



Festival Divadelní svět Brno
Národní divadlo Brno
Dvořákova 11
657 70 Brno

Produkce:
Silvie Zeinerová Sanža
+420 702 221 970

Marketing, PR:
Petr Novák
+420 604 919 879

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Theatre World Brno International Festival

The Theatre World Brno Festival to Celebrate its 15th Anniversary in May

From May 17th to 28th, Brno is going to become the theatre capital city of the world for the fifteenth year in a row. On this particular occasion, the Theatre World Brno International Festival is going to offer more than seventy performances and side events that stand from what can be ordinarily experienced in Brno. On May 17th, the TWB Festival will open with the authorial production *DNA*, which the Ballet Ensemble of the National Theatre Brno 2 on the Piazzetta in front of the Janáček Theatre. Shortly after its opening, the festival will present one of its best highlights: the Company of Akram Khan, the world-famous British dancer and choreographer of Bangladeshi origin, returns to the Czech Republic after more than ten years with their dance-theatre production *Jungle Book Reimagined*. It is at the Janáček Theatre that the audience can relish the legendary choreographer's spectacular show, full of multimedia projections, on May 18th and 19th. One of Czechia's biggest and top-rated theatre festivals will bring to Brno a unique selection of foreign productions from Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia and Great Britain, as well as the best of the domestic theatre scene. The theatres participating in the programme composed of more than ten days stacked full of big drama, more intimate projects, dance shows, site-specific performances, children's theatre shows and a rich array of side events include the National Theatre Brno, the Brno City Theatre, the Goose on a String Theatre, the Polárka Theatre, the Radost Theatre, the Orlí Street Theatre and the stages of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts – Studio Marta.

A Unique Selection of International Shows

The TWB festival programme traditionally presents—as part of its best-ofs—a range of international shows. *“I and the whole dramaturgical board perceive our festival's networking and interconnecting with prestigious foreign players of the international artistic scene as a step towards its further development and its future course. We want to offer the audience an opportunity to see productions that can be commonly seen at festivals in Western Europe or in Asia,”* explains Martin Glaser, Director of the Festival and Director of the National Theatre Brno. One of the productions that audiences of international festivals exalt is the project *The Employees* co-created by the Warsaw Teatr Studio and Poland's star of stage directing Łukasz Twarkowsky. Their thrilling multi-media show, which is a reflection on humanity's future, its relationships with robotics and artificial intelligence, will be exclusively presented in the G2 Pavilion of the Brno Exhibition Centre at the end of the festival, on May 27th and 28th.

Fans of great drama and great acting can look forward to seeing the Slovak National Theatre's performance *Children*, which will be hosted by the Mahen Theatre. This profound family drama features a stellar cast of Slovakia's greatest actors, such as Emília Vášáryová, Kamila Magálová and Emil Horváth. Another guest ensemble, Ad Infinitum from Great Britain, has been invited to perform *Beautiful Evil Things*, which excelled at the renowned Edinburgh Theatre Festival. Offering an uncommon view of Ancient myths through the prism of women, the show will be hosted by the Goose on a String Theatre. *“When composing the festival programme and selecting individual productions we put special emphasis on the diversity of what we offer to spectators in order to provide them with a representative sample of the most remarkable achievements of foreign theatre and the best of domestic theatrical production. Our constant aim is to ensure that both adults and children of all ages could take their pick,”* points out Barbara Gregorová, the festival's Chief Dramaturge.

**DIVADELNÍ SVĚT
BRNO 17.—28. 5. 24**

15. ročník mezinárodní divadelní přehlídky divadelnisvet.cz
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Festival on the Move

For many years already, dance and motion theatre, distinct from classical ballet, have constituted one of the major axis of the TWB Festival. Besides the aforementioned show *Jungle Book Reimagined*, whose updated rendition addresses—in a very sensible, poetic manner—the highly topical issues of family, environmental protection and refugee crises, the festival features many other attractive projects. The one that bears a particularly engaging title: *“TRIO. For the Beauty of It”*, is performed by the ensemble La Fleur, which is composed of dancers from all parts of the world who draw their inspiration from various dance and music styles in Africa, Mexico, as well as on the New York voguing scene. This show, which makes spectators abandon words to exclusively perceive movement, will be hosted by the Goose on a String Theatre. *“I am very glad about the selection of dance and motion productions for this year’s TWB Festival. Our festival offers more intimate dance shows where performers and spectators are close enough to touch, as well as grandiose motion and circus shows involving big on-stage ensembles,”* claims Karel Littera, Dramaturge of the NTB Ballet.

The chamber theatre projects include two productions by the ensemble 420PEOPLE, which will be hosted by Studio Marta. The first one, *Why Things Go Wrong*, starring Michal Heriban and Viktor Konvalinka, promises a fantastic experience of how it feels when a sunlit situation suddenly turns into burning hell. The main performers excelling in the second show, *42+PEOPLE: Where*, are Helena Arenbergerová, who won the 2023 Thalia Award for this role, and Václav Kuneš, Artistic Director of the 420PEOPLE ensemble. The duo offers the audience a very inward, intergenerational insight into the career climax of dancers aged over 42. The festival has also invited the much-loved ensemble DEKKADANCERS, which will present its reinterpretation of Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This captivating jazz-swing show produced by the international team of choreographer and stage director Arthur Pita will be hosted at the Brno City Theatre. New circus is also to be represented at this year’s TWB. The Losers Cirque Company will guest at the Brno City Theatre with their successful project *The Audition*, an acrobatic show about an audition whose winner is entirely decided by the audience.

Festival for Children

A remarkable motion performance from abroad is ready to enchant child spectators this year. *Hocus Pocus*, created by the Swiss ensemble Cie Philippe Saire for children aged 7 to 11, will be shown at the Polárka Theatre. Children and their parents alike will be able to give free rein to their imagination when following the adventures of two brothers who appear and disappear in the rhythm of light and darkness. *“During this year’s festival, even our youngest audiences can get closer to their on-stage heroes. We have put on the festival programme several shows that permit children to join actors on stage, living a truly intense theatrical experience,”* explains Jiří Hajdyla, Artistic Director of the Polárka Theatre. One of such shows is *Hugo’s World* by the Bratislava Puppet Theatre, which is to guest at the Brno City Theatre’s Drama Stage. The youngest spectators from 4 years of age are invited to share the adventures of an urban boy called Hugo: have a ride on a motorbike, meet elephants, and even aliens! The children’s programme of our festival includes two puppet shows by FRAS, *Best Wishes* and *Behind the Door*, a fantasied sylvan story by the Musashi Entertainment Company, *Fabula Sylvestris*, and the poetic fairytale *Island Home* by the Slovak fine artist Katanari, which will also be performed in English to reach English-speaking audiences.

The TWB festival will also host three of Czechia’s most acclaimed children’s theatres. The first of them, the Drak Theatre from Hradec Králové, will bring their fabulous play *What a Challangel!* about what may





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happen when, all of a sudden, an angel falls down to Earth. The show, intended for children from 4 years of age, will be hosted by the Orli Street Theatre. The second one, the Prague theatre Minor, will contribute to this 'Year of Hamlets' with its piece *Little Hamlet*, an unusual story about a boy dealing with his parents' divorce. The Naive Theatre of Liberec, will enrich this year's TWB with its production for young adults, *#Burn #IAmHere #Herostratos*, which retells one of the controversial Greek myths with the aid of the most common tools of the present: social networks. The festival will also offer a range of site-specific events, such as the interactive performance *Long, Broad and Sharpsight* co-produced with the Polárka Theatre. Spectators are invited to the Björnson Garden to enjoy this unique event.

Domestic productions

Bringing the best achievements of the Czech theatre to Brno has been the TWB Festival's longest-lasting objective. The Slovácké Theatre of Uherské Hradiště is to present one of its most recent productions, *Love, Defiance and Death*. This unconventional interpretation of a folkloric play by the Czech avant-garde artist Emil František Burian is directed by Lukáš Brutovský. At the Reduta Theatre, the festival audience will be able to savour distinguished voice bands and choral singing. Hosted by the Drama Stage of the Brno City Theatre, the Jihlava Horácké Theatre will perform—under the direction of one of Czechia's most talented stage directors Jakub Čermák—Ingmar Bergman's legendary psychological drama *Cries and Whispers*. The Prague theatre Divadlo Na Zábradlí has been invited to show its piece *About Paul*, starring the sparking actress Anežka Kubátová, at the Reduta Theatre. The Švanda Theatre from Prague-Smíchov will perform its play *The Trojan Women*, featuring three extraordinary women under the direction of the Ukrainian stage director Anna Turno. Prague City Theatres will participate with their special site-specific performance entitled *The Kitchen*, an insight "into guts of drama" taking place in the back area of a swanky restaurant. The genre of stand-up will be represented by *Iris*, a project of Irena Kristeková and Miřenka Čechová interpreted by Tantehorse. It cleverly reflects the hardships and traumas of a young woman from the city of Příbram on her path towards a better life.

Besides inviting professional repertory theatres, TWB also gives space for independent theatrical companies, production units and houses. "We regard domestic independent production as an integral part of the Czech theatrical culture. Independent ensembles and venues make it possible to set up projects which reflect present-day topics with as much open-mindedness as possible, generating opportunities for young stage directors and actors who will later make it to stages of subsidized theatres. That's the reason why such productions shall have their place at the Theatre World Brno Festival," says Miroslav Ondra, dramaturge of the Brno City Theatre. *The Istanbul Treaty*, apart from designating a document that the Czech Republic never ratified, is also the title of a production that A Studio Rubín will bring to Brno. The Prague theatre Divadlo Letí will present its tragic-comedy *Jeeps* starring Milada Vyhnálková and Tomáš Kobr. The ensemble Masopust, which is entering its last theatrical season, will come to present *The Declaration of Addictions*, a piece in which spectators are encouraged to find answers to questions concerning our relation to theatre and the reasons why we need it.

Theatrical projects involving disabled people constitute a stand-alone line within the Czech production section of the festival. The first, conceived by the Prague production house Vzlet, bears the title *Nobody's Land: Arrival*. The second, *Brides*, inspired by Karel Jaromír Erben's celebrated collection of ballads *The Bouquet* (*Kytice* in Czech), is performed with the participation of Down syndrome artists from the Brno ensemble Aldente. Both these pieces will be on show at the Goose on a String Theatre. With regard to





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audiences with special requirements, the festival has also envisaged adapted side-events, introductory lectures for the deaf, and excursions to theatres for blind and hearing impaired persons.

Festival premieres and co-productions

In recent years, the TWB Festival has been developing its 'staging incubator programme' with the aim to encourage and support the creation of new artistic projects in the independent sector. This year, too, the abundant harvest of its continuous efforts encompasses several opening nights. The first is the festival premiere of the multi-genre co-production project *Oedipus Complete*, which the ensemble Tygr v Tísni will show in the garden of the Löw-Beer Villa. The trilogy comprises the iconic Greek tragedy *King Oedipus* (translated by Petr Borkovec and Matyáš Havrda; directed by Ivo Kristián Kubák), the drama *Laius* (written by Hana Lehečková; directed by Zuzana Burianová), and the dance libretto *Abyss* by Marie Nováková and Václav Kuneš. Theatregoers will only have two exclusive occasions to see this original project. The second project to be premiered at our festival has been created in co-production with the Prague theatre Divadlo X10. Starring Antonie Rašilová, Vojtěch Hrabák and Václav Marhold under the direction of X10's artistic director Ondřej Štefaňák, this Hellenic myth adaptation entitled *Philoctetes. Last minute* will be hosted by the Goose on a String Theatre.

Another play to be first shown at TWB is *The Droeshout Portrait: How Shakespeare Is Born*, which has been co-produced with the French ensemble Les Antiaclestes, the Theatre Faculty of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU), and the Czech Centre in Paris. It is intended for young adult audience. TWB will also present the fruit of its 'work-in-progress' co-production with the Letí Theatre, the project *Hearing the Scream of New Voices – Work in Progress*. This interactive form of drama will be performed at the Brno venue known as Káznice. The 2024 festival programme also includes two non-theatrical events aimed at the broad public. In collaboration with the daily *Deník N*, a podcast moderated by journalist Filip Titlbach will be recorded for *Studio N*. A debate about the present condition of the Slovak culture is being organised by TWB in collaboration with the daily *Respekt*. Held at the Mahen Theatre it will be moderated by Erik Tabery, editor-in-chief of the daily. Just like in the two previous years, TWB and Czech Television have co-produced a documentary film about a theatre artist whose career is, in particular, bound to Brno. After Eva Tálská and Hubert Krejčí, they have opted for stage director and dramatist Jan Antonín Pitínský. Their documentary film *Jan Antonín Pitínský's Timelessness* will be shown at the Goose on a String Theatre. The screening will be preceded by an exclusive presentation of Pitínský's production *Mein Švejk* with Dalibor Buš as the lead actor.

Showcase

For the organising theatres, the TWB Festival constitutes an extraordinary occasion to present their production to spectators coming from all over the country. This year, the participating Brno-based theatres are to offer several new pieces and drama premieres. TWB's fifteenth year will also host the AICT/IACT international critics conference, which will be held at the Mozart Hall of the Reduta Theatre from May 22nd to 24th. The event, which is co-organised by the Czech Theatre Institute in collaboration with the National Theatre Brno and the TWB Festival, will be attended by more than 120 theatre critics from around the world. Related to this event is the ever-widening array of performances with English subtitles. The National Theatre Brno contributes to the festival programme with a festive opening night of *Hamlet* directed by Martin Čičvák and hosted by the Mahen Theatre. NTB's second drama stage — Reduta Theatre — will be represented by one of its spring premieres, *The Girl's Room*, which is directed by Anna Davidová. The Brno City Theatre will be the venue for *Hamlet or the Dispute Between Soul and Body*, starring Michal Isteník and Martin Mihál, and for the premiere of *The Game That Went Wrong* directed by Mikoláš Tyc. The Goose on





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a String Theatre intends to enthrall theatregoers with the 'event of the season', the staging of *The Marx Family Saga* under Jan Mikulášek's direction, and with the audience favourite project *I'm Done Baking*, the fruit of cooperation among amateur senior actors, professional actress Tereza Volánková and theatre instructor Marie Klemensová. The Radost Theatre is proud to host *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, a terrifying show for older children directed by Patrick Sims, as well as adventure stories for younger kids based on Ester Stará's book *And Then It Happened!*. A piece inspired by Božena Němcová's legendary book *Babička* will be proposed by the Polárka Theatre under the title *The Grandma: Is There Nothing More of the Good Old Lady?*. The theatre's Small Stage will see the premiere of *Prince & Prince*, a tale about a kingdom where everyone racks their brains over the future bride of their prince. The art scenes of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts (JAMU) have been invited to present *Icarus Wings*, a dramatic theatre project, at Studio Marta, and *The Chorus*, a project of the physical theatre studio, at the Orlí Street Theatre.

As the dates of the TWB Festival are approaching the ticket sale has been launched. Tickets for all performances and events can be bought on-line on our website, at the Customer Centre of the National Theatre Brno, at presale offices of all participating theatres as well as via the Ticketportal network.

The Theatre World Brno International Festival will take place from May 17th to May 28th, 2024.

Contact:

Petr Novák

TWB Marketing & PR

Ph.: +420 604 919 879

Email: novak@ndbrno.cz

