

SILVIA HRONCOVÁ

Director of the National Theatre Opera and State Opera

The new National Theatre Opera season to open with a unique concert featuring music from the era of the New German Theatre

Prague, 30 August 2017

The National Theatre Opera has launched its 135th season. For its opening concert, Petr Kofroň, the Artistic Director of the National Theatre Opera and State Opera, has chosen works that were included in the repertoire of the New German Theatre in Prague. All of the operas, whose overtures, interludes and ballet music will be performed during the gala evening, had acclaimed premieres, and some of them even went on to enjoy popularity on numerous renowned stages elsewhere. Nonetheless, they have fallen into oblivion. But has their fate been justified? Come and judge for yourselves on Thursday 14 September at 7 pm at the historical building of the National Theatre in Prague.

For half a century (1888–1938), the New German Theatre, whose original building now houses the State Opera, was a true phenomenon of the Prague music scene. Owing to the relentless efforts of Angelo Neumann, its first, and enlightened, director, as well as his successors, the theatre gave world premieres of some 30 operas and hosted Czech premieres of 163 works. And owing to Neumann's unceasing seeking out new pieces, Prague audiences saw operas shortly after they had received first performances elsewhere in Europe. *"Neumann's theatre intuition was imply amazing,"* Petr Kofroň said, adding: *"In a number of cases, he proved to have brought to Prague the latest hits of the global repertoire. On the other hand, with the constant staging of new works he and other directors of the New German Theatre 'only' met the audience's insatiable demand for new operas, operettas and ballets, the names of whose creators today are just entries in the encyclopaedias. Some of them, however, certainly do not deserve to be neglected – that is what we will try to prove at our opening concert. "*

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The programme of the State Opera Orchestra's concert is a probe into the Neumann-era repertoire, one that did not know geographic borders: it features music by Austrian composers (Emil von Reznicek, Ludwig Rochlitzer), as well as creators hailing from England (Charles Henry Litolff), Hungary (Jenő Hubay), Denmark (August Enna), Spain (Tomás Bretón, Isaac Albéniz), Poland (Moritz Moskowsky, Ignacy Jan Paderewski), Italy (Niccola Spinelli, Giacomo Orefice, Lorenzo Filiasi) and Germany (Siegfried Wagner, Leo Blech).

Two operas, fragments of which will be performed at our concert, have recently been staged in Poland: *Chopin* by Giacomo Orefice (Wrocław) and *Manru* by Ignacy Jan Paderewski (Wrocław, Bydgoszcz). *"I would above all highlight an opera that at one time enjoyed global popularity. The work in question is Emil von Reznicek's **Donna Diana**, which Neumann presented in world premiere on 16 December 1894,"* said the dramaturge **Jitka Slavíková**. *"You will hear the impressive, still popular Overture, allegedly written by Reznicek upon Neumann's request the very night before the premiere. By performing it, we would like to whet the audience's appetite for the forthcoming concert of the entire opera, which will take place on 1 March 2018 at the Forum Karlín, conducted by Andreas Sebastian Weiser, the Music Director of the State Opera."*

PROGRAMME:

Emil Nikolaus Joseph von Reznicek (1860–1945)

Donna Diana

Overture

Ludwig Rochlitzer (1880–1945)

Myrthia

Interlude from Act 2

Henry Charles Litolff (1818–1891)

Les templiers

Czárdás from Act 3

August Enna (1859–1939)

Heksen

Overture to Act 4

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Tomás Bretón (1850–1923)

Garín

Overture to Act 2

Moritz Moszkowski (1854–1925)

Boabdil, der letzte Maurenkönig

Malagueña from Ac 2

Jenő Hubay (1858–1937)

A cremonai hegedüs

Interlude from Act 1

Nicola Spinelli (1865–1909)

A basso porto

Overture to Act 3

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

Pepita Jiménez

Finale of Scene 1, Act 2

Siegfried Wagner (1869–1930)

Der Bärenhäuter

Interlude from Act 3

Giacomo Orefice (1865–1922)

Chopin

Overture to Act 3

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941)

Manru

Overture to Act 3

Lorenzo Filiasi (1878–1963)

Manuel Menendez

Orchestral Postlude to the Menendez and Férmina scene “Verzeih’ mir Unglücksel’gen!”

Leo Blech (1871–1958)

Alpenkönig und Menschenfeind

Overture