

The Opera Platform is launched - free, live and on demand www.theoperaplatform.eu



Tomorrow, Friday 8 May 2015, the online community may discover a new platform entirely dedicated to opera. It aims to attract those who already love opera and those curious to try it for the first time.

The European Commission's Creative Europe programme supports this new website created by a partnership led by Opera Europa, the European association of opera companies and festivals, with cultural broadcaster ARTE and fifteen opera companies: Austria: Wiener Staatsoper; Belgium: La Monnaie/De Munt Bruxelles; Finland: Finnish National Opera Helsinki; France: Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Opéra national de Lyon; Germany: Komische Oper Berlin, Oper Stuttgart; Italy: Teatro Regio Torino; Latvia: Latvian National Opera Riga; Netherlands: Dutch National Opera Amsterdam; Norway: Den Norske Opera og Ballett Oslo; Poland: Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa Warsaw; Spain: Teatro Real Madrid; United Kingdom: Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera. This multinational partnership opens new perspectives for opera's reach in Europe and beyond.

The Opera Platform will be available in three languages – English, French and German – and will offer free content, rich in information: full opera performances and extracts; synopses and background material; artist interviews and behind-the-scenes documentaries. The opera houses of Europe invite you to discover their archives and their current productions.

The European opera season of the platform will add at least one new opera per month, subtitled in six languages – English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish – and available on demand for six months. New additional content will regularly enrich the offer.

The Opera Platform is launched with the live transmission from Madrid's Teatro Real of *La traviata*. Further showcase operas in the launch month will include *Król Roger* from Royal Opera House Covent Garden, *Kullervo* from Finnish National Opera Helsinki and *Valentina* from Latvian National Opera Riga.

The Opera Platform comes to life for the celebration of the ninth edition of the European Opera Days, under this year's theme 'Opera alive and online'.



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Programme of the opening six months

- 8 May Launch of **The Opera Platform**
Live transmission from Teatro Real de Madrid of *La traviata* by Verdi, conducted by Renato Palumbo and directed by David McVicar, with Ermonela Jaho, Francesco Demuro and Juan Jesús Rodríguez
Rich content available in the early days: *Die Zauberflöte* from Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, *Sinbad* from La Monnaie/De Munt and three one-act operas from Opéra national de Lyon, and many shorter contributions from other opera companies drawn from across the membership of Opera Europa
- 16 May Live transmission from Royal Opera House Covent Garden of *Król Roger* by Karol Szymanowski, conducted by Antonio Pappano and directed by Kasper Holten, with Mariusz Kwiecień, Georgia Jarman and Saimir Pirgu
- 23 May Transmission from Finnish National Opera Helsinki of *Kullervo* by Jean Sibelius, conducted by Jukka-Pekka Saraste and directed by Tero Saarinen
- 30 May Transmission from Latvian National Opera Riga of *Valentina* by Arturs Maskats, conducted by Modestas Pitrenas and directed by Viesturs Kairish
- 7 June Live transmission from Wiener Staatsoper of *Götterdämmerung* by Richard Wagner, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle and directed by Sven-Eric Bechtolf, with Evelyn Herlitzius, Stephen Gould, Falk Struckmann, Boaz Daniel and Caroline Wenborne
- 8 July Live transmission from Festival d'Aix-en-Provence of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, conducted by Jérémie Rhorer and directed by Martin Kušej, with Jane Archibald, Rachele Gilmore, Daniel Behle, David Portillo, Albert Pesendorfer and Tobias Moretti
- August Focus on Festivals dedicated to and founded by composers, including features on Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro and Britten's Aldeburgh Festival
- September Focus on Norway : new horizons for opera
Transmission from Den Norske Opera og Ballett of *La bohème* by Giacomo Puccini, conducted by Eivind Gullberg Jensen and directed by Stefan Herheim, with Marita Sølberg, Jennifer Rowley, Diego Torre and Vasilij Ladjuk
- October Focus on Italy: birthplace of opera
Aida from Teatro Regio Torino conducted by Gianandrea Noseda and directed by William Friedkin

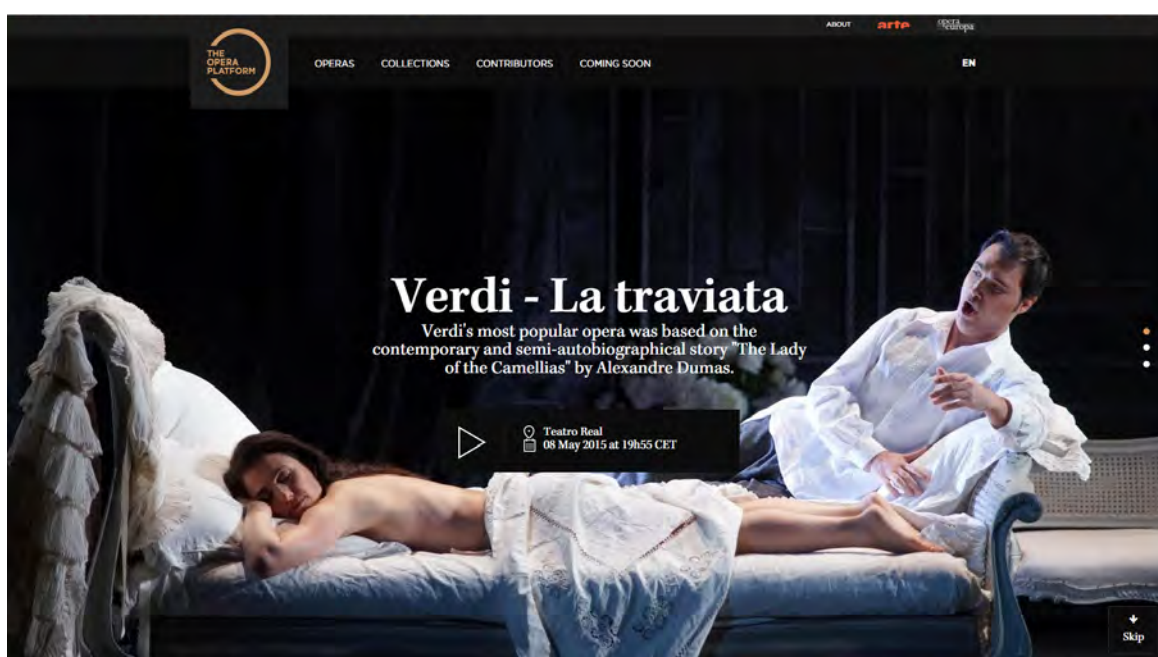


The Opera Platform is an online platform for the promotion and enjoyment of opera. It is designed to appeal equally to those who already love opera and to those who may be tempted to try it for the first time.

The Opera Platform offers a range of content from the most popular titles to the most innovative:

- an average of one new showcase complete opera each month from one of 15 partner theatres
- tantalising highlights from productions throughout Europe
- curated documentary material setting operas and opera houses within a wider cultural context
- a rich archive bringing history to life for today's audiences
- each of the showcase complete operas will be subtitled in six languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Polish and will be available to view for free for six months on demand

The Opera Platform is a partnership between Opera Europa, a network representing 155 opera companies and festivals; the cultural broadcasting channel ARTE; and 15 carefully selected theatres from across Europe. It is supported by the European Commission's *Creative Europe* programme with a grant until the end of 2017. It welcomes contributions from all those committed to sharing opera with a wider public.



List of partners: 17 partners from 12 countries

Opera Europa (lead partner)

ARTE

Austria, Wiener Staatsoper

Belgium, La Monnaie/De Munt Brussels

Finland, Finnish National Opera Helsinki

France, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence

France, Opéra national de Lyon

Germany, Komische Oper Berlin

Germany, Oper Stuttgart

Italy, Teatro Regio Torino

Latvia, Latvian National Opera Riga

Netherlands, Dutch National Opera and Ballet Amsterdam

Norway, Den Norske Opera of Ballett Oslo

Poland, Teatr Wielki/Opera Narodowa Warsaw

Spain, Teatro Real Madrid

United Kingdom, Royal Opera House Covent Garden

United Kingdom, Welsh National Opera

What is the aim of the project?

The Opera Platform is part of a wider project funded by the European Commission's *Creative Europe* Programme, which aims to:

- Create a unique authoritative freely-accessible online resource for European opera
- Enable fifteen opera houses to produce high quality digital content and share the benefits of these experiences across all the opera companies of Europe. The project aims to build, more generally, the sector's capacity to adapt to the digital age.
- Attract visitors to our platform: those who already love opera and those new to opera.

Who originated the project and why?

The Opera Platform is a joint initiative by Opera Europa and ARTE. For Opera Europa, the project meets the network's ambitions to support the development of opera, and the work of opera companies of all sizes throughout Europe, in very practical ways. The project builds on the network's other initiatives (such as the European Opera Days) that aim not only to facilitate the development of its member companies but also to promote the art form of opera to a wider public. For ARTE, the project corresponds to this Franco-German public service broadcaster's exceptional commitment to promoting good opera in its familiar territories of France, German and neighbouring countries, and indeed across the world. It also matches with its will to enlarge its presence in Europe and to federate cultural actors throughout Europe.

How were the 15 partner theatre companies selected?

The project partners were selected by Opera Europa to represent a cross section of the network's membership. It was important to bring together theatres from a variety of different countries: 12 in all. As the project aims to enable the partners to produce high quality digital content, Opera Europa was particularly keen to gather members whose digital operations are at very different stages of development. The Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Wiener Staatsoper both have considerable experience in streaming their productions online. Others in the partnership are relatively inexperienced and, through this project - built around cooperation and exchange - they will acquire new skills and negotiate new agreements with their rights' holders to enable them to pursue digital strategies.

Is *The Opera Platform* a response to opera houses' questions about how digital technology can help them?

The platform responds to the needs of opera houses in Europe at this particular moment of the digital era. The membership of Opera Europa, which ranges from top 'brand name' opera houses to small-scale touring companies without a fixed venue, were certainly asking themselves a number of questions in the period leading up to this project: how to make a success of digital strategies; how to respond to the lead of some houses to bring opera into cinemas; how to develop viable business models for digital projects; how digital content can continue to ensure the primacy of the live physical experience for audiences of a performance in a venue. The platform, in the broader framework of our EC-funded project, will help companies share best practice in addressing these questions. The involvement of ARTE – which has always been forward-thinking regarding digital technology – should be an asset in developing best practices.

About the platform

The platform will be launched on Friday 8 May 2015 with a live stream of *La traviata* from Teatro Real in Madrid, a production directed by David McVicar and conducted by Renato Palumbo, and will also already offer rich and diverse content from the 15 main partners and several other contributors.

All the live streams and the additional content on the platform are totally free to internet users. There is no subscription nor login nor access codes needed. It is a free site. To find out more about launch and the programme of live operas, those interested can subscribe to a free newsletter on the Opera Europa website. All the streams are available to view freely throughout the world.

How does this project address common concerns about rights in the digital age?

The project aims to find some common solutions to points of concern. Over the course of this three-year project, Opera Europa will bring together stakeholders (artists, agents, publishers, broadcasters, film producers, distributors) to look for practical solutions to rights and other issues. The project aims to:

Rights: Find pan-European cross-sector solutions to issues relating to opera in the web environment that have previously been treated inconclusively at a national level.

Skills: Enhance the opera sector's capacity to commission and/or produce digital content.

Financial models: Enable the opera sector to put in place viable economic models for digital content.

Dissemination: Encourage Europe's opera companies to pool part of their digital content on a single pilot platform and share the finding across the opera sector and beyond.

Fifteen opera houses are pioneering *The Opera Platform*. Can others opera houses be part of the project?

Fifteen opera houses are pioneering this project alongside Opera Europa and ARTE. As a partnership of 17 institutions, our project is quite exceptional for the European Commission. Rarely do so many organisations come together to cooperate on a European scale, indeed twenty is the maximum allowed under the EC's *Creative Europe* scheme.

While it would not have been possible to work with more opera houses in the framework of an EC funding programme, Opera Europa and all the partners are keen to see this platform serve the whole of the opera sector in Europe. For this reason, Opera Europa has encouraged the 155 member opera houses/ festivals/ companies of Opera Europa to contribute content (full operas, extracts and behind the scenes material) to the platform from its launch. At launch, the platform will feature content from more than the 15 partners. This aspect of the project will grow in the coming years.

What is ARTE's role in *The Opera Platform*?

ARTE is a key partner in the conception and realisation of this project. ARTE advises on the editorial line of the platform as part of the editorial group (see below). ARTE has a role not only in building but also promoting the platform. ARTE is responsible for the technical development of the platform and the subtitling of the main showcase operas on the platform in six languages; all the partners have benefited from ARTE's experience in this area. ARTE also has a role in telling people about the platform and using its considerable reach to attract visitors to the platform. To that purpose, the main showcase operas shown on *The Opera Platform* for six months will be streamed in parallel on ARTE Concert, usually for the first month. This will help the platform and its contents find their audience.

How are the operas that are streamed on *The Opera Platform* chosen?

The Opera Platform is managed on a daily basis by a small team of staff from Opera Europa and ARTE. The choice of each full-length showcase opera is reviewed by a group representative of the partnership: this editorial group advises on the editorial line of the platform. The group is keen to promote the specificity of opera in that theatre, whether in terms of repertoire, artistic teams or style of production. The additional contextual content on the platform is chosen to add short insights to the work of an opera house/festival or the making of a particular production – for those who love the art form or those who may be discovering it for the first time.

Is there a timetable of the first live stream?

The Opera Platform will launch on Friday 8 May 2015 with a live stream of *La traviata* from Teatro Real, and will be followed in the first month by performances from Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Finnish National Opera and Latvian National Opera. Each opera streamed on the platform will be available to view on the platform for a period of six months.

How is the project funded?

The total project budget of the project is 3.937.166 euros. The EC has awarded a grant of up to 1.855.688 euros. Each of the partners makes a contribution to balance the overall budget.