



2016. January
February

Erika Miklósa

Lear

GreekLateNight

La bohème 2.0

Sarabande | Falling Angels

Pinchas Steinberg

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Dear music-loving audience member,

It is an extraordinary honour for me to have the Hungarian State Opera include my opera *Lear* in its programme, and accordingly, I would like to express my gratitude to General Director Szilveszter Ókovács. I was pleased to hear that the musical direction would once again be handled by Stefan Soltész, who has already conducted the opera, in 2001, in Essen. Also promising to be a special treat is the fact that we'll again be able to watch on stage a reproduction of the grandiose 1978 world-premiere directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle.

I wish all the best to the singers, the orchestra, the conductors and the entire creative staff! I hope that the final weeks of rehearsals are going pleasantly.

I am looking forward to the Budapest premiere on 30 January 2016 with great interest!

Aribert Reimann



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OPERA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA

RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHER: General Director Szilveszter Ókovács
 PUBLICATION CONCEPT: Dr. Monika Turkovics
 Director of Marketing and Communication
 EDITOR: Viktória Filip
 LAYOUT: Mátai és Végh Kreatív Műhely
 PROOFREADER: Ildikó Endrei Szemők

PREPRESS: Mátai és Végh Kreatív Műhely
 PRINTER: Keskeny és Társai 2001 Kft.
 COVER PHOTO: László Emmer
 ADVERTISING CONTACT: hirdetes@opera.hu
 Printed in 20,000 copies
 ISSN 1789-4093

AUTHORS: Szilvia Becze | Anna Braun | Kristóf Csengery | Balázs Feledy | Viktória Filip | Márk Gara | Tamás Jászay | Márton Karczag | Ferenc László
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Erika Miklós's clothing and jewellery provided by Michael Kors, Nubu and Coccinelle, with thanks to Márk Lakatos (cover page/ page 6)

READY IN BODY AND SPIRIT

At the end of January, Erika Miklósa is celebrating the 25th anniversary of her debut with the Opera with a gala concert at the Erkel Theatre. But this jubilee is far from the only thing we had to talk about when we chatted.

Ferenc László

Photo by László Emmer



Photo by Péter Illag

ARABELLA, 2012 – THE FIAKERMILLI



HUNYADI LÁSZLÓ, 2012 – MÁRIA GARA | Photo by Tomasz Opitz

– What recollections do you have of that very first performance of *The Magic Flute* in 1991, in which you played Papagena?

– I will never forget that night 25 years ago, and neither will András Aczél, the director, who up until that point had worked as a stage manager. Since I was very young and completely inexperienced with the professional jargon used internally in the theatre, when the time came for my debut, with no separate stage rehearsal beforehand, and I heard someone say, “Papagena to the fire tower,” I went all the way upstairs to the fifth floor. It was practically at the last minute that András found me up there. But in the end, despite this, the performance turned out perfectly well.

– Following such an adventurous beginning, how did your relationship with the Opera go on to develop?

– In this sense, the 25 years can be divided into three periods. The first years were extremely beautiful: they looked

after me like a painted eggshell. Back at that time, it was Emil Petrovics who signed me, although Endre Ütő was the general director when I made my debut. I’m deeply grateful to both of them, and I hope that Endre Ütő will be there at my anniversary concert, in the first row! They consciously developed my career in such a way that I could practice first with minor roles, and later with medium-sized ones, allowing me to develop a routine and, with time, to get a big opportunities here and there. And during this first phase, I was able to experience the more familial, more intimate, old opera company atmosphere that still existed then. Then, in 1999, there came a moment when I came home from Milan and had to face the fact that the general director at the time was not thinking about my work and didn’t even really see a need for me. That’s when I quit. Looking back from the present day, this decision was the key catalyst in my international career. And finally, in 2010, there commenced a third era in my

relationship with the Opera, still lasting, which has again been a time of joint work and constant collaboration, and in which the trust, and the friendship I’ve long enjoyed with Szilveszter Ókovács, are on a solid foundation. But there are also others in the current management whom I’ve known and liked from before and elsewhere, such as Emese Soós and Ferenc Anger, who always makes me think of Szeged and our experiences there together.

– Another sign that this working relationship has grown closer is the fact that not only do you appear regularly at performances here in Budapest, you are also a partner with the Opera in various other events and activities. One example of this is with the opera balls: two years ago you were the event’s programme host, and this February you will be there at the Shakespeare Gala.

– At that Silver Rose Ball two years ago, I got to co-present with pentathlete



and television personality Péter Sárfalvi, and to enjoy the ball together with an army of sports figures, so that event has remained a nice memory ever since, since I think it's common knowledge how close I am to the world and concept of sport. And now at the Shakespeare Gala, I am really looking forward to seeing Plácido Domingo again, having worked together with him a great deal in the past. His appearance as star guest may truly open a new chapter in the history of the opera balls. I'd also like to tell him about how much success we had with the autographed vinyl record of his that I donated for the *Good to be Good* day-long philanthropic television programme. This was one of the earliest Domingo recordings, which I purchased at a Manhattan flea market during my first stay in New York in 2005. It was at the same time that I was able to personally get to know the famous tenor, who was not only endlessly kind and helpful, but even invited me to appear jointly with him. This gave me the courage to have him sign my new acquisition, and he presented me with a very kind and personal dedication. This record

went to the bidder of a large sum in December, together with two tickets to my anniversary concert. In any case, these charitable activities mean a great deal to me, because I've always considered it important to supplement my operatic work with something else; this enriches me as well.

– At that concert in January, as you've done at several previous galas, you will be singing Violetta's aria from the first act of *La traviata*. This summer, however, will see the entire role and vocal part being added to your repertoire, since you'll be in the opera's title role at its premiere on Margaret Island. Does this mark the beginning of a new phase in Erika Miklósa's career?

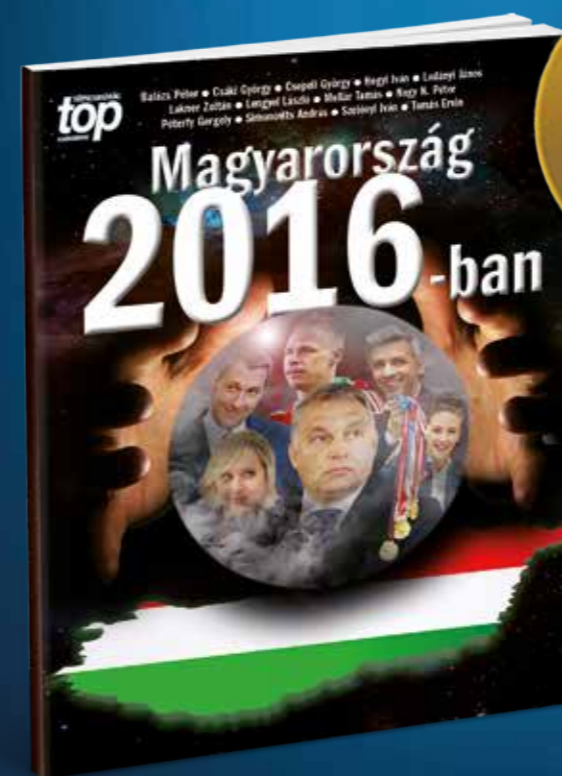
– Yes, and as part of this, after exactly 500 performances, I've bid farewell to the Queen of the Night. I owe many thanks to this role, and I'm certain that there are hardly any other singers who have sung this extraordinary part for so long or so many times. There was a time when I travelled the world practically with no other role, and although I yearned for variety, I soberly accepted my manager's view that this

kind of specialisation was the way of the future. And it's also true that *The Magic Flute* always gave me something back: emotions, something to think about, a stronger sense of humanity. But, nevertheless, the time has come to part, and with it, the moment of starting a new period, which is what *La traviata*'s Violetta also signifies. This character has come up for me more than once before, and I would have been able to sing the part too; however, it's now that I feel ready in body and spirit for the encounter. I've become a mother, I'm happy, and my life is now complete, and so I feel that in recent years I've collected enough human, feminine and artistic experience to grapple with this humongous task.

– And what roles come after Violetta?

– I'd really like to sing, for example, a few of the great *bel canto* soprano roles, such as Anna Bolena, Elvira in *I puritani*, and Amina in *La sonnambula*. And even though I've played the role before, I would be truly pleased to get the opportunity in Budapest to again sing the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. ○

Hova tartunk?



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New Gala, New Opportunity

Photo by Péter Rákossy



Plácido Domingo's popularity literally overwhelmed the Shakespeare Ball, giving rise to a Gala in order for more people to be able to see the most multi-faceted talent of *The Three Tenors*. And this is the way it should be. Superstars are meant to burst in and, by generating enormous interest, change everything around them. György Réz

Pop and Opera

The three tenors, that is, Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras, were once bigger stars than it is possible to imagine today. We weren't yet being bombarded with information from a thousand different directions, only through a few television channels and radio stations. And *The Three Tenors* were on all of them. There's no better word for it: what they were doing was cool. Every mannerism, and every extravagant scarf and suit. It was as if they had stepped out of Fellini's *E la nave va*, and just like in the film, suddenly opera became so much more important than anything else. They even made it worthwhile to



Photo by Attila Nagy

argue about which one of them was most deserving of one's adulation. At the final match of the 1994 World Cup, 1.3 billion people would watch and hear them at the same time. That is the point when these three tenors, already world-class, became world-famous, and at the same time made the genre of opera something that was known and recognised. Although nobody has found anything shinier or smoother than Pavarotti's lyric tenor ever since, these were minor differences among the threesome: opera is a question of more than simply the voice, and on stage, Domingo was the favourite. In addition, Domingo proved to be a genuine multi-faceted talent outside of the mega-venues as well, finding success as an artistic director, conductor and even in pop music, with its



Photo by Valter Berecz



Photo by Zsófia Pályi

completely different singing technique. The three tenors, and Domingo most of all among them, raised opera performance to a new level, and at the same time brought it into the world of popular culture while still performing at the highest professional level.

The Spanish singer will now be singing at the Opera House for the first time, and the interest that this has generated has compelled the Shakespeare Ball to change its format. The seats in the Opera House's auditorium will therefore not be taken out, but instead will remain in place so as many listeners as possible can enjoy the performance, and spaces will also be opened up so that guests can remain for as long as possible after the concert.

Plácido Domingo will be providing what he provides best: in the first part of the programme, he'll be performing Verdi arias, while in the second part he will be favouring the Hungarian audience with a "personal" gift by singing zarzuela. Since Domingo's parents themselves worked to popularise "zarzuela", the younger Spanish sibling to Italian opera, it will surely be interesting to watch a production that can be considered authentic.

Ball and Gala with a Shakespearean theme

Whereas a ball is an official social gathering for those youngsters who have proved themselves worthy, at a gala, the host opens his doors to the world



Photo by Attila Nagy



Photo by Péter Herman

in order to welcome his guests into his home. Truth be told, this opportunity could not have come at a better time, since the buffet halls and terrace of the nation's opera house have just been renovated, thus providing plenty to see in a building always radiant in its full glory, and which on this occasion can be entered via a red carpet. The broad audience will also be greeted by other changes in appearance for the event: the main entrance adorned with ornamental plants and the decorations evoking Shakespeare's era. Guests filing in past the decorations placed in the enormous golden urns will be assisted in getting oriented by staff in period dress situated by the rows of boxes.

The building's loveliest chambers will also be opened up, including the Opera Café, the Red Salon, the Székely Bertalan Hall and even the terrace on Dalszínház Street, because the higher ticket prices also include an invitation to an exclusive reception. The grand terrace on Andrassy Avenue and the first floor Feszty Bar, remodelled for last autumn, will be functioning as a dance space, remaining open until the

wee hours for all guests to use. Likewise for this single evening, live music is being arranged for the Opera's most elegant, marble-balustraded grand staircase, where there will be Renaissance music to entertain the audience.

At the Opera's gala of total art, the main programme will naturally be directed by Ferenc Anger, the Opera's artistic director, and Ballet Director Tamás Solymosi. In the stage programme, "debutantes" will be taking the stage along with the dancers of the Hungarian National Ballet, with Kristina Starostina and Bence Apáti as soloists, as well as leading soloists from the Opera, including Erika Gál, Polina Pasztircsák, Szilvia Rálik, Orsolya Sáfár and Zita Szemere, not to mention András Palerdi and Csaba Szegedi, together with the Opera's chorus. The Opera's orchestra is to be directed by Péter Halász.

All of these can be enjoyed in a true Renaissance whirlwind, because while the success of the king of opera has expanded the ball's framework, the Hungarian State Opera has not done away with the theme dictated for the

Shakespeare season in the third such event in a row to celebrate total art. Shakespeare embraces everything: the soap opera, the telenovela, the bricks-and-mortar theatre piece, the possibility for the Hollywood mega-production as much as the experimental off-Broadway pub or room theatre. It is thus an excellent theme for this kind of evening, which is at the same time modern and contemporary, and which connects the popular with high culture, and even with gastronomy. None of this would leave room for an average production, but the profound philosophies of the English playwright's oeuvre are both admissible and suited to such a gala, in the same way that its commercial nature and subversive effects stir the passions.

They say that a carnival ball or gala at the beginning of the year is a success if it gives the people who were there something to talk about for the rest of the year. Based on the above, we're not concerned: the guests at the Shakespeare Gala will certainly have topics for discussion for the three hundred or so remaining days. ○

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Donizetti's immortal comic opera is an eternal repertoire piece, impossible to grow bored of, sunnily entertaining, but thought-provoking as well. The Opera has always kept it on the programme, and now it is being revived. In his career so far, this is the only work that fate has brought the director together with three times. This is one of the things we talk about with Csaba Káel.

Kristóf Csengery

Don Pasquale

– through the spectacles of René Magritte

○ Fotó: Emmer László

– You love this opera that much?

– I'm wild about it! I encountered my first *Don Pasquale* in the summer of 2012 at the VeszprémFest, where we were getting ready to perform the work in the castle, in front of the Bishop's Palace, as part of an open-air production, but the weather intervened and we had to move it to the city's sports arena. The second meeting was in 2013, this time at the Hungarian State Opera, where we revived the Opera on Wheels of the past with Donizetti's masterpiece. At the heart of the initiative was a cultural mission: to bring the genre of opera to places with no musical theatre. During the course of the January and February performances, we implemented a conventional theatre version of the Opera on Wheels staging in the Erkel Theatre.

– How does this staging differ from the production of Don Pasquale that was created for Opera on Wheels?

– The production created under the Opera on Wheels aegis had to be adapted to the fact that provincial

theatres come in varying sizes, but most of them have tiny stages. Now, however, we find ourselves on the Erkel's enormous podium, and have to align ourselves to its requirements.

– Over the course of your career so far, you've directed more serious works than cheery ones. What does it mean for you to stage a comic opera?

– A comic opera brings great enjoyment to everyone: the director, the singers and the audience. Especially if one has the chance to work with such a masterpiece. I had already had the opportunity to direct *Lelisir d'amore* at Müpa Budapest. This is Donizetti's other great classic, a genuine opera hit. It has enthralled every era since it was first premiered.

– Isn't humour a difficult genre?

– It's an incredibly pleasant task! The entire style of Italian comic opera performance is fed from the tradition of the commedia dell'arte, and one of the most masterful examples of this is with

Donizetti. The other branch, naturally, is Rossini's, as we can see, for example, in *La Cenerentola*. Both of these branches are about musical jokes. Donizetti spoke this language marvellously, and it is an incredibly great pleasure to engage with this work of his, a delight to direct it, to derive the jokes from the characters and the conflicts, to follow how different characters periodically reposition themselves in the course of the comedy. This is not problematic work; instead, it's joyful.

– In addition to the merriment, other motifs also appear: pain, an ageing man, trickery, loneliness. As a director, how do you relate to these shadings?

– In terms of genre, *Don Pasquale* is classified as a comic opera, but it's like a Fellini film: somewhere deep down, there is a cultural affinity between the two artists.

We can laugh freely when we recognise ourselves in certain situations, and it is never imaginable to have self-recognition without criticism. The point



ORSOLYA SÁFÁR | Photo by Péter Rákossy



○ LÁSZLÓ SZVÉTEK AND ANDRÁS KÁLDI KISS | Photo by Péter Rákossy



○ LÁSZLÓ SZVÉTEK | Photo by Péter Rákossy



○ ORSOLYA SÁFÁR, LÁSZLÓ SZVÉTEK AND ANDRÁS KÁLDI KISS | Photo by Péter Rákossy

when we can truly give ourselves over, with abandon, to the story's gaiety, is when we start to live the human profundity of its characters. For that matter, the problems depicted in the piece are all contemporary ones. They touch us, we think about them, and afterwards we can laugh freely. Of course, this is also because the music resolves everything. Don Pasquale is an exceptional masterpiece: it's extremely rare, for example, for both an opera's music and its libretto to stand the test of time.

– Here you can find a host of practically textbook-case motifs, and even clichés, that are present in the world of comic opera all the way from the commedia dell'arte, as you mentioned, to Richard Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau*: switching clothes, trickery, old man/young woman, fake notary, an inheritance, greed.

– Nobody can "escape" from the opera tradition of the 19th century: even Richard Strauss places a little "Italian music" here and there into his operas. On top of that, the comic prose tradition is here as well. There's no need to escape from it, but rather to re-conceptualise the opera's ideas in modern language.

We have to transpose them into a world that people of today can project themselves into. I believe that Éva Szendrényi, the production's set designer, and I succeeded in finding something interesting and relevant here: we came up with a set that pushes the realism of *Don Pasquale* slightly in the direction of surrealism, with the scenery evoking well known motifs from the pictures of René Magritte, the master of the artistic movement. Magritte represented the branch of surrealism that lampooned the *petit bourgeois* attitudes that play a key role in the world of *Don Pasquale*. The objects in Don Pasquale's environment from time to time appear on the stage blown up to enormous dimensions.

– True to form at the Erkel Theatre, the work is being performed in Hungarian.

– With this being a comic opera, this is a particularly good solution. It's difficult enough to react to a joke while reading the translation from a foreign language, but even when that is managed, maintaining the tension is important. If audience members don't get a joke right away, they can't laugh at it later. Performing in the audience's native

language helps a great deal in this regard. We used a brilliant Hungarian translation as a starting point: the splendid Hungarian text by Sándor Fischer, father of the Fischer brothers, in which the famous "sputtering" duet in the third act is an even more virtuoso accomplishment to sing than the original Italian *Cheti, cheti, immantinente...*

– In contrast to grand opera, in which big crowds have to be moved around, comic opera is more of a chamber play. How do you work with the singers, how precisely do you develop your ideas, and do you leave room for improvisation?

– Karinthy said it best: "Humor is no joke." This is concentrated work, also in the sense of taking the shape of the singers into account in order to make the caricature of the characters more effective. If somebody is a bit "chubby", then we play on that, or if they are on the lanky side, then use that. That's certainly true here, too, and this is also something we've inherited from the commedia dell'arte. The ancient *topoi* of humour are at work here, showing mankind in a carnival mirror. And this is what we swung back toward Magritte with: this is how his world is. ○



Koncert

Szórakozol velünk?!

Színház

Kiállítás

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Party

Sport

The Joy of Mountain Climbers

"Art no longer provides solace," wrote one musicologist to sum up the oeuvre of Aribert Reimann, the Berlin-based German composer active since the late 1950s. The Opera's premiere of *Lear* poses an exceptional challenge to singers and audience alike. *Tamás Jászay*



PHOTO: SABINE TÖPFER, BAYERISCHE STAATSOPER, 2009, LEAR

Jan Kott, one of the foremost Shakespeare scholars of our time, writes, "*King Lear* gives one the impression of a high mountain that everyone admires, yet no one particularly wishes to climb."

In his final analysis, the Polish scholar conflates the tragedy with Beckett (!) and the absurd, meanwhile analysing the disintegration of Lear's universe, the inevitable procession of failures and the piece's fairy-tale and biblical motifs. As another critic has it, this is Shakespeare's least conventional drama, one whose world is defined by hysteria, horror and the bizarre.

Through the past centuries, more than one composer has taken the view that the story of Lear dividing his realm among his daughters was fit for the opera stage: Berlioz and Debussy both looked into the subject, and Verdi actually started working on it. More recently, the Finnish composer Aulis Sallinen premiered his new opera in Helsinki a decade and a half ago. Of the treatments that have been realised, Albert Reimann's work *Lear*, which has become one of the most successful German operas of

the 20th century since its premiere in 1978, clearly stands out. In order to understand the peculiarities of *Lear*'s pitch-black world, it's worth taking a look at the composer's oeuvre. Aribert Reimann spent his childhood around the time of the second global conflagration in the shadow of family tragedy as the son of musical parents: a noted organist and a singer and teacher. He wrote his first piece for piano at the age of ten, and emerged in his twenties as a sought-after pianist and répétiteur; his later close working relationship with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau originated with this. As early as 1971, German critics recognised him with an award for his work as a composer up to that point. Starting in the early '70s, and for three decades, he would teach contemporary Lied-singing: first in Hamburg, and later in Berlin. At the same time, he started to make his mark as a composer early on, composing both orchestral and vocal works.

In every capacity, both as a teacher and as a composer of songs setting to music the texts of, among others, Paul Celan, James Joyce and Sylvia Plath, and as an opera composer

creating works based on Strindberg and Kafka, Reimann is preoccupied with the human voices and its limits. In the professional literature, the composer has been dubbed a "singer's composer". This, however, is a long chalk from meaning that he puts his singers in a straightforward position. To the contrary, since Reimann knows the possibilities of the singing voice so precisely, he therefore often goes out to the final reaches of feasibility, thereby – unlike in most contemporary operas – placing the vocal elements in the spotlight.

Reimann, growing up in a grim era, made all of his operas into tragedies that deal with universal human problems, the core questions of European culture and, often, the dark sides of the soul. He has based two of his works on the dramas of Strindberg (*A Dream Play*, 1965, and *The Ghost Sonata*, 1983), and also won acclaim for *The Castle* (1991), his adaptation of Kafka's mysterious novel. He has also treated such emblematic works of European dramatic history as the *House of Bernarda Alba* (2000) and *Medea*. The premiere of the latter was given the premiere of

○ SABINE TÖPFER, BAYERISCHE STAATSOPER, 2009, LEAR



the year award by the prestigious professional journal *Opernwelt*.

But returning to *Lear*, the composer was commissioned to write the work in 1975 by August Everding, who, freshly installed as general intendant of the Bayerische Staatsoper three years later, would with his own eyes enthusiastically watch Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in the role of Lear. The world premiere in Munich was directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, the legendary production Ferenc Anger is using as a basis in Budapest. The conductor was Gerd Albrecht, and Júlia Várady, at Fischer-Dieskau's side, played the role of Cordelia. The production won enormous acclaim, and something else quite rare in contemporary opera occurred: the work immediately won the favour not only of the unsparing critics and professional insiders, but of the audience as well.

This despite the fact that the material is admittedly not something that is easy to enjoy. The critics cited Berg and Schönberg as possible influences in their reviews, quickly adding that the complex music, despite all its dif-

ficulty, successful adapts to the tastes of an audience knowledgeable about opera. This clearly was one of the reasons why, over the last 30 years or so, *Lear* has been performed in so many different productions: in addition to a dozen major and minor opera houses in the German-speaking world, the work has been played in San Francisco and Tokyo, and this season will see it being performed in Paris, in addition to the Budapest production.

Where does the secret of *Lear's* success lie? Reimann wrote dark, complex and meditative music created for the stage in every sense. On paper, Shakespeare's piece takes place in medieval England, but its analysts have repeatedly pointed out that it is the uncertain atmosphere of the final days of the medieval period and the dawning Renaissance that left their deepest stamp on it. One music historian feels that Reimann's music has an almost physical impact on viewers and listeners: the screams and creaking and crackling, reminiscent of gnashing teeth, and powerful sound effects depict a world out of joint with incisive force that cuts to the bone.

In an interview, the Danish baritone Bo Skovhus, who has sung the title role to great acclaim in both Paris and Hamburg in recent years, squarely stated that when he started to study the role, he almost gave up several times, feeling that it would take an eternity for him to be able to sing the score flawlessly – and at the time he had not yet even started to develop the role. The superheated music and overflowing emotion cannot help but leave both the audiences and performers unaffected: in addition to the dramatic nature of the raging storm scene, the sheer beauty of the lyrical finale, with the king cradling the dead Cordelia in his arms, is an unforgettable moment.

Reimann and his oeuvre resist any kind of forced classification: his opera is a confusing, sovereign and monumental creative work that musicologists consider to be among the most radical and unbridled music of our time. The moving and powerful music helps the sensitive listener, standing on the peak named after Lear, to proudly survey the world spread out below him. ○

○ JULIA VÁRADY IN LA TRAVIATA



The audience has been able to see countless exquisitely good pieces premiered at the Opera this season, but the high point is only coming now. Reimann's opera, playing from the end of January, counts as a true rarity from several points of view. General Director Szilveszter Ókovács says of the work, "Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, whom I might call my master, spent long years trying to get Aribert Reimann to write the *Lear* that Verdi had finally ruled out. Naturally, he had already cast himself in the title role and his wife, Júlia Várady, as Cordelia – but anybody who saw that production knows how much it gained from having them there. It's also worth knowing that it was created with their voices and personalities in mind. In 1978, it couldn't have been simple at the Bavarian State Opera, either, to produce a piece that was total theatre itself – but having the very greatest bring it to the stage gave *Lear* a chance. As a result, it's no coincidence that nearly 40 years later – in spite of every difficulty – it's on the programme, and not just here, but also



○ DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU AND FERENC FRICSAY BEFORE A 1961 PREMIERE OF DON GIOVANNI (Photo property of the Dobay-Fricsay family)

at the Paris Opera, where the Spanish hell-raiser Calixto Bieito is bringing it to the stage. Ponnelle, the greatest opera director of his era, was able to breathe Reimann's facture into life. Why, there isn't anything here that, *ab ovo*, would appeal to listeners accustomed to hearing ordinary operas. The story itself is already full of murder, excessively so even by opera standards, the vocal parts, as a new kind of *sprechgesang*, are much closer to spoken prose, and the playing of the 90-person giga-orchestra instills unbearable tension or else confines itself to otherworldly effects (each of the 24 violins plays a separate part). *Lear* is one of the masterpieces of serialism, and at the same time I feel it is the capstone of twelve-tone post-modern opera. Staging it is a great feat and simultaneously a test for the Hungarian State Opera – while also demanding from the viewer that they put aside convention before they leave their house and seek out Shakespeare's work in Reimann's piece, because this is not opera so much as a multi-dimensional theatrical production. For people who approach it with an open heart, eyes and ears, the Budapest replica of the original Ponnelle production can be a lifetime experience."



○ TÓMAS TOMASSON, GYÖRGY JÁVORSZKY, STEFAN SOLTÉSZ, SZILVESZTER ÓKOVÁCS, FERENC ANGER AND GERGELY ZÖLDY Z | Photo by Szilvia Csibi

King Lear

opera and paintings

We already reserve a great deal of respect for artists who perform outstandingly in just one area. While Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's brilliance as a singer is well known, it's only now, upon seeing his paintings for the first time, that we can judge that he was able to make significant achievements as a painter as well. *Balázs Feledy*

DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU: LEAR
(painting property of Julia Varady)



The story is grippingly human. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau suggests to his colleague, Aribert Reimann, his junior by more than ten years, that the composer and répétiteur write an opera based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The work was created in 1978, in the period when Fischer-Dieskau was finishing his career as an opera singer, but would still go on singing – mostly only *lieder* – for another decade and a half. Nevertheless, he himself would naturally create the title role of *Lear* at the world premiere in Munich. Always drawn to other branches of the arts, the baritone would occupy himself more and more intensively with painting during these years, and also find success in this area. Such duality is rare. Someone who spends his entire life on a stage (an actor, or a musician or singer), appears before the public and demonstrates his special talent before them. On the other hand, someone who is a creative artist (a writer, composer, painter or sculptor)

typically works alone, and creates his work alone, and it is only later that the creative work (can) appear before the public. The performing artist mobilises his own body, his energies and his talent before an audience – while the creative artist does not need to do this directly, since his works speak for him.

There are few major examples, therefore, of somebody exhibiting excellence in more than one branch of the arts. Perhaps the greatest model for this is Michelangelo, whom we know primarily as a sculptor and painter (developing skill in both these areas is in itself unusual!), but who can also be considered, in addition to these, a poet by virtue of the sonnets and madrigals he composed. In Hungarian musical life, Sylvia Sass's painting and Endre Útő's woodcarvings and ceramic statues are both well known. These examples lend credence to the view that it is possible to supplement the performing artist with the creative artist. This is the kind of duality we discover in the figure of the superb opera and *lieder* singer Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who left behind an illustrious legacy as a painter.

It's a completely unique thing that, from the end of January, we'll be able to see those paintings that were created based on Aribert Reimann's opera *Lear* here in Budapest, at the Opera House. In his *Lear* paintings, Fischer-Dieskau works in the spell of the great stylistic school, primarily German in origin, of expressionism. The word itself refers to "expressing something" and as a school of painting it spread with explosive speed in European art, a trend which was only reinforced by the cataclysms of World War One. The artist endeavours to project his own inner emotional complexes and subjective feelings onto the visual elements of the subject world, while also at the same time reshaping this vision. All of this is coupled with an energetic and lively method of painting.

Images in the public mind of *King Lear* form a near-consensus about how the old monarch should be depicted, and while Fischer-Dieskau was not one to deviate from this, his style of depiction and painting are very unique, and at the same time quite appropriate to the subject matter.

In the two paintings, both being exhibited at the Opera House exhibit, he presents the tragic hero in such a way that affects us not so much through the painter's talent and skill in depiction, but more through their extraordinary emotion and dynamism. Although different in terms of their colour schemes, the two images are striking in how they depict the fragmentation and disintegration in *Lear*'s unravelling personality. Shattered in their construction, the pictures heighten the drama and tension, which is further increased through the liveliness and dynamism of the artist's method of painting.

The brown-toned picture is more unified and balanced, while the one built around blue hues, approaching surrealism, conveys more complex meanings. Appearing in this picture are symbols – gazing eyes and faces, and the manner in which tears and rays of light stream from them suggests something entirely tragic, while the painting's crucial blue tones in and of themselves elevate the image into uniquely infinite dimensions.

It is interesting to note that a quarter-century passed in the time between

when the two paintings were created (in 1978 and 2002), and even while changes took place in the artist's conception, we can also sense the stubborn insistence that nearly constantly brought the artist back to his subject. In the early 2000s, Fischer-Dieskau also painted a picture he entitled *Lear and Cordelia*. This is yet another indicator of his ongoing interest in the subject, and in it, the painter emphasises how the reclining *Lear* scarcely notices *Cordelia*'s existence or presence by making her features themselves unrecognisable, with the position of her body the only clue to some kind of – more than anything else – spiritual presence. What is striking in these works is the great significance given to the hands, which also have the power of expressing a psychological state. But Fischer-Dieskau was also skilled at drawing. The pen sketches and studies he made of the composer, Reimann,

indicate the feel for character and the powers of observation of their creator. Fischer-Dieskau was able to transfer the emotion- and passion-rich perspective of his singer's personality into his creations as a fine artist. He was capable of setting before us, in his paintings and drawings, the wide emotional range that we were accustomed from his temperament as a performer. This visual world is full not only of drama, but also of dissonances, misunderstandings and misinterpretations, just like the world that appears in both Shakespeare's dramatic work and Reimann's opera. Fischer-Dieskau's artworks are just as disturbing, and just as unwilling to leave their beholders unperturbed, as the music is and does for those watching the opera. His profound inquisitiveness, talent and skill are matched with intense empathy. A true and complete artist. ○



Photo: © Ferenc Liszt Music Academy/György Darabos

THE OPERA SALUTES THE MUSIC ACADEMY,
NOW IN ITS 140TH SEASON, WITH THE PREMIERE OF
GREEKLATENIGHT.



Love and Death

Under the series headline **GreekLateNight**, Gluck and Bertoni's versions of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice are being premiered together at the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy on February 5. The production provides a splendid occasion for comparing the two works, which are linked to each other by factors beyond their common subject matter. *András Oláh*

The story of Orpheus unquenchable love for Eurydice in defiance of the underworld has engaged composers up through modern times, but it had a particularly inspirational effect during the Baroque era. From the first premiere of Monteverdi's creation in 1607 up until Bertoni's work appeared before audiences in 1776, more than 30 versions of the ancient story are known to exist. Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, also considered his first reformed opera and to this day his best known work, was first performed in 1762, in the court of Maria Theresa, where its innovations kicked off revolutionary changes in the genre. It not only simplified the empty and rigid forms of Italian Baroque opera, it also used the music to illustrate the text, to express the inner psychological processes and to portray the characters, the music also takes an important role in narrating the story. Gluck's piece had a great impact on the German operatic literature. While its theme, in which a hero must conceal his emotions in order to reach the underworld can also be detected in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Wagner *Das Rheingold*, the Baroque composer's ideas were a powerful inspiration for the composer of the *Ring* cycle in developing his ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

The innovations mentioned above, however, took time to spread, and thus completely eluded Ferdinando Bertoni when, in 1776, he wrote his own *Orfeo* for his good friend, the castrato Gaetano Guadagni. The world premiere provoked more than a little outrage among the knowledgeable audience at Venice's Teatro San Benedetto, since Bertoni had not only used the libretto Ranieri de' Calzabigi had originally written for Gluck's opera, similarities

could also be observed between certain musical passages. Audible among these are, pronouncedly, the encounter between Orfeo and the Furies and the measures played upon the protagonist's arrival in Elysium. Bertoni admitted to composing with Gluck's score open before him, and although he indeed borrowed a number of motifs from the German composer, he was one of the most distinguished composers of his day in his own right. (In *Orfeo*, musicologists tend to pick out Euridice's aria and her duet with the title character as being particularly worthy of praise.) Nonetheless, of the two works, Bertoni wrote the one better aligned to the traditions of *opera seria*, and it thus is less developed and almost forty minutes shorter in length than Gluck's original creation. As in previous years, the two one-acts to be debuted at the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy's Georg Solti Hall are being staged by two young students from the University of Theatre and Film Arts. Helga Lázár and Zita Szenteczki are fourth-year students in Kata Csató and



MÁTÉ CSÓSZ'S
COSTUME DESIGNS –
ORFEO ED EURIDICE

Tibor Csizmadia's course in stage and puppet theatre directing, and have also gained their knowledge of the musical stage from classes with composer Zsófia Tallér and director Ferenc Anger, the Opera's artistic director, among other teachers.

Albeit based on differing conceptions, the two one-acts revolve around similar sets of questions: the problems of closure and letting go, and thus devote attention to the more rarely emphasised feminine aspect of the mythical story as well. Zita Szenteczki's directing of Gluck's opera is strongly inspired by contemporary Scottish poet Carol Ann Duffy's work *Eurydice*, in which the title character is ready to escape from the relationship. This is a situation that Orpheus – out of his sheer narcissism – is incapable of processing, and thus, as she returns from the dead, the woman intentionally provokes the love-stricken man to look at her. *Orfeo ed Euridice* takes place in different places, and thus the various stations of the hero's inner calvary, where death and separation are equivalent to each other. The couple are being portrayed in this production by two young singers, Zoltán Daragó and Ágnes Molnár, for whom Rita Rác will be a worthy partner.

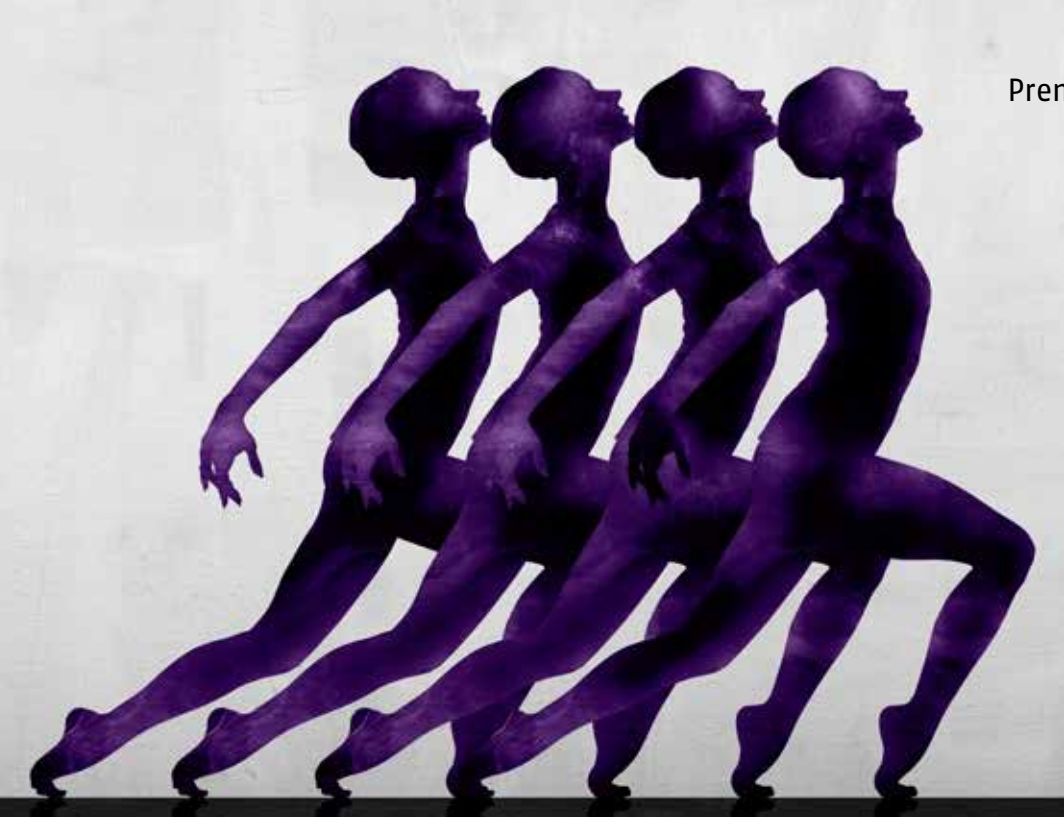
At the centre of Bertoni's *Orfeo*, Helga Lázár places an already demented man, bidding farewell to life, for whom the earth, Elysium, Hell and its gate, as well as the rock symbolise the various periods of his youth and letting go of them. The title character in the production is being sung by Éva Várhelyi, who possesses an unusually broad repertoire, alongside the equally multi-faceted Eszter Wierdl as Eurydice, with the deservedly popular Ingrid Kertesi portraying Amor, here reconfigured into the god Hymen. ○





Women and Men, in Black and White

At the end of January, the Hungarian National Ballet is premiering two new Kylián pieces, thereby substantially expanding the segment of its repertoire consisting of contemporary one-acts. *Falling Angels* offers a peek into the hidden corners of the lives of women, and *Sarabande* that of men, as seen by Kylián. Márk Gara



Appearing on shop shelves in 1997 was a DVD bearing the title *Black and White*, in which Jiří Kylián's pieces were performed by his ensemble of the time, the Netherlands Dance Theatre. It felt like a unique and momentous event in the history of dance to take the disc and watch what the Dutch-Czech choreographer had achieved in his compositions. Born in 1947 and growing up behind the Iron Curtain, Kylián had become an iconic figure in modern ballet, although it would be more appropriate to use the term "contemporary dance" rather than "modern ballet". After his ballet studies, Kylián gained admittance to the Stuttgart ensemble and experimental workshop of John Cranko – the choreographer of *Oregon* and another creative artist known in Hungary – where the opportunity arose to realise his choreographic ideas. Soon, however, these limits and the language of ballet itself proved too small for the Czech artist, and so he took over, and reshaped in his own image, the Netherlands Dance

Theatre, which he headed between 1975 and 1999. During this period, the Hungarian audience would get to encounter several works during guest performances here, while the Opera's ballet company placed two works of his on its programme during the 1980s: the one act ballet-parody *Symphony in D major* and the lyrical duet *Clouds*. Sadly, both have since been taken off the repertoire, and it is only very rarely that the choreographer allows these early works to be performed.

The first part of the *Black and White* DVD to make it before the Opera's viewers was *Six Dances*, in 2001. We would get another chance to see this a few years later, this time staged in a programme together with *Petit mort*. From the very beginning, Ballet Director Tamás Solymosi would have liked to mount a full evening of Kylián's works, but it was not possible to acquire all of the pieces simultaneously, and showing them all ended up taking a longer time. Nevertheless, this outcome may

have been a blessing in disguise, giving the audience time to get used to the master's style and choreographies. Striking a light and cheery note, *Six Dances* is the very embodiment of carefree frolic, while *Petit mort*, set to Mozart's marvellous piano music, is a lyrical, almost lofty statement about the dimensions of the relationship between men and women.

The two newer dance pieces being premiered now are closer to Kylián's current creations than to his older ones. One could say that they constitute a bridge between his current works and the ones that originate from before 1990. *Falling Angels* was created for an exclusively female ensemble, and it continues the thread that the choreographer opened up with *Stamping Ground*.

For this latter piece, the artist went all the way to Australia for inspiration, studying the movements of the aboriginal inhabitants on the spots. Upon



seeing the once disparaged dances of the Aborigines, the amazed Kylián invented this complex and multifaceted dance material, which encompassed, among other things, the use of polyrhythm and isolation – using certain body parts independently of others. In *Stamping Ground*, which dates from 1983, the choreography was created not for music in the classical sense, but only for rhythms and periodic beats and sounds generated by the body, and this is the path followed by *Fallen Angels* as well. And how did the work get this name? In this work, Kylián attempted to delve into women's souls, and thus was trying to decode the question of femininity, although one should not expect to get an exactly worded explanation from the choreographer. Kylián's 1989 work is an associative creative work that allows for numerous readings. There are those who see in it that rearing children is the essence of female life, while others believe that it explores the frustrations rooted in the female body.

Sarabande makes a good pairing with *Falling Angels*, since as the latter is a female piece, *Sarabande* is its male counterpart. The six men emerging, as

if being born, from the black, baroque costumes familiar from *Six Dances*. To music composed from shouts, and later to Bach's *Violin Partita in D minor*, the layers of male existence are presented through a number of scenes. The audience gets to see raw strength, fear, aggression, vulnerability and self-restraint. This is clearly a subjective observation, but since Kylián is more familiar with what dwells in the soul of a man, this choreography is the more powerful of the two.

It is no coincidence that these works mentioned above are referred to as being from his black-and-white period, as the visual world of these creative works in dance is at least as characteristic of Kylián as the language of dance that he used and created. On a stage lit from underneath, the choreographer creates spaces with lighting – especially rectangles – that are present practically as solitary pieces of scenery and, at the same time, the companions of the dancers. Fitting perfectly into this minimalist conception is the use of flexible draperies, which successfully depict the profundity of the subconscious and the realm of the surreal. As Livia Fuchs writes about the pieces of

the black-and-white period: "nothing other than a torrent of dance in which the choreographic text is of the highest importance. Simultaneously, or in a series of duos, solos, or trios following one after the other and attesting to an inexhaustible fantasy, the contrast of the tempos and the movements, sometimes condensing and sometimes diverging structure [...] are themselves the pure movement that remains outside the medium of the verbal."

Although both of Kylián's pieces are now more than 25 years old, they have not lost a single bit of their power. Watching them provides a splendid opportunity for more conservative viewers to get to know two superb works of contemporary dance and to see the road that has taken us to today revealed before them. It is very important, however, to not attempt to unravel these works as one would pieces with a plot, because to decode these from movement to movement is impossible. Instead, one should let oneself be captivated by the curiosity of discovery and for Kylián's wonderful visions in dance of the mysteries of human existence have their effect on us. o

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Old Repertoire Piece, New Requirements



Photo by Fabio Lavino

With *La bohème 2.0*, a piece that caused major reverberations in the opera world is coming to the Erkel Theatre. The director of the production, Damiano Michieletto, is considered one of Europe's most exciting and sought-after young opera directors, with his calendar booked solid until 2020.

Tímea Papp

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Many people, while browsing through the Opera's calendar, surely put their heads in their hands when they saw the title *La bohème 2.0*, and at the Erkel Theatre no less. "But over at the Opera House there's the obligatory Nádasy production, which is maligned from some quarters and considered un-touchable by others," they might continue, as a counter-argument to the new premiere. Szilveszter Ókovács put it this way: "None of the great works in the operatic literature do any good if they are presented to the audience in a single reading for eight decades. Kálmán Nádasy and Gusztáv Oláh's 1937 production remains remarkably valuable aesthetically speaking, and we are making an exception for it to

stay, intending this as a homage to the work of our predecessors, and at the same time the starting point for our own task. At the same, *La bohème* is a piece with a living message, which the Budapest audience certainly has the right to also finally see in a different interpretation, one which draws itself closer to the score – this will be possible in the Erkel Theatre, where in the future, the OperaAdventure audience will also get the chance to become acquainted with the work: this will be the first Italian-language production in the large-scale student series." After studying literature in Venice, the creator of the "recharged" Puccini opera, Damiano Michieletto, learned how to be a director in Milan, at one of the most storied

drama schools in the world. He made his name in 2003 at the Wexford Opera Festival, where he staged a version of Czech-American composer Jaromír Weinberger's *Schwanda the Bagpiper*, which the *Irish Times* voted the opera production of the year. Aside from at La Fenice, his home-town opera house, he has directed at Milan's La Scala, in Bologna, Florence, Naples, Turin, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Paris, Copenhagen, Leipzig and Zürich, among other venues, including at Vienna's Theater an der Wien on several occasions, and at major festivals, including more than once in Salzburg and at Pesaro's Rossini Festival. He made his debut at Covent Garden last season with *Guillaume Tell*, and is returning there this year to do



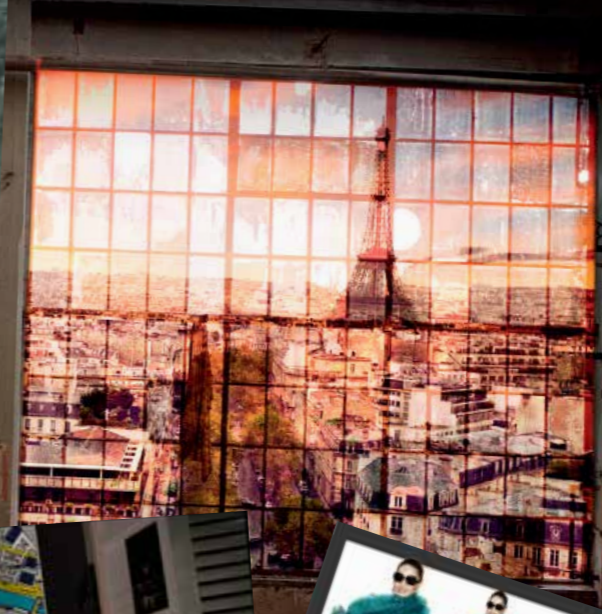
PAOLO FANTIN'S SET DESIGN AND CARLA TETI'S COSTUMES

Cavalleria rusticana and *Pagliacci*. While his diverse repertoire includes such core works as the three Mozart-Da Ponte operas, as well as *Alcina*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Falstaff*, *La Cenerentola*, *Idomeneo*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Lohengrin*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Il tritico*, he also feels at home in the world of modern composers like Ramón Carnicer, Michael Daugherty, Nino Rota, Stefano Pavesi and Marco Turino; several of his productions are also available on DVD. He has worked with such artists as Antonio Pappano, Daniele Gatti, Zubin Mehta, Cecilia Bartoli, Anna Netrebko, Piotr Beczala and Eva-Maria Westbroek. He has also enjoyed success when venturing into other genres: his productions of *The Government Inspector* and *The Beggar's Opera* have both been staged at Milan's Piccolo Teatro. Apart from Ireland, his work has also received awards in Denmark and Austria.

He's not particularly interested in convention: he located the story of Guillaume Tell in an abstract space in front of an uprooted tree, while *Così fan tutte* took place in a swinger hotel, and in *Madama Butterfly* both sex tourism and the character of Hello Kitty were present as motifs at the same time, while Mimì resembled Amy Winehouse. He says that he doesn't place any limits on his imagination, and is inspired equally by classical and pop culture. As to whether he's considered provocative, he said: "I don't have any



strategies, and I don't adapt. I don't set out to provoke anyone, but I'm curious. Curiosity is part of the theatre: even children are interested in what's behind the lowered curtain." His motto is to never give up, and in accordance with his tattoo, which reads "Keep the Dream Alive", he is a true dreamer, although one who at the same time intends not to forget to remain open and attentive to the world. Just as in interviews Damiano Michieletto admits to his own vulnerability, he also shows the fragility of the human soul through opera characters. This fact isn't any different in the *La bohème*



PAOLO FANTIN'S SET DESIGN AND CARLA TETI'S COSTUMES

that he staged in Salzburg in 2012, a production that was later performed in Shanghai as well.

The sets and costumes of this concept are arriving in Budapest in February to be inhabited by superb Hungarian opera singers, so that we too can be convinced of the Italian director's originality and the fact that for him, liberated playfulness and tragedy, irreverent laughter and tears of sorrow together constitute the entirety of life. It's not only because of the tiny houses placed in front of the giant street and metro map of Paris that the story appears from an entirely different perspective, and it's not merely the contrast of the urban landscape, seemingly under a curse and deserted after the madness of the Christmas shopping chaos, that the director builds on. Instead, he provides a very precise justification for how and why Mimì became a victim of circumstance.

Fundamentally traditional in concept despite its 21st-century setting, the production was received positively, with critics praising the grand spectacle and the fact that the director freed the story of any kind of sentimentality. Since the Opera's general director also once worked as a critic, we cite here what he wrote about this production: "the directing is uniformly strong, a thousand ideas enliven even the most difficult parts, including the Momus scene, where the huge Christmas shopping rush brings out the same cavalcade as it did in the Parisian cafés of the day that Puccini envisioned. The most scenic is the third act: I never would have thought that a run-down Paris mo-



torway exit and a cheap local dive bar would be a moving venue for Mimì's confrontation with death – yet it is."

Is it anything to wonder at, then, that we are seeing this *La bohème* here in Budapest? According to Szilveszter Ókovács, "Damiano Michieletto's Salzburg production impressed me years ago. I waited and watched it again, to make sure it wasn't the star cast that had captivated me, but it wasn't. I'm counting on a revelatory production, which, owing to the different stage dimensions and technical differences, will be a new version, not a carbon copy. The creative staff understand that they are bringing their production into a special medium, where the audience has a high level of opera literacy, and *La bohème* has been shown many times and continues to be shown; everybody knows it inside and out, they just haven't seen it done any other way. And that's where the challenge lies!"



○ SZILVESZTER ÓKOVÁCS, TAMÁS SOLYMOSSI AND PINCHAS STEINBERG | Photo by Attila Nagy

“And then along came Steinberg to open up a completely new door”

The musician compelled to turn into a conductor now feels practically at home in Hungary. He speaks entertainingly with kindness and humour, but when it gets down to professional questions, there is no room for compromise. Szilvia Becze

– You used to be a violinist. Why did you then decide on a career as a conductor?

– I didn't choose this calling. Instead, it chose me. And I say this very seriously. The whole thing was for all practical purposes a coincidence. If we can call two events a coincidence, that is. At the time of the first, I was the concert-

master in Chicago. We were working on *Don Giovanni*. The conductor was Ferdinand Leitner, who before taking the stage told me that he wasn't feeling so well, but he didn't think it was anything serious and went ahead and started the performance. Later I saw that there really was a problem, because his face had gone completely yellow and everything was getting slower and slower. Suddenly he looked at me and motioned with his eyes: “come over here!” I immediately put down my violin and stepped up to the conductor's podium. He put his baton in my hand and sat down in a seat. The whole thing was quite dramatic, because I was starting to conduct an opera that thus far I had only played violin in, and on top of that, I was supporting the conduc-

tor with my arm as he was growing weaker and weaker and an instant later collapsed. Two people came out to take him away, while I stayed and conducted *Don Giovanni* for the first time in my life, and for a television broadcast with world stars like Alfredo Kraus and Tito Gobbi to boot. Later on, I visited Leitner in hospital, and he said “I think you should consider making a change and really become a conductor. You know, I was really unwell, but I could still hear what was happening in the performance. Believe me, you should think about it!” The other incident also took place in Chicago, a year later, this time with Christoph von Dohnányi. He was conducting *Der Rosenkavalier*, but since he had only come for the final rehearsals owing to an obligation in



○ Photo by Péter Herman

San Francisco, I was the one who got the production ready. In the meantime, he was travelling back and forth. It must have been the end of November or the beginning of December, and Chicago was being pounded by these terrible snowstorms, so that the flights were cancelled too. When I arrived at the operahouse, the manager was already there waiting to ask me whether I'd be able to conduct *Der Rosenkavalier* that day, because if not, he would have to send the audience home. I was still young and didn't really sense the gravity of the task and simply shrugged my shoulders and said, sure, I'll conduct anything you like. You know (laughing as he explains), this was exactly the same as if they had asked me if I would be willing to travel to the moon that evening. Well, sure! Why not?

But the true miracle happened afterwards, because I received an invitation



○ Photo by Attila Nagy

from Herbert von Karajan himself to be his assistant. In the middle of the season I went to the management and asked to have my contract terminated, since this was the chance of my life. The day before Christmas I arrived in Berlin, where I would get to work with the maestro for five years, and get to play with the Berliner Philharmoniker as well. That is, I was both a musician and an apprentice conductor at the same time. This is how my career started.



○ Photo by Péter Herman



○ Photo by Attila Nagy



Photo by Attila Nagy

– Since then you’ve literally conducted all over the world. Meaning that you’ve also seen the changes very acutely. Are there still orchestral traditions? How has globalisation impacted music?

– There you’ve hit the nail on the head. Globalisation is a catastrophe. Everything that used to be unique, distinctive and special has been lost. What we have now is what I call the “McDonaldisation” of music. Whatever special factor made a given ensemble unique no longer exists. It’s tragic! Of course I try to counter this with the opportunities I have, but it’s like Don Quixote tilting at the windmills.

– But if you still try, what can you do? How can a guest conductor work miracles in a few days?

– I never go anywhere without a concept. I always know exactly what I want to hear. But this still isn’t enough, either, but after I have the ideal sound, I still have to plan how to get it all out of the musicians. The orchestras with which I work are, without exception, good, meaning that I have to do more explaining and give more motivation and inspiration in order for the good to become better and unique. In addition, each musical genre and era requires a different sound. You

can’t give the same instructions for playing Mozart’s symphonies as you would for those of Brahms.

– What do you have to do if you need to conduct well-known classical “hits”? Your January 18 programme in Budapest consisted of such works. Do you have to present something new at any cost, or is it worth following the principal that “less is more”?

– Let’s use as an example *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which everybody knows. These are small musical miniatures: each movement depicts a different painting, which have to receive character and a message in the music. For me, it’s not the popularity of the piece that is important, but the colours that I want to show. When I was invited to conduct the Cleveland Orchestra, which has played the piece a thousand times, the musicians said afterwards that “we thought that we know the piece. And then along came Steinberg to open up a completely new door for us.

– It’s really true, but how do you do it? How have you worked with the Budapest Philharmonic?

– We played the piece for the first time with each other in January, but I was confident, because all of our work had

gone very well thus far. I think that the relationship between an orchestra and a principal conductor is one that can be likened to a marriage, where in the beginning everything is lovely, fabulously beautiful and perfect, and then gradually we get to know each other. The same thing is true with an orchestra. In the beginning we throw ourselves into the task with great energy and then – even though the momentum doesn’t necessarily wear off – the truth still comes out, and I can see more and more clearly where the weak points are, what needs to be fixed, and what requires a great deal of work. My experiences thus far have been highly positive: but there always has to be someone there to direct, lead and sometimes open another door.

– 2016 is still in its early days. What do you wish for yourself and the world in the new year?

– For myself, to remain healthy. Without that, I wouldn’t be able to do anything. For the world? One single word with great meaning: “peace”. Although there’s no world war going on, all over the globe there are conflicts. This is the tragedy of humanity, that we aren’t able to live peacefully alongside each other, and always want to fight. I’d like to have peace, that’s all I can say... ◊

BUDAPEST PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
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ZENEKARA

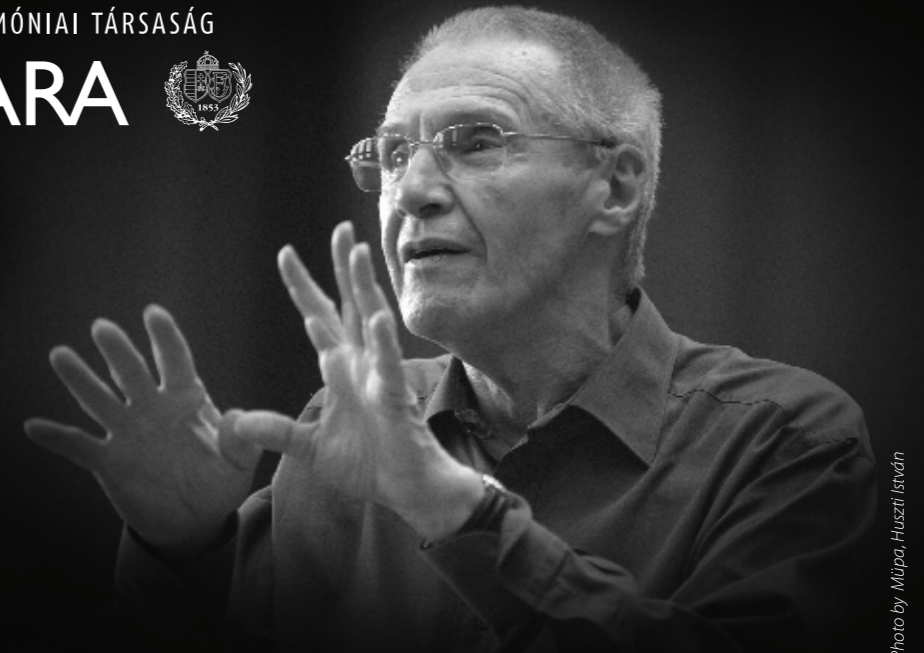


Photo by Múpa, Huszti István

Concerts at the Opera

Concerts by the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra!

22 February 2016, 7:30 pm

KURTÁG90

Enescu ▶ **Romanian Rhapsody No. 2**
Kurtág ▶ **...concertante... op. 42**
Dvořák ▶ **Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)**

Conductor ▶ **Lawrence Foster**
Featuring ▶ **Hiromi Kikuchi – violin,
Ken Hakii – viola**

14 March 2016, 7:30 pm

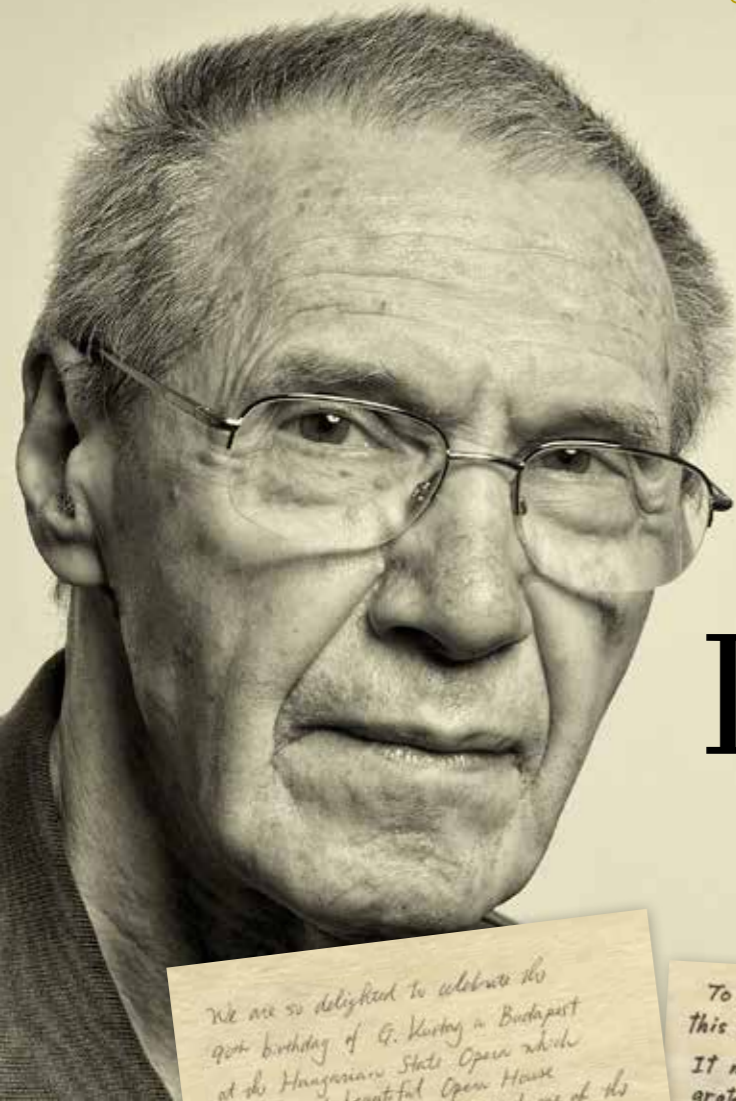
Barber ▶ **First Essay for Orchestra, op. 12**
Gershwin ▶ **Piano Concerto in F major**
Schumann ▶ **Symphony No. 2**

Conductor ▶ **John Fiore**
Featuring ▶ **Peter Jablonski – piano**

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○ Photo: BMC (István Huszti)



The greatest living Hungarian composer, who occupies a pre-eminent spot among the world's best, is 90 years old. His name is synonymous with music, meticulousness and conscientiousness. And his oeuvre consists not only of his compositions, but also of those endless chamber music lessons that will live on in the minds of students and other curious visitors. February 22 will see a concert organised in his honour at the Opera House. Benedek Várkonyi

Kurtág's Universe

We are so delighted to celebrate the 90th birthday of G. Kurtág in Budapest at the Hungarian State Opera which is the most beautiful Opera House and together with the oldest and one of the finest orchestras in Hungary.

To play Kurtág, to play ... Concertante. This is very special for us. It means that we are always extremely grateful to Gyuri and Márta Kurtág who are the mentors of our music and life.

„We are delighted to celebrate the 90th birthday of G. Kurtág in Budapest at the Hungarian State Opera which is the most beautiful Opera House and together with the oldest and one of the finest orchestras in Hungary. To play Kurtág, to play ...

concertante... this is very special for us. It means that we are always extremely grateful to Gyuri and Márta Kurtág who are the mentors of our music and life.

Hiromi Kikuchi, Ken Haki

György Kurtág's nine decades on earth have been filled nearly constantly with music, and even today, he continues to write his works with the same dedication that he always did. His source of fun – teaching – he abandoned for the sake of his work, for composing, although it's true that both of these are equally parts of this life. His has never been an easy path.

For long decades he roamed the landscape of his great trials: the hardships of enforced silence, the powerful urge when the sounds came, and the dead ends of experimentation. This path consists of silence and listening. Its results were not works numbering in their hundreds, symphonies and other large-scale forms, but rather a slow trickle of miniatures: mature, polished pieces. We can marvel at how few works are there before us after nearly seven decades of work. We can marvel when we see the number of works, and yet we can also accept, with a sense of naturalness, the endlessly refined and distilled music that the decades have brought so far.

His intention was always pure, and irrep- roachable from his own point of view as well, because it wasn't art that he wished to make, but music. He constructed his works from the material he himself is

built: music. There's no technique or secret that we can crack; we can gaze into the depths and analyse his system, and the experts even find hidden strands from which the tissue of every masterpiece and true creative work is made. But now matter how much we magnify its atoms, all that remains is dense material: Kurtág's music. This unusual realm of sound is a part of contemporary life that also locks up the past with its modernity and novelty.

Time lends value to many things, and for Kurtág's music, time is indeed probably one of the most important factors: in the time, measured in minutes, that the piece is given. These minutes, or even seconds, concentrate the endless material from whose compactness open up great spaces. This is often compared to Weberian density, as if there is any need for that at all. It's as if Kurtág is at the same time both rushing and locking the hours into the moments, while simultaneously suggesting that he lives in eternity. He polishes, massages and refines his material until what's left is something his rigour will accept, to which he himself can now say: this is the music. Seconds created over years. The minutes of the creative work, however, are stopped time. Then there is no rush, and the speed of external life comes to a halt: this is how he seeks out the notes over the years, this is how he finds each melody, a single colour, which in his hands will become music that his sense of conscientiousness also accepts.

What drives somebody to endlessness? To the impossibility of making perfection the aim of every moment? If we ask him about this, we find ourselves facing an insurmountable obstacle. As if guarding a secret, he answers no questions, staving off any professional inquisitiveness.



○ KEN HAKI

For a long time, he actually did seek out large formats. He experimented with placing shorter works alongside each other, but he didn't get the shape that he wished for this way. Many times "inspiration" abandoned him, forcing him into idleness. And if something good ended up on paper, then that made him happy. His view of the creative process: "These are the moments when we're smarter than we really are. But something also happens during the time when I don't write, when no piece is being created. This period of waiting also is part of the work."

Anyone who has participated, even as only a spectator, in the classes which he led into the maelstroms of chamber music playing will have observed that it is not only knowledge that he gives over with his teaching, but feeling, experience and sight: the kind of sight with which we can both hear and make music differently than we did before. When he was still teaching, shaping a few measures of a Brahms sonata took up an entire lecture with him. His lectures at the Music Academy gradually transformed: it wasn't only his students who were learning from them, but the hordes of visitors who descended on them after learning that Kurtág would be giving a class. Because magic happened at them. Just like in his music. Many people feel his works strange, or "modern". But all you have to do is pay attention to them, just like you do to his every note and every word. The voice is soft, but still a great one.



○ HIROMI KIKUCHI

Roles in the “Szvétek” Style

Last June, at the end of the past season, László Szvétek was awarded the Mihály Székely commemorative plaque. It's incredible that he has already been a member of the Opera for more than 20 years, with his artistic career from the very beginning being shaped by the model set by the great basses from Hungary and abroad.

Tamás Pallós



Photo by László Emmer

– Looking back at the past two-plus decades, which figure stands out before everyone else?

– My true and good friend József Gregor, who also makes me think about the fellowship among basses. Not long before his death, he sang for the last time at the Ócsa Music Festival I had organised. He was already very ill, and could hardly even drive a car, but he agreed to this performance. The next day, a Monday, he went into the Opera House and cancelled every other performance. I can truly respect those of my colleagues who truly are worthy of respect. Intentionally or not, I've learned a great deal from them. As I consciously prepared for this career, with Nesterenko's guest performance in Budapest one of my influences, I already had my role models set at a young age. Later on I got the chance to meet them in person, and even to be their partner on stage, and in more than one instance even to develop life-long friendships with them. I've never been disappointed by them, even by those world greats whom I only got to know through bakelite records.



DIE WALKÜRE – LÁSZLÓ SZVÉTEK (WOTAN) AND JUDIT NÉMETH (BRÜNNHILDE) | Photo by Vera Éder

– The range of roles you take on has changed in recent times. Are comic characters closer to your personality?

– For many years, I primarily sang weighty dramatic parts, including Wagnerian operas, which although difficult, I liked very much. Deep in my heart, however, I've always been a cheerful fellow (even if I don't look it too much.), and that's why I've always brought "buffo arias" to my various concert appearances. The opera's new management, in place for several years now, knew that I like these kinds of things, and may have even decided that I'm not too bad at them either, so they put me on that "track". I really exult in such roles.

– Csaba Káel directed the mobile Opera on Wheels version of Don Pasquale that is being moved to the Erkel Theatre in January. And yet, this is not your first encounter with the title role of Donizetti's comic opera.

– I had already sung the title role, in Italian, in the old production by Kálmán Nádasdy. As a "founding member", I would have been part of Csaba Káel's "travelling" Don Pasquale as well, but since in Budapest the piece was performed in its original language, and because on the road I would have had to sing in Hungarian, I couldn't accept the engagement. But better late than never, and now I'm very enthusiastic about the new, more modern Don Pasquale production as well. It requires a different set of tools, but I really like this method of approach too, and the humour isn't lacking here either! I'll tell you that back when I was studying the part of the old bachelor, I watched and listened to every József Gregor recording I could find, and I admit to stealing everything that I liked. This time around, however, I'm not really listening to recordings, preferring not to be influenced from 50 different directions. I believe that by now I can put together a role tolerably well in the Szvétek "style" as well.



RIGOLETTO, 2005 – SPARAFUCILE | Photo by Zsuzsanna



THE TENOR, 2004 – HICKETIER | Photo by Szilvia Csibi

Portrait



○ LITTLE MAGIC FLUTE, 2014 – SARASTRO | Photo by Péter Rákossy



○ ARABELLA, 2012 – BERNADETT WIEDEMANN (ADELAIDE) AND LÁSZLÓ SZVÉTEK (COUNT LAMORAL) | Photo by Pál Csillag

– And yet, what is it that makes a comic opera good? The masterpieces of the genre are far from being “carefree buffoonery”...

– Even in the case of Don Pasquale, it’s not the music that’s humorous, but the story. In and of itself, the wonderful, vibrant music: we, the performers, have to contribute our part. I consider it important for the humour not to be tasteless. Exhibitionist joking is for me tiresome and lacking. The characters of Dulcamara in *L’elisir d’amore* and Don Pasquale are not idiots: in the latter case, the character is beset by much sadness. If we look at it this way, the sorrow in this cheerful medium is of greater gravity than that of Verdi’s dramatic operas. A very complex character. Playing him requires one to walk a tightrope, if we’re not looking for a cheap victory. Once after performing together with him, I was having dinner with György Markos, one of the renowned figures of the genre of humour, and he said, “What I like about you, my dear Laci, is that your sense of humour is very tasteful and refined. Believe me, that will have at least as much impact on the audience as mine

does.” I felt truly honoured, and I think that this comment also expressed my artistic ethos.

– While working, in the theatre, are you good at handling unexpected situations? Legends about funny stories taking place in the wings abound.

– I’m fundamentally an introverted person, perhaps a little bit morose as well, prone to depression. I like funny things, but I don’t know how to take unexpected and troublesome situations in my stride or handle them easily. When I step out on a stage and see the audience, I forget about everything else. I like discipline, and I expect my colleagues to show the necessary seriousness. Humour cannot come at the expense of musicality; I’d express it this way: I get upset when musicality is missing.

– Your wife, Erika Gál, is a mezzo-soprano. Do you talk about your work at home?

– Thank God, we have enough to do so that when we’re home, we try to spend the little time we have with

our two beautiful box. Mostly we talk about singing only when the children ask about it. Erika and still talk about lots of things one on one. We hold each other’s efforts in the highest regard and respect each other. We both know what this genre means, and how it “works”. Our outlooks with respect to work do not necessarily correspond, but the chief aim, to achieve as much as possible, is the same for both of us. ○



○ HUNYADI LÁSZLÓ, 2012 – JURIK CILLEI | Photo by Pál Csillag

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Ha komolyan szórakozik...



GYÖRGY LEÁNYVÁRI AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Attila Nagy

„CASTING!”

Billy Elliot Selection in the Home Stretch

The starting pistol whose report will signal the commencement of the rehearsal process has already been raised skywards. With at least three different casts, the country's most renowned adult actors and its most talented child performers, the world-famous musical, Billy Elliot will be starting on its way. We chatted with director Tamás Szirtes about the past twelve months.

Anna Braun

It was nearly a year ago, in February 2015, when the Hungarian State Opera announced that it would be including *Billy Elliot the Musical*, first premiered in 2005, in its repertoire.

The story of the talented young boy born into a poor family that is firmly opposed to ballet dancing was greeted with such joy from the audience that the piece has been running in the United Kingdom ever since. The work's Hungarian director and the Opera team are hopeful that the musical's international success will take off in this country as well, and over time will not only be an emblematic production for the Erkel Theatre, but will also inspire a



MARIA TOLLDY | Photo by Péter Rákossy

love for the genre of dance among the younger members of the audience.

– You've already been through a huge number of casting sessions, endless auditions and coaching sessions, and yet the first rehearsal for the production is still a ways off. Is the preparatory process always this lengthy and thorough?

– We began the process of selecting the children last March, when I would often repeat that this is a highly complex project, because its not enough for the boy playing the lead to be cute and sweet: he has to be able to sing and dance much better than merely acceptably, and he can't get lost in the prose, either. When the children came in October, they had already been receiving training for months, and now, in January, when we're making our final decision, they already have over half a year of intensive training under their belts. (Editors Note: The Madách Musical Dance School was a partner in preparing the child performers). It was a distinct challenge, therefore, to find



EDIT RUIJSZ, TAMÁS SOLYMOSSI AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Attila Nagy



GÉZA KÖTELES, DÓRA SZANYI, ANDREA DÁVID, ISTVÁN SILLÓ, EMESE SOÓS AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Péter Rákossy



TAMÁS SOLYMOSSI AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Attila Nagy



ISTVÁN SILLÓ AND ZSUZSANNA WARNUS | Photo by Péter Rákossy

the two young boys, Billy and Michael, and of course the adults as well, who also have to perform at a very high level in all three areas.

– Does this mean that so far no one has made the cut?

– It's not that, but rather that everyone has undergone major change and development over the past year. We're talking about eight-to-ten-year-old kids, some of whom were going through adolescence at the time, with others just starting to now. It's not just how well that they are performing now, when the casting is taking place, that we need to pay attention to; we also have to see where they'll be in a year or a year and a half. That's why we have to feel out the process and why we have to select several children. General Director Szilveszter Ókovács is



Photo by Zsófia Pályi



ÁKOS TIHANYI | Photo by Péter Rákossy

contemplating a three-cast production, but in order for the piece to have a firm foundation, we'll have to coach seven or eight young performers.

– Is it gradually becoming clear which of the selected children will be Billy, and which will be Michael?

– I can't say anything about who will be cast in which role until the middle of February, but I can say that there are some children with whom it's totally clear which character suits them, and there are others for whom it is worth thinking about both roles.

– You could already begin the rehearsal process with the other roles in the piece. How were they selected?



ZSUZSANNA FEHÉR, ZSUZSANNA WARNUS AND BRIGITTA KOVÁCS | Fotó: Pályi Zsófia



TAMÁS SOLYMOSI AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Péter Rákossy

– Through casting by invitation only. Some of them were contacted by phone due to personal relationships, and others by mail. For each role, we invited eight to ten actors or actresses to try out, and the roles were all filled from these groups. In their case, of course, the selection process was made easier by the fact that they likely won't go through as many radical changes as the children over the course of the next year. In the end, one round was enough to make our final decision.

– You invited the most famous performers in the country. Why was it necessary to have them audition at all?

– It's well-known actors we're talking about, of course, and typically we all live in Budapest not too far from each other. But we still don't have up-to-date



EDIT RUJSZ AND TAMÁS SZIRTES | Photo by Péter Rákossy

knowledge on what their current state is or about how well the piece suits them, or how they function singing and dancing. It wasn't their talent that was in question, only their suitability, which we wouldn't have been able to test in any other way. Everyone received the excerpts, choreographies and songs which they would have to perform later on, and we watched where they went with it.

– Are their names also confidential?

– For the moment, yes. But the wait is almost over!



BRIGITTA KOVÁCS, MÁRIA TOLDY, TAMÁS SZIRTES, TAMÁS SOLYMOSI AND ZSUZSANNA WARNUS | Photo by Péter Rákossy

– Did everyone accept their invitation?

– Naturally. Being a part of a Hungarian State Opera production is a huge honour and very attractive. Actors, fortunately, are generally the kinds of people who constantly like to pit themselves against new roles.

– What tasks do you still have on your plate before the premiere?

– In April, at the Madách Theatre, there will be the premiere of the production of *Les Misérables* that has already been to Szeged, and so I can tell you from experience that it is a large but not unfamiliar undertaking. The incredibly talented young actor Ádám Solti, who has already excelled in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, will be playing one of the leads. He's worth paying attention to, as is the cast list for *Billy Elliot*, which will be published in January. Come to the Erkel Theatre for the July premiere and see for yourselves if we made the right call! ○



ÁKOS TIHANYI | Photo by Péter Rákossy



DÓRA SZANYI AND GÉZA KÖTELES | Photo by Zsófia Pályi



The Meaning of an Important Day

January 22 is a symbolic day twice over. Firstly because, as the manuscript shows, this is the day that Ferenc Kölcsey completed the words to Hungary's national anthem, and it was a musician, the pianist Árpád Fasang, who in 1989, the momentous year of the regime change, suggested that this day be named the Day of Hungarian Culture. It was only a few short years later when the Opera joined in with celebrating this national event, and on each occasion ever since it has worked to add some kind of unique programme to the rich and colourful offerings.

Márton Karczag

In recent years, as a special surprise for those who come to visit the Opera House on the day of Hungarian Culture, we have set up, next to the marble bust of architect Miklós Ybl on the building's grand staircase, a glass showcase displaying cultural treasures never before shown. Once we selected a set of Erkel's relics to lay out alongside

a copy of the composer's manuscript for the *Himnus*, the Hungarian national anthem. Another time we displayed scores Hungarian composers had dedicated to the Budapest Philharmonic, as yet unseen by the wider audience. This year, together with my colleague Nóra Wellmann, the curator of the *Failoni*125 exhibit viewable from December 18 until the end of January in the Red

Salon, I picked out photos and scores of Sergio Failoni kept at the Opera's archives. It was extremely enlightening to look through the piano reductions and scores that in one way or another have remained at the Opera House or else have wound up back in the collection. Some of these are nearly totally untouched, with hardly a single note or comment written in them, and there are also others, such as the copy, autographed by the composer, of Kodály's *The Spinning Room*, which nobody but Failoni himself could have used for anything, since the printed score itself is hardly visible underneath the densely written notes. Also kept in the score archives is the legendary piano extract of *Tannhäuser* in which the maestro marked spots of importance to him with drawings of animals.

The Italian conductor, who died in Budapest in 1948, will be taking the spotlight on January 22 in another sense as well, since it is on this day when the book *The Hungarian Failoni* will see daylight. The date of the volume's release is not coincidental, since the conductor's life work constituted a bridge between Italian and Hungarian culture. Born in Verona, his career started in Italy, but his two decades of work in Budapest practically form a separate era in the 130-year history of the Opera. His significance in cultural history, however, does not lie simply in the fact that he taught numerous Italian (and German) operas: he also functioned as an ambassador of Hungarian culture in his homeland. He was the one who premiered *The Spinning Room* at Milan's La Scala. Like *Fricsay100*, this book, with its rich and for the most part previously unpublished photographic material, is available at the Opera Shop.

In addition to the book, we are hoping that a CD of rarities will also be released. One of the most important, perhaps the most important, revival in the history of *Bluebeard's Castle* took place on 29 October 1936. The director was Kálmán Nádasdy, the designer Gustáv Oláh, with Sergio Failoni conducting and performances by soloists Mihály Székely and Ella Némethy. The revival was also broadcast on radio, from where Sophie Török, the wife of the writer Mihály Babits, recorded with her own record-cutting device. The recording – the sole complete opera from prior to World War Two – remained with us. Its quality, of course, cannot compete with studio recordings, but it casts a great deal more light on the artistry of the long-gone greats!

While General Director Szilveszter Ókovács – also true to tradition – will on January 1 be giving a copy of the

For the Road 2016 DVD to the first baby born in Budapest in 2016, the release's official debut will take place on the Day of Hungarian Culture. The fourth member of the series will again be a DVD, following up on the *Little Magic Flute* production, this time it will be the contemporary Hungarian children's opera premiered at the Erkel Theatre in the spring of 2015, Zsófia Tallér's work *Leánder and Linseed* as recorded by Hungarian Television.

Naturally, theatre-goers will also not be deprived of performances on the Day of Hungarian Culture: in honour of the Shakespeare season, the Opera House will be showing an updated version of László Seregi's ageless ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, while Balázs Kovalik's no-less beloved production of *Turandot* will be performed at the Erkel Theatre. ○



The Mystery



© SZILVESZTER ÓKOVÁCS AND EDITA GRUBEROVÁ | Photo by Attila Nagy



© LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR – DARIO SCHMUNCK, EDITA GRUBEROVÁ AND ANDRIY YURKEVYCH | Photo by Attila Nagy



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© LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR – DARIO SCHMUNCK AND EDITA GRUBEROVÁ | Photo by Attila Nagy

She has been given a hundred different sobriquets and has been written about in a thousand different ways; one could read her interviews, listen to her recordings, collect her albums, marvel at her when she appeared on the Hungarian stage, but the secret still could not be unravelled. Despite it all, Edita Gruberová's oeuvre is an open book.

Viktória Filip

Every music lover is familiar with the arc of this opera diva's career: especially in light of how she has been a regular guest on Budapest stages and podiums in recent years. In the last six

years she has visited us in Hungary four times, naturally without neglecting her engagements in Germany, Austria and Japan either. As to whether honouring us Hungarians with her attentions signifies nostalgia for the singer's happy childhood, or is a clever organisational move or even a conscious repositioning that addresses the rising standard of our concert life, we cannot know. What is certain is that – as she herself expressed in a previous greeting in *Opera Magazine* – is that she has always been glad to arrive in this "stunning capital" and was likewise happy to accept an invitation to the Hungarian State Opera's Fricsay100 "Mini" Festival, in which she sang the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in the "beautifully renovated Erkel Theatre" in 2014 – perhaps for the last time, but never more successfully. The critics wrote of "mad

coloraturas" and of a singer who vocally as well is "nearly as radiant as in her old brilliance... transcending sopranos at the heights of their careers", who, even if we had only been there in order to hear her portrayal in the mad scene, that alone "would have been worth coming for," as Gábor Bóka opines. "They say that for the big moments, you have to go to the theatre or a concert. On this evening, Gruberová put all of her cards on the table, and won: her big scene seized the moment and held it." The singer herself says that she too has kept the memory of this performance and the "always enthusiastic Hungarian audience" in her heart, and that it was a good feeling to be enveloped in the "enormous emotion and affection" So, it hasn't only been a matter of preserving pleasant memories: she's also put new dates in her calendar.

This means that towards the end of January, we'll get even closer to unravelling the nature of the Gruberová phenomenon. This time, however, through an entire unique genre, the song recital, which enjoyed its golden age in the last century but today appears to be in decline, and which is considered to be the most intimate of all types of concerts, where she will be taking the stage at the Opera House with a concert programme that reflects in part her own roots and in part the Opera House's past. This is a bold venture that is truly suited to Gruberová, since it is no longer certain today that the velvet seats of the auditorium are so inviting when it comes to listening to "merely" a lone voice in a duet with a single musical instrument. (We just remember an example from not so long ago, when one of our finest sopranos, likewise seasoned

on the world's greatest stages, incorporated the thread of another branch of the arts into the tapestry of her solo recital held at the Erkel Theatre.) Edita's accompanist on piano will be Slovakian-born Peter Valentovic, whose activities as a conductor are more and more at the forefront of his evolution. He completed part of his studies in Paris with Zsolt Nagy, who also works as assistant to Péter Eötvös, and was already working with Gruberová in 2013, when he conducted the singer's gala concert at the Theater an der Wien. At this Viennese concert, the listeners would get a taste of the "Donizetti Queens", roles that constitute major milestones in the diva's already more-than-40-year career. *María Stuarda*, *Anna Bolena* and *Elisabetta* from *Roberto Devereux*, on the other hand, can thank Gruberová for freeing them from the dust of history

clinging to them, so they could bathe in the glamour of the opera stage.

As put by Gruberová herself, who sees the ingredients for her ongoing success in simple terms: loads of work, luck, decades of experience on the stage, and of course, good teachers are needed for those who would rather preserve and polish their vocal endowments rather than ruin them. Being in good physical condition is also not something to neglect, as she stated earlier, "since regular maintenance of the body also has an effect on the voice." And if we wonder how she does this? Does she run like Erika Miklósa through the crystal-clear air of the Bakony Mountains, or does she bicycle over the hills of Rome like Cecilia Bartoli? Let that remain her secret. ○

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Back to the future

Baroque time-travel and a moon voyage, a set resembling a galactic shopping mall and an authentic theatre venue. The November performances of Haydn's comic opera *Il mondo della luna* in the Baroque theatre of the Royal Palace of Gödöllő counted as a true novelty.



○ ANDRÁS KISS AND GERGELY UJVÁRI | Photo by Attila Nagy

"No matter how many times I had been to Gödöllő recently, I never was able to see a performance at the venue; the reconstruction of the Baroque theatre technology existed for me purely as an item on exhibit, but without providing a living dramatic experience. Thanks to the Hungarian State Opera's policy of incorporating new venues into its programme, this situation has finally been altered.

If the reader objects to the fact that, in evaluating the production, I have started off by dissecting the virtues of the choice of venue, I hasten to assert that it is not solely for personal reasons that I have done so – since upon seeing the completed production I was struck with the impression that it was not for the work and the vision



○ ANDRÁS KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy

attached to it that the performance venue was sought, but rather exactly the opposite: it was as if the right opera was sought for the Gödöllő palace. Hence, Attila Toronykőy's directing was not aimed at giving the piece a contemporary re-interpretation, but rather attempted – and successfully, at that – to exploit as thoroughly as possible the situational and character comedy created by the librettist, Carlo Goldoni. Katalin Juhász's costumes leave the story in its original rococo setting, and it is only the imagined spectacle of the lunar world that resembles that of Earth today, and as a 21st century hypermarket or shopping mall to boot, complete with a child-care centre furnished with bright plastic balls and a slide. (...)

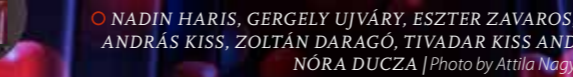
As revealed in the above, the chief virtue of the staging – as with previous productions I've seen by Toronykőy – is the painstaking analysis of the characters, the precise interpretation of the situations and, stemming from this, the richness – lacking in so many other productions in Hungary – with which the actors are directed. Indeed, there



○ TIVADAR KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ESZTER ZAVAROS AND NÓRA DUCZA | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ NADIN HARIS, GERGELY UJVÁRY, ESZTER ZAVAROS, ANDRÁS KISS, ZOLTÁN DARAGÓ, TIVADAR KISS AND NÓRA DUCZA | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ZOLTÁN DARAGÓ AND TIVADAR KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ZOLTÁN DARAGÓ, NADIN HARIS, GERGELY UJVÁRY, ESZTER ZAVAROS, TIVADAR KISS, ANDRÁS KISS AND NÓRA DUCZA | Photo by Attila Nagy

is nothing unique in what we see – except that he executes the primary reading of the piece at such a high professional standard that, aware as we are of the anomalies in Hungarian opera life, is not at all something to be dismissed. (...)

How lively the portrayals are! This is very likely due to, in addition to the talent of the cast and creative staff and the aforementioned directing, the fact that the piece is being performed in Hungarian, in a new translation by Lajos Csákovics. Csákovics's text is excellent not only from the point of view of prosody, but in how its sometimes elegant and sometimes grotesque wittiness happily avoids cheap and clumsy joking around; the quality of the transplantation and the overall directness of the effect are important principals for performing operas in Hungarian.

The most important singing and acting performance was given by Tivadar Kiss, who in the role of Ecclito was able to convey both the mischievousness and the wickedness of the fraudulent astronomer. It is a source of gladness that András Kiss is getting more and more roles, since every turn reveals just

how how much he was made for the stage: his is the type that has stage presence even without props or other tools, and who for this very reason can be safely used to build on. What we will remember first of all from his portrayal of Buonafede is a countenance achieving a total character illustration. After his wonderful performance in *Leander and Linseed*, Daragó Zoltán's Ernesto again reminds us of the superb counter-tenor's sensitive musicality. The three female singers: Eszter Zavaros (Flaminia) Nóra Ducza (Clarice) and Nadin Haris (Lisetta) all played their roles, which do not extend beyond type but within these confines were composed with great imagination, with precision, both vocally and dramatically. As Cecco, Gergely Ujvári revealed not only his unrestrained skill as a performer, but his promising vocal reserves as well.

The Hungarian State Opera Orchestra's chamber-sized ensemble played with readiness and style under the baton of László Bartal, for whom this Haydn interpretation can be put down as one of his finest productions." (Gábor Bóka, *Opera-Világ*)

○ ANDRÁS KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ANDRÁS KISS AND TIVADAR KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy

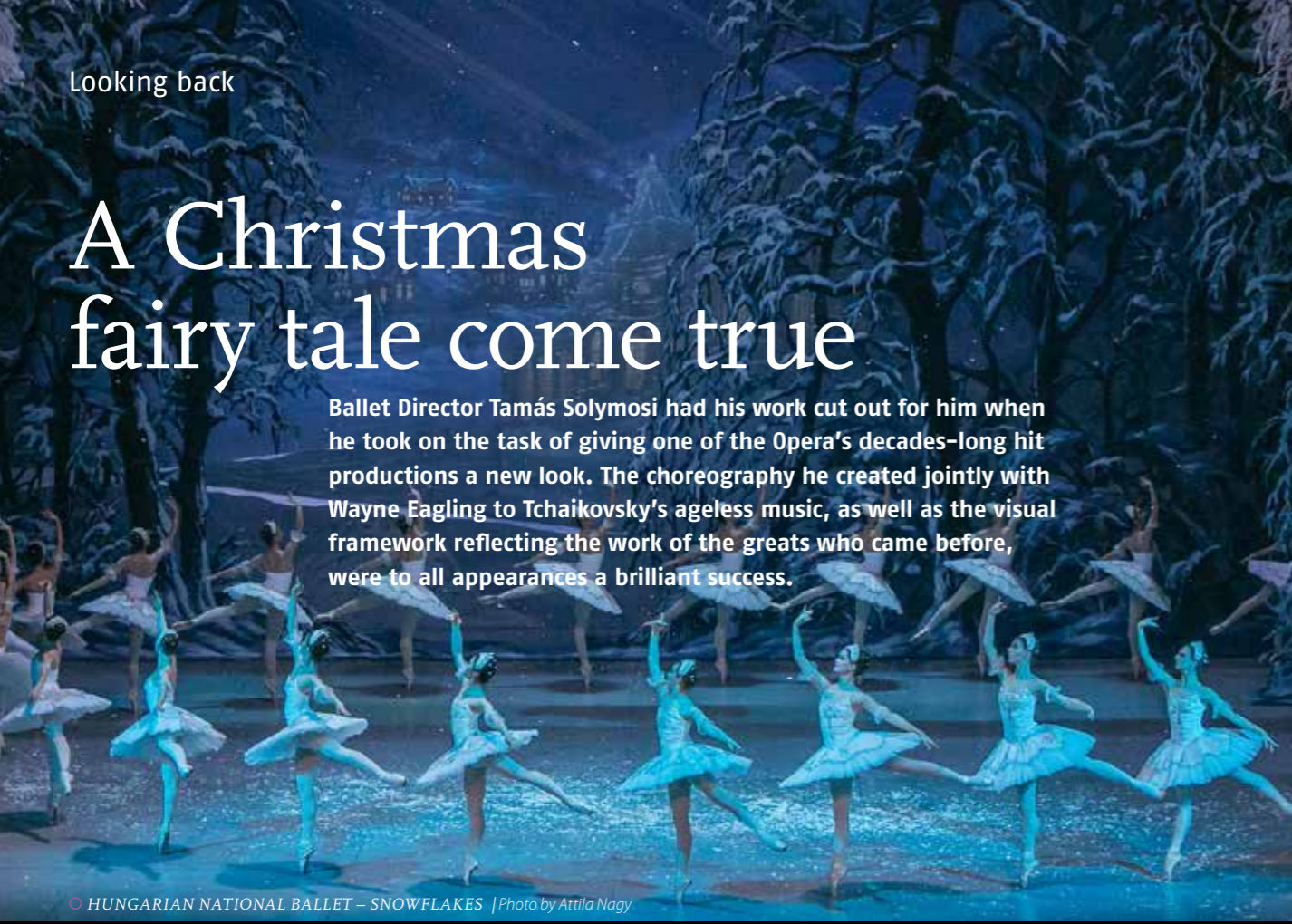


○ GERGELY UJVÁRI, ANDRÁS KISS AND ZOLTÁN DARAGÓ | Photo by Attila Nagy

Looking back

A Christmas fairy tale come true

Ballet Director Tamás Solymosi had his work cut out for him when he took on the task of giving one of the Opera's decades-long hit productions a new look. The choreography he created jointly with Wayne Eagling to Tchaikovsky's ageless music, as well as the visual framework reflecting the work of the greats who came before, were to all appearances a brilliant success.



○ HUNGARIAN NATIONAL BALLET – SNOWFLAKES | Photo by Attila Nagy

“Right at a time when it is getting harder and harder to show the rising generation what a real Christmas is like, the Opera has renewed a 70-year-old tradition. They've dusted off this Tchaikovsky fairy-tale ballet that has touched millions over the decades in such a way as to simultaneously commemorate the many, many performances that allowed an entire country to know a noble and gracious

tradition: that of the Christmas-season Nutcracker production. They could scarcely have made a finer gesture: the new Nutcracker contains everything that is valuable in the old one, and truly is capable of speaking to everybody, regardless of age: both those who grew up on the old choreography and those who are just now encountering this lovely tradition for the first time.



○ ANNA FÜLÖP | Photo by Zsófia Pályi



○ Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ALIYA TANYKPAYEVA AND GERGELY LEBLANC | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ KARINA SARKISSOVA, DÁVID MOLNÁR, MARK JAMES BLOCCA, LLOYD PETCHEY AND GERMAN BORSAI | Photo by Zsófia Pályi

Wayne Eagling and Tamás Solymosi's choreography is new, modern and adequately gorgeous, while at the same time being a kind of homage to the, shall we say legendary, creative work, of Vasili Vainonen – and Gusztáv Oláh. The latter considered the sets for *The Nutcracker* to be the greatest “exhibition” of his life, and these are constantly reflected in the sets Beáta Vavrínecz designed for the current production, while Nóra Rományi's costumes are classic, beautiful and timeless.

The Nutcracker, therefore, received an adequately handsome exterior to stuff its contents into: just like the dough for a Christmas *beigli* pastry. So the Hungarian National Ballet can be grateful for the task of dancing these lovely, classical choreographies that showcases every beauty of the art of dance.



○ TATIANA MELNIK, DMITRY TIMOFFEV AND GÁBOR SZIGETI | Photo by Zsófia Pályi

While the pair playing the leads at the premiere, Aliya Tanykpayeva and Gergely Leblanc, are dancers of unusual talent, later on others also get the opportunities to take solo parts in this piece, and this move in and of itself is worthy of the message of Christmas. Also to be commended is the orchestra, which has obviously already played the work countless times, but now under the baton of Máté Hámosi sounds like they too have been dusted off. The new treatment puts the entire production in an extraordinary light. (Eszter Veronika Kiss, Mno.hu)



○ MINGJUNG KIM AND ZOLTAN OLÁH | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ MIKLÓS DÁVID KERÉNYI | Photo by Attila Nagy

Looking back

"It took 65 years to replace this version by Vasily Vainonen and Gusztáv Oláh, premiered in 1950 and since ennobled to a classic, stiffened into something of a museum piece and dustily archaic, and which today's grandparents have had plenty of chances to see. (...) And now here is a new variation, as per Wayne Eagling and Tamás Solymosi's choreographic intentions. It feels like a descendant of the old production, yet is full of youth, vigour and viability for the long term.



○ HUNGARIAN NATIONAL BALLET – WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS | Photo by Zsófia Pályi

We can wonder at how truly lovely, young and energetic Zoltán Oláh, who in this conception plays both the Nutcracker and the Prince, and his partner on stage, Minjung Kim are, and how well they dance. The corps de ballet holds the line heroically, and there are full-company dances of parade-like splendour, with the *Waltz of the Snowflakes* truly enchanting as a fairy tale, and the *Waltz of the Flowers* compellingly sweet in its reverie. Accompanying all this, the music trickles and floods into our ears under the baton of Domonkos Héja. Nóra Rományi's costumes are impressive, making the characters elegant, charming and graceful, or are humorously grotesque. The sets designed by Beáta Vavrincz to recall those of Gusztáv Oláh are the cosy home, the glorious, but not kitschy, beauty of the magic castle and the interior of the cave and, most of all, the family house illuminated invitingly in the snowy landscape are all very memorable. We also see scenic live images, a huge undertaking, throughout the production. And despite every deficiency, worthily of its predecessor, it can look forward to decades of success." (Gábor Bóta, *Nápszava*)



○ JÓZSEF CSERTA | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ MINJUNG KIM, LEVENTE BAJÁRI AND ZOLTÁN OLÁH | Photo by Péter Rákossy



○ ZSUZSANNA PÁPP AND BENCE APÁTI | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ALIYA TANYKPAYEVA | Photo by Attila Nagy

"The *Waltz of the Snowflakes* turned out especially well, evoking the crowded glittering heavenly blessing as it streams, sparkles and crackles." (Miklós Fáy, *Figyelő*)



○ KRISTINA STAROSTINA AND JUDIT VARGA | Photo by Zsófia Pályi



○ CRISTINA BALABAN, KRISTÓF MORVAI AND BORIS MYASNIKOV | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ LILI FELMÉRY AND GERGŐ BALÁZ | Photo by Zsófia Pályi

VIEWERS' OPINIONS

"Every piece offers a different experience, you just have to find the wonder in it. This work remains unforgettable for me, together with all of its old and new versions." (Marcsi Szalai)

"*The Nutcracker* is the world's most marvellous Christmas fairy tale. Tchaikovsky's genius never ceases to amaze. It's also true that the performances by this enormously talented and skilled ballet ensemble and the orchestra are also a contributing factor." (Wolfgang Günter Donkó-Dejte)

"We're happy about the updating, because the overhaul makes the work very spectacular and entertaining, making it an actual fairy tale – in every sense of the word." (Andrea Lukács)



○ LEON JESSICA CARULLO AND CARLOS TARAVILLO | Photo by Attila Nagy

"My young son and I received something wonderful on Sunday morning – *The Nutcracker*." (Ilona Szekeres)

"Bravo, bravo, bravo! Dear General Director Ókovács, A new marvel has been born on the stage of the Opera House with the new *Nutcracker*! Splendid ballet dancers, impressively overhauled sets and fantastic choreography! The people indisputably at the centre of this raging success are Ballet Director Tamás Solymosi and the costume designer, Nóra Rományi. Their artistic achievements can be described only in superlatives, which is why I think each of them deserves a high state honour (it's no coincidence that Nóra Rományi's talent is widely compared to that of the late Nelly Vágó. The lion's share of the credit for this success obviously goes to you, as the Opera's top in-house manager. Heartfelt congratulations to all of you, and thank you for the magical evening!" (Zsolt Pálffy)

○ ALIYA TANYKPAYEVA AND GERGELY LEBLANC | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ CLEO MITILINEOU, PÉTER KÁLMÁN, JÁNOS SZERÉKOVÁN, MÁRIA FARKASRÉTI, BERNADETT WIEDEMANN, TAMÁS BUSA, ANDRÁS KISS AND TAMÁS SZÜLE | Photo by Attila Nagy

A threesome at the Opera



○ CLEO MITILINEOU, PÉTER KÁLMÁN, MÁRIA FARKASRÉTI AND BERNADETT WIEDEMANN | Photo by Attila Nagy

The audience got to meet old friends not seen for nearly ten years at last year's final premiere at the Erkel Theatre, when Puccini's *Il trittico* was played in its entirety, with later performances pairing Gianni Schicchi with either *Il tabarro* or *Suor Angelica*, showing new faces of life and death.



○ MITILINEOU CLEO, WIEDEMANN BERNADETT, FARKASRÉTI MÁRIA | Foto: Nagy Attila

Suor Angelica – Puccini's favourite of the three – is an allusion to the story of the Virgin Mary also containing the motif of Purgatory. (...) Ildikó Komlósi and Gabriella Látay Kiss, partly because of their contrasting appearances, are suited to the roles: the former a measured and cold *femme fatale*, the latter a pure and fragile *sponsa Christi* – their duet is especially powerful in its musical and dramatic impact. While Mónika Budai-Langermann gave a refreshing portrayal in the humorous role of Dolcina, Veronika Dobi-Kiss and Mária Farkasréti also deserve mention as the senior nuns. (...) Following on the tragedies, absolution was brought by the light *Gianni Schicchi*, which did not dispense with either humour or wit. Gergely Kesselyák and the Opera's orchestra played to a high standard all night, reflecting the score in its complete beauty and sense of devotion, and picking up a more jagged character in the closing one-act from their spirited and vibrant playing.

○ ORSOLYA SÁFÁR AND PÉTER BALCZÓ | Photo by Péter Rákosy



○ Photo by Attila Nagy

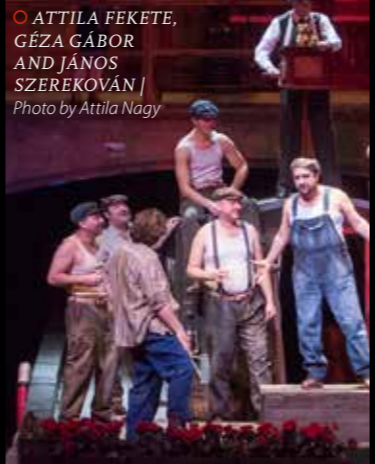
Orsolya Sáfár's *O mio bambino caro* was a delight for the ears sung with innocent charm, although it may not have been greeted with adequately noisy applause. But Gianni Schicchi is not about the individuals, but about the ensemble's performance. Tamás Szüle, Bernadett Wiedemann and Cleo Mitilineou (this list is not complete) all stepped up as first-rate entertainers. Péter Kálmán simply excelled in the title role, his voice penetrating and effortlessly dominating. Before the curtain falls, however, he doesn't change sides for the sake of winning the audience's applause, because he knows that the world belongs to the clever and astute, but so does the underworld." (Máté Csabai, Fidelio.hu)



○ JÁNOS SZERÉKOVÁN AND TAMÁS SZÜLE | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ESZTER SÜMEGI AND ATTILA FEKETE | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ ATTILA FEKETE, GÉZA GÁBOR AND JÁNOS SZERÉKOVÁN | Photo by Attila Nagy

"During the 1990s, there ran two series of the *Il trittico* operas, and we might even say that the set design for one or two of the pieces was more appealing than the current crop. In both series, however, productions with highly differing visual styles were performed on the same evening. This problem always bothered me, and so on the evening of the premiere, already familiar with the preliminary visual designs, it was with a heightened sense of curiosity that I took my seat in the auditorium. I have to say: the visual spectacle won me over beyond expectations. (...) The chorus and the children's chorus performed outstandingly, as did the orchestra, conducted by Gergely Kesselyák. Particularly in the case of *Il tabarro*, I noticed new shadings previously unknown to me. The dark tragedy of the cloak, the mystical trance of *Suor Angelica* and the humour and sparks of *Gianni Schicchi* were all successfully brought out and developed in the orchestra's playing. All three operas reaped significant acclaim separately as well, with multiple curtain calls and the entire cast and creative staff basking in the audience's ovation at the end." (Károly Fülöp, Opera-Világ)



○ ESZTER SÜMEGI AND KÁROLY SZEMERÉDY | Photo by Attila Nagy



○ Photo by Zsófia Pályi

"Puccini's scores can be interpreted as models for directing: one merely must know how to read them. Anger knew how, particularly in the case of *Il tabarro*. (...) Anger, I felt, this time tried precisely and intensively, doing an excellent job of managing his singers, principal and secondary characters alike, who all performed their duty splendidly. Here, and at this time, I felt the staging aspects to be more highly developed, with Z Gergely Zöldy's optically pleasing and illusory sets and the magnificent costumes in *Schicchi*. (...) Károly Szemerády was a big surprise! This was the first time I had seen or heard him, and I knew nothing about him, but with the great dearth of great Hungarian singers, I had to put my head in my hands. A naturally-coloured voice that is balanced in every register is a rare phenomenon on the Hungarian opera stage. (...) The minor characters performed unobtrusively, but to a high standard. Like always, Géza Gábor showed especially his robust voice. János Szerekován's material represents an entirely different weight, but after last year's splendid Pedrillo, I again enjoyed the naturalness he shows in acting and singing. He will be, or already is, a big gain for the theatre in a role type that is not at all insignificant. Bernadett Wiedemann practically burst out of the confines of the La Frugola character. Her voice is marvelous stuff even today." (ppp, Café Momus)



○ GABRIELLA LÉTAY KISS | Photo by Attila Nagy

"Portraying Giorgetta in *Il tabarro*, Eszter Sümegi's (...) performance was nuanced and expressive, vocally as well. We could hear lovely and powerful high notes from her, and during the dramatic segments she sang through the orchestra's fortes with self-confidence. Luigi is a true heldentenor role, and Attila Fekete managed the part's difficulties well, including its aria (*Hai bene raggion*) and the "voice-killing" *Folle di gelosia!* scene, and was a worthy partner to Eszter Sümegi in the duets as well. (...) I would like, however, to make special mention of Zoltán Bátki Fazekas, whose dramatic portrayal of the notary in Gianni Schicchi, through his humour, made an already stellar production even more entertaining, as well as the young singer András Kiss, singing the role of Betto di Signa, whom I consider to be the most talented bass of his age group." (Balázs Csák, Opera Portál)



○ GABRIELLA LÉTAY KISS | Photo by Zsófia Pályi

“If you dare punch that man, then I’ll never give you another kiss!”

World champion professional boxer Mihály Kótai has been a frequent guest of the Opera’s. While it was because of the Wagner 200 festival series that he developed a close relationship with the institution, he was no stranger to the world of opera previously either.

Zsófi Rick



Photo by Péter Rákossy



MIHÁLY KÓTAI, BENCE APÁTI AND LILI FELMÉRY | Photo by Péter Hermann

– What few people know about me is that I was born into a family of musicians and have loved classical music ever since childhood. We lived in Rakamaz, and didn’t have too many opportunities to go to the Opera or to concerts, and so we watched and listened to the programmes on the radio and on television. I’m a big fan of tenors and love Pavarotti, Carreras and Domingo. The Three Tenors concert in Budapest that I watched on television had a big effect on me, and later on, as an adult, I got the chance to hear Carreras live in Pécs. My wife also adores this world, so before our daughters were born, we visited the Opera House frequently, and now I have to take them, since they both dance: the younger one, Liza, in the MU Theatre’s children’s

ensemble, and Rozi, the older one, with Aleszja Popova. She’s also been admitted to the Opera’s children’s chorus, and will soon be appearing in *La bohème*. I’m very proud of them, and it’s a nice feeling to be able to relive the experiences of my childhood through them and with them.

– **You wrote an endorsement for the cover of the *Leander and Linseed* DVD, the fairy-tale opera that was released on disc this year. This is the result of two years of cooperation. How did the Opera find you for the Wagner200 event in the first place? Did they know about your affection for music?**

– I’m sure they didn’t. Probably they just figured of me that I’d agree to

go out for a few playful bouts. At the “warm-up” press conference for Wagner200, I had to get in the ring to box with ballet dancer Bence Apáti.

– **Did you give that match 100%**

– No, of course not! I was very careful to avoid any overly forceful contact, so I wouldn’t hurt him. My daughter Rozi and I had already seen Bence at least three times together in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he plays Tybalt. Before the match, she told me, “if you dare punch that man, I’ll never give you another kiss!” So I had to be careful. It was a really good exercise, and it was good for boxing and good for ballet. Maybe for Bence not so much... Just joking! (*Laughs*). The previous night I hit on the idea of standing in the ring in

first position, but it didn’t turn out that way. Both boxing and ballet are difficult in their own ways.

– **But there’s still some similarity between dance and boxing. For example, both require a sense of rhythm.**

– Yes, it doesn’t hurt! In fact, a boxer’s movements can be recorded just like a choreography.

– **Why is it important for you to be standing behind the Opera’s efforts?**

– I enjoy taking on challenges, and always try hard to give my best in everything I do: for most people, their only memory of me is being half-naked and bleeding. In addition, I really love this other world as well. The human soul is liberated by music, and through stories.

– **And at the same time, you dispel prejudices about “tough guys”:**

– Boxing is a tough sport for tough fellows, but that doesn’t mean that we’re uncultured half-wits. Even I somehow was accepted into medical school... In professional sports, it’s impossible to last long without intelligence. Anyone who isn’t able to shape the techniques and methods, the knowledge that they get from a good coach, for their own individual personality will never become a true professional athlete.

– **How would you convince somebody who has never set foot in the Opera House to go see a ballet performance?**

– I’d start by telling them that ballet is a lot more than just pretty boys leap-

ing around the stage in tights. Dancing a *pas de deux* requires both relentless work and being in extremely good physical condition. Second, I’d say that for three years, my little daughter and her companions have been practising the same positions that I did way back when with the left jab - right cross and left hook. Finally, I’d buy them a ticket to see *Romeo and Juliet*. Everybody knows the story, and I don’t think there’s anybody who wouldn’t enjoy Prokofiev’s music. This is a good way for people to fall in love with the ballet and develop some curiosity for it in the future as well. My closing argument would be to mention how pretty the ballerinas are! ○



Válassz élményt!

OPERA

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OPERA	2, 11 and 13 February 2016	Lear Aribert Reimann
	3 and 7 February 2016	Tosca Giacomo Puccini
	4 February 2016	Romeo and Juliet László Seregi - Sergei Prokofiev
	6 February 2016	Shakespeare Gala
	10, 12, 14, 18, 21, 25 and 27 February, 5 March 2016	Faust Charles Gounod
	19, 20, 21, 24, 26 and 28 February, 2, 4, 5, 12, 16 and 18 March 2016	Manon Sir Kenneth MacMillan–Jules Massenet–Martin Yates
	20 February, 19 March 2016	Artists Unmasked series – with Éva Bátori
	22 February, 14 March 2016	Concerts at the Opera House
	28 February 2016	Le Nozze di Figaro Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
	3, 6, 10, 13, 17 and 20 March 2016	DIE WALKÜRE RICHARD WAGNER
	6, 12 and 13 March 2016	DISRUPTION IN THE SERAGLIO WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART–JÁNOS NOVÁK
	8, 9, 11, 15 and 19 March 2016	Bánk bán Ferenc Erkel
	23, 25 and 28 March 2016	Parsifal Richard Wagner
	24 and 26 March 2016	St. John Passion Johann Sebastian Bach
	31 March 2016	Iván Nagy Ballet Gala
ERKEL	4 and 6 February 2016	Turandot Giacomo Puccini
	5, 6 and 7 February 2016	White, Black – Opposites in Attraction J. Kylián–S. Reich / J. Kylián–J. S. Bach–D. Heuff / H. Lander–C. Czerny–K. Riisager
	7 February 2016	Don Pasquale Gaetano Donizetti
	11, 13, 18 and 27 February 2016	A tenor Ernő Dohnányi
	13, 14 and 20 February 2016	Figaro házassága Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
	13, 14 and 20 February 2016	Leánder and Linseed Zsófia Tallér–Andor Szilágyi–Barnabás Szöllősi
	19, 21, 26 and 28 February, 3 March 2016	LA BOHÈME 2.0 GIACOMO PUCCINI
	11, 13, 17 and 19 March 2016	Hunyadi László Ferenc Erkel
	18, 20, 24 and 26 March 2016.	Il trovatore Giuseppe Verdi
	27 and 31 March 2016	Cavalleria Rusticana / Pagliacci Pietro Mascagni / Ruggero Leoncavallo
MUSIC ACADEMY		edition kunzelmann
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OPERA

MAGYAR ÁLLAMI OPERAHÁZ
HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA

Aribert Reimann
Lear

Opera in two parts in German, with Hungarian and English surtitles

Librettist ▶ **Claus H. Henneberg**

Original set design ▶ **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle**

Original costume design ▶ **Pet Halmen**

Director of the original production ▶ **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle**

Sets and costumes reconstructed by ▶ **Z Gergely Zöldy**

Staged by ▶ **Ferenc Anger**

Conductor ▶ **Stefan Soltész**

Premiere ▶ 30 January 2016, Opera House

Further performances ▶ 2, 11 and 13 February 2016