Warsaw, 9 June 2025  
Press Release

***The Best City in the World. An Opera about Warsaw*– ticket sales now open**

**19 & 20 September, 18 & 19 October 2025**

**Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera, Warsaw**

**The world premiere of *The Best City in the World. An Opera about Warsaw* will take place on 19 September 2025 – an exceptional new work co-produced by the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera and Sinfonia Varsovia to mark the 80th anniversary of the beginning of Warsaw’s post-war reconstruction. Ticket sales open on 10 June.**

**A story of rebuilding Warsaw**

The inspiration behind the opera comes from Grzegorz Piątek’s award-winning **book** ***The Best City in the World. Rebuilding Warsaw 1944–1949***. **Beniamin M. Bukowski**’s libretto tells a story of intertwined human destinies – of dreams and ambitions, doubts and compromises.

At the heart of the opera are two women: an architect and a journalist (portrayed by **Agata Zubel** and **Joanna Freszel**). The architect is based on Helena Syrkus, a key figure at the Bureau for the Reconstruction of the Capital, whose vision of redesigning a dysfunctional city is challenged first by the devastation of war, and later by the difficult realities of post-war rebuilding. The second protagonist is inspired by the American journalist Anna Louise Strong, a communist sympathiser who travelled through war-torn Poland with the Red Army.

**Cezary Duchnowski’s** music combines symphonic scale with cutting-edge electronics. Alternating passages for soloists and choir create a dynamic sonic landscape that conveys both the collective tragedy of a ruined city and the intimate experiences of its inhabitants. The production is directed by **Barbara Wiśniewska**. The story told in the libretto resonates personally with her, reflecting the fate of her own Warsaw-based family in the aftermath of the war. She draws inspiration from the shared determination that enabled the capital, reduced to rubble, to rise again. The stage design for *The Best City in the World* is by Polish-Japanese designer **Natalia Kitamikado**. **Sinfonia Varsovia** and the **choirs of the Polish National Opera** will be conducted **by Bassem Akiki**, a Polish-Lebanese conductor known for his strong affinity with contemporary repertoire.

*An Opera about Warsaw* carries a powerful message about the need to come together across divides in order to rebuild. It is not only a story about the past, but one that speaks directly to the present – to the idea that “the best city in the world” can only be built on a foundation of community, courage, and hope.

**The making of the opera**

*An Opera about Warsaw* was made possible thanks to the **patronage of the City of Warsaw**. The concept was initiated by architectural historian and curator **Jarosław Trybuś**, who in 2021 presented the idea to **Jerzy Kornowicz**, Director of the Warsaw Autumn Festival; **Waldemar Dąbrowski**, Director of the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera; and **Janusz Marynowski**, Director of Sinfonia Varsovia, who took the project under his wing with the support of his team.

The composer and librettist were selected through closed competitions held in early 2023. Beniamin Bukowski completed the final version of the libretto in the autumn of that year, and Cezary Duchnowski finished the score in the summer of 2024. The stage director, Barbara Wiśniewska, was appointed through a dedicated competition launched in early 2024. She is joined by a creative team including set designer Natalia Kitamikado, dramaturg Marcin Cecko, costume designer Emil Wysocki, choreographer Maćko Prusak, lighting designer Aleksandr Prowaliński, video artist Bartek Macias, and make-up designer Mateusz Stępniak.

The world premiere of *The Best City in the World. An Opera about Warsaw* on 19 September 2025 will inaugurate the 2025/2026 season of the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera and serve as the opening concert of the 68th Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music. The opera is one of the landmark events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the beginning of Warsaw’s post-war reconstruction. Further performances will take place on 20 September, and on 18 and 19 October 2025. Tickets will be available via the [Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera](https://teatrwielki.pl/en/calendar/2025-2026/najlepsze-miasto-swiata-opera-o-warszawie/termin/2025-09-19_19-00/) website from 11:00 a.m. on 10 June 2025.

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Współorganizatorzy: Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera and Sinfonia Varsovia  
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***The Best City in the World. An Opera about Warsaw***Friday, 19 September 2025, 7:00 p.m. *(world premiere)*Saturday, 20 September 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Saturday, 18 October 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday, 19 October 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
Moniuszko Hall, Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera, Warsaw

**Cezary Duchnowski** music

**Beniamin M. Bukowski**  libretto, based on *The Best City in the World. Rebuilding Warsaw 1944–1949* by Grzegorz Piątek  
**Agata Zubel** soprano  
**Joanna Freszel** soprano  
**Bassem Akiki** conductor  
**Barbara Wiśniewska** stage director  
**Natalia Kitamikado** set design  
**Choir of the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera  
Władysław Skoraczewski “Artos” Children’s Choir  
Sinfonia Varsovia**

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