

## Ruhrtriennale 2026 – A Festival is still a ‘Fest’

In the third and final year of Ivo Van Hove’s directorship, the Ruhrtriennale once again invites people to come together, discover meaningful encounters, and celebrate shared experiences. The programme for the Ruhrtriennale 2026 addresses current social issues and presents them in an engaging and accessible way from diverse perspectives.

Artistic Director Ivo Van Hove: “I’m looking forward to another *Fest* with the Ruhrtriennale audience. Let us celebrate life despite the crises of our time – through shared encounters and experiences, through togetherness and exchange, and with a deep curiosity about one another, including openness to different ways of life and different perspectives. And with an openness to dialogue where we hold differing opinions. Once again, the works of the festival’s artists provide a starting point for this.”

The opening production *Rebel Rebel* by Ivo Van Hove (musical direction by Henry Hey, choreography by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui) is conceived as a commentary on the present, which is becoming increasingly dystopian. Alienation and isolation here are not merely socially conditioned but legally enforced. A young couple, however, resists, and creates their own utopia, in which love conquers all.

Christopher Rüping’s production *Deutscher Herbst* also explores the question of what happens when freedom is no longer a given, and in *Europa*, Krzysztof Warlikowski examines how experiences of violence are passed down as trauma from generation to generation.

A special highlight of the Ruhrtriennale 2026 is the multidisciplinary performance *Balkan Erotic Epic* by Marina Abramović, the most influential performance artist of our time. In her most monumental work to date, the audience moves freely through 13 scenes in which Abramović explores the eroticism and spirituality of Balkan mythology.

Ina Brandes, Minister of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia: “Under the direction of Ivo Van Hove, the Ruhrtriennale features a programme of world-renowned artists that appeals to everyone: experienced audiences and newcomers alike. In addition, a well-designed participatory programme for children and young people also sparks an interest in art and culture among the audiences of tomorrow. The strong attendance figures from the first two years have set the bar very high! However, I am certain that Ivo Van Hove will again succeed in completely captivating the Ruhrtriennale audience in the third and final year of his directorship.”

Garrelt Duin, Director Ruhr Regional Association: “Every year, the Ruhrtriennale demonstrates the creative power inherent in the impressive sites of industrial heritage. Whether it’s a power plant or a machine hall: the festival transforms places of work into places of artistic inspiration – and in doing so, makes the Ruhr region truly unique.”

Another highlight of the 2026 Ruhrtriennale is the music theatre production *SIDDHARTHA* by Lisaboa Houbrechts, which explores themes of identity and self-discovery. These are motifs that also feature in the poems of Emily Dickinson, which Joyce DiDonato brings to life in the song cycle *Emily – No Prisoner Be*. The *Erased Music* series is being given a grand finale: Chorwerk Ruhr, together with the Bochumer Symphonikern conducted by Florian Helgath, will present forgotten and rediscovered



compositions by Roman Padlewski & Charles Tournemire at the Jahrhunderthalle Bochum.

For the third year in a row, the *Wunderland* Festival Centre in Bochum will serve as the heart of the festival. Among other things, it will once again host popular and formats free of charge from past festival years, such as the *Ruhr Diamonds* concerts, the *Spoken Acts*, and the *Down The Rabbit Hole* parties by Cute Community Radio.

The Ruhrtriennale 2026 begins on August 20 and ends on September 20. There will be a total of 31 productions and projects comprising 114 events in Bochum, Duisburg, Dortmund, Essen, and Gladbeck, including 14 in-house and co-productions as well as commissioned works. We welcome a total of around 600 artists from 43 countries to the Ruhrtriennale 2026.

Advance ticket sales start today; a total of around 45,000 tickets are available for the events. Capacity has been expanded for the production *Balkan Erotic Epic*, so that tickets are now available again for some previously sold-out performances.

Until May 31, festival tickets are available at an early-bird discount of 10 percent. The "Bring your friends" promotion is back this year: For every full-price ticket, you can get up to three additional tickets at a 50 percent discount for selected events. For more information on the programme and tickets, visit [www.ruhrtriennale.de/en](http://www.ruhrtriennale.de/en).

Detailed information on all productions can be found in our press kit at [ruhrtriennale.de/en/press](http://ruhrtriennale.de/en/press). There you will also find photos and video material, which we will continuously update throughout the festival.

We will begin accepting accreditation requests in mid-June and will send a reminder this summer with the exact start date.

Best regards,

Your Ruhrtriennale Press Team

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