



DN
2023

medzinárodný festival
international theatre festival

International Festival Divadelná Nitra 2023 presents its headliners

PRESS RELEASE

Nitra, 17 July 2023

The thirty-second edition of the International Festival Divadelná Nitra, to be held in Nitra from 22 to 27 September 2023, has completed the selection of productions for the main programme. It will feature of 12 productions: 4 international productions – from Belgium and Ukraine, 4 productions made by independent Slovak theatres and 4 productions by state-funded Slovak theatres. Currently, the Festival has two headliners. Detailed Festival programme with the 2023 leitmotif *Odozvy/ Responses*, was released at the press conference in Bratislava on 10 August 2023, when online ticket sales also opened.

2023 FESTIVAL EDITION LEITMOTIF: RESPONSES

Traditionally, each Festival edition has a unique leitmotif that epitomises its overarching theme. It is also common denominator for the themes of the individual featured works. The leitmotif serves as an incentive to search for content or mental associations, connections between individual parts or works of the Festival programme. It is an inspiration for visual solutions, an incentive to toy with meanings. Thus, an imaginary map, a network of mental and communication links emerges and the idea of the Festival as a platform for cultural exchange and the development of critical thinking is met.

"For the 2023 International Festival Divadelná Nitra, we chose the leitmotif **ODOZVY/RESPONSES**. Response means interest in all that surrounds us, awareness of the state of those closest to us and the world, strengthening relationships, developing empathy and the ability to help. Response is an interaction that helps us survive and find meaning in life. It is a reaction to public apathy brought about by the critical events of the recent years, particularly the aggression in Ukraine, the ecological and economic crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic. We also want to elicit a response from Festival visitors as an instrument to deal with the globally observed audience crisis," says Festival Director Darina Kárová.

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**DIVADELNÁ
NITRA**

22 – 27 sept

PROGRAMME RESPONSES

"When compiling the programme, we emphasised the Slovak programme. Here, we built upon the experience we acquired when meeting with a group of the Nitra public within the project of the Audience Programme Board (implemented since 2019). The result is bound to impress in terms of the representation of the most prestigious state-funded theatres, but also with a lavish lineup of independent theatres. Most will feature at Nitra for the first time. Yet, we do not wish to limit the Festival to brick theatres. On the contrary, our ambition is to venture out more into the streets and other non-traditional spaces. In public space, the main programme will be complemented by accompanying activities. In those, we are mindful of the child audience, young people, along with a range of marginalised groups," adds Anna Šimončíčová, Deputy Director of the Festival, responsible for international relations, coordination of the Dramaturgical Board and main programme production.

We are proud to present below the headliners within the international and Slovak programme at the 2023 International Festival Divadelná Nitra.

INTERNATIONAL HEADLINER

DANCE MACABRE

UKRAINIAN PERFORMANCE GROUP **DAKH DAUGHTERS**

The international headliner of the 2023 International Festival Divadelná Nitra is ***Danse Macabre*** or ***Dance of Death***, an exceptional cabaret by the Ukrainian music and performance group **Dakh Daughters**. Divadelná Nitra audiences are familiar with Dakh Daughters since 2016, when the group featured at the Festival with the cabaret *Roses*. Six actresses and director Vlad Troitskyi created the trio *Macabre* shortly after the outbreak of the war made them emigrate to France. In this case, the usual commemoration of finitude is a conversation with death that cuts in a country invaded by Russian aggressors; it is also a conversation at a distance with those who remain. The production is a testimony of war and exile, a nostalgic memory of native land, an indictment, a show, a report and a revue in one. *Danse Macabre* featured at a number of European festivals; members of the ensemble also performed with great success at the Pohoda festival in Slovakia (2015, 2023). The captivately instrumented and performed songs are a mix of different genres from post-punk to Ukrainian folk music. In addition to the songs, the stories of women from war-affected Ukraine will sound from the stage. Stories from the war are interspersed in the production with quotations from the *Book of Job*. Female performers, living in exile, lend their voice to other

people's stories, whilst they also share their own. They offer most intimate experience, descending into the depths of war to show the infinite strength of man defying adversity. The cathartic stage piece is an original call to solidarity and a passionate defence of peace.

SLOVAK HEADLINER

HECUBA

SLOVAK CHAMBER THEATRE MARTIN

There aren't many theatres in Slovakia that manage to continuously maintain their artistic standard to the extent and time span as is the case of the Slovak Chamber Theatre in the city of Martin. Their works are a regular part of the Slovak programme at Divadelná Nitra Nitra. This year, too, their production of the Marina Carr play *Hecuba* is the highlight of the recent theatre season in Slovakia.

The fate of the Trojan queen Hecuba is anchored in ancient Greece, a period that represents the cultural and political roots of our civilisation. Yet, the contemporary Irish playwright Marina Carr does not tell the story of the glorious victory of the Mycenaeans with Odysseus at their head. On the contrary, she reflects the suffering that military aggression always brings along. In the acting interpretation of Lucia Jašková, Hecuba personifies the fate of all women who had to, and still have to look at the violent death of their children and husbands, women exposed to sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse. All this is happening in a world where not only social and moral rules, but also those of warfare have ceased to apply. In the context of current events, it is natural to draw parallels with the atrocities with which the inhabitants of the Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia are currently confronted. In a broader context, however, the text is also a rebuke to history written by a white European.

"The choice of the production of the Martin Theatre is not merely an appreciation of the qualities of a specific work, but also of the longstanding endeavour of the company. I see the benefit in this direction mainly on two levels. One is the overall quality of the repertoire that makes sense as a whole, and is not just a sequence of selected titles. Yet, the affidavit of excellence of the theatre is also the quality and diversity of the cast. In *Hecuba*, whether we are talking about the central couple – Marek Geišberg and Lucia Jašková, or about the rest of the cast, with their emotionally charged performances, all performers prove that acting in the Martin-based theatre is the crème de la crème in Slovakia. This is how the imaginary triangle of high-quality contemporary text + inspiring



dramaturgy and direction + precise and captivating acting works perfectly," the curator Miro Zwiefelhofer elucidates the choice of the Slovak headliner.

FESTIVAL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND COMMUNITIES

The main Festival programme is complemented by accompanying activities, bringing experiences beyond the limit of what we are taught to do in ordinary cultural settings. Theatre performances for the little ones, along with those dedicated to primary and secondary schools, will bring the most inspiring pieces from Slovak and Czech theatre. Befitting an international festival, the section Young Theatre in Nitra offers space for presentation to art schools' students. The events that will bring the city centre to life employ cultural diversity and will bring together different communities in the city and region of Nitra. That includes Dance Hall World – an event that will introduce many world dance cultures. The Festival will also bring numerous discussions and learning projects.

LITTLE UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine that has been raging for one and half year (by September it will be seven months), has changed our lives. The war in Ukraine affects us all. The accompanying Festival programme entitled **Little Ukraine** brings Ukraine closer to us with all the vicissitudes of war. "During Divadelná Nitra, we will construct, create a portrait of Ukraine in a reduced form – a reduced Ukraine. Her images, sounds, tastes. How we see her, how we perceive her today. We will present a kind of essence of heroism, courage, bravery, yet also of pain, losses, war experiences, humanitarian aid, solidarity, and humanity," explains her concept the co-author of the project and indefatigable activist Viera Dubačová. She has made a commendable number of trips to Ukraine with humanitarian aid, and several documentaries with her collaborators.

VOLUNTEERS AND DIVADELNÁ NITRA

Even the 32nd edition of the Divadelná Nitra International Festival cannot do without creative and hardworking volunteers. Ever since the inception of the Festival, over 1,700 volunteers contributed to its preparation, some repeatedly. Their list is in the recently published publication *Transcending Divadelná Nitra 1992 – 2021*. About 60 volunteers work every year in various fields at Divadelná Nitra. They will always create an unforgettable atmosphere, full of enthusiasm, creativity and superbly friendly atmosphere. Strong friendships are formed between the volunteers, that gives rise to their desire to meet and experience the Festival again. Hence, a great many volunteers have been working for the Festival for several years and love to come back. All information about volunteering at this the 2023 Festival edition and registration is [HERE](#).

Tickets for the performances online are now available via GoOut. From 4 September also in the Festival Box Office (bod.K7, Štefánikova street 7, Nitra) on Monday – Friday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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The main festival convenor is the **Association Divadelná Nitra**.

The main co-organisers are the **Nitra self-governing region**, the **City of Nitra** and **The Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra**.

The **International Festival Divadelná Nitra** is supported from public funds by the **Slovak Art Council** – the main Festival partner and other partners.

Projects by the Association Divadelná Nitra have been supported by:

Projekty Asociácie Divadelná Nitra podporili



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