



PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic

29 September 2025

PHILIP GLASS'S *THE TRIAL* PREMIERES IN OSTRAVA

The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre has launched its 107th season, which brings not only new repertoire but also major upgrades to its second-largest stage, the Antonín Dvořák Theatre. Closed until the end of October for a comprehensive modernization of its stage technology, the venue will soon meet the highest standards required by 21st-century theatre.

The first opera premiere of the 2025/2026 season will therefore be presented in Ostrava's oldest church, the Church of St. Wenceslas. The opera company has prepared a site-specific production of **Philip Glass's *The Trial***, based on Franz Kafka's famous novel. This Czech premiere also marks the first time the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre stages an opera based on a literary work by Franz Kafka. Fourteen performances will be given between 9 and 25 October 2025.

Philip Glass (b. 1937) is the world's most performed living opera composer and one of central figures of late 20th-century music. With *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), created in collaboration with director Robert Wilson, he reshaped the landscape of music theatre. Since then, he has composed more than twenty operas, works that—even in chamber form—address profound existential themes.

Glass previously turned to Kafka in his opera *In the Penal Colony* (2000). In *The Trial*, through the story of Josef K.—arrested on his thirtieth birthday by an unknown authority for an unspecified crime and executed exactly a year later—he explores themes of alienation and the individual's helplessness before the system. The libretto was written by British playwright Christopher Hampton (b. 1946).

The Trial is Glass's second "pocket opera," scored for eight singers and a chamber orchestra. For the Ostrava production, the orchestra will expand to fourteen players. "We have set this production in the Church of St. Wenceslas, which represents both a significant challenge and an artistic adventure for everyone involved. I believe it will offer audiences an extraordinary experience, and I wish to thank the representatives of the Diocese of Ostrava–Opava, whose consent and generous support made this possible," says stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**.

Originally scheduled five years ago but postponed by the COVID-19 pandemic, *The Trial* now finds an even more powerful setting. Staging the work in the Church of St. Wenceslas amplifies the story's absurdity and underscores the brilliance of Glass's minimalist score. Redesigned at the turn of the millennium by architect Marek Štěpán as a multifunctional space for liturgy, concerts, and theatre, the church now fulfils that vision.

Glass also has a personal connection to Ostrava. In 2013 he served as composer-in-residence at the Ostrava Days Festival, where he and his ensemble performed the legendary *Music in*



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

Twelve Parts. One of the world's foremost platforms for contemporary music, the festival has long established Ostrava as a leading centre of today's music.

Conductor **Bruno Ferrandis**—a regular guest of Ostrava Days—will lead the Ostrava production of *The Trial*, bringing his extensive experience with contemporary repertoire. *“What struck me was the inexorability of Josef K.’s destiny, his path toward death. For me, it is deeply painful to see, because he is powerless to change the course of his fate. The music makes you feel this inevitability. It is like the mechanics of gigantic clocks—repetitive themes, phrases, and above all a relentless beat, almost like a pop rhythm but orchestrated in a classical way. There are huge surges, quiet descents into passages of infinite, almost naïve and childlike tenderness, and finally an ending that feels like the rhythm of hell itself,”* observes conductor Bruno Ferrandis of Glass's pocket opera.

The production is directed by the theatre's Intendant **Jiří Nekvasil**, with set design by **David Bazika** and costumes by **Marta Roszkopfová**. The roles of Miss Bürstner and Leni will feature young American soprano **Bree Nichols** in her Ostrava debut, alternating with **Karolína Levková**. The title role will be shared by **Jiří Hájek** and **Pavel Divín**. The production is enriched by the participation of the **NDM Opera Studio** under the direction of Lenka Živocká. Including NDM Opera Chorus and NDM Opera Orchestra—concert masters **Jan Šošola** and **Lucie Staňková**

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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.



OSTRAVA!!!

Show dates

1st premiere: 9.10.2025

2nd premiere: 10.10.2025

reruns in the 2025/2026 season: 11.–12., 14.–18., 21.–25.10.2025

Sung in English with Czech and English surtitles

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Venue

The Church of St. Wenceslas Kostelní nám. 3172, 702 00 Moravská Ostrava a Přívoz, Czech Republic



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Creative team

music director **Bruno Ferrandis**
conductor **Bruno Ferrandis / Marek Šedivý**
stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**
set designer **David Bazika**
costume designer **Marta Roszkopfová**
movement director **Michaela Dzurovčinová**
head of the NDM Opera Studio **Lenka Živocká**
Czech lyrics **Pavel Drábek**
assistant conductor **Lukáš Kovařík**
dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**

Cast

Fraülen Büstner / Leni / Offstage Voice **Karolína Levková / Bree Nichols**
Paní Grubachová / Washerwoman (Wife of Court Usher) / Offstage Voice / Woman **Šárka Hrbáčková / Anna Nitrová**
Titorelli / Flogger / Student (Berthold) **Vít Nosek / Vincenc Ignác Novotný**
Guard 1 (Franz) / Block / Offstage Voice **Raman Hasymau / Martin Javorský**
Josef K. **Pavel Divín / Jiří Hájek**
Magistrate / Assistant / Lawyer Huld / Offstage Voice **Ihor Maryshkin / Petr Urbánek**
Guard 2 (Willem) / Court Usher / Clerk of the Court / Priest **Erik Ondruš / Josef Škarka**
Inspector / Uncle Albert **Josef Kovačič / Jan Šťáva**

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

The NDM Opera Company

The NDM 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 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



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ
NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

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