



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

29 January 2024



OPERA CONCERT *LIBUŠE* AT THE NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 stands as the flagship project of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre's 2023/2024 season. To commemorate Bedřich Smetana's bicentenary and 140th anniversary of his passing, all eight operas—that have premiered over the course of the last decade—will be performed in nine days marking the anniversary dates in March and May. Both editions of the cycle will culminate with a concert rendition of the opera ***LIBUŠE***, co-produced with the **Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava** and the **Prague Philharmonic Choir**.

Smetana's fourth opera *Libuše* was completed in 1872 and premiered at the Prague National Theatre nine years later on 11 June 1881. Its original libretto in German was written by Josef Wenzig and translated into Czech by Ervín Špindler. Originally envisioned as a coronation opera for the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I as the Czech king, *Libuše* holds historical significance as a pageant tableau. Although the coronation never transpired, the opera premiered during the National Theatre's inauguration and was later reintroduced after the catastrophic fire in 1883. Smetana expressed his dedication to the project, stating, "I have worked on this project to the best of my abilities. I have given it my all and hope to leave a noble legacy to my dear nation."

The opera narrates the legend of medieval Princess Libuše—the mother of the Czech Nation—known from *Chronica Boemorum*. She was the youngest but wisest of three sisters, who became queen after their father Krok died; she married Přemysl the Ploughman with whom she established the Přemyslid dynasty and prophesied the founding of the city of Prague in the 8th century.

Divided into three acts and six scenes, the opera unfolds the story of Libuše's judgment, marriage, and prophecy. The first act explores the conflict between two brothers, Chrudoš and Šťáhlav, over the inheritance. Chrudoš, the elder and fierier sibling, insists on claiming the entire estate, while Šťáhlav, the younger and calmer one, seeks an equal division. In the second act, amid opposition from Chrudoš, Libuše, with the assembly's approval, chooses Přemysl, a farmer from Stadice, as her husband. The third act witnesses the reconciliation of the two brothers. Libuše forgives Chrudoš for his initial disagreement, and he is compelled to apologize not only to her but also to Přemysl. Despite his initial resistance, Chrudoš eventually



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submits to the authority of the prince. Libuše expresses gratitude to the gods and experiences a prophecy foreseeing the future of the Czech nation.

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. The set design is by Jiří David and Martin Dostál, who also serves as the stage director for the production.

Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 show dates: 10.03.2024 from 6:30 pm and 12.05.2024 from 3 pm

Venue

Jiří Myron Theatre Čs. legií 148, 701 04 Moravská Ostrava a Přívoz, Czech Republic

Creative team

conductor **Robert Jindra**

stage director **Martin Dostál**

set designer **Jiří David / Martin Dostál**

Cast

Libuše, Queen **Mária Porubčinová**

Přemysl, a farmer from Stadice **Svatopluk Sem**

Chrudoš **Martin Bárta**

Šťáhlav, younger brother of Chrudoš **Richard Samek**

Lutobor, father of Krasava **Pavel Švingr**

Radovan **Jiří Hájek**

Krasava, Lutobor's daughter **Petra Alvarez Šimková**

Radmila, sister of Chrudoš and Šťáhlav **Monika Jägerová**

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