



OOPERA
BALETTI

Finnish National Opera and Ballet 2018



This is a shortened version
of the Annual Report 2018.





Finnish National Opera and Ballet

Memorable experiences for everyone

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is a national arts institution, offering opera and ballet performances and other events to Finns of all ages. Guest performances, school operas, TV broadcasts and streaming bring the FNOB to everyone all over the country and even the globe.

In terms of personnel, the Finnish National Opera and Ballet is a medium-sized opera and ballet company. In 2018, there were 553 employees on average, representing 33 nationalities. Finnish and foreign guest artists appear alongside the FNOB's own soloists. The FNOB also employs experts from a wide range of crafts specialities, from shoemakers to metalworkers. Our aim is to create a good and inspiring workplace for all professional groups by being equitable, transparent and fair; by offering opportunities for continuing self-improvement; and by supporting wellbeing at work and work ability.

The FNOB generally stages four new opera productions and three to four new ballet productions each year. Added to these are revivals of old productions, resulting in a programme that is different every week and may include dozens of productions in the course of the year. The FNOB performs both established classics and contemporary opera and dance works, especially new Finnish works. All the opera performances are performed in original language and subtitled in English, Finnish and Swedish.

The FNOB is the only professional opera and ballet company in Finland. It traces its history back to 1911; the Ballet was founded in 1922. The company occupied the tiny Alexander Theatre for decades until the purpose-built Opera House was finally inaugurated in 1993. The main auditorium seats more than 1,300, and there is a studio stage too. The foyers are also used for small-scale performances and free public events.

In Finland, opera and ballet are substantially subsidised out of public funds. In 2018, 53% of the FNOB's funding came from the national lottery funds distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, 17% in the form of state rent subsidies, 1% from Ballet School's state subsidy, 7% from the metropolitan area municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen, and 22% from ticket sales, corporate partnerships, etc. In-house revenues covered 27% of all operating costs. Public and private funding help us keep our ticket prices at a moderate level.



Year 2018 in brief

Star dancer Eun-Ji Ha awarded Edvard Fazer Prize

Last February the Finnish Cultural Foundation awarded star dancer Eun-Ji Ha the Edvard Fazer Prize, which is distributed every two years for the best performance in the Finnish National Ballet promoting dance as an art form.



FNO Orchestra acquired a Grancino cello



A unique Giovanni Grancino cello dating back to the year 1700 was acquired for the FNO Orchestra. This acquisition was enabled by an investment vehicle developed by Mandatum Life for professional investors. There is only a limited number of rare valuable instruments like the Grancino cello in the world. In addition to the cello, the FNOB has two other valuable instruments in its possession: an Andrea Guarneri violin owned by wine merchant Juha Berglund and a Tononi cello owned by the Emil Aaltonen Foundation.

Public fundraising launched

In August the National Opera and Ballet launched its first public fundraising campaign under the theme *Support Future Talents*. At the same time, a donation by Esa-Pekka Salonen was used to set up a fund that bears his name. It supports new opera and ballet art with a focus on technology.



Opera and Ballet toured Finland

As in the previous years, the FNOB put up a fair number of performances outside the Opera House in 2018. They were held in a total of 26 localities across Finland.

One of the most extensive events was held Oulu in October. The programme included diverse shows for both adults and children.



Tosca charmed audiences

Christof Loy's visionary *Tosca* charmed audiences and the media alike. "The FNOB's *Tosca* is a splendid thriller of the highest international standard."

Helsingin Sanomat, 8 Sept 2018.



Oopperabaletti.fi now also an online store

The National Opera and Ballet rolled out its own ticket sales system and online store in April 2018. The online shop is part of the increasingly popular Oopperabaletti.fi service.

In 2018, the web-based service attracted over 1.7 million visits, up 20% on the previous year.

Opera and Ballet in figures



654

PERFORMANCES



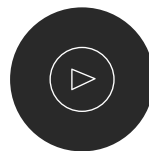
26

LOCALITIES



291 295

SPECTATORS



1.2

PEOPLE REACHED DIGITALLY



92

PER CENT CAPACITY FACTOR



EUR 12.2

MILLION IN BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS



We clarified the strategy for 2025 announced in 2017 in more detail by stating that our vision is to be forerunners in providing meaningful experiences.

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Public service at the heart of activities

My first year as the General Director of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet is now drawing to a close. It was a heart-warming experience to be welcomed to a house where I used to work in the early days of my career. Many things have remained unchanged during the twenty years that I spent elsewhere. However, the people's dedication, passion, professional pride and the will to improve are still there. But a lot of things have also changed. As a result of the radical transformation of society, the FNOB has been called upon to keep up with the developments by opening up and finding new ways of working. Clearly, the view that we are first and foremost public servants is winning ground throughout the organisation. For this, we owe a great deal to my predecessor Päivi Kärkkäinen, who worked hard to instil customer-oriented thinking in all our activities.

One of my first practical measures after assuming my new position was to extend the executive management team. In January the Financial and HR Managers joined the management team as permanent members whose input is, in my opinion, essential to the direction of activities at the FNOB. In August the executive management team was joined by the newly appointed Artistic Director of the Ballet Madeleine Onne. Together we have made determined efforts to clarify the duties and improve the efficiency of the work carried out by the management team.

The efforts to develop the strategy were continued because I find it important to delve into and have the management team fully commit to our strategy that spans several years to come. We clarified the strategy for 2025 announced in 2017 in more detail by stating that our vision is to be a forerunner in providing meaningful experiences. As Finland's only opera and ballet house, we feel duty-bound to create, develop and maintain opera and ballet art of the highest international standard and to offer these services across Finland.

Our biggest concern in the next few years is the adequacy of funding.

Currently our operating grant provided by the state is 99% of what it was in 2012, but we have managed to balance the budget by increasing box office receipts and improving efficiency. Also, the increase in general cost levels has been very moderate. However, the situation will change. As a result of the pay increases specified in the collective agreements and the effects of inflation, our costs will increase. At the current level of funding, our financial position will become unsustainable. To fill the financing gap, we have taken measures that have not directly affected the artistic standard of our works and launched an active private fundraising campaign. However, these measures are not enough to resolve the situation as the box office receipts cannot be increased very much given the high capacity factor since we want to keep the ticket prices reasonable.

Despite the challenges, we are looking ahead with confidence. We want to secure the future of high-standard opera and ballet in Finland and firmly believe that we are able to find the necessary financial resources through determined efforts and with the aid of private funding. In this spirit, we have been engaged in constructive efforts during 2018, for which I wish to express my warmest thanks to the Board, Supervisory Board and staff. Also, I wish to express my gratitude to the growing audiences who have followed our performances both on location and through digital channels in Finland and abroad.

Gita Kadambi, General Director

Creating experiences

Our performances are supported by a huge production machinery behind the scenes. A large number of highly skilled craftsmen in several workshops design and manufacture everything we see on the stage. The professional skill, creativity and enthusiasm of the staff and smooth cooperation between the various professional groups play a key role in the successful execution of our strategy – they are essential to accomplishing our vision of being forerunners in providing art experiences.



A ballet mistress's job is to pass on the ballet tradition by drawing upon her own training and experience.

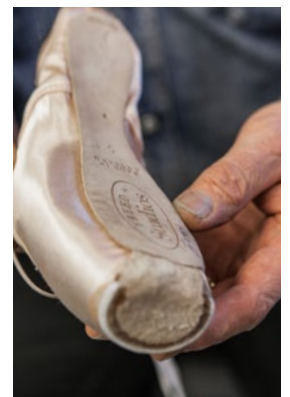
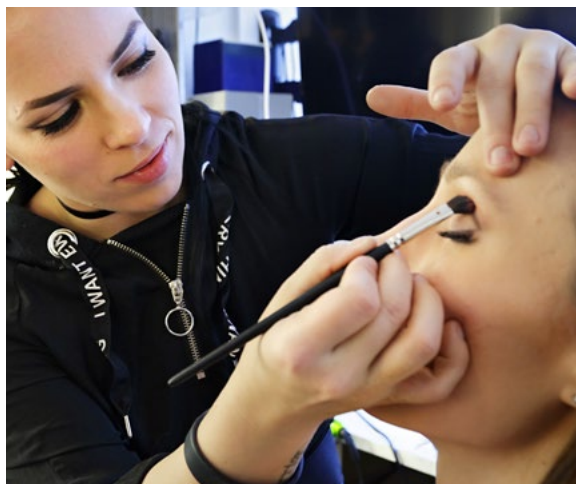
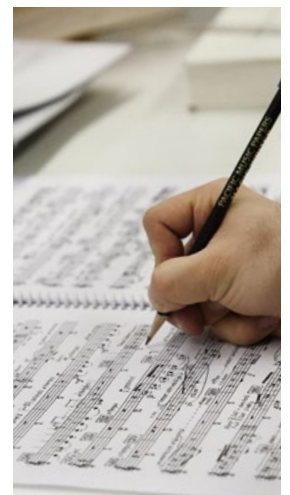
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*Ingrid Néměčková
Principal Ballet Mistress*

I'm always moved when watching a performance. When it starts, I feel part of a huge machinery of art-making, part of something great and beautiful.

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*Pipsa Keski-Hakuni
Props Designer*



The artists coming to make-up sit down on the first available seat, so you never know the character you're going to work on.

”

*Daniela Eckhart
Hairdresser/Make-up Artist*



National Opera and Ballet today

On the road to becoming a forerunner in providing meaningful experiences

One of the highlights of 2018 was the new amazing Tosca production.

Christof Loy's masterly direction will be part of our repertoire for a long time to come.

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*Lilli Paasikivi,
Artistic Director of the Opera*

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is a national art institution of a high international standard. As Finland's only professional opera and ballet house, we seek to touch a wide range of audiences and serve society at large. Although the core of our activities consist of performances held in the Opera House, it is also important for us to reach other audiences and have a presence throughout Finland. Our activities are managed by the Finnish National Opera and Ballet Foundation.

The strategy announced in 2017 extending up to 2025 defines our vision as being a forerunner in providing meaningful experiences. The strategy is presented on the adjacent page.

Opera and ballet performances are supported out of public funds to make them available to all. In 2018, 53% of the FNOB's funding came from the national lottery funds distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, 17% in the form of state rent subsidies, 1% from Ballet School's state subsidy, 7% from the metropolitan area municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen, and 22% from ticket sales, corporate partnerships, etc. In-house revenues covered 27% of all operating costs. Thanks to public and private funding, we have been able to keep ticket prices affordable.

In 2018, we put up 654 performances, of which 168 were held on the main stage. A total of 274,187 people watched our performances, either free or by buying a ticket. When various audience outreach and other projects are included, the number of spectators reaches 291,295. In Finland, we visited 26 localities. The capacity factor of the performances held in the Opera House was 92%.

For information about the repertoire in 2018, see encore.opera.fi/en.

Inclusive audience outreach activities reached people of all ages throughout Finland

A third key field of activity of strategic importance aside from opera and ballet productions is audience outreach. Its objective is to offer art experiences to people who do not otherwise avail themselves of our services. The guidelines for audience outreach activities are determined by Artistic Directors who aim to achieve the same standard of artistic quality as in the works put up on the main stage. The established forms of audience outreach activities were continued in 2018: events and performances were organised for babies, toddlers, children, young people and senior citizens.

The most important recent audience outreach projects included:

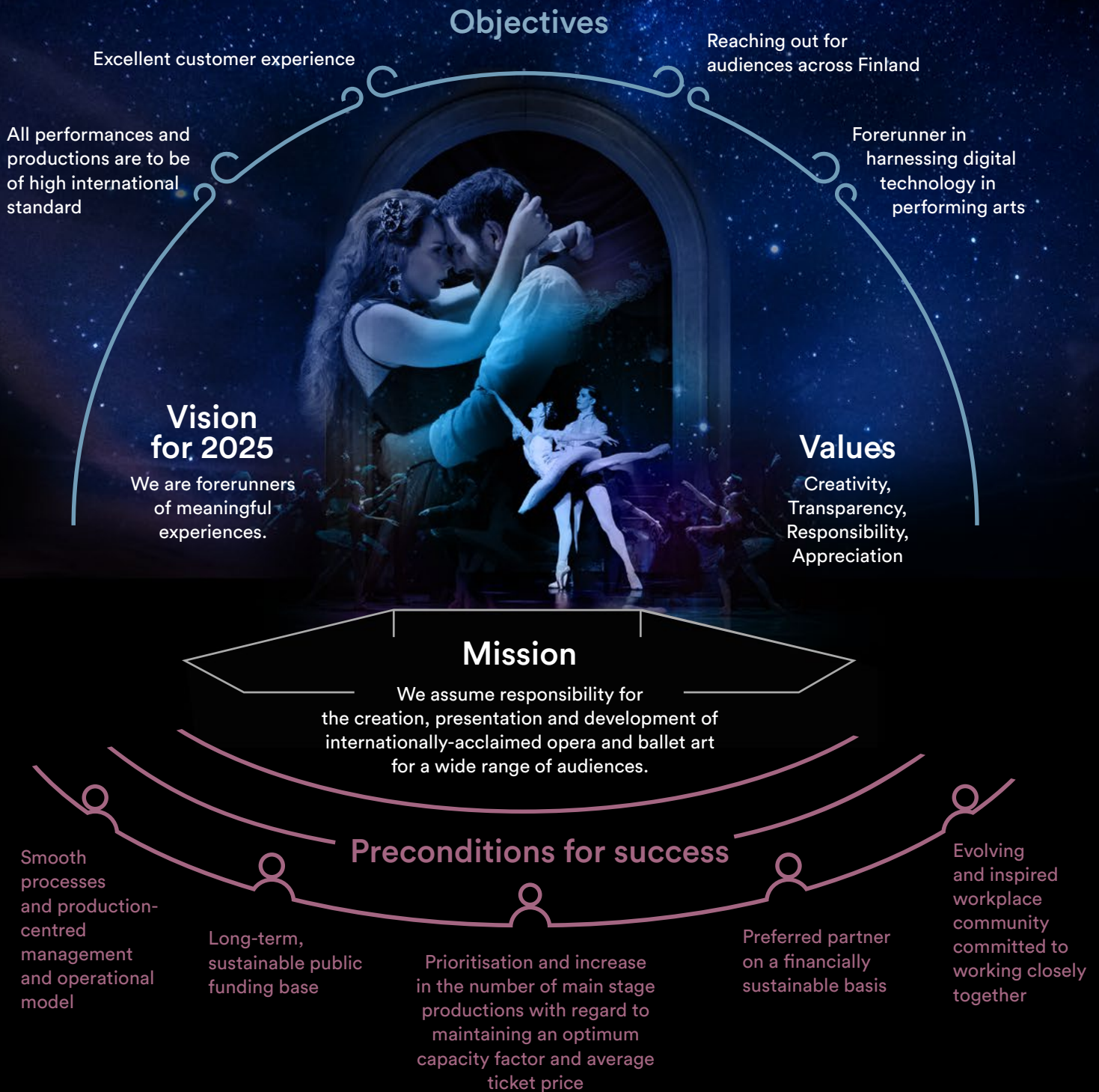
- The school opera *Boy Wonder A*, born out of the cooperation between lower-level pupils and opera staff, was performed a total of 110 times in 24 localities across Finland.
- We are involved in an extensive joint nationwide 3-year project called *Art Testers* which was launched in 2017 by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and Swedish Cultural Foundation and which will take all 8th graders to various art institutions to experience and assess art. In 2018, a total of 14,100 pupils attended the 21 performances held on the main stage.
- As part of the *So You Think You Can Muuv?* programme launched by the FNOB, we engaged in cooperation with the Regional Dance Centre of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. For this development project, we received funding under the *Schools on the Move* programme administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

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*Madeleine Onne,
Artistic Director of the Ballet*

I want to strengthen the National Ballet Youth Group which is an important path of professional development for dancers. The objective is to consolidate the group's Finnish identity in an international operating environment.

Strategy 2025





A French soirée: Suite en blanc

A definite majority of our customers have welcomed the new customer information and ticket sales system.

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*Liisa Riekkii,
Communications Director*

Extensive cooperation with Finnish and foreign partners continued

As in the previous years, we received a large number of visits by artists from Finland and abroad. Active cooperation with other opera and ballet houses was continued in the context of the Opera Europa organisation, among others.

Other forms of activity included the rental, purchase and production of works in collaboration with other opera and ballet companies. Five rented productions were put up on the main stage during 2018. Additionally, we co-produced *Madama Butterfly* and the *Phantom of the Opera* together with the Göteborg Opera.

We have recording agreements with our artistic groups and a partnering agreement with the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE on one radio and one TV recording per year. These agreements allows us to make our opera and ballet performances available to wide audiences in Finland and internationally through various channels. Two major recordings were released in 2018: Stravinsky's *Perséphone* by Esa-Pekka Salonen for the Pentatone label and Sebastian Fagerlund's acclaimed *Höstsonaten* for BIS.

We are also involved in two international web services: *Opera Vision* funded by the European Union and *Opera Season* of the European culture channel ARTE. Of the FNOB's repertoire, *Opera Vision* webcast Iiro Rantala's opera *Instant Cure Sanatorium* and Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*. Puccini's widely acclaimed *Tosca* produced in collaboration with YLE was aired in ARTE's *Opera Season* project.

First-rate experiences to audiences

All our activities aim at offering a full experience to our customers from the first contact to the post-performance mood and impression. The new customer information and ticket sales system rolled out in the spring of 2018 is one of main ways in which we will seek to improve the customer experience. It allows us to identify customers and offer a comprehensive range of services as well as permits seamless integration of e-sales with online services and digital customer communications. The share of tickets sold online has increased from 40 to over 60 per cent over a period of just a few months and we expect this trend to hold up. Another improvement that makes life easier for customers is that now tickets and restaurant services can be purchased at the same time. People have also eagerly grasped the possibility of buying tickets at the customer service outlets of Stockmann's, our current principal partner.

Streaming supports the objective of making opera and ballet available to all. The webcasts were implemented in collaboration with YLE and Helsingin Sanomat and all the live webcasts and recordings were also available in FNOB's Stage24 online service. Streaming, TV broadcasts and recordings helped reach a total 1,203,529 people in Finland and abroad.

As well as recordings and a wealth of information, our online service offers an opera and ballet experience even before the actual performance, as the online materials provide the opportunity to get to know the work or go behind the scenes to have a digital encounter with FNOB artists and other top professionals. The online service attracted a total of 1,702,596 visits, 20% or 300,000 more than in 2017. Both the number of new visitors and the time spent on the site increased relative to the previous year.

A year of active fundraising

The objective of fundraising is to develop corporate partnerships and donor relations on a long-term basis. At the same time, we are preparing for potential cutbacks in public funding in the coming years.

The Finnish National Opera's main partners are the Varma Mutual Pension Insurance Company and the Helsingin Sanomat. During 2018, we signed partnering agreement with Stockmann's and Evli Bank.

We launched our first public fundraising campaign under the theme *Support Future Talent*. We received several major donations during the year, the biggest being EUR 150,000 from a private individual.

In 2018, we received a total of EUR 1,970,000 in subsidies from the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation intended for the years 2019–2022. Subsidies were received by the FNOB Youth Group and the new *Opera Beyond* project designed to enrich art through immersiveness.

With the support of Finnish-Swedish foundations, we will produce the first ever Swedish school opera called *Djurens planet* (Planet of Animals) due to premiere in March 2019. Financial support for the project is provided by Föreningen Konstsamfundet, The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, Svenska kulturfonden i Björneborg, Stiftelsen Brita Maria Renlunds minne, Svenska folkskolans vänner, and Stiftelsen Tre Smeder.

One of our first fundraising schemes is the *Bravo* customer club, whose members are offered an extensive range of services. All revenues from the club activities are used for promoting artistic activities.

Supporting the fundraising efforts since 2016 is the Fundraising Council, which consists of friends of opera and ballet representing a wide variety of fields. The Council's term expired at the end of 2018 as planned.

In 2018 we started developing our ways of working by making use of the Lean philosophy. A successful pilot was carried out by the Set Workshop, and now we're well on the way of adopting a production-led management and operation system.

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*Timo Tuovila,
Production Director*

Evolving and inspired workplace community committed to working closely together

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is a multicultural workplace community that employs top professional from a variety of fields. At the end of 2018, the FNOB's 567 salaried employees represented a total of 33 different nationalities. There are more than one hundred job titles.

To succeed in implementing our strategy, we need enthusiasm, motivation and a commitment to working together. Without these qualities, we will be unable to offer our customers first-rate, unforgettable emotional and art experiences. Consequently, a key objective of our HR policy is to maintain this enthusiasm, motivation and commitment by looking after the wellness of the staff and offering opportunities for professional development.

We encourage staff members to look after their own health and working ability. To this end, the FNOB offers versatile occupational healthcare and safety services as well as recreational activities. We conduct regular staff appraisal discussions to determine the need for professional skills development.

In 2018, HR efforts focused on the management of working ability and workplace development, which included the following projects:

- The three-year *Hyrsky* project focusing on the working ability and coping of 50+ employees ended. We analysed the benefits generated by the project and the participants' views of the ways of working piloted during the project. We will use the results to determine which of the methods will be adopted as tools for future working ability management.
- We conducted a survey addressing gender equality and non-discrimination as well as the house rules for the prevention of harassment and bullying at work. While the results show that progress has been made in these issues, we will continue to pay attention to workplace rules and the creation of a secure atmosphere in view of potential conflicts.

Sense of responsibility – a key part of our value base

Since the public funding we receive obligates us to act responsibly in every respect, responsibility is one of the fundamental values of our strategy.

Our mission is to serve society as extensively as possible by offering touching opera and ballet experiences of the highest standard for wide range of audiences and age groups all over Finland. At the same time, we are called upon to shoulder our share of responsibility for the renewal and promotion of Finnish culture.

Our human resources management seeks to create a sound and inspiring workplace for all professional groups by treating people equally, transparently and fairly, offering opportunities for continual improvement, promoting staff wellbeing and occupational safety and supporting the ability to cope.

We are active in identifying and minimising the environmental impact of our activities. The objectives for the management of environmental issues are determined in our environmental policy.







The Ballet School presents: Spring Performance

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Tosca, photo Heikki Tuuli

TRANSLATION

Notaatio



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