



# NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

## PRESS RELEASE

### OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

The original press release (6 October 2023) edited on  
25 January 2024



## WHAT SECRET DOES *THE SECRET* BY BEDŘICH SMETANA KEEP?

In a renewed premier on 12 October, the audience in Antonín Dvořák Theatre will see *THE SECRET*, a second to last completed opera by Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884). The same team consisting of the director Tomáš Studený and conductor Jakub Klecker will produce it after six years to have it ready for **the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024**. For Smetana's anniversaries, The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre will produce all eight of his completed operas in two-time blocks in March and May. All the pieces are the theatre's own productions which makes the theatre only one in the world to achieve this.

Opera's opening night took place in Prague in 1878 and experts consider it to be Smetana's best opera composition despite Smetana's sickness. Opera's musical motive is identical to the motive of the symphonic poem *From Bohemia's Woods and Fields* from the cycle *My Fatherland*. The libretto was written by Eliška Krásnohorská and deals with relationships. Kalina and Róza are the main couple – their love was ruined 20 years ago and now, with complications, they are healing their relationship. Old injustices, animosities and emotions come to light which intensifies the conflict between their whole families...

Jakub Klecker, the conductor, and Tomáš Studený, the director, do not hide their admiration for Smetana's music. According to stage director Tomáš Studený, the biggest secret of the opera is its comicality and Smetana's doubts about whether the music is comical enough as well as whether the final product will make the audience laugh. "It is as if Smetana had to fit a mould, because the taste of that period and his own belief made him write something comical and national; however, his creative spirit would subconsciously reject it. The strength of his music is in that invincible temperament, sensitivity and; mainly, in his absolute musicality with which it is written. We can say that none of Smetana's comical operas are actually a typically buffoon matter – one that would bring comical characters and crazy situational acts on stage as we, for example, see in Italian comical operas. On the contrary, *The Bartered Bride*, *The Two Widows*, *The Kiss*, *The Secret* and the romance comic *The Devil's Wall* are more serious than one would expect from comical operas. This is due to Smetana's nature as he is able to empathize with each character with admirable understanding and that way perform their sadness, happiness, conflicts and passions.

When writing the libretto, both Eliška Krásnohorská and Smetana also had doubts about its comicality. Tomáš Studený, who even after six years from the premiere in Ostrava holds the



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same opinion about *The Secret*, draws attention the opera's main feature, which is its happy end. " *The Secret* is an opera about a broken love between Kalina and Róza that after 20 years still lasts but brings old hurts and wrongs to the surface. This theme of late love as a leitmotif appears in other Smetana's operas. Smetana probably projected the twists and turns of his own relationships, Studený explains"

This is the 12th rendition of the opera *The Secret* in the NMST, whose original opening night took place on 27 and 29 April 2017.

## Show dates

**1<sup>st</sup> revived premiere: 12.09.2023**

**2<sup>nd</sup> revived premiere: 14.09.2023**

**reruns in the season: 18.10., 05.12.2023, 08.03., 10.05.2024**

**Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 show dates: 08.03. and 10.05.2024 from 6:30 pm**

## Venue

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

## Creative team

conductor **Jakub Klecker<sup>1 2</sup> / Josef Kuřířt**

stage director **Tomáš Studený**

set designer **David Janošek**

costume designer **Eva Jiřiková**

choreographer **Lukas Zuschlag**

movement director **Ladislava Košíková**

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**

dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**

## Cast

Malina, a councillor **Martin Gurbal<sup>1</sup> / Jiří Příbyl<sup>2</sup>**

Kalina, a councillor **Martin Bárta<sup>12</sup> / Svatopluk Sem**

Panna Róza, Malina's sister **Lucie Hilscherová<sup>2</sup> / Anna Nitrová<sup>1</sup>**

Blaženka, Malina's daughter **Soňa Godarská<sup>1</sup> / Jana Sibera<sup>2</sup>**

Vít, a huntsman, Kalina's son **Ondřej Koplík<sup>1</sup> / Richard Samek<sup>2</sup>**

Bonifác, veteran soldier **Josef Kovačič<sup>2</sup> / Josef Škarka<sup>1</sup>**

Skřivánek, a singer **Martin Javorský<sup>1</sup> / Vít Šantora<sup>2</sup>**

An entrepreneur **Jakub Tolaš / Roman Vikovič**

The innkeeper **Ivana Ambrúsová<sup>1</sup> / Nikola Novotná<sup>2</sup>**

Jirka, a bell-ringer **Aleš Burda<sup>1</sup> / Petr Němec<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> cast of the March edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024

<sup>2</sup> cast of the May edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024



**NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ**  
**NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE**

The Ghost of Barnabáš **Petr Urbánek / Roman Vlkovič**  
Bagpipe player **Jiří Dvořák**

**Mgr. Soňa Zapletalová**

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**OSTRAVA!!!**