

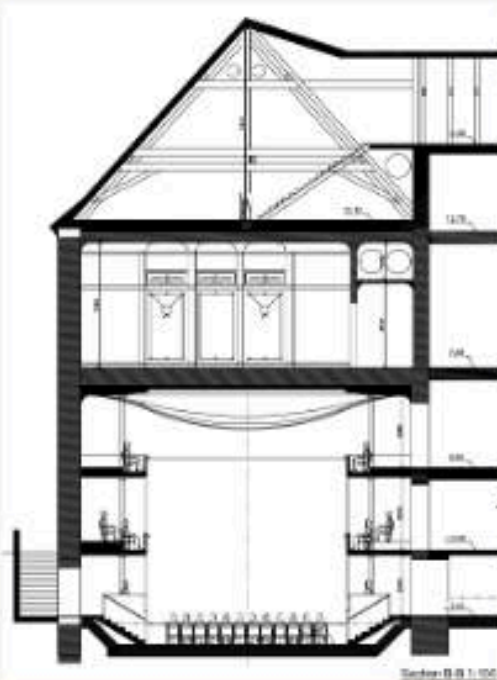
**GESAMTKUNSTWERK21 –
THE RENAISSANCE
THE WAGNER THEATER IN RIGA**

March 2020

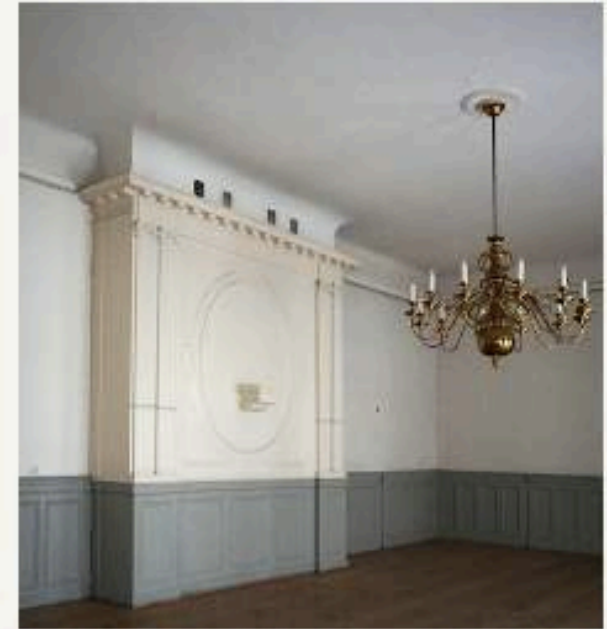
RESTORATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF THE THEATRE



1. SAVING THE
BUILDING
SUBSTANCE



2. RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE
THEATRE



3. RENOVATION OF
THE HISTORICAL
ROOMS

Second floor
"Musse"

THE PROJECT

In the old town of Riga there is the former German Theatre, today called Wagner Theatre. Under the patronage of the Latvian President Egils Levits and Richard Wagner's great-granddaughter, Eva Wagner-Pasquier, a German-Latvian team is working on plans to restore and revive this unique building complex.

In addition to the restoration of the 5000m² building, which includes a chamber music hall and spacious representative rooms, the second major task is to develop a vision for the building to ensure its long-term use.

THE VISION

"Children, create new things!", an exclamation from Wagner, has become the main theme. In Riga, in addition to normal theatre activities, the promotion and communication of music and art to young people, an incubator of all the arts is to be created under the title "GESAMTKUNSTWERK21" - the total work of art of the 21st century. A literal work, in which something new is created and the arts merge with each other.

THE GOALS

A cultural lighthouse in northeastern Europe; a place where people of all nations and of all ages meet the arts of all kinds; a place of international understanding and intercultural encounter in the middle of the Baltic States; a utilisation strategy that will enable the house to become self-sustaining in the medium term.



"MUSSE" FLO	
DOM	
1 hall	
BY	
BY	
BY	
staircase	
BY	
2 room	
2 room	
2 room	
2 room	
2 room	
BY	
2 room	
2 room	
BY	
10 room	
stage	
pe	
Total:	

Wagner street

(E)
(D)
(C)
(B)

WHY RIGA? - A HISTORIC BUILDING OF EUROPEAN IMPORTANCE

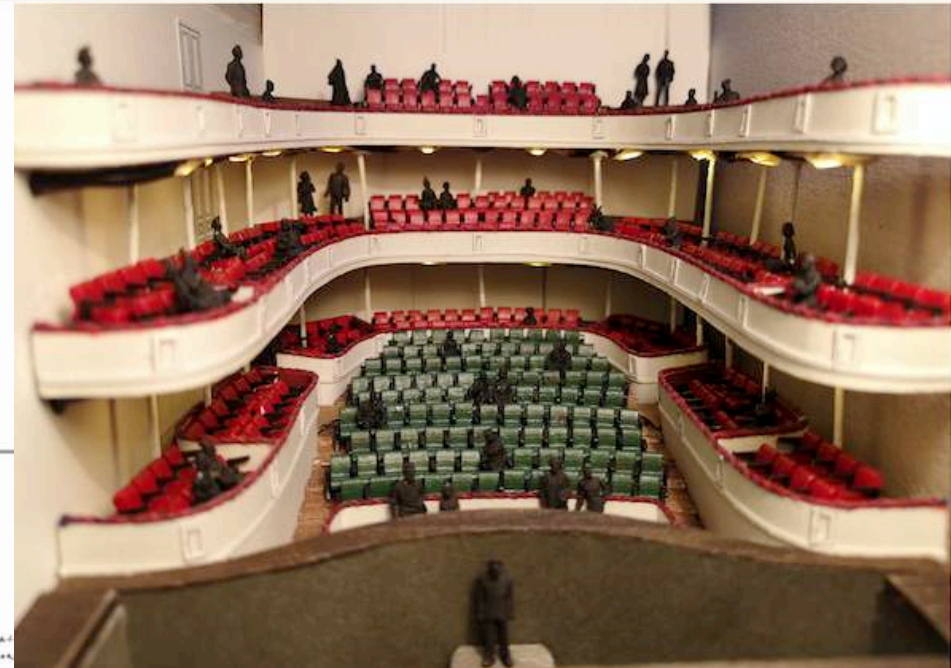
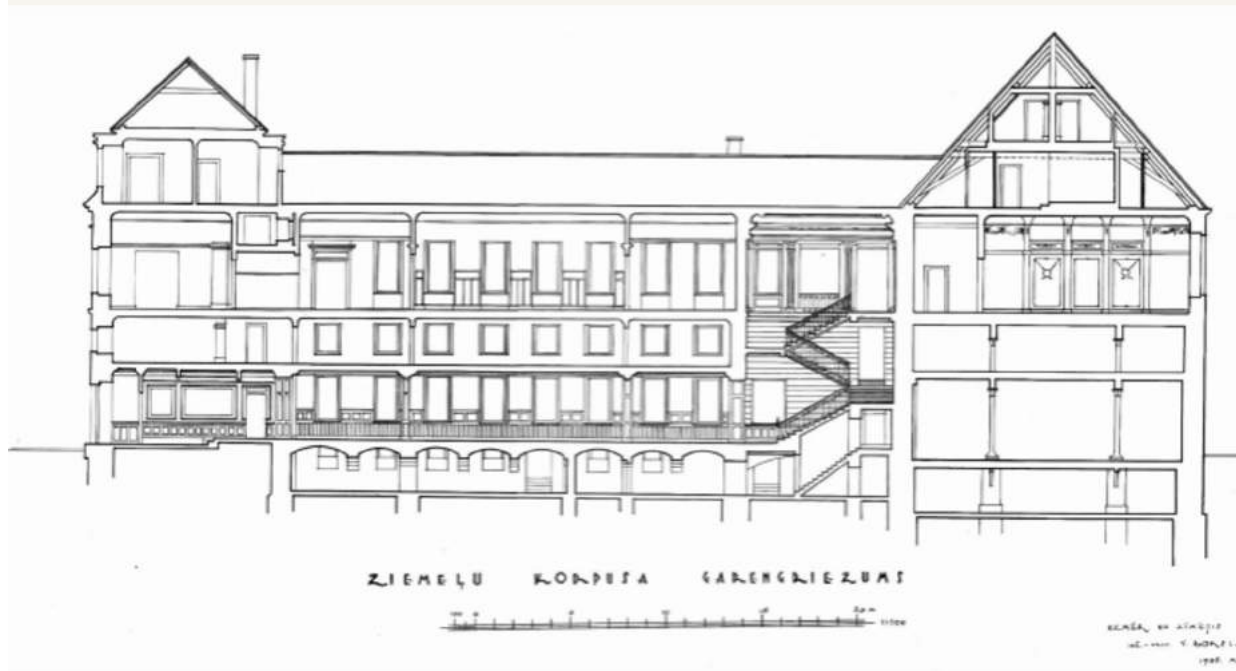
The von Vietinghoff family stands for 600 years of German history in the Baltic States. Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff gen. Scheel (1722-1792), initiator and financier of the theatre was under Catherine the Great of Russia what today corresponds to the office of a health minister. As a patron of the arts he donated the German Theatre in Riga.

The architect Christoph Haberland (1750-1803) planned the first permanent theatre building in Riga in 1781/82. He was the first to try to change the medieval townscape according to the ideas of the Enlightenment. His innovative ideas made him one of the pioneers of classicist architecture in Riga.

For many decades the theatre was the social and musical meeting place of German-speaking citizens in Latvia. For two years - from 1837 to 1839 - Richard Wagner was Kapellmeister at the theatre, launched his world career from Riga and took over essential structural features for the Bayreuth Festival Theatre.



ARCHITECTURE & PREMISES



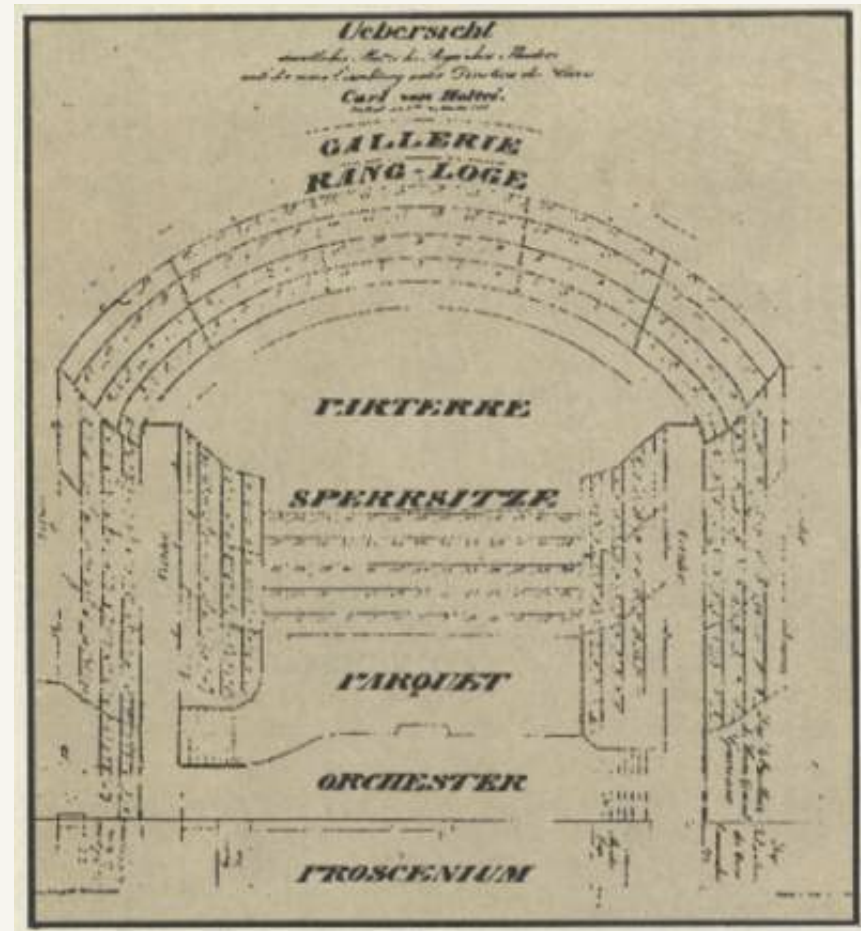
In the years 1781 - 1782 the German Theatre was built. The building has an unusual architecture: the two and a half floors of the new building still contain the entrance hall and stately representation rooms. For many years the social life of Riga took place here with soirées, balls and concerts.

INSPIRING BAYREUTH: THE GERMAN THEATRE HALL

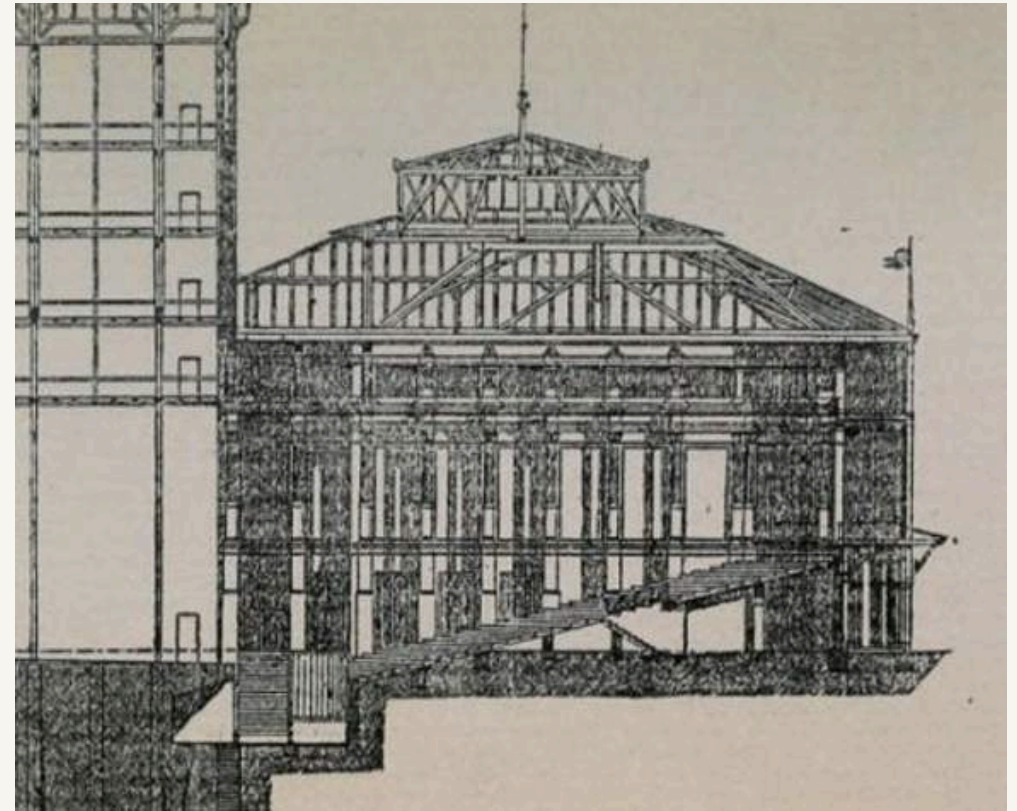
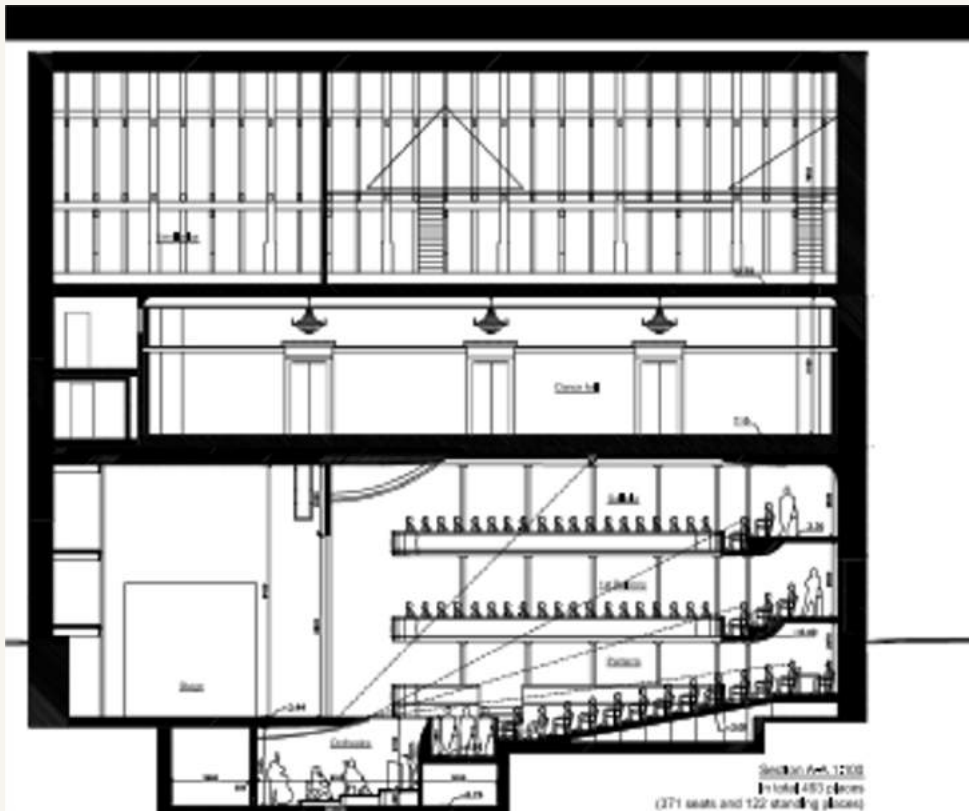
A "strange memory the strongly rising parquet, the semi-darkness of the auditorium, the low orchestra."
– Richard Wagner in 1863

The theatre hall itself was built into an old warehouse in the rear part of the building. The hall had three levels, including a balcony and a gallery. In front of the stage, behind the orchestra room, was the parquet for standing attendees. There is no reliable information about the number of seats in the theatre hall. However, the number of 500 - 600 spectators seems likely.

Richard Wagner was conductor in Riga from 1837 - 1839, praised the stepwise rising arrangement of the seats, the recessed orchestra room and the semi-darkness in the hall during the performance - and later implemented these principles when building the Bayreuth Festival Hall.



RECONSTRUCTING AN EUROPEAN TRESURE

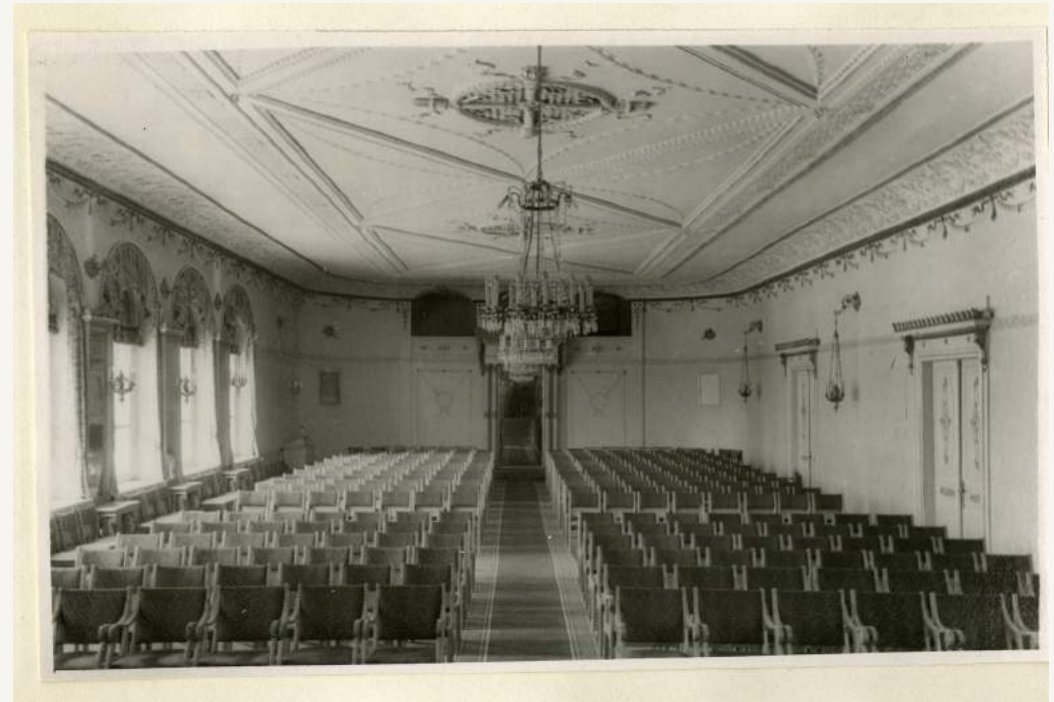


A cross-section of theatres in Riga and Bayreuth - the reconstruction is based on historical sources.

THE RENOVATION OF THE CHAMBER MUSIC HALL

Above the theatre hall was the dance hall of the "Musse" Society, which still exists today as a chamber music hall with the epithet "Richard Wagner". Originally the hall was not intended for concerts. Such an unusual location of a hall above a theatre was not logical from a static point of view and apparently caused by the limited area of the property.

The dance hall was renovated in 1903 according to the plans of the architect August Reinberg. Essentially, the interior design and equipment created by Christoph Haberland was retained. Reinberg moved the balcony to the other end of the hall. He created a new décor in neo-classical forms for the wall mirrors, ceiling, parquet flooring and chandeliers made of crystal.



IMPRESSIONS 2020



The building complex

IMPRESSIONS 2020



Staircase and room on the second floor

IMPRESSIONS 2020



The representative room series on the Beletages.

IMPRESSIONS 2020



Details of the current status.

5000M² FOR EUROPEAN CULTURE – AN INCUBATOR FOR THE ARTS

Meeting centre for European musicians, especially in training, a scholarship recipient house (comp. Villa Massimo). With the following program:

- Master classes with well-known musicians from all over the world to promote young talents from the Baltic States.
- Performances in the theatre and the chamber music hall
- Use of the diverse rooms for various cultural event concepts
- Exhibition spaces
- Lease of a restoration on the ground floor
- GesamtkunstWerk rehearsal and workshop areas

GESAMTKUNSTWERK21

THEATRE, CONCERTS, MUSEUM & RESTAURANT

MASTER CLASSES, SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME,
PROMOTION OF YOUNG LATVIAN ARTISTS

GESAMTKUNSTWERK21
DIE RENAISSANCE DER AVANTGARDE

PLANS - RESTORATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF THE THEATRE

The house is in a desolate condition, the technical condition is unsatisfactory and cracks have appeared in the walls due to the lowering of the foundation.

The construction work is to be divided into three steps:

- The most extensive preservation of the old building fabric by securing the foundation and repairing the ceilings.
- The restoration and furnishing of the historic rooms, as well as cosmetic renovation work.
- The construction of a new theatre as true to the original as possible, following the historical model.

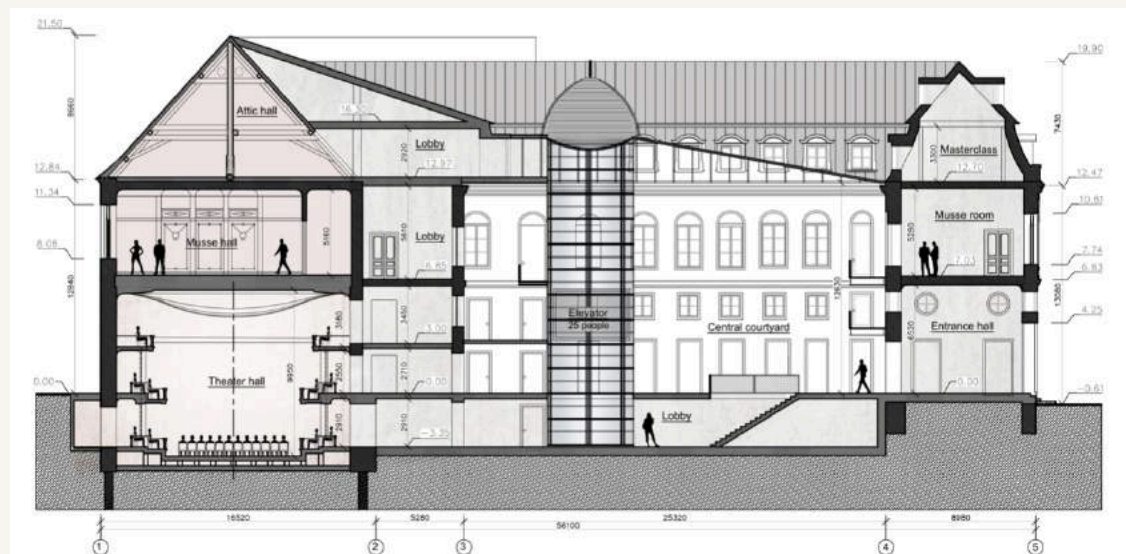
COST TO COMPLETION: approx. 27 million Euro



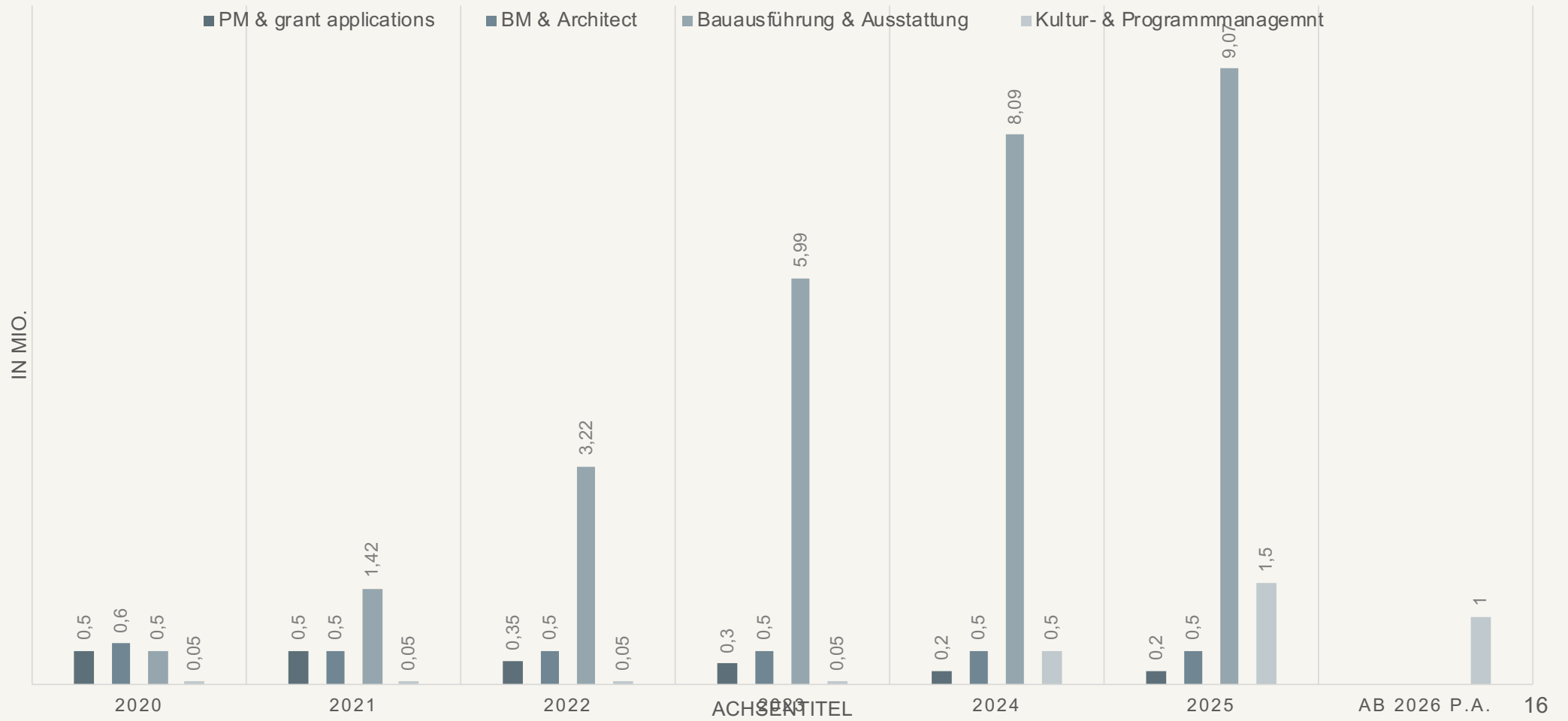
LONG ROAD AHEAD - STATUS AS MARCH 2020

The Latvian Parliament will complete the decision to transfer the land and buildings in the first quarter of 2020. The initiator is Maris Gailis, former Latvian Prime Minister, entrepreneur and Chairman of the Richard Wagner Society in Riga. In recent years, the association has already carried out considerable preliminary work to take stock of the situation: Civil engineers, architects and technicians have examined and surveyed the building and drawn up plans for its renovation. It is the project sponsor on the Latvian side.

The project and fundraising management will be handled by the German consultancy ALEXIS csc UG (Dr. Konrad Winckler and Mechthild Foet).



BUDGET PLANNING

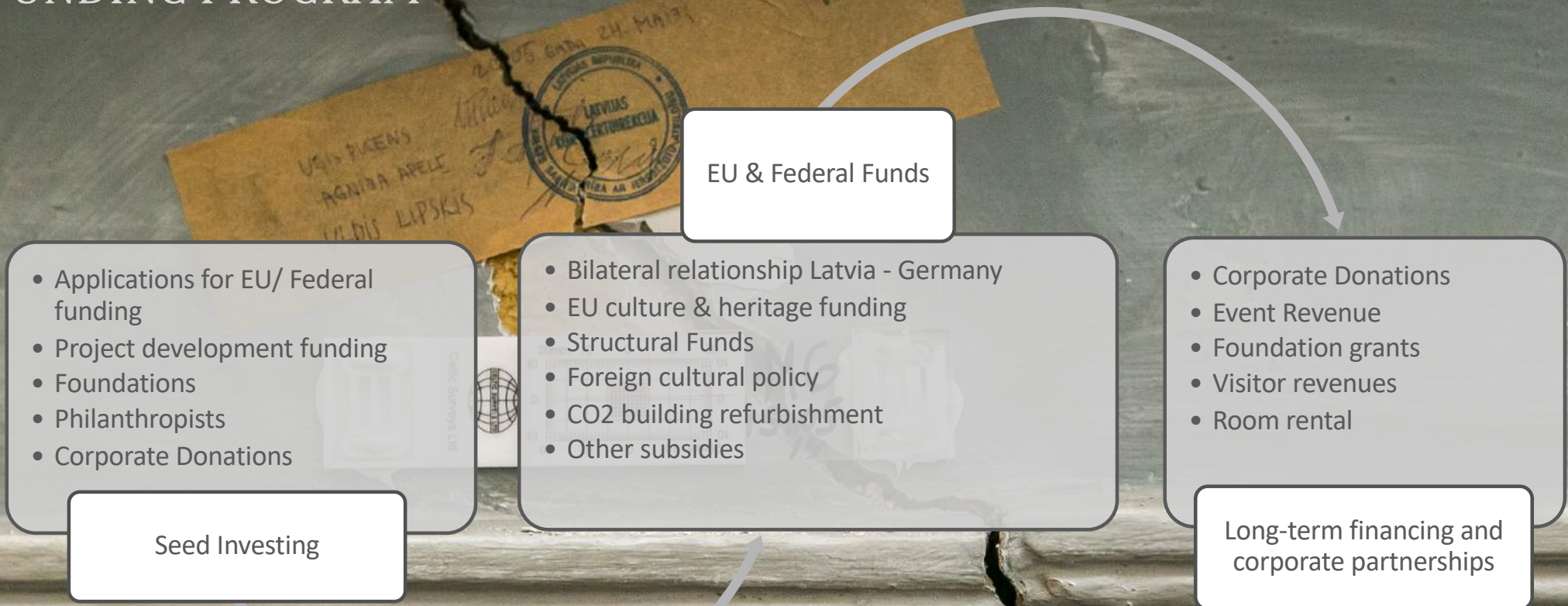


CONSTRUCTION PHASE PLAN

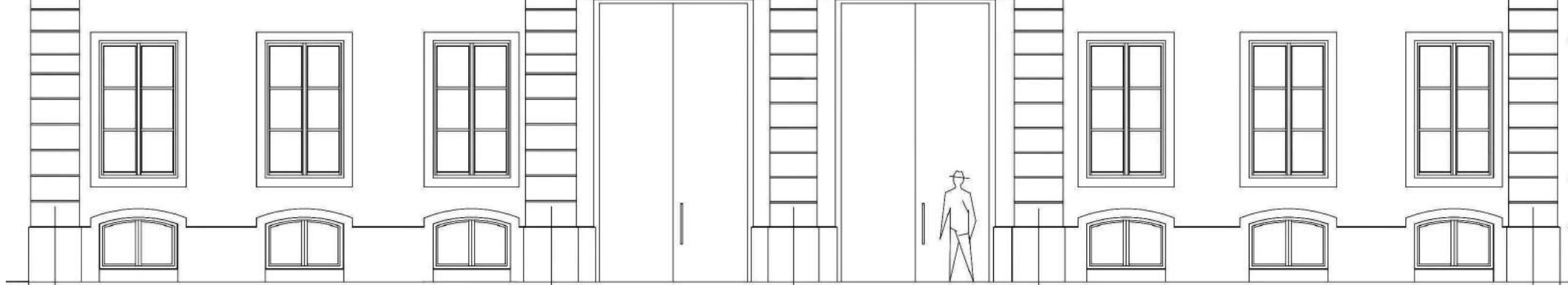
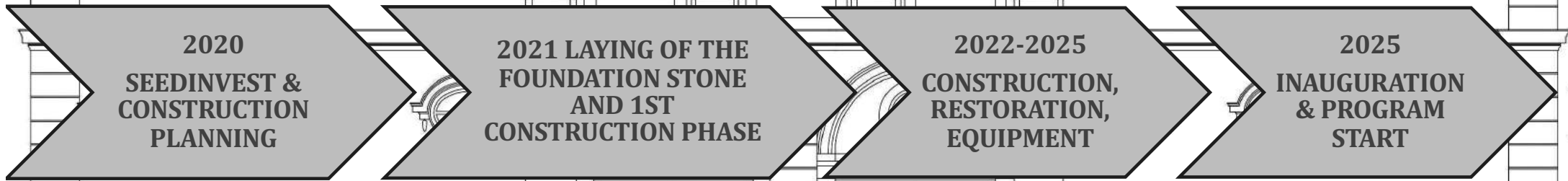
BUILDING PHASE*	1st Year	2. Year	3. Year	4. Year	5. Year
costs of site preparation and maintenance					
Research and design					
Reinforcement of the foundations of the house; cellar excavation; demolition of the basement in place of the theatre hall; dismantling of the liquidation structure; installation of a continuous floor slab for the orchestra pit; construction of external networks					
Construction and repair of all load-bearing walls of the house; execution of ceiling works; renovation of stairs and lift shafts; roof construction; construction of windows and lounges. Insulated roofs.					
Partition walls, lightweight construction, internal network and communication construction, ventilation, air conditioning, heating construction.					
Interior works (floors, walls, elevators, stairs), installation of lighting equipment, construction of sanitary facilities, interior restoration works, facade finishing and restoration.					
BConstruction of theatre and muse room technology (chairs, lighting, stage technology, sound, acoustics)					
costs of site supervision					
Project management of construction supervision, equipment, program planning					

*Detailed construction phase plan in backup

FUNDING PROGRAM



ZEITPLAN



FUNDRAISING

"CHILDREN, CREATE SOMETHING NEW!"
A NETWORK OF POLITICS, ECONOMY & CULTURE



CALL TO ACTION

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR:

- Broad support for political promotion
- Architectural planning
- planning permission of the monument conservation
- Setting up the project and fundraising management

WHAT IS PLANNED FOR 2020:

- Application to the federal government and EU
- Foundation drilling
- Expert opinion
- Detailed planning by the architects
- Public relations and marketing
- Project Management

WHAT DO WE NEED IN 2020:

- Foundation drilling: 80.000 Euro
- Public relations and project management: 170.000 euros
- Architects & Expertises: 180.000 Euro
- Applications: EUR 50.000

CALL FOR ACTION – IMPACT* OF THE SEEDINVESTOR

PARTNERSHIP

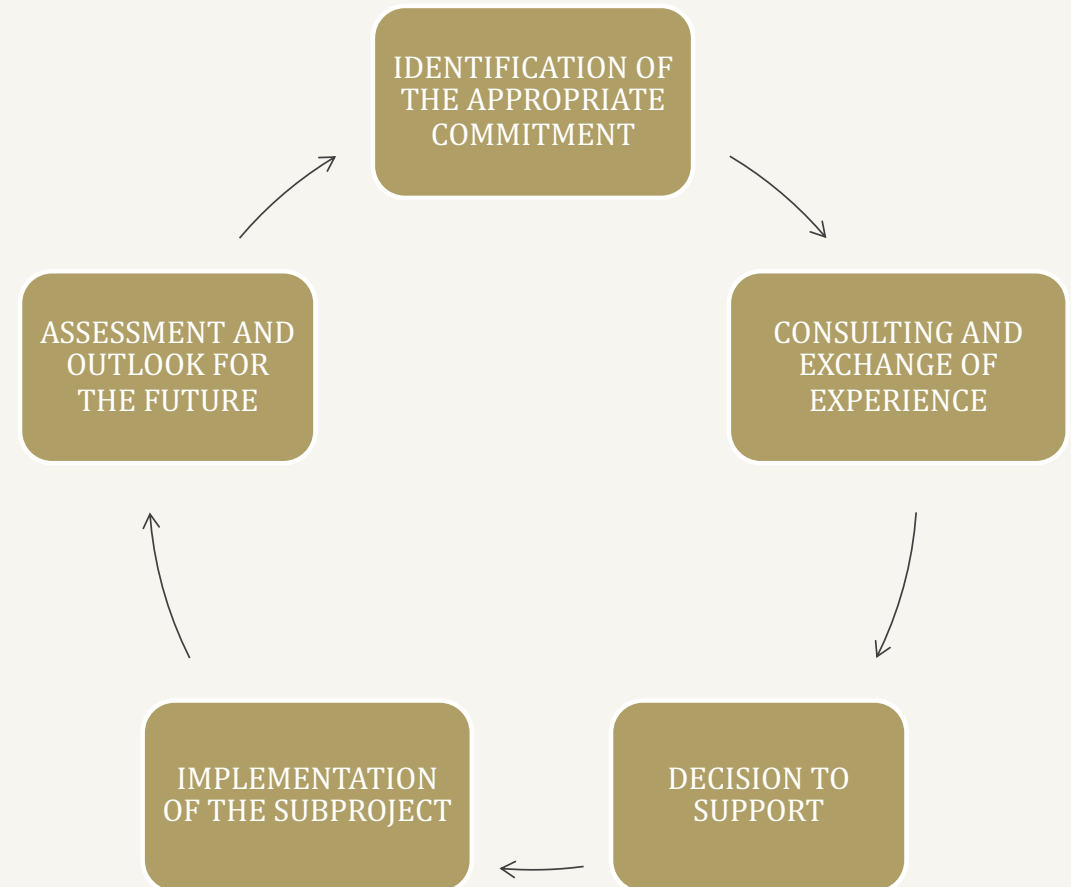
- Seat on the project advisory board
- close experience exchange
- Influence on the direction of use

ADVANTAGES

- Name giver of a room
- Use of public premises
- Ticket allotments for benefit concerts and exclusive musical experiences

VISIBILITY

- Part of political communication and public relations
- Offline: Presence in booklet, flyer, ads
- Online: Social Media & Linking to Homepage



*Detailed service overview in backup

FAZ, 6. Januar 2020

Wagners Vision vom Festspielhaus

Das frühere Deutsche Theater in Riga soll ein internationales Musikzentrum werden / Von Josef Oehrlein, Riga

Es waren nur zwei Jahre, in denen Richard Wagner in der heutigen Hauptstadt Lettlands, dem damals zu Russland gehörenden Riga, als Kapellmeister am Deutschen Theater wirkte. Er hat dort von 1837 bis 1839, offensichtlich eher gelangweilt, das gängige Opernrepertoire bedienen müssen. Zugleich aber erhielt er wichtige Impulse für sein Schaffen. Ihn faszinierten an dem Haus das nach Art eines Amphitheaters ansteigende Parkett, der abgedunkelte Zuschauerraum mit Fokus auf die beleuchtete Szenerie und das teilweise unter der Bühne verdeckt untergebrachte Orchester. Diese Besonderheiten des Rigaer Theaters beeindruckten Wagner und beeinflussten seine Vorstellungen von einem eigenen Musiktheaterbau, wie er ihn später in Bayreuth verwirklichte.

Auch die künstlerische Entwicklung Wagners erhielt in Riga entscheidende Anstöße. Neben dem Opernbetrieb gestaltete er eine eigene Konzertreihe, vor allem mit Werken Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts und Ludwig van Beethovens, er arbeitete an seiner ersten großen Oper, „Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen“. Und bei seiner abenteuerlichen Flucht aus Riga vor den Gläubigern hatte der notorisch überschuldete Wagner in aufgewühlter See seine Eingebung, aus den Eindrücken von der stürmischen Meeresfahrt eine Oper zu gestalten. Es wurde der „Fliegende Holländer“.

Das Deutsche Theater in Riga war auch jenseits von Wagner ein von der deutschen Kultur geprägtes Zentrum. Franz Liszt, Clara Schumann und andere renommierte Musiker aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum gastierten dort. Der deutsch-baltische Baron Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff hatte den palastartigen Komplex als privater Investor in der zweiten Hälfte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts

errichten lassen, geplant hatte ihn der deutsche Architekt Christoph Haberland. Als das neue Opernhaus in Riga 1862 seinen Betrieb aufnahm, verlor das Deutsche Theater an Bedeutung. In der Sowjetzeit wurde es als „Wagnersaal“ mit neuen Einbauten versehen und für diverse kulturelle Zwecke genutzt, als Bibliothek, Tanzsaal und Musikclub.

Seit eineinhalb Jahrzehnten ist das Haus geschlossen, weil sich Risse und andere, zum Teil gravierende Mängel zeigten. Es schien dem Verfall preisgegeben. Wiederholt gab es Versuche, den Bau zu sanieren und ihn neu zu beleben, doch blieb das Projekt in Rigaer Kommunalquellen stecken, vor allem fehlte es am Geld. Priorität hatte zudem das Vorhaben, der Stadt einen großen Konzertsaal zu beschenken. Der „Wagnersaal“ eignet sich nicht für diesen Zweck, obwohl sich hinter der unscheinbaren Fassade an der Richard-Wagner-Straße ein großer Gebäudekomplex auftut. Er beherbergt eine Vielzahl mittelgroßer Räume, manche von herrschaftlichem Charakter. Doch ein Saal für Konzerte und andere Veranstaltungen lässt sich in dem Haus allenfalls für etwa vierhundert Besucher unterbringen.

Riga hat, abgesehen von der Großen Gilde, noch immer keine Konzerthalle, aber jetzt kommt Schwung in das Projekt Wagnersaal. Treibende Kraft ist der frühere lettische Ministerpräsident Maris Gailis, Vorsitzender der Rigaer Richard-Wagner-Gesellschaft. Er hat eine ganze Reihe von Persönlichkeiten von der Notwendigkeit überzeugt, das Haus vor dem Verfall oder gar Abriss zu retten. Als Verbündete hat er bereits den amtierenden lettischen Präsidenten Egils Levits, die Wagner-Urenkelin Eva-Wagner Pasquier, die im deutsch-baltischen Austausch engagierte Bundestagsabgeordnete Elisabeth Motschmann und den Pro-

jektmanager Konrad Winckler ebenso im Boot wie deutsche Wagnerverbände, vor allem auch einige Sponsoren, die sich bei der Finanzierung des Wiederauf- und -ausbaus engagieren wollen.

Inzwischen hat man klare Vorstellungen, wie der Gebäudekomplex genutzt werden kann: als ein musikalisches Kulturzentrum mit wiederhergestelltem Theatersaal, einem Museum sowie Räumen für Se-

minare und die Begegnung von jungen Musikern mit Koryphäen ihres Fachs in einem internationalen Stipendienprogramm. Der aus Riga stammende Geiger Gidon Kremer würde gern in dem Haus ein Büro unterhalten und Meisterklassen anbieten. Das Zentrum soll aber auch für die Öffentlichkeit zugänglich sein. Der wiederhergestellte Saal wäre für Kammerkonzerte und Opernaufführungen mit kleiner Besetzung, etwa von Werken aus der Barockzeit geeignet, das Museum könnte sich zum Magnet für die vor allem von Kreuzfahrtschiffen nach Riga strömenden Touristenscharen entwickeln.

Noch befindet sich der dreistöckige, auf bis zu fünf Etagen erweiterbare Gebäudekomplex mit einer Gesamtfläche von fünftausend Quadratmetern im Besitz der Stadt Riga, er soll aber unter Nutzungsaufgaben an die örtliche Wagner-Gesellschaft übergeben werden, ein entsprechendes Gesetz steht vor der Verabschiedung. Für die Sanierung und den Ausbau werden 25 Millionen Euro veranschlagt, für die Ausstattung und Folgekosten noch einmal etwa zehn Millionen. Das Fundraising ist im Gange. Gailis zeigte sich im Gespräch mit dieser Zeitung zuversichtlich, mit den Sanierungsarbeiten in ein oder zwei Jahren beginnen zu können. Das Musikzentrum könnte dann 2024 eröffnet werden.

Derzeit ist das Vorhaben weitgehend ein baltisch-deutsches Projekt. Angesichts der Bedeutung Wagners müssten sich freilich auch Brüssel und überhaupt die europäischen Länder für den Erhalt des Kulturpalastes und dessen Nutzung engagieren. Nichts wäre schlimmer, als wenn das Haus dem Kommerz anheimfiele. Traurig die Vorstellung, dass dort, wo Wagner zwei wichtige Jahre seines Künstlerlebens verbrachte, ein Shoppingcenter einziehen könnte.



Künstlerlabor: Blick in einen Saal des Rigaer Deutschen Theaters

Foto dpa

Wagner's vision of the Festspielhaus (translation)

The former German Theater in Riga is to become an international music center / By Josef Oehrlein, Riga

It was only two years during which Richard Wagner worked as conductor at the Deutsches Theater in the Latvian capital, Riga, which at the time belonged to Russia. From 1837 to 1839, he obviously had to serve the routine opera repertoire of the time there in a rather bored manner. But at the same time he received groundbreaking impulses for his future work. He was fascinated by the amphitheatre-style rising parquet floor, the darkened auditorium with its focus on the illuminated scenery and the orchestra, which was partly concealed under the stage. These special features of the Riga theatre impressed Wagner and influenced his ideas of his own musical theatre building, as he later realised it in Bayreuth.

Wagner's artistic development also received decisive impulses in Riga. In addition to opera, he created his own concert series, especially with works by Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven, and worked on his first truly great opera, "Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes". He had already begun composing it before his time in Riga, although it was not premiered until 1842 in Dresden. And on his adventurous flight from Riga to escape his creditors, Wagner, who was notoriously over-indebted, had the inspiration to create an opera from his impressions of the stormy sea journey. It became the "Flying Dutchman".

The German Theatre in Riga was a centre of German culture even beyond Wagner's time. Franz Liszt, Clara Schumann and other renowned artists from the German-speaking world gave guest performances there. The German-Baltic Baron Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff had had the palace-like complex built as a private investor, as one would say today, in the second half of the eighteenth century; the German architect Christoph Haberland had planned it. When the new opera house in Riga, which opened in the sixties of the nineteenth century, went into operation in 1862, the German Theatre lost its importance. During the Soviet era, it was given new fixtures as the "Wagner Hall" and used for various cultural purposes, including a library, dance hall and music club.

The building has been closed for a decade and a half because of cracks and other defects, some of which were very serious. It seemed to be left to decay. There were repeated attempts to renovate the building and revive it, but the project got stuck in Riga's communal squabbles, and above all there was always a lack of money. Another priority was the project to provide the city with a large concert hall. The "Wagnersaal" is not suitable for this purpose, although a large building complex opens up behind the inconspicuous façade on Richard-Wagner-Strasse. It accommodates a large number of medium-sized rooms, some of them of a stately character. But a hall for concerts and other events can be accommodated in the building for at most about four hundred visitors.

Riga still does not have a concert hall, apart from the Great Guild, but now the Wagner Hall project is gaining momentum. The driving force behind the project is former Latvian Prime Minister Maris Gailis, chairman of the Riga Richard Wagner Society. He has convinced a number of personalities of the necessity of saving the building from decay or even demolition. As allies, he has already brought on board the incumbent Latvian President Egils Levits, Wagner's great-granddaughter Eva-Wagner Pasquier, Elisabeth Mutschmann, a member of the German Bundestag who is committed to German-Baltic exchange, and project manager Konrad Winckler, as well as German Wagner associations, and above all several sponsors who have already expressed their serious commitment to financing the reconstruction and expansion.

In the meantime, there are quite clear ideas on how the building complex can be used: as a musical cultural centre with a restored theatre hall, a museum and rooms for seminars and for young musicians to meet luminaries in their respective fields in an international scholarship programme. The Riga-born violinist Gidon Kremer, for example, would like to maintain an office in the building and offer master classes. But the centre is also to be open to the public. The reconstructed hall would at least be suitable for chamber concerts and opera performances with a small cast, for example of works from the baroque period, and the museum could develop into a magnet for the flocks of tourists who come to Riga mainly from cruise ships.

The three-storey building complex with a total area of five thousand square metres, which can be extended to five storeys, is still owned by the city of Riga, but it is to be handed over to the local Wagner Society under conditions of use; a law to this effect is expected to be passed shortly. Twenty-five million euros have been estimated for the renovation and expansion, and another ten million euros or so for the equipment and various follow-up costs. Fundraising is still in progress. In an interview with this newspaper, Gailis expressed confidence that the renovation work could begin in a year or two. The music centre could then open in 2024 at the earliest.

In the meantime, the project is largely a Baltic-German project. In view of the importance of Richard Wagner as a European artist, Brussels and the European countries in general must also commit themselves to the preservation of the Palace of Culture and its future sensible use. Nothing would be worse than for the house to fall into the hands of commerce. Sad to think that a shopping centre could move in where Richard Wagner spent two crucial years of his artistic life.

Richards Traum

Im ehemaligen Deutschen Theater der lettischen Hauptstadt Riga soll ein internationales Kulturzentrum entstehen

Man mag es kaum glauben, dass hinter der trostlosen Fassade mit dem bröckeligen Mauerwerk und den verwitterten Fensterrahmen einmal Musikgeschichte geschrieben wurde. Immerhin verkündet eine Gedenktafel, dass ein gewisser Rihards Vāgners zwischen 1837 und 1839 in dem Haus als Dirigent und Komponist tätig war und dass außerdem 1842 Ferencz Lists, 1844 Klára Vika-Šumane und Antons Rubinstejns, außerdem 1847 Hektors Berliozs in dem Gebäude zu Gast waren. Das ehemalige Deutsche Theater in der lettischen Hauptstadt Riga heißt heute »Wagnersaal« und bewahrt die Erinnerung daran, dass der Komponist an dieser Stätte zwei entscheidende Jahre seines frühen Künstlerlebens verbrachte. Die lettische Schreibweise verfremdet die Namen von Wagner, Franz Liszt, Clara Wieck-Schumann, Anton Rubinstein und Hector Berlioz gerade so weit, dass man noch zu erkennen vermag, welche Koryphäen der Frühromantik in diesem Haus aufgetreten sind.

Wagner dirigierte in Riga vor allem Konzerte, widmete sich intensiv seiner ersten wirklich großen Oper (»Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen«) und machte im Deutschen Theater Entdeckungen, die für sein noch embryonales Projekt eines alle Künste umfassenden Musiktheaters von entscheidender Bedeutung sein werden. Ihn faszinierten das nach Art eines Amphitheaters ansteigende Parkett sowie der abgedunkelte Zuschauerraum, aus dem sich der Blick des Publikums zwangsläufig auf die beleuchtete Bühne konzentriert, ihn begeisterte die aus reiner Platznot geborene pragmatische Lösung, das Orchester teilweise unter der Bühne verschwinden zu lassen.

Derlei Erfahrungen waren bestimmend bei den Planungen für Wagners eigenes Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, in dem er in ähnlicher Weise wie in Riga die Zuschauerreihen ansteigen und den Orchestergraben sogar vollständig verdecken ließ. Das als eine Art Palast angelegte Deutsche Theater hatte der deutsch-baltische Baron Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff als privater Investor nach den Plänen des deutschen Architekten Christoph Haber-



land errichten lassen. Von der Original Einrichtung ist freilich so gut wie nichts mehr vorhanden.

Nach der Eröffnung des Rigaer Opernhauses 1863 verlor das Haus an Bedeutung. In der Sowjetzeit kamen neue Einbauten hinzu, als »Wagnersaal« beherbergte es verschiedene kulturelle Einrichtungen, im unabhängig gewordenen Lettland diente es als Bibliothek, Tanzsaal und Musikklub. Vor eineinhalb Jahrzehnten wurde der Komplex geschlossen, weil sich in dem Gemäuer immer neue Risse und andere gravierende Schäden zeigten. Diverse Initiativen, das Haus zu sanieren und es einer neuen Bestimmung zuzuführen, blieben in kommunalpolitischen Querelen stecken. Maris Gailis, der frühere lettische Ministerpräsident und Vorsitzende der örtlichen Richard-Wagner-Gesellschaft, hat jetzt aber neuen Schwung in das Vorhaben gebracht, aus dem Gebäude mehr als eine Pilgerstätte für Wagnerianer zu machen.

In dem hoffentlich bald gründlich sanierten und erweiterten Komplex soll ein internationales Kulturzentrum entstehen, in dem Wagners Vorstellungen von einem alle künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen gleichberechtigt umfassenden Gesamtkunstwerk in die Gegenwart und Zukunft überführt werden könnten. Nichts weniger als ein allenthalben in Europa sichtbarer kultureller »Leuchtturm« soll aus dem bislang vernachlässig-

ten Haus werden. Geplant ist, dass Vertreter aller Sparten von Musikern und Regisseuren bis zu Filmmusikern und Lichtdesignern jeweils eine Zeitlang dort arbeiten und damit ihren Teil zur weiteren Entwicklung des Musiktheaters beitragen. Der etwa 400 Besucher fassende Theatersaal wäre nach seiner Wiederherstellung zumindest für Kammerkonzerte und Opernaufführungen mit kleiner Besetzung geeignet. In den übrigen zum Teil herrschaftlich anmutenden Räumen könnten sich junge Musiker aus ganz Europa in Seminaren und Kursen fortbilden. Das Kulturzentrum soll aber auch für die Öffentlichkeit zugänglich sein und mit Ausstellungen, Konzerten, Lesungen sowie Festveranstaltungen nach Riga strömende Touristenscharen anlocken.

Das klingt alles sehr verheißungsvoll. Entscheidend wird jedoch sein, ob das ambitionierte Projekt zu finanzieren ist. Für Sanierung und Ausbau werden 25 Millionen Euro veranschlagt, für Ausstattung und diverse Folgekosten noch einmal rund zehn Millionen. Das Fundraising ist voll im Gang, die bisherige Resonanz möglicher öffentlicher Geldgeber wie privater Sponsoren, Mäzene oder Förderer stimmt die Verantwortlichen zuversichtlich. Gailis hat eine Reihe von Persönlichkeiten von der dringenden Notwendigkeit überzeugt, das Haus vor dem weiteren Verfall oder gar Abriss zu retten und zu verhindern, dass an dem historischen Ort ein Shoppingcenter entsteht. Als Verbündete hat er bereits den amtierenden lettischen Präsidenten Egils Levits, die Wagner-Urenkelin Eva Wagner-Pasquier, die im deutsch-baltischen Austausch engagierte Bundestagsabgeordnete Elisabeth Motschmann, den Projektmanager Konrad Winckler sowie deutsche Wagner-Verbände gewonnen.

So engagiert sich vorrangig lettische und deutsche Kulturschaffende, Politiker und Organisationen für das Vorhaben einsetzen – zum Aufbau eines derart anspruchsvoll konzipierten internationalen Projekts müssten auch Brüssel und die einzelnen Mitgliedsländer der europäischen Gemeinschaft mehr als ein Scherlein beitragen.

— Josef Oehrlin

Richard's Dream An international cultural centre is to be established in the former German Theatre in the Latvian capital Riga.

It is hard to believe that music history was once written behind the dreary façade with its crumbling brickwork and weathered window frames. After all, a memorial plaque announces that a certain Rihards Vāgners was active in the house as a conductor and composer between 1837 and 1839, and that in addition 1842 Ferencs Liszt, 1844 Klāra Vīka-Šumane and Antons Rubinsteins, and in 1847 Hector Berlioz were guests in the building. The former German Theatre in the Latvian capital Riga is now called the "Wagner Hall" and preserves the memory of the fact that Richard Wagner spent two decisive years of his early artistic life at this site. The Latvian spelling of the names of Wagner, Franz Liszt, Klara Wieck-Schumann, Anton Rubinstein and Héctor Berlioz has been distorted to such an extent that it is still possible to recognise the luminaries of early Romanticism who performed in the house.

Wagner conducted the concerts in Riga, devoted himself intensively to his first truly great opera ("Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes") and made discoveries in the German Theatre which will be of decisive importance for his still embryonic project of a musical theatre encompassing all the arts. He was fascinated by the parquet floor rising like an amphitheatre and the darkened auditorium, from which the audience's gaze is inevitably focused on the illuminated stage. He was also fascinated by the pragmatic solution, born of pure space constraints, to make the orchestra partially disappear under the stage.

Such experiences were decisive in the planning of Wagner's own festival theatre in Bayreuth, where he had the audience rows rise in a similar way to Riga and even had the orchestra pit completely covered. The German Theater, designed as a kind of palace, was built by the German-Baltic Baron Otto Hermann von Vietinghoff as a private investor according to the plans of the German architect Christoph Haberland. Of course, there is almost nothing left of the original furnishings.

After the Riga Opera House was opened in 1863, the German Theatre lost its importance. During the Soviet era new fixtures were added, as the "Wagner Hall" the house housed various cultural institutions, and it also served as a library, dance hall and music club in the newly independent Latvia. The complex was closed a decade and a half ago, because the walls showed new cracks and other serious damage. Various initiatives to renovate the building and give it a new purpose have been stuck in local political squabbles. However, Maris Gailis, former Prime Minister of Latvia and chairman of the local Richard Wagner Association, has now given new impetus to the plan to turn the building into much more than just a Wagner pilgrimage site.

In the complex, which will hopefully soon be thoroughly renovated and expanded, an international cultural centre is to be created in which Wagner's ideas of a Gesamtkunstwerk encompassing all forms of artistic expression on an equal footing are to be transferred to the present and future. Nothing less than a cultural "lighthouse" visible everywhere in Europe is to be created from the previously neglected building. Representatives of all genres, from musicians and directors to film musicians and lighting designers, should each work there for a while and be able to contribute their share to the further development of music theatre. Once restored, the theatre hall, which will hold around four hundred visitors, would at least be suitable for chamber concerts and opera performances with a small cast. In the other rooms, some of which have a stately appearance, young musicians from all over Europe could train in seminars and courses. The cultural centre should also be open to the public. Museum rooms, concerts, readings and festive events should also attract the crowds of tourists flocking to Riga.

This all sounds very promising, but the decisive factor will be whether the ambitious project can be financed. Twenty-five million euros have been estimated for renovation and expansion, and another ten million euros or so for equipment and various follow-up costs. The fundraising is in full swing, and the response so far from potential public sponsors such as private sponsors, patrons or patrons gives those responsible confidence. Gailis has convinced a whole range of personalities of the urgent need to save the building from further decay or even demolition and to prevent a shopping centre from being built on the historic site. As allies, Gailis has already won over the current Latvian President Egils Levits, Wagner's great-granddaughter Eva Wagner-Pasquier, Elisabeth Motschmann, a member of the Bundestag who is committed to German-Baltic exchange, project manager Konrad Winckler and German Wagner associations.

Latvian and German cultural workers, politicians and organisations are primarily committed to the project - Brussels and the individual member states of the European Community would have to contribute more than just a small mite to the development of such an ambitious international project.

Josef Oehrlein

DONATIONS & PROCEEDINGS

The project is carried out in cooperation with the Richard Wagner Verband International e.V. **Grants are tax-deductible** and will be transferred to the Wagner Association Riga on demand. Auditing and verification of the proper and correct use of the funds is carried out by a German independent auditing body.

Richard-Wagner-Verband International e.V.

IBAN: DE71 7735 0110 0009 0946 81,

BIC : BYLADEM1SBT

BANK: Sparkasse Bayreuth

Intended use: Renaissance of the Wagner Theatre Riga

CONTACT

Initiator and chairman of the Richard Wagner Association Riga:

Maris Gailis: maris@mg.lv ; +33 712 6666908

ALEXIS Cultural and Social Concepts UG

Dr. Konrad Winckler: winckler@alexiscsc.de pm@vagneriga.lv

+49 172 937 6219

Mechthild Foet: foet@alexiscsc.de fundraising@vagneriga.lv

+49 151 14782649

ANNEX 1: BENEFITS FOR SUPPORTERS

Feature	SeedInvestor 2020	Strategic Partner	Patrons	Sponsor
Donation	One time	Several years	Several years	One time
Print and offline: Logo presence or mention in booklet, flyer, advertisements and mention in PR (in the corresponding category)	X	X	X	X
Social media/online: Logo presence or naming, logo with link (in the corresponding category)	X	X	X	X
Name giver for a room (7x possible) (100.000€)	X	X		(X)*
Use of the event rooms	X	X	(X)*	(X)*
Membership in the advisory board	X	X		
Dinner with patrons	X	X	X	(X)*
Ticket contingent for benefit concerts and exclusive musical experiences	X	X	X	X
Allotment of tickets for the theatre	X	X	X	X

* ab einer entsprechenden Spendenhöhe

