

DIVADELNÁ NITRA ÚZEMIE ÉTOS/TERRITORY ETHOS

MEDZINÁRODNÝ FESTIVAL / INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL



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The International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra makes changes to its programme but takes place as scheduled!

Despite unfavourable developments affecting the culture sector as a whole and the programme of the 29. International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra (25 – 30 September) in particular, organisers have adapted to the new circumstance. All fans of theatrical art can look forward to captivating performances and a rich accompanying programme – all in keeping with anti-epidemic health and safety measures.

“The good-old ‘programme may be subject to change’ was never as relevant as it is nowadays,” festival director Darina Kárová describes the reality of the recent months and weeks accompanying preparations for the festival. Organisers have faced numerous challenges hindering the main and accompanying programme. During these days, they are working hard so visitors might experience the festival atmosphere of Divadelná Nitra as they know it.

Top picks from Slovakia

Confronting habituated moral rules, ethical principles or one’s own ideas about good and evil: these are among the natural resonances of theme of the 29. International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra – *territory ethos*. Spectators will cross its borders with the help of intriguing new productions from Slovakia. **No Show Tonight** takes them back to the Velvet Revolution, while **Silent Night, Lightless Night** draws them into the events of the Slovak National Uprising. **The Czech Comedy about the Rich Man and Lazarus** offers a glimpse of the rotten world of upstart elites, and in **The House**, a revival of the legendary production *The House of Bernarda Alba*, they come face to face with a society incapable of responding to otherness. The programme will also see a broad selection of original productions with a powerful social message – **The Norm**, a collective piece about the lives of mentally challenged actors, a multi-genre production thematising the obscure world of autism titled **Winter’s Journey**, and authentic testimonies about motherhood in **Love You and Take Care** (the last will not take place in Vila K but instead in the premises of DOM of CREATIVITY, the former Fashion House). The festival also features its own productions – a brand new multi-genre piece by acclaimed choreographer Petra Fornayová titled **Blue is the Colour**, presented as a work-in-progress. Due to the worsening pandemic situation, the festival has cancelled programmed performances of **In the Solitude** by GAFFA company as well as Divadelná Nitra’s international co-production project starring teenagers from Prague and Nitra, **Icarus**. Instead of the



latter, the festival has scheduled a puppet show by SpozaVoza Theatre – **The Secret of the Ocean**, based on the popular children's book *The Whale, the Sea and the Stars*.

No international programme this year

While organisers did their best to keep the festival going, the international programme of ITF Divadelná Nitra was gradually stripped down. Spectators will not be able to see performances of **7 Promises** and **Do My Mouth** by Belgian company Random Scream. The scheduled performance of **Heretical Essays** by Prague's Studio Hrdinů has also been cancelled. The latter will be replaced by a staging of director Peter Palík's **Midnight Mass**, premiered recently at the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre. This will afford a higher representation to Slovak theatre, in line with the motivations of this year's festival edition. A play of powerful dialogue and tense emotion set in the momentous year of 1944, it poses fundamental questions about conscience and the age, and is staged to commemorate 100 years since the birth of its author, famous playwright Peter Karvaš.

Discussions, concerts, exhibitions and children's events. A multi-genre mosaic in the accompanying programme

The main programme of Divadelná Nitra will be complemented with a rich off-programme, which will similarly revolve around the year's festival theme. Association Divadelná Nitra and Denník N are preparing a large public debate titled **known/unknown territories ethos**, moderated by Oliver Rehák and streamed online via Denník N's Facebook and website. Its guests will include nature protector and Minister of the Environment Ján Budaj, pneumonologist and phthysiologist Štefan Laššán, and economist and IT expert Miroslav Pikus. The public debate will be followed up by other discussions on ethical topics in culture and politics.

The festival will see musical performances by organ grinders, the bands **Genius Locci** and **La3no Cubano**, and brothers **Marek and Martin Geišberg**. It finishes off with **Shakespeare Concert**, a show featuring sonnets and excerpts from the hand of the world's prince-among-playwrights set to music performed by Alena Pajtinková, Ľuboš Kostelný, Dávid Hartl and others. Tickets to the concert are still available.

Festival visitors will also have a chance to see a number of exhibitions, such as a collection of photographs and other material in memory of Jozef Bednárík's legendary production of **The House of Bernarda Alba – Then and Now** in the entrance foyer of Studio DAB, **theatre.sk** – an exhibition organised by the Theatre Institute to commemorate 100 years of Slovak professional theatre, and several exhibitions at Nitra Gallery and the Nitra Regional Museum. The off-programme also



features stand-up performances by **Gabo Žifčák** and **Peter Petiar Lachký** with an accompanying concert, which will, however, not run in outdoor restaurant terraces over the course of the festival but one after the other in Studio DAB (on Friday, 25 September, 8:30 PM).

Interesting performances will also take place in the square, railway station and Synagogue. For its youngest visitors, the festival has prepared a series of puppet theatres under the title **Buffonade**, the New Theatre's punk-animal-hand-puppet-comedy thriller **Puss in Boots, A Knight's Tale** – a street play by Teátro Komika, and the seafaring adventure **Captain Anchor** by Agapé Theatre. The Nitra Regional Museum offers them a chance to play archaeologists.

For reasons of anti-epidemic prevention, ITF Divadelná Nitra has decided to call off its customary **balloon parade** through the centre of town. The festival will also do without the Czech clown show **Stoppers** by Studio Underground, and it will be replaced by the fire show **Inspinia** created in collaboration between Inspinia company and CirKus-Kus on Saturday, and the circus-drumming street acrobatic show **Circus Rhythms** by Campana Batucada and CirKus-Kus on Sunday. The time and place of these performances remains the same. The literary event **KnihKupecká** has also been cancelled. All remaining events remain programmed as is for the time being.

Young critics will meet online

Several activities organised for Association Divadelná Nitra's year-long projects will take place during the festival: arts and crafts integration activities for children from the **Tulip Online** project, including the **Black Box pen**, a project for rediscovering the forgotten public works of art and architecture in Nitra titled **This is Art, Too**, and the international audience activation project **Be SpectACTIVE!** The learning project for high school and university students **How to Understand Theatre** will see a change of mentors – instead of Czech theatre scholar Martin Pšenička, the seminar will be led by theatre scholar Miroslav Ballay.

The planned international young critics seminar for artistic reflection **V4@Theatre Critics Residency** will take place online. Under the guidance of German theatre scholar Stefan Tigges, participants will join analytic seminars, discussions on selected productions from the main programme of ITF Divadelná Nitra 2020 and socio-political issues, and a meeting with the main programme curators and participants from other projects organised by Association Divadelná Nitra. The programme will be complemented by an online lecture and expert advice from Croatian theatre expert Darko Lukić.

All changes to the programme will be published online at www.nitrafest.sk, on social media and in printed materials during the festival.



Safety goes hand in hand with art

“The organisation of all festival events was twice as demanding – first, in the standard production activities and, secondly, in parallel adjustments of all hygienic and anti-epidemic measures tailored to the festival. These follow current instructions of the Regional Public Health Authority in Nitra and the Notice of the Director of the Andrej Bagar Theatre,” explains festival director Darina Kárová. Visitors will only be allowed to enter festival premises with a face mask or appropriate covering of the upper respiratory system, including to outdoor festival venues. Body temperature will be taken upon entry to buildings, the festival will follow a strict no-handshake policy, mandatory distancing, and provide disinfectant, spare masks and gloves for its visitors. *“We hope Divadelná Nitra will be a safe space to encounter art,”* adds Kárová.

The 29. International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra will take place in the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen, Synagogue, DOM of CREATIVITY, 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 concerns, the organisers recommend visitors purchase their tickets online. Due to recent safety measures, hall capacities have been reduced, and fewer tickets have been released for sale than usual.

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.



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