



PRESS RELEASE

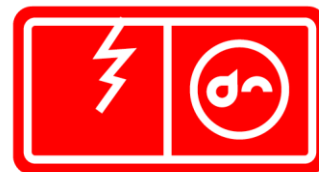
30. 9. 2022

Divadelná Nitra 2022 moved the festival to a new stage with good news: People did not forget to go to the theatre

The organisers began the preparations for the 31st edition of the International Festival Divadelná Nitra with respect. The pandemic has changed our established habits. It turned out that theatre remains a part of our lives, even if we no longer buy tickets for performances well in advance. And so, for the 31st time, it was perfectly possible to celebrate art in Nitra – the city on the foothills of Zobor. After two corona years, Divadelná Nitra 2022 offered during the six Festival days, a full-fledged opportunity to rediscover social life and the joy of mutual contact.

Divadelná Nitra 2022: a milestone in international presence

According to **Darina Kárová**, director of the International Festival Divadelná Nitra, the initial success is the very fact that the Festival was at all held: ***"Live. And without any programme change. Moreover, it bolstered its international character. The main programme featured 15 productions co-produced by 10 countries. And the international project of critical reflection also brought to Nitra participants from ten countries, while 5 of them were from other countries than those represented within the main programme. Divadelná Nitra has never before received such***

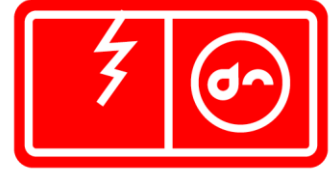


international representation. Most of the international creative and performing artists made a Slovak debut with their performance at Divadelná Nitra. The programme perfectly fulfilled the Festival leitmotif: fragility. We saw stories from the war, childhood traumas, the fate of human body, calls for nature protection. Most importantly, these profound, often taboo themes, presented through extraordinary scenic means, resonated strongly with the audience."

Ms Kárová admitted that before the Festival opened, she did have some concerns about possibly limited attendance, as ticket sales had long stagnated. ***"Yet, it turned out that people did not forget to go to the theatre. I wish to commend the audience, who created the atmosphere of Divadelná Nitra. As if after the pandemic they became more sensitive to the incredible fragility of being – of man, society, nature. We would like to thank all the performers, influencers, colleagues from the theatres and the media, who spread the word about the Festival, they all helped to fill the smaller halls to the last seat all performances,"*** she added.

Multiple debuts

A total of 15 Slovak and international productions within the main programme were seen by 2 346 spectators. 7 Slovak and 8 international productions made by authors from 10 countries featured within in the main programme. Matija Ferlin, Pablo Figaldo, László Göndör and Viktor Černický made their Slovak debut, while Pawel Sakowicz (Poland), Adrien Hód (Hungary) and Róbert Lucskay with Lukáš Bobalik from Slovakia marked their debut at Divadelná Nitra. The curator of the main international programme, Ján Šimko is pleased that the new names met the expectations: ***"I am quite surprised by how tremendously the Festival audience received them. It seems that there was again an audience that also enjoy seeing new names,***



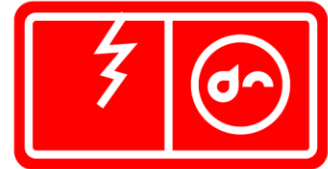
and aren't too attached to relying on established ensembles, authors or forms. They were very open, and accepted things that I consider relatively difficult in the Slovak context, or such stage and performative forms that the local audience is certainly not accustomed to." Though the curators took a risk with their selection, it definitely paid off.

The appeal of new forms

"The post-pandemic situation in theatres has changed a lot, and the creative and performing artists are thinking about their new relationship with theatre as a medium of artistic expression. The same thing happened with the audience. I have the impression that people come to the Festival because they are looking for something other than entertainment theatre, that they are looking for theatre as a means to reflect on the world. That doesn't necessarily have to be only serious. It is also the comic forms or those stage forms we had at the Festival. They were all but simplistic, what the audience liked," Šimko pointed out, adding that it's good news for the world of theatre. The specificity of this edition of Divadelná Nitra was that the Festival became a kind of laboratory, when three performances were completed as the Festival was held: ***Chronicles of War, Hatred and Love, Virtual Ritual*** and ***Prima***. They brought on stage local artists and the public who was thus able to work with professionals from abroad.

Much rain – much gain

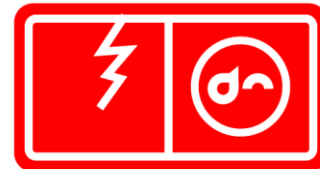
29 events within the off-programme were convened by the Festival team itself, additional 10 were brought by the co-organizers. 9 events were dedicated to children. ***"Most off-programme events were customarily offered during the Festival weekend. The menu included the Nitra White Night held after a break of several years. The White Night offered***



presentation of the newly established cultural and creative centres in Nitra (Domof Creativity, Creative Centre Nitra, point bod.K7), a concert by the singer Katarzia on the square and the opening of exhibition of posters by the Slovak-based Ukrainian graphic designer Mykola Kovalenko. Even the downpour on Sunday didn't prove to be an obstacle, quite on the contrary: The concert of the group Vrbovskí víťazi moved to bod.K7 and the performance by the Tuš Theatre A Girl with Great Ingenuity held in lobby of The Andrej Bagar Theatre made a much stronger connection with the audience in the interior," reflects the Festival off-programme dramaturge **Miro Zwiefelhofer**.

Distinctive moments

101 performers were involved in the off-programme that drew 1 980 spectators. In addition to the customary spaces, such as the square Svätoplukovo námestie, the Synagogue and bod.K7, in 2022 the off-programme events venture to further venues - in the House of Matica Slovenská the **New Theatre** performed ***The Book Thief***; D4 studio of the Private Conservatory in Nitra hosted a student production ***Don Juan Returning from War***. The event **A Tulip for You** was held in a special mood this year – as a tribute to the late musician **Thierry Ebam** who had been part of the project for years. ***"Sadly, Thierry left us. The opening event of the entire Festival was dedicated to his memory,"*** added **Elena Kárová**, coordinator of the A Tulip for You project. This year, the project of the Divadelná Nitra Association also offered festival visitors a **Black Box**, in which nearly 100 visitors experienced the life of the visually impaired. The project included 5 events with c. 70 participants from Slovakia and Ukraine, with 5 volunteers helping the planning and running.

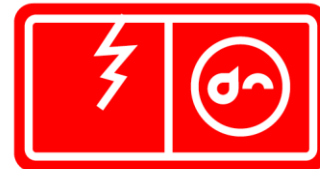


Volunteer input

45 volunteers worked directly at the 31st Festival edition, of which 12 were young men. Volunteers were at hand on very arrival at The Andrej Bagar Theatre, as many of them manned guest reception. Others were assisting with the decoration of the premises and did ample work behind the scenes to make everything run smoothly. And it did!

Young learners – the future of the Festival

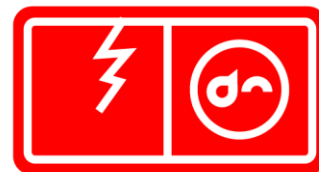
The Festival customarily also includes the projects of the Association Divadelná Nitra: **V4@Theatre Critics Residency**, an international creative platform for theatre critics under the age of 35 from Slovakia and abroad; and **How to Understand Theatre**, informal learning about theatre. The aim of the **V4@Theatre Critics Residency** is to advance critical theatre reflection, follow new trends in the performing arts, and familiarisation with analytical methods used to reflect on often specific and experimental works of art. As part of the residency, this year a group of 14 theatre critics from 8 countries (Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Ukraine, Albania, North Macedonia) participated in the performances within the main programme and continuously analysed them in sessions led by the lecturers **Stefan Tigges** from Germany and **Darko Lukić** from Croatia. *"In our workshops, we discussed a lot about what criticism means today and what the power of critical thinking could be. We also explored the leitmotif of the 31st Festival edition: fragility. We further explored a number of the solo projects that featured at the Festival this year,"* Tigges summarised. Lukić added: *"After two years, I finally got to enjoy a standard Festival edition, which was very exciting. The project is very beneficial for Divadelná Nitra. It is most useful for these young critics from different countries to be here, because they know how to debate, they go to the theatre, they see performances."* Both distinguished theatre



theorists and critics were pleased with the many young people in the audience. They find that good news for the future of the Festival.

Zest of mind

The Festival offered the project **How to Understand Theatre** for the 14th time. During the six days, its 21 participants (5 students of The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and 16 students from two Košice-based conservatories) viewed the performances within the main programme, attended lecturer-led workshops and discussions with the creative teams of the productions. The lecturers, specialists on theatre theory and practice, **Miroslav Ballay** and **Miklós Forgács**, navigated the participants to look critically at the theatre, introduced them to current trends in performing arts and introduced them to analytical approaches to examining works of art. *"We debated the place of text in contemporary theatre methods, the place of the actor, and we also touched upon a very important topic, which is the language of contemporary theatre,"* said Miroslav Ballay, lecturer at the Department of Cultural Studies at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. The participants also met a group of young international theatre critics and Festival team to explore different perspectives of artistic expression and the current trends in contemporary research into theatre. *"The group of participants was quite diverse, but in the end the mix turned out to be a bonus. There are differences in the desire and determination to communicate, as there is somewhat of a routine among university students. Yet, with a little patience and empathy, it was worth waiting for the opinions of those who were first shy to speak up,"* added Miklós Forgács, dramaturge of the Thália Theatre Košice, who made his debut as Festival lecturer at Divadelná Nitra.



Statistics – 31st edition of the International Festival Divadelná Nitra

Number of main organisers: 3

Number of co-organisers: 13

Number of donors: 22

Number of media partners: 16

Number of partners: 24

Number of Festival team members: 30

Number of cast within the main programme: 44

Number of productions within the main programme – total: 15

Number of international productions within the main programme: 8

Number of Slovak productions within the main programme: 7

Countries participating within the main programme: 10

Number of spectators attending performances
within the main programme: 2 346

Number of off-programme events: 29

Number of performers within off-programme events: 101

Number of spectators attending off-programme events: 1 980

Number of accredited journalists: 16

Number of volunteers: 45

KREHKOSŤ / FRAGILITY



Patrons, convenors, partners

International Festival Divadelná Nitra 2022 is held under the auspices of Mr Milan Belica, the Chairman of the Nitra Self-Governing Region and Mr Marek Hattas, the Mayor of the City of Nitra.

Lead convener

Association Divadelná Nitra

Main co-organisers

The Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, Nitra Self-Governing Region, City of Nitra

Co-organisers

Botanical Garden of the Slovak Agricultural University in Nitra, Domof Creativity, Regional Public Enlightenment Centre in Nitra, Creative Centre Nitra, NGO Mareena, Gallery of Nitra, NGO Nitra Culture Centre, Nitra Regional Museum in Nitra, Books and Second-hand Booksellers Pod Vřškom, Joint Boarding School for Pupils with Sight Impairment, Bratislava, NGO Vila K, The Prince Pribina Elementary School in Nitra, The Jozef Rosinský Elementary School of Art in Nitra

