

# In favour of joy

**"I know not all that may be coming,  
but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing."  
Herman Melville**

Is it still possible to fight in favour of joy?

To see joy not as a veil thrown over a burning world, a selfish and frivolous curtain shielding the eye from violence and division?

Is it still possible to believe joy is a way to resist?

There is doubt, obviously – doubt keeps heads out of the sand. Yet choosing joy every day means cracking a window of hope. Choosing the *power to*, and not the *power over*. Because it can cheekily and noisily bring people together, joy is proving to be utterly political.

An entire generation is currently fighting in favour of joy, refusing cynicism, powerlessness, and fear. Such a fight is perfectly embodied by the French poet Kiyémis.

She says: *"Joy is about living together, resisting together. About inventing spaces where beauty and creativity are the focus instead of an afterthought. Choosing joy, plain and simple, is a way to live in the world without giving up the will to change it. Each collapse contains the faint echoes of a song, and joy is the underground tune hummed every time the world wobbles."*

Can you hear the underground tune swiftly buzzing in your ears? The tune you are now humming absentmindedly? This tune is yours. This tune may be the most integral part of our humanity – that fragile land where the greatest forms of beauty come to bloom. This tune is the reason why opera houses open ears and minds.

This house, your house, is a place to converge, to experience together what makes us human: to share, to risk, to imagine, to create, to transform. An opera house is a promise, first and foremost, a promise to feel the world more intently and to build it together.

This season, the Opéra de Lyon renews its commitment to be the sentinel of a collective exploration of joy, in each and every form.

A dazzling *Salome*. Youth and eagerness in *Olympe the Rebel* and *Madam Angot's Daughter*. A dizzying *Lucrezia Borgia*. A facetious *Love of the Three Oranges*. The fervour of great symphonies. The pulse of dancers in full force. The Opera Underground's intense inventiveness.

When sharing these kinds of moments, something changes within us. Our heart is lighter; our gaze, sharper. As our societies are divided by increasingly unsteady international relations, the simple act of being together and feeling is becoming fundamental. In the manner of *Peer Gynt*, the Opéra de Lyon is adamant that our voices are our most precious common trait: "Singing is being oneself".

Our Festival is a great reminder of that fact. The 2027 edition, "Make your voice heard", introduces a new expanded version of this event gathering locals and all the opera enthusiasts Europe has to offer. The ambition is simple, forward – we want the whole city to sing – and pursued via a whole array of venues and art forms: opera, musical theatre, installations, performance art.

This entire programme will come to life thanks to the Opéra de Lyon's unique and complementary pools of artists, tech staff, and executives, all gathered at the service of the arts. Thanks to them, each season amounts to 350 performances and more than 1,000 events overall.

The Opéra continues to welcome artists from all over the world; great voices and great visions, together on our stage. *Opera on the Road* and *Opera Under the Stars* are still going to travel throughout the City and Region, much in the fashion of our productions: from Saint-Priest to Shanghai, from Villefranche to Prague, Brussels, Clermont-Ferrand, Aix-en-Provence, Berlin, Paris, Chambéry, Oullins, Tokyo, proving time and time again our operas, ballets, and concerts are for everybody.

Before embarking on world tours, the productions and artists meet here, at the Opéra de Lyon, which you attend in increasing numbers each year; last season, there were 305,799 of you, here to see a show, take a tour of the place, take part in outreach initiatives. 83% came from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region and 33% came for the first time. Your trust has brought us together, fuelled by the power of youth – for one out of three of you are under 29.

Our promise is made with you and for you.

A promise of joy.

**Richard Brunel**  
General and Artistic Director