



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

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THE KISS AT THE NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre's opera currently presents the festive premiere of Bedřich Smetana's sixth opera *The Kiss* on September 23 and 25. The team, led by director Jiří Nekvasil and conductor Marek Šedivý, has prepared this production for the complete staging of all eight completed Smetana operas in the year 2024, marking the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth for the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024.

The Kiss has waited for this new staging in Ostrava for 21 years, last seen by audiences between February 2000 and November 2002. This new staging marks the eleventh presentation; the first time this opera premiered in our theatre was as the second opera, right after *The Bartered Bride*, in August 1919.

"Smetana's operatic work is crucial for Czech opera. Each of his operas is an entirely different world, with a distinct artistic concept, as if Smetana were opening new possibilities for Czech opera. Composed by Smetana after he had become deaf in 1874, it was the first of three collaborations with librettist Eliška Krásnohorská. The relatively simple plot unfolds from afternoon to the following morning, with a significant focus on the thoughtful psychology of the characters," explains the production's stage director Jiří Nekvasil. He adds that "Vendulka is to marry a young widower, Lukáš, whom she has loved for a long time and who reciprocates her love. The entire situation almost falls apart due to a customary kiss that the man demands from the girl when the wedding is arranged before the eyes of the whole village. We follow the journey to the relationship fulfilment between two people who have a history and whom fate has brought together after a long wait. They must not squander their second chance. The audience should not be misled by the apparent simplicity of the plot. The depth and richness of the opera become evident when approached with trust, a pure heart, concentration, creative playfulness, and lightness."

Before 1989, Bedřich Smetana's operas were frequently performed; after the revolution, they are rarely staged. Currently, the NDM opera is the only one in the world with *The Kiss* in its repertoire. The production pertains to the **Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024**. The complete Smetana cycle was presented by the Prague National Theatre and the then State Theatre in Ostrava in 1984. Our theatre also performed it in the years 1924 and 1956. "Since 2014, we have systematically prepared for 2024 in which we will stage all eight completed Smetana operas twice in a row: for the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth, first from March 2, and in the second cycle, from the end of April to May 12, his death anniversary," reminded NDM director and director Jiří Nekvasil. The latest productions are already prepared: *The*



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Devil's Wall (premiere in 2014), *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* (2016), and *The Secret* (2017). The most performed *The Bartered Bride* was rehearsed almost two years ago by Jiří Nekvasil in co-production with the Slovenian National Theatre Opera and Ballet in Ljubljana; it will premiere in Ostrava in December 2022. Still on the schedule for this season are *The Two Widows* (premiering in June 2022), *Dalibor* in 2023, and in 2024, the theatre plans festive stagings of the opera *Libuše*.

Show dates

1st premiere: 23.09.2021

2nd premiere: 25.09.2021

Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 show dates: 07.03. and 09.05.2024 from 6:30 pm

Venue

Antonín Dvořák Theatre Smetanovo nám. 3104, 701 04 Moravská Ostrava a Přívoz, Czech Republic

Creative team

conductor **Marek Šedivý¹ / Adam Sedlický**

stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**

set designer **Jakub Kopecký**

costume designer **Simona Rybáková**

movement director **Jana Tomsová**

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**

dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**

Cast

Paloucký **Martin Gurbal^{1 2} / František Zahradníček**

Vendulka, his daughter **Lívia Obručník Vénosová / Veronika Rovná**

Lukáš, a young widower **Luciano Mastro² / Martin Šrejma¹**

Tomeš, his brother-in-law **Svatopluk Sem^{1 2}**

Martinka, Vendulka's old aunt **Lucie Hilscherová² / Anna Nitrová¹**

Barče, a maid **Lucie Kaňková² / Marta Chila Reichelová¹**

Matouš, an old pash **Josef Kovačič² / Josef Škarka¹**

Officer **Václav Cízek¹ / Václav Morys²**

Aurora **Karolína Beňová / Stela Machová / Zuzana Smrčková / Nela Starková**

¹ cast of the March edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024

² cast of the May edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024

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