

PRESS RELEASE

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STATE OPERA AND BALLET

4TH INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL OPERA FESTIVAL

STARTS ON JUNE 25TH

- **International Istanbul Opera Festival** where selective Turkish and world class operas meet art lovers every year, is preparing to embrace opera lovers with a rich program and unforgettable performances in its fourth year. The festival organized by Directorate General of State Opera and Ballet with contributions of DenizBank will be held between June 25th and July 8th this year.
- In scope of the festival, besides the Gala Concert “Viva Verdi” to be held at Hagia Irene, it will be possible to watch five different works of art in five different venues ranging from works of famous composers such as W.A. Mozart to Antonio Vivaldi.

4th International Istanbul Opera Festival organized by Directorate General of State Opera and Ballet that continues activities with the mission of providing opera and arts to all ranges of society under the main sponsorship of **DenizBank** that wishes to support culture and arts in Turkey will meet opera lovers between June 25th and July 8th 2013.

The festival to last two weeks will meet art lovers with a total of nine performances including five opera productions and a gala concert in July under the art directorship of chief stage director Yekta Kara. In scope of the festival, guests will be able to watch “**Viva Verdi**” **Gala Concert** in the magical atmosphere of Hagia Irene besides performances of Ankara, İstanbul, Antalya and Samsun State Opera and Ballet. In the concert led by **Roberto Abbado**, famous soloists of opera such as **baritone Marco Vratogna, tenor Stefano Secco, tenor Marco Berti and soprano Aleksandra Kurzak** will take to the stage. The night to be held for the 200th birthday of Giuseppe Verdi who comes from 19th century Italian opera école and whose works of art are staged all around the world will bring richness to the festival.

Rengim Gökmen: “Opera Festival makes us proud in its fourth year in terms of world opera”

Director General of State Opera and Ballet and General Art Director **Prof. Rengim Gökmen** said “Istanbul Opera Festival that has brought culture and arts to another dimension in our country makes us proud in world opera arena by exceeding borders of our country thanks to its corporate and international success in its fourth year. In the festival where popular opera performances will meet local and foreign art lovers in beautiful historical venues of Istanbul, we are very happy to host famous foreign guest artists too. While inviting art lovers of all ages, I would like to thank DenizBank family before Hakan Ateş for their valuable contributions since day one”.

Hakan Ateş: “We will continue to support the festival that we have been main sponsors since 2010”

DenizBank CEO **Hakan Ateş** said that the International Istanbul Opera Festival has become a tradition and one of the most important events of culture and arts. Ateş said “We are proud to be the biggest supporter of an event that has become a brand in our country such as the International Istanbul Opera Festival. We think we have opened an important path in our country in making culture and arts accessible to all ranges of society in daily lives with the International Istanbul Opera Festival. I believe that our contribution to this valuable organization that became popular both in Turkey and the world which we are a founder of will be long term. Besides, we contribute to arts and culture via our sponsorship of Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra for eight years and many projects we execute with our subsidiary Deniz Kültür and we will continue to do so”.

Yekta Kara: “World famous artists meet the audience”

Chief Stage Director of Directorate General of State Opera and Ballet and General Art Director **Yekta Kara** stated that the purpose the festival is to ensure that historical richness of Istanbul meets the art of opera and provide great contribution to culture tourism and for all ranges of audience to watch opera in these historical venues. This year, world famous artists in the art of opera meet our audience in both gala concerts and other performances and we are proud to serve the city of Istanbul”.

Surprise of this year: “Viva Verdi” Gala Concert

One of the most attractive parts of the festival program this year is the “Viva Verdi” Gala concert at Hagia Irene on July 1, 2013. Istanbul Opera and Ballet Orchestra will accompany the concert led by Maestro Roberto Abbado who conducts various operas in many countries with Italy being in the first place and famous soloists of opera such as baritone Marco Vratogna, tenor Stefano Secco, tenor Marco Berti and soprano Aleksandra Kurzak will take to the stage. In the night for the honor of 200th birthday of Giuseppe Verdi, chief Roberto Abbado who represents the école of

Franco Ferrara and guest performers who are world famous in opera world will offer unforgettable moments to art lovers in magnificent historical atmosphere and acoustics of Hagia Irene. Audience will be able to enjoy Rigoletto, Bajazet, Tulipmania, The Abduction from the Seraglio and Murad IV within festival repertoire in original historical décor.

The 4th International Istanbul Opera Festival embraces all people and visitors of Istanbul with its program and content. Integrated with the historical sites of the city, the festival aims to position Istanbul uniquely on global scale. The Festival performances will be held at Topkapi Palace, Hagia Irene, Haliç Congress Center, Kadıköy Süreyya Opera House and Bahçeşehir Center for Culture and Arts.

Tickets of the festival are available at Mybilet. Ticket prices vary between TL 15 and 150.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM

DATE	PROGRAM	VENUE
25 June 2013	Rigoletto	Haliç Congress Center
27 June 2013	Bajazet (Yıldırım Bayezid)	Kadıköy Süreyya Opera House
28 June 2013	Tulipmania	Bahçeşehir Center for Culture and Arts
29 June 2013	Bajazet (Yıldırım Bayezid)	Kadıköy Süreyya Opera House
1 July 2013	“Viva Verdi” Gala Concert Conductor: Roberto ABBADO	Hagia Irene
3-4 July 2013	The Abduction from the Seraglio	Topkapi Palace
7-8 July 2013	Murad IV	Topkapi Palace

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERFORMANCES

- The first performance of the 4th International Istanbul Opera and Ballet Festival, “Rigoletto” will be staged on **June 25th, 2013** by the State Opera and Ballet of Ankara at **Haliç Culture and Congress Center**. Yekta Kara stages the opera that is accepted as Giuseppe Verdi’s masterpiece of his golden age. The theme and libretto of Rigoletto Opera have been formed faithfully to Victor Hugo’s “The King’s Fool / Le roi s’amuse” and is based on a sound theatrical structure. With Yekta Kara’s modern interpretation, it

has been carried onto the Italy of 1920s and mafia setting, conveys a hypocritical world and Rigoletto's problematic relationship with his daughter. Famous soprano Ekaterina Siurina, who performed "Gilda" in Rigoletto at many important opera houses of the world such as the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, will be on stage for Turkish art lovers in the same role as the guest performer in this year's festival.

- On **June 27th and 29th 2013**, the State Opera and Ballet of Istanbul will stage the opera "**Bajazet**" twice at **Kadıköy Süreyya Opera House** and unite the pure and elegant style of the famous baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi with the audience. Premiered at last year's festival and attracted great attention, the piece is about the power struggle of the Ottoman Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid with Tamerlane. This baroque masterpiece, one of the many long lost opera pieces of Vivaldi, was brought to light by our world famous opera artist Leyla Gencer and is staged with the direction of Mehmet Ergüven.
- The State Opera and Ballet of Antalya will perform the two-act "**Tulipmania**", which entered into our repertoire recently and was composed by Ali Hoca within the scope of the 400th anniversary celebrations of Turkish and Dutch relations. The opera will be staged on **June 28th, 2013** at the **Bahçeşehir Center of Culture and Arts**. Libretto of Tulipmania, which will impress the audience with its music and theme, belongs to Şefik Kahramankaptan. The piece begins in Holland of the 17th century and ends in Istanbul. The adventurous nobleman Fink van Broot, who enjoys acquiring valuables he likes, is interested in tulips as they are popular at that time. It is not unusual for a handful of tulip bulbs to change hands for a mansion during those days. Fink van Broot hears that President of the Tulip Stock Market Jan den Boyl, beautiful Lotte's father, owns a rare and valuable tulip bulb. He starts to make plans to acquire the "Great Admiral" bulbs and his adventurousness initiates a series of events that take him to the mansion of Grand Vizier Damat Pasha in Istanbul. At that time, the palace and people in Istanbul are in a tulip mania. The finale of the piece surprises both Fink van Broot and the audience.
- At the "Viva Verdi" Gala Concert to be held in Hagia Irene on July 1st, 2013; Baritone **Marco Vratogna**, tenor **Stefano Secco**, tenor **Marco Berti** and soprano **Aleksandra Kurzak** will perform as soloists with **Roberto Abbado** as the conductor. Orchestra of the State Opera and Ballet of Istanbul will accompany these famous artists who have performed at important operas of the world. At the night dedicated to the 200th birth anniversary of Giuseppe Verdi, conductor Roberto Abbado will lead the concert, as a representative of Franco Ferrara école. Son of a musician family, Roberto Abbado chose

to be a conductor like his uncle Claudio Abbado and has led opera and symphonic orchestras throughout the world since his 20s. World stars to meet Turkish audience in this concert are the world famous Marco Vratogna, known for the baritone roles in Verdi operas and surprisingly wide vocal register; Marco Berti & Stefano Secco, tenors known for their successful performances in Italian operas, and Polish soprano Aleksandra Kurzak, who enchants the spectators with her divine voice and whose mother is also an opera artist.

- With two performances on **July 3rd and 4th, 2013** by the State Opera and Ballet of Samsun, W.A. Mozart's "**The Abduction from the Seraglio**" opera will be staged with the direction of Yekta Kara at the **Topkapi Palace, the home of the Ottoman Sultans**. Themed with the Ottoman culture and life that shook Europe from the 17th century on, The Abduction from the Seraglio was composed by Mozart, who was impressed by the Ottoman Military Band Anthem, and tells a love story based on Ottoman tolerance and magnanimity. World famous soprano Christiane Boesiger will add color to this year's performance of The Abduction from the Seraglio as "Konstanze". She is known for her strong theatrical performance in the world of arts, as different from opera artists that become prominent for their voices.
- With two performances on **July 7th and 8th, 2013** by the State Opera and Ballet of Samsun again at **Topkapi Palace**, "**Murad IV**" opera will be staged in the home of the powerful Sultan. Composed by Okan Demiriş and libretto written by Turan Oflazoğlu, Murad IV is directed by Gürçil Çeliksaş. With these performances, the 4th International Istanbul Opera Festival will say goodbye to the audience until next year from Topkapi Palace.