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Workshop of young critics from V4 and Eastern Partnership countries as a laboratory of ideas about theatre



"The idea of this international workshop is important and meaningful. Exchange of methods and opinions, analysis of aesthetics from a wide range of perspectives, as well as discussions about censorship or strategy-building, all in atmosphere of mutual enrichment and fair openness."

That was the evaluation of the seminar in Critical Reflection of V4@Theatre Critics Residency made by one of two expert lecturers of the project, a renowned German theatre critic and curator, former chief editor of the prestigious journal Theater der Zeit, Thomas Irmer.

The International Festival Divadelná Nitra, which took place this year during September 22 – 26, 2017, not only established a presentation of top-class and innovative European theatre art, but also served as an irreplaceable creative platform for young theatre critics and gave an education opportunity for students of both art and other schools.

This year the six-day creative workshop was attended by 13 young critics from 7 V4 and Eastern Partnership countries, under the mentorship of 2 experts from France and Germany.

Enriching debates



"Each participant comes to a workshop with a good knowledge of contemporary theatre, but also influenced by a specific tradition, culture, historical experience and with a help of this unique personal and valuable view, can contribute to the debate and enrich others," explains the world-renowned French theatre critic Patrice Pavis. Under his mentorship, during the five festival days, the participants watched

productions of the main programme of Divadelná Nitra from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, the United States of America, Slovenia and Slovakia, which they analysed during common meetings. *"It is a fascinating experience to discuss the same production with participants from different countries,"* explains Patrice Pavis, who has been a project mentor from the very beginning, for the third year already.

"While analysing and during the interview it can be clarified, what do we, critics, have different and common – our common knowledge, views, expectations, but also different perceptions of nuances, that are not the matter of other tastes, but emerge from specific historical and political environments, in which each of us grew up and lived," he added, mentioning that he didn't see his role as a professor, but rather as a conductor who guided different views.

"Our mentors have encouraged us to ask unpleasant questions and listen carefully, what artists want to express due their works. And finally, they want us to judge, if their plan was realized. We have never come to the same conclusion in the group of participants. But the opportunity to listen to the opinions of other participants opened to me much more complex view on the productions," summarized the participant of the workshop, theatre director and critic Julia Lizurek from Poland.

Laboratory of Intellectual Thinking



"I think, that this year's festival is successful. Selected productions from abroad and from Slovakia showed original concepts of the theme and offered their attitude to many serious problems in the world," evaluated Patrice Pavis.

According to him, the workshop is important, just because it creates a platform that serves as a laboratory for

different ways of intellectual thinking, aesthetic sensation, or methods of analysing and observing performing works, thus contributing to the knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

In addition, while participating young international critics are setting a new framework, if we talk about their response to the festival, and they formulate opinions, as well as theatrical criticisms and reviews that are particularly valuable for the domestic selection of productions, thus fulfilling the long-term strategy of the festival – create a dialogue between domestic and international theatre.

Acute need

*"There is an acute need for similar workshops in our geographic region, as well as the demand for them, which is explicit for some years already. Participants' interest in visiting **V4@Theatre Critics Residency** only confirms this," says Ján Balaj, a member of Artistic Board of Divadelná Nitra Festival and coordinator of the project. "It is important to mention that the stay of participants at the Divadelná Nitra Festival within this project include not only a visit to the festival programme's productions and their analysis at meetings with mentors of residence. An integral part of the workshop are presentations for the public about the current trends in the theatre arts in V4 and Eastern Partnership countries, which are prepared by participants of the residence themselves and which help to get to know the different theatrical cultures and to find out, for example, about less known theatre artists or trends in Ukraine or Moldova," he added, mentioning that another significant feature of the workshop are endless debates of the group of participants together with their mentors outside the official residence programme.*

Representatives

V4 @ Theatre Critics Residency Slovakia was represented by Barbora Forkovičová, the student of Theory and Criticism of Theatre from Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, and Lucia Galdíková, doctoral student from Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, the Czech student of Theatre studies Barbora Havlová and a theatre critic of renowned Czech theatrical periodicals Kateřina Veselovská, dance critic Zsuzsanna Komjathy and a translator, as well as a theatre critic Dorottya Albert from Hungary. Poland was represented by a theatre director and critic Julia Lizurek and by a student, dance and theatre critic Stanisław Godlewski. In addition to the V4 countries, Divadelná Nitra welcomed professionals from the selected Eastern Partnership countries: Ukrainian editor and journalist Olena Mygashko and a cultural manager Veronika Sklyarova, Belarusian

cultural manager Hanna Kazakova and a teacher, as well as a theatre critic, Kristina Smolskaya. Critic Marin Madan arrived from Moldova.

During the three years of the V4@Theatre Critics Residency, Divadelná Nitra welcomed over 30 young theatre critics aged under 35 years from 8 countries under the mentorship of prestigious theatre theorists and critics.

The project V4 @ Theatre Critics Residency was supported by the International Visegrad Fund, the main partner of the project and Slovak Arts Council.

Project V4@Theatre Critics Residency supported by



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Project partners



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2nd year of the Divadelná Nitra Association project named EU DNA

The Divadelná Nitra Association successfully completed the second year of its next international project, called EU DNA (European Debate and Network Activities / Divadelná Nitra Association). The project is based on the long-term effort of the Divadelná Nitra Association to cross the borders of Slovakia, to develop international contacts, to

stimulate the creation of co-production projects and networking between the Slovak and foreign theatrical scene.

EU DNA: 16 foreign mobilities



16 foreign mobilities were carried out within the project EU DNA 2017. It gave a travel opportunity for 6 theatre critics, dramaturges and cultural managers to reach such destinations as Belgium, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Russia, Germany and the Czech Republic. In these countries, they visited significant European institutions and festivals – Münchner Kammerspiele, Impulse Theater Festival, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Wiener Festwochen, Stücke 2017, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts and several Czech theatre scenes.

One of the priorities of the project was the development of contacts with the IETM (International Network for Performing Arts). The Spring Meeting of IETM in Bucharest was one of the opportunities how through active participation in the meeting programme provide information from the world's topical publications about the current theatrical arts in Slovakia and to negotiate with partners for future co-production projects.

The project EU DNA was supported using public funding by Slovak Arts Council, main partner of the project.

All actual information you can find at: www.nitrafest.sk and www.facebook.com/divadelna.nitra

> Contact

International Theatre Festival

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