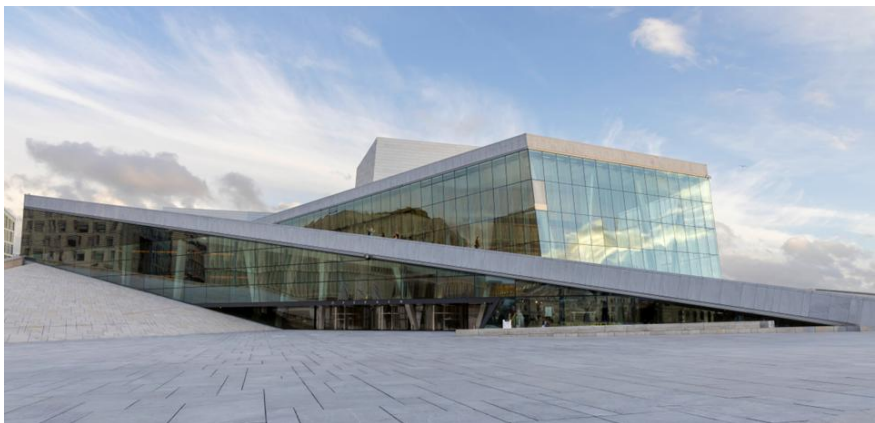




Norwegian Opera & Ballet's ambitious 2025-26 season launches with the world premiere of a new work by Sir Wayne McGregor and Tatjana Gürbaca's landmark staging of Dvořák's *Rusalka*



The Norwegian Opera & Ballet, Photo: Martina Pipprich

The Oslo Opera House is set to present an enthralling programme across the course of its 2025-26 season. A broad selection of its opera, ballet and concert productions are now available for sale.

Audiences have the chance to discover familiar classics in a fresh approach, new Nordic voices in the performing arts, and works from the most prominent opera directors and choreographers of our time throughout Norwegian National Opera & Ballet's forthcoming season.

"The Norwegian National Opera's 2025-26 season is rich in contrasts," says Randi Stene, the company's Artistic Director. "It ranges from classics to modern works, from evergreen fairy tales to the alarmingly relevant. It includes grand opera, chamber opera, singspiel, oratorios, sing-along opera and music from musicals. We are pleased to present such prominent directors as Tatjana Gürbaca and Barrie Kosky – as well as new directing voices in the field of opera, Peer Perez Øian among them. The season also offers outstanding conductors such as Paolo Arrivabeni, Antonio Méndez and our own Music Director Edward Gardner. On stage we have world-class singers, both our own soloists and international guests."

"The Norwegian National Ballet's forthcoming season offers scenic stories that embrace both the intimate and the grand," says Ballet Director Ingrid Lorentzen. "Sir Wayne McGregor will stage a large-scale world premiere at the Oslo Opera House, where ballet and opera join forces. Our own Kaloyan Boyadjiev creates a new *Romeo and Juliet* with a classical form. And not least, we will highlight the Nordic choreographers Elle Sofe Sara, Hlín Hjalmsdóttir and Simone Grøtte, who bring new stories to our stage."

The comprehensive programme is now available at www.operaen.no. Sales opened on Thursday 8 May at 11 am. The season at the Oslo Opera House starts in August 2025 and runs until the following summer.

Ballet season

The season opens with the world premiere of Sir Wayne McGregor's *Jocasta's Line* – a collaboration between the Norwegian National Ballet and the Norwegian National Opera, with the Norwegian Opera Choir, opera soloists and the Norwegian Opera Orchestra. Here, the Greek tragedies *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* are intertwined: Samy Moussa has composed completely new music for *Antigone*, while *Oedipus Rex* is set to Igor Stravinsky's opera-oratorio from 1927.

With *Láhppon/Lost*, Elle Sofe Sara takes us closer to a dark chapter in Norwegian history: the Kautokeino rebellion, the Sámi uprising of 1852. Sara has already distinguished herself in Norway as one of the most interesting choreographers of her generation. Together with Iceland's Hlín Hjalmsdóttir, she creates for the Norwegian National Ballet for the first time, working together with Denmark's Henrik Vibskov on costume and set design.

Marit Moum Aune's Ibsen ballets have been praised by critics in Norway and on tour to Europe and Asia. Now the Oslo audience can once more experience Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* as retold in dance, with music by Nils Petter Molvær and Grete Sofie Borud Nybakken in the title role.

With the triple bill *Tetley/McGregor/Lynch*, the stage is set for a three-part celebration of modern ballet. One hundred years after his birth, Glen Tetley is honoured here with works by three generations of choreographers: Tetley's own iconic *Voluntaries*, Sir Wayne McGregor's acclaimed *Chroma* and a brand-new work by the Norwegian National Ballet's own Samantha Lynch.

The world premiere of *Tungrodd – Rahčamuš – Raataminen* awaits on Stage 2 of the Oslo Opera House, anchored in choreographer Simone Grøtte's Sámi and Kven ethnic heritage. Cina Espejord's family friendly *A Tale of Swan Lake* from 2024 returns, before going on tour to Haugesund, Stavanger, Arendal and Skien this autumn. The young dancers of Norwegian National Ballet UNG will also take its spring performance to Stage 2, before they begin a tour of Norway.

No holiday season is complete without *The Nutcracker*. The Norwegian National Ballet dances 23 performances of Tchaikovsky's evergreen work before Christmas. A large number of students at the Ballet School are poised to participate in the production ahead of their own student performance at Stage 2 next spring.

The new season will see joyful reunions with several classics and great stories. *Giselle*, the supreme romantic ballet, returns in Cynthia Harvey's staging. Natalia Makarova's legendary *La Bayadère*, with some of the most beautiful scenes in ballet history, also makes a welcome return.

In addition, next spring the Norwegian National Ballet will gain its own version of the world's most beautiful love story: *Romeo and Juliet*. Kaloyan Boyadjev, who made *The Nutcracker* for the company in 2016, is now building a new ballet with a classical form that offers fresh perspectives on the tale of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers.

More dance performances will be announced later, including details of one of Jo Strømgren Kompani's successes and two productions during CODA, Oslo's international dance festival.

Opera season

The season begins with Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka*, in a compelling staging by the acclaimed German director Tatjana Gürbaca and conducted by Edward Gardner. This operatic fairy tale for adults, partly influenced by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, explores themes of double standards, power games and exclusion – all framed by Dvořák's rich orchestration and Slavic folk accents and performed by a cast of international soloists, including Sara Jakubiak and Dmytro Popov.

September is the time for new music in Oslo. As part of the city's Ultima Festival, the Norwegian National Opera, in collaboration with the Norwegian National Ballet, presents *Jocasta's Line*, where Samy Moussa's *Antigone* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* meet in one performance.

In addition, the company will present György Kurtág's *Fin de partie* in a concert performance, with the singers who helped shape its world premiere staging at La Scala, Milan in 2018. Edward Gardner conducts what is widely considered to be one of the most significant operatic works of our time.

"We have a tremendously strong start to the season with *Rusalka* and *Fin de partie*," comments Edward Gardner. "*Rusalka* is such an iconic work, as powerful as a Wagner opera in so many ways. It's a huge symphonic piece for the orchestra and demands so much from the singers. With Sara Jakubiak and Dmytro Popov leading the cast, we're very confident about what we can do. And we have Tatjana Gürbaca's beautiful, airy, modern take on the piece. She will direct our *Ring* cycle, starting in 2027, so *Rusalka* is a lovely way to start our relationship. And to do that alongside Kurtág's *Fin de partie* shows the company's flexibility. We'll work very hard to give that modern masterpiece the performance it deserves. We're proud that we have the skills and resources to do it."

Cinematic opera magic is on the cards when Barrie Kosky's joyful reimagining of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* makes its first outing to Norway. The performance has played to over one million people in over 45 cities worldwide since its premiere at the Komische Oper Berlin in 2012. Mozart's irresistible music meets silent film aesthetics from the 1920s in a visually enthralling production, suitable for everyone from eight-year-olds to eighty-year-olds.

Theatre director Peer Perez Øian makes his Norwegian Opera debut with Benjamin Britten's gothic chamber opera *The Turn of the Screw*. Britten's exquisite yet disturbing music, conducted by Antonio Méndez, is sure to draw audiences deep into the dark recesses of the human mind.

Verdi's monumental *Don Carlo*, directed by David Livermore, will also arouse intense emotions, thanks not least to its beautiful and magnificent set designs, a supersized opera chorus and a cast that includes, among others, the Norwegian National Opera's own soloists Marita Sølberg, Astrid Nordstad and Yngve Sølberg.

"Directors love coming to the Oslo Opera house, where the rehearsal conditions are ideal," notes Edward Gardner. "We've just had a great success with Stefan Herheim's staging of *The Cunning Little Vixen* and look forward to welcoming Barrie Kosky and other outstanding directors in the coming season. I'm thrilled that we have been able to cast three of our house singers, who are world-class artists, in leading roles in *Don Carlo*. Very few international opera houses could do that. Above all, we're giving our audiences the broadest possible diet of work at the highest possible quality."

An entirely new production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, which places the work's comedy in a sharp, vivid frame, and where generational conflicts hold centre stage, has been specially created for the company by South African theatre director Matthew Wild. His vision of Mozart's timeless composition will be brought to life by a young, energetic ensemble, led from the orchestra pit by Italian baroque specialist Ottavio Dantone.

The season will see revivals of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Puccini's *Tosca*, in potent productions by Christof Loy, Jetske Mijnsen and Calixto Bieito. Their cast-lists of prominent international artists include Audun Iversen and Lilly Jørstad.

With *Wonderful Bernstein!* the party atmosphere returns to the main stage of the Oslo Opera House, fuelled by highlights from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, *Candide* and *Wonderful Town*. In addition, last year's successful *Sing Opera!* is back, providing an uplifting opportunity for the audience to sing together with the company's orchestra, choir and soloists.

Taking place on Stage 2, the Children's Choir presents its own opera. Gisle Kverndokk's *Purriot and the Lost Bronze Horse* sees all its roles cast in the form of well-known vegetables. The Opera's programme for young singers, WOYS, will also present Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* on Stage 2.

With support from the Sparebank Foundation, the umbrella project *Opera for All* continues, bringing song and opera to kindergartens, schools, families, young people and the senior citizens.

Concert season

In addition to conducting full-scale opera and ballet productions, Music Director Edward Gardner leads the Opera Orchestra in several major concert events next season. He begins with a concert performance of György Kurtág's opera *Fin de partie* and, as a taster of the company's staging of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, scheduled to begin in 2027, will conduct *The Ring Without Words*, enabling audiences to experience magnificent orchestral highlights from Wagner's seminal opera cycle in one evening. Gardner also takes the podium when the award-winning cellist Gautier Capuçon plays Saint-Saëns with the Opera Orchestra.

Several high-profile soloists will grace the Main Stage with their own concert programmes. The young Russian mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina, who has garnered international acclaim for her performances as Bizet's Carmen on the world's leading opera stages, the Greek violin master Leonidas Kavakos, and the Icelandic star pianist Víkingur Ólafsson will come to the Opera for the first time.

Concerts with two sparkling duos also feature on the new season's programme: the world-renowned musicians Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider and Daniil Trifonov will share the stage, and Leif Ove Andsnes and Bertrand Chamayou will play Schubert together on one piano following their critically acclaimed concerts throughout Europe.

On Stage 2, the Opera Orchestra offers its own chamber concert series, where the musicians themselves choose to perform repertoire they are passionate about. This autumn, there will be a celebration of the 150th anniversary of composer Maurice Ravel's birth and of Spanish folklore with the Opera Orchestra's brass group on the programme. There will also be a joyful return to the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra's celebrated theatrical concert *DSCH*.

See operaen.no for the full programme. Details of more performances and concerts will be launched throughout the season.

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