



# NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

## PRESS RELEASE

### OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

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on 26 January 2024



## REVIVED *THE DEVIL'S WALL* AT THE NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

On December 14 2023, Ostrava opera company opens *The Devil's Wall* by Bedřich Smetana in a renewed premiere. The original opening night took place in June 2014. It was in 2014 when the NMST's opera creative team embarked on the production with the intention of performing all eight of the composer's completed operas in a span of 10 years – concluding in 2024 – in blocks to commemorate the composer's bicentennial birth and 140th death anniversaries."

"My opera will puzzle many critics..." wrote Smetana to librettist Eliška Krásnohorská while crafting a work that would ultimately become a remarkable fusion of stage and musical fantasy. "In a collage-like manner, it weaves together romantic lightness, comedy, the intimate emotion of arias and duets, the sophistication of musical ensembles, choral scenes, and dissonance, foreshadowing the world of 20th-century music," recalls the production's stage director Jiří Nekvasil.

*The Devil's Wall* stands as the composer's ultimate completed opera, having its premiere on 29 October 1882. Eliška Krásnohorská (1847–1926) collaborated with Smetana as the librettist for both *The Secret* and *The Kiss*. Her inspiration drew from an ancient legend surrounding the formation of a remarkable stone structure on the upper stream of the Vltava River near Vyšší Brod. "Thus, unfolds a narrative of the devil exploiting human weaknesses, pursuing his own interests, and obstructing Mr. Vok's marriage to safeguard his family's legacy. In the aftermath of Přemysl Otakar II's ascension to the Czech throne, Vok I of Rosenberg (died in 1262) held the esteemed position of the supreme marshal of the Kingdom of Bohemia, making him the second most influential figure in the expanding kingdom since 1255. Smetana's musical composition strongly echoes autobiographical elements, portraying his yearning for love, hope, personal happiness, and social redemption—praying for salvation and the dismantling of his own devil's wall. This metaphorical barrier, constructed by the curses of deafness, tormenting hallucinations, and gradually debilitating madness, symbolically represents his adversaries and opponents," explains Jiří Nekvasil.

**Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024** is the largest project of the 2023/2024 season at NMST. To commemorate the composer's bicentenary and 140th anniversary of his passing, all eight operas will be performed in nine days in March and May. Opera *Libuše* will be presented as a staged concert at the Jiří Myron Theatre, led by Robert Jindra, with the participation of the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava and the Prague Philharmonic Choir.



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This is the 9th rendition of the opera *The Devil's Wall* in the NMST, whose original opening night took place on 12 and 14 June 2014.

## Show dates

**1<sup>st</sup> revived premiere: 14.12.2023**

**2<sup>nd</sup> revived premiere: 16.12.2023**

**reruns in the season: 16.01., 09.03., 11.05., 29.05.2024**

**Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 show dates: 09.03. and 11.05.2024 from 6:30 pm**

## Venue

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

## Creative team

conductor **Marek Šedivý<sup>1 2</sup> / Josef Kuřifřt**

stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**

set designer **David Bazika**

costume designer **Marta Roszkopfová**

movement director **Gianvito Attimonelli / Jana Tomsová**

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**

dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**

## Cast

Vok Vítkovic **Martin Bárta<sup>1</sup> / Jiří Brückler<sup>2</sup>**

Záviš, his nephew **Kateřina Jalovcová<sup>1</sup> / Anna Nitrová<sup>2</sup>**

Jarek, knight in service of Vok **Luciano Mastro<sup>1 2</sup> / Martin Šrejma**

Hedvika, Countess of Šauenburka **Lívía Obručník Vénosová<sup>1</sup> / Veronika Rovná<sup>2</sup>**

Michále, the steward of Rožmberk Castle **Jorge Garza<sup>2</sup> / Gianluca Zampieri<sup>1</sup>**

Katuška, his daughter **Veronika Kaiserová<sup>1</sup> / Kristýna Kůstková<sup>2</sup>**

Beneš, a hermit **Martin Gurbaľ<sup>2</sup> / Josef Škarka<sup>1</sup>**

Rarach, the devil **Miloš Horák<sup>2</sup> / František Zahradníček<sup>1</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

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**OSTRAVA!!!**