

### Ostrava Becomes the Center for Contemporary Opera Again 5th Biennial NODO Festival Coming Up!

Ostrava, February 24, 2020 – For the fifth time already, the last days of June in Ostrava will be dedicated to new opera and progressive forms of music theatre, showcasing Czech and world premieres of works with the power to move us deeply. Production teams from Europe, the USA and Japan, as well as the international orchestra Ostravská banda, will converge on the Moravian-Silesian metropolis. This year, they will rehearse and perform seven unique chamber opera productions over the course of two weeks. Four different venues in the center of Ostrava will hold these events: Antonín Dvořák Theatre for opera performances, Jiří Myron Theatre for musical theatre performances, the post-industrial Brick House of the Hlubina Coal Mine and the abandoned G Pavilion at the Černá louka Exhibition Grounds. The fifth biennial NODO/ New Opera Days Ostrava will be held from Friday, June 26th to Tuesday, June 30th.

The Festival will open with the Czech premiere of an opera from one of the greatest stars of contemporary music theatre – **Salvatore Sciarrino**. **Superflumina** will mark his fifth production in Ostrava. The setting of Sciarrino's work, based on the lyrical novel of Elizabeth Smart, is a large train station – a site of amplified noise and a gathering place for homeless people. The composer's muse, mezzo-soprano **Anna Radziejewska**, who excelled two years ago at NODO in Sciarrino's *Luci mie traditrici*, will take up the major role of Woman who finds herself lost and lonely amidst the hurrying crowd. The Polish team, led by the director Pia Partum, returns to Ostrava to repeat their great success from previous years. Since the piece is very demanding in terms of staging, it will be performed twice (June 26th and 27th).

The collaboration between Czech composer **Michal Rataj** and German director **Katharina Schmitt** on the new music-theatre piece **Aphasia Studies** is so intertwined that both present themselves as the authors of this work, which will have its world premiere at NODO. The question "Who speaks?" is just as important for them as the question of who cannot speak or who cannot be heard. And what is this aphasia? It is a speech disorder, an inability to accept and transmit symbolic codes, be they spoken or written. (June 28th)

American and Japanese teams, including dancers of the famous Noh theatre, will meet in Ostrava to perform a new experimental opera based on rhythms of Buddhist chants. Its author is **Miya Masaoka**, a composer from New York, an acclaimed koto player, experienced improviser and professor at Columbia University (NY). The traditional (for some of us exotic) poetry of the East will blend with the Western world in the world premiere of **The Long Arc of Time** at the Hlubina Coal Mine (June 28th).

Composer and pianist **Marek Kepřt**, whose compositions are infused with ambiguity and poetic, often humorous and highly ambiguous anagrams, will be another composer representing the Czech music scene at NODO. One of the plotlines of his opera debut will consist of degustation sounds (smacking of lips, smelling, swallowing etc.). The performers of his experimental opera **HIBIKI, HIBIKI, vzhmoť!** will need even more space than the stage of Antonín Dvořák Theatre can provide. (June 29)

The opera **Wedding** (Svadba), written by Serbian-born, Montreal-based composer **Ana Sokolović**, will showcase a sextet of women who prepare their friend for a wedding ceremony. Over the course of this bachelorette party, which is accompanied by traditional singing and dancing, women laugh as well as cry, but are particularly thrilled that on the next day, their lives will turn into something amazingly exceptional... (June 29)

Completing the trio of female composers at this year's NODO festival will be African-American performer, rapper, writer and activist **Camae Ayewa**, better known in the USA and Europe as **Moor Mother**. Her uncompromising, raw and modern forms of expression will represent the antithesis of everything we associate with the term opera, even more so because theme of her performance is the last moments in the life of **Queen Elizabeth I**. (June 30th)

The final day of the festival will belong to **The Garden** – a playful and hyperbolic opera piece from British composer **Richard Ayres**. The story of an unsatisfied man who constantly searches for meaning in his life unfolds upon the mythical backdrop of a garden. *“Are we as an audience watching the reality, or observing a dream and fantasy world?”* We will have the opportunity to encounter a work from an author known for his ability to pick out only the best from classical music, while reveling in overstatement and originality. (June 30)

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The NODO festival responds to the desire for contemporary opera – opera which reveals strong, current and timeless themes and processes them through a musical language familiar to the listener today. The only festival of new opera in the Czech Republic, NODO was born from an idea of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre's director **Jiří Nekvasil** and **Dita Eibenová** to connect the great four-ensemble theatre institution with the small nonprofit association Ostrava Center for New Music (OCNM), which also organizes the Ostrava Days festival. The OCNM is led by composer, flutist, conductor and avid initiator of music events Petr Kotík. The history of the first biennial festival NODO goes back to June 2012, and since then, more than twenty operas have been performed in Czech or world premieres in Ostrava. Of the seven operas to be performed this year, four will be world and three will be Czech premieres, with the oldest one composed in 2010.

*“NODO is still quite a unique project. The presentation of the contemporary opera takes place in our theatre spaces, but the productions are created only for this particular festival, for that specific biennial edition. The basis for these is (I am unafraid to say that) some kind of desire and enthusiasm for top-notch interpretation. We've accomplished some really great things, and I would specifically like to mention the exclusive production of the world premiere of Alois Hába's Thy Kingdom Come at NODO 2018,”* said Jiří Nekvasil.

All operas will be staged directly in Ostrava and the majority of them were created on commission of the NODO festival. The international orchestra **Ostravská banda** will again perform as the opera orchestra, and the **Canticum Ostrava** choir, composed of local singers, led by choirmaster Jurij Galatenko, will be the opera choir. The soloists, conductors and production teams will come from Japan, USA and six European countries. Next to composers from Italy, Canada, the USA and the UK,

# **New Opera Days Ostrava** \* Dny nové opery Ostrava

Czech composers will also make appearances. Without their active participation, NODO would not be complete and would fall short of its purpose as the only festival of new opera in the Czech Republic.

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**The presale of NODO festival passes and tickets starts on April 1, 2020. Please find attached the detailed program of the festival.**

The NODO/New Opera Days Ostrava festival is organized with the support of the Statutory City of Ostrava, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Moravian-Silesian Region and Czech-German Future Fund and thanks to other institutions, foundations and the support from the private sector. We thank Mr. Libor Winkler for his continuous generous support of Ostrava Center for New Music.

NODO is co-produced by **Ostrava Center for New Music** and **National Moravian-Silesian Theatre**. The festival is organized in cooperation with the Lower Area Vítkovice. Additional information is available on our website <http://www.newmusicostrava.cz/en/> and on [facebook](#).

**Additional information and print materials:**

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