

LUBOR CUKR, STAGE DIRECTOR

Lubor Cukr, stage director, was born in Prague in 1974. From an early age he experienced acting and dancing, and after a few seasons at the Black Light Theatre of Prague, IMAGE, he started to sing and dance in several musicals. He performed in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar* from 1994 to 1998, and joined in 1999 the first Czech production of *Evita*. Still active today in this field, Lubor Cukr currently prepares as director a new production of the famous Czech musical Vratislav Blažek's *Dáma na kolečkách* for the J.K.Tyla Theatre in Pilsner, with Pavel Kantořík as musical director.



His interest for musical theatre broadened in 1999 when Lubor Cukr started a collaboration as production assistant with the festival Opera Praha Open Air; there, he assisted Martin Otava for productions of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Verdi's *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* in the courtyard of the Lichtenstein Palace. In 2006 Lubor Cukr assisted Karel Drgáč for his new production of *Don Giovanni* for the open air festival in Gars am Kamp in Austria and in 2008, for another open air festival, the Opera week in Kutná Hora, he staged a new production of Puccini's *Tosca*, conducted by František Drs.

In 1999, Lubor Cukr also joined Státní opera Praha as assistant stage director in residence, under the direction of Daniel Dvořák and Jiří Nekvasil. Since then, Lubor Cukr has been working with international stage directors such as David Pountney, Heinz Lukas-Kinderman, Arnaud Bernard, Yoshi Oida, Philippe Godefroid, Roman Hovenbitzer, but also with renowned Czech stage directors like Jozef Bednárík, Zdeněk Troška or Cabani. The numerous performances presented yearly by this opera house established his knowledge of the grand repertoire. For many shows he was in charge of maintaining the quality of the staging and it is as associate stage director that Lubor Cukr recently revived Dominik Neuner's 1992 successful production of Verdi's *Otello*.

During his artistic residency, Lubor Cukr also began to develop his own staging style by directing concert performances for special appearance of the Státní Opera Praha Company in Germany, Italy and Turkey. He made his debut as stage director in 2002, for the company Dětská Opera Praha, with the world premiere of *Hry*, a children opera by Jan F. Fischer, conducted by Robert Jindra at the Kolowrat theatre of Prague. In 2005, for the same company, Lubor Cukr presented Britten's *The Little Sweep*, with his own translation into Czech of the libretto.

In 1999-2002, Lubor Cukr took an active part in a cycle presented by Státní opera Praha and representing French opera's evolution of the last centuries: Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* staged by Gilbert Blin and conducted by Vincent Monteil inaugurated the cycle, followed by *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* by Dukas, staged by Paul-Émile Fourny. For the world premiere of Laurent Petitgirard's *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant man*, Lubor Cukr also assisted Daniel Mesguich. He was called by Opéra de Nice for *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss, in the production of Jean-Claude Riber in 2004. For the same house, with Marco Guararini as musical director, Lubor Cukr also worked with Olivier Bénézech on Mozart's *Idomeneo* in 2004 and on Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 2005, this production being presented also in Opéra de Toulon in 2007.

Since 2001, Lubor Cukr regularly works with Gilbert Blin. He assisted him for the staging of Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* presented at the Státní Opera Praha in 2001; this project raised Lubor Cukr's interest for the music of the eighteenth century. At the occasion of the modern premiere of *Rosmira fedele*, by the same composer, was given at the Opéra de Nice in March 2003, Lubor Cukr joined ACADÉMIE DESPREZ, *Association Française pour le Rayonnement du Théâtre du Château de Drottningholm*. With the Groupe de Recherche of ACADÉMIE DESPREZ, Lubor Cukr started researches about baroque gestures. In 2007, he assisted Gilbert Blin for the production of Händel's *Teseo* at Opéra de Nice. This collaboration kept on with Scarlatti's *La Giuditta* for the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, conducted by Gilbert Bezzina, which opening performances were given in March 2008 in Nice. This successful show toured in 2009 in several festivals such as Festival de Musique sacrée de Marseille, Concerts à La Chabotterie and Festival de La Chaise-Dieu.

In 2006, Lubor Cukr started his Mozart cycle. In the frame of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart a new production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was initiated by the company Opera MozART. With artistic director Jiří Kotouč, Lubor Cukr staged a historical reconstruction in the Estates theatre in Prague, where the piece was created in 1787. This successful production was performed three consecutive seasons. In 2008, Opéra de Nice asked him to direct a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, conducted by Sergio Monterisi. The cycle keeps on with a new historically informed production of *La clemenza di Tito*, under the musical direction of Damiano Binetti, planned for the Silesian theatre of Opava in 2010.