamental accompaniment. The opera was successfully revived and Ernst Krenek appeared in Brno in 1970 for a concert to celebrate his 70th birthday. At the time, the Vienna sponsors performed it with the "cheaper" Brno orchestra – the Philharmonic – nevertheless, Krenek was enthusiastic about it. As a young man I interviewed



PHOTO THE LEOŠ JANÁČEK MZM ARCHIVE

Members of the Club of Moravian Composers

him and invited him to a separate programme at the Small Theatre of Music at the Moravian Museum. Krenek told me how he had been greatly influenced by the posthumous production of Janáček's last opera *From the House of the Dead* based on Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead*. He came to Brno to watch it and wrote an enthusiastic review. He was not at all annoyed by Janáček's dislike of his opera and said to me at the time – Janáček was right, it was the folly of youth...

But by then it was the 1930s in Brno. Immediately after Janáček's death, the unforgettable conductor and composer František Neumann also died. During its time, his verist opera *Liebelej* after Arthur Schnitzler's play was much more popular than Janáček himself, who was just beginning to be recognized as a figure in European opera. The 1930s, however, signalled a move away from the 1920s avant-garde. This was a result of the economic crisis, which understandably also affected culture. Following Janáček's death it appeared as though his pupils would take over the initiative and dramaturgical activity in Brno. However, they began to suffer the same fate as most avant-garde groups which could usually only unite around what they rejected, but as soon as they had to offer their own programme they began to split, their solidarity weakened, fragmented, sometimes even to vanish.

The music and concert history of the German House (Deutsches Haus) forms an entirely separate chapter in the history of music in Brno until the Second World War. One of the factors behind the construction of this building was the fact that Brno's Czechs had promoted the development of the Besední dům. It is surprising that the Germans (who were much richer and held a majority political position in the town, and who prevented the natural growth of the town with the addition of its

Czech suburbs because they knew very well that they couldn't maintain this majority, which did indeed happen after the establishment of Greater Brno after 1918) built a fairly average building, architecturally speaking, in comparison with the Czechs' elegant Besední dům designed by the court architect Theofil Hansen... And so in the 1930s and 1940s, German music was to be heard in the German House. The Czechs generally ignored it – only the critics responded to it – Gracian Černušák was one of the "permitted" commentators on significant German events – e.g., the Berlin Philharmonic with Wilhelm Furtwängler and many others – though during the Protectorate similar behaviour might have appeared as collaboration. But German culture managed to resist Nazification for a relatively long period, and we know this from the language of the Brno German newspapers. It wasn't until the start of the 1940s that the German newspapers began to be polluted by the language you'd find in the *Völkischer Beobachter* and similar linguistic monstrosities... If we take an overview of the post-Janáček Brno of the 1930s, we can see that the avant-garde of the 1920s had receded somewhat into the background. The 1930s may have brought some novelties from the fading avant-garde, but with the emergence of the Third Reich in the second half of the 1930s everything became polarized. We might recall some musical highlights at this time, in particular the efforts made by Bohuslav Martinů to break into Brno's opera scene. He had already managed this with his opera *The Soldier and the Dancer* after Plautus, which František Neumann managed to perform on 5 May 1928. Another promoter of Martinů's stage works was the conductor Antonín Balatka, who produced the successful *Miracles of Mary* on 23 February 1935 as well as *The Theatre Beyond the Gate* on 20 September 1936. After the Second World War, Bohuslav Martinů's works received systematic attention, with the conductor and dramaturg Václav Nosek performing all of his stage music along with the complete works of Leoš Janáček and Sergei Prokofiev.

At the start of the 1930s there was a move away from Janáček in the work of his pupils. Osvald Chlubna was his most loyal pupil and assistant, but he was attracted to neo-impressionism and mysticism. Vilém Petrželka was undoubtedly a very talented composer and his cantata *Nicholas the Sailor* to a text by Jiří Wolker (1928–29, premiere 1930, State Prize 1931) was at its time one of the finest Czech cantatas, but after the war his work appears to be merely technically refined recycling. And so we would conclude that the greatest talent from the next generation was undoubtedly Janáček's pupil Pavel Haas, a victim of the Holocaust. His opera *The Charlatan* followed on from the dynamic 1920s and showed what a tremendous loss his death in Auschwitz was to Czech music. To a certain degree, the post-war period followed on from the tension of the Protectorate. Animosity, hatred, rejection and manipulation were all carried over from the Nazi period to the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s. But that is for another chapter altogether.

As we have seen, the avant-garde of the 1920s, which Janáček had been actively involved in, began to dissolve amid the wave of rising nationalism, and this also affected individual figures. Petrželka was to peak in the 1930s and Chlubna continued with his neo-impressionism and opera works which stuck to Czech historical themes. Most of Janáček's pupils went to Prague to study under Novák. Jan Kunc, a promising talent from the start of the 20th century, almost reached the level of Novák with his vocal-orchestral ballad *Kate Stood by the Danube* after which he went downhill. Despite Jaroslav Kvapil's close contact with the avant-garde – e.g., his interpretation of Stravinsky's *Les noces* in Brno – he failed to build upon his expressionism from the 1920s. Similarly, Václav Kaprál, whose *Lullabies* from the 1930s represented one of the best compositions of the period, went



PHOTO THE LEOS JANACEK MZM ARCHIVE

Pavel Haas at the piano during his studies at the Janáček Master Class in the early 1920s



PHOTO JAMU ARCHIVE

Ceremonial opening of the JAMU on 1 October 1947

on to be inspired by neo-romanticism. His daughter Vítězslava died at 25 as war loomed over France, and her last compositions show that she was an exceptional talent. Her neo-classicism was inspired by elements of neo-romanticism and was certainly no worse for its time than Bohuslav Martinů's stylistic focus. The occupation and the war then greatly damaged and interrupted this progress and its fundamentalism ushered in the new era of socialist realism...

Accounts were settled with the Nazi regime following the liberation of Brno by the Red Army at the end of April 1945. This led to many excesses often involving former collaborators who wanted to cover over their past as quickly as possible. Soon after the liberation, President Beneš arrived in Brno and radical changes to Brno's cultural and university life came in the autumn of 1945. Janáček's idea of establishing a college of musical education gradually began to bear fruit. After intensive efforts by various interested parties the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts was established in 1947. The first rector was Janáček's pupil and assistant, Ludvík Kundera. Relatively quickly the new music college established itself as one of the most important cultural institutions in postwar Brno. It was also helped by the fact that there was a concentration of exceptionally talented young people in the music and drama departments, and so in the first half of the 1950s the new college sent out artists who went on to become successful not only in the regions but also in the centres – Prague, Brno, Ostrava and elsewhere.

The music disciplines also prospered – Janáček's students Kundera, Petřelka and others created the conditions for advanced training in instruments, composition and conducting. Opera directing also became established and from the start it was obvious that the school would need to offer both drama and opera courses. The coup of 1948 also affected JAMU and the running of the school. The older generation found themselves in a difficult position as their young students had more or less become actively involved in the new trends. The situation during the first half of the 1950s was very tense – the new generation of composers

including Josef Berg, Miloslav Ištvan, Ludvík Poděšř, Gustav Křivinka, Jaromír Podešva, Ctirad Kohoutek and Alois Piňos were influenced by socialist realism, which was gradually being promoted as the only compositional method. Having studied a large amount of theoretical material, we know today that this amounted to nothing more than the kind of declarative, theoretical proclamations you'd hear at party congresses. There were, though, some positive developments – for example, the state's enthusiastic support of folk music led to the establishment of BROLN – the Brno Radio Orchestra of Folk Instruments, which in the 1960s and 1970s (during Normalization) provided a great deal of positive inspiration. In Brno in the 1950s, the generation of Janáček's pupils was composing music which was more in the spirit of the 1930s and 1940s. Although the 30th anniversary of the death of Janáček was commemorated and led to a great deal of musical activity, the actual music of Petřelka, Chlubna, Kvapil and others tended to deviate away from Janáček. A frequent paradox appeared here – it was only the third generation which fully followed Janáček's example. This would happen in the years of political liberalization following the worst excesses of Stalinism, when Janáček systematically led this generation back to the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s.

Ctirad Kohoutek became the Czech equivalent of Herbert Eimert. He wrote a history of new compositional techniques that everyone had to refer to – willingly or unwillingly – which was why the book was soon published a second time. At the end of the 1950s, the terminologically precise Kohoutek thus allowed Ištvan, Piňos and others to start work on compositions which were atonal, dodecaphonic and sometimes even serialist. Brno therefore overtook Prague, where the only outstanding theoretician of Musica Nova was the musicologist Eduard Herzog, who worked with Alois Piňos. This resulted in joint studies and a visit to Darmstadt – a mecca for Musica Nova – which I undertook with them in 1966. Lectures were given here by Adorno, Ligeti, Boulez, Stockhausen and others... The 1950s were thus rendered obsolete and none of those mentioned ever veered from the path they had set out on. One great and brilliant exception was Jan Novák, whose small cantata *Passer Catulli for bass and nonet* at the end of the 1950s was one of the first outstanding Czech dodecaphonic compositions... X

The Brno Contemporary Orchestra and Brno composers

It doesn't end with Janáček! This is the motto of the outstanding BCO ensemble, which has captivated lovers of contemporary music for more than twenty years, not only thanks to its excellent programming, but also because of its unconventional performance venues. Brno audiences have been able to hear the BCO in the Athropos Pavilion alongside a life-sized mammoth, as well as in the newly opened water reservoirs on Žlutý kopec, and other interesting sites. It is practically a resident ensemble at the festival and its programmes are always full of real musical treats. This year the BCO is really living up to its motto as it plans to present composers and their works from the period 1960–1970, the so-called “golden era of the Brno avant-garde”. This year's highlights will be a puppet performance of *Breakfast at Schlanke-wald Castle* by Josef Berg; *Genesis* for film reel and chamber orchestra – a joint work by the composer Alois Piňos and the artist Dalibor Chatrný; and *Love, Defiance and Death* by Miloslav Ištvan, unconventionally written for synthesizers, two cimbaloms and percussion instruments. The programme concludes with an entirely new work – the composition *Ghetto Brünn* by Petr Kofroň, which was commissioned by the BCO in 2022. ✕



PHOTO BCO ARCHIVE



9.11

3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)

BRNO CONTEMPORARY
ORCHESTRA

The Janáček Quartet



PHOTO MARTIN ZEMAN

Charting works by Brno composers will also feature in a concert by the Janáček Quartet, an ensemble that was founded back in 1947 by students from the Brno Conservatory. Thanks to its outstanding interpretations of Leoš Janáček's music, the ensemble quickly earned the right to bear his name, and throughout its existence it has successfully represented Bohemian–Moravian artistic traditions in fifty-five countries and at major international festivals. Today it is represented by the following outstanding musicians – Miloš Vacek (1st violin), Richard Kružík (2nd violin), Jan Řezníček (viola) and Lukáš Polák (cello). Their programme will, of course, feature music by Leoš Janáček. His quartet *Intimate Letters* is the composer's declaration of love for his long-term muse, Kamila Stösslová. The interwar Brno composers will be represented by the *String Quartet* by Vítězslava Kaprálová, an immensely talented composer and pupil of Bohuslav Martin, whose career was cut short by her untimely death. Vítězslav Novák is linked to Leoš Janáček by his love of folk music, and his *String Quartet No. 2* is a beautiful example of his original approach to folk sources of inspiration. ✕



24.11

3 pm, Villa Löw-Beer

JANÁČEK QUARTET

Janáček is fun

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

It's an outdated theory that it's only with age that you begin to appreciate Janáček's operas. Getting to know Janáček's operas can be a fun-filled adventure for both children and adults, and the festival programme has certainly taken this to heart.

Hurvínek in the footsteps of Vixen Bystrouška

Following on from the successful tour of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, we have the return of the famous puppet Hurvínek with his dog Žeryk. He wants to meet other Czech composers and so he is visiting Leoš Janáček just as he is in the middle of composing *The Cunning Little Vixen*. What happens when Hurvínek and Žeryk start to get involved? All will be revealed over two festival weekends in the foyer of the Janáček Theatre. For children aged 5–9. The program will be available only in Czech.



PHOTO PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

Hurvínek with his dog Žeryk



16. 11 and 24. 11

11 am, foyer of the Janáček Theatre

**HURVÍNEK IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF VIXEN BYSTROUŠKA**

Behind the Curtain with *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*

Behind the Curtain is one of the most popular programmes organized by the Brno Opera for schools and the public. On this occasion, together with the Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB, the soloists and the conductor Marko Ivanović, we will go behind the curtain with Matěj Brouček to the Moon, to the past, and even to Janáček's composing kitchen. Would you like to learn a lunar hymn? Take a step Behind the Curtain with us! For second-year primary pupils. The program will be available only in Czech.



21. 11

11 am, Janáček Theatre

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

When you hear the name Janáček

A fun way for pupils to learn about Leoš Janáček. What is Janáček's story? How did he live and work? Which places in Brno are linked to him and how much of his own life was projected into the music he wrote? A two-hour educational workshop during which the teacher Eliška Pruch-Dočkalová will take you into the magical world of Janáček's operas directly on the rehearsal stage of the Janáček Theatre. The program will be available only in Czech.



1, 8, 15 and 22. 11

10 am, rehearsal stage of the Janáček Theatre

**WHEN YOU HEAR
THE NAME JANÁČEK**

Janáček's Vixen through the eyes of children

Every town should have its own opera! Brno is lucky because Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen* is just such an opera. This November it celebrates 100 years since its first performance. There is still a glint in her eye, her coat has the colour of autumn gold and no-one would guess she was one hundred, but that's the way it is. Such a birthday requires a proper celebration and gifts, one of which is an exhibition of children's art on the theme of how they see the Vixen. ×

1–24. 11

the square in front of the Janáček Theatre

**VIXEN BYSTROUŠKA THROUGH
THE EYES OF CHILDREN**

The story of Brno's villas

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

With the Tugendhat Villa, Brno can boast of a true masterpiece of functionalist architecture. However, slightly in its shadow are several other beautiful villas, which the festival visitor might at first see as being connected just by the fact they are hosting concerts, but in reality they have a lot more in common. At the beginning of our story is wool, transformed into a luxury fabric which gave Brno its nickname of the Moravian Manchester. Wool and the textile industry also linked the three families which are at the centre of our story about villas.

The oldest of them is the Löw-Beer Villa, and the history of the family who gave it its name starts at the end of the 18th century in a Jewish ghetto in Boskovice. The entrepreneurial Löw-Beers gradually expanded their activities and set up a yarn-spinning factory in Svitávka in the 19th century. In the second half of the 19th century, Max Löw-Beer moved his firm to Brno, which offered better opportunities to develop and better connections to Vienna. The family also owned a factory in Brněnec, though today it is more associated with Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* than with the original owners. It was here that Oskar Schindler rescued around 1,000 Jews from the concentration camps.

Max's son, Alfred Löw-Beer, moved to Brno in 1913. He bought a house opposite Lužánky Park on what is today's Drobného Street. It was originally a plot of land with two summer houses and a garden with a vineyard. In 1902, the industrialist Moriz Fuhrmann built a villa here, designed by the Viennese architect Alexander Neumann. In the 1930s, Löw-Beer had the villa partly reconstructed by the architect Rudolf Baumfeld, who was responsible for the beautiful space of the central hall and the staircase opening onto the first floor. Alfred's sister, Cecilie, bought the adjacent Arnold Villa, another attractive Brno location, the reconstruction of which was finally completed this year and the villa is now open to the public.

Alfred Löw-Beer and his wife Mariana had three children – Max, Grete and Hans. Grete went to study in Vienna, where she met the industrialist Hans Weiss, whom she married in 1922. Six years later they divorced and Grete and her daughter Hana moved back to Brno. After her return she became friends with Hermine Stiassni, the wife of Alfred Stiassni, the owner of a wool factory on Přízová Street. Alfred Stiassni also came from an incredibly wealthy Jewish family. He moved to Brno with his family and siblings from Bučovice, and the neo-renaissance Bochner Palace on today's Přízová Street became their home. Following nationalization his factories became the foundation for the *Vlněna* company.

Hermine Stiassni, or Mitzi as she was called at home, was born in Ústí nad Labem. Her father, Jakob Weinmann, was involved in the banking and coal mining businesses, though he himself came from the family of a poor Jewish merchant. Hermine married Alfred in Brno in 1909 and after the wedding became involved in her husband's business, in particular real estate. She had considerable wealth of her own and she decided to go into business for herself in 1925. She was responsible for the construction of the multifunctional building known as Palác Morava on today's Malinovsky Square. She also became a member of several charity groups and she and Grete were involved with the League of Human Rights, which offered help to political refugees from



Villa Löw-Beer

PHOTO TOMÁŠ DITTRICH



PHOTO DAVID ŽIDLICKÝ

Villa Tugendhat

Germany. Money was raised for them through events such as the annual bridge tournament at the Tugendhat Villa.

One of Grete's childhood friends was Fritz Tugendhat, who also came from a family of Jewish-German industrialists and merchants, who had lived in Brno for several generations. The Tugendhats didn't have their own businesses but they were co-owners of the Brno wool factories Feldhendler et Co. and Max Kohn. Soon after her divorce Grete married Fritz Tugendhat and they decided to settle in Brno. Grete was given some land from her parents as a wedding gift – the upper half of the garden behind the Löw-Beer Villa, while her father would also finance the building of their house. Stiassni decided to build his villa in a quarter which today overlooks the Brno Exhibition Centre, and the two houses were originally to have been designed by the famous architect for the German-Jewish elite, Ernst Wiesner.

The Stiassni Villa was built between 1927 and 1929 at a quite astronomical sum for those days – almost a quarter of a million crowns. The house was equipped with all of the modern amenities, there was a swimming pool and tennis court on the grounds, and there was even a gym on the villa's underground floor. The interiors were designed by the Viennese architect Franz Wilfert. This undoubtedly reflected Hermine's taste, who not only had a head for business but was also an excellent photographer and painter. As a result, there emerged a villa which is the complete opposite of the Tugendhat Villa – the outside reveals its origin from the 1920s, while inside exudes the calm domestic atmosphere of the late 19th century.

The Tugendhats, however, decided they wanted their villa to look completely different. In a lecture during her visit to the villa in 1969, Grete herself said: *"I very much wanted a modern, spacious villa with clear and simple lines. My husband was terrified by the thought of rooms full of the knick-knacks and soft furnishings he knew from childhood."* And so they contacted Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who came to Brno in September 1928. He was greatly taken by the plot overlooking the town's historical centre and construction began in 1929. The work by the Eisler brothers' construction firm from Brno took 14 months, and van der Rohe managed to encapsulate within the building the ideals of simplicity and functionality. It is set into the slope of the garden as though carved out from the greenery surrounding it. The interior spaces of the villa flow seamlessly together and the use of the finest materials (onyx, exotic wood) together with unique technological features (windows that can retract into the floor) create a truly unique building.

However, none of the families were able to enjoy their homes for long. The end of the 1930s marked the radicalization of Germany and the Stiassni family were among those who managed to get out in time. Information about the imminent Anschluss with Austria forced them to leave the republic with only their most essential belongings. From London they travelled to the USA and from there to Rio de Janeiro, before finally settling in Hollywood. Alfred Stiassni died there in 1961 and Hermine a year later. Their daughter Susanne acquired American citizenship and died in 2005. None of them ever returned to Brno...

The Tugendhats also left the republic in May 1938, firstly to Switzerland and then to Venezuela. The Löw-Beers were the last to flee in 1939. Only Grete's father Alfred remained in occupied Czechoslovakia and tried to protect as much of the family property as possible. His body was found on a railway track near Stříbro at Easter in 1939 and his death has never been explained. Their villa was confiscated by the Nazis in 1940 and became a Gestapo headquarters. After the liberation of Brno it was taken over by Soviet and Romanian soldiers and eventually became a children's home, which existed there until 2012. Afterwards, the villa underwent extensive renovation and in 2016 a permanent exhibition was opened, with social and cultural events also being held here.

The Tugendhat Villa had a similar fate – after the war it was used as a stable by the Soviet army before being turned into a children's hospital and rehabilitation centre. In 1967, Grete managed to visit Communist Czechoslovakia and see her former home again. She returned to Czechoslovakia once more in 1969 with her daughter Daniela, who lives in Vienna. On 17 January 1969 she gave a lecture at the Brno House of Art in which she recalled her life in the villa and working with the architect Mies van der Rohe. Daniela Tugendhat-Hammer continues to travel to Brno and from 2010–2012 overlooked the villa's reconstruction to its original state. In 2001, the Tugendhat Villa was the first modern architecture monument to be registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. After the war, the Stiassni Villa was converted into a luxury hotel for special state guests. The first was President Edvard Beneš, who stayed in the villa in May 1945. Today it is administered by the National Heritage Institute and has undergone extensive renovation work. In 2018 it was included in the prestigious Iconic Houses list – a global network of iconic homes from the 20th century.

Art should be a complex experience and the concerts in the villas undoubtedly provide this. At the same time, it's also a small way of thanking those who built them and lived in them for such a short time. ✕

Music and architecture, the perfect match of artistic genres at the festival concerts

The Tugendhat Villa

A song recital with Simona Šaturová and Marek Kozák
Folksong is the window to the soul and a deep well of inspiration for composers such as Leoš Janáček, but also for Eugen Suchoň and Klement Slavický. You will hear Janáček's *Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs* performed by the outstanding soprano Simona Šaturová accompanied by Marek Kozák in the Tugendhat Villa, along with a selection from *On the Overgrown Path* and other piano pieces.



PHOTO JAN HOUDA

Simona Šaturová and Marek Kozák



10.11

11 am and 8 pm, Villa Tugendhat
**RECITAL: SIMONA ŠATUROVÁ
AND MAREK KOZÁK**

The Ardašev Duo

Husband and wife Igor Ardašev and Renata Lichnovská are among the top piano players not only in their hometown of Brno but also on the international stage, both as soloists and partners. There will be a first festival outing for Antonín Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* for piano four hands, which is certain to be just as impressive as its orchestral version.



21.11

8 pm, Villa Tugendhat
**DUO ARDAŠEV:
SLAVONIC DANCES**

A recital featuring Václav Petr and David Mareček

Many composers have been seduced by the combination of the piano and the velvety tones of the cello. Janáček wrote his *Fairy Tale* for these two instruments, Antonín Dvořák wrote the composition *Silent Woods* for them, and Josef Suk his *Ballad*. These and other compositions will be performed by one of the best cellists of the younger generation, Václav Petr, accompanied on piano by David Mareček.



PHOTO PETR KADLEC

David Mareček



23.11

3 pm, Villa Tugendhat
**RECITAL: VÁCLAV PETR
AND DAVID MAREČEK**



Martin Kasík

PHOTO MAREK OLBRYMEK

A piano recital with Martin Kasík

Smetana, Janáček, Novák, Fišer and Slavický – a rich feast, charting Czech piano music from the 19th to the 20th century, performed by Martin Kasík, one of the most distinctive figures of the Czech piano scene. As a pianist he is admired for his poetic style of playing, which manages to capture the mood of the moment.



23. 11
8 pm, Villa Tugendhat
RECITAL: MARTIN KASÍK

The Löw-Beer Villa

A song recital featuring Pavla Vykopalová, Karel Dohnal and Eliška Novotná

A soprano, clarinet and piano are an unusual combination, but this was what Janáček had in mind when he wrote the playful *Nursery Rhymes*, which will be performed by the soloist from the Janáček Opera NTB Pavla Vykopalová, the clarinetist Karel Dohnal, and the pianist Eliška Novotná. We will also hear songs by Pavel Haas, Bohuslav Martinů and Antonín Tučapský. ✕

The Stiassni Villa

A piano recital with Jan Jiraský

Brno audiences associate the name of the excellent Brno pianist Jan Jiraský primarily with the Leoš Janáček Memorial. On this occasion, he will be at the Stiassni Villa and the programme featuring Janáček's piano opus *In the Mists* will be fittingly accompanied by Antonín Dvořák's *Poetic Moods* and Bedřich Smetana's *Sketches*.



16. 11
11 am, Villa Stiassni
RECITAL: JAN JIRASKÝ



Pavla Vykopalová

PHOTO MAREK OLBRYMEK



17. 11
3 pm, Villa Löw-Beer
**RECITAL: PAVLA VYKOPALOVÁ,
KAREL DOHNAL
AND ELIŠKA NOVOTNÁ**

Student and alternative theatre

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

Young artists and students are always welcome at the festival and their programmes are usually amongst the most interesting, whether they are morning events leading visitors around the JAMU building to the sound of music from every corner, or chamber concerts at the Leoš Janáček Memorial.

This is now the third year when the festival has inspired the creation of new opera works, and on this occasion two faculties with several artistic teams have come together in their development. Librettists, composers and stage directors worked together in the initial search for a subject and then from the first draft of the script to the finished work. The festival will present the three resulting operas – *Echo and Narcissus*, *Oliver* and *Tvorování*, or as the students themselves called the project – ENOT. Why did they choose these themes and what do they want to communicate to audiences?

Echo and Narcissus

Kateřina Slaběňáková (composer)

“What I enjoy most about the story of the boundless love of the world-famous ancient ‘lovebirds’ is that it presents composers with a whole range of moods. It gave me the chance to write music for scenes that are ironic, humorous, very deep as well as completely absurd and superficial. Neither was there a lack of deadly serious moments – perhaps literally? Another amazing adventure was then searching for the musical language to precisely describe the traits and individuality of the characters, each of whom would provide enough material for at least another opera of its own.”

Martin Dostál (stage director)

“Two people appear in the opera Echo and Narcissus with two themes which I or the people around me have encountered personally. Echo is incapable of describing the thoughts she has in her mind – she would like to but is unable. All she can do is repeat the empty phrases she hears around her. Narcissus brings hypocrisy – in the virtual world he enjoys a great deal of attention from others, but in reality he is a shy and timid person. The psychological themes of hypocrisy and the inability to express oneself are nothing new in human relationships, but I do believe that the way the world works today, with all of its technological possibilities, reinforces and aggravates these psychological problems.”

Oliver

Kateřina Szymeczková (composer)

“Although it might not seem obvious at first, for me the central theme of the opera is music therapy. The fact that it’s set in a hospital and the person behind this ‘musical treatment’ is the hospital clown, seems to me to be a clear way to work with such a motif. Music accompanies us throughout our lives, it is important for various rituals, why not stress its importance in a hospital as well?”

Vojtěch Orenič (stage director)

“Illness can paralyse us to the extent that we perceive nothing else and often we can’t even talk about it. On the one hand, I see Oliver as a tribute to hospital clowns, on the other, as a patient’s awareness of their condition. As a kind of understanding, thanks to which they find the strength to carry on as best they can.”

Tvorování

Noemi Savková (composer)

“When I first opened the libretto for Tvorování (still an ongoing project then), I was struck by its poetical, fanciful and playful atmosphere. I like the idea of contributing to the creation of a world where not everything is clear, where there is room to create mystery. At the same time, Tvorová’s journey is one we all share.”

Vladimír John (stage director)

“Kristýna Brázdová’s resonating libretto, complemented by Noemi Savková’s stirring music, immediately struck me with its important contemporary theme and at the same time showed how a serious subject can create joy and peace. The opera describes the journey of a teenage narrator in a turbulent world of shapes, creations and potatoes. Thanks to its wit, we discover the recipe for why, despite sudden difficulties, we shouldn’t fear adulthood or the child within each of us.”

9.11

11 am, Faculty of Music, Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts

MATINEÉ BY THE STUDENTS
OF THE FACULTY OF MUSIC,
JANÁČEK ACADEMY OF MUSIC
AND PERFORMING ARTS



12.11 and 19.11

7pm, Theatre on Orlí street

NEW CHAMBER OPERAS
BY THE JANÁČEK ACADEMY OF
MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS





PHOTO WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Vítězslava Kaprálová in 1935

Vitka Fate

Unlike JAMU, the Brno Conservatory does not carry the name of Leoš Janáček, but it was this school which the Brno Maestro fought to establish. It is, therefore, very special that its students are a regular part of the festival programme. This is the third time they will prepare a programme where the whole singing department, from the first-year students to the oldest, will contribute. During the last festival, their *Weeping Fountain*, dedicated to Janáček's daughter, was a truly beautiful and moving experience. This time they have prepared a look into the life of another exceptional Brno woman – the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová – entitled *Vitka Fate – A Song of Love*.

“She was a femme fatale for a lot of men. She loved them but her heart belonged mainly to music. Can you choose your fate or can you only succumb to it? And how does history, which we are part of, leave its mark on us? The life and loves of the Czech composer and conductor, Vítězslava Kaprálová, whose journey ended far too soon.”



14. 11 7pm, 17. 11 11am
Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)
STAGE PROJECT OF THE BRNO
CONSERVATORY OPERA STUDIO

The Other City

“In a rundown second-hand bookshop, the nameless main character discovers a book written in an indecipherable script. He finds a specialist who has encountered it before but is unable to translate it. After the specialist uncovers the secret of this ‘other city’ which exists in parallel with our own reality, the main character becomes obsessed with finding this town.”

For twenty-five years now, the Ensemble Opera Diversa has been an integral part of Brno's alternative scene. It has produced a number of operas, mini-operas and premieres of orchestral compositions. At the heart of its activities is the musical and operatic work of the ensemble's founding members, the composer Ondřej Kyas and the librettist Pavel Drábek. They have also worked with a large number of composers and performed works by Miloš Štědroň, Ivo Medek, Alois Piňos and Lukáš Sommer and others. At the festival they will perform Ondřej Kyas's opera *The Other City*, inspired by the novel of the same name by Michal Ajvaz, directed by Kateřina Křivánková, with musical staging by Gabriela Tardonová. ×



22. 11
7pm, Theatre on Orlí street
THE OTHER CITY



PHOTO MAREK OLBRZYMEK

The Other City

The truth in folk music

TEXT VENDULA GALDOVÁ

All of Leoš Janáček's works are linked by his attempt to truthfully express the driving forces behind human actions. The composer found this truthfulness in the folk music he had been surrounded by since his youth and to which he devoted a considerable part of his life as a collector of folksongs. He wrote a large number of texts which sought to describe the essence of folk music, the most extensive being *On the musical side of Moravian folksongs*. Janáček not only discussed folk culture and folk musicians from a specialist's perspective, but also poetically and lovingly in his own unique way – he saw in it something he had an affinity to, which had been unjustly forgotten and neglected.

Leoš Janáček followed in the footsteps of František Bartoš in his exploration of folksong in Moravia. Following previous unfortunate changes to the harmonization and other aspects of folksongs, one of Janáček's main objectives was to return them to their authentic state. *"We will only arrive at a true, complete knowledge when we look from a clear scientific perspective at the living tone, the living rhythms, the living folk song. That is the true core, the true material to be studied."* With these thoughts in mind he set out to systematically collect songs and melodies in 1888.

Influenced by his inclination towards realism, the composer was not only interested in the singers and musicians, their social backgrounds and life stories, but also in carefully recording the instruments they used – the bagpipes, the cymbalom – and how they contributed to the creation of the songs' melodies. The players passed on the well-known songs they had memorized through imitation, which Janáček appreciated because it *"sharpened one's perception of the music in an extraordinary manner."*

Leoš Janáček's trips as a collector took him to the far-flung corners of Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia. He worked very systematically during these research trips as can be seen from his instructions for other collectors. In addition to the geographical and notational information, he also advised noting down details about the areas where the songs were played and facts about the singer's life. He recommended behaving in a relaxed manner, recording everything without embellishment, while standard musical notation was not to be used. *"If you measure the sketched figures with sixteenth notes and tap the rhythm precisely as indicated, then this monster will sound rhythmical, false, inert – because you never find that in people!"*

The songs sounded most authentic when they were sung in their natural acoustic environment, which also contributed to their rhythmical structure: *"The full echo from the peaceful Wallachian mountains disappearing into the distant lowlands of Moravia, directly invites long rhythmical conclusions. What reason would there be for dragging out the concluding notes in low village rooms without an echo?"*

Janáček attempted to explain the secret surrounding the folk melodies with reference to his speech-melody theory. He believed that songs grew from natural speech – melodies which had a certain musical value even if they were taken outside of a musical context. *"An unbreakable thread winds out from speech to song,"* was how Janáček described the transition from the spoken word to singing. His idea was to attach these speech melodies to his song collections, as he hoped folk melodies would continue to be collected.

As chairman of the Working Committee for Czech folksongs in Moravia and Silesia, he along with Františka Kyselková and Hynek Bím set out to record songs using a phonograph from 1909 to 1912. Thanks to the careful work of researchers who have digitalized the recordings from these wax cylinders, we can also now listen to the preserved authentic recordings in the form they were heard more than a hundred years ago by Janáček himself.

In his later folk-music research, Janáček focused more on psychology as part of speech and song – for example, he highlighted the differences in the melody of the same word when said in different mental states; when the context of the situation changed; and he also distinguished the intonation between a father and son. He wrote everything carefully down in notation and assigned pitch and rhythm values to the words. When recording with a phonograph he had the singers say the same word in turn in order to observe the difference in the speech melody of the different individuals.

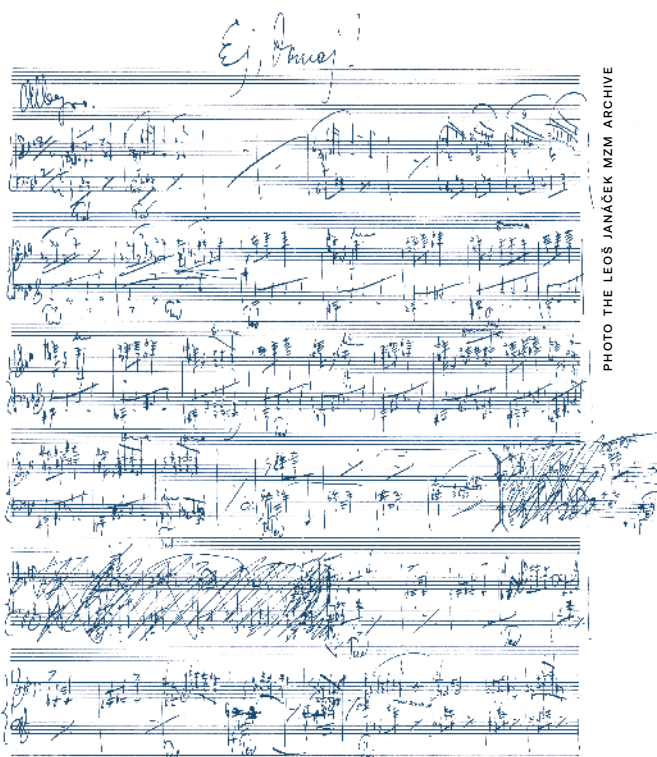


PHOTO THE LEOŠ JANÁČEK MZM ARCHIVE

A sketch of Janáček's piano arrangement of the dance *Ej, danaj!* from 1892.

Aiming to analyse and make accessible thousands of songs, Janáček set out to classify them according to type, period of origin, form and occasion. However, he also criticized the “decline in form” which no longer offered interesting rhythmical or melodic features, instead he valued the original, concise melodies. *“Rich ideas are compressed here into the most modest of places without losing their clarity and impact. As though on a small bed grew the greatest variety of flowers, colourful and yet picturesquely grouped!”* Dance numbers are given the credit for establishing the rhythmic regularity of folk music and he devotes separate chapters or essays to them, describing the individual dances and their instructions in detail. In the Wallachian songs, for example, he finds a naturally uniform *“timing of movement”*.

The harmonic aspects of folk music also held an important place in Janáček’s research. He examined in detail the characteristic lines which emerged from the natural flow of folk melodies and the liberation from having to use today’s commonly used keys. He came up with the term *“Moravian modulation”* – this describes a characteristic inclination towards the seventh degree in a key. *“The incline is so strange that you notice it on first listening. It seems to me as though the depth of the soul was being measured by these strange melodies. It is as though the melody deliberately drops away from the central one a whole tone lower and spreads itself so widely in the soul that it either takes in the meaning of the new key itself or establishes a new key.”*

He also wanted to know the reason why songs gradually transformed – what became established within them and, on the contrary, what did time *“cover over”*. He saw the natural rhythm based on the words as being essential in folk songs. He aptly called one of his essays from his later folk-culture period *“On the most durable thing in folksong”*. What did he see as being at the heart of folk music? The constant search for the basic building block of folk music brought him back again to human psychology, the expression of which, due to the rhythmical expression – *“sčasovky”* or timings – created the structure of the song: *“The timing in folksong is admirable and magnificent. It is the most durable thing in folksong. It will hold it fast ‘in the middle of the waters of the Danube’ and the swain in the middle of the village room amid the whirl of dancing.”*

If we read Janáček’s own description of songs and nature, we can glimpse the sincere relationship he had with folksong, and

it compels us to think about the beauty of a disappearing folk culture. This sentiment was also aroused in the composer during one of his research trips when he observed a cymbalom player describe how he had learned from his father. *“He obligingly exchanged his sickle for a cymbalom, sat down at the threshold of his home – and soon the quiet, narrow valley echoed with the trembling sounds...It was so strange, words eluded me.”*

Janáček described how a song, like speech, would change with each performance depending on the external circumstances – the place, time, acoustics, mood. *“In particular, songs and melodies blown only by the wind in an orchestral procession – with all of the lively voices from the treetops and the tangled bushes, abandoned stubble and succulent lawns – across those vast hillsides with their hamlets full of life, especially those songs to which the bagpipes do not beg, nor does the cymbalom trail, nor does the musician weave their voices – it is hard to fix these songs from Mother Nature into unvarying intervals.”*

Folk musicians don’t play at inappropriate times – some songs, therefore, are heard very seldom, only a few times a year, though with the decline in interest in folk traditions, they might gradually disappear from people’s consciousness. Janáček’s lament in the foreword to the third edition of *A Bouquet of Moravian Folksong* reflects the situation in folk culture at the start of the twentieth century: *“This general disappearance of folksong can only be sincerely regretted. This is not merely about a means of social entertainment: with the songs disappears not only an aesthetic ideal but an ethical one as well, the result of which will be a coarsening of taste and a brutalization of manners.”*

Janáček used his extensive folk-culture research to create a unique musical language. A study of the principles for creating folksong and of the internal driving forces of ordinary people became one of the elements which still distinguishes Janáček as a composer today, while his carefully collected speech melodies became the starting point for his opera compositions. Through his research, Janáček also sought to achieve a continuity in the development of folksong, which would greatly influence his artistic compositions. We are grateful to Janáček the folklorist for his contribution to our knowledge of the origin, creation and performance of folksong. We can only hope that this interest in the musical legacy of our ancestors will remain alive and well in this century too. ✕



PHOTO THE LEOŠ JANÁČEK MZM ARCHIVE

Leoš Janáček with the painter Antos Frolka and his wife Mariana at a meeting at the Moravian Year in Brno in June 1914

The roots of Janáček's folk-culture inspiration

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

It's one thing to hear all about how Janáček was inspired by Moravian and Slovak folk music, it's quite another to hear for yourself where this inspiration came from and what its roots were. The festival is not only a showcase of famous or dramaturgically interesting works – it is also about putting things into context. And this includes the wonderful experience of listening to authentic performances of Moravian folk music.

For the fourth year of the festival we have organized concerts together with Magdalena Můčková, who is the singer, cimbalom player and artistic director of Cimbálová Muzika Danaj. She has devoted her whole life to folk music and her festival concerts always cover areas of Moravia which are musically connected to Janáček's activities as a collector and composer.

The concert *Intoxicated by Song* will take you to the village of Březová, which Leoš Janáček frequently visited and even wrote an essay on. Regional singers and musicians will perform songs from Uherskobrodsko and Kopanice, regions on the Moravian-Silesian border linked by Janáček's notes and commentaries.

In addition to song, Janáček was also inspired by folk dance, and his Lachian Dances are still very popular to this day. In the programme for the concert *Ubiquitous Janáček*, we will set out to other areas of Moravia with their equally fascinating dances, such as the Haná dances (Kalamajka, Trojky, Silnice, Troják) and Moravian dances (Kožich, Kalamajka, Trojka, Silnice, Rožek), the Serbian Round, the Little Queens, etc. The juxtaposition of Janáček's musical interpretation with a regional concept of music and dance will be at the heart of the *Ubiquitous Janáček* programme. ✕



PHOTO MAREK OLBRZYMEK

From a folk concert as part of the MFJB 2018



10.11
3 pm, Reduta Theatre (Theatre Hall)
FOLK CONCERT:
BEDAZZLED BY SONG



22.11
7 pm, Mahen Theatre
FOLK CONCERT WITH DANCE:
UBIQUITOUS JANÁČEK

In the footsteps of Janáček with the Brno festival

TEXT PATRICIE ČÁSTKOVÁ

Are you really serious about getting to know Leoš Janáček? Then mix yourself a unique festival cocktail of music, art, history and a trip to the countryside, or just meander through the town, taking in places linked to the famous conductor.

Mahen Theatre

You could start at the Mahen Theatre, the venue for several of Janáček's opera world premieres. The main entrance to the foyer is said to have been inspired by the Palais Garnier in Paris, but whether this is true or not, the Vienna architects Fellner and Helmer designed an elegant theatre building for Brno and the first electrified theatre in continental Europe. After the foundation of Czechoslovakia, the then Theatre on the Ramparts became the home of the Czech ensemble. The opera orchestra and its chief conductor, František Neumann, a great supporter

of Janáček, also gave regular concert performances here, so the festival concerts will gently transport you back in time to when Janáček would come here for, among other things, the rehearsals and performances of his operas. In addition to the symphonic concert by the Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB, you can also hear two recitals. The violinist Josef Špaček and pianist Miroslav Sekerka need no introduction to festival audiences. This year their programme focuses on Antonín Dvořák, Bedřich Smetana and Bohuslav Martinů.

The baritone Adam Plachetka will not only be performing the role of the Gamekeeper in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Baron Prus in *The Makropulos Affair* at the festival. Festival goers will also have the chance to hear him in a chamber setting with the recital *Evening Songs*, featuring works by Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák and Zdeněk Fibich, accompanied by the pianist and conductor David Švec. The foyer of the Mahen Theatre once functioned as a rehearsal space for the opera orchestra, and during the festival it will echo to the sounds of the brass Janáček ensemble with music by Gideon Klein, Leoš Janáček and Jaroslav Ježek.

→



Miroslav Sekerka and Josef Špaček

PHOTO RADOVAN ŠUBÍN



2. 11
7pm, Mahen Theatre
**RECITAL: JOSEF ŠPAČEK
AND MIROSLAV SEKERA**



3. 11
11 am, foyer of the Mahen Theatre
JANÁČEK ENSEMBLE



9. 11
7pm, Mahen Theatre
**EVENING SONGS:
ADAM PLACHETKA & DAVID ŠVEC**

At home with Janáček

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to look over a composer's shoulder? In the case of Janáček, the nearest you can get to this is by visiting the Leoš Janáček Memorial, located in his home next to the Organ School, where he was once director. You will find here the study where he wrote his major works, while for researchers the building of the former Organ School houses the Leoš Janáček Archive, which is listed in the UNESCO Memory of the World register, and which contains the manuscripts of all of Janáček's compositions and libretti. During the festival, the Memorial also comes alive with the sound of chamber concerts and morning performances. Additionally, there will be an exhibition entitled *The Janáček Affair*, charting how Leoš Janáček has been represented in the works of artists from the 1920s to the present day.



6. 11

7 pm, Leoš Janáček Memorial

RECITAL: LENKA KUŽELOVÁ,
DENNIS SCHNEIDERKA,
JOSEF KLÍČ AND JAN JIRASKÝ



11. 11

7 pm, Leoš Janáček Memorial

PIANO RECITAL BY STUDENTS
OF JAMU MUSIC FACULTY



24. 11

11 am, Leoš Janáček Memorial

FENG-YŪN SONG AND LENKA
NAVRÁTILOVÁ MATINÉ

Discover Janáček's youth

What was Janáček's childhood and youth like? Head down to Mendlovo náměstí in Old Brno, where from the age of eleven Janáček attended a foundation for musically gifted boys at the Augustinian Monastery of St Thomas. He was one of the "bluebirds" as the Old Brno foundation pupils were known because of their blue uniforms. The boys were given a musical education related to the provision of music by the monastery. You can also find out more about another prominent Brno figure, as the Augustinian Monastery was where the father of genetics, Johann Gregor Mendel, lived and carried out his research. As part of the festival a Spiritual Concert will be held in the Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, while in the Abbey refectory there will be a Morning Concert with compositions by Janáček and his teacher Pavel Křížkovský performed by the ensemble Q Vox. You will also have the opportunity to tour some of the places associated with Janáček's stay at the monastery, including the foundation's classroom and the choir loft of the Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. And you will also hear the bluebirds sing!



2. 11

11 am, refectory of the Augustinian Abbey

Q VOX



7. 11

7 pm, Basilica of the Assumption
of the Virgin Mary

SPIRITUAL CONCERT



16. 11 11 am, 21. 11 4 pm
Mendlovo nám. 1

TOUR OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
MONASTERY



PHOTO TIC ARCHIVE

Take a walk with Janáček

Do you want to take a break from music and just head out for a stroll? Follow in Janáček's footsteps around Brno with the interactive Loxper mobile app. The route takes you to places where Janáček lived, composed, conducted, taught, heard the premieres of his compositions, went for walks, met his friends, etc. You don't even have to walk the route – during the festival you can also follow in the footsteps of Janáček in the comfort of a minibus with an audio-guide in either English or German for international visitors.



www.loxper.com/en/leos-janacek/



3. 11 and 14. 11

2 pm, náměstí Svobody

IN JANÁČEK'S FOOTSTEPS
BY MINIBUS

Gastronomic Janáček

While you're strolling through the city, refresh yourself at one of Brno's gastronomic establishments offering a taste of recipes from *Marie's Cookbook*, by Marie Stejskalová, Janáček's long-time housekeeper:

- Janáček's rosehip cheesecake,
Café Placzek, Minoritská 4
- Janáček's lentil patties,
Kohout NA VÍNĚ, Malinovského nám. 2
- Janáček's butter tubes,
Etažér (Cukrářství Martinák), Poštovská 4 (Alfa Pasáž)
- Janáček's marble slices,
Buchta C, Zelný trh 10
- Janáček's almonds,
Kobliha Brno, Pekařská 68
- Janáček's good black coffee,
qb coffee roasters, Veslařská 179
- Janáček's chestnut cake,
Zemanova kavárna a cukrárna, Josefská 4
- Janáček's walnut slice in a jar,
Jazz Café Podobrazy, Zelný trh 14
- Janáček's meringue kisses,
Cukrárna Tutti frutti, Mendlovo nám. 18
- Janáček's cream buns,
Mlsná holka, Poštovská 1
- Janáček's currant cake,
Café Punkt., Bayerova 7
- Shredded pancake with Janáček's rowanberry jam,
Kafe v rozkladu, Veselá 6
- Janáček's apricot dumplings,
Café ERA, Zemědělská 30



Janáček's Hukvaldy

Janáček wasn't born in Brno – his hometown is Hukvaldy in North Moravia. However, during the festival you can also travel there as part of a day trip by bus (around 150km from Brno). Visitors can look forward to a tour of the Leoš Janáček Monument, a visit to the former Hukvaldy school, where in 1854 Janáček was born as the son of the schoolmaster, a walk to a game reserve, and time also to buy the famous "lopačky" cakes from the Hukvaldy bakery. On the way back to Brno there will also be a stop in nearby Příbor with a tour of the birthplace of the celebrated father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. ✕



For more detailed information on this and other events for festival goers organized by TIC BRNO



19.11
8 am, Janáček Theatre
FOLLOWING JANÁČEK
TO HUKVALDY



PHOTO JAN SLAVIK

Petr Sís

Petr Sís and Janáček

The uniqueness of the Janáček Brno 2024 festival is underlined by its visual appearance, which Petr Sís designed for the festival based on the motto No Limits... "I had the feeling that as the wind blew over Wallachia and Lachia, it picked up the young Leoš Janáček and carried him through life. He was a unique cloud of lyricism in the musical sky and his landscape of feelings is perhaps in a way inexpressible..." The artist also designed the drawing for the 100th anniversary of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*. ✕



LEOŠ JANÁČEK
MILOSLAV IŠTVAN
BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ
ORCHESTRA
OF THE JANÁČEK
OPERA NTB
AND JAN MRÁČEK

Conductor: Robert Kružík

Violin: Jan Mráček

Soloists: Jana Šrejma Kačírková, Václava Krejčí Housková,
Roman Hoza and Vít Nosek

Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno, choirmaster: Petr Fiala

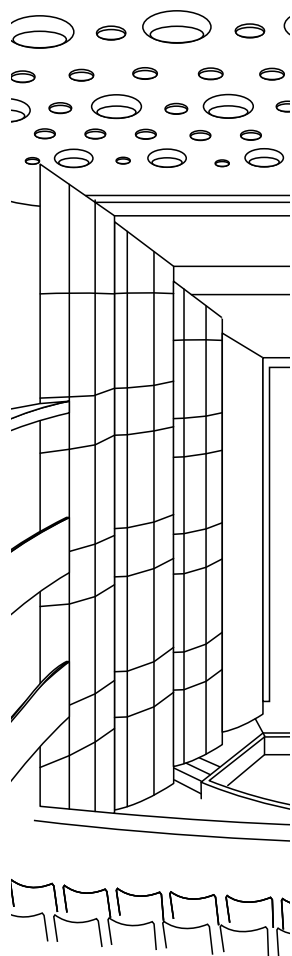
Brno Children's Choir, choirmaster: Valeria Maťašová

Co-performers: Hana Briešťanská and Daniel Bambas

15.11. 2024, 7 pm
Mahen Theatre

→ p. 36

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It is a mission of honour for the Leoš Janáček Foundation to support, develop and revive the legacy of Leoš Janáček. Thanks to the Janáček Brno Festival, his music resonates in truly world-class quality, which is why the Foundation has proudly supported the festival from its very beginnings.




Shorten your wait for the festival. **Listen online** or follow Janáček's works according to the event calendar at **www.janacek-nadace.cz**




As part of the Janáček Brno festival, we warmly invite you on a trip to Janáček's birthplace in Hukvaldy on November 19, 2024.


more information:



 janacek-nadace.cz

 www.editiojanacek.eu

 NLJ

 [plj_hukvaldy](https://www.instagram.com/plj_hukvaldy)

Discover JANÁČEK with TIC BRNO

You can look forward to a wide-ranging programme during the Janáček Brno 2024 festival

- Follow in the footsteps of Janáček from the comfort of a minibus
- Travel by coach in search of Janáček's Hukvaldy
- Visit the exhibitions about life at the Janáček family and about Bystrouška
- Try Janáček's favourite recipes from Marie's Cookbook in some of Brno's most popular gastro spots
- Listen to Janáček in the streets of Brno day and night



More information at leosjanacek.eu



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Support Us

The main aim of the festival is to commemorate the importance of Leoš Janáček as a composer in the place where he worked and created music for more than fifty years in the form of a prestigious biennial. We continue to develop dynamically and are always striving to improve. In order to continue to grow, we need you, our patrons and supporters.

You can support the festival with a one-off voluntary contribution of your choice. Depending on the amount of support, you can adopt a Golden Fox, a Silver Fox or a Little Fox. The Janáček Brno festival would like to thank you for your help.

Adopt a Golden Fox

Contribution of CZK 50.000 +

- Graphic for the 100th anniversary of the opera The Cunning Little Vixen by Petr Sís
- Possibility to give flowers to the conductor / soloist on stage
- Private lecturer's introduction before the performance
- Participation in the rehearsal of the production with a backstage tour
- Toasts with artists (selected performances)
- Use of the VIP lounge before the performance and during intermission (selected performances)
- Acknowledgements on the festival website

Adopt a Silver Fox

Contribution of CZK 20.000 +

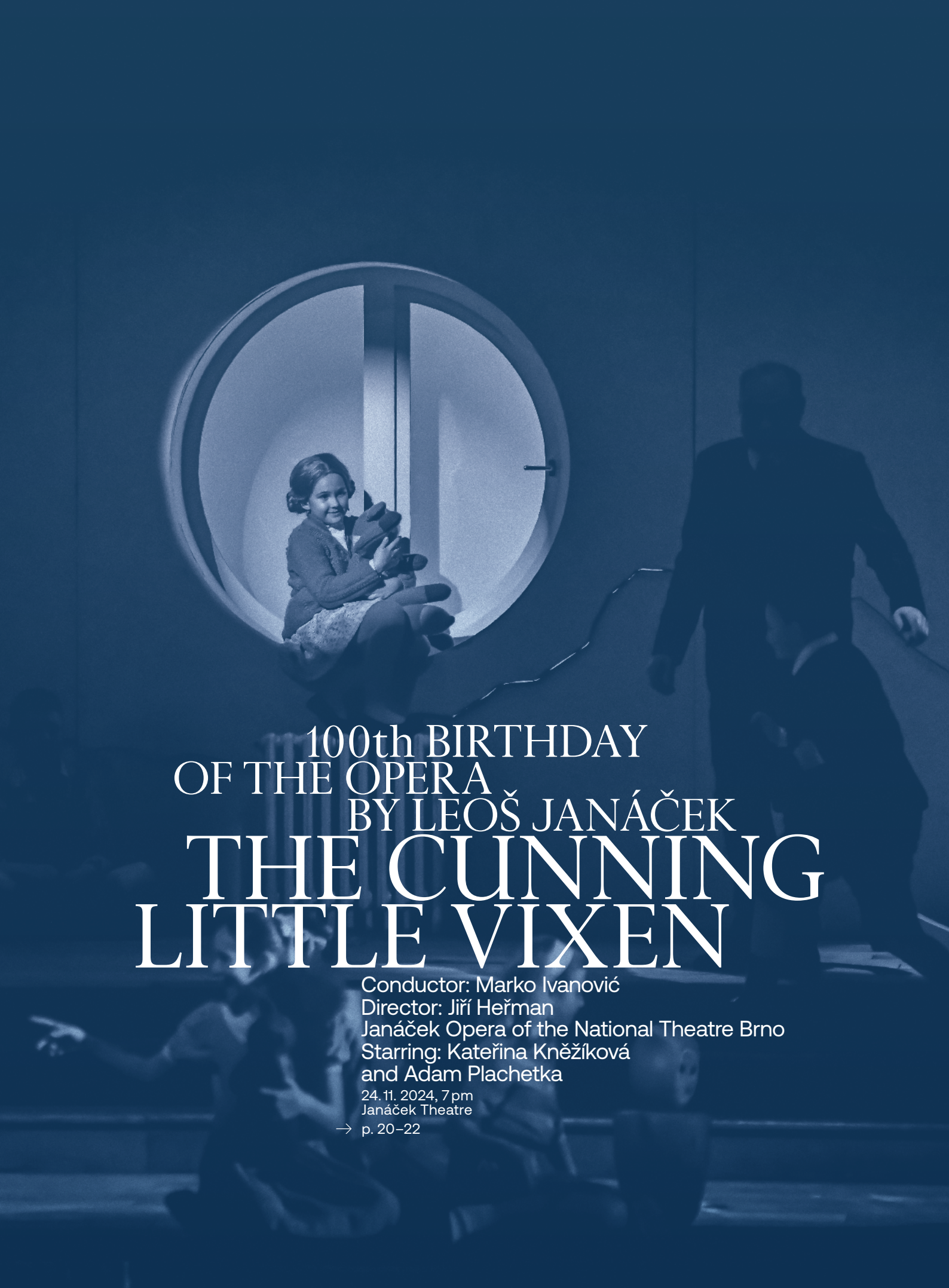
- Participation in the rehearsal of the production with a backstage tour
- Toasts with artists (selected performances)
- Use of the VIP lounge before the performance and during intermission (selected performances)
- Acknowledgements on the festival website
- DIVA NdB magazine to your mailbox

Adopt a Little Fox

Voluntary contribution to any amount

- We are grateful for any support. For a voluntary donation we will send you a postcard with a graphic for the 100th anniversary of the opera The Cunning Little Vixen by Petr Sís.





100th BIRTHDAY
OF THE OPERA
BY LEOŠ JANÁČEK
THE CUNNING
LITTLE VIXEN

Conductor: Marko Ivanović

Director: Jiří Heřman

Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno

Starring: Kateřina Kněžíková
and Adam Plachetka

24. 11. 2024, 7 pm
Janáček Theatre

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