



Project Butterfly

Boosting environmental
awareness in opera creation

The Project Butterfly Newsletter
August 2025 🦋



Behind the curtain: the team that brings an opera to life

With the performances now complete, Project Butterfly is shining a light on the many talents that made this ambitious opera possible. This month, we turn our attention to the people behind the scenes – the artistic team whose creativity and dedication transformed an idea into a series of living, breathing performances.

Setting the music in motion

It all begins with the composer, who writes the music that sets the emotional tone and pace of the story. For Project Butterfly, the choice of composer was placed directly in the hands of students. In each country, students compared extracts submitted via an open call and selected the one that best matched their vision. This led to the appointment of Paavo Korpijaakko (Finland), Benjamin Baczevski (Poland), and Marco Attura (Italy), each of whom brought their own artistic voice and cultural perspective to the project, enriching the operas with three distinct musical identities.



Giving words to the story

Working closely with the composer is the librettist, who crafts the words and dialogue, shaping character and narrative. In Italy, Vincenzo de Vivo led workshops with students in Modena before adapting their ideas into a libretto, drawing on his decades of experience as an Artistic Director, librettist, and dramaturg to guide the storytelling process. In Finland, Mirva Koivukangas collaborated closely with students, turning their themes and storylines into a text that reflected their perspectives while keeping the narrative clear and engaging. In Poland, Jagoda Jagson took on the role of librettist, adapting the students' ideas into a libretto that captured both youthful imagination and dramatic structure.

Shaping the vision on stage

Guiding the overarching artistic cohesion of Project Butterfly was Aldo Sisillo,

the project's Artistic Director, who ensured that every creative element moved in harmony towards a unified vision. Within this framework, the director interpreted the work on stage: Matteo Mazzoni led the staging, aligning text, music, and movement with the production's dramatic arc. The set and costume designer then transformed this vision into physical reality. For Project Butterfly, Joanna Borkowska created a striking visual identity through scenography and costumes that combined imagination with responsibility. Drawing inspiration from nature and abstract art, she wove sustainability and innovative technologies into her designs, bringing a fresh and thought-provoking visual language to the stage.

Guiding every note

No opera would be complete without the conductor, who unites the orchestra and singers in a living performance. In Project Butterfly, Estonian conductor and pianist Jaan Ots guided the musical direction, arrangements, and live performances, ensuring every line resonated with clarity and emotion. With experience ranging from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* at the Finnish National Ballet to leading ensembles across Europe, he brought both precision and expressive depth to the stage.



Creating light and atmosphere

Beyond the creative leads, specialist crafts also played a vital role in shaping what audiences experienced. Lighting designer Lauri Sirén and 3-D designer Andreas Probst enriched the production with their expertise, shaping the atmosphere and visual texture that carried the director's vision to the stage.

Co-creation in action

Just as important is how this opera was created. In Project Butterfly, each opera house worked with a group of students from its own city; these groups took part in workshops and developed nine story ideas, of which three were selected. A librettist from each country then adapted the chosen ideas into a libretto, and - through an open call - students in each country compared submitted music extracts and chose one composer per country to set their story to music.

Together, these artists - and the students at the heart of the process - demonstrate that opera is the work of many hands, hearts, and minds. Project Butterfly shows how creativity, collaboration, and sustainability can turn an opera into a shared journey of imagination.

[Learn more about Project Butterfly here!](#)

Key Dates in opera, music, and sustainability

Interesting facts and anniversaries to remember

As August unfolds, the month offers a tapestry of cultural milestones and global reflections. From operatic premieres that reshaped musical storytelling to international days that urge us to consider peace, humanity, and our bond with nature, August reminds us of the power of art to mirror and inspire a more sustainable and compassionate world.

- **4 August – Birth of Louis Armstrong (1901)**

Born in New Orleans in 1901, Louis Armstrong became one of the most influential figures in 20th-century music. His artistry transformed jazz into a global language, breaking barriers of race and culture. Armstrong's legacy reminds us of music's power to connect people across divides - a message that resonates strongly with sustainability's call for shared responsibility and collaboration.

- **6 August – Hiroshima Peace Memorial Day**

Commemorating the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, this day is observed worldwide as a call for peace and disarmament. For artists and cultural institutions, it underscores the role of music and performance in fostering remembrance, resilience, and a more sustainable future built on peace.

- **19 August – World Humanitarian Day**

Designated by the United Nations, this day honours humanitarian workers and advocates for collective global responsibility. Cultural institutions, including opera houses, often mark such days with performances and outreach, using music to highlight shared humanity and inspire solidarity.

- **22 August – Birth of Claude Debussy (1862)**

Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Debussy reshaped musical language and evoked the natural world in works from *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* to *La mer* - a reminder of how sound can attune us to fragile ecosystems.

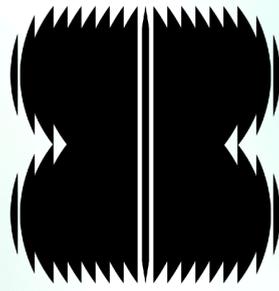
- **25 August – Birth of Leonard Bernstein (1918)**

Composer, conductor and educator, Bernstein bridged genres and communities, championing music's civic and educational role - values that resonate with today's sustainability and inclusion agendas.

- **28 August – World premiere of Wagner's Lohengrin (1850)**

Premiered at the Staatskapelle Weimar under the direction of Franz Liszt - deliberately timed for Goethe's birthday - this Romantic milestone highlights how cultural heritage and collective artistry shape the operatic canon.

[Check out our Instagram for updates!](#)



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Project Butterfly Team



Project Butterfly



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