





Dea Loher: Innocence, Slovak National Theatre (2015), director: Eduard Kudláč;
photo: Braňo Konečný / Slovak National Theatre





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Michel Houellebecq: Submission. Arena Theatre (2016),
director: Marián Amsler; photo: Ľuboš Kotlár







A BRIEF HISTORY OF SLOVAK THEATRE

Juliana Beňová

The first records of theatre life on the territory of today's Slovakia date back to the Middle Ages when two basic forms of theatrical expression were present – secular and religious. Secular theatre drew on the activities of the so-called igrics (travelling comedians, a kind of minstrel) who entertained their audiences in public places as well as in aristocrats' residences with presentations of heroic and historical songs, amusing epic compositions, and often even with their own dramatic scenes. Religious theatre was connected with the presentation of Christmas and Easter mysteries, passion plays and legends which, however, cannot be documented today with any compact texts. This particular theatre form was developed mostly by religious orders and later on, starting in the 15th century, also by richer towns, in particular guild associations. During the Renaissance, also owing to the influence of Protestant education and the spreading Reformation, mystery and passion plays became less prominent and Latin humanist school plays were brought to the fore, mostly performed in schools during celebrations and on special occasions. School performances

◀ Erdődys' theatre at Hlohovec (1802). The oldest preserved theatre building from the period of the 18th and 19th centuries;
photo: Matúš Ložonský

were educational and didactic, performed in Latin or German and served to promote religious purposes. In the Baroque period, various forms of school theatre were developed mostly by Jesuits who preferred themes from the Old Testament and focused on stage technique and set design to make the depicted theme appear as suggestive as possible. At this time, the first dramatizations of current issues emerged – the play *Tragoedia or a Play Which is Woeful, Wretched* (1728) is a Protestant play by an unknown author which allegorically portrays the fate of persecuted Protestants. A unique artefact from this period is the preserved fragment of a Slovak-versed interlude (intermezzo) from the first half of the 18th century (it is the address of a character by the name of Klimo, with linguistic features of the Central Slovak dialect). Towns like Trnava, Skalica, Spišská Kapitula and Bratislava became important theatre centres. In 1741, when Bratislava hosted the coronation of Maria Theresa, the first wooden theatre was built in the city. A bricks-and-mortar theatre was built in 1776. From the second half of the 18th century on, interest in theatre began to grow among both the nobility and townspeople. And so, theatre life in Slovakia was enriched not only by German, Hungarian and Czech travelling companies, but also by nobility theatres in the residences of the aristocracy where, in line with the European model, music and dramatic arts were developed. The oldest preserved theatre building from this period is the Empire style theatre in Hlohovec, built



between 1801 and 1802 by Count Jozef Erdödy, a patron of the arts, on the occasion of the visit of Emperor Francis II. Theatre performances for the gentry were often produced only for a small audience because they were performed by foreign travelling companies, the German opera, or by the tried-and-true puppet theatre, but they did not meet the needs of the Slovak ethnic group. These needs were related to the national movements at the beginning of the 19th century and were connected with the process in which modern nations in Central Europe were formed. In Slovakia, this process resulted in the national revival which aspired to provide Slovaks living in a multinational monarchy with a separate and independent existence.

At the time when modern nations were constituted, the establishment and development of national theatres became one of the characteristic features of all nations in the Habsburg monarchy. The primary goal of these theatres was to elevate national and public life, and to help in the process of developing a civil society. While many nations had already started to build their professional theatres, the specific political, economic, and cultural conditions of Slovaks in Hungary were still not favourable for the establishment of a professional theatre. Therefore, national theatres in Slovakia were founded by Slovak revivalists (rural and small-town intelligentsia), students and amateur theatremakers, for whom theatre was a unique tool to spread knowledge and raise

awareness, a powerful weapon in the fight for a national culture, and fertile ground for patriotic agitation. The first of the revivalist amateur theatres was founded under the leadership of the important national activist, bookbinder and bookseller, Gašpar Fejérpataky-Belopotocký in Liptovský Mikuláš. He named it Diwadlo slowanské Swato-Mikulášske (The Slavic Theatre of St. Nicholas). It began its activities on 22 August 1830 with the premiere of the satirical comedy Kocúrkovo by the renowned Slovak playwright Ján Chalupka (1791–1871). Belopotocký's theatre enterprise showed the way to others who used theatre to strengthen Slovak national identity and promote national culture. Students of the Protestant Lyceum in Bratislava were the most vigorous in this effort – finding major supporters and protectors of their theatre ambitions in Sobotište and Myjava, where they eventually (on 5 August 1841) established the Slovak National Theatre of Nitra. Although they performed only a handful of shows, their productions were very carefully prepared – their sets emphasized patriotic and nationalist tendencies, focused on actors' performances, and cultivated Slovak as the stage language. Theatre became an important activity also for the students of the Levoča Lyceum, where a large group of students found refuge in 1844, as a way of protesting against the dismissal of Ľudovít Štúr from the office of Deputy Professor at the Department of Czechoslovak Language and Literature at the Protestant Lyceum in Bratislava.

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Levoča also welcomed Ján Francisci Rimavský, who came to the town as a teacher and established an unofficial organization – the Union of the Slovak Youth – which came to have a broader social and cultural impact all over Slovakia. It was the commitment of this organization that led to the foundation of the Private Theatre of Amateur Theatremakers in Levoča, an undertaking which – between October 1845 and June 1846 – produced as many as 22 performances. The shows were very unique – they were almost intimately private, multilingual (Slovak, Hungarian, and German), and the female roles were performed by men. Gradually, Slovak theatre performances started to gain popularity and amateur theatre spread to other Slovak towns (Martin, Brezno, Banská Štiavnica). Martin became a centre of cultural and social life in the 1870s. In 1872, a democratic association of Martin-based amateur theatremakers was founded and dubbed the Slovak Choir.

It is often stated that until 1920 the Slovak Choir was in fact Slovakia's national theatre. According to its statutes, the principal activities of the Choir were singing and the organization of social and cultural events. However, that did not last long, and the members of the Choir were spending most of their time preparing theatre performances. In 1875 the Choir established a theatre section which naturally drew on the previous activity of the Martin-based amateurs. Its influence grew when the National House was constructed – a representative building with a distinct courtyard used for theatre performances. Between 1889 and 1900, the National House served as the backdrop to about a hundred performances. With its multifaceted set of activities in the social and cultural fields, the Slovak Choir laid the foundation of Slovak theatremaking.

The different social and political situation in post-war Europe, the disintegration of the multi-national monarchy, and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918) brought along substantial changes in Slovak theatre as well. Amateur companies were supplemented by new cultural associations and organizations, as well as by new ensembles and institutions, whose aim was to demonstrate and confirm the national and cultural existence of Slovaks. The most significant cultural and political event in the newly established country was the foundation of the Slovak National Theatre in 1920 in Bratislava. The establishment of the National Theatre led to a gradual

process in which Slovak theatremaking was professionalized. But the specific situation in Slovak culture did not allow for the constitution of the National Theatre on solely Slovak grounds, which was why help had to be sought from the more experienced Czech theatre artists. In order to promote the National Theatre's drama production, a specialized touring company was set up (the so-called Marching Company) which aimed to present Slovak theatre outside of the capital city and win new audiences. In the very intricate economic and political conditions of the young republic, the first decades of the National Theatre's existence (also because it operated three sections – ballet, drama and opera, and performed in several languages – Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, German) brought an incessant struggle for its purpose and existence, and also a search for new art forms and expressivity. The artistic level of the individual ensembles was becoming more distinct and stable owing to the work of renowned directors, conductors, set designers, actors and singers, and then also the first graduates of professional art schools (the Music and Dramatic Academy for Slovakia), who had a significant impact on the professionalization of Slovak theatremaking and its artistic ripening. The end of the 1930s was thus characterized by a fruitful dialogue between Czech and Slovak theatre (directors Viktor Šulc and Janko Borodáč) and by artistically valuable productions.

The second professional theatre in Slovakia was founded in Košice in 1924; however, numerous problems (mostly financial) led to its demise in 1930. The theatre was revived some time later (1937) and operated as the East Slovak National Theatre until its forced closing down as a result of the Vienna Arbitration in 1938. Between the wars, more theatre bodies existed in Slovakia and many of them were closed down later for various reasons (the Otakar Novák Theatre Company, the Chamber Theatre of Emília Wagnerová, the Central Slovak Theatre of Nováková-Rosenkranzová). A lot of amateur companies were expanding their activities (Banská Bystrica, Brezno, Liptovský Mikuláš, Nitra, Kremnica, Zvolen, Prešov), drawing on the long-standing tradition of Slovak amateur theatre, while at the same time observing the development of theatre in Europe. Amateur productions often outperformed drama in Bratislava. One of the most eminent theatres was the Slovak

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Choir in Martin, which continued with the previous prolific, active theatre and music production created by famous artists (the director Ferdinand Hoffmann and visual artist Jozef Cincík) and staged a whole series of modern productions.

Paradoxically however, despite a tricky political and social situation, the period of the independent wartime Slovak Republic (1939–1945) was crucial for the development of Slovak theatre culture (as well as for the National Theatre as an institution). In this period, Slovak theatre seemed to be catching up with what it had missed before. It underwent definitive “Slovakization”, offsetting its developmental delay and trying to become part of the modern European theatre of the 20th century. The drive towards a more European and modern approach was also reflected in the production of new and suitable translations of representative works of world drama, the shaping of current Slovak drama (Ivan Stodola, Július Barč-Ivan, Peter Zvon), modern set design (Emil Belluš), as well as the arrival of young directors, mostly educated in Czech and European modern drama (Ján Jamnický, Ferdinand Hoffmann). The new directors came to nurture their ambition to liberate theatre from the national and cultural effort and to transcend the boundaries of descriptive and realist theatre. The internal structuring and profiling of theatre became important – direction was thoroughly separated from dramaturgy, there were more professionally trained actors, set design

was made by the best visual artists of the time (Ľudovít Fulla, Mikuláš Galanda, František Tröster), and, more importantly, theatre started to open up to the impulses of modern European art. Most notably, however, theatre gained respect and support from the public.

Another momentous event which essentially affected the subsequent development of Slovak theatre-making was the 1945 regulation which nationalized all theatres. As a result, the Slovak National Theatre, the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin (later renamed at the Army Theatre, then the Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising, and today the Slovak Chamber Theatre), and the East Slovak Theatre in Košice (later the State Theatre) were all nationalized. Only the Slovak Theatre in Prešov continued working as a cooperative until 1948. Several Slovak towns attempted to establish professional theatres, mostly in places with a strong amateur tradition. And so, more theatres were founded – the Central Slovak Theatre in Zvolen (today the Theatre of Jozef Gregor Tajovský), the Regional Theatre in Nitra (since 1979 the Andrej Bagar Theatre), the Regional Workers' Theatre in Žilina (today the City Theatre in Žilina). The network of professional theatres continued to grow and more professional theatremakers joined them. However, after 1948, politics, not art, became the most important element in theatres. Suddenly, artistic intent had to be decided by the state (via its authorities and organizations); the government now

assigned theatres the role of the architects of socialism and carriers of the state ideology. Slovak stages started to depict themes like nationalization, transformation to cooperatives, and the birth of the socialist man. But despite the increase in the number of theatres and theatre companies, no increase in the quality of art took place – theatres started to resemble one another, losing their artistic distinctiveness. Stages were dominated by uniformity and socialist realism became the only allowed method of creation. Most theatre productions communicated the socialist ideology and therefore were highly schematic, formalist and dogmatic. Unnaturally and compulsorily, Slovak theatre started to incline towards the Soviet model, mostly in dramaturgy, direction and acting. The totalitarian communist regime (1950s and 1960s) introduced censorship in theatre which took over control of the repertory, bringing about an absence of freedom in artistic expression, which deformed the natural development of artistic creation. Theatre underwent a long, complex and often tempestuous development – from ideological consent, through arguments with the ideology, all the way to timid contributions aspiring to destroy the totalitarian regime. Fortunately, even this period witnessed productions which – even though they respected the official ideology and believed in “socialist humanism” – offered suggestive portrayals of human destinies, were emotionally and artistically enthralling, posed questions, confronted the

spectator's perception of reality, and allowed extraordinary actors and directors to grow (a good example of this is several productions by Jozef Budský at the SNT).

The late 1960s and early 1970s brought along a political thaw and cultural boom not only in society but also on theatre stages. Texts appeared which had not been produced before, alongside with new theatre forms (e.g. mime, small stage forms) and genres (musical, slapstick, absurd and model drama). The new political and cultural freedom opened the gates to experimenting in both theme and expressivity, to modern artistic expression and extraordinary activities in all theatrical forms. This resulted in the origination of new theatre companies, for example the iconic generational Divadlo na korze (1968 – 1971) which was to be forcefully closed down later. Intense theatre life pulsed outside the capital city too; in Nitra, director Pavol Haspra made use of contemporary drama, Žilina and Košice produced poetic theatre under the direction of Jozef Palka, the ensemble in Zvolen was shaped by director Igor Ciel, and the artistic work of the theatre in Martin got boosted by director Miloš Pietor. Slovak theatre reacted to incentives from theatres around the world and the voices calling for experiment and modernization were getting louder. This progress, however, was blatantly suppressed and terminated by political powers when the armies of the Warsaw Pact invaded the country in August 1968.



The above mentioned period of relative freedom and political thaw (the attempt to implement so-called “socialism with a human face”) was replaced with years of normalization and consolidation exercised by the ruling regime – years which somewhat felt like a return to the 1950s. The late 1970s and the 1980s passed under the sign of strict control of all artistic activities and the consequent punishment of those who “disobeyed” – the anti-socialist, avantgarde artists. Constant inspection and purging frequently led to a ban or restriction for individual artists or theatre ensembles. But the new social and political situation did not discourage theatremakers from creating free art. Now they did not express their opinions and civil views directly, but rather started to code them into metaphors, relying on the spectators’ intuition and their sense for decrypting stage images. Action-based set design became a prominent element on the theatre stage, next to stylized approach, montage, situational shortcut, and devised theatre. Some theatres, mostly outside of Bratislava, display a degree of schematism which often deceived the censors with metaphorical expressivity or with productions of classical texts with semiotic crossover into current themes (theatres in Martin, Trnava, Nitra, Prešov). Productions which completely negated ideology and politics also enjoyed a lot of success. Once again, very remarkable productions were those by amateur ensembles which, in turn, incited collaboration

with professional companies, because the amateur stage offered greater artistic freedom and larger space for artistic creativity.

Slovak theatremakers experienced total freedom in artistic expression only after 1989, when essential changes took place not only in politics but also in most of the areas of social life, including theatre. Governments fell, regimes changed, borders were erased. Limitations in creativity and thinking ceased to exist, ideological bans and commands were no longer in place, and theatres felt the “fresh breeze” of freedom. A work of art was no longer the carrier of ideas defined by the government; it became an autochthonous expression of the artist. Productions started to present their own view of the world and their own opinion openly, with no limitations or censorship. Slovak theatre found a new face; the network of theatres grew larger, dramaturgical and author’s workshops were set up directly in theatres, the number of domestic festivals was growing, and every ensemble could freely travel to any festival anywhere in the world. In an atmosphere filled with creative artistic freedom, new names made the list of playwrights and new original plays were written. Slovak theatre opened itself up to the world, and the world opened up for Slovak theatre.



CONTEMPORARY SLOVAK THEATRE

Vladislava Fekete

In its past several seasons, theatre life was very busy in Slovakia – not only in artistic terms, but also as far as organizational and legislative matters were concerned. More than any time before, a debate was started about the role and creative resources of Slovak theatre, its organizational structure and networks, common platforms, documentation and archiving, as well as creative industries. While in 2013 a total of 50 theatres existed in Slovakia, including both public and independent theatres, 2014 saw this number increase to 77. In particular, the number of independent stages doubled (from 24 in 2013 to 49 in 2014) extending this very vital and progressive category of Slovak theatres, both in form and content. Independent theatres are very competitive and internationally active. Similarly accelerated growth was recorded in the number of theatre festivals in Slovakia (rise from 37 festivals in 2013 to 82 in 2014). What, then, are the reasons for this impressive growth in theatres and permanent stages? What is the imaginary step forward in theatre life? The answer is partly that the individual regions in Slovakia experienced an awakening and that

◀ Extracts and Substitutes., SkRAT Theatre (2016); photo: Ctibor Bachratý

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more funding from abroad found its way to Slovakia in the form of grants from partner international projects. But mostly, in 2015 the cultural community in Slovakia was stirred by the establishment of the Slovak Arts Council as an institution independent of state administration (until then the subsidizing scheme was in exclusive authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic). The Council provides funding particularly for the creation, distribution and presentation of artwork, for the support of international cooperation, for educational programmes in the field of art, culture and creative industry, for scholarships given to natural persons who contribute to the advancement of art and culture as creators or researchers. The Council published its first call on 30 November 2015. The total sum at the Council disposal for 2016 / 2017 is around 15 million euros. Theatremakers can apply for support grants for live art, festivals, networks, mobility, publishing, international

presentation, scholarships, translations, and so on, in all performative categories. After many years of consultations and venting of the artists' dissatisfaction, the newly established fund is expected to yield great results in supporting art creation in Slovakia.

WHAT GOES AROUND THE THEATRE, COMES AROUND THE THEATRE

After two decades of a rigid political regime (1968 – 1989), during which art forms were divested of their autonomy, theatres displayed Soviet posters with great regularity, and original and progressive Slovak theatre works were suppressed, or even banned, after decades during which the regime did not allow the vigorous European and global attitudes in the new performative or post-dramatic art to cross political borders, the time came to wake up and catch up quickly with what had been missed. And theatremakers took advantage of this opportunity.

New independent theatres were established (GUnaGU, Studio L+S, STOKA, later also SKRaT, and most recently Debris Company, P.A.T., Teatro Tatro, Pôtoň Theatre, etc.). They started introducing not only new approaches to theatre, but, most of all, also new issues. Theatre carefully observed the gradual social change and reacted adequately – posing new questions, being provocative, and becoming involved in European projects. The flagship international festival Divadelná Nitra

Jiří Havelka et al: Elites, Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava (2017),
photo: Vladimír Kiva Novotný / Slovak National Theatre





(Theatre Nitra) was founded in 1992 attracting top European ensembles. But, step-by-step, Slovak theatre also expanded and let itself be known. At the same time, in 2004, two other important national festivals emerged: Dotyky a Spojenia (Touches and Connections) in Martin, and the New Drama festival in Bratislava presenting productions of contemporary Slovak and international drama. Both festivals have become part of the Slovak festival culture and, each in its own way, enhanced the importance of providing a space for a confrontation of theatres. Theatres started to seek an original expression, asking the question “what is the thing we call Slovak”, trying to find a way to distinguish ourselves and make ourselves known. Consequently, new performance centres were opened integrating several art forms under one roof, interacting and complementing each other, and enlivening the cultural local colour of towns and cities (A4 in Bratislava, Station Žilina-Zárečie in Žilina, the Pôtoň Theatre in Bátovce, Platforma 1–12 in Topolčany, Tabačka Kulturfabrik in Košice, etc.). Theatre became younger as well – young authors brought along experience gained during international visits, stays and festivals, and started transferring it into Slovak theatres. Theatres considerably changed their dramaturgical composition, often because under the pressure of other media (mostly television) they realized that they had to offer different values and push the discourse in another direction.

A phenomenon of the day were the “multi-purpose” authors who worked as playwrights, dramaturges, directors, or performers at once (Viliam Klimáček, Silvester Lavrík, Martin Čičvák, Rastislav Ballek, Ľubomír Burgr, Dodo Gombár, Laco Kerata, Sláva Daubnerová, etc.). Many noticeable projects were completed using the genre of the documentary in order to assess – critically and impartially – issues which had long been considered to be taboo, and not only in theatre. For example, a whole series of productions have focused on the wartime Slovak Republic, the Holocaust, and the communist regime, but there has also been a great deal of critical assessment of the current consumerist and mediatized society.

THE ARTISTIC “COMMANDMENTS” OF THE LAST FEW SEASONS

If anything stirred the waters of Slovak theatre in the past few seasons, it was definitely the activity of Slovak dancers in the field of contemporary dance and physical theatre. Communication with no words, or with a minimum of words, produces a strong experience, as well as an interaction of movement, sound and visuals. But Slovak dance art is interesting also because it has introduced something new into stage art – something strong and new, something that has not been common for many years. It has introduced interactive, modern, open and communicative

elements. Slovak dancers often become members of European associations (for example, the dance group Les Slovaks that has found its home in Brussels, ME – SA in Prague, the Rootless-Root of Jozef Fruček in Athens, and Pavel Zuštiak's Palissimo Company in New York). Abroad Slovak artists gain not only a technical backup for their art, but also sufficient funding and satisfaction. Thus, they get to represent Slovak dance globally. Paradoxically, in spite of the great success of Slovak contemporary dance, the only permanent dance stage is the Dance Studio Theatre in Banská Bystrica. All of the other dancers and dance ensembles (particularly the Debris Company, Jaro Viňarský's SKOK!, dancers Daniel Raček, Soňa Feriečíková, Peter Šavel, Stanislava Vlčeková, among others) interact with one another and produce their projects in rented spaces, or use the assistance of independent culture centres (such as the Žilina–Zárečie Station, the Garden in Banská Bystrica, Tabačka Kulturfabrik in Košice, Platforma 1–12 in Topolčany, the Pôtoň Theatre in Bátovce, etc.) that co-produce the projects and support the dance scene in this way. The activities of the above mentioned centres in Slovakia is an example of a contemporary trend when various forms of art are interconnected and presented in modern and popular places where a broad community with a feel for contemporary tendencies in art and culture meets every day.

ETHEATRE.SK – EVERYTHING ABOUT THEATRE IN SLOVAKIA

eTHEATRE.SK is an information online database for the public from the Theatre Institute's webpage www.theatre.sk as well as from independent sources. Visitors can search individually according to selected thematic categories (productions, personalities, theatres and institutions, events and activities) or use full text search in all categories simultaneously according to a selected keyword (e.g. actor name) or a group of keywords (name of actor, name of director, theatre). eTHEATRE.SK also contains digital copies of archive documents (scanned photographs, stage and costume design, as well as other digitized objects) which can be viewed by the public. Visitors thus get comprehensive information about the items they searched for from the comfort of their home or work computer.

Theatre in Slovakia has become an important element of the country's cultural policy and creative industry. Theatre keeps shifting the cultural dialogue and, most of all, never ceases to point out what has always been its essence – the reinforcement of the inner values of man.



CONTEMPORARY SLOVAK DRAMA

Dária Fojtíková Fehérová

After 1989, Slovak drama underwent a significant transformation. By the late 1980s, Slovak drama displayed a visible effort towards devised theatre, or collective creation. This, in turn, led to a withdrawal from the classical forms of dramatic texts and a shift toward improvisation which resulted in the recording of texts or performed scenes. This shift was accompanied by the approaching change of the social and political situation in the country, which brought along new ways of perceiving reality. Young theatremakers turned away from plays whose production depended on a silent agreement with the political regime (either by glorifying it or being entirely benign politically). For some time, helplessness ruled the world of both theatre and drama. When the independent Slovak Republic was established (1 January 1993), the new situation brought about a need for new plays and new issues. New drama was needed. In the mid-1980s, the GUaGU theatre was established in Bratislava by its house writer and director Viliam Klimáček (1958). In his plays, Klimáček always deals with topical issues, matters he considers to be relevant and problematic in Slovak society. From intimate themes,

◀ Karol Horák: Evidence of Blood, State Theatre Košice (2014), director: Agnieszka Olsten; photo: Braňo Konečný

through family stories, cabaret performances dealing with issues such as homosexuality, or the au-pair phenomenon, Klimáček, as one of very few Slovak authors, has progressed all the way to a reflection of the Slovak past. His texts are intended not only for the very specific poetics of the GU-naGU theatre, but work as independent literary units which are produced by other Slovak theatres as well. In the 1990s, the phenomenon of collective creation was represented by the Stoka theatre which has meanwhile become a legend. Ľubomír Burgr and Dušan Vicoň are developing Stoka's creative method in their SkRAT theatre. Their shows, made using improvisation on selected themes, are among the most interesting ones every year (Dead Souls; Stabbers and Lickers; The Trial, for the Trial, by the Trial, Extracts and Substitutes, Project Onegin, Mono - Stereo - Surround.)

Since 2005, the poetics of devised theatre has also been fostered by the Theatre on the Platform led by artists Zuzana Psotková, Jana Wernerová and Peter Kočíš. They prefer current social themes (Na stáž! – Heil Scholarship! – the title is a paraphrase of a greeting known from a totalitarian regime; Slumber – on aging).

Silvester Lavrík's (1964) plays can be described as drama written for a specific theatre. His plays are typical for their play with words, meaning and symbols, as well as scene transitions. In the centre of Lavrík's attention are women (Katarina; Dry, my love; Elisabeth Báthory; Villa Lola), the search for

love, and relationships. His texts are inspired by surrealism and magic realism, the latter of which he has recently abandoned to write characters with a more elaborate psychology. He writes plays for the theatre and radio, and also texts for children. The plays of Eva Maliti Fraňová (1953) (*Krčeň the Immortal*, *The Cave Virgin*) explore the overlapping of dream and reality, the intersection of the past and the present. The author works with archetypal characters whom she can place in a specific social and political situation. Her characters are universal, anchored in the present, and allowing the audience to perceive the text on several levels. The texts thus simultaneously become a reflection of the past and a caricature of the present. In her dramas, Iveta Horváthová (1960) makes exclusive use of the female experience from the point of view of gender and gynocritics. She heads the TWIGA centre (Theatre Women Improvisation Gender Action) which aspires to influence gender-sensitive language in theatre and to support independent discourse on women and men in art. Under TWIGA, Horváthová also produces her texts which are inspired by the life stories of famous Slovak female writers (*Love Variations*; *Written in the Dark*) and which deal with the issue of the position of a contemporary woman in the society, mostly from a historical perspective (*Snoops*, *Carping and Unravelling*). Horváthová also writes for children. A very specific chapter in Slovak drama is filled by the work of Stanislav Štepka (1944), the in-house writer for his *Radošina Naive Theatre*. The





Michal Vajdička et al: Empty Hole, Astorka KORZO '90 Theatre (2015),
director: Michal Vajdička; photo: Ctibor Bachratý / ASTORKA Korzo '90 Theatre

plays are known for their distinctive, so-called naive poetics, and for their simplifying and gentle account of current Slovak issues, its history, as well as universal themes, such as the creation of the world. The young generation of authors is represented by Roman Olekšák, Peter Pavlac, and Michal Ditte. Olekšák (1978) is presently involved in the making of TV series, but his awarded play *Smileys* confronts the worlds of art and consumerism. At present, he is writing socially critical plays in with co-writer Valéria Schulczová (*Doctor Macbeth*, *The Natives*).

The plays by Michal Ditte (1981) create a link between poetry and a harsh view of the world. They contain elements of magic realism, alternating between the real and the imaginary, varying between the present and the past. His current texts are based on research and interviews with inhabitants of Slovak regions and represent the genre of documentary drama in Slovakia (*Terra Granus*; *Misery*). Peter Pavlac's (1976) texts are thematically very broad: for example, the biography of a personality (*The Red Princess*) or reactions to Slovak show business. As a dramaturge, Pavlac focuses on adaptations of Slovak fiction. An eminent representative of female authors of this generation is Zuzana Ferenczová (1977) who deals with universal themes, such as motherhood (*Babyboom*), or teenage problems (*Going Spare*). She was awarded several prizes for her work. Her plays are produced both in Slovakia and abroad. This generation of authors also includes Peter Lomnický (1971),

though his first play was not produced until 2014. The language of Lomnický's plays is influenced by German drama – it is ironizing and philosophizing, his play introduce mainly very specific political and social themes instead of issues of interpersonal relationships (Capital, Fear, Abduction of Europe).

Lukáš Brutovský and Michaela Zakut'anská are the youngest generation of playwrights. Brutovský (1988) wrote several shorter texts – the most interesting one being For Lunch, written in the style of Werner Schwab's drama. Currently, he keeps his focus on directing. Zakut'anská (1987) impressed audiences with Havaj, a play about a small Slovak village, and by a cabaret-like satirical version of the story of the legendary Slovak highwayman titled Jánošík 007.

In 2013, she founded the Prešov National Theatre with her in-house director Júlia Rázusová as an independent professional theatre that produces texts connected with her home

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town of Prešov. In these plays, she takes an ironic attitude towards current social or small town affairs and focuses on dealing with topical issues of her generation (how to find a job after graduating from college, whether and when to have kids, and so on).

Another interesting authorial phenomenon of the recent years is director Tomáš Procházka (1989) who attracted attention because of his strong interventions into classical texts (Macbeth: A Play About Bastards, Kafka.Dreaming, People.Lions.Eagles.Partridges – based on Chekhov's The Seagull, Oedipus Rex: Mommie Dearest – based on Sophocles).

In 2000, the Theatre Institute launched a competition of drama texts written in Slovak, now known as Drama. In the beginning, it was a platform for the confrontation of already established authors, now it is aimed to discover new talent. The Theatre Institute regularly publishes collections containing selections of the best plays from the Drama competition. The Institute has also released a DVD titled Slovak Drama in Translation which contains all available translations of plays by contemporary Slovak authors (translations into Czech, English, German, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Slovenian, among others). The plays are available on the Theatre Institute's website (section "Slovak Drama in Translation," which is regularly updated and new translations are added).

The Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre has shifted its programme focus on Slovak



drama by choosing specific theme-based dramaturgy plans for every season. The 2014-2015 season, which presented Slovak and Slavic themes, saw the premieres of new plays about historical personalities (Viliam Klimáček: *Mojmír II or the Twilight of an Empire*; Daniel Majling: *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*; Karol Horák: *The Revelation, Sacrifice and Ascension of Prophet Ľudovít and His Disciples*). In the 2016-2017 season, plays were directly commissioned by the Slovak National Theatre to deal with the morality of present-day Slovakia and Slovaks (Pavol Weiss: *From the Life of Mankind*, Sláva Daubnerová: *The Singing House*, Valéria Schulczová – Roman Olekšák: *The Natives*). The effort aimed at confronting current morality through Slovak drama started with the unique project titled *The Ten Commandments* (premiere in 2014) in which ten authors wrote ten short plays about the biblical ten commandments. These were staged in a five-hour production in various spaces of the national theatre. The idea continued with three plays on moral dilemmas of the future titled collectively as *Morals 2000+*. In the intimate space of the Blue Salon, new texts are regularly staged, dealing with the life of an important, and often controversial, personality (Leni, *The Unreformed Saint*, *Cabaret Normalization*, and *A Prayer for Marta*). Contemporary Slovak drama is predominantly male. It mostly deals with topical social issues, while never expressing schematic opinions on the current political situation. It is slightly critical of the

media culture and carefully deals with Slovakia's past. The tendency towards universal themes is rather rare – specific, regional issues are reflected much more frequently. Genrewise, new drama is inclined to satire, tragedy and farce, in tragedy often with pathos. Only very few plays are published – if they are, they usually have to be “proven” by a staged production. Despite all this, new contemporary Slovak drama is alive. After the tempestuous years of political dictatorship (in the 1950s and 1970s), Slovak drama is gradually finding its place, looking for inspiration abroad, and, though perhaps a little late, becoming a regular constituent of theatres' repertoires.





drama



opera



puppet theatre



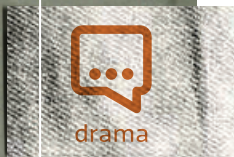
ballet



dance

< Péter Esterházy: Mercedes Benz, Slovak National Theatre (2017),
director: Roman Polák; photo: Andrej Čanecký / Slovak National Theatre





SLOVAK DRAMA

Karol Mišovic

The end of World War I and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire became a profound milestone for Slovaks – it brought them cultural autonomy, among other things, and allowed them to start fully developing their national independence. In 1919, an initiative of cultural workers and the political intelligentsia founded the Association for the Slovak National Theatre which set up the conditions for the establishment of the first Slovak professional theatre – the Slovak National Theatre (SNT). In Slovakia, however, there were no professional theatremakers and so the Association had to invite the East Bohemian Theatre Company from Pardubice, managed by Bedřich Jeřábek. It came with a ready repertory (performed all over Czechoslovakia), and an experienced ensemble, as well as props and costumes which were absolutely necessary for a newly founded theatre which

◀ Jozef Gregor Tajovský: The Commotion, Slovak National Theatre (1928), director: Ján Borodáč;
photo: Theatre Institute Archive

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THE FIRST THEATRE
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ON DUTY, WHICH
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21 MAY 1920.

had nothing. The premiere of the first drama took place on 2 March 1920, when the production of *Maryša* by the Mrštík brothers was staged. Since the committed artistic ensemble came from Bohemia, attributes such as “national” and “Slovak” were proudly displayed just in the theatre’s name, while its inner self was becoming “national” only gradually. Slovak was only very slowly and irregularly used as the stage language. The first theatre plays performed in Slovak were Tajovský’s one-act plays *The Sin and On Duty*, which premiered on 21 May 1920. In August 1921, in order to increase the interest of audiences (very few Slovaks lived in Bratislava at that time and Hungarians and Germans did not go to the theatre to see drama) and to promote Slovak theatre art also in other regions of Slovakia, the Rural Travelling Company of the SNT was founded (also known as the Marching Company). It toured Slovak towns for nearly a year and became

the home stage for the first professional Slovak actors – Janko Borodáč, Ol'ga Országhová (later Borodáčová), Andrej Bagar, Jozef Kello, and Gašpar Arbet. For financial reasons, however, the company fell apart after less than a year and the ensemble was dissolved.

In 1923, Oskar Nedbal was appointed director of the SNT. He was an entrepreneur as well as an important composer and conductor. Though he naturally preferred opera and ballet to drama and aimed to attract as many spectators to the theatre as possible (he was expected to guarantee regular supply of funds), fortunately he also understood the necessity to make theatre more Slovak. For this reason, in 1924, he started hiring actors who would become the pioneers of Slovak acting, for example, Hana Meličková, who became one of the leading actresses after she successfully played the title role in Wilde's *Salome* in 1926. A significant role in the naturalization of the Slovak language in theatre was played by the first specialized dramaturge of the National Theatre, Tido J. Gašpar, a writer by profession, who initiated the production of works by Slovak playwrights and acquired adequate Slovak translations of world drama. Janko Borodáč, originally an actor, was appointed director of the drama section of the SNT in 1929 and started his regular work as a director. His directorial poetics attempted to approximate the realistic style of K. S. Stanislavsky, but his first productions suffered from monotonousness and

an overly realistic direction. Nonetheless, he became an important element in the creation of the theatre's repertory because he introduced the plays of classical Slovak writers and, most of all, contemporary Slovak drama, represented, for example, by the works of Ivan Stodola, Július Barč-Ivan, and Vladimír Hurban Vladimírov. Borodáč is to be credited also for the opening of the programme in theatre studies at what was then the Music Academy (1925), where he and his colleagues from the founders' generation educated the next generations of eminent actors and directors.

The pinnacle of the effort to make drama independent and Slovak at the National Theatre came in the 1932 – 1933 season, when the director of the SNT, entrepreneur Antonín Drašár, divided the drama section into two units – Czech and Slovak. The Slovak drama unit was led by Janko Borodáč, and the Czech unit was entrusted to Viktor Šulc, a Czech director who was well-acquainted with European theatre and who brought elements of modern theatre approaches to Slovak practice. The radical social and political changes in 1938 and 1939 resulted in the decline of Czech drama and many Czech artists even had to flee back to Bohemia. Paradoxically, however, the 1939 – 1945 period brought about a modernization of Slovak theatre for which the gates of Europe were now open. Even though the drama section at the SNT was still headed by Janko

Borodáč with his realist poetics (in the wartime period, he arrested the attention of audiences by politically committed productions of Slovak classics), two outstanding directors started to gain artistic ground – Ferdinand Hoffmann and Ján Jamnický, both of whom showed an inclination to modern theatre. The former of the two (until then working in the most important contemporary amateur company, the Slovak Choir in Martin) introduced the SNT to a new type of dramaturgy which was more open to the global repertory. Because of his politically sharp anti-nationalist productions, such as *The Greasy Pot*, *Jánošík*, and *Danton's Death*, Hoffmann was forced to leave the theatre in 1942. The latter, Ján Jamnický, influenced by the work of Russian







Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol: Marriage, Korzo Theatre (1969),
director: Miloš Pietor; photo: Theatre Institute Archive

avant-garde artists, enriched the SNT with synthesizing elements, stylized stage concepts, and the aesthetics of theatricality. Before the end of the war, however, he also had to leave. After the end of World War II, the ensemble of the National Theatre found itself with an original composition of actors, but with no directors – although some of the directors helped to shape the theatre considerably. Translator Jozef Felix was appointed as head dramaturge and his explosive dramaturgy fuelled the young talent of Czech director Jozef Budský, originally an actor. Budský started to direct not just the contemporary world and Slovak plays dealing with war issues (Useless Constitution, Assassination, The Cloud and the Waltz) but also stage adaptations of Slovak poetry. The most significant ones were Botto's Death of Jánošík and Sládkovič's Marína (both in 1948). During the wartime Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945), other theatres were established as well, for example, the Travelling Slovak Folk Theatre of Trnava, later of Nitra (1942). In 1944, the Slovak Chamber Theatre was founded in Martin, and the Slovak Theatre in Prešov was established as a cooperative. In 1946, a group of young artists got separated from the drama ensemble at the SNT and founded a second Bratislava-based theatre, Nová scéna, which (until 1952 when it was annexed to the SNT again) performed many outstanding theatre productions under the direction of František Kudláč, Ladislav Srmček and Magda Husáková Lokvencová.

The turning point for all Czechoslovak theatres came in 1948, when the government took control over all theatres and started to radically interfere with their artistic operation. Theatre repertoires were “enriched” by works of socialist realism in which a new, nascent man was born, a man who would build socialism without compromise. Everybody had to adapt to a uniform theatre style and any casual performance against “the fourth wall” significantly impeded any further development in theatremaking. In this period, only the Martin-based Army Theatre (former Slovak Chamber Theatre) worked with a more progressive and modern repertoire. More political freedom came in the mid-1950s (after Stalin’s death and the revelation of the implications of his cult of personality) – new theatre incentives were openly introduced by Jozef Budský who produced a series of poetry by the Štúr generation of poets titled The Song of our Spring

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(1956). At the SNT, the most progressive directors got engaged in creative dialogue – Jozef Budský proposed themes of human fate and fatality, Karol L. Zachar presented himself as a theatremaker of pure genres and harmonious poetics, while Tibor Rakovský made his mark with a detached philosophical view and rationality in the creative approach. The beginning of the 1960s was marked by new dramatics using elements of the grotesque and absurd, and the establishment of so-called theatres of small forms. Theatres in places other than Bratislava (Nitra, Košice, Zvolen, and Martin) were becoming more prominently shaped, almost always under the authority of a distinct director. Modern tendencies in Slovak theatre found their peak in the establishment of the generation-based theatre Divadlo na korze (1968) which allowed young theatremakers, led by director Vladimír Strnisko, later also Miloš Pietor, to present their own view of the world and theatre through the prism of grotesque realism, not refraining from criticizing the socialist society “between the lines”. In 1971, Divadlo na korze was

◀ Maxim Gorky: The Lower Depths, SNP Theatre (1967), director: Miloš Pietor;
photo: Jaroslav Barák

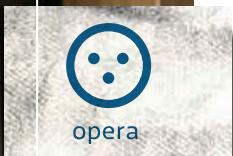
disbanded and closed down and nearly all of its members, including the directors, found new jobs at the Nová scéna.

In the “normalization” period, theatres had to fight with censorship and artistic coercion. Ensembles from outside of Bratislava and amateur companies come to the foreground – perhaps because they stood farther away from the watchful eye of the political regime. During this period, amateur theatre was shaped most significantly by Peter Scherhauser and Jozef Bednárík. In the 1970s and 1980s, a new generation of graduates from the Academy of Performing Arts (est. 1949) came into play – including, for example, directors like Blaho Uhlár and Juraj Nvota (Theatre for Children and Youth in Trnava), or Ľubomír Vajdička and later also Roman Polák (SNP Theatre in Martin). The stage poetics of this generation was already headed to stage shortcuts, persiflage, and montage, while fully employing the authorial subject.

After November 1989, new creative possibilities opened for theatremakers – with no censorship pressure or artistic limitations. The transformed social and political system brought about numerous changes in the structure and organization of theatre life in Slovakia.







SLOVAK OPERA

Michaela Mojžišová

Opera has been part of cultural life in the territory of Slovakia since the 18th century. At that time it became a popular component of the repertory of private theatre houses owned by aristocratic families. The most prominent theatre houses in Bratislava belonged to Count Miklós Eszterházy and Count János Erdödy, the Grassalkovich family (Ivanka pri Dunaji), the Pálffy (Bratislava) and the Braunschweigs (Dolná Krupá). Opera production in Bratislava was in turn performed by Italian, German and later also Hungarian theatre companies. Erdödy's private company, whose repertory was focused in particular on Italian opera and Viennese singspiel, played a key role. The first theatre performing the function of a municipal theatre in Bratislava emerged in the 1760s. It was located in the Main Square in the Grünstübelhaus. 1776 saw the opening of a permanent municipal theatre, the first brick-and-

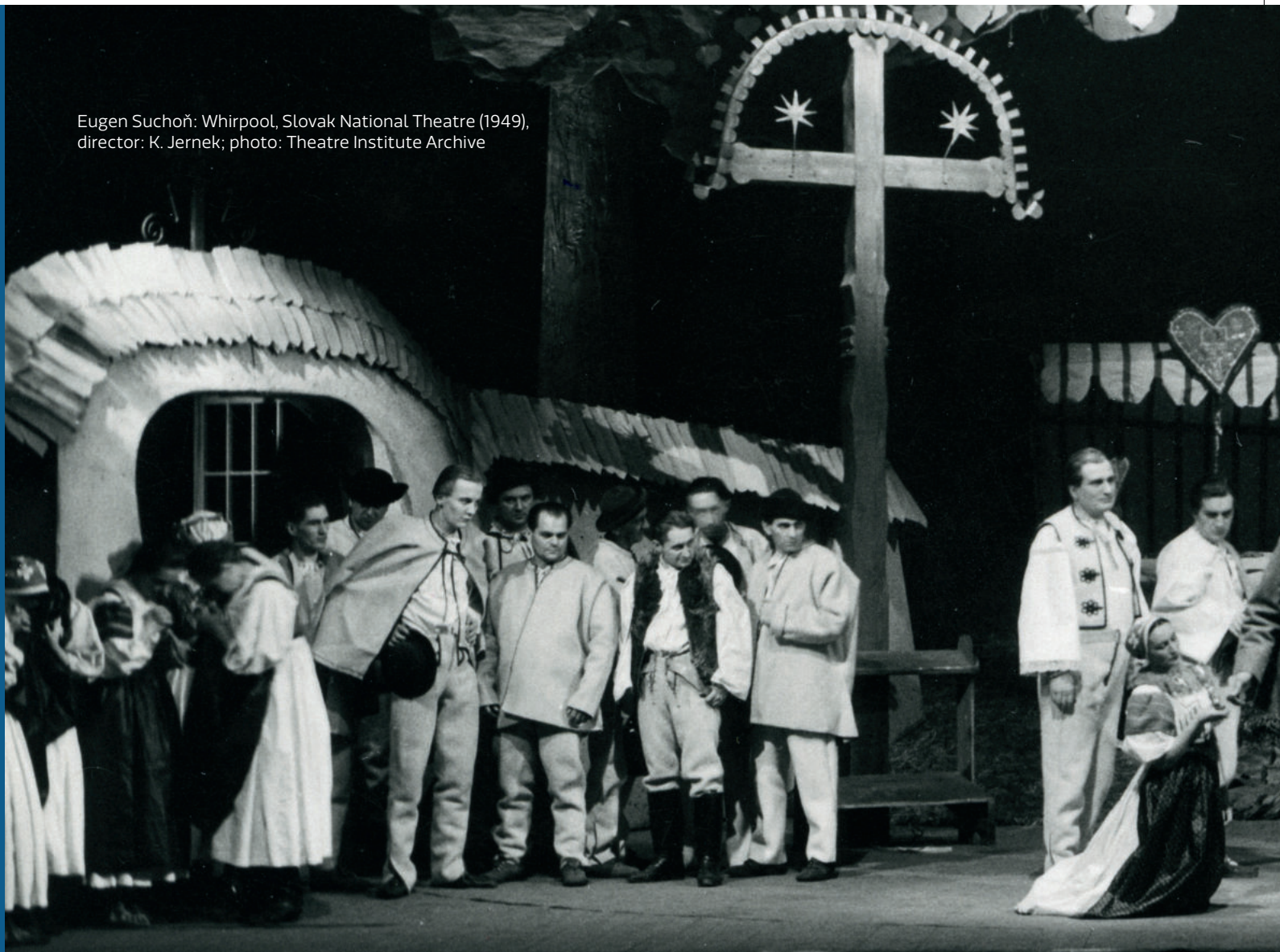
◀ Antonio Vivaldi: Arsilda, Slovak National Theatre and co-producers (2017), director: David Radok; photo: Jozef Barinka / Slovak National Theatre

A MILESTONE IN
THE HISTORY OF
SLOVAK THEATRE LIFE
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mortar theatre in Upper Hungary. While in 1861 its building underwent reconstruction, in 1884 it was pulled down due to its operational and safety inadequacies. The construction of the new building of the Municipal Theatre, which has housed the Slovak National Theatre since 1920, began in 1885 and was based on the plans of the architects Herman Helmer and Ferdinand Fellner. The theatre was opened with a performance of Ferenc Erkel's opera *Bánk Bán* (1886) produced by a Budapest opera company under the baton of the composer himself. Another city theatre had been built in the second cultural centre of the country, Košice, in 1789. With an auditorium that could seat almost a thousand people, it was the sixth largest theatre in Hungary. Hungarian and German theatre companies appeared on its stage. The building was demolished in 1894, and between 1897 and 1899 a new theatre was built in its place based on a project by the architect Adolf Lang. From 1924

the building housed the East Slovak National Theatre, and from 1945 the newly established State Theatre of Košice. A milestone in the history of Slovak theatre life was 1 March 1920, when the newly established Slovak National Theatre gave its first performance, Bedřich Smetana's The Kiss. Three opera theatres operate in Slovakia today: the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava (1920), the State Theatre of Košice (1945) and the State Opera of Banská Bystrica (1959), which had been known as the opera company of the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Banská Bystrica until 1993. From 1986 to 1999, Bratislava also had a chamber opera house that focused on producing less frequent and chamber opera titles. The post of the artistic director of the Opera of the Slovak National Theatre has been held by several prominent personalities. In the 1920s the opera company was led by outstanding Czech conductors: for a short time Milan Zuna and later Oskar Nedbal, who managed to attract distinguished conductors and soloists to Bratislava (Emma Destinová, Mme. Charles Cahier, Karel Burian, Karl Norbert-Novotný, Dimitrij Smirnov, Leo Slezák, Georgi Baklanoff and Pietro Mascagni). When Oskar was replaced by his nephew Karel Nedbal, the Slovak National Theatre experienced one of the most remarkable periods in its history. This lasted for about a decade and was marked by ambitious opera dramaturgy: the theatre pioneered in introducing some contemporary works by Leoš Janáček and Richard Strauss as well as some new

Eugen Suchoň: Whirlpool, Slovak National Theatre (1949),
director: K. Jernek; photo: Theatre Institute Archive





pieces shortly after their world premiere – for example, Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and Rocca's *The Dybbuk*. Karel Nedbal devoted a lot of attention to the scenic aspect of the opera productions. The most significant performances in the history of the Opera of the Slovak National Theatre include the works of the avant-garde drama director Viktor Šulc. One of the founding fathers of modern Czechoslovak stage design, František Tröster, cooperated on some of the productions. Besides Czech artists, especially the great singing actor Arnold Flögl, and the first Slovak Professional singers Janko Blaho and Helena Bartošová, the theatre provided opportunities from the 1930s onward for the first Slovak graduates of the Music and Drama Academy and Josef Egem's former students: Nelly Bakošová, Štefan Hoza, Margita Česányiová, Zita Frešová, Žofia Naprávilová, and Mária Kišonová--Hubová. After the break-up of the Czechoslovak Republic, there was a high staff turnover in the theatre. The prime task the management undertook during the war was the professionalization of the opera company and recruitment from local Slovak resources. The Slovakization of the Opera of the Slovak National Theatre in the 1938/1939 theatre season also required the translation of every opera libretto. One of the most important milestones in the history of Slovak culture was 10 December 1949, when Eugen Suchoň's *Krútňava*

[The Whirlpool], often described as Slovakia's national opera, premiered. The leading director of the 1950s was the Czech Miloš Wasserbauer, who drew on modern European staging poetics. The most prominent scenographer in the history of Slovak theatre, Ladislav Vychodil, came to the foreground in the same period. Beginning in 1955, the Slovak National Theatre hired the first graduates of opera direction from the Academy of Performing Arts who set the tone of the next three decades: Miroslav Fischer, Branislav Kriška and Július Gyermeik. Ladislav Holoubek and Tibor Frešo were the leading conductors of the time. The period until the invasion of Czechoslovakia by occupation forces in August 1968 was, in terms of dramaturgy, one of the most balanced and conceptual periods in the history of the Slovak National Theatre. It also favoured the development of original Slovak production and the growth of talented composers (Ján Cikker, Alexander Moyzes, Ladislav Holoubek, Igor Bázlik, Tibor Andrašovan). At that time the Slovak National Theatre had the most efficient company in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. It included: Margita Česányiová, Mária Kišonová-Hubová, Anna Poláková, Anna Martvoňová, Elena Kittnarová, Ol'ga Hanáková, Nina Hazuchová, Ľuba Baricová, Imrich Jakubek, Jiří Zahradníček, Gustáv Papp, Bohuš Hanák, Juraj Martvoň, Ondrej Malachovský, Gejza Zelenay and others. By the beginning of the 1970s, the theatre had lost some of its best performers due to the emigration of some artists (for example, Bohuš Hanák and





Gejza Zelenay) and as a result of natural generational change. However, this period also had its positives: the engagement of the Czech conductor Zdeněk Košler as the artistic director of the opera company and the arrival of a new generation of talented performers who have also made a name for themselves internationally, such as Peter Dvorský, Sergej Kopčák, Magdaléna Hajóssyová and others. The directorial and visual look of opera productions was limited by the isolation of the creative environment until the end of the 1980s. The character of the theatre was almost exclusively determined by three directors influenced by stage realism: Branislav Kriška, Miroslav Fischer and Július Gyermeek. The events that foreshadowed the shift towards more modern directorial approaches were Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1987), directed by the young ambitious Marián Chudovský, and especially the ground-breaking production of *Faust and Margaret* (1989) under the direction of Jozef Bednárík, which the company presented in Edinburgh at one of Europe's most significant theatre festivals. The following decade in the Slovak National Theatre was characterized by a tendency towards repertory appealing to the mainstream viewer and

► Dimitri Shostakovich: *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk*, Slovak National Theatre (1935), director: Viktor Šulc; photo: Theatre Institute Archive

uncontroversial directorial approaches. Following the appointment of Marián Chudovský as director in 2002, the theatre opened up to the diversity and plurality of opinions in order to integrate into the current European context. Nowadays it often cooperates with foreign guest directors (for example, Peter Konwitschny, Mariusz Treliński and Gintaras Varnas). Currently, the opera company of the Slovak National Theatre performs on two stages: in its historical building and in the opera hall of its new building, which was, after long-term complications and delays, ceremonially opened on 14 April 2006.

From 2012 to 2016, Austrian conductor Friedrich Haider headed the ensemble – he positively contributed particularly to its musical and interpretational profile. One of the greatest current successes of the opera department of the Slovak National Theatre is the highly praised coproduction of Vivaldi's *Arsilda*, which was presented in Bratislava in its modern world premiere.

Following the opera singers of the previous generation (Lucia Poppová, Edita Gruberová, Peter Dvorský and Sergej Kopčák), the younger generations of soloists have made great names for themselves on the international scene, such as Miroslav Dvorský, Dalibor Jenis, Eva Jenisová, Ľubica Vargicová, Adriana Kučerová, Pavol Bršlík, Štefan Kocán and others.

In 1945 Košice became home to the three-company State Theatre under the management of the

bard of Slovak theatre, Janko Borodáč. The most prominent personalities of the founding generation were the prima donna Gizela Veclová and the tenor Imrich Godin. Until the beginning of the 1980s, the opera company of the State Theatre was moulded by the outstanding conductor Ladislav Holoubek, who was later replaced by Boris Velat. The period of 1954 to 1965 saw some remarkable productions under the direction of Branislav Kriška, who had worked for the theatre in Košice alongside the doyen of Slovak opera theatre Kornel Hájek before he departed for the Slovak National Theatre. In the 1970s Drahomíra Bargárová became the principal director of the opera company. In the 1980s a young graduate



of opera direction, Marián Chudovský, entered the Slovak opera scene. From the 1950s to the 1970s the company relied especially on the talents of Eva Šmáliková, Anna Poláková, Gita Abrahámová, Mária Adamcová, Jozef Regec, Imrich Jakubek, Miroslav Hájek, Ladislav Neshyba, Sr., and Gabriel Zelenay. The most prominent representatives of the next generation of singers were Alžbeta Mrázová, Eliška Pappová, Jozef Konder, Pavol Mauréry, František Balún, Juraj Šomorjai and others. From 1987 to 1995 opera in Košice experienced a difficult period caused by the reconstruction of the historical theatre building. The inhospitable environment of the Cultural Centre, where the opera company had found temporary shelter, had an adverse impact on the interest of the audience. At present, the theatre is trying to recover its audience, and it is quite successful in doing so. While under the management of the famous tenor Peter Dvorský, the opera company chose titles appealing to the mainstream viewer; the new management under Karol Kevický is trying to expand its repertory both in terms of dramaturgy and directorial approaches. The professional opera company in Banská Bystrica was established as part of the dramatic Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen in 1959. Originally, it was supposed to be a touring theatre, but since 1972 it has had the status of an opera company. The youngest Slovak opera theatre was opened with the performance of J. B. Foerster's *Eva*, which was directed by the first head of the company, František

Rell, and conducted by Jozef Kende. The most distinct personalities of the founding generation of opera singers included Dagmar Rohová, Štefan Babjak, Jozef Konder and Ladislav Longauer. Later on, their ranks were joined by František Caban, Ján Zemko, Jozef Hadraba, Božena Fresserová, Jarmila Vašicová, Tatiana Brummerová, Mária Tomanová, Zoltán Vongrej and others. The opera in Banská Bystrica was also the place where the famous Slovak sopranos Edita Gruberová and Ľubica Orgonášová began their artistic careers. Since its beginnings, its repertory has included operettas, musicals and ballets, but the main focus has been on opera titles. Besides time-tested pieces, the dramaturges focus on staging less frequent opuses, often premiering them in Slovakia. The opera theatre in Banská Bystrica has created room not only for neglected opera titles but also for directorial approaches standing outside the realist-conservative mainstream (for

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example, the remarkable productions by Martin Bendik and Aleš Votava in the 1990s). Since 1979 the State Opera in Banská Bystrica has been the chief organizer of the opera section of Zámokké hry zvolenské (The Zvolen Castle Plays), the only open-air opera festival in Slovakia. Under the totalitarian regime, it featured Olivia Stapp, Mario Malagnini, Paolo Gavanelli or Carlo Guelfi. Following the artistic crisis of the 1990s, which was the consequence of the festival's insufficient funding, the new millennium saw the event regain its high profile. The principal pillars of the dramaturgy concept included concert productions of Italian belcanto works that had not been presented in Slovakia. The festival's quality was guaranteed by renowned guest soloists (Dimitra Theodossiou, Francesca Scaini, Iano Tamar, Ignacio Encinas, and Riccardo Zanellato, among others). However, several unfortunate circumstances (including long-term lack of interest of audiences) caused the opera section of the Zvolen Castle Plays to be terminated after 2014.







SLOVAK PUPPET THEATRE

Lenka Dzadíková

The beginnings of Slovak puppetry go back to puppeteers who were wandering comedians performing not just marionette theatre, but also other visual attractions, including dressage and taming of animals. The first written record of Slovak puppeteer Ján Stražan dates back to 1882. Before that, however, only puppeteers of other nationalities performed on the territory of present-day Slovakia, mostly those who travelled across Europe. The descendants of Ján Stražan produced puppet theatre until the 1950s, when private property was nationalized and socialist realism was enforced as the dominant art form. This significantly affected the subsequent fate of puppet theatre. According to the new legislation, puppeteers had to pass competence tests in front of ideological panels and give up everything that made up their poetics, in particular their nomadic lifestyle and traditional

◀ Dezorzovo lútkové divadlo: Lovestory – Tragedy from the Extazu (2011);
photo: Jozef Pálenik



J. Ozábal: A Wondering Little Elephant, Puppet Theatre Žilina (2014), director: Peter Palik;
photo: Milo Fabian



puppetry themes. As a result of these social and political changes, puppet theatres gradually disappeared, even those with histories which spanned many generations. After 1989, the puppetry tradition was remembered and popularized by Anton Anderle, a descendant of the Anderle family of puppeteers and a puppet collector.

Professional puppet theatre in Slovakia is very young. The first out of five professional, state-founded theatres, the Žilina Puppet Theatre, was established in 1950. It was followed by the West-Slovakian Puppet Theatre Nitra (1951), the State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava (1957), the Košice Puppet Theatre (1959) , and finally the Regional Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica (1960). Initially, the theatres were under the influence of the Soviet model and of rod puppetry. In the 1960s, other types of influence swayed puppet theatres in Slovakia, e.g., cabaret, mime, and mask theatre. Playfulness became more pronounced than the mentoring approach and didactic nature of productions. The most popular were black theatre productions which became “an export article” despite closed borders (it was impossible for most people to travel abroad).

After the political changes in 1989, theatres underwent a formal transformation (change of the establishing entity, change of name) and gradually started to react to various artistic impulses. Today, all puppet theatres try to offer productions for adult audiences; however, the dogma

about puppet theatre being primarily intended for children, which was enforced during the socialist period, is still remarkably strong and it is very difficult to alter this conviction among Slovak spectators. Very few Slovak puppeteers are known outside of Slovakia. Some directors, for example, Marián Pecko and Ondrej Spišák, as well as visual artist Eva Farkašová, mostly work in Poland.

At present, theatres are established by the higher territorial units of self-government and some of them have changed their name: the Old Theatre of Karol Spišák in Nitra, the Bratislava Puppet Theatre, the Puppet Theatre on the Crossroads in Banská Bystrica.

After 1989, private puppet theatres were established. Many of them were short-term projects only – a way to earn money by performing in kindergartens and during the most exposed periods of the year, at Christmas and on International

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Children's Day. Some of the privately owned puppet theatres have endured nonetheless and have produced good artistic results, for example, the PIKI Pezinok Theatre, Teátro Neline Budmerice, and the Maškrtá Košice Theatre. Among private theatres, Dezorz's Puppet Theatre stands out with its productions which are intended exclusively for adult audiences. The New Theatre in Nitra was established in 2016 by a group of creators that left from the Old Theatre of Karol Spišák.

The university education of puppeteers in Slovakia began in 1989. At present, the Department of Puppetry at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts offers study programmes in puppetry, puppet theatre direction and dramaturgy, and puppet theatre set design and technology. Puppet theatre festivals in Slovakia are organized by individual theatres. The international biennial festival Puppet Bystrica has taken place eighteen times so far. The festival Stretnutie, Setkání, Spotkanie, Találkozás (Meeting) is organized by the Old Theatre in Nitra and provides a lot of opportunities for puppetry students from the countries of the Visegrad Four. The Festival of the Bratislava Puppet Theatre and the Puppet Žilina national exhibition are organized every two years. The youngest of all festivals is Virvar, organized by the Košice Puppet Theatre.







SLOVAK BALLET

Miklós Vojtek

The dance parts in *Il Marito Ama Piu*, an opera by Antonio Draghi and Emperor Leopold I, may be considered to have been the first ballet production on the territory of today's Slovakia. The dance parts in question were composed by A. Schmelzer and choreographed by D. Ventura. The production performed by the Viennese Court Theatre took place in Count Pálffy's Pressburg mansion in 1688. During the reign of Maria Theresa, the resident Hungarian gentry invited ballet ensembles to perform in their private theatres. In 1776, Count Csáriký commissioned the building of the City Theatre, where the performing German companies produced ballet shows as well. The works of Jean-Georges Noverre found their way onto the Pressburg scene through his Viennese students. In 1777, Joseph Schmalögger was the first to produce a ballet on a theme from Goethe's work – based on his sentimental epistolary

< Ludwig Minkus: *Bajadera*, Košice State Theatre (2015),
director and choreographer: Vladimir Malakhov; photo: Joseph Marčinský

... VISCUSI
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CHOREOGRAPHY
AND
INTERPRETATION.

novel *The Suffering of Young Werther*. The famous romantic ballet *Giselle* by A. C. Adam was staged in 1861 by Katti Lanner. As part of the opening ceremony of the new City Theatre in 1886, the ensemble of the Budapest-based Royal Hungarian Opera produced L. Delibes's ballet *Coppelia* choreographed by F. Campilli. The comical ballet *La fille mal gardée* was produced in 1894 under the title *Saltarello oder der Hüpfende Fraier* by artists of the Viennese Court Opera with Irene Sironi in the role of Lisa. Slovak dance first appears on the stage of the City Theatre in 1887 in the folk play *A tót leányka* (*The Slovak Girl*) by T. Almássy, with music by L. Serly. At the turn of the century, our largest city was visited by such renowned pioneers of modern dance as Loie Fuller, Maud Allan, Rita Sachetto, and Grete Wiesenthal. Young Rudolf von Laban gained the first stage experience in his home town.

FOUNDING BALLET AT THE SLOVAK NATIONAL THEATRE

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, the former town of Pozsony-Pressburg-Prešporok was renamed Bratislava and became the capital of Slovakia. In the new political and social conditions, the Slovak National Theatre was established and its ballet ensemble performed its first show on 19 May 1920: a production of Coppelia with choreography by Václav Kalina. It was a very modest beginning. Besides a prima ballerina and the first soloist, the ensemble consisted of only four dancers and had to rely on the help of the opera members and amateurs.

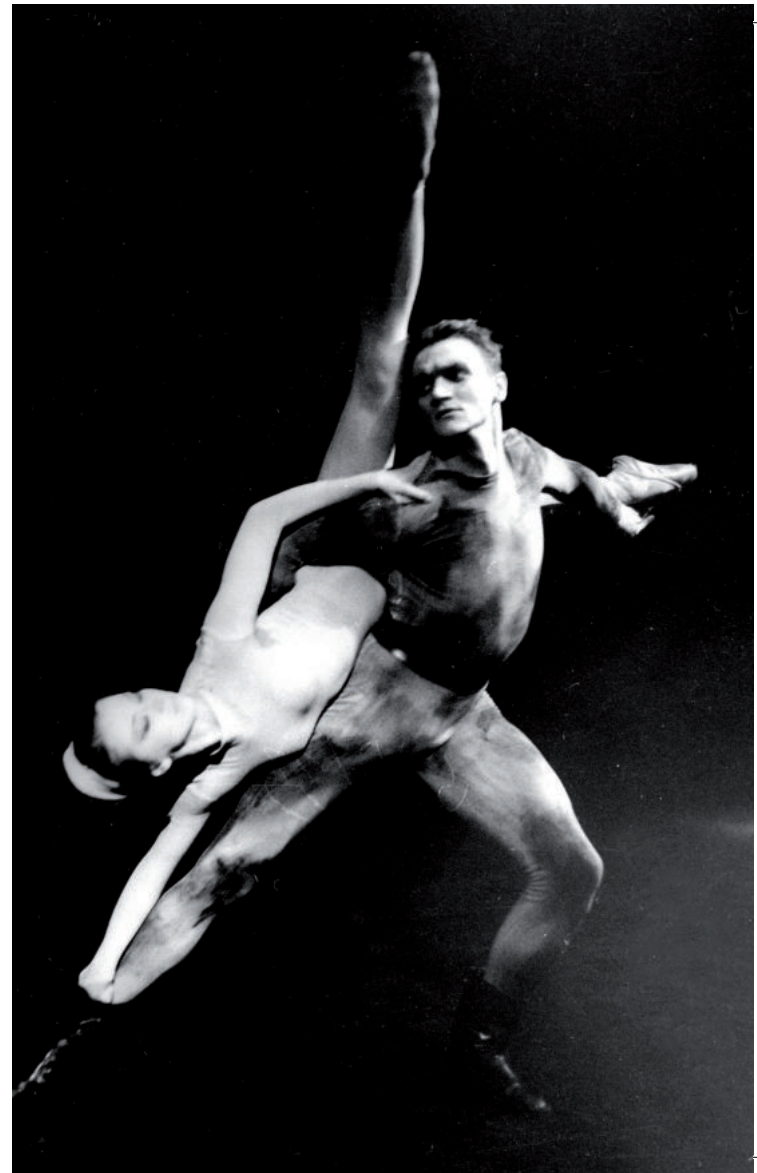
In 1923, the eminent musician Oskar Nedbal became the director of the Slovak National Theatre. He hired Achille Viscusi as the ballet master and started an important era in the history of Slovak ballet. Viscusi, a representative of the classical Italian ballet school, managed to produce not only prominent shows such as Sylvia, Swan Lake, or The Nutcracker, but also staged Nedbal's ballet mime performances. By doing this, Viscusi started a whole new tradition in choreography and interpretation. His pedagogical work was a guarantee of firm professional foundations which his successors could use to continue his work.

When Viscusi left the ensemble, his student Ella Fuchsová took over and directed the national ballet in 1931–1933 and 1935–1937. She introduced a new production of *Nikotina* by V. Novák, as well as Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. In both productions, she was the lead dancer. During Fuchs's professional engagement in Prague, ballet in Bratislava was directed by Vladimir Pirnikov, whose most magnificent production was Glazunov's *Raymonda*, with choreography produced in collaboration with Jelizaveta Nikolska, the prima ballerina of the Prague National Theatre. The most outstanding performers of the first generation of dancers were O. Janatová, the Vécsey sisters, B. Holoubková, E. Gabzdil, V. Jassik, and V. Libovický. When Ella Fuchsová came back to Bratislava for good, she dedicated all her time to her private ballet school, where she trained a lot of excellent performers.

Between 1937 and 1940, ballet in the National Theatre was headed by Bohuslav Relský, who later worked in the Slovak Folk Theatre in Nitra, and – after the war – in Prešov.

An important period for Slovak ballet came under the direction of Maximilian Froman, a graduate from the Czar's Theatre Training School in Moscow. He worked for Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* and later in the group of Anna Pavlova. His greatest contribution was the production of Fokine's

ballets from the Diaghilev repertory: Scheherazade, Papillons, Carnaval, The Polovtsian Dances, and Les Sylphides. From among the feature productions, the most successful one was Sleeping Beauty with lead dancers Mimi Vasileva and Fritz Füsseger. The other solo roles were performed by Gréta Schmidtová, Alica Illyová and Izabela Černochová. After World War II, the legendary Czech dancer Miroslav Kůra made his debut as a choreographer with Bolero, Rhapsody in Blue, and Petrushka. In the 1950s, the ballet ensemble in the National Theatre started to focus on feature Soviet dram ballets, for example, The Flames of Paris, The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, Gajane, and Romeo and Juliet. These



Jiří Kylián: KY-TIME/Pocta Jiřímu Kyliánovi, Un Ballo, Slovak National Theatre (2008);
photo: Ctibor Bachratý





titles were produced several times and became very popular with audiences. Alexandr R. Tomsky from Moscow produced his version of The Red Poppy, which was made into the first ballet movie in Czechoslovakia. The ballet production using a Hungarian folk backdrop called Šatôčka (Little Scarf), created for our ensemble by Budapest-based choreographer Gyula Harangozó, broke the record in the number of performance reruns. Eminent dancers of the time were T. Tašká-Boudová, G. Herényiová, G. Basová, J. Manšingerová, E. Slancová, and T. Isichenko.

The first eminent personality to lead the National Theatre's ballet ensemble after the war was Stanislav Remar, a choreographer and librettist of the first Slovak ballet, Orpheus and Eurydice (1949), with music by Tibor Andrašovan. The first ballet to take a cue from Slovak history was A Knight's Ballad (1960), composed by Šimon Jurovský with choreography by Jozef Zajko. After a successful solo career, Zajko established himself as the first Slovak ballet choreographer. His extensive work includes titles such as Laurencia, The Legend of Love, The Miraculous Mandarin by B. Bartók, and Daphnis and Chloe by M. Ravel.

Karol Tóth, a graduate of the Moscow GITIS, was the National Theatre's artistic director from 1961 to 1972 and then again from 1980 to 1989 and separated the ballet ensemble from the opera sec-

tion. The most memorable of his creations include The Rite of Spring, The Scythian Suite by Prokofiev, and Notre Dame de Paris by M. Jarre. Guest choreographers produced many outstanding pieces, including D. M. Dadishkiliani's Spartacus and The House of Bernarda Alba by the Cuban I. Tenorio. During Tóth's first term as artistic director, the ensemble went on its first tours to Italy, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and Cyprus. The most prominent performers of this period were Ž. Červeňáková, F. Lojeková, G. Zahradníková, V. Zlochová, T. Pomšár, J. Hal'ama, Z. Nagy, and J. P. Plavník, among others.

Boris Slovák, an outstanding choreographer of operettas and musicals, was artistic director from 1973 to 1980 and tried to transform the ensemble into a modern dance theatre group. He hired younger dancers, including graduates of the Prague conservatory, e.g., Libor Vaculík, who became a successful soloist and later on a sought-after choreographer.

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BY JOZEF ZAJKO.

Owing to the political changes of 1989, dance theorist Emil T. Bartko could make contacts with Western choreographers more easily – the collaborating artists included B. Genty, Ch. D’Amboise, M. Diamond, E. Frey, and N. Beriosoff. Bartko also provided an opportunity for Slovak choreographers – Ján Ďurovčík, Igor Holováč, and Mário Radačovský, among others. Guest pedagogue Rafael G. Avnikiyán helped Bartko extend the classical repertory with titles such as *Le Corsaire*, *La Bayadère*, and Bournonville’s *La Sylphide*, which was produced by N. Kehlet from Copenhagen. Prominent soloists included N. Gallovičová, N. Stehlíková, N. Poláková, C. M. Zaharia, J. Dolinský Jr., R. Lazík, M. Blahuta, and A. Kremz.

Mário Radačovský, former soloist of the Netherlands Dans Theater and the National Ballet of Canada, became director of the ballet section at the Slovak National Theatre and introduced to Slovak audiences the work of G. Balanchin (*Serenade*, Tchaikovsky’s *Pas de deux*), J. Kylián (*Un ballo by M. Ravel*, *Six Dances by W. A. Mozart*), and J. Kodelka (*Four Seasons*, *15 Heterosexual Duets*). In his feature choreography debut *Warhol*, Radačovský was inspired by the life of the king of pop art. Solo roles were performed by K. Bittererová, R. Kołodziej, S. Nájdená, B. Kubátová, A. Szabo, O. Jahelka, P. Dedinský, and A. Ducin. After short periods in which the ensemble was headed by Vlastimil Harapes and Andrej Suchanov, today’s 60 members of the national ballet are directed by Jozef Dolinský, Jr.

BALLET OUTSIDE OF BRATISLAVA

The city of Košice in eastern Slovakia has enjoyed a rich theatre tradition. Until 1918, the Košice City Theatre hosted German and Hungarian ensembles. The first record of a staged dance event dates back to 1762, when the daughters of theatre director G. Bodenburg started producing short ballets alongside the traditional pantomime. One of the peculiarities of the period was a one-act ballet produced in 1831 to the music of K. Herfuhrt and titled Nagyidai lakodalom (Wedding in Vel'ká Ida). The plot unravels in a place close to Košice and the production's choreographer L. Szöllősy-Szabó gave a true picture of the local colour. In 1844, ballet master A. Mayer used music by G. Micheaux to create a three-act ballet titled A tündérmagány avagy Ámor varázssereje (King of Fairies, or Amor's Magic Power). By the end of the 19th century, ballet was limited to parts in operettas.

After World War I, Košice audiences had the opportunity to see ballet performances only thanks to guest shows by the National Theatre. Real ballet life, however, started only after World War II, in 1948, when Rudolf Macharovský became director of the ballet section of the State Theatre. Besides Macharovský, the most eminent creative personalities were the above-mentioned S. Remar, and Marinela and Ondrej Halász, who initiated the establishment of the dance



department at the State Conservatory in 1974. The Košice ensemble maintained a standard classical repertory while being always open and daringly experimenting. It was in Košice where the first opuses by young choreographers Róbert Balogh (*Eroticon*) and Ondrej Šoth (*Carmina Burana*) were staged in 1987. From 2000 to 2011, Ondrej Šoth was also head of the Košice ensemble.

The Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov and the State Opera in Banská Bystrica also have smaller ballet ensembles. Besides their primary function to perform parts in operas and musicals, they also produce standalone ballet performances.

THE TRAINING OF OF BALLET ARTISTS

State education focusing on the training of professional dancers goes back to 1949, when a department of dance was established at the Bratislava Conservatory. A. Jelínková became the first head of the department and was replaced in 1954 by Eva Jaczová, a graduate from the Budapest Academy of V. G. Troyanoff. Jaczová initiated the establishment of an independent Dance Conservatory which has borne her name until today and offers eight-year programs in classical, folk and modern dance. Since 1994, the Conservatory of J. L. Bella in Banská Bystrica has also had its own dance department. Choreographers, pedagogues, and theoreticians are trained by the Department of Dance Art at the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, founded in 1951.

◀ Slovak National Theatre Ballet, Sergei Prokofiev, Natália Horečná: Romeo and Juliet (2017), choreographer Natália Horečná; photo: Tomáš Benedikovič / Slovak National Theatre





CONTEMPORARY SLOVAK DANCE

Eva Gajdošová

Looking back at Slovakia's past and dancing pioneers, we inevitably have to start in 1879 when one of the world's most significant dance reformers, Rudolf Laban, was born in Bratislava (then known as Pressburg). He spent his childhood and young years in this city, yet sadly he developed his career elsewhere. Unlike the Czechs in the interwar period, he did not leave any successors in his hometown who would join the stream of modern European dance, represented by artists like Jaques Dalcroze, Kurt Joos and Rosalia Chladek. The professionalization of contemporary dance in Slovakia did not begin until the change of regime in the 1990s, although its potential had been developed by amateur modern dance companies since the 1970s.

◀ Dance Studio Theatre: The Core (2015), choreographer: Zuzana Ďuricová Hájková;
photo: Vlado Veverka

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The intensity of developments in contemporary dance in the 1990s seemed to be trying to make up for the forty years spent behind the Iron Curtain. There was a great boom in the guest appearances of foreign dance companies and choreographers. This period also gave rise to nearly all influential companies, institutions, projects and festivals, the majority of which have survived until today. The first group that brought contemporary dance to the stage in 1990 was A dato. A non-theatre company that gained renown was Hubris, later renamed Debris, which was committed to physical theatre. The first professional ensemble comprising dancers, choreographers, instructors and critics – the Association of Contemporary Dance – was founded in 1996 with the aim of creating professional conditions for the development of contemporary dance, promoting and presenting contemporary Slovak dance at home and abroad and organizing workshops under the guidance of domestic and foreign instructors, festivals and projects. The same year saw the setting up of the Artyci dance company. A year later, the first state ensemble, the Studio of Dance, was formed in Banská Bystrica. This town also became home to the first state conservatory named after Ján Levoslav Bella, which offered contemporary dance as a study programme. Bratislava Dance Theatre appeared as the first private theatre

of contemporary dance. Independent choreographers and dance companies made themselves heard too: for example, AS Project, the Tangere Company, DuWadance, Tanečné divadlo alternatív (the Dance Theatre of Alternatives), Dajv and others.

Since the beginning, dance events have included site-specific projects, which were mostly inspired by the visual appearance of the site, its uniqueness and functionality. Supported by the Dutch organization MAPA, movement workshops emerged in Slovakia. They constituted the core of performances in churches, abandoned factories, building sites and streets. One of the first projects was Tanec v uliciach (Dance in the Streets), but the greatest site-specific project was H2O Danubiana H2O, a result of collaboration between Slovak and foreign performers.

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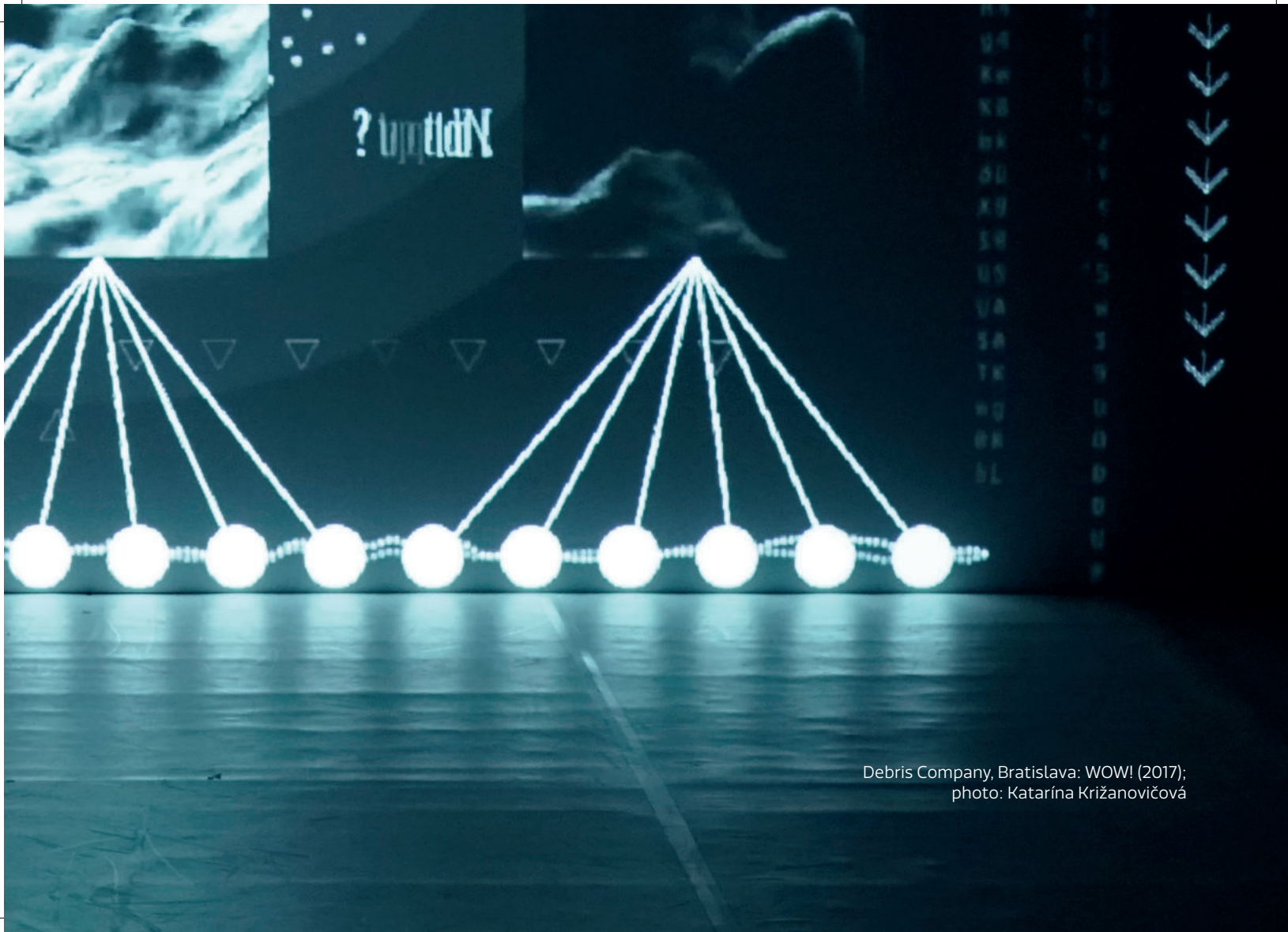
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Debris Company, Bratislava: WOW! (2017);
photo: Katarína Križanovičová

FESTIVALS

Bratislava v pohybe (Bratislava in Motion), an international festival of contemporary dance, was started in 1996 with the aim of offering inspiring top-quality productions especially by foreign makers of contemporary dance. Its ten editions have introduced a lot of dance companies and solo dancers from the USA, Canada and fifteen European countries, including Slovakia. The festival also has its Slovak platform. To date it has always included lectures, seminars and workshops under the guidance of foreign instructors. In 2016, the festival celebrated its 20th anniversary by staging a representative programme – among other pieces, Slovak audiences saw for the first time the work of such legends of American dance as Merce Cunningham or Trisha Brown.

Štyri dni tanca pre Vás (Four Days of Dance for You), a festival organized by the Studio of Dance in Banská Bystrica, is one of the main dance events in the Banská Bystrica region as well as in the national context. Its mission is to present original domestic productions and expand the audience of contemporary dance. The international festival of contemporary dance and movement theatre In 2015, the Four Days of Dance for You festival was transformed into the Creative Days For You festival. It is the result of the theatre's communication and long-term collaboration with



Slovak conservatories. Slovak conservatory students of dance are the primary target group of this event.

Nu Dance Fest has been organized by the Association of Contemporary Dance since 2006. It resulted from the ambition to give greater room to original Slovak productions in the centre of contemporary dance. Later the dramaturgy of the festival expanded to include foreign productions. However, its main objective remains to present new, unconventional works with an opinion which would appeal to the general public.

The Kiosk Festival – an activity originally initiated by the Theatre Institute – was gradually transformed into a festival. Since 2008, it has been produced by Stanica. Kiosk is a showcase of current productions of the Slovak independent theatre and dance scene. The festival's dramaturgy focuses on theatre, dance and broadly perceived performative art, and – through its original and inventive forms – attempts to address topical issues.

A special festival is Hybaj ho! (Move It!), whose first year presented contemporary Slovak dance in Prague in 2007. The next year contemporary Czech dance was showcased in several cities and towns in Slovakia. The festival is organized by the Czech civic association Altart.

SPACE FOR DANCE

While the first decade was marked with the formation of new ensembles and the acquisition of experience in workshops and its application in original projects, in the second decade the acute shortage of space that would provide professional conditions for the creation and presentation of dance productions became a major issue. The Tanec v Aréne project (Dance in the Arena) arose from the initiative of the Association of Contemporary Dance and the mime artist Milan Sládek, and aimed to build a real centre of dance, movement theatre and pantomime. Following Sládek's departure, the project was discontinued, and contemporary dance was deprived of the chance to be presented in a theatre building. For several years, the only stage for contemporary dance was to be found in A4, an independent centre for contemporary culture in Bratislava's House of Arts, which, however, was not suitable for more technically demanding productions. Between 2007 and 2015 the only permanent dance stage in Slovakia has been located in the historical building of the former slaughterhouse in Miletičova Street, which has been converted to the professional Elledanse Theatre and Dancing School. The productions of the Elledanse Theatre focused on contemporary dance, music and physical theatre and combined different genres and styles.



The building also houses a dancing school which is focused on contemporary dance but which has the potential to appeal to anybody keen on movement, creativity and art.

Another unique project is Station Žilina-Záriečie, which has been converted from a small defunct railway station into a centre where dance coexists with other kinds of contemporary art. It is run by the Truc Spérique civic association, which was established to provide a platform for projects in the field of art, social activities, art therapy and education. For the past three years it has hosted a great number of dancers, performers, musicians and visual artists. It is perhaps the only venue for the production of site-specific projects. Another project that attempts to promote contemporary dance is Contemporary Dance in the Slovak National Theatre, which picked up the threads of a similar project, Contemporary Dance Mondays. Its aim is to offer the Studio of the Slovak National Theatre and its state-of-the-art technical base to independent art makers. For the past two years the Slovak National Theatre has presented productions by most Slovak choreographers, and in the future it is also planning to invite foreign-based Slovak artists.

Despite its short history, contemporary Slovak dance has made its way onto the international scene. Our dancers are well known for cooperating on projects by renowned dance companies,

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such as those of Wim Vandekeybus, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Akram Khan as well as S.O.A.P., RootlessRoot Company, David Zambrano Comapny, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui Company and others.

Slovak dancer and choreographer Andrej Petrovič was involved in the dance scene event of 2016 in the United Kingdom – the premiere of the groundbreaking version of Giselle at the English National Ballet choreographed by the famous Akram Khan – in which he worked as assistant choreographer.

The Les Slovaks dance company, composed of five Slovak dancers, is recognized all over Europe. In addition to regular guest appearances in European dance productions, the company works with Slovak ensembles as well. The company is made up of five exceptional Slovak performers who share their work experience in international ensembles. “Slovak folk dance has always been the source of our inspiration . We do not wish

to reconstruct it though: we only select and make us of what is unique and precious in it, that which will distinguish us in the world – transformed into pure dance language,” said Martin Kilvdy, a member of the company.



THEATRE IN A NEW SPACE

Dáša Čiripová

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the definition of independent theatre in Slovakia has undergone several significant changes. In the past, independent theatre only referred to productions created outside of the state-run system of theatres. Gradually, however, this definition got extended to new aesthetic alternatives, as well as innovative approaches to the text and its interpretation, which presented a challenge in the creation and reception process for both artists and spectators. In the last ten years, this led to a situation in which independent theatres have become part of representative international networks and the subject of an extensive discourse on art. At present, it is the independent scene which provides the space and platform for searching, experimentation, and new ways of staging – all of which are outside of the standard dimension in which theatre thinking and creation take place.

The boom in devised theatre and original projects was catalysed also by the effort of alternative artists to break through the rigidity and frigidity of the productions offered by state-funded

◀ The old building of Stoka Theatre independent company, Bratislava; nineties of the last century;
photo: Ctibor Bachratý

A SIGNIFICANT
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OF THE CREATOR
AND THE
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theatres. A significant cornerstone was the redefinition of the theatrical space – the space of the creator and the spectator. It was standard practice for independent theatres to transform the theatre space in order to change the position of the audience. This was done, typically, by making use of premises which were not used for theatre purposes, or were not even planned to be used as theatre buildings. These usually included former factories, disused train or bus stations, slaughterhouses, traffic and transport buildings, warehouses, and so on.

Shortly after 1989, the Stoka Theatre – by now an icon among alternative theatres – found its home in the Office of Transportation. Stoka reconstructed the building to serve as a theatre and later even built a pub there. Stoka became a sought-after location not just for theatre, but also for concerts, literary evenings, and, perhaps most of all, for discussions

about culture and art. In 2006, however, the building was demolished. The regular ensemble had fallen apart even earlier to give rise to the new SkRAT Theatre, founded by some of the former Stoka members. The leading personality of Stoka, director Blaho Uhlár, took a longer break in Bratislava to work with the Disk amateur theatre company in Trnava only to come back to the capital city and set up Stoka's successor in the building of a former yarn factory, Cvernovka (which is now a sight of historical interest). Cvernovka provides space and studios for architects, designers, visual artists and others. Cvernovka provided space and studios for architects, designers, visual artists and others until 2016, when the developer's intentions clashed with the vision of a cultural creative centre. The original studios and premises reconstructed by the artists themselves, all that has remained is the Stoka Theatre -- existing in very provisional conditions and to be demolished in 2019. The New Cvernovka exists as the Creative and Cultural Centre in what used to be an industrial district of Bratislava.

The history of the SkRAT Theatre, not just as a theatre group, but also as a theatre space, is significant for the current situation in Slovak culture. Right after its establishment, the ensemble found a place in the former Czech Centre in the legendary V-club of the National Culture Centre (during socialism, the V-club was a university club where rock and roll, later also jazz,

concerts took place; the V-club became a symbolic island of artistic freedom, of underground culture, a place which defied the socialist uniformity). In 2004, the civic associations Atrakt Art, Association of Contemporary Dance, Burundi Datalab Studio Displej Press, and the Association for Contemporary Opera transformed the Czech Centre to A4-Zero Space. In the eight years of its existence (even though the centre was in constant insecurity and under existential threat because it had to fight for the premises every year), A4 became an alternative multicultural space. Besides the performances of the SkRAT Theatre, the centre hosted concerts of contemporary classical music, gigs of popular Slovak and international underground bands, presentations of new forms of performing art, dance projects, film evenings and so on. In 2012, a non-transparent public bid, announced to find a new renter, forced A4 out of the V-club premises. From one day to another, A4 had to find a new place. For a few months, it rented one floor in the functionalist-style building, formerly a department store specializing in clothes, which had in the meantime become a cultural sight and the residence of the Dunaj Culture Centre – one of the most visited multicultural locations in Bratislava. After about three months, the Association moved to another famous functionalist building – the former YMCA. There, adopting a DIY attitude, the Association members reconstructed the underground theatre and pub in the

basement. Surprisingly, in only a few months, the place was full of people and A4 transformed its zero space to a space for contemporary culture.

Another relevant space for independent art was set up by the theatre company known as Pôtoň. Its creative team Iveta Ditte Jurčová and Michal Ditte founded Pôtoň as an amateur theatre company in 2000. Three years later, the theatre was transformed into an independent professional association which, from the very beginning of its existence, took a pronounced path – focusing on controversial social issues based on field research and authentic material. The group first resided in the town of Levice until they managed to rent the former building of a culture centre in the village of Bátovce in 2008. According to the contract, the rent is free of charge and runs for 30 years. The building has been reconstructed and now is the home to the new Centre for Art and Creativity.

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STATION.

This crowned Pôtoň's many years of effort to find a place to create art, do workshops, organize residential stays, set up incubators, and perform community-based or educational activities.

For some years, experimental theatre events have successfully found their home ground in the internationally oriented Station Žilina-Záriečie, established in the building of a former train station. Station Žilina-Záriečie offers a variety of art activities, as well as theatre and dance projects. It has been an independent cultural space, an art lab, and the place to go for a community of activists since 2003. The aim has been to set up an artistic station providing space for critical thinking, creativity, and education.

In 2009, the Station got attached to the building and new premises were built so that it could be used for contemporary theatre and dance. It was dubbed S2 and built using 3,000 beer crates, 800 haystacks, 10 m³ regular wood boards, 60 OSB boards, 120 old train sleepers, a 12-metre-long ship container, 2 trucks of clay, 10,000 nails, 1 km of threaded bars, 1,000 nuts, bolts and washers, 1,500 wood screws, 1 truckload of gravel to even up the terrain, 1 extension cable for electricity supply, 2 wheelbarrows, and 1 small scaffolding. 7,000 Euros sufficed to build a place which doubled the room capacity of the Station. Simultaneously with S2, a plan was made to create S3, another low-budget space. S3 gallery and studios will be built from eight discarded



SINCE 2011,
THE TRUC SPHÉRIQUE
ASSOCIATION (THE
BODY THAT HAS
RUN AND OPERATED
STANICA) HAS
DEDICATED ITS
ACTIVITIES TO THE
RECONSTRUCTION
AND OPERATION OF
ANOTHER CULTURAL
SPACE: THE NEW
SYNAGOGUE –
KUNSTHALLE ŽILINA.

ship containers. The three-story building will incorporate workshops, studios, and will provide room for work and exhibitions. Since 2004, Station Žilina-Záriečie has been a member of Trans Europe Halles, an international project of independent culture centres. The Station is managed by the Truc sphérique civic association, which was founded in 1998. Since 2011, the Truc sphérique association (the body that has run and operated Stanica) has dedicated its activities to the reconstruction and operation of another cultural space: the New Synagogue – Kunsthalle Žilina. The neological synagogue is considered to be one of the most remarkable monuments of modern architecture from between the two world wars, a building of European significance. It has been a national cultural monument since 1963.

In 2011, Anténa was set up; it is a network of culture centres and organizations active in independent contemporary

art and culture in Slovakia. The network was created in order to improve the position of independent culture in the society. It represents independent culture centres in their communication with bodies of state administration and self-government, contributes to the creation of professional conditions for its members, initiates collaboration, experience exchange, and the drawing up of common projects, and supports the distribution of artistic productions. Anténa acts as an umbrella organization for 10 culture and art spaces: A4 – Space for Contemporary Culture (Bratislava), Tabačka Kulturfabrik (Košice), NA PERÓNE Theatre (Košice), the Pôtoň Theatre (Bátovce), Záhrada – Centre for Independent Culture (Banská Bystrica), Station Žilina-Záriečie (Žilina), Theatre from the Passage (Banská Bystrica), the Mining Station (Banská Štiavnica), KC Dunaj (Bratislava), Klub Lúč (Trenčín) and other affiliated organizations and associations.

The Barracks/Kulturpark Košice was established as part of the Košice – European Capital of Culture project, one of the largest investment projects in Košice. The barracks, military warehouses and the attached area, was opened after reconstruction in 2013. The original concept of the Barracks as a centre of independent culture suffered from the personal changes in the entire Košice ECC 2013 project and now the new proposal has abandoned the initial idea – today, the Barracks/Kulturpark is deemed to become a city culture centre which aims to provide a space for the integration

and interconnection of activities performed by other culture centres. The former team responsible for the Barracks and the ECC 2013 project did not give up on their original idea and founded Kulturfabrik Tabačka one year later. After a prolonged struggle with the city council, they finally succeeded in taking the building of a former tobacco factory. Just like the Záriečie station in Žilina and A4 in Bratislava, Košice now also has a centre for contemporary art and culture which acts as a platform for new, independent, and underground culture.





BASIC STATISTICAL DATA ON PROFESSIONAL THEATRES

Martina Čierna

In the past two years, the number of theatres in Slovakia has been growing continuously. While in 2006, 44 theatres were registered in Slovakia, in 2017 this number went up to 88.

The growth in the number of theatres became visible mostly after 2011 – particularly in the non-state theatre category, where the number increased twofold. This development was not only due to new theatres being established, but also because of the new online collection of statistical data which resulted in a higher number of forms that were returned.

Out of the total number of theatres, 4 are directly founded by the state or by state organizations, 23 by regional self-governing bodies or municipalities, and the remaining 61 theatres are independent. Nearly 51% of all theatres are concentrated in the Bratislava region, 13% in the Banská Bystrica region and 11% in the Košice region; 7% of the theatres are active in the Prešov region, 9% in the Nitra region, and 6% in the Žilina region, and 3% in the Trnava region. Until very recently, there was not a single professional theatre in the Trenčín region, but since 2014 one non-state theatre has been active there.

◀ Scenography collections depository; photo: archive of the Theatre Institute Museum

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State-funded theatres offer an average of 11,685 seats, while non-state theatres only offer 3118. If we were to take into account the number of permanent stages, state-funded theatres have available an average of 250 seats on one permanent stage. Non-state theatres, on the other hand, have nearly half of that number – 130 seats in the audience per one permanent stage.

The average number of performed productions in the last decade was 7515.

Between 2006 and 2015, the repertory of professional theatres in Slovakia included a total of 803 productions. The annual increase in this figure is 5.43%.

The overall absolute number of customers who visited the productions of all registered theatres in Slovakia is, on average, 1,520,000 annually. The yearly growth in the number of visitors is 2.53%. The statistical data collection also includes the monitoring of the employment situation. Despite the fact that there was an almost 11% rise in the number of permanent stages of theatres, the average annual increase of employment was a mere 2.63%. The most considerable drop in employment – more than 15% – was recorded in 2009. It was brought about mostly by the global financial crisis. When comparing state and non-state theatres, there have been great differences in the structure of employees because of the types of work contract. While state theatres enjoy a well-balanced proportion between permanent work (55%) and contracts for work performed

outside of a regular job (45%), non-state theatres display an entirely different trend. Only 17.5% of their employees are employed full-time: the remaining 82.5% are contracted for work.

Overall, it can be stated that the theatres have very good management – the income and expenditures of theatres in Slovakia are almost always balanced. Theatres use and write their expenses only up to the amount of their income. The supply of funds in absolute numbers showed a rising trend until the year 2010. After 2010, the income started to oscillate somewhat. In a percentual projection, the average annual growth in income was around 5.85% between 2006 and 2015. However, a realistic assessment of the funding of professional theatres – based on the collected statistical data – is not possible. Non-state theatres, that often operate as non-for-profit organizations or civic associations, do not publish their economic data in any scope and structure that would correspond to the information about state-funded theatres.



THE THEATRE INSTITUTE

Vladislava Fekete

Director of the Theatre Institute

The Theatre Institute in Bratislava, founded in 1961, is a nationwide institution directly administrated by The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, concerned with complex research, documenting and providing information related to theatre culture in Slovakia since the first professional scene began in 1920.

The Theatre Institute is focused on systematically collecting, scientifically processing, protecting, preserving and allowing access to archival and documentary repertoires of the history and present day of Slovak professional theatre and it provides a complex information system about professional theatre in Slovakia.

Repertoires are focused on documents about particular theatre productions, photography and promotional materials, staging scenarios, directing books, periodical and non-periodical print media, audio- and audiovisual recordings of theatre productions, scenic and costume drafts and other materials related to the history and present day of theatre art and theatre culture in Slovakia.

◀ The room of Janko and Ol'ga Borodáčs in the Theatre Institute; photo: Theatre Institute Archive

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Funds and collections are classified into groups of documenting collections, archival repertories and collections, the library, audiovisual and multimedia collections, collections of gallery and museum objects, which are currently undergoing complex informatization and digitalization. Their database forms are available to the public on-line via the Theatre.sk information system as well as separate databases, such as CEMUZ, BACH and CLAVIUS, and they are also available for in-house study.

By publishing original and translated works of Slovak and worldwide theatre art, this is an institution which is ranked among the top publishing houses in Slovakia. The Theatre Institute co-operates with partner institutions in Slovakia and abroad as well. In relation to foreign countries, the Theatre Institute is a member of organisations such as ITI, ENICPA, IETM, ICOM and SIBMAS through which it is involved in international scientific teatrological activities, projects and other regular activities that support the promoting of Slovak theatre abroad.

A triad of important statutes of the institution – the Specialized Public Archive, the Museum of the Theatre Institute and the Theatre Research Centre – creates a platform for scientific and research work in the area of theatre history and theory, concentrates on the field of Slovak theatre and drama






George Orwell: The Principles of Newspeak; Studio 12 Theatre (2017).
director: Rastislav Ballek; photo: Robert Tappert







history, designs new methods of their analytical processing, specifies the theatre terminology and reinforces the position of Slovak theatre and drama in a Central European context.

The Theatre Institute helped the Slovak Centre of the AICT (Association of Theatre Critics) to launch in 2006 the Monitoring of Theatres in Slovakia project with the aim to inform the theatre public as well as the wider culture community about current theatre events in Slovakia and present a complex analysis of theatre seasons. Since 2007, Theatre Institute has published a monthly journal about theatre and art in Slovakia – *kød* – “concretely about theatre”.

The Theatre Institute is the founder of *Nová dráma* / New Drama Project and the main organizer of a festival of theatre productions of contemporary Slovak and international drama called *Nová dráma* / New Drama. In addition to the main programme, it offers many accompanying events, such as conferences, exhibition projects, and presentations of drama by authors of other nationalities, and it focuses on European theatre.

Within the area of original drama, the Theatre Institute yearly announces a competition of original drama entitled Drama, and a competition of the best drama text by young authors called the Dramatically Young Competition.

Within its Studio 12 multimedia theatre space, the Theatre Institute presents contemporary Slovak and European drama and theatre, organizes seminars, workshops, stage readings, and systematically collaborates with Slovak theatres and art schools in preparing education projects for children and young adults.

The Theatre Institute is a coordinator of a nationwide event called Theatre Night. On a regular basis it holds various exhibitions both in Slovak theatres and abroad. Its library provides information, searching and consultancy services and offers the possibility of home study or in-library lending of literature from the field of teatrology. The visual and audio recording library offers Slovak and foreign theatre production recordings and other related documentary material. The collections and funds of the Theatre Institute are open to the public in the form of in-library study in the reading room. The Prospero Information Centre serves also as a specialised bookstore on theatre literature published in Slovakia and abroad.

www.etheatre.sk

www.novadrama.sk

www.studio12.sk

www.nocdivadiei.sk







SLOVAK THEATRES – REGISTERS

◀ Ingmar Bergman: Fanny and Alexander, Slovak National Theatre (2016), director: Marián Amsler;
photo: Ľuboš Kotlár / Slovak National Theatre

PUBLIC THEATRES

Slovak National Theatre

Address: Pribinova 17,
819 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 204 72 111
E-mail: snd@snd.sk
Web: www.snd.sk

New Stage, Bratislava

Address: Živnostenská 1,
812 14 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 204 88 100
E-mail: sekretariat@nova-scena.sk
Web: www.nova-scena.sk

State Opera Banská Bystrica

Address: Národná 11,
974 73 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 2457 101,
+421 48 2457 111
E-mail: janka.cabanova@stateopera.sk
Web: www.stateopera.sk

State Theatre Košice

Address: Hlavná ul. 58,
042 77 Košice
Phone: +421 55 2452 200
E-mail: sdke@sdke.sk
Web: www.sdke.sk

SELF-GOVERNING

& CITY THEATRES

ASTORKA Korzo'90 Theatre

Address: Nám. SNP 33,
814 99 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 544 32 093,
+421 903 601 339
E-mail:
lzednikovicova.astorka@gmail.com
Web: www.astorka.sk

Arena Theatre

Address: Viedenská cesta 10,
851 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 672 02 550
E-mail: pokladna@divadloarena.sk,
marketing@divadloarena.sk
Web: www.divadloarena.sk

Bratislava Puppet Theatre

Address: Dunajská 36,
811 08 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 526 34 740,
+421 2 529 23 668
E-mail: brtis@babkovedivadlo.sk,
prevadzka@babkovedivadlo.sk
Web: www.babkovedivadlo.sk

Ludus Theatre

Address: Jozefská 19,
811 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 670 672,
+421 915 795 564
E-mail: ludus@ludusdivadlo.sk
Web: www.ludusdivadlo.sk

DPOH City Theatre

Address: Laurinská 19,
811 00 Bratislava
E-mail: mdpoh@mdpoh.sk
Web: www.mdpoh.sk

Jan Palárik Theatre

Address: Trojičné nám. 2,
917 01 Trnava
Phone: +421 33 5511 353
E-mail: djp@djp.sk
Web: www.djp.sk

Andrej Bagar Theatre Nitra

Address: Svätoplukovo nám. 4,
950 53 Nitra
Phone: +421 37 7721 577,
+421 37 7721 581
E-mail: dabnr@dab.sk
Web: www.dab.sk

The Old Theatre of Karol Spišák

Address: Ulica 7. pešieho pluku 1,
949 01 Nitra
Phone: +421 37 6525 003
E-mail: riaditel@sdn.sk
Web: www.sdn.sk

Jokai Theatre

Address: Petőfiho 1,
945 12 Komárno
Phone: +421 35 7908 124,
+421 35 7908 116
E-mail: sekretariat@jokai.sk,
dramaturgia@jokai.sk
Web: www.jokai.sk

Puppet Theatre Žilina

Address: Kuzmányho 6,
011 37 Žilina
Phone: +421 41 5620 315,
+421 41 5623 995
E-mail: bdz@bdz.sk
Web: www.bdz.sk

City Theatre Žilina

Address: Horný val 3,
010 01 Žilina
Phone: +421 41 3810 000,
+421 905 528 027
E-mail: info@divadlozilina.eu
Web: www.divadlozilina.eu

Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads

Address: Skuteckého 14,
975 09 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4125 513
E-mail: bdnr@bdnr.sk
Web: www.bdnr.sk

Theatre Dance Studio

Address: Komenského 12,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4146 540,
+421 902 672 799
E-mail: organizacne@studiotanca.sk,
riaditelka@studiotanca.sk
Web: www.studiotanca.sk

Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre

Address: Divadelná 3,
960 77 Zvolen
Phone: +421 45 5551 222
E-mail: djgt@djgt.sk
Web: www.djgt.sk

Slovak Chamber Theatre

Address: Divadelná 1,
036 80 Martin
Phone: +421 43 4222 234,
+421 43 4224 098
E-mail: skd@divadlomartin.sk,
vyrostko@divadlomartin.sk
Web: www.divadlomartin.sk

Theatre of Spišská Nová Ves

Address: Radničné námestie 4,
052 01 Spišská Nová Ves
Phone: +421 53 4173 270
E-mail: sekretariat@spisskedivadlo.sk
Web: www.spisskedivadlo.sk

Actores City Theatre

Address: Šafárikova 20,
048 01 Rožňava
Phone: +421 58 7329 623,
+421 905 560 526
E-mail: actores@actores.sk
Web: www.actores.sk

Puppet Theatre Košice

Address: Tajovského 4,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 907 951 822
E-mail: sekretariat@bdke.sk
Web: www.bdke.sk

Thália Theatre

Address: Timonova 3,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 55 6225 867
E-mail: office@thaliaszinhaz.sk
Web: www.thaliaszinhaz.sk

Romathan Theatre

Address: Štefánikova 4,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 55 6224 980
E-mail: divadloromathan@stonline.sk,
romathan@romathan.sk
Web: www.romathan.sk

Jonaš Záborský Theatre

Address: Námestie legionárov 6,
081 61 Prešov
Phone: +421 51 7775 777,
+421 51 7724 466
E-mail: sekretariat@djz.sk,
riaditel@djz.sk
Web: www.djz.sk

Alexander Duchnovič Theatre

Address: Jarková 77,
080 01 Prešov
Phone: +421 51 7732 200
E-mail: dad@divadload.sk,
sekretariat@divadload.sk
Web: www.divadload.sk

INDEPENDENT THEATRES**Radošina Naive Theatre**

Address: Záhradnícka 95,
821 08 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 556 44 762,
+421 905 491 666
E-mail: rnd@rnd.sk
Web: www.rnd.sk

L + S Studio

Address: Námestie 1. mája 5,
811 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 529 21 584,
+421 2 5292 5082
E-mail: blanka.abelova@studios.sk,
pavol.danisovic@studios.sk
Web: www.studios.sk

Teatro Tatro

Address: Národná 7,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 37 905 590 396
E-mail: mana@mana.sk,
teatrotatro@teatrotatro.sk
Web: www.teatrotatro.sk

STOKA Theatre

Address: Košická 37, 821 08 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 211 031
E-mail: stoka@stoka.sk
Web: www.stoka.sk

Teatro Neline

Address: J. Holčeka 21,
900 86 Budmerice
Phone: +421 33 6448 650
E-mail: teatroneline@stonline.sk
Web: www.neline.sk

Debris Company

Address: Dostojevského rad 11,
811 09 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 466 348
E-mail: booking@debriscompany.sk
Web: www.debriscompany.sk

**City Theatre – Theatre from
the Passage**

Address: Lazovná 21,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 412 47 82,
+421 911 909 035
E-mail: divadlozpasaze@gmail.com
Web: www.divadlozpasaze.sk

Studio 12

Address: Jakubovo nám 12,
813 57 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 204 87 602,
+421 915 891 343
E-mail: studio12@theatre.sk
Web: www.studio12.sk

SkRAT Theatre

Address: A4 – priestor súčasnej kultúry,
Karpatská 2,
811 05 Bratislava
Phone: +421 902 754 380
E-mail: burgr@skrat.info,
sash.polovkova@gmail.com
Web: www.skrat.info

Wüstenrot Theatre

Address: Trnavské mýto 1,
831 04 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 502 28 739
E-mail: gedur@gedur.sk
Web: www.gedur.sk

Theatre With No Home

Address: Štefánikova 16,
811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 524 98 508
E-mail: ursulka@mac.com,
patrikk@mac.com
Web: www.divadlobezdomova.sk

Theatre Silent Sparks

Address: Lazovná 21,
97401 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4124 782,
+421 904 457 496
E-mail: ticheiskry@gmail.com
Web: www.ticheiskry.sk

P.A.T. Theatre

Address: Bakošova 26,
841 03 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 589 757
E-mail: slavadaubnerova@gmail.com
Web: www.slavadaubnerova.com

Dezorz Puppet Theatre

Address: Hlboká 5,
811 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 142 282
E-mail: pr@dezolutky.com
Web: www.dezolutky.com

NON.GARDE Theatre

Address: Prepoštská 4,
814 99 Bratislava
Phone: +421 908 615 757,
+421 904 504 003
E-mail: non.garde@gmail.com
Web: www.nongarde.com

Arteatro

Address: Biela 6,
811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 829 883
E-mail: divadlo.arteatro@gmail.com
Web: www.theatre.sk

Laban Atelier

Address: Staré záhrady 14,
821 05 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 706 550
E-mail: info@labanbratislava.sk
Web: www.labanbratislava.sk

Small Stage STU Theatre

Address: Dostojevského rad 7,
811 09 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 204 20 012,
+421 902 228 228
E-mail: korenciova@malascena.sk,
dramaturgia@malascena.sk
Web: www.malascena.sk

Teatro Colorato

Address: Nejedlého 12,
841 02 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 827 465
E-mail: teatro.colorato@gmail.com,
peter.weinciller@gmail.com
Web: www.colorato.sk

Piki Theatre

Address: Obrancov mieru 18,
902 01 Pezinok
Phone: +421 911 976 124
E-mail: piki@rsb.sk
Web: www.piki.sk

Pôtoň Theatre

Address: Bátovce 358,
935 01 Bátovce
Phone: +421 36 6308 300
E-mail: divadlo@poton.sk
Web: www.poton.sk

Žilina-Zariečie Station culture node

Address: Závodská cesta 3,
010 07 Žilina
Phone: +421 948 344 606
E-mail: info@stanica.sk,
marek@stanica.sk
Web: www.stanica.sk

Kontra Theatre

Address: Za Hornádom 8,
052 01 Spišská Nová Ves
Phone: +421 907 908 986
E-mail: peciz9@gmail.com
Web: www.theatre.sk

Touring Theatre for Children DRaK

Address: Hlavná 18,
080 01 Prešov
Phone: +421 903 978 434
E-mail: riaditel@kocovnedivadlo.sk
Web: www.kocovnedivadlo.sk

GUnaGU

Address: Františkánske námestie 7,
811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 917 916 754
E-mail: gunagu@gunagu.sk
Web: www.gunagu.sk

Theatre Sting

Phone: +421 905 339 683
E-mail: vlado.zetek@gmail.com
Web: www.divadlozihadlo.com

Theatre under the Balkony

Address: Rudohorská 37,
974 11 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 905 533 679
E-mail: jharustiak@azet.sk,
harryteater@gmail.com
Web: www.divadlolodbalkonom.sk

Theatre Lab

Address: Svoradova 4,
813 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 915 668 278
E-mail: office@divadlolab.sk,
press@divadlolab.sk
Web: www.divadlolab.sk

Theatre on the Wheels

Address: Kozmonautov 13,
900 21 Svätý Jur
Phone: +421 903 198 024
E-mail: divadlonakolesach@gmail.com

Theatre oProti

Phone: +421 907 177 865
E-mail: info@oproti.eu
Web: www.oproti.eu

Bratislava Punch

Address: Rudnayovo námestie 4,
811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 948 228 657
Web: www.bratislavskygasparko.sk

Chamber Opera Bratislava

Address: Rovnianska 3,
851 02 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 444 412
E-mail:
roman.muller@komornaopera.sk
Web: www.komornaopera.sk

Ensemble of Non-regular Theatre

Address: Akademická 327/2,
969 69 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 905 258 284,
+ 421 908 801 137
E-mail: and-theatre@mail.telecom.sk
Web: www.and-theatre.art

Boat – Theatre in the Underdeck

Address: Tyršovo nábrežie,
851 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 449 650
E-mail: divadlovpodpalubi@gmail.com
Web: www.lodteatro.sk

Honey and Dust

Address: Silvánska 1,
841 04 Bratislava
E-mail: andrejkalinka@gmail.com,
martinkaivan@gmail.com
Web: www.medaprach.sk

Meteorit International Theatre

Address: Čulenova 3,
811 09 Bratislava
Phone: +421 944 280 221
E-mail: festival.meteorit@gmail.com
Web: www.meteorit-theatre.com

NA PERÓNE

Address: Tabačka Kulturfabrik, Gorkého 2,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 915 959 427
E-mail: divadlo@naperone.sk
Web: www.naperone.sk

NoMantinelS

Address: Višňová 5, 831 01 Bratislava
E-mail: info@nomantinelS.sk
Web: www.nomantinelS.sk

Portál theatre

Address: Októbrová 46,
080 01 Prešov
Phone: +421 51 4520 610,
+421 51 7712 037
E-mail: divadloportal@gmail.com
Web: www.divadloportal.sk

Prešov National Theatre

Address: Fučíková 4,
080 01 Prešov
E-mail: presovskendarodne@gmail.com
Web: www.pnd.sk

Pressburg Theatre

Address: Staromestský klub,
Školská 14, 811 07 Bratislava
Phone: +421 907 891 536
E-mail: frantisek.lintner@gmail.com
Web: www.presporskedivadlo.sk

Slovak Dance Theatre

Address: Pribinova 25,
811 09 Bratislava
Phone: +421 903 738 235
E-mail: artdirector@jan.sk, sdt@sdt.sk
Web: www.sdt.sk

Old Town Theatre of Peter Rašev

Address: Stará Baštová 1,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 905 508 198,
+421 903 605 316
E-mail: lubapeto@netkosice.sk
Web: www.staromestske-divadlo.sk

Silence and comp.

Address: Školská 14,
811 07 Bratislava
Phone: +421 908 111 065
E-mail: tichoaspol@gmail.com
Web: www.tichoaspol.sk

Tomáš Plaszký – Theatre in a Suitcase

Address: Jantárová 10,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 905 271 409
E-mail: dvk@dvk.sk
Web: www.dvk.sk

Wandering Theatre

Phone: +421 948 231 902
E-mail: jakubnv@gmail.com
Web: www.facebook.com/tulavedivadlo.sk

Garden – Centre for Independent Culture

Address: Námestie SNP 16,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 907 628 127
E-mail: info@zahradacnk.sk
Web: www.zahradacnk.sk

BABADLO – Puppet Theatre

Address: Solivarská 80,
080 01 Prešov
Phone: +421 51 7711 631,
+421 51 7711 632
E-mail: babadlo@babadlo.sk
Web: www.babadlo.sk

Red Cat Cabaret

Address: Obchodná 17,
911 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 531 408
E-mail: club@redcatcabaret.com
Web: www.redcatcabaret.com

dívaldo KOMIKA

Address: Kukučínova 11A,
080 05 Prešov
Phone: +421 907 873 417
E-mail: divadlo@komika.sk
Web: www.komika.sk

La KOMIKa Theatre

Address: Michalská 5,
810 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 518 667
E-mail: vosatkovan@gmail.com
Web: www.lakomika.sk

New Theatre

Address: Dom Matice slovenskej,
Dolnočermánska ulica, Nitra – Čermáň
Phone: +421 903 394 138
E-mail: info@novedivadlo.sk
Web: www.novedivadlo.sk

Peter Mankovecký Theatre

Address: Michalská 7,
811 01 Bratislava
E-mail: divadlodpm@gmail.com

ZkuFraVon Theatre

Address: Michalská 7, 811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 908 709 407
E-mail: divadlozkufravon@gmail.com
Web:
www.facebook.com/Divadlo-ZkuFraVon

Odivo, o. z.

Address: M. Rázusa 1317/5,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 902 395 956
E-mail: odivotheatre@gmail.com
Web: www.odivo.sk

SCHOOLS

Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava

Address: Ventúrska ul. 3,
813 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 593 01 446,
+421 2 544 32 172
E-mail: rektorat@vsmu.sk,
htf@vsmu.sk, letenay@vsmu.sk
Web: www.vsmu.sk

The Academy of Art Banská Bystrica

Address: ul. J. Kollára 22,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4320 120,
+421 48 4320 111
E-mail: rektor@aku.sk,
kancelarka@aku.sk
Web: www.aku.sk

Conservatoire Bratislava

Address: Tolstého 11,
811 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 544 35 341
E-mail:
konzervatorium@konzervatorium.sk
Web: www.konzervatorium.sk

Church Conservatory Bratislava

Address: Beňadická 16,
851 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 638 30 895
E-mail: sekretariat@ckba.sk
Web: www.ckba.sk

Conservatory Žilina

Address: J. M. Hurbana 48,
010 01 Žilina
Phone: +421 41 5622 680,
+421 41 5620 090
E-mail:
konzervatoriumza@vuczilina.sk
Web: www.konza.sk

**Jan Levoslav Bella Conservatory
Banská Bystrica**

Address: Skuteckého 27,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4123 214
E-mail:
konzerva@konzervatoriumbb.sk
Web: www.konzervatoriumbb.sk

Conservatory Košice

Address: Timonova 2,
042 03 Košice
Phone: +421 55 6222 092,
+421 55 6221 967
E-mail: kon-ke@stonline.sk
Web: www.konke.sk

Dance Conservatory of Eva Jacz

Address: Gorazdova 20,
811 04 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 592 03 911
E-mail: tankonba@tankonba.sk
Web: www.tankonba.sk

FESTIVALS**INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
DIVADELNÁ NITRA**

Address: Svätoplukovo námestie 4,
950 53 Nitra
Phone: +421 903 554 475
E-mail: nitrafest@nitrafest.sk
Web: www.nitrafest.sk
Director: Darina Kárová

**NOVA DRAMA / NEW DRAMA
The Theatre Institute**

Address: Jakubovo námestie 12,
813 57 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 204 87 500,
+421 2 204 87 603
E-mail: dominika.zatkova@theatre.sk
Web: www.novadrama.sk
Director: Vladislava Fekete

**BRATISLAVA IN MOVEMENT
Asociácia Bratislava v pohybe**

Address: Šancová 43,
831 04 Bratislava
E-mail: festivalba@gmail.com
Web: www.abp.sk
Director: Miroslava Kovářová

ZVOLEN CASTLE PLAYS

J. G. Tajovsky Theatre
Address: Divadelná 3,
960 77 Zvolen
Phone: +421 45 5551 222,
+421 45 5551 202
E-mail: djgt@djgt.sk
Web: www.zhz.sk
Director of the drama section:
Jana Raffajová

**OPERALIA BANSKÁ BYSTRICA
State Opera Banská Bystrica**

Address: Národná ulica č. 11,
974 73 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 2457 101,
+421 48 2457 111
E-mail: janka.cabanova@stateopera.sk
Web: www.stateopera.sk
Director of the opera section:
Rudolf Hromada

**TOUCHES AND CONNECTIONS
THEATRE FESTIVAL**

Slovak Chamber Theatre

Address: Divadelná 1,
036 80 Martin

Phone: +421 905 366 664

E-mail: vyrostko@divadlomartin.sk,
mmichnova@yahoo.com

Web: www.dotykyaspojenia.sk

Director: František Výrostko

PUPPET ŽILINA

The Puppet Theatre Žilina

Address: Kuzmányho 6,
011 37 Žilina

Phone: +421 41 5620 315

E-mail: bdz@bdz.sk

Web: www.bdz.sk

Director: Peter Tabaček

PUPPET BYSTRICA

Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads

Address: Skuteckého 14,
975 90 Banská Bystrica

Phone: +421 48 4215 623,
+421 48 4125 513

E-mail: bdnr@bdnr.sk

Web: www.bdnr.sk

Director: Iveta Škripková

ALONE ON THE STAGE

**The Contemporary Art Association
Kolomaž**

Address: M. Turkovej 30,
911 01 Trenčín

Phone: +421 903 027 910

Web: www.monodrama.sk

E-mail: kamil@monodrama.sk

Contact person: Kamil Bystrický

FESTIVAL OF CZECH THEATRE

L + S Studio

Address: Námestie 1. mája 5,
811 06 Bratislava

Phone: +421 2 529 21 584,
+421 2 5292 5082

E-mail: blanka.abelova@studios.sk,
pavol.danisovic@studios.sk

Web: www.studios.sk

Director: Milan Lasica

PROJECT ISTROPOLITANA

**The Academy of Music and Dramatic
Arts**

Address: Ventúrska 3,
813 01 Bratislava

Phone: +421 944 333 748

E-mail: istropolitana@vsmu.sk,
press@istropolitanaproject.sk

Web: www.istropolitanaproject.sk,
www.vsmu.sk

ATTRACTIVE THEATRE DAYS

**The Association for Noncommercial
Cultural Activities**

Address: Ul. Martina Rázusa 44,
960 01 Zvolen

Phone: +421 908 987 556

E-mail: tomas@vadfestival.sk

Web:

www.vikendatraktivnehodivadla.sk

Director: Tomáš Kršňák

TEMPUS ART

Actores City Theatre

Address: Šafárikova 20,
048 01 Rožňava

Phone: +421 58 7329 623,
+421 905 560 526

E-mail: actores@actores.sk

Web: www.actores.sk

Director: Tatiana Masníková

FESTIVAL MEETING – STRETNUTIE

– SETKANI – SPOTKANIE

– TALALKOLAS

The Old Theatre of Karol Spišák Nitra

Address: Ulica 7. pešieho pluku 1,
949 01 Nitra

Phone: +421 37 6525 003

E-mail: riaditel@sdn.sk

Web: www.sdn.sk

Director: Martin Kusenda

**BRATISLAVA PUPPET THEATRE'S
FESTIVAL**

Bratislava Puppet Theatre

Address: Dunajská 36,
811 08 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 526 34 740,
+421 2 529 23 668
E-mail: brtis@babkovedivadlo.sk,
prevadzka@babkovedivadlo.sk
Web: www.babkovedivadlo.sk
Director: Ján Brtiš

**INSPIRATIONAL THEATRE
PERFORMANCES**

Trnava City

Address: Hlavná 1,
917 01 Trnava
Phone: +421 33 323 443
E-mail: terezia.krupcikova@trnava.sk
Web: www.trnava.sk
Contact person: Terézia Krupčíková

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN THEATRE
FESTIVAL**

State Theatre Košice

Address: Hlavná 76,
040 01 Košice
Phone: +421 55 2452 222,
421 55 2452 224
E-mail: tenai@kosicefest.eu,
lenka.papugova@sdke.sk
Web: www.kosicefest.eu
Director: František Ténai

**FESTIVAL FOUR (+1) DAYS
OF DANCE 4 YOU
The Theatre of The Dance Studio**

Address: Komenského 12,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 4146 540,
+421 902 672 799
E-mail: organizacne@studiotanca.sk,
riaditelka@studiotanca.sk
Web: www.studiotanca.sk
Director: Zuzana Hájková

**NU DANCE FEST
The Contemporary Dance Association**

Address: Anenská ulica 1,
811 05 Bratislava
Phone: +421 944 161 835
E-mail: ast@sucasnytanec.sk
Web: www.sucasnytanec.sk,
www.nudancefest.sk
Contact person: Petra Fornayová

**ERROR
Theatre With No Home**

Address: Štefánikova 16,
811 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 524 98 508
E-mail: ursulka@mac.com,
patrikk@mac.com
Web: www.divadlobezdomova.sk
Contact person: Patrik Krebs

**THE INTERNATIONAL THEATRE
FESTIVAL ARTE TERAPIE
City Theatre – Theatre from the
Passage**

Address: Lazovná 21,
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Phone: +421 48 412 47 82,
+421 911 909 035
E-mail: divadlozpasaze@gmail.com
Web: www.divadlozpasaze.sk

KIOSK

**Žilina – Zariečie Station/
Truc spherique, o.z.**

Address: Závodska cesta 3,
010 01 Žilina
Phone: +421 948 344 606
E-mail: martina@stanica.sk
Web: www.stanica.sk,
www.kioskfestival.sk
Director: Marek Adamov

**PUBERTÁK – A FESTIVAL OF TEENAGE
THEATRE**

Ludus Theatre

Address: Jozefská 19,
811 06 Bratislava
Phone: +421 905 670 672,
+421 915 795 564
E-mail: ludus@ludusdivadlo.sk
Web: www.ludusdivadlo.sk
Director: Peter Kuba

**PRO-TEZA (PRO-THESIS)
– A FESTIVAL OF DEVISED THEATRE
A4 – Association for contemporary
culture**

Address: Karpatská 2,
811 05 Bratislava

Phone: +421 910 549 225,
+421 911 549 222

E-mail: manager@a4.sk,
produkcia@a4.sk

Web: www.a4.sk/projekty/pro-teza

MAGAZINES

kød – concretely about theatre

Description: Published since March 2007 by the Theatre Institute in Bratislava. The journal is a platform for reflection and opinions of contemporary theatre. Its content profiles artists, local and international festivals' reviews, information about the international theatre scene, comments and remarks on cultural policy, studies from history, and the theory of theatre and drama.

Periodicity: ten issues per year

Web: www.casopiskod.sk

Contact details:

Phone: +421 2 204 87 503,
+421 2 204 87 312

E-mail: kod@theatre.sk

Address:

Redakcia časopisu kød
Divadelný ústav
Jakubovo námestie 12
813 57 Bratislava

**SLOVENSKÉ DIVADLO
(SLOVAK THEATRE)**

A review of dramatic arts

Description: Published since 1953. A theoretical and historical Slovak journal covering areas of theatre, film, radio and television. Published by the Institute of Theatre and Film Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. About 400 pages are published every year.

Periodicity: quarterly

Web: www.sav.sk/index.php?doc=journal&journal_no=29

Contact details:

Phone: +421 2 5477 7193

E-mail: michaela.mojzisova@savba.sk

Address:

Ústav divadelnej a filmovej vedy SAV
Dúbravská cesta 9
841 04 Bratislava 4

HUDOBNÝ ŽIVOT (MUSIC LIFE)

Description: A specialized monthly on classical and jazz music in Slovakia. Published by the Centre for Music in Bratislava. It presents information about festivals, concerts, profiles of personalities, and the history of Slovak music.

Periodicity: monthly

Web: www.hudobnyzivot.sk

Contact details:

Phone: +421 2 204 70 450,
+421 905 643 926

E-mail: peter.motycka@hc.sk,
andrej.suba@hc.sk, robert.kolar@hc.sk

Address:
Hudobné centrum
Michalská 10
815 36 Bratislava

JAVISKO (SCENE)

A quarterly on amateur theatre and artistic presentation

Description: The magazine reflects the state of amateur theatre and artistic presentation, and helps to educate amateur theatremakers and reciters. Published by the National Culture Centre in Bratislava.

Periodicity: quarterly

Web: www.nocka.sk/javisko

Contact details:

Phone: +421 2 204 71 249

E-mail: rcj@nocka.sk

Address:
Národné osvetové centrum
Nám. SNP 12
812 34 Bratislava 1

SALTO

Description: A magazine about contemporary dance and movement theatre.

Periodicity: irregular

Web: [www.facebook.com/
SALTO-111377752274387/](http://www.facebook.com/SALTO-111377752274387/)

Contact details:

Phone: +421 905 181 893

E-mail: nmcode@slovanet.sk

Address:
NM Code
Čmelíkova
821 03 Bratislava 2

PORTAL

A portal of the Slovak National Theatre

Description: An information magazine of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava. Published since September 2012.

Periodicity: monthly

Web: www.snd.sk/mesacnik-portal

Contact details:

Phone: +421 2 204 72 107

E-mail: portal@snd.sk

Address:

Portál SND
Pribinova 17
819 01 Bratislava

VLNA

(VAWE)

A magazine about contemporary art and culture

Description: A magazine published since 1999 by civic association Vlňa. It focuses on new and experimental art in Slovakia, including film, literature, music, visual arts, and theatre. The magazine publishes unabridged texts of theatre plays.

Periodicity: quarterly

Web: www.vlna.sk

Contact details:

Phone: +421 944 117 888

E-mail: vlna@vlna.sk

Address:

Vlňa
Vlčkova 18
811 01 Bratislava

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