

The National Theatre



Sightseeing tour in
Prague in English
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- The National Theatre in Prague is a stunning neo-renaissance building, constructed between 1868-81



Das neue böhmische Nationaltheater in Prag. Nach einer photographischen Aufnahme von J. Seidrich in Prag.

- Today the National Theatre consists of three artistic ensembles – opera, ballet and drama – which alternate in their performances in the historic building of the National Theatre, in the Theatre of the Estates and in the Theatre Kolowrat. All three artistic ensembles select their repertoire not only from the rich classical heritage, but in addition to local authors they focus their attention on modern world output.





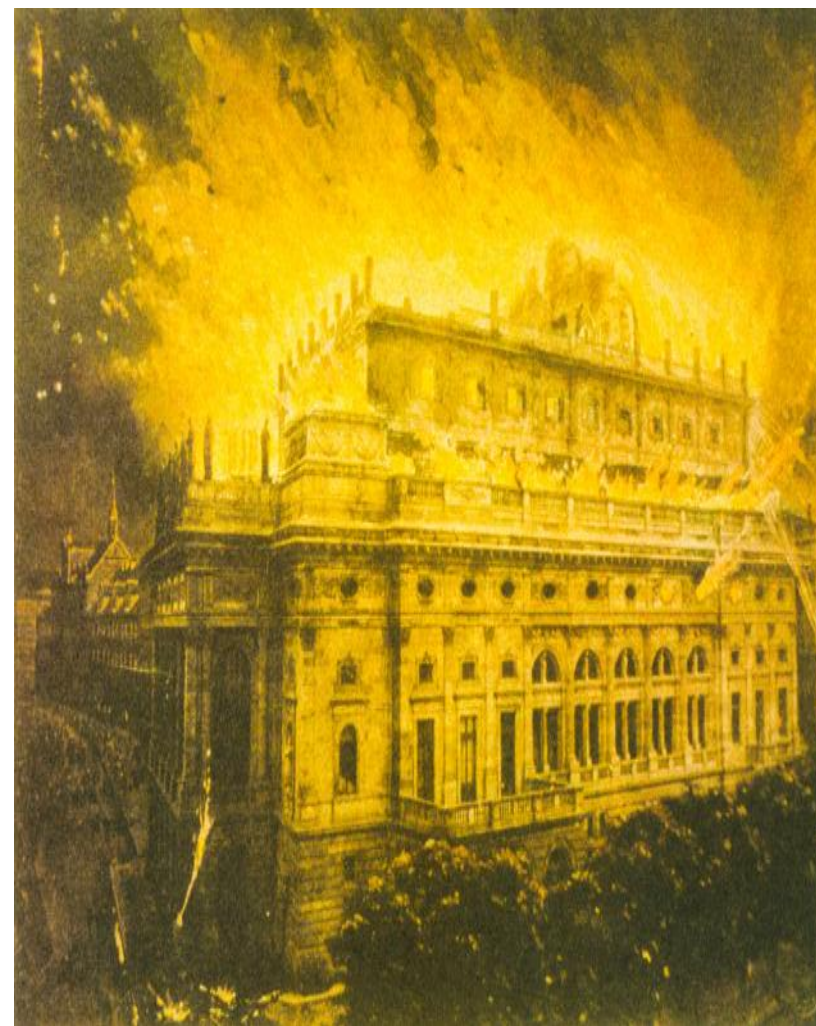
- The idea of building a dignified edifice to serve as a theatre matured in the autumn of 1844 at the gatherings of patriots in Prague and began to be implemented by an application submitted by František Palacký to the Provincial Committee of the Czech Assembly on January 29, 1845 having requested 'the privilege of constructing, furnishing, maintaining and managing' of an independent Czech theatre.

- On May 16, 1868 the foundation stone was ceremoniously laid, and in November the foundations were completed, In 1875 the new building reached the full height and in 1877 the theatre was roofed over



- The National Theatre was opened for the first time on June 11, 1881 to honor the visit of crown prince Rudolf. Another 11 performances were presented after that. Then the theatre was closed down to enable the completion of the finishing touches.

- While this work was under way a fire broke out on August 12, 1881 which destroyed the copper dome, the auditorium and stage of the theatre. The fire was seen as a national catastrophe and met with a might wave of determination to set up a new collection: within 47 days a million guildens were collected.



- The building of the National Theatre was inaugurated on November 18, 1883 with a performance of Smetana's festive opera Libuše composed for this occasion.



- The building, technically perfectly equipped (electric illumination, a steel constructed stage), served without any extensive modifications for almost one hundred years.

- It was only on April 1, 1977, following a performance of the Lantern by Jirásek, that the theatre was closed down for six years. Architect Zdeněk Vávra was appointed to take charge of the overall reconstruction work. This extensive project was combined with the completion of work on the entire setting of the theatre. The work was completed to meet an important deadline which was the date of the 100th anniversary of the opening of the National Theatre: November 18, 1983. On that day the theatre was handed over to the public again with a performance of Smetana's Libuše.

- Now this historic, extremely prestigious and beautiful building together with the annex of a modern office building which also includes the main box office, represents the main stage of the three artistic ensembles of the National Theatre: the drama, opera and ballet.



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- www.prague-tourist-information.com
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