**The Polish National Opera announces its 2021/22 season**

Dear Audience Members,

We awaited your return to the opera house with great impatience. Your presence in the auditorium gives meaning to our work and inspires us to give life to important stage productions. It is an indispensable element of the magical relationship between the creator and the recipient, for the essence of theatre is the exchange of energy between the performers and the audience, the possibility to share emotions and experiences that you can then take home with you and which stay with you for a long time.

During the difficult and challenging time of lockdown, we remained ready to perform and welcome you back to the opera house. Meanwhile, we were able to visit you at your homes through the agency of social media. Thank you for your hospitality and warm reception of our broadcasts and online content.

In the course of last season, we managed to stage five new productions in front of a live audience with all the necessary safety measures in place. We also continued to work on our offerings for the 2021/22 season which can today present to you with great joy and hope.

In the upcoming season, the Polish National Opera will treat its audience to **six new opera and ballet productions**, including **two operas which we were not able to stage in the current season, 15 revivals, and a range of special events: concerts, recitals, educational projects, and exhibitions** mounted by the Opera Gallery and the Theatre Museum.

On **24 September 2021 we will observe the 200th birth anniversary of Cyprian Kamil Norwid, remarkable Polish poet, prose writer, playwright, painter, philosopher and Romantic bard.** To pay tribute to the great artist, the Polish National Opera will hold a concert titled ***Norwid’s Theatrum Mundi****.*Norwid’s poetry proved inspirational to 20th-century songwriters. The concert’s program consists of popular songs using Norwid’s texts, including *Italiam! Italiam!*, *Marionetki*, *Moja piosnka*, *Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod* from the repertoire of Czesław Niemen; Wanda Warska’s *W Weronie*, Stan Borys’s *Coraz to z ciebie jako z drzazgi smolnej*, Krzysztof Cugowski’s *Noc nad Norwidem*, and Natalia Sikora’s *Ty mnie do pieśni pokornej nie wołaj*.

Arranged anew for voice solo, chorus and symphony orchestra, the pieces will be performed by Polish opera stars and our regulars Małgorzata Walewska, Tomasz Konieczny, and Jakub Józef Orliński. Joining them onstage will be actors of the National Theatre who will present a selection of Norwid’s poems and fragments of his prose. ‘We want to juxtapose the lyrical dimension of the concert with a dramaturgy of fragments of his texts recited by actors. This way we want to create a polyphonic narrative involving words and music. The inclination for dialogue, or even polyphony, in poetic writing, so characteristic for drama, is also a permanent feature of Norwid’s work. It is also what makes it so contemporary. We wish to take advantage of the dramatic, or theatrical, quality of the poet's writing to establish a dialogue between the musical and the verbal dimension of the event, strengthening its stage effect,’ write director Ewa Rucińska and Waldemar Dąbrowski, general director of the Polish National Opera, who developed the artistic concept of the concert.

**Our first new production of the 2021/22 season is the only opera ever written by Ludwig van Beethoven – *FIDELIO*.** The two-act work with libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner, Stephan von Breuning, and Georg Friedrich Treitschke will open on **24 October**. **It is a co-production with the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen, the second in the two opera houses’ history after Penderecki’s *Devils of Loudun*. John Fulljames**, the artistic director of the Royal Danish Opera, who is at the helm of the production, sees the piece as a manifesto praising freedom, loyalty, and fairness. In his staging the three triumph over despotism and cruel fate. **Ann Petersen** stars as Leonore opposite **Torsten Kerl**’s Florestan. Subsequent performances: **27, 29, and 31 October.**

**The next premiere of the season is *EXODUS / FLIGHTS-HARNASIE,* a double bill of choreographies by Anna Hop and Izadora Weiss. Anna Hop**’s *Exodus* was conceived as a monumental choreography philosophically exploring fate that decides the course of human life. The production’s protagonist is the collective trapped in a vicious circle of the same mistakes repeatedly committed by the human kind for millenniums. Inspired by groups of insects and birds, the choreography provides a convincing portrayal of a complex social structure made up of individuals. In its visual aspect the piece draws on the 'crush art' of Bogusław Lustyk and Krzysztof Kieślowski’s *The Decalogue.*

The dramaturgy of **Izadora Weiss**’s *Flights-Harnasie* is based on an audacious combination of **Olga Tokarczuk**’s prose and **Karol Szymanowski**’s music. Weiss, who also designed costumes for the piece, brings together the *Flights* vignette from Tokarczuk’s Man Booker Prize winning novel under the same title, Szymanowski’s Symphony No. 4 (S*ymphonie concertante*) and his *Harnasie.* In a broad sense, Tokarczuk’s flights are contemporary harnasie: free people. The work is based on constant movement and incessant striving for freedom.

What brings the two parts of the ballet double bill together is Polish music (Wojciech Kilar, Karol Szymanowski) and the motif of movement, travel, and searching for your place. **Premiere: 13 November, subsequent performances: 14, 16, and 17 November.**

**On 3 December we will debut another long-awaited production: Barbara Wysocka’s take on Giacomo Puccini’s *LA BOHÈME*, originally set to open on our stage in the 2020/21 season.** The director has already treated the Warsaw audience to her productions of Philip Glass’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Pascal Dusapin’s *Medeamaterial*, Eugeniusz Knapik’s *Moby Dick*, Ludomir Różycki’s *Eros and Psyche*, and Puccini’s *Tosca*. This time she paints an atmospheric portrayal of a community of young artists living in New York City of the 1970s drawing on the style of Jim Jarmusch’s early movies. Wysocka’s *La bohème* is a tale about great emotions, partings and reunions, merciless fate and loss. The director discusses illness as ‘the nighttime side of life’ and tells a story of star-crossed love that succumbs to death. Barbara Hanicka designs the sets. Subsequent performances: **4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 December**.

**In the second part of the season we will offer you a rare chance to listen to a concert version of *BARBARA RADZIWIŁŁ* by Henryk Jarecki.** Written in 1893, this largely forgotten opera will be performed by Chorus and Orchestra of the Polish National Opera under Marta Kluczyńska. The historical figure of Barbara Radziwiłł, a controversial queen of Poland, has been inspiring painters, writers, directors, and composers for years. The most famous love story in Polish history marred by a conflict between personal happiness and state interests, and Barbara’s mysterious death blamed by some on dowager Queen Bona Sforz, who was suspected of having her daughter-in-law poisoned, also made an impression on composer Henryk Jarecki. The libretto is based on Dominik Magnuszewski’s three-act play with an epilogue titled *Barbara jeszcze Gasztołdowa żona* (Barbara Still The Wife of Goštautas). In his youth, Jarecki studied at the Institute of Music in Warsaw where he was Stanisław Moniuszko’s favourite student. Considered examples of ‘grand operas of the post-Moniuszko era’, Jarecki’s works explore historical subject-matter and draw inspiration from Polish romantic and positivist literature.

In the late 19th century this historic opera scored triumphs in Lviv, yet subsequently fell into oblivion. Considered lost for a long time, the manuscript of *Barbara Radziwiłł* survived the war and was rediscovered by the recognised conductor Marta Kluczyńska. Today, it is held by the National Library in Warsaw together with Jarecki’s other manuscripts.

**Thirteen years after his first take on the opera, Mariusz Treliński reprises Modest Mussorgsky’s *BORIS GODUNOV*. The production is set to open in 2022.**

This psychological drama exposes the mechanism of seizing and consolidating power assumed by violence and stealth. Developed in 2008, the director’s first take on the opera was originally staged at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre in Vilnius. It opened in Warsaw a year later. The press described the production as  'a raw, yet suggestive tale of a ruler killed by remorse' (*Ruch Muzyczny*) and 'a story about a tsar’s rise to power and his demise' (*Gazeta Wyborcza*). The new staging is a coproduction with the New National Theatre in Tokyo.

*Boris Godunov* is a brilliant music adaptation of Alexander Pushkin’s Shakespearian tragedy under the same title describing one of the most tragic periods in Russian history, called Smuta. The production is designed by Boris Kudlička. Remarkable bass-baritone Evgeny Nikitin sings the title role.

**The last new production to open in the upcoming season is Krzysztof Pastor’s ballet *DRACULA* with music by Wojciech Kilar.**

*Dracula*, Krzysztof Pastor’s choreography set to a selection of music by Wojciech Kilar, became a ballet sensation of 2018. Commissioned by the West Australian Ballet, it was given its debut in September 2018 in Perth. This ballet adaptation of Bram Stoker’s world-famous horror novel (1897) and its 1992 Oscar-winning film version by Francis Ford Coppola is danced to a carefully arranged score put together by Michael Brett that features themes from Kilar’s soundtracks for Wajda’s *The Promised Land* and *Chronicle of Amorous Accidents*, Hoffman’s *Leper*, Zanussi’s *Wherever You Are*, and Majewski’s *Jealousy and Medicine*, as well as such self-standing works as *Kościelec 1909*, Symphony No. 5 (*Advent Symphony*), and *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*. It is a story of man haunted by a terrible curse that only love can break.

Pastor’s *Dracula* is a moving period show about love that survives death. The work was nominated for the prestigious Helpmann Award for Best Ballet and received three Performing Arts WA Awards, for Best New Work, Best Costume Design, and Best Musical Arrangement.

**The season would not be complete without some of the best of our productions of the previous years.**

**On 18 and 19 September** you will have a chance to hear Carl Orff’s scenic cantata in three parts ***CARMINA BURANA (BLINK OF AN EYE****)*, which is a **BMW Art Club** project.In Boris Kudlička’s innovative interpretation, *Carmina Burana* becomes a space for experiencing the changing world through visuals and music. The excellent set designer has enlisted the help of Jarosław Mikołajewski, expert in Italian studies and medieval literature, poet, and translator, who devised his own poetic version for each of the twenty-five pieces selected by Orff.

In 2021 we will also invite you to ***Le Corsaire***, the spectacular balletic show choreographed by Manuel Legris to music by Adolphe Adam (**30 September; 1, 2, 3 October**), performances of Willy Decker’s production of Massenet’s opera ***Werther*** which were enthusiastically received by our audiences this season (**8, 10 October**), and everybody’s all-time favourite, Toer van Schayk and Wayne Eagling’s choreographic version of Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s ***The Nutcracker and the Mouse King***. The youngest audience members will surely appreciate the return of ***Fairy Tale, Where Are You*** (11 and 12 September; 8 and 10 December).

**In the second part of the season we will show the following operas and ballets:**

*The Magic Flute* written by W. A. Mozart, directed by: Suzanne Andrade, Barrie Kosky,

*Tosca* written by G. Puccini, directed by: Barbara Wysocka,

*Mayerling* choreography: Kenneth MacMillan, music: Franz Liszt,

*Carmen* written by G. Bizet, directed by: Andrzej Chyra,

*Rigoletto* written by G. Verdi, directed by: Gilberto Deflo,

*The Haunted Manor* written by S. Moniuszko, directed by: David Pountney,

*La traviata* written by G. Verdi, directed by: Mariusz Treliński,

*The Tempest*, choreography: Krzysztof Pastor, music: Henry Purcell, Thomas Tallis, Robert Johnson, Matthew Locke, Michel van der Aa and Iranian traditional music,

*Onegin* written by P. Tchaikovsky, directed by: Mariusz Treliński,

*Madama Butterfly* written by G. Puccini, directed by: Mariusz Treliński.

**Working in collaboration with with *Ruch Muzyczny* magazine, in the 2021/22 season the Polish National Opera will organise a series of open meetings dedicated to our opera productions. Details will be announced at the beginning of the new season.**

**As you have probably noticed, two of our new productions use the music of excellent Polish pianist and award-winning composer, Wojciech Kilar.** The remarkable creator of classical and film music would mark his 90th birthday in July 2022. A winner of a BAFTA, César, and the Polish Film Academy Award, among others, wrote music for over 130 film productions, including more than forty movies directed by Krzysztof Zanussi. His score for Francis Ford Coppola’s *Dracula* won him the ASCAP Award from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Producers. Kilar also worked with Andrzej Wajda, Kazimierz Kutz, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Stanisław Różewicz, Wojciech Has, Tadeusz Konwicki, Marek Piwowski, Roman Polański, and Jane Campion. To celebrate his stellar achievements, the Polish National Opera will hold a concert of **Wojciech Kilar’s film music**.

**Symphony concerts, Premiere Preludes , Moniuszko Competition, Concert of the Prizewinners of the Chopin Competition**

**In the upcoming season we will launch a new series of symphony concerts spearheaded by the theatre’s music director, Patrick Fournillier**. The Orchestra and the Chorus of the Polish National Opera are the pillars of the theatre. The idea behind the cycle of symphonic concerts thought up by music director Patrick Fournillier is to give the ensembles a chance to get out of the pit and let the public see them from a different perspective and in more leading role. It is also an opportunity for them to show off in a different repertoire, challenge themselves to work harder on their skills and built an even better level of performance. Four of such concerts are planned in the 2021/22 season. The first will be held on the eve of the premiere of *Fidelio* and will be part of the much liked series of ***Premiere Prelude*** concertspreceding new productions andintroducing audiences to the music of their composers.

**Next year’s 11th edition of the Moniuszko Competition will coincide with the 150th anniversary of the death of the composer falling in June 2022.** Held by the Polish National Opera, Teatr Wielki, Warsaw, the International Stanisław Moniuszko Vocal Competition is the biggest singing competition in Poland. Established in 1992 by Maria Fołtyn, since 2019 it has been a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. Every three years young artists from around the world gather in Warsaw to present their skills and abilities before a select group of music professionals. For many the competition becomes a launch pad to an international career. The list of past prizewinners and finalists includes such excellent artists as Aleksandra Kurzak, Urszula Kryger, Małgorzata Walewska, Mariusz Kwiecień. Apart from recognized artists and singers, the competition jury gathers managers of top international opera houses.

The Teatr Wielki will also host the **Concert of the Prizewinners of the Chopin Competition**.

Traditionally, we will send off 2021 with a **New Year’s Eve Gala**.

**As for the enthusiasts of the visual arts, the Opera Gallery and Theatre Museum have a range of exhibitions in store for them.**

The **Opera Gallery** will open the new season in October 2021 with a show titled ***Różewicz and Painting***. Still as a student, poet Tadeusz Różewicz befriended members of the Second Kraków Group. He cultivated many of the friendships for the rest of his life. Among the people he corresponded with for years were Jerzy Tchórzewski, Jerzy Nowosielski, and Ewa Kierska. The exhibition explores the influence of painting on the poet, focusing on Polish artists as well as Rembrandt and Bacon, whose work Różewicz greatly appreciated. Apart from pieces by painters associated with Różewicz, the display includes memorabilia, manuscripts, and fragments of writing. Subsequent Opera Gallery exhibitions will be dedicated to the work of **Jerzy Skolimowski, Jarosław Modzelewski, Janusz Pastw, and Adam Styka**.

**The Theatre Museum** will launch the new season with an exhibition celebrating legendary Polish singer **Mieczysław Fogg.** Mounted in collaboration with the Museum of Polish Song in Opole, the show includes memorabilia from the institution’s collection and the family archive of Michał Fogg, the artist’s great-grandson, including items that have never been publicly showcased before: stage photographs, prizes, travel souvenirs, a tailcoat he used to wear onstage, his WWII resistance fighter’s uniform, and chronicles kept by his first wife, Irena. Taking pride of place will be the upright piano used by the artist almost for his entire life. Titled **Mieczysław Fogg: Songster of the Polish People**,the show opens in September 2021.

With young audiences in mind, the Theatre Museum will organise workshops introducing children to early theatre forms, music, and history called ***Potash Marking, or Philosophy in the Vegetable Garden***. The project is a collaboration with the National Museum in Warsaw.

Celebrating **the Kochanowskis, a distinguished Polish 16th-century artistic family,** in October 2021, the Museum will host a series of talks, historical dance workshops, literature and music programmes, and dance shows for families, people interested in early dance and culture, and professionals studying Polish literature of the Renaissance.

More educational projects are planned by the opera house’s **Educational Department**. Apart from well-known offerings for the young and old audiences, such as *Musical Matinees*, *Opera University*, or *Meetings with Muzalinda*, we will launch new programmes, including **WorkshopON 5+, 7+, and 15+**.The project’s oldest participants will be provided with a chance to present their arrangements of received sheet music and listen to them being performed by Polish National Opera musicians.

Events September–December 2021:

1. ***Young Spirit of Dance***, 3–4 September,
2. ***Fairy Tale, Where Are You?***, 11, 12 September
3. ***Concert of Sinfonia Varsovia*** under Marek Janowski, 16 September,
4. ***Mieczysław Fogg: Songster of the Polish People***, Theatre Museum
5. ***Carmina Burana (Blink of An Eye****)*, 18, 19 September,
6. ***Norwid’s Theatrum Mundi, Concert marking the bicentenary of C. K. Norwid’s birthday***, 24 September,
7. ***La Folle Journée de Varsovie***, 25, 26 September
8. ***Le Corsaire***, 30 September, 1, 2, 3 October,
9. ***Różewicz and Paintins,*** exhibition, Opera Gallery
10. ***Werther***, 8, 10 October,
11. ***Symphnony concert / Premiere Prelude: Beethoven The Romantic***, 9 October
12. ***Potash Making, or Philosophy in The Vegetable Garden***, 10 October,
13. ***Chopin Competition: Prizewinners’ Concert (Fryderyk Chopoin Institute)***, 21 October,
14. ***Fidelio***, 24, 27, 29, 31 October,
15. ***Exodus / Bieguni–Harnasie*** 13, 14, 16, 17 November,
16. ***Stage of Tomorrow*,** 17–18 November
17. ***Krzysztof Penderecki In memoriam***, concert, 28 November
18. ***La bohème***, 3–5 / 7–8 / 10–12 December,
19. ***Symphony concert*** under Patrick Fournillier, 9 December,
20. ***The Nutcracker***, 18–19 / 21–23 / 28 and 29 December,
21. ***New Year’s Eve Gala***, 31 December,

Events January–June 2022:

1. ***The Magic Flute***
2. ***Tosca***
3. ***Mayerling***
4. ***Le Corsaire***
5. ***Carmen***
6. ***Exodus / Bieguni-Harnasie***
7. ***Rigoletto***
8. ***Concert Paganini/Stradivarius***
9. ***Premiere Prelude*** preceding the opening of *Barbara Radziwiłł*
10. ***Symphony concert*** under Patrick Fournillier
11. ***The Haunted Manor***
12. ***Barbara Radziwiłł (concert version)***
13. ***Boris Godunov***
14. ***The Secret Life of Paintings***
15. ***Symphony concert*** under Patrick Fournillier
16. ***Wojciech Kilar’s film music***, concert
17. ***Dracula***
18. ***La traviata***
19. **11th International Stanisław Moniuszko Vocal Competition**
20. ***Onegin***
21. ***Creations: Choreographic Workshop***
22. ***Symphony concert*** under Patrick Fournillier
23. ***The Tempest***
24. ***Madama Butterfly***

**We look forward to welcoming you to the opera house and hope our carefully planned events meet your expectations!**

**Our press kits are available** [www.teatrwielki.pl](http://www.teatrwielki.pl) **(“For the media”).**

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**Ticket information:**

Tickets for performances scheduled until 31 December 2021 go on sale on **22 June** on [www.butik.teatrwielki.pl](http://www.butik.teatrwielki.pl) and the physical box offices.

Tickets for performances scheduled between January and June 2022 will go on sale in October 2021. Follow our website, newsletter and social media for updates.

In the 2021/22 season we will continue to sell prepaid cards. It is an excellent gift option for a love one, especially that they themselves choose the performance to see or publication to buy.

**Gift shop (and box office) in the left wing of the opera house:**

Until 30 June: everyday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

1 July– 31 August: Wednesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

**Box offices (main lobby):**

Until 30 June: everyday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

1 July– 31 August: closed

**Ticket Service:**

Weekdays, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

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**We take reservations by phone only.**

**Opera Gallery:**   
Until 30 June: Tuesday– Saturday, noon–6 p.m. Ticket holders may enter the exhibitions before the curtain-up and during intermissions. Currently on display: Jan Cybis exhibition.

1 July–26 September: Wednesday–Sunday, noon–6 p.m.

Tickets are available at the gift shop.

**We recommend that you buy tickets online on** **www.butik.teatrwielki.pl.**

**Go to our website for current Covid-19** [safety information](https://teatrwielki.pl/en/nc/safety-measures/)**.**