

25 October: World Opera Day 2020 celebrates the power of culture

This year, when everyone's lives have been affected by the global pandemic, and the world's social injustices have gained visibility and touched wider communities, the healing power of music and art is needed more than ever. Yet, restrictions on public gathering have had a devastating impact on the cultural and especially the performing arts sector.

World Opera Day 2020 is a vital step on the road to recovery.

Opera is an international language, and its stories reflect an understanding of human nature and contribute to sustaining the values of freedom and tolerance. We aspire to a culture which belongs to and includes all those within its community. At the same time, it must embrace a diverse but connected world. World Opera Day is an occasion to underline the importance of culture in society.

Who better than Beethoven to be the emblem of this 2020 edition? On the 250th anniversary of his birth, this genius of musical creativity perfectly embodies the humanitarian message of universal brotherhood, which inspires our programme for 25 October.

On World Opera Day, opera companies from around the world will contribute live or online to the celebration. Respecting local measures, participating opera companies will host diverse opportunities for audiences to meet opera. A global social media campaign will carry our message.

Our online platform OperaVision will stream three contrasting versions of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*: in a recent recorded concert version; in an animated form for young people; and in a promenade production staged at the heart of an inner-city community.

Opera Europa, Opera America and Opera Latinoamérica, in collaboration with Opera for Peace, will offer vocal performances from six continents alongside messages from ambassadors worldwide, including Ai Weiwei, Ernesto Ottone (UNESCO), Lawrence Brownlee, Isabel Leonard, Brian Jagde, Elsa Dreisig, Joyce El-Khoury, Peter Sellars, Golda Schultz and Nicole Car, and emerging artists Raehann Bryce-Davis, Victoria Karkacheva and Leonardo Sánchez. This free celebration concert, commissioned by OperaVision, will be streamed on multiple platforms to encourage accessibility.

World Opera Day is a joint initiative of Opera Europa, Opera America and Opera Latinoamérica, in collaboration with national organisations National Centre for the Performing Arts Beijing, National Centre for the Performing Arts India, Réunion des Opéras de France, Deutscher Bühnenverein, Opera XXI, Association of Music Theatres Russia, and Opera.ca, and international organisations Fedora, IAMA, the International Theatre Institute and Opera for Peace, supported by UNESCO.

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