



PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

14 February 2024

A FUSION OF OSTRAVA THEATRE, ZNOJMO MUSIC FESTIVAL, AND THE BAROQUE ENSEMBLE: HANDEL'S MASTERPIECE *JULIUS CAESAR IN EGYPT* MARKS UNIQUE COLLABORATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In a very first groundbreaking collaboration, the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre (NDM) joins forces with the prestigious **Znojmo Music Festival** and **Czech Ensemble Baroque** to present George Frideric Handel's masterwork ***JULIUS CAESAR IN EGYPT* (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*)**. This landmark production, featuring period instruments and an exceptional international cast, premieres at Ostrava's Antonín Dvořák Theatre in Ostrava on **19 June 2025**.

"In today's modern era, performing Baroque opera offers something extraordinary – a mode of interpretation that's recognized worldwide not as a historical artifact, but as a vital, respected approach to performance," says **Roman Válek**, conductor and founder of Czech Ensemble Baroque. "Beyond the period instruments, whose distinctive sound blends perfectly with the vocal lines, we're embracing the creative instrumentation and dynamic interpretation that makes this music truly come alive."

The production features an exceptional international cast led by world-renowned countertenor **Andreas Scholl** in the title role, whose interpretations of this opera have set the benchmark for modern Baroque singing. The stellar ensemble includes countertenors **Valer Sabadus** and **Frank Klisović**, alongside celebrated Czech artists **Adam Plachetka** (performing exclusively in Znojmo), **Michal Marhold**, **Doubravka Novotná**, and **Monika Jägerová**.

Composed in 1724, *Julius Caesar in Egypt* is one of the most celebrated operas by Georg Friedrich Handel, blending gripping drama with dazzling vocal virtuosity. The opera follows the legendary love affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, set against a backdrop of political intrigue and power struggles in ancient Egypt. Over the centuries, this compelling story has captivated audiences worldwide, making it one of the most frequently performed Baroque operas today.

The Ostrava performances will take place in the acoustically superb Antonín Dvořák Theatre, where the neo-Baroque architecture provides an ideal setting for this historically informed production. In July, the opera moves to Znojmo's unique Domeček (German House), which will be transformed into a world-class Baroque opera venue, continuing the Znojmo Music Festival's tradition of presenting masterworks in extraordinary settings.

"This production represents not just a performance, but a new model of artistic collaboration in the Czech Republic," notes **Jiří Ludvík**, President of the Znojmo Music Festival. "By bringing



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

together a publicly-funded opera house with our festival-driven stagione approach, we're demonstrating that the highest artistic standards can be achieved through innovative partnerships."

For the first time in its history, NDM collaborates with an external orchestra for authentic musical interpretation. Under Válek's direction, Czech Ensemble Baroque brings its acclaimed expertise in historically informed performance, using period instruments and techniques to capture the true essence of Baroque music. This unprecedented collaboration between NDM, Znojmo Music Festival, and Czech Ensemble Baroque represents a bold new direction for opera production in the Czech Republic, offering audiences an unforgettable opportunity to experience one of opera's greatest masterpieces in its most authentic form.

All of the activities of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre are financially supported by The Statutory City of Ostrava, The Moravian-Silesian Region, and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.



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OSTRAVA!!!

Show dates

Ostrava shows: 19, 21, 22, 25, and 26 June 2025, all from 6.30 PM

Znojmo shows: 10, 12, and 13 July 2025, all from 8.00 PM

Sung in Italian with Czech and English surtitles

Venue

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

Znojmo: Domeček (The Historic German Bourgeois House in Znojmo) Pontassievská 918/1, 669 02 Znojmo, Czech Republic

Creative team

music director **Roman Válek**

conductor **Roman Válek**

stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**

set designer **Daniel Dvořák**

costume designer **Hana Kelar Knotková**

movement director

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**



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Cast

Andreas Scholl (Caesar) – countertenor

Valer Sabadus (Sesto) – countertenor

Franko Klisović (Tolomeo) – countertenor, alto castrato

Doubravka Novotná (Cleopatra) – soprano

Monika Jägerová (Cornelia) – contraalto

Adam Plachetka (Achilla) – bass-baritone (for Znojmo shows)

Michal Marhold (Achilla) – baritone (for Ostrava)

Co-produced with **Znojmo Music Festival** and **Czech Ensemble Baroque** – concert masters Elen Machová, Josef Žák, Peter Zajíček.

The NDM Opera Company

The NMST Opera Company, one of the oldest in the Czech Republic, is recognized for its high-quality programming and exceptional interpretation. Led by Music Director Marek Šedivý and Intendant Jiří Nekvasil, the company honours Ostrava's long-standing tradition of opera cycles, including the notable Smetana Opera Cycle and the Terežín Opera Cycle. Their predecessor's as well as their own dedication to excellence has affirmed the company's role as a distinguished cultural institution over the past decade.

About the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre

The NDM (Národní divadlo moravskoslezské, founded in 1919) is the largest and oldest professional theatre in Ostrava and the Moravian-Silesian Region, established by the Statutory City of Ostrava. The theatre is a home to four artistic companies—opera, drama, ballet, and musical—that perform regularly on three permanent stages: the Antonín Dvořák Theatre, Jiří Myron Theatre, and the chamber Theatre 12. Each season, the theatre opens approximately 20 productions and stages nearly 500 performances. Beyond its regular productions, the NMST co-produces the drama festival OST-RA-VAR and the biennial opera festivals New Opera Days Ostrava (NODO) and Ostrava Days.

About the Znojmo Music Festival

Znojmo Music Festival is a unique celebration of music, wine, and history, offering world-class performances in stunning historical venues. With a strong focus on authenticity and artistic excellence, the festival presents a carefully curated program, centred around a fully staged opera or ballet production. Concerts span diverse genres, from classical and jazz to cross-genre collaborations, all complemented by exclusive regional wine tastings. By transforming unconventional spaces into concert venues, the festival creates an unforgettable cultural experience, seamlessly blending music with the rich heritage of the Znojmo region.

About the Czech Ensemble Baroque

Czech Ensemble Baroque is one of the leading European ensembles specializing in historically informed performances of Baroque and Classical music. Founded in 1998, the ensemble is dedicated to reviving both renowned and overlooked masterpieces, performed on period instruments with authentic interpretation. Under the artistic direction of Roman Válek, they



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have gained international recognition for their dynamic performances, collaborations with top soloists, and participation in prestigious festivals. A key part of their mission is the rediscovery of Czech-born composer Franz Xaver Richter, a significant figure of the Mannheim School. Their critically acclaimed recordings for Supraphon include the world premiere of Richter's Requiem in E-flat major, as well as Deposizione Dalla Croce, Te Deum, and an oboe concerto. Through concerts, recordings, and research, Czech Ensemble Baroque continues to bring the rich musical heritage of the past to life for contemporary audiences.

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