Press Office 12/06/2023

**ARENA FOR ALL**

**OPERA EVENINGS ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY INCREASE TWO-FOLD**

**Italy's most important accessibility project, organised by the Arena Foundation and Müller, increases performances in the world's largest open-air theatre from 10 to 25 events.**

**From 20 June, trailers, accessible digital opera booklets, multi-sensory trails and 2,500 additional tickets will be available for people with motor disabilities**

As many as 25 evenings of live entertainment, from June to September, ensure accessibility. Project **Arena for All,** conceived by **Fondazione Arena di Verona** with **Müller** is back in 2023 for the 100th Festival. After last year's zero edition, **the initiative implements a two-fold increase in performances, from 10 to 25.** Everyone will have the opportunity to follow the opera with ad hoc aids and paths including audio description for the blind and visually impaired, as well as specific subtitles for the deaf. **This year, in three different languages: Italian, English and German**. **New standards of use for the practice of opera singing in Italy, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, to be enjoyed by all.**

Italy's largest inclusion project, in terms of number of spectators involved, includes accessible trailers, digital opera booklets, multi-sensory pathways and **2,500 additional tickets for people with motor disabilities, 100 per evening**.

The initiative was presented this morning, at the Arena in Verona, by **Cecilia Gasdia,** Superintendent of the Arena Foundation, along with **Luisa Ceni,** Councillor for Social and Housing Policies of the Municipality of Verona; **Paola Scandola,** Marketing Director of Müller Italia, and Project Coordinator **Elena Di Giovanni,** Associate Professor of English Translation and Accessibility at the University of Macerata.

*«Opera belongs to everybody and is for everybody. We shall never tire of emphasising this. This is why we have introduced new standards to the Arena, the largest open-air theatre in the world. The aim is to increase accessibility to opera performances*,*»* says **Cecilia Gasdia, Superintendent of the Arena Foundation***. «This is Italy’s most important inclusion project, which has been strengthened this year by Müller. Opera has been a multimedia show and a multi-sensory experience since its inception, a strongly inclusive collective ritual. And the success of the zero edition of ‘Arena for All’ has proven this».*

**Alessandra Locatelli,** the **Minister for Disability,** also wished to convey her thank you «*to all those who made the project possible. It touches on a crucial issue for the development of our communities, namely universal accessibility, a core principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. *Ensuring that every person has the opportunity to enjoy their free time and, above all, be happy is and must be a common commitment. This requires a concrete, widespread change of perspective that truly involves everyone, including institutions, the private sector and individual citizens. Designing and imagining any place and any event we want to make universally accessible and usable is a huge challenge and responsibility that concerns everybody. Hence, a heartfelt thank you to all of you. We have embarked on a path of change that needs everybody to do their part. If we do that, we shall achieve the cultural revolution that will finally change the general perspective, and improve the life of every person».*

*«We are pleased with the second edition of this important project. Launched at the 100th edition of the Festival, it is being proposed again this year just a few days before the grand opening of the 101st opera festival in the world,» says* **Luisa Ceni, Councillor for Social and Housing Policies**. *The synergy between institutions and sponsors underscores the community's commitment to make our amphitheatre more accessible and welcoming. This milestone is also crucial in view of the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic events. It reflects the Administration's commitment to promote accessibility and inclusion».*

Müller's participation in this major musical and cultural event is part of **Müller For People, the long-term path of social sustainability** the Verona-based organisation has mapped out for the coming years.

*«After last year's remarkable success, we have decided to renew and expand our efforts to make the Arena Opera Festival even more accessible. We thank Fondazione Arena di Verona for giving us the opportunity to support Italy's most important inclusive project from the very onset. This initiative makes opera accessible, and also appeals to every spectator, allowing everyone to experience the beauty of lyrical opera,»* says **Paola Scandola, Marketing Director of Müller Italia**.

The **four operas chosen** to inaugurate the project, coordinated by Professor Elena Di Giovanni with the support of Professor Francesca Raffi of the University of Macerata, are: Stefano Poda's 'crystal' *Aida* , the inaugural event of the 100th Festival; *Turandot, a* tribute to Giacomo Puccini on the centenary of his death; *The Barber of Seville*, in Hugo De Ana's elegant Rococo staging; and *Carmen,* in the “kolossal” staging with stage direction and design by Franco Zeffirelli.

*«The Arena di Verona is the largest and most accessible opera house in Europe. After the wonderful experience of 2023, attended by almost 500 people with sensory and intellectual disabilities thanks to project “Arena for All”, we are ready to start once again with several innovations. Already many people are contacting us about attending the event. It promises to be an even more beautiful and intensive year,»* says **Project Coordinator, Elena Di Giovanni.**

The initiative, which will kick off on Thursday, 20 June, with Aida 'in crystal' staged by director Stefano Poda, includes 10 unmissable evenings along with**multi-sensory pathways entirely free of charge,** subject to compulsory booking at **inclusione@arenadiverona.it** or via the Web page [**www.arenapertutti.it**](http://www.arenapertutti.it). People with disabilities will be **accompanied on stage to explore the sets, costumes, and props,** guided by the stage staff and by the skilful hands of those who have organised the performances down to the smallest detail in the Arena di Verona’s workshops.

Each performance will be accompanied by an **accessible trailer** (in Italian, English and German, with subtitles, voice, translation into Italian, international and German sign language, audio description of the images) and provided, during the performance, with **both audio description and subtitles in Italian, English and German for the deaf**. These accessibility services make use of state-of-the-art technology.

All spectators present will also be guaranteed access to **digital opera booklets**. These are highly inclusive tools that, by **replicating the graphics and structure of classic printed opera booklets** (with synopsis, director's notes, photos and information on performances), offer **simplified texts with editable and enlargeable characters, images and scene sketches with audio description** (for the blind and visually impaired), besides **texts translated into Italian sign language**. The opera booklets will be available in English, with international sign language translation.

Finally, **cards for the four operas** will be provided in **Easy To Read language** (promoted by “Inclusion Europe”, the European Association for People with Cognitive Disabilities) in Italian, English and German.

**The initiative is part of the regional project “Social and Inclusive Tourism in the Veneto Region”,** alongside other projects in which the Arena di Verona Foundation is involved.

For further information and to find out how to join, please write to the e-mail address inclusione@arenadiverona.it and consult the website [www.arenapertutti.it](http://www.arenapertutti.it).

The initiative will take place on the following dates:

20 June - *Aida*

22 June - *Turandot*

23 June - *Aida*

**27 June - *The Barber of Seville (evening with multi-sensory path)***

**28 June - *Aida (evening with multi-sensory path)***

**29 June - *Turandot (evening with multi-sensory path)***

6 July - *The Barber of Seville*

7 July - *Aida*

**11 July - *Aida (evening with multi-sensory path)***

**12 July - *The Barber of Seville (evening with multi-sensory path)***

13 July - *Carmen*

18 July - *Aida*

20 July - *Carmen*

21 July - *Aida*

**25 July - *Carmen (evening with multi-sensory path)***

**26 July - *Aida (evening with multi-sensory path)***

1 August - *Aida*

3 August - *Carmen*

**8 August - *Carmen (evening with multi-sensory path)***

17 August - *Carmen*

**23 August - *Carmen (evening with multi-sensory path)***

**24 August - *The Barber of Seville (evening with multi-sensory path)***

31 August *- The Barber of Seville*

6 September - *The Barber of Seville*

7 September - *Carmen*

**Information**

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