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**FONDAZIONE ARENA VISITS MUMBAI AND BANGKOK FOR THE FIRST TIME.**

**FINAL STAGES OF THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL TOUR A RESOUNDING SUCCESS**

Fondazione Arena di Verona, as ever an unceasing hive of activity, has closed its 2024 international promotional tour in Asia. **Over the last year it visited around twenty cities and met over 3000 stakeholders around the world**, including authorities, representatives of Italian institutions abroad, tour operators, entrepreneurs and industry journalists.

Paris, Madrid, Sofia and Munich, as well as Los Angeles, Toronto and Washington, right through to Seoul, Mumbai and Bangkok. A year of Fondazione Arena events across the world. The aim was to raise awareness of the opera as an area of Italian excellence, stimulating new tourist flows and developing international relations.

*"We came to plant a seed and we are returning home with lots of customers for next summer*,” underlines **Cecilia Gasdia, General Manager** **of Fondazione Arena di Verona**. *“It was an important year for the Arena, and these two events in Asia were the perfect conclusion to an international tour that took us around the world. Both India and Thailand absolutely love music and we hope that the opera can carve itself out a space and a following. The audiences in both countries were very enthusiastic and this gives us hope. We will continue to do our very best for the Arena and for Verona.”*

*“These were two really valuable opportunities to come into contact with the society of these countries*,” explains **Stefano Trespidi, Deputy Artistic Director of Fondazione Arena**. *“It is incredible how people who do not know the opera ‘product’ are so enchanted by our places and our art that they immediately propose partnerships and projects. We return home with new contacts, relationships and ideas. We must think outside the box and these tours help to open up new pathways, new strategies and new markets.”*

Performing some of the most beautiful arias by Verdi and Puccini were sopranos Eleonora Bellocci and Caterina Marchesini, tenor Galeano Salas and baritone Giulio Mastrototaro, accompanied on piano by the General Manager of Fondazione Arena Cecilia Gasdia.

**THAILAND**. A crowded room with an enthusiastic audience that did not shy away even when the singers involved the guests in one of the songs on the programme. Topped off with lots of selfies and photos at the end of the concert. The Yamaha Music Hall in Bangkok was packed for the presentation of the 102nd Arena di Verona Opera Festival organised by the Italian Ambassador to Bangkok Paolo Dionisi. Also in attendance was Thai conductor Akkrawat Payr Srinarong. And, to mark the partnership between Verona and Thailand that in 2025 will bring the Muay Thai World Festival to Verona, the chairman of WBC Muay Thai, Thanapol Bhakdibhumi, and Italian head of WBC Muay Thai Italy, Max Baggio.

*"Fondazione Arena has had quite an impact and generated lots of enthusiasm*,” comments **Paolo Dionisi, Italian Ambassador to Bangkok**. “*We all hope it will back here in Thailand next year for the Bangkok Festival. The “Bel Canto” is a splendid tool of international politics and diplomacy, a real source of pride for Italy. And so is sport. Next year Verona will be hosting the Muay Thai World Festival 2025, demonstrating the great affection that the people of Thailand have for Italy. And the Arena can represent its emblem.”*

**INDIA**. Also a great success was the evening in Mumbai which saw the biggest Italian institutions present in the Indian city take to the stage of the Royal Opera House together. In addition to Fondazione Arena di Verona, represented by General Manager Cecilia Gasdia and Deputy Artistic Director Stefano Trespidi, also in attendance were the Consul General of Italy in Mumbai Walter Ferrara, Chairman of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in India Alessandro Giuliani, Director and representative of Enit Claudio Maffioletti, and Director of the Italian Institute of Culture in Mumbai Francesca Amendola. Over a hundred Indian business professionals, tour operators and stakeholders were also present. From Italy there was Luca Romano, CFO of Bauli, a Group that already supports the Arena with the 67 Colonne fundraising project and which is present in India with a site in Baramati. Indian actress Eshanya Maheshwari was also among the guests.

*"I am really happy to be here this evening in Mumbai to celebrate Arena di Verona and the opera, two exceptional Italian institutions*,” underlined **Walter Ferrara, Consul General of Italy in Mumbai**. *India has a great love both for Italy and its music, often seen as one and the same thing, especially abroad. I am sure that the Indians will develop a growing interest in the opera. The success of this evening is a step in the right direction.”*

*"Business and culture go hand in hand, in fact culture can drive both the economy and the social side of a country*,” explains **Alessandro Giuliani, Chairman of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in India**. *“Art is very important both in Italy and in India and, as we have seen this evening, can build bridges and generate new interest. At a time when Indian tourists are ‘invading’ Italy, this Mumbai stop on the international tour of Arena di Verona is strategic and a great sign of friendship.”*

*“Though active on the international market, our Group has close links to Verona*,” concludes **Luca Romano, CFO of the Bauli Group**. *“This is why we are proud to support Fondazione Arena, cultural institution and symbol of Verona in the world. We share a journey of over a hundred years, a history of excellence. Pairing the Bauli name with that of the Arena gives us the chance to maximise the premiumness and value of the brand on the global market, an excellent opportunity, fruit of local synergies.”*

**Information**

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