

OPERA

MAGYAR ÁLLAMI OPERAHÁZ  
HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA

SHAKESPEARE  
400+

SHAKESPEARE<sub>400+</sub> FESTIVAL

15  
20  
16

PREMIERES IN 2015/16

Thomas Adès

# The Tempest

*Opera in three acts*

Conductor | Péter Halász Director | Ludger Engels

Szereplők ► Franco Pomponi, Erika Miklósa, István Horváth,  
Andrea Szántó, Péter Balczó, István Kovácsházi,  
Tamás Tarjányi, Krisztián Cser, Zsolt Haja, András Palerdi

The composer attempts the impossible by taking Shakespeare's play and then, without adapting it as a whole, but still preserving the spirit, wildness and philosophically circumspect playfulness of the original, brings to life the story of the dethroned king. Through the tale of Prospero, Caliban and Ariel – as well as the young Ferdinand and Miranda – the viewer is confronted with issues such as the thirst for vengeance, the power of good and evil, the nature of magic, the possibility of love, and paths to reconciliation. Presented in Hungary for the first time.

21, 25, 28 MAY & 1 JUNE 2016 OPERA HOUSE

Enrico Wolf-Ferrari

# Sly

*Opera in three acts*

Conductor | Sándor Gyüdi Director | Pál Göttinger

Cast ► Boldizsár László, Zoltán Kelemen, Krisztina Kónya, András Kiss

On one visit to a London pub where he is a regular, the poet Sly drinks himself unconscious. The Earl of Westmoreland decides to play a joke on the poet: dressing him in fine clothes, he takes him to the palace to make him believe that he himself is the Earl, and that his beautiful „wife”, Dolly, has been praying for him to wake from his ten-year sleep. In truth, however, the cruel joke is the one that comes when he regains his sense of reality...

27, 29 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE

## May Celebration

With the end of the Shakespeare season approaching, the Hungarian State Opera will be organising its biggest festival ever – and certainly its most varied – between May 17 and 2 June 2016. While it won't be easy to exceed the scale of 2014's Strauss150 festival or the scope of the previous year's series on the theme of Faust, the unmatched influence of the „Swan of Avon" nevertheless ensures that this year will see premieres of 17 different adaptations in four different venues (Opera House, Erkel Theatre, Music Academy and Palace of Arts), most of them more than once, and with several Hungarian premieres among them as well.

SHAKESPEARE400+ FESTIVAL

# Lear

Aribert Reimann

*Opera in two acts*

Conductor | **Stefan Soltész** Staged by | **Anger Ferenc**

Director | **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle**

Cast ► **Tómas Tómasson, István Kovács, Zsolt Haja, Boldizsár László, István Kovácsházi, András Pallerdi, Barnabás Hegyi, Dániel Vadász, Éva Batori, Szilvia Rálik, Eszter Sümegi**

Lear decides to retire from reigning over the realm, and divides his kingdom among his daughters. His sweetest, youngest daughter, Cordelia, cannot find words fine enough to express her love for her father, and the offended man disowns her, instead dividing his power among her two honey-tongued elders. The old king must then suffer great disappointment, and only after being banished to the wilderness does he finally understand the rules of love and of the exercise of power. This brutal and beautiful opus, by all measure the loudest in musical literature, is being staged in Hungary for the first time by Ferenc Anger, based on the original production by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle of the Munich world premiere.

29, 31 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

Otto Nicolai

*Singspiel in three acts*

Musical director | **Dániel Erdélyi**

Featuring the artists of the Hunagrian State Opera Choir

The Merry Wives of Windsor, that is, the story of Sir John Falstaff being taught a lesson and the loving marriage of the young Anne Page, has been a favourite thematic source for prose and musical theatre alike since the time of Shakespeare. Nicolai's singspiel, which was last performed here more than 60 years ago, is performed by artists from the Opera's highly professional chorus in the foyer of the Erkel Theatre, allowing the audience to enjoy the new revision in intimate proximity to the performers.

25, 31 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE, FOYER

Henry Purcell

# The Fairy Queen

*Semi-opera in five acts – excerpts*

Conductor | **Benjamin Bayle** Director | **András Almási-Tóth**

Purcell composed *The Fairy Queen* to honour the 15th wedding anniversary of the royal couple William III and Mary II. Its first performance took place in London in 1692. The piece is a wonderful semi-opera packed with musical and dramatic fantasy based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare: the audience find themselves in the world of the beautiful Titania and the story of her love affairs. The magic journey leads all the way to China...

17 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE, FOYER  
(PREMIERE: 17 JUNE 2016 OPERA HOUSE)

Leonard Bernstein

# West Side Story

*Musical in two acts*

Conductor | **István Dénes** Director | **Péter Novák**

Cast ► **András Káldi Kiss, Boldizsár László, Helga Nánási, Lúcia Megyesi Schwartz**

The now classic musical work that sheds an old-yet-new light on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* will be performed on the stage of the Erkel Theatre. The conflict between immigrants and „natives” as well as warfare between street gangs are, unfortunately, not problems that are unknown to our own time, either. Director Péter Novák has taken on the task of premiering this Bernstein classic on a Hungarian opera stage for the first time in a production that combines operatic voices and elements of dance theatre.

22, 26 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE



Giuseppe Verdi  
**Falstaff**

*Comic opera in three acts*

Conductor | **Marcus Bosch** Director | **Arnaud Bernard**

Cast ▶ **Ambrogio Maestri, Gunyong Na, Péter Balczó, Zoltán Megyesi, Géza Gábor, János Szerekován, Beatrix Fodor, Orsolya Sáfár, Bernadett Wiedemann, Erika Gál**

Verdi's clever riposte to Rossini's dig that he couldn't write comedy. Aging gentleman's midlife crisis complete with romance, escapes in laundry hampers, a dunking in the Thames, and woodland shenanigans. Duets, quartets, and musical quotations inspired by Shakespeare with a knight and his reality show – and a guaranteed happy ending.

20, 22 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE

Giuseppe Verdi  
**Macbeth**

*Opera in four acts*

Conductor | **Renato Palumbo** Director | **Miklós Szinetár**

Cast ▶ **Lado Ataneli, István Rác, Szilvia Rálik, Nadin Haris, István Kováčházi, Gergely Boncsér, Ferenc Cserhalmi, Sándor Egri**

An ambitious general at the top of his career aims higher: he does not wait until he can move forward, he slays his monarch to become a king himself. An even more ambitious wife, passionately in love with him, stands by his side as a willing and bloodthirsty instigator, while the horrible plan is also assisted by witches and the forces of darkness – or are they only the demons of the soul? Instead of the political aspect, Verdi's opera focuses on the powerful passions of the Shakespearian characters, the monsters around and within us, the light and shady stage of the soul.

22, 26 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE

Giuseppe Verdi  
**Otello**

*Opera in four acts*

Conductor | **Gergely Madaras** Director | **Stefano Poda**

Cast ▶ **Roberto Aronica, Andrea Rost, Mihály Kálmándi, Judit Németh, Gergely Boncsér**

Verdi's penultimate opera premiered in La Scala in 1887 after so many years of silence. The music rang out with elemental force in the overture's turbulent tempest scene. The man who considered himself an outsider had composed the tale of another „outsider”. The Moor Otello is a soldier, a general and a loving husband who, despite all of his accomplishments, is not accepted by the people of Venice. He remains the eternal „black” foreigner. The vulnerability of the stranger seeking to fit into society is something that is easy for false friends to exploit – as is his jealousy.

24, 27 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE



# Programme of the Shakespeare400+ Festival

*Purcell*

**The Fairy Queen** – *excerpts*  
(17 May Erkel Theatre)

*Gounod*

**Roméo et Juliette** – *concert performance*  
(17 May Erkel Theatre)

*Seregi–Goldmark–Hidas*

**The Taming of the Shrew** – *ballet*  
(18, 20 May Opera House)

*Szokolay*

**Hamlet** – *concert performance*  
(19 May Erkel Theatre)

*Adés*

**The Tempest**  
(21, 25, 28 May & 1 June Opera House)

*Verdi*

**Macbeth**  
(22, 26 May Opera House)

*Bernstein*

**West Side Story**  
(22, 26 May Erkel Theatre)

*Nicolai*

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**  
(25, 31 May Erkel Theatre)

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*Bellini*

**I Capuleti e i Montecchi** – *concert performance*  
(23 May Erkel Theatre)

*Verdi*

**Otello**  
(24, 27 May Opera House)

**The Wives of Henry VIII**  
(27, 28 May Opera House)

*Britten*

**A Midsummer Night's  
Dream**  
(27, 29 May Music Academy)

*Wolf-Ferrari*

**Sly**  
(27, 29 May Erkel Theatre)

*Reimann*

**Lear**  
(29, 31 May Opera House)

**Budapest Philharmonic  
Orchestra concert**

*Dvořák* Otello Overture

*Tchaikovsky* Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture

*Mendelssohn* A Midsummer Night's Dream – *incidental music*

Conductor | **Arthur Fagen**

(30 May Opera House)

*Wagner*

**Das Liebesverbot** – *screening*  
(1 June Palace of Arts)

**Shakespeare song recital**  
(2 June Opera House)

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László Seregi–Karl Goldmark–  
Frigyes Hidas

# The Taming of the Shrew



*Ballet in two acts*

Conductor | **István Silló**

Choreographer | **László Seregi**

**Featuring the artists of the Hungarian National Ballet**

Kate, the shrew can keep the whole of Padua in fear: no wonder she is unable to find a suitable suitor. Unfortunately, her gentle sister, Bianca cannot be given away until Kate, the first-born is married. Enter Petruchio. He knows the task is immense, but he makes a bet on his success, and he sets out to get the job done. He only needs to overcome one obstacle: the would-be spouse he wishes to love and chasten. Naturally, Petruchio succeeds by methodically crushing Kate's resistance, making her meek as a lamb in the final scene.

18, 20 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE

Charles Gounod

# Roméo et Juliette

Conductor | **Christian Badea**

Cast | **Ivan Magri, Zita Szemere, László Szvétek, Csaba Szegedi, Ágnes Anna Kun, Gábor Bretz, Gergely Boncsér, Éva Balatoni, Tamás Busa, Lajos Geiger**

The immortal story of the two lovers of Verona is presented in a fresco full of flowing emotions by Gounod. His opera is a colourful, melodic adventure in which the lovers are only just not able to unite before death, while all the necessary elements of French romanticism take place on the stage from charming pages to meddling nurses. Virtuoso melodies, tones of light and darkness evoking the Renaissance, and romantic coloratura form the wonderful masterpiece of the French composer into a many-coloured yet organic tapestry.

17 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE

Vincenzo Bellini

# I Capuleti e i Montecchi

Conductor | **György Vashegyi**

Szereplők | **Klára Kolonits, Szilvia Vörös, István Kovács, Ferenc Cserhalmi**

**Featuring the National Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir**

Shakespeare, love, tragic ending – reflected in a slightly lesser-known mirror. This piece by the master of bel canto does not only focus on the cover story from Verona, does not merely tell the tale of the star-crossed lovers. The composer is also interested in the feuding families, the middle ages packed with violence, betrayal, dark passions, and the battle between dynasties. It's a game of life and death, dealing with roles, sexuality, tradition, and power; the whirling of body and soul...

23 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE

# Shakespeare song recital

Conductor | **Gareth Jones**

Featuring | **Bryn Terfel**

2 JUNE 2016 OPERA HOUSE

## Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra concert

*Dvořák*  
Otello Overture, *op. 93*

*Tchaikovsky*  
Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture

*Mendelssohn*  
A Midsummer Night's Dream  
*incidental music*

Conductor | **Arthur Fagen**  
Featuring the **Hungarian State Opera Choir**  
(Choir Director: **Kálmán Strausz**)

30 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE



## Szokolay Sándor Hamlet

*Live CD recording*

Conductor | **János Kovács**

One of the best-known stories of all times that is almost impossible to construct as an opera. Sándor Szokolay's sensitive, strongly intellectual music, his atmospheric inner world tempt to conquer this impossible task. His work features the complex philosophic content of the play, the complicated intertwining relationships of the characters, and the suffocating political mood, the scenes of a dictatorship all at the same time. The opera is based entirely on the text by Shakespeare, the music precipitates in heavy dramatic blocks, or to the contrary, in light inner monologues that represent the thoughts of the prince, thus making their way into our minds.

19 MAY 2016 ERKEL THEATRE


## The Wives of Henry VIII

The court of Henry VIII, sultry with eroticism and filthy with scandal and betrayal. A venue for fraud and deceit, slander and valid accusations, legitimate and groundless lawsuits, and of great – and sometimes fatal – amusement. The unbridled and mortally dangerous monarch was „in his heart of hearts” a poet and a composer of music. In the mirror of his plans, decisions and choices appear five different women, the king's happily married – or resting in eternal happiness – wives: Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard. The programme features the people of the royal court as well as Henry VIII's own musical compositions and poems, masterworks by the poets attached to the courts, excerpts from Shakespeare's plays, as well as selections from Romantic operas and contemporary music.

Featuring **Eszter Zavaros** and **Balázs Csémy**

27, 28 MAY 2016 OPERA HOUSE,  
CHANDELIER LOFT





*Benjamin Britten*

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

Conductor | **Dominic Wheeler**

Director | **Máté Szabó**

Featuring the students of the Liszt Ferenc Music Academy

With its two dozen soloists and instrumental accompaniment of nearly the same size, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* verges on chamber opera. It is only quite rarely staged in Hungary, and has not appeared on the Opera programme for 40 years. This version is a joint production with the vocal soloist department of the Music Academy created as a kind of examination performance, with the objective of revealing the work's full beauty.

27, 29 MAY 2016 MUSIC ACADEMY,  
SIR GEORGE SOLTI CHAMBER HALL

*Richard Wagner*

# Das Liebesverbot

Conductor | **György Selmeczi**

Director | **Máté Szabó**

This is the work with which the 23-year-old Richard Wagner made his debut as an opera composer. Based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Wagner substantially revised the plot for *Das Liebesverbot*, but its theme nevertheless remains intact: repressed desire and criticism of false prudery, all presented as a comedy. Wagner set the story in Palermo, with a sanctimonious German governor at its centre. A novice nun takes up the struggle against the occupier and his restrictions, and the general turmoil – after an unrestrained carnival – is ended by the return of the king.

1 JUNE 2016 PALACE OF ARTS