

Mgr. SILVIA HRONCOVÁ
Director of Opera

Rossini's La Cenerentola at the Estates Theatre

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After Bellini's Norma The National Theatre introduces another bel canto masterpiece. Rossini's La Cenerentola, musically prepared by Jan Kučera, directed by Hungarian director Enikő Eszenyi and set design by Kentaur premieres on 21 and 22 January 2016. Starring as Angelina is Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Lena Belkina and successful Czech singer, primarily engaged in Austria and Germany Kateřina Hebelková. In the role of Don Ramiro the audience will enjoy soloist of the National Theatre Martin Šrejma and also Greek tenor Vassilis Kavayas.

For conductor Jan Kučera La Cenerentola is his third cooperation with the National Theatre after his musical direction of Shostakovich's operas Orango and Anti-Formalist Rayok and his own composed opera Red Mary. *"Rossini's musical story telling of the famous Cinderella story evokes these three words for me: power, happiness and craftiness. He wrote it when he was 24 years old, but you can already feel the experience and flair for the dramatic situations as well as great punchlines and timing,"* said Jan Kučera and continues: *"Even though Rossini is sometimes accused of certain musical superficiality, which could be due to his creation of a large numbers of operas, La Cenerentola is never musically trivial. Yes, it is to some extent entertainment music, for this reason it had to be simple, effective and easy to remember, yet it is incredibly inventive, witty and impressive even after repeated listening. I really wish that we all manage to transfer these feelings from the wonderful Rossini's music to the audience."*

Hungarian director and managing director of the Budapest Vígszínház Enikő Eszenyi is well known in Prague for her three Shakespearean productions created for the Estates Theatre in 1999-2001 and she was also an actress in the role of a waitress in Robert Wilson's production 1914. La Cenerentola is her first operatic directorial experience. *"Today's teenagers, but actually also kids want to be famous due to influence of their environment - have a profile on Facebook, posting photos on Instagram ... Girls long to be in magazines, have a beautiful dress and to be known. Very soon they begin to use makeup, paint their nails and dye their hair. In this production I would like to show that this simple Cenerentola can be successful with her own unique identity and without a need for making all kinds of changes. My Cenerentola doesn't put on makeup and reads books. And when an opportunity occurs, she has the desire to go to a ball, to be beautiful and wear a beautiful dress. She is creative but doesn't copy or seek her beauty in glossy magazines,"* said Enikő Eszenyi.

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Thanks to La Cenerentola the young Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Lena Belkina, who spent three seasons in the ensemble of the Leipzig Opera, makes her debut in Prague. Belkina portrayed Angelina in the movie version of Rossini's opera from 2012, directed by Carlo Verdone and also confirms her mastery of bel canto with her last year's recording *Dolci Momenti* for Sony Classical. *"The full name of the opera speaks for itself - Cinderella, or Goodness Triumphant. The best thing we can learn is to be kinder. Cenerentola has endured a lifetime of hurt, even Magnifico says she is 'dead' and does not want to show her to the prince. But she forgave everyone and fate made up for it. Miracles happen, you just have to believe!"* encourages Lena Belkina.

The following operatic premiere is Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*; musical preparation by Martin Leginus and direction by Jiří Heřman. The premiere will take place on 4th and 9 February 2016 at the State Opera. Before that, the already traditional concert of Mozart's birthday with soloist Simona Houda-Šaturová and the National Theatre Orchestra will take place at The Estates Theatre, under the baton of Rolf Beck, exactly on the 260th birthday of the musical genius.

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