

Dear cast, dear crew, dear all I worked with during 6 years in the National Opera House of Ljubljana, dear colleagues, dear Slovenian friends,

Let me start to thank you for the five productions we made together: *Kat'a Kabanova*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Devica Orleanska*, *Capuleti e Montecchi*, *Faust*... it always has been an honour and a real pleasure to create this operas with all of you.

I write this open letter because it might be the last time for me to be in Ljubljana. Faust might be my last production. Let me explain why. In the fourth act I wanted to have little yellow and blue flags behind the window wall in the set instead of the blue, white and red flags I had in my previous production of Faust. An artist has a voice and has to speak. That's his duty. Theatre (and opera) should listen to the heartbeat of the present. For me, the heartbeat of today is coloured in blue and yellow. But I have been forbidden to put this colours in my staging by the general director of the Opera House of Ljubljana, Mr. Staš Ravter. And it goes even further: when I would speak openly with a journalist about his ban I would 'never set one footstep again in 'his' Opera House'. Dixit the general director of your cultural temple.

Dear colleagues, dear all, can we accept this dictatorship? Do we agree with censure? Do we agree to be blackmailed when we use our freedom of speech? As an artist? As a person?

I love Ljubljana. So much. I love Slovenia. So much. And I love you all. So much. But I have a mirror at home. And I obliged myself to look in it every day to judge myself, to question myself.

No, I will never agree with ordinary blackmail. I will never agree with censure. If the general director closes his doors for me: so be it. I will keep with me the greatest memories. These memories, mister general director, you will never take away from me. And you will never take away my voice. Never.

Frank Van Laecke  
stage director

Draga umetniška zasedba, draga ekipa, dragi vsi, s katerimi sem sodeloval v preteklih 6 letih v SNG Opera in balet Ljubljana, dragi kolegi, dragi slovenski prijatelji,

Uvodoma se vam zahvaljujem za pet predstav, katere smo ustvarili skupaj: *Katja Kabanova*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Devica Orleanska*, *Capuleti in Montegi*, *Faust*... vedno mi je bilo v čast in resnično veselje ustvarjati te opere z vsemi vami.

To odprto pismo pišem zato, ker sem morda zadnjič v Ljubljani. *Faust* je morda moja zadnja režija v SNG Opera in balet Ljubljana. Naj razložim zakaj. V scenografiji četrtega dejanja sem želel za steno z okni imeti majhne rumene in modre zastave, namesto modro-belo-rdečih zastav, katere sem imel v svoji prejšnji uprizoritvi Fausta. Umetnik ima glas in mora govoriti. To je umetnikova dolžnost. Gledališče (in opera) naj prisluhne srčnemu utripu sedanjosti. Zame je današnji srčni utrip obarvan v modro in rumeno. Toda direktor ljubljanske Opere, g. Staš Ravter, mi je prepovedal uporabo teh barv v uprizoritvi. Še več kot to: če javno spregovorim v medijih o njegovi prepovedi, 'nikdar več ne bom prestopil praga 'njegove' operne hiše'. Tako je dejal direktor vašega kulturnega templja.

Dragi kolegi, dragi vsi, ali lahko sprejmemo takšno diktaturo? Se bomo podredili cenzuri? Ali sprejmemo to, da nas izsiljujejo, ko uporabljamo svojo svobodo govora? Kot umetnik? Kot človek?

Ljubim Ljubljano. Zelo. Obožujem Slovenijo. Zelo. In vse vas imam neizmerno rad. Doma pa imam ogledalo. In prisilil sem se, da vsak dan pogledam vanj, da se presojam, da se izprašujem.

Ne, nikdar se ne bom strinjal z navadnim izsiljevanjem. Nikoli se ne bom strinjal s cenzuro. Če mi direktor zapre vrata: naj bo tako. S seboj bom odnesel najlepše spomine. Teh spominov, gospod direktor, mi ne boste nikoli vzeli. In nikoli mi ne boste vzeli glasu. Nikoli.

Frank Van Laecke  
režiser