

Press release on the 1st Reading Rehearsal for the 42nd Oberammergau Passion Play 2022

Rehearsals for the next Passion Play to commence after nearly 2-year interruption

The long wait is over for all actors and actresses of the 2022 Passion Play who will finally commence rehearsals on January 6th. Director Christian Stückl invited 111 speaking parts to attend the first reading rehearsal. "Everyone joins in, no matter how small their part. It's the only time all the actors get to hear the play together as a unit," Stückl explains.

The Hair and Beard Decree has been in force since February 2021. The Passion Play performers have been allowing their hair to grow out ever since, which for the males means also growing their beards. 1,554 Oberammergauers have agreed to join in the 2022 Passion Play. Plus approximately 500 children. This means that around 2,100 performers spanning all generations will be on stage. Since the 17th Century, the Passion Play has been carried exclusively by the citizens of the village. Participants have to be either native Oberammergauers or longtime residents for over 20 years.

The choir and orchestra are well along in their preparations and done with their new pre-auditions. "We want our young people who, two years later, are now in their prime to have a fair chance," musical director Markus Zwink comments. Musical rehearsals have been underway since November. The rehearsal schedule is tight. "Our young singers are amateurs who require some familiarizing with the Passion Play music; they will be expected to perform nearly an hour and a half of choral music by heart, and with confidence. This requires a considerable amount of advance preparation for each chorister", Zwink says.

Not to forget the hive of activity backstage. Both the workshops and the tailor shop have been abuzz and working at full throttle since November. Getting ready for the Play is the name of the game. "The set changes have to be quick, which is why we are currently rehearsing them one after the other. We now have a bit more leisure implementing the technical complexities for set-up and dismantling than would have been possible in 2020," according to Stefan Hageneier, stage and costume designer for the Oberammergau Passion Play. "All costumes are currently being fitted, finished, and made ready for virtually daily use on stage." Some 1,500 costumes were hand-crafted in the Passion Play Theatre.

Since 1634, the Passion Play has been performed in Oberammergau once every decade. The Play goes back to a vow made by the villagers in 1633 in their desperate effort to free their village from the plague. 2022 will see the 42nd season of the Oberammergau Passion Play. The Play is scheduled to premiere on May 14, 2022 and the final performance will take place on October 2, 2022.

[Picture material for download](#)

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