



PRESS RELEASE

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The 57th Maribor Theatre Festival Competition Programme

"This year's festival edition is presented in its full scale, with all the programme strands, including the competition programme and the traditional festival awards ceremony. We will host numerous foreign and Slovenian producers and Maribor will once again be the epicentre of Slovenian theatre."

Aleš Novak, artistic director

Maribor – A press conference was held today in the foyer of the Old Hall of the Slovene National Theatre Maribor to present the competition programme of the 57th Maribor Theatre Festival. **Aleš Novak**, artistic director of the Maribor Theatre Festival, and **Nika Leskovšek**, selector of the competition programme, took part in the presentation. This year's Maribor Theatre Festival will take place between 30 May and 12 June, offering a diverse accompanying programme, which will be presented in detail at a press conference in May.

Fourteen live performances will be staged in the competition programme, the centrepiece of the festival, whereas **two will be presented online**. The performances were selected by Nika Leskovšek, the selector of the competition programme of the 57th Maribor Theatre Festival, who **watched 210 theatre events between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2021**. As she wrote in her justification for the selection, there was a trend towards performances with a slower rhythm, notable pauses or even complete silence. "In general, **there is a rise of chamber form performances**, significantly higher numbers of monodramas, solo and autobiographical performances. Institutional theatre houses, however, have already taken risks at the beginning of the new season with more pompous, larger casts and visually more lavish productions." The selector also pointed out that the season (and a half), when considered as a whole, **stands out for the quality of the actors' creations**. "Due to the long periods of interruptions, the study time (of the roles) has been extended, and with it getting into character, as well as the time to fully focus on building the details, which are a pleasure to watch. This should definitely be maintained in the future. I am particularly pleased with the **large number of more prominent and complex female roles**."

According to the festival's artistic director Aleš Novak, **two important factors influenced the shaping of the programme** - the ongoing epidemic and the related interruptions and adjustments in theatre production, and **the shift of the festival dates to spring time**. "The new date dictates a new selection period; from now on it will be a calendar year. These circumstances have dictated a longer selection period for the competition and other programme strands - hence the much larger



volume of productions in this year's competition programme, which will be a dominant feature of the programming image."

The festival maintains its **established programme structure**: "We start with the **Young Theatre and the development of new audiences** and continue with an **international conference** on theatre inclusion of vulnerable groups and student activities. The opening of the festival will be accompanied by an outstanding performance by **world-renowned choreographer Akram Khan, *Outwitting the Devil***, followed by the competition, accompanying and professional programme." Aleš Novak also explained that the Maribor Theatre Festival will once again take place over a fortnight at the SNT Maribor and at a number of other venues in the city. "We expect that there will be no special restrictions during the festival, but we want the producers to be able to carry out the planned programme, with full theatre halls and enthusiastic audiences."

Additional quote:

"The selected performances do not only reflect our current state, but also comment on each other in an unstoppable kaleidoscopic way. Whether it is the disintegration of the family unit, the depiction of its dysfunctions or the unbearable state of living between four walls, the confrontation with loneliness and isolation in the midst of the community; they point to discrimination, intolerance, the resulting mental health problems, depression and burnout, the often related financial conundrums, and the hyper-productive pressures of neoliberal capitalism; they address the climate crisis, the (consequent) growing problems of mass migration and the perception of cultural integration, point to the radical consequences of intolerance and violence due to religious or ideological divisions, and show, last but not least, how one's own hatred turns against oneself. The performances in the competition programme allow the plurality of different points of view to be represented, encourage dialogue and its development, and at the same time raise awareness that art is also an important moral and spiritual support, a way of getting over difficult existential situations and seeing them in a different light."

Nika Leskovšek, selector of the competition programme of the 57th Maribor Theatre Festival

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