



PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

3 December 2024

**LOVE, IMAGINATION, AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEW OSTRAVA
RENDITION OF *TURANDOT***

The opera *Turandot*, Giacomo Puccini's unfinished masterpiece that has captivated generations with its magic and raw emotions, returns this December to the stage of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava after more than 20 years. Directed by the renowned stage director and set designer **Rocc**, a familiar name to the Ostrava opera audience, the premieres are scheduled for 19 and 21 December 2024 at 18:30 at the Antonín Dvořák Theatre.

In recent seasons, Rocc has brought several well received productions to Ostrava opera stage, including *The Emperor of Atlantis* and *The Broken Jug* by Viktor Ullmann, *The Two Widows* by Bedřich Smetana, and the world premiere of *The Sell Out* by František Chaloupka, which shone brightly at this summer's NODO biennale. However, it was *Turandot* that impacted the Slovenian director's artistic path—it was this opera that inspired him to pursue a career in opera direction 30 years ago. Now returning to *Turandot*, he approaches it for the first time as a director, promising audiences a bold and fresh interpretation that blends tradition with modern innovation.

At the heart of *Turandot* is love—its transformative power and ultimate triumph. Uniquely for Puccini, *Turandot* ends on a hopeful note. "Most of his operas end tragically, with suicides, deaths, or total destruction," Rocc observes. "But *Turandot* ends happily, with love overcoming even the greatest cruelty." This theme of sacrifice for love lies at the core of Rocc's vision. Prince Calaf is willing to risk everything—his own life and the lives of others—for the love of Turandot. Meanwhile, Turandot herself resists love, imprisoned by her own cruelty, but ultimately succumbs, defying everything she once knew. "Are we still capable of fully surrendering ourselves to love today? That is a profoundly relevant question for me," Rocc reflects.

One of the production's innovative elements is the use of QR codes within its set design. While considering the riddles central to *Turandot*'s plot, Rocc was struck by the parallel between traditional puzzles and modern-day codes. "When I thought about today's equivalent of riddles—how we encode our world—I realized that QR codes are everywhere. Then, as I worked with their design, I noticed how they resemble Chinese characters," he explains. In the production, QR codes serve as a visual motif connecting Chinese aesthetics with contemporary symbolism. Much like in today's world, where QR codes reveal hidden



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information to those equipped to decipher them, the audience—like the characters—will face riddles requiring interpretation.

Rocc's *Turandot* draws heavily on themes of dreams, imagination, and fairy tales. This fantastical approach is reflected in the set and Belinda Radulović's set costumes. The protagonist, Calaf, is portrayed as a modern figure who steps from the reality of the auditorium into the dreamlike world of the stage. This surreal transition emphasizes fantasy's central role in the production.

Although the story is set in China, the staging deliberately avoids literal Chinese elements, opting instead for a European interpretation of an imagined China. 'We are not striving for historical or documentary accuracy. For us, China represents a distant world, and we present a European perspective on how we imagine it might appear,' Rocc explains. By blending respect for tradition with innovative perspectives, Rocc's *Turandot* promises to deliver a visually and emotionally captivating experience.

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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Show dates

1st premiere: 19.12.2024

2nd premiere: 21.12.2024

reruns in the 2024/2025 season: 27.12.2024; 10.01.2025; 25.01.2025; 16.02.2025; 18.02.2025; 22.03.2025; 23.04.2025; 25.04.2025; 15.05.2025; 28.05.2025

Sung in Italian with Czech and English surtitles

Venue

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

Creative team

music director **Marek Šedivý**

conductor **Josef Kuřfiřt / Marek Šedivý**

stage director **Rocc**

set designer **Rocc**

costume designer **Belinda Radulović**

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**

dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**



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Cast

Princess Turandot **Frédérique Friess / Maida Hundeling**
The Emperor Altoum, her father **Václav Morys / Jan Vacík**
Timur, the deposed King of Tartary **Jozef Benci / Martin Gurbal'**
The Unknown Prince Calaf, his son **Ragàa Eldìn / Luciano Mastro**
Liù, a slave girl **Veronika Rovná / Gabrijela Deglin**
Ping, Lord Chancellor **Pavel Divín / Sungbin Kim**
Pang, Majordomo **Václav Morys / Vít Šantora**
Pong, Head chef of the Imperial Kitchen **Martin Javorský / Juraj Nociar**
A Mandarin **Tomasz Suchanek / Roman Vlkovič**
The Prince of Persia **Jiří Dvořák**
The Executioner **Petra Sejkorová / Julie Svitičová / Elen Šnoblová**

Including NMST Opera Chorus—concert masters **Jan Šošola** and **Lucie Staňková**

The NMST 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 NMST (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 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.

Mgr. Soňa Zapletalová

Foreign Relations Manager NDM
sona.zapletalova@ndm.cz
+420 725 716 375
+596 276 214

NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE
Čs. legií 148/14, 701 04 Ostrava – Moravská Ostrava, Czech Republic
www.ndm.cz/en

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