

Documentary 50 mins 4K HDR

A THEATRE FOR OUR TIME

This is the inspiring story of a very special theatre. It's also the story of a city: Wrocław in Poland, a beacon of learning and the arts throughout its history and a city which has often paid dearly for its resistance to oppression. The stunning Capitol Theatre, now restored to its former glory after enduring extensive destruction amidst the rise and fall of two totalitarian regimes, mirrors not only the modern history of the city but of Central Europe itself.

In 1929 a new cinema was built in Gartenstraße, an area known for its cafés and culture in what was then the German city of Breslau. The Capitol cinema boasted a glorious art deco design said to be the most beautiful in Europe and featured state-of-the-art sound and projection facilities anticipating the rise in 'talkies', the promise of colour and the thriving and innovative film industry.

In 1945 the infamous siege of Breslau by a ruthless Soviet army left the city in ruins. Renamed Wrocław and returned to Poland after the surviving German population had been forcibly expelled, it was slowly rebuilt under the weight of the communist dictatorship who also finished the work of the Nazis by removing the last of the centuries-old Jewish community from the city. Despite heavy damage, the Capitol's main auditorium avoided complete destruction and became the Śląsk cinema, reduced to showing party-sanctioned material and propaganda. In 1956 the last of its expressionist glamour faded when the opulent art deco colour scheme was overpainted with tempera.

When democracy returned to Poland in 1991, the theatre was stirring with new life as the Music Theatre-Wrocław Operetta. Director *Wojciech Kościelniak* was ambitious to create a world-class musical theatre. The city agreed, and under the supervision of Capitol director *Konrad Imelia* a stunning new building was completed in 2013, its massive glass atrium housing the original auditorium which had been lovingly restored to its former dazzling glory. Today, the Capitol stands once again as one of the finest and most beautiful theatres in Europe. It also stands for originality and innovation - most of the productions are written and composed at the theatre's special request.

Narrated by *Rula Lenska*, whose family history and proud Polish heritage has poignant relevance, *A Theatre For Our Time* tells this remarkable story in the equally remarkable context of Wrocław/Breslau and of Poland itself. Not looking just to the past, it focuses too on what is happening today and in the future. With unique access, we follow the production of a new commission of Fellini's *E la nave va (And the Ship Sails On)*, to be written and directed by Kościelniak himself - arguably Poland's foremost theatre director - from initial concept through to opening night.

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