Date 6 June 2024

Place Ostrava

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PRESS RELEASE

**World architect Steven Holl will visit Ostrava again**

Ostrava will once again welcome the world's leading architect Steven Holl, who is returning to the prepared area of the reconstructed House of Culture of the City of Ostrava after almost three years. This time he will take on a special task. Together with other celebrities, he will tap the foundation stone of the concert hall. Apart from the ceremonial act, however, he will also have another programme to look forward to. Those interested can meet this world architecture personality at the international Meltingpot Forum during the Colours of Ostrava. Steven Holl will then discuss the current situation of the building with the team that has been working on the unique building for many years, as the architectural competition has been in preparation since 2017.

"The new concert hall in Ostrava will be an inspiring place for the public and visitors from abroad who appreciate the great modern music legendary to Ostrava. The concept of a “perfect acoustic instrument in its case” has been carried out in all the working drawings and now will be realized in space and sound. It's an extremely exciting moment music and architecture," said Steven Holl. Visitors to Colours of Ostrava can look forward to Steven Holl's lecture on 19 July 2024 at 4.30 pm, with a discussion on architecture planned in the UniverCity zone.

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the concert hall is planned for 19 July 2024. The programme will include a performance by the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava under the baton of future chief conductor Daniel Raiskin, who will perform Bedřich Smetana's My Country. The foundation stone of the building comes from the quarry in Mrakotín.

"Quality architecture is essential for the development of Ostrava, and the personality of Steven Holl and his team brings a unique building to the city, much discussed by both supporters and opponents of the concert hall. Many have compared the construction of the concert hall to the situation of the building of the New Town Hall, when even the then mayor Jan Prokeš faced harsh criticism from the public and the media during the construction of the largest town hall complex in the country. In any case, the exceptional concert hall project will bring a reconstructed appearance of the town's house of culture, adequate musical facilities and has an impact in the field of architecture. Thanks to such prominent architectural figures and the extensive work of the teams involved in the implementation of these unique projects, Ostrava will be able to offer a new multifunctional complex that has no rival in the country. However, before the new concert hall welcomes its first visitors, there are many tasks ahead of us, the main topic is, of course, apart from the implementation itself, also the financing of the project," said Jan Dohnal, the mayor of the city.

At its last meeting, the town council discussed the terms of the contract with the European Commission's executive agency, which could amount to up to €21 million. "The non-repayable grant, combined with a long-term investment loan from the European Investment Bank, makes up the bulk of the funding. We could sign the grant agreement, as well as the loan agreement, as early as June this year. The amount of the loan could be up to two billion crowns. The co-financing of the city is provided by the Fund for the construction of the new concert hall. We will also receive a subsidy of CZK 300 million from the Moravian-Silesian Region. For the next subsidy we expect to issue a registration with the amount of support of CZK 600 million. In March this year, an application was submitted to the Modernization Fund of the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic for energy savings of the House of Culture of the City of Ostrava, where we could receive a subsidy of up to 88 million," explained Lucie Baránková Vilamová.

The financing of the whole project is multi-source. "The model of multi-source financing of this demanding construction is not entirely simple. For example, the European Commission grant and the European Investment Bank loan are mutually conditional drawdowns and the amount of both can be variable. We are fine-tuning the project with the providers of the other sources of financing, from the application to the financing of the individual items, including the purpose of the drawdown. We must avoid so-called double financing, i.e. financing one budget item from two sources of funding. However, the city is very experienced and this risk is reliably taken care of. And each subsidy in this model is therefore unique. As soon as we have valid grant decisions or grant agreements, we will of course publish more detailed information about the funding," added Hana Tichánková, Deputy Mayor.

The newly built complex will offer a concert hall with a capacity of 1300 seats, the theatre hall will have an additional 490 seats and the multifunctional chamber hall will have a capacity of 515 seats. The education centre is defined by 200 seats and the lecture multifunctional hall will have 120 seats. The complex includes a recording studio, spaces for leisure activities and facilities, cafes, restaurants, lounges. The city of Ostrava first attempted to build a quality concert hall in the 1960s, the last time in 1969. The new form of the building has been known since July 2019, when the results of the architectural competition were announced. The winning design by Steven Holl Architects from New York and Architecture Acts from Prague preserves the existing building to a large extent.

"At the beginning of April, a contract was signed with the contractor of the second phase of the project of the concert hall and reconstruction of the House of Culture of Ostrava. The winner of the public contract was the Association for the Concert Hall, whose partners are IMOS Brno a. s. and IPS Třinec a. s. The Association offered the lowest price of CZK 2.798 billion. The first phase of the project, the preparation of the area, was already started last year and is now being completed. It included the necessary works, such as relocations and connections of utilities, construction of water management facilities and geothermal wells, among others. The preparation of the area will be followed by the excavation of the construction pit in the coming months," explained Břetislav Riger, Deputy Mayor. "We are also facing a rather crucial coordination of traffic, as several projects are in various stages of implementation in the affected area, starting with the construction of a new parking house and ending with the construction of a scientific library, the so-called Black Cube," added Břetislav Riger.

"In 2018, after thorough preparations, the City of Ostrava took a major step. This was the announcement of an international architectural competition for the construction of a concert hall and the related reconstruction of the historically valuable building of the cultural house with a clear goal - to breathe new life into the site and the current cultural house and to create an adequate cultural and social facility in Ostrava with world-class acoustic, technical and architectural parameters. These requirements were met by the project of the studio of the world-famous architect Steven Holl, which was selected a year after the competition was announced. Now, in 2024, we are at the stage of starting the construction itself. So it has been a relatively short time from idea to actual construction, which is a testament to the incredible energy our city naturally has. I believe that the positive impact of this project, which is unprecedented in the Czech Republic, will be crucial for the development of Ostrava. Ostrava will indelibly put itself on the cultural map of Europe," concluded Jan Žemla, Director of the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava.