The Hungarian State Opera is again offering more than 2000 programmes in the new season. The Hungarian Season will feature pieces by countless major Hungarian composers, choreographers and directors, while over the course of a few weeks, the May Festival will showcase two centuries of Hungarian opera history, from József Ruzitska to Levente Gyöngyösi. In addition to the 28 opera and ballet premieres being added to the enormous classical repertoire, the season will also include a steady stream of musicals, grand operettas, concerts, talk programmes as well as interactive family and children’s programmes.
The public will be seeing many of the premieres for the first time: Poulenc’s *Dialogues des Carmélites* and the ballet *Le Corsaire*, choreographed to music by Adam, have never been listed on the Opera programme. In 2017, we will be giving the Hungarian audience their first look at Péter Eötvös’s opera *Love and Other Demons*. The string of world premieres include unique productions such as *Love*, inspired by the Károly Makk film, *A Streetcar Named Desire* set to music by László Dés, a practically unknown opera fragment by Mozart, as well as a composition by Rautavaara – *The Mine* – that has never before been performed on any of the world’s opera stages.

On the penultimate weekend of September 2016, as the summer break comes to a close, life will return to the Opera House and the Erkel Theatre. At the Erkel, fans of contemporary dance will be rewarded with Johan Inger’s choreography *Rain Dogs*, while the Opera House, as in previous years, will be opening its doors in the context of a grand season opener: following the usual open-air *commedia dell’arte* chamber operas, Ferenc Anger’s new production of *La traviata*, with Erika Miklósa and Polina Pasztircsák in the principle roles, will move into the palace of opera on Andrásy Avenue after being given its summer pre-premiere on Margaret Island.

To put it all into numbers: with 28 brand-new productions (including six world and six Hungarian premieres), there will be a total of 450 full-scale performances comprising an additional 60 repertory pieces, 100 concerts, chamber performances and gala, event and festival productions, 200 children’s programmes, 600 building tours, and more than 1,000 ambassadorial presentations. All in all, the 800,000-strong audience can look forward to more than 2,500 attractions taking place in some 20 different venues in the 2016/17 season.

The extraordinarily broad offering of operas again includes a few popular pieces that are being renewed: *The Spinning Room*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Bánk bán* will all be mounted in productions stamped with the names of directors Michał Znaniecki, Máté Szabó and Attila Vidnyánszky, while Géza M. Tóth continues to direct the *Ring* cycle with *Siegfried*. In addition to the events in the auditoriums of the Opera House and the Erkel Theatre, other tried-and-true venues will also welcome lovers of operatic genres: the Sphinx Terrace for the autumn chamber pieces, the Royal Staircase and the Bertalan Székely Hall for children’s and youth programmes, with the *LateNight* series finding a home at the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy’s Solti Hall for the fourth season. Joining the ranks of special performance venues in the new season is the Eiffel Art Studios, where visitors will be able to watch, in addition to one work each by Mozart, Ferenc Farkas and György Ránki, contemporary dance performances.
On the 50th anniversary of the death of Zoltán Kodály, that charismatic figure of Hungarian musical culture, and the centenary of the world premiere at the Opera House of Bartók’s *The Wooden Prince*, one of the most important Hungarian dance works, we declare this to be the Hungarian Season. We will be evoking all of the great personalities from the past two centuries of Hungary’s opera and dance culture, and, for the May Celebration, will bring you the biggest Hungarian classical music festival ever, featuring plenty of 20th century and contemporary pieces presented in conjunction with our partner ensembles.

Joining the *Opera on Wheels* programme, which brings the genre to bricks-and-mortar theatres outside of Budapest, will be the *Ballet on Wheels* initiative, showing popular one-act dance works by world-famous contemporary choreographers Jiří Kylián and Johan Inger to audiences in cities around the country.
We are organising some of the season’s special events on the occasion of one or another special anniversary. Returning to sing opera arias for the centenary of the birth of legendary Hungarian tenor József Simándy will be star tenor Jonas Kaufmann, who this time will be making his debut on the stage of the Erkel. We will also be commemorating the greatest Hungarian, Count István Széchenyi, with additional jubilee galas, celebrating the birthdays of conductor Ádám Medveczky and renowned dancer/choreographers Lilla Pártay and Zoltán Zuráfszky and saluting Ilona Tokody on the 40th anniversary of the start of her career. Many of these special series and one-off productions promise to be special evening, including the Éva Marton Singing Competition Gala Night, Seregi Night 2017 and the popular Tuning and Questions, Questions series of informative presentations, every phase of the Christmas Nutcracker Festival, World Voice Day and the Choral Artist’s Mini-Festival. Also in 2017, the Primavera ’17 festival will show new productions from provincial theatres at the Erkel Theatre.

Throughout the course of the season, a number of world stars will arrive in Hungary for solo recitals, including Edita Gruberová and Renée Fleming, as well as René Pape, one of the world’s most sought-after basses, who will be appearing in this country for the first time with a recital of arias on the stage of the Opera House. The ranks of our internationally renowned artists also include our Hungarian luminaries Andrea Rost, Erika Miklósa, Ildikó Komlósi, Csilla Boross, Levente Molnár and Gábor Bretz, who will be appearing in countless roles. Beside them, around 120 Hungarian artists will be taking the stage alongside visitors from abroad such as Iréne Theorin, Erwin Schrott, Rafael Rojas, Leo Nucci, Tommi Hakala, Tetiana Zhuravel, Jürgen Sacher, Egils Silins, Kamen Chanev, Kristian Benedikt, Ivan Magri, Michael Kupfer, Marcus Jupither, Karine Babajanyan and Marcello Giordani: every one of them a star of the international opera world.
With more than a century and a half of history behind it, the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra will, at concerts organised on significant dates, pay homage to the memory of major Hungarian artists like Zoltán Kodály, Miklós Ybl, György Cziffra, as well as János (Hans) Richter, a conductor who enjoyed the confidence of both Wagner and Liszt.

The globe-trotting Hungarian conductors taking the podium at performances during the 2016/17 season will be joined by a total of 15 of their colleagues from abroad, including Philippe Auguin, Christian Badea, Paolo Carignani, Marco Comin, Alessandro De Marchi, Ion Marin and Pinchas Steinberg, as well as by Péter Eötvös, who will conduct his own opera.

The 2016/17 season holds plenty of excitement in store for ballet fans as well. In addition to the popular repertoire pieces, we'll be premiering a number of classical and contemporary pieces in productions from choreographers like Johan Inger, Anna-Marie Holmes, Pál Frenák and Marianna Venekei. The Iván Nagy International Ballet Gala, being organised for the third time in 2017, will again draw luminaries from European ballet life, while DanceTrend and Pas de Quatre, in which dance companies from outside of Budapest take the stage of the Erkel Theatre, will each be welcoming audiences for the fourth such occasions.
Starting with its 2015/16 season, the Hungarian State Opera has put the price structure for tickets and subscriptions on a new footing, introducing individualised plastic point-collection cards linked to a specific name, which open up significant discounts primarily for returning visitors who live in Hungary. For the Hungarian Season, the institution is offering its audience 63 different subscriptions, with the four new discount options again available to season ticket purchasers: the Bonus, Bonus+, Flexible Subscription and Six-Performance Card offer the opportunity for our domestic visitors to attend at prices that can be even lower than this year’s prices.

Detailed information: www.opera.hu

Opera-lovers can therefore prepare for the entire season – from the open-air Season Opener extravaganza welcoming thousands, to the grand premieres, to the Night of Stars gala night at the end of June. Young opera singers and dancers will be appearing in the summer heat at the Akvárium night spot on Erzsébet Square, and during the break between seasons will again be welcoming audiences on Margaret Island, at the Sziget Festival, at Lake Tisza and at the OperaFüred event by Lake Balaton.
The modernisation and reopening of the Erkel Theatre, as well as the completion of the Organisational Centre project, the opening of the Opera Café and Opera Shop and the multi-staged renovation of the Opera House, commenced in the summer of 2015, mark the start of the implementation of an ambitious comprehensive plan. When completed in 2018, the Budapest Opera will be able, as one of the world’s greatest opera complexes, to match the leading European institutions in terms of infrastructure as well.

At present, the 30-year-old repertoire is undergoing rapid replacement in both a physical sense and with respect to the artists involved: in recent years and during the current Shakespeare Season and Hungarian Season now being announced, around 50 brand-new full-scale productions have been, or are being, staged. This means that the Opera has succeeded in renewing the overwhelming majority of its active repertoire. In order for the preparation and administration of the productions to take place smoothly, the government of Hungary in 2015 made new Art Studios available to the Opera in the form of a 6.7-hectare portion of the Northern Vehicle Repair Shop, including a 22,000 m² structure made up of five main halls and bearing the name of Gustave Eiffel, as well as two auxiliary buildings and a complete rail station.

The plans were made at the end of last season, and in summer the work can commence. This will result in a rehearsal, construction and storage centre for the Opera, which will provide space for the Bánffy Stage and a rehearsal hall of similar size, as well as a music hall suitable for making recordings. Guests at the visitor centre will also be able to study, through the glass walls of the manufacturing units, one of the world’s highest-quality theatre workshop operations, where they will also learn about the professions of set and costume design.
The Opera's new rehearsal, manufacturing and warehouse complex, the Eiffel Art Studios will open in June of 2017 with the reconstruction of L'oca del Cairo, a hitherto unknown opera of Mozart's, but visitors will be able to get a glimpse of the brand-new theatre auditorium as early as May, when they will be welcomed to both an aria recital being held as part of the Chorus Singers' Mini-Festival and a fairy-tale opera by Ferenc Farkas.

The Eiffel works, once capable of repairing as many as 96 steam locomotives at a time, will perform additional functions as well. There will be a restaurant operating in the teak wood interior of an antique rail car, and visitors will be able to marvel at a legendary MÁVAG 301 steam locomotive. A costume rental facility will open, and this is also where we are establishing the Opera's training facilities: the Opera Music School and the Opera Ballet Institute. The building's designer, János Feketeházy, worked on other projects other than these works: he also is credited with the Opera House's steel roof structure. His work is being honoured by the memorial hall being named after him.

The development of the Eiffel Art Studios means that three hectares of green space can be redeemed from the demolished ruins, which means that a park can be created, to be used for, among other things, spending theatre intermissions in proximity to nature, while a playground is also being constructed around the environmentally conscious facility. The inauguration of the park will mark the end of the second major development in the history of the nation's greatest cultural institute since 1984: the Eiffel Art Studios project, to be followed immediately by a third: the modernisation of the great palace on Andrássy Avenue...