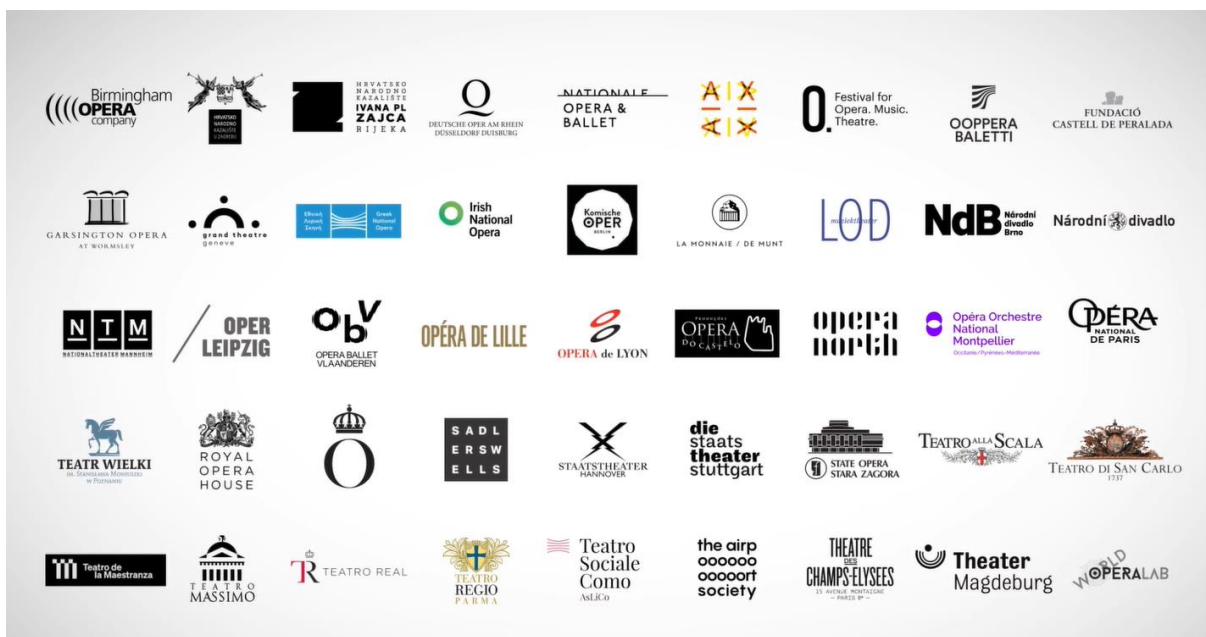




Press release: Opera Europa and FEDORA launch Next Stage

Opera Europa and FEDORA hereby launch Next Stage, an initiative for change in the opera and dance sector. It aims to provide financial support and skills development to boost innovation and holistic sustainability in three focus areas - **green, inclusive and digital transformative initiatives** – in order to build resilience within the performing arts sector. Driven by opera and dance companies, Next Stage’s 3-year plan will enable these institutions to transform themselves in order to flourish in the future, while opening up new funding opportunities. As of spring 2022, grants will be distributed to support the development of innovative, scalable projects championed by opera and dance companies for the benefit of the sector. Forty-five opera and dance companies in 17 countries have already committed to this initiative.



The performing arts play an important role by contributing to the economy, society, employment, as well as sustainable development, tourism, and education. They generate revenues of \$127 billion and employ 3.5 million people worldwide. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in spring 2020, the performing arts have been among the most negatively affected sectors. The containment measures that have been put in place have led to a chain of effects, severely impacting their economic and social situation.

Cultural institutions have been forced to make significant adjustments to their operations this past year. That involves changing how the theatres are managed and seasons are planned; how artists are engaged; how productions are created, performed and toured; how new audiences are reached and expanded; and how relations are established and nurtured with donors and partners. The process of recovery is an opportunity for the performing arts sector to reinvent itself for tomorrow's world.

Over the summer, Opera Europa and FEDORA led a market study conducted on a pro-bono basis by the global management consulting firm Kearney. This market study establishes a qualitative and quantitative assessment on where the European opera and dance sector stands today on the topics of sustainability, inclusivity, and digital transformation. With 100 participating companies throughout Europe sharing their perspectives on the three strands, followed up by in-depth interviews with 37 committed organisations, the findings of this study form an excellent basis to benchmark organisations on their accomplishments and ambitions. Key takeaways of the survey show us that many organisations embrace these 3 areas of interest and some have already taken steps towards transforming themselves. While these institutions are aware of the need to change their organisations on several levels, their main challenge is gathering the expertise and financial capacity to do so, and to set up the measurement tools for impact assessment. Next Stage aims to support their ambitions.

Opera Europa and FEDORA will showcase the successful projects' transformative activities in regard to sustainability, equality and digital transformation during professional meetings. Combined with expert knowledge scaling, peer-learning and best-practice sharing, this 'lighthouse project' will not only encourage the entire sector to increase efficiency and reduce costs, but it will also trigger a positive ripple effect on the socio-economic-environmental tissue of society to build resilience. The purpose is for opera and dance companies proactively to transform themselves, so that they may become exemplary leaders in the performing arts sectors.

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