



Confirmation of the European Conference of Opera Europa in Moravia

## PRESS RELEASE

**On 13th October 2013, the Opera Europa International Conference in Ireland officially confirmed that the next Opera Europa International Conference in autumn 2014 will be held in Moravia.**

The Conference was held in Ireland from the 28th until the 30th October 2013 as part of the Wexford Festival Opera in the Irish city of Wexford. The outcome: the autumn conference of Opera Europa (OE) next year will be jointly organised by the National Theatre Brno and the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava.

### **Wexford in retrospect:**

The central theme of the Wexford Conference was 'Discovery'. During the Conference many topical issues were discussed such as: cultural tourism in the context of attracting new audiences, cultural tourism and fundraising, possibilities of financial support from abroad and changes and opportunities in regards to how to face the future. Among the speakers were Alex Beard – Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Karen Stone - General Manager of the Theatre in Magdeburg, Joan Matabosch - Artistic Director of Madrid's Teatro Real and Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Jan Burian - General Director of the National Theatre in Prague, as well as Eva Blahová – Artistic Director of the Janáček Opera of the National Theatre Brno.

► Opera Europa was founded in 2001 and is the leading service organisation for professional opera companies and festivals in Europe. It currently serves 135 theatres and music festivals from 36 different countries including England, Germany, Denmark, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Russia, Luxembourg, Estonia, Finland, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland as well as from more distant destinations such as Oman, Turkey, North Korea, Japan and Chile. (More information at <http://www.opera-europa.org/en/members>).



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Among the most important activities is the organisation of conferences in the member countries. Conference programmes focus on the development of current practical interest of musical theatres and festivals, which include maximizing revenue, audience development of the opera, new technology, human resources development, PR, marketing, fundraising and sponsoring. Conferences are held twice a year in member countries.

► Opera Europa, on the basis of a submitted application, selected the National Theatre Brno and the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava as the organisers of the prestigious Opera Europa International Conference - autumn 2014. The theme of the Conference is ‘The Year of Czech Music’. The Conference will be attended by 350 guests from all continents and across each of the theatre professions. The opening of the Conference is always carried out in the presence of European and national figures (e.g. at the Conference in Vienna the opening address was given by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission). The delegates of the Conference are professionals, artists and students working in the field of music. The range of speakers is made up of leaders in their field of expertise.

### **Autumn 2014**

**Name of the Conference:** Opera Europa International Conference

**Theme of the Conference:** ‘The Year of Czech Music’

**Place:** Brno, Ostrava and Hukvaldy

**Date:** 20th to 23rd November 2014

“The aim of the autumn 2014 conference is to internationally promote renowned Czech music and composers”, clarifies Kristýna Štěpánková, Project Coordinator of the autumn



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2014 conference. “In September 2013, the Board of Opera Europa met, and based on the submissions from numerous applicants, the Board selected Brno and Ostrava. We are very honoured by the decision and we hope that the Conference will strengthen the international importance of Czech music and Czech composers”.

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The National Theatre Brno, along with other Brno institutions such as the Brno Philharmonic, the Moravian Museum and the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, is organising the 4th International Janáček Brno Festival from 21st– 29th November 2014. The participants of the Conference will have the opportunity, among others, to attend the festival premiere of *The Makropulos Case* which will officially open the Festival. The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava is preparing for delegates the opera production of Bedřich Smetana’s *The Devil’s Wall*. Of course these are not the only events that will be on offer for the participants of the Opera Europa International Conference - autumn 2014. Organisers are now clarifying the programme and we will subsequently inform you of its content.

**Nicholas Payne, Director of Opera Europa, gave the statement below for this press release:**

### **Year of Czech Music**

I first heard the music of Leoš Janáček as a child of 13 years when Rafael Kubelik conducted *Jenůfa* at Covent Garden. Overwhelmed, I demanded Jaroslav Vogel’s Supraphon recording as a birthday present. Prague’s Národní Divadlo visited the Edinburgh Festival in 1964 with five memorable productions, including *Kat’a Kabanova* and Smetana’s *Dalibor* with the incomparable Vilém Přibyl from Brno; and again with more revelatory Janáček in 1970. These experiences led to my first visit to Czechoslovakia in 1974, drawn by the opportunity to hear all of Smetana’s operas during one week. The legacy of these inspiring composers, of Dvořák and Martinů too, created a style of singing and instrumental playing which conjured for me a yearning spirit of this sad but resilient country. When I came to work for British opera companies, I sought to introduce these favourite pieces to our audiences, becoming determined to stage Martinů’s *Greek Passion*. With Welsh National Opera and Charles



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Mackerras, we recorded it in Brno in 1981; and finally we fulfilled Kubelik's dream of staging it at Covent Garden in the year 2000. To be able now to bring Opera Europa delegates to the Janáček Brno 2014 Festival is both a privilege and pleasure.

**Nicholas Payne**

November 2013



Nicholas Payne became the Director of Opera Europa in 2003 shortly after the organisation had been founded in 2001. During his time with Opera Europa he has built up a membership of 135 opera companies and opera festivals from 36 countries. He has established it as the leading professional opera association in Europe and has established professional contacts throughout the operatic world. Nicholas Payne has worked in opera since he joined the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden in 1968. After working briefly at the Arts Council during the early 1970s, he worked for four different UK opera companies over 27 consecutive years. He was Financial Controller at the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff and was subsequently appointed General Director of Leeds based-Opera North. After returning to London he became Director of the Royal Opera in Covent Garden. Later, he was appointed General Director of English National Opera at the London Coliseum.

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