

DIVADELNÁ NITRA
ÚZEMIE ÉTOS/TERRITORY ETHOS
MEDZINÁRODNÝ FESTIVAL / INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL



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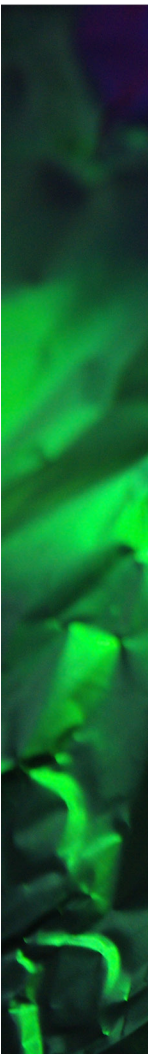
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Powerful original pieces on motherhood, male subjectivity, autism and mental impairment. Divadelná Nitra programs bold works of theatre

They live among us but often go unseen, separated by a veil of taboo and ignorance. Our attitude only tends to change with personal experience. The International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra (25 – 30 September 2020) features powerful original works that openly reflect on excluded people and groups and so penetrate the wall run around otherness.

Art should be accessible to all, and everyone should have an equal opportunity to take part in its creation. This is the avowed approach of Divadlo z Pasáže from Banská Bystrica, the only Slovak professional theatre that systematically engages mentally challenged actors. The 29. year of Divadelná Nitra will introduce their newest production titled **The Norm**, created at the performers' own behest. Director Monika Kováčová engaged them in conversations about what they believe important in life, what they hope to achieve, and how they would like to be seen by society. *"Their collective piece explores the limits of normativity, generally imposed by majority society, and provokes the spectator with an uncompromising honesty. The Norm illustrates otherness and uses humour to dismantle the boundary between 'us' and 'them',"* explains curator of the Slovak programme section Martina Mašlárová. **Actors from Divadlo z Pasáže show that we are all alike in the need for social acceptance and the desire to belong.** *"Spectators should come to our performance because it is about our norm. There, you don't need to be closed in, but you can freely decide for yourself and your life,"* says performer Ján Kinčoš.

That something is not necessarily worse or less important simply because it is different is a theme *The Norm* shares with Peter Mazalán's production **Winter's Journey**. The protagonist is a misunderstood vagrant lost in the mist of his own existence. Relying on a highly aestheticized form, the work raises themes only rarely or marginally represented in theatre, **thematizes otherness and explores the phenomenon of neurodiversity**. In his art, Mazalán – a trained opera singer – is known to blend operatic inspirations with themes he takes personal interest in. In *Winter's Journey* it is Franz Schubert's famous song cycle *Winterreise*, inspired by the poetry of Wilhelm Müller, and an eponymous play by Elfriede Jelinek. In both works, the author discovers parallels with the opaque inner life of autism, a pendulum of fascination and profound absorption on the one hand, and anxiety and social





isolation on the other. The result is a unique multi-genre scenic artwork that subordinates story to impression and atmosphere. *“I have interpreted Franz Schubert’s song cycle for several years, but only recently, when a person with an autism spectrum disorder was born into our family, I began to interpret him with a fresh pair of eyes. Winter’s Journey is a chamber song recital that at a certain moment turns to the inner world of a human being. I firmly hope it will contribute to the discussion on autism and that we will begin to realize and recognise what kind of people surround us, although it may sometimes be difficult to notice,”* says Peter Mazalán. Besides Mazalán’s vocal interpretation of Schubert, the production features a subtle performance by Annamária Janeková, realistic acting by Jana Oľhová, the piano virtuoso Peter Pažický, and a visual concept by Ján Ptačin.

They speak of motherhood without idealism or embellishment. They scour anonymous message boards and private conversations for themes such as postpartum depression, pain, lactation psychosis and partner misunderstandings. Veronika Malgot, Lýdia Ondrušová and Laura Štorcelová from NUDE Theatre will stage their original play **Love You and Take Care**, following in their programmatic exploration of the lives of women. This production, rehearsed within the space of an apartment, is based on the performers’ authentic stories. *“In the present case it is motherhood, a topic that mostly echoes in public discourse in attempts to legislate limitations on the rights of women freely to choose whether and when they are to become mothers,”* notes curator Martina Mašlárová. Each of the play’s storylines is delivered in a different form of artistic expression. *“Although it might be misleading to describe NUDE’s productions as feminist, the company is one of a few in Slovakia that pays systematic attention to women and female themes. In contrast, the spectatorial experience offered in the production is certainly not meant solely for the allegedly gentler sex – rather the contrary,”* adds Mašlárová. The festival performances in Nitra will take place in an unusual venue – the functionalist Kollmann family villa.

A homosexual in a world governed by heterosexuals who took interest in human beings on the margins of society, be it blacks, gangsters or misfits from the underworld. Playwright and director Bernard-Marie Koltès took up themes closely related to his personal life. His masterpiece *In the Solitude of the Cotton Fields* presents a dialogical swordplay between a dealer and a client. His play inspired an ambitious production titled **In the Solitude** by young Slovak creator Martin Hodoň from the platform GAFFA. *“The original mysterious, multivocal text is turned into **a conversation about desire and power, about dependence and about the need to dominate and tempt, but equally to be owned and tempted.*** In the Solitude in many ways resembles the dialogue between Mephistopheles and Faust, except here it is unclear who is the demon and who the craver,” writes curator of the Slovak programme section Milo Juráni. This philosophical tractate about men exploring the possibilities of male intimacy will seize the spectators’ mind and emotions. A minimalist piece on the boundary of contemporary dance and



physical theatre, it handles tension and intensity meticulously and boasts a gripping theatrical duet by Mark Kristián Hochman and František Maňák.

The 29. International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra will take place in the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen, the Synagogue, Villa K, and at Svätoplukovo námestie.

Tickets to performances can be purchased via the online marketplace GoOut from 7 September 2020 and at the Festival Cash Desk (main entrance of the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra) daily from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. In view of current safety measures, the organisers recommend visitors purchase their tickets online.

Association Divadelná Nitra will ensure compliance with all hygienic and anti-epidemic measures in accordance with current instructions of the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic and the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra during the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2020. For more information about current measures, please visit www.nitrafest.sk.

Projekty Asociácie Divadelná Nitra podporili



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