

Mgr. SILVIA HRONCOVÁ
Director of Opera

Two opera fairy tales at The National Theatre

Prague, 19 October 2015

Two fairy tales with a happy ending, two different musical worlds. The National Theatre will, for the first time in its history, stage operas *The Nightingale* by Igor Stravinsky and *Iolanta* by Petr I. Tchaikovsky, both in a single evening. The premieres are scheduled for Thursday 22 October and Friday 23 October 2015 at the National Theatre.

Musical preparation by the British conductor and current artistic director of The New Opera in Moscow, Jan Latham-Koenig, who is remembered by the Prague audience from the productions of *Tristan and Isolde*, *Il Trovatore* and *Orpheus and Eurydice*. *"Iolanta is a fairy tale and I do not want to add the weight of an emotional drama. I know of no other Tchaikovsky's opera whose score would be so elaborate. All imaginable instructions are firmly inscribed into it,"* says conductor Jan Latham-Koenig and continues: *"At first I was not sure if it's even possible to play it in this way, but then I understood when respecting the composer's intention, Iolanta becomes an absolutely extraordinary piece. It's a colourful and sparkling fairy tale full of life and emotional depth. It's a masterpiece."*

For Dominik Benes *The Nightingale* and *Iolanta* represent his debut at the National Theatre. His staging of Smetana's *The Secret*, Offenbach's Hoffmann stories or Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* were very positively evaluated by both audiences and opera critics. In his case, it is also a first directorial encounter with an opera by a Russian author. *"In both stories, the protagonists suffer from loneliness and inner anguish, and my goal is to accentuate the path that they must take to find spiritual fulfilment and freedom. In the opera The Nightingale It means accepting oneself and responsibility for ones actions. Iolanta is brought out of loneliness through encountering true love without lies. The stories are thus connected by a step into new life dimensions,"* says Dominik Beneš. *"The musical expression of Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky are different. I see the stories as solitaires with a coherent storyline, so I decided to leave them like that,"* adds the director.

The National Theatre presented Igor Stravinsky's opera *The Nightingale* twice in concert performances five years ago. This time the title role is assumed by alternating sopranos Olga Jelínková, who recently dazzled audiences as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Magic Flute* at The Estates Theatre, and Macedonian singer Milena Arsovska, for whom this opera is a Prague debut. The main role of the princess *Iolanta* will be sung by Dana Burešová and the South Ossetian soprano Veronika Dzhioeva. Dzhioeva has already

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introduced herself in Prague with a concert repertoire and Tchaikovsky will be her debut at The National Theatre. *"We are looking for the best scenic location with the director Dominik Benes, and I think we are succeeding. At least I have a great feeling from the rehearsals, and I'm sure we will prepare a successful production,"* says Veronika Dzhioeva.

In addition to the opera premieres at The National Theatre, these two works will be staged seven more times until the end of season: 1., 20. and 25. November 2015; 5 and 27. February and 1. and 22. April 2016.

Next operatic premiere of The National Theatre is a post minimalistic oratorio *Lost Objects* by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe at The New Stage on 17 December 2015. Before this The National Theatre is preparing a Gala concert on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Antonin Dvorak Vocal Competition in Karlovy Vary conducted by Libor Pesek on November 8, 2015 and also a concert *Hommage à Jan Dismas Zelenka* on November 22, 2015 at the Estates Theatre.

IGOR STRAVINSKIJ: The Nightingale

PETR ILJIČ ČAJKOVSKIJ: IOLANTA

Premieres: 22 and 23 October 2015 at The National Theatre

Conductor: Jan Latham-Koenig

Stage director: Dominik Beneš

Set designer: Martin Černý

Costume designer: Zuzana Přidalová

Movement cooperation: Dana Pala

Lighting designer: Martin Špetlík

Chorus master: Martin Buchta

Dramaturge: Ondřej Hučín

CAST

THE NIGHTINGALE

Nightingale: Milena Arsovska / Olga Jelínková

Fisherman: Jaroslav Březina / Josef Moravec

Kitchen Maid: Yukiko Šrejmová Kinjo / Marta Reichelová

Emperor: Roman Janál / Aleš Jeniš

Chamberlain: Miloš Horák / Pavel Švingr

Bonze: Jan Šťáva / Luděk Vele

Death: Stanislava Jirků / Václava Krejčí Housková

First Japanese Emissary: Michal Bragagnolo / Václav Lemberk

Second Japanese Emissary: David Nykl / Luboš Skala

National Theatre

Ostrovní 1, 112, 30 Praha 1, Česká republika, www.narodni-divadlo.cz

T +420 224 901 742, opera@narodni-divadlo.cz

IČ 00023337, Bankovní spojení: KB Praha 1, č. ú.: 939931/0100

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Third Japanese Emissary: Václav Barth / Jiří Hruška

Mechanical Nightingale: Jonáš Janků

IOLANTA

Iolanta: Dana Burešová / Veronika Dzhioeva

Count Vaudemont: Konstantin Andrijev / Aljaž Farasin

Duke Robert: Roman Janál / Aleš Jeniš

King Rene: Zdeněk Plech / Jevhen Šokalo

Bertrand: Miloš Horák / Pavel Švingr

Ibn-Hakia: Jiří Hájek / Vladimír Chmelo

Almeric: Jaroslav Březina / Josef Moravec

Marta: Lucie Hilscherová / Yvona Škvárová

Brigitta: Yukiko Šrejmová Kinjo / Marta Reichelová

Laura: Stanislava Jirků / Václava Krejčí Housková

For more information, contact:

PR Opera Michaela Černá, +420 737 214 667, mi.cerna@narodni-divadlo.cz