



PRESS RELEASE

BALLET

Ostrava, Czech Republic

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CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP AT NDM BALLET

Lenka Dřimalová: “What gives me the greatest satisfaction is that people in Ostrava actually go to the ballet.”

Lea Bessoudo Greck: “My vision is to continue bringing a rich and versatile repertoire to Ostrava, offering audiences a wide range of artistic voices.”

As the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre enters its 108th season, the NDM Ballet Company is undergoing a change in artistic leadership. After thirteen years, Lenka Dřimalová is handing over the company to the young choreographer Lea Bessoudo Greck.

Lenka Dřimalová remains the dramaturg of the 2026/2027 season. In November, NDM Ballet will present the classical Romantic title ***Giselle***, choreographed and directed by **Andrea Helander Kramešová** (after the celebrated originals by J. Coralli, J. Perrot, and M. Petipa). The second premiere, scheduled for spring 2027, will be an exclusive mixed bill entitled ***Under the Skin***, featuring works by two internationally acclaimed choreographers—**Marco Goecke** and **Jacopo Godani**. Godani's choreography will be introduced by the company's new artistic director.

Lenka Dřimalová will continue to collaborate with the company and is not leaving entirely. Over the coming season, she will symbolically pass the baton to her successor while introducing her to the workings and day-to-day life of Ostrava's ballet company. A native of Ostrava, she has lived in the city all her life and remains deeply committed to it, although she also worked in Prague and served for six seasons as Artistic Director of Ballet at the National Theatre Brno.

While still studying at VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava, she was already active as a choreographer, founding the international festival *Tanec Ostrava* and the *Zóna Dance Theatre*, before going on to study choreography and dance pedagogy at HAMU in Prague. She took over the leadership of NDM Ballet thirteen years ago, at a time when the company had only around thirty members and needed to be rebuilt and strengthened. Step by step, she led the ensemble to European renown. Today, the company comprises forty-five dancers from around the world. Professional critics have described her dramaturgical concept as bold, ambitious, and entirely exceptional in the Czech context. The quality of Ostrava's ballet company is further confirmed by its regular invitations to tour internationally. Among its most



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prestigious achievements was an appearance at the **Italian gala Roberto Bolle and Friends** in Milan.

“My main ambition was to ensure that Ostrava Ballet would not turn inward, but would instead connect with the international scene and avoid becoming a regional bubble. We succeeded, and today we are able to engage world-class choreographers without difficulty. They are willing to meet us halfway, and we know how to convince them that although we are a smaller theatre by European standards, we have the organisational capacity for top-level choreography and are able to stage it at the highest standard. It is important to show that this truly matters to us.”

Lenka Dřimalová shaped the company’s repertoire around a combination of mixed bills and large-scale full-length productions. These mixed programmes brought together a range of contemporary choreographies by leading international creators such as **Jiří Kylián**, **Ohad Naharin**, **Itzik Galili**, **Johan Inger**, **Mauro Bigonzetti**, **Angelin Preljocaj**, and **Eric Gauthier**. Among them were productions such as ***All That Jazz***, ***Rock, Blues***; ***Rossini Cards***; ***Two Worlds / One World***; ***Rising and Falling***; ***dancENJOY***; and ***More Than Mozart!***

“At the same time, the NDM Ballet repertoire has seen an extraordinary shift towards full-length dramatic and visually rich productions with an international signature, such as ***Peer Gynt*** (choreography by **Jeroen Verbruggen**), ***Cinderella*** (**Paul Chalmer**), ***Chaplin*** (**Mario Schröder**), ***Coppélia*** (**Giorgio Madia**), and ***La Sylphide*** (**Karina Elver after Bournonville**). The company has also staged key works by the world-renowned choreographer **Youri Vámos**—***A Midsummer Night’s Dream***, ***Swan Lake***, and ***The Nutcracker – A Christmas Carol***. The latter two titles have remained hopelessly sold out ever since their premieres!” emphasizes NDM Director Jiří Nekvasil, adding that Lenka Dřimalová also placed great trust in outstanding Czech creators.

This May saw the final performance of the highly successful ***Carmen*** by **Jiří Pokorný**. Natalia Adamska, who performed the title role, received the Thalia Award for her performance, while Francesco Fasano (Don José) was nominated for this prestigious prize. ***Carmen*** also received the ***Divadelní noviny*** Award in the category Production of the Year 2022 – Dance Theatre, and this spring it was recorded by Czech Television for broadcast. The new Artistic Director of NDM Ballet, **Lea Bessoudo Greck**, emerged from a younger generation of choreographers and has already created several works for the Ostrava company. During the 2024 Year of Czech Music, she created ***Šárka*** to Bedřich Smetana’s composition of the same name, and this year saw the premiere of her ***Requiem***, danced to Mozart’s famous Requiem Mass (as part of the production ***More Than Mozart!***).

“My priority is to preserve and to develop the company’s artistic identity within this renowned theatre. I aim to cultivate an environment where dancers are inspired to grow. With respect for the theatre’s legacy, I also look forward to bringing new impulses to the theatre through national and international cooperation, and to offering our audience high-quality art of dance that will enrich Ostrava and its surroundings.”



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Lea Bessoudo Greck is a choreographer, dancer, and audiovisual artist born in the south of France. She received her dance training at the Princess Grace Dance Academy of *Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo* in Monaco. From 2016 onwards, she performed with the Israeli Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company (KCDC), appearing both in Israel and abroad, while also pursuing her work as a choreographer. She has been collaborating with NDM since 2024; her first project for the theatre was the choreography for Smetana's opera *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, directed by Jiří Nekvasil. Her choreographies created for NDM Ballet are listed above.

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NDM Ballet

NDM Ballet is one of the oldest ballet ensembles in the Czech Republic. Over the years, the company has developed a distinctive artistic profile through collaboration with leading Czech and international choreographers and through a dynamic, diverse repertoire. Following the artistic leadership of Lenka Dřímlová and now under the direction of Lea Bessoudo Greck, the ensemble continues to be recognized for its high artistic standards and versatility, performing a broad spectrum of works from classical ballet to contemporary dance.

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.

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