

1–6 OCT  
2021



30. ročník Medzinárodného festivalu  
30<sup>th</sup> edition of International Theatre Festival

DIVADELNÁ  
NITRA

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## Ecology and freedom – ITF Divadelná Nitra will dance to important questions

What's the point in rinsing a plastic yoghurt cup if some people fly to Thailand four times a year? What will the future of our planet look like? And how do young people feel about our age? Answers to these questions will be explored in international multidisciplinary productions with a distinctive Slovak input featured at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra (1 – 6 October 2021).

Productions that were meant to take stage last year but were precluded by the pandemic. Difficult times postponed their world premieres by a year – but also intensified their sense of urgency. The main programme of the jubilee 30. ITF Divadelná Nitra, subtitled *p r e s a h y / t r a n s c e n d e n c i e s*, will feature works that probe our planet's future and the limits of freedom. These productions were created for the respected European project Be SpectACTive!

He sought to fly higher – and it cost him his life. The mythological tale of Daedalus and his son Icarus inspired the piece **ICARUS**, programmed for **Saturday, October 2**, at Svätoplukovo námestie. Lust for freedom and the urge to test boundaries are part and parcel of growing up, and that is why this project stands on young people. It is the fruit of a creative collaboration between professional dancers – Marie Gourdain (FR, CZ), Jaro Viňarský (SK), and Václav Kalivoda (CZ) – and teenagers from Prague and Nitra. *“The story served as a starting point for a combination of symbolic and abstract imagery, as well as the teenagers’ scenic movement, based in an analysis of human walking and the trajectorial principle of human movement. Walking expresses identity in motion,”* says French director Marie Gourdain. The project's aim was to create a mobile piece that can be carried to other countries, variably created anew and presented with groups of local teenagers.

The production results from more than a two-year-long participative process. Marie Gourdain's scenography involves coloured rods reminiscent of Mikado. These form simple frames, variable shapes, and an impressive and visually dynamic composition. Slovak dancer Jaro Viňarský performs the role of a disturbing element in the order surrounding him. *“He amplifies expression, transforming everyday gesture into frenetic, enthralling, unrestrained dance.*

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*He represents the element of freedom, varying motifs connected with the work's theme: the relationship between individual and society, and individualism, which is not merely an achievement of freedom but likewise the root of egoism. He asks where the possibility freely to tear oneself from the grey mass of the crowd ends and where solitary emptiness begins,"* the director explains. All this is tied together by Czech musician Václav Kalivoda's character of an almost-conductor, who controls the rhythm of stage action and backs the performance with music, as though alternating between different stages of life with different colours and intensities.

The project was prepared parallelly in two cities, at joint residencies of children and artists in Nitra and Prague. Over the past year, the creators also held meetings online. Here, children completed artistic assignments in dramaturgy, music, and dance, and discussed with each other and the creators.

*"Undertaking this production is meant to foster interest in contemporary dance in Nitra. Active involvement of children in artistic production side by side with leading figures on the international and local dance scene expands the future career prospects of young dancers from Nitra and broadens their horizons. During the epidemic, it was also an unplanned way of socializing and escape from isolation. At the same time, it brings participative experiment to Slovakia, promotes ideas of active citizenship, and supports community life,"* explains festival vice-director Anna Šimončíčová.

**On Sunday, October 3,** festival visitors will have a chance to see the world premiere of the multi-genre artwork **Blue is the Colour (or Why Rinse a Plastic Yoghurt Cup if Some People Fly to Thailand Four Times a Year)** at Párovské Háje Culture House. In it, choreographer, performer and actor Petra Fornayová dives into complex reflections about the future of our world. *"If apocalyptic predictions about climate change do come true, even partly, then we are closer to a dystopia than some utopian miracle, and the 'moral law in us' will be tested in due time,"* says the author, asking what will convince our civilisation of a need to change its dominant discourse. Countering the question as to why we should even care, she exclaims: *"What else is there to care about? It's about the environment we live in, raise our children, create, work... and we are digging our own grave. We can reflect on the roots of this, and perhaps, when we do find them out, we will gain a chance of reversing – per some experts, irreversible – changes,"* says Fornayová. She continues: *"I think it is a mixture of peculiar human greed, inertia, comfort, and the desire to own and control. It may even be plain old struggle for survival, except that it seems to have gone out of hand, because by defeating other animal species,*

*we are also defeating ourselves.” Another moment her performance tries to touch is the consequence of decisions meant to solve ecological problems: “A blanket attitude might cause much harm in the political sphere; on the other hand, private strategies and individual changes of behaviour appear to be insufficient.”*

Petra Fornayová, who features in the production alongside performers Vlado Zboroň and Silvia Sviteková, queries: *“Are there any solutions to the advancing ecological crisis? Will they be private or – on the contrary – global political strategies? How willing and capable will we be in following the ‘moral law’ and how far will its limits be displaced?”* Spectators will also be actively involved, but there is no need to worry – their dialogue with creators will take place through the medium of technology, guaranteeing the comfort of impersonal confrontation. *“We deliberately use a new type of communication. Nowadays we are all heroes in the media, we can barely look each other in the eyes and say our opinion out loud without the aid of a screen and keyboard. In order to preserve the spectator’s comfort, more or less without intruding in his or her personal zone, we collect answers to questions. After each performance, we use them to write up an ad hoc new ten commandments, which we should start obeying. So is it also a mini-sociological study,”* elucidates the author.

The participative production was created in Slovakia and at a creative residency in Slovenia. Additional planned residencies in Ireland and Belgium were cancelled due to the pandemic. In the end they were replaced by research through digital technology and rehearsals at home. *“Reality will overlap with fiction, texts with movement and image,”* adds Petra Fornayová. Besides contemporary dance, the work also spotlights other art forms – its visual concept was authored by multimedia artist Jakub Pišek, texts and dramaturgy are due to Peter Šulej, while its music was composed by Fero Király.

Both productions were created for the European project Be SpectACTive!, supported by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union. This community-oriented project enables diverse activities contributing to citizen participation in local cultural events, their activation, development of artistic production and audiences, and exchange of international contacts. The organisers of ITF Divadelná Nitra were the first in Slovakia to join its ranks in 2019. By undertaking these creative projects, Association Divadelná Nitra fulfils its ambition of supporting Slovak artists in international production and promoting their position on the world theatre scene.

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The 30. International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra will take place in the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra (Great Hall and Studio), Svätoplukovo námestie, Zobor Monastery, Párovské Háje Culture House, Vila K, the Synagogue, Kupecká ulica, and the premises of other festival partners (Regional Education Centre Nitra, Karol Kmeťko Regional Library in Nitra, Nitra Gallery, Nitra Region Museum, Slovak Agricultural Museum in Nitra)..

Association Divadelná Nitra and co-organisers will ensure compliance with all hygienic and anti-epidemic measures during the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2021 in accordance with current regulations of the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic, directions of the Regional Public Health Authority in Nitra, the epidemic notice of the Director of the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, and valid notices of co-organisers. For more information about current measures, visit [www.nitrafest.sk](http://www.nitrafest.sk).

Events organised during ITF Divadelná Nitra 2021 directly by the festival are classified under following 'Covid Automat' categories: indoors – OTP (fully vaccinated/tested/recovered from COVID-19), outdoors – Basic (no restrictions).

Tickets to shows can be purchased online via GoOut and from 6 September 2021 at the festival box office (bod.K7, Štefánikova trieda 7) on working days from 3.00 PM to 5.00 PM. Given higher concerns for health and safety, the organisers recommend visitors purchase their tickets online.

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**The International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2021 is held under the auspices of President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Čaputová, Chairman of the Nitra Self-Governing Region Milan Belica, and Mayor of The City of Nitra Marek Hattas.**

**Main organiser**

Association Divadelná Nitra

**Main co-organisers**

Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra

Nitra Self-Governing Region, The City of Nitra

**Co-organisers**

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