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The Year of Slovak Theatre 2020

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THE THEATRE INSTITUTE

Theatre in Slovakia is an important part of our national culture. It is the seismograph of an era. It advances the cultural dialog while drawing attention to its essence – strengthening the inner values of a man.

Its stories take place on fertile ground in the country that in 1989 shed the scepticism of the past regimes and resolutely opened up to various forms of re-evaluation, gaining independence in 1993, and subsequently joining the European structures in 2004. The theatre culture needed this revival and the theatre creators seized this opportunity. New independent theatres emerged and brought not only new dramatic processes, but particularly new topics.

Theatre closely follows the gradual shift in the society and responds adequately, asks new questions, provokes, and participates in European projects. New national and international festivals were founded, thanks to which Slovakia gets to host top European companies and individuals, and we also gradually expand and make ourselves heard. We search for original expression in both theatre and dance and we ask what makes it “ours, Slovak” that may distinguish us from others and attract attention. Subsequently, new performance centres open, bringing together multiple art genres, interactively complementing each other and revitalizing the cultural character of the cities.

The Slovak theatre became significantly younger. Young authors bring their own experiences that they gained during international exchanges, studies and festivals, and bring them to theatres. The theatres significantly change the composition of their repertoires, and under the pressure of other media they realize they must offer original values. A phenomenon of the era are authors wearing many hats, who are comfortable playing simultaneous roles of playwrights, literary managers, directors and performers. Attention should be paid to projects that critically and from a broader perspective start to re-evaluate topics that have been considered taboo for many years, not only in theatre. A number of plays emerge that speak about the times of Holocaust, communism, but also critically view the current consumerism and global society.

The line between the theatre and everyday life is being erased and the artists know that they can speak to the hearts of the spectators and that the new Slovak theatre and new drama are a vital artistic practice, but also a way to understand the social, political and cultural changes.

The Slovak theatre fully participates in the international community and brings its own valuable and value-based messages.

In 2020, the Slovak society commemorates an important anniversary – **the centenary of the foundation of the Slovak National Theatre** (1 March 1920). This significant milestone in the history of theatre, national culture and cultural identity can be considered a turning point of nationwide significance, as the establishment of the Slovak National Theatre also opened a new era in the history of the Slovak professional theatre. In light of significant historical collaboration and interconnections between the non-professional and professional artists in Slovakia it should be also noted that in 2020 we also celebrate **the 190th anniversary of the first amateur performance in Slovakia** (Liptovský Mikuláš, 1830).

The decision of the Government of the Slovak Republic to declare 2020 the *Year of Slovak Theatre* is viewed as the celebration of theatre in all its shapes and forms as well as the recognition of work of artists and their role in the shaping of our culture and national cultural heritage. As the initiator of the *Year of Slovak Theatre*, the Ministry of Culture along with the sponsor institutions Slovak National Theatre, Theatre Institute and the National Centre of Culture and Further Education consider the big anniversary to be a significant event within a wider context. For all theatre artists as well as historians, scientists, critics, academics, students, and particularly the general public, these theatre jubilees present a challenge and an inspiration.

Vladislava Fekete

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Theatre and Drama on the Territory of Today's Slovakia before 1830

The beginnings of religious forms of medieval theatre date back to the 9th century and are associated with the process of formation of Western Christian liturgy, where the decisive role was played by the development of tropes. First Easter trope called *Quem quaeritis?* (Whom Do You Seek?), created in the monastery of Saint Gallen in today's Switzerland, was dramatized during the 10th century, and this resurrection Easter performance at the end of the decade gave birth to the first, specifically theatrical phase of medieval religious drama – a liturgical play.

The arrival of renaissance and humanism in the area of development of religious theatre on the territory of today's Slovakia manifested itself by the adoption of a new dramatic genre – the school play.

The development of the secular form of the Slovak (and Czech) renaissance and humanistic theatre was most markedly affected by two Slovak playwrights writing in Czech who lived and worked in Moravia and Bohemia – Pavel Kyrmezer and Juraj Tesák Mošovský.

Pavel Kyrmezer: Czech Comedy about the Rich Man and Lazarus (Prague, 1566).
Source National Library of the Czech Republic

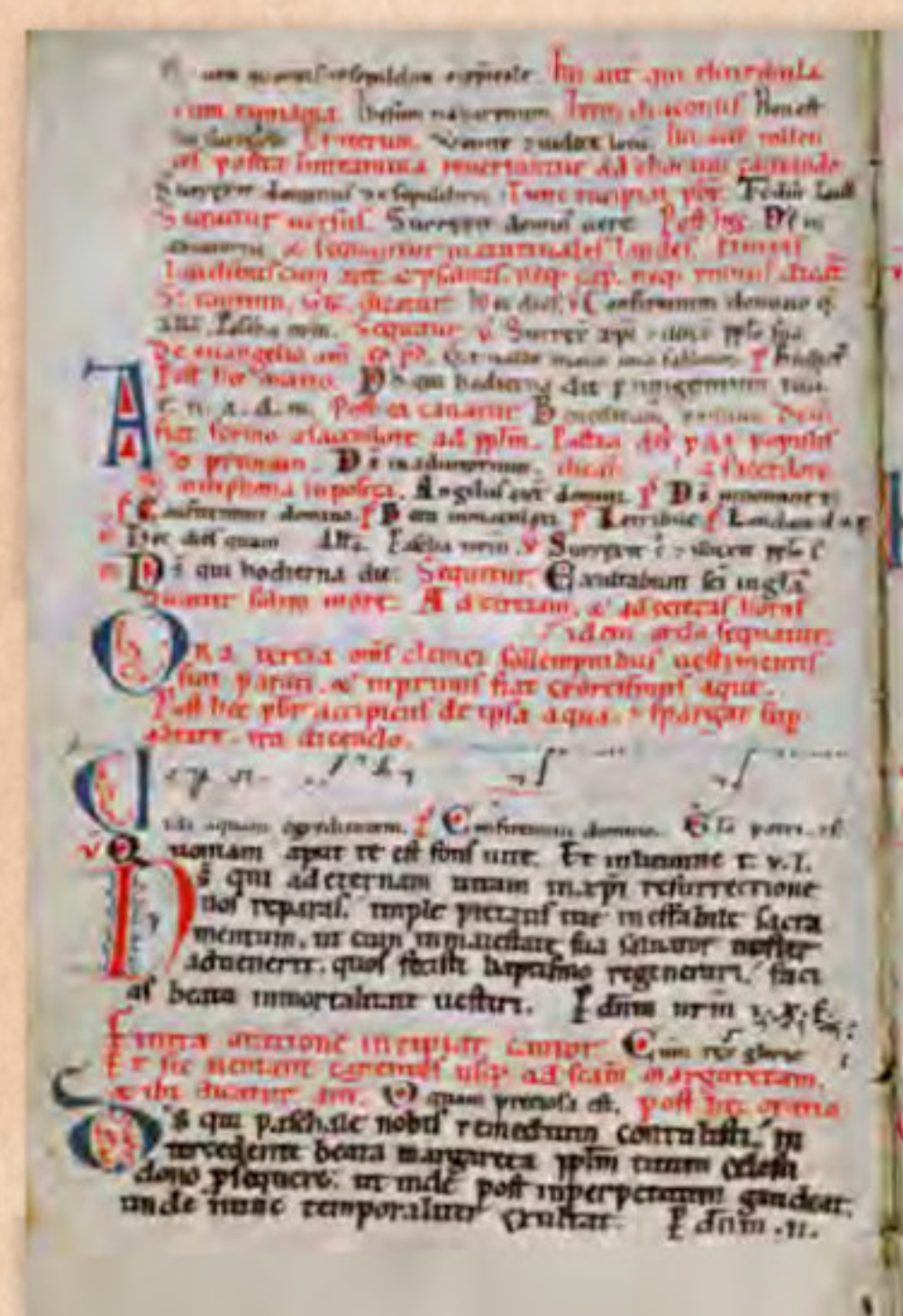


In the baroque period, the most common form of religious dramatic theatre production was still the (protestant and catholic) school play.

The presence of school drama lasting several centuries significantly influenced the Bernolák era, which can be seen in the example of a translation of the German tragedy *Chrysanthus and Daria* written by the Austrian priest Gottfried Uhlich, translated by Michal Klimko under the name *Krizant and Daria* in 1793.
Source Slovak National Library, SD 8401



With the emergence of the Age of Enlightenment in the second half of the 18th century, school plays were considered more and more obsolete, and in 1794 they were officially banned.



The interconnection of the European genesis of religious dramatic theatre production with our domestic development can be witnessed in the Saint Gallen trope that has been preserved in Slovakia in the so-called Pray Codex (1192 – 1195).
Source Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest, Kézirattár, Quart. Hung. FU/1433



A proof of continuous development of school plays in Slovakia is an early baroque school performance called *Ein zwiefacher poetischer Act und geistliches Spiel* (A Double Poetic Act and Spiritual Play), created by Peter Eisenberg, which fully reflected the high quality of our school theatres at the turn of the 17th century.
Source Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest, Régi Nyomtatványok Tára, RMK II. 765



The second edition of Juraj Palkovič's play *Two Bangs and Three Shushes* from 1810, which is considered our first original dramatic play in the area of secular drama from the Bernolák era.
Source Slovak National Library, SB 2133

Slovak Theatre Before Professionalization 1830 – 1919



Record-Keeping Book of the Slovak Theatre in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš from 10 July 1830
The Record-Keeping Book includes all important information about the activities of the amateur theatre – opening nights, actors, venues, as well as financial details associated with the dramatic performances.

The development of amateur theatre on the territory of today's Slovakia was primarily influenced by the German and Hungarian theatre. The dramatic efforts of amateurs were concentrated in multiple cultural centres – in Brezno, Sobotište, Levoča, Martin, Tisovec, Banská Štiavnica or in Banská Bystrica. The official birthday of the Slovak amateur theatre is 22 August 1830, when in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, over the summer holidays, Gašpar Fejérpataky-Belopotocký with his students staged Ján Chalupka's comedy *Kocúrko*. The most prominent playwrights of this time included Ján Chalupka, Ján Palárik, and later Ferko Urbánek. Their comedies became the basis for the repertoires of the Slovak amateur theatres.

The beginnings of the Slovak dramatic activities were significant particularly for their national revival efforts. With the help of Samuel Jurkovič, teacher and later also notary public in Sobotište, the Bratislava students founded the Slovak National Theatre in Nitra on 5 August 1841. In addition to the Bratislava youth, the theatre company included the local enthusiasts from the Sobotište community.



Samuel Jurkovič Cooperative Museum in Sobotište with a commemorative plaque
The Slovak National Theatre in Nitra played in this building, which is marked with a commemorative plaque placed on the building.



Anička Jurkovičová in a theatrical costume
One of the first Slovak actresses was Anička Jurkovičová, later the wife of Jozef Miloslav Hurban.

The second half of the 19th century was most favourable for the Slovak nation and culture. Matica slovenská was founded in Turčiansky Sv. Martin (1863), and three Slovak high schools opened in Revúca, Turčiansky Sv. Martin and Kláštor pod Znievom. The energetic theatre activities gradually spread to other Slovak cities – Trnava, Prešov, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Trenčín, Žilina. In addition to Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Turčiansky Sv. Martin became a significant centre of amateur theatre. Amateurs from Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš focused their work in Slovenská beseda, amateurs from Martin developed a more active dramatic portfolio after the foundation of Slovenský spevokol (1872).



1891 Curtain of Slovenský spevokol, gift from Umelecká beseda in Prague, 1891
The curtain of Slovenský spevokol in Martin from 1891 was a gift from Umelecká beseda in Prague. It was designed by Karel Vítězslav Mašek.



Title page of the printed version of Ferko Urbánek's *Penalty for Sin* (1919, originally published under his pen name Miloš in 1890)
In the early years of the 20th century, amateur theatres were dominated particularly by the plays of Ferko Urbánek. Through his plays, based on the principles of Christian humanism and lingering sentimentalism, theatre spread to the village residents.



Members of Slovenský spevokol in Martin during the August festivities in 1913



Signs (posters with the cast) of Slovenský spevokol in Martin



Posters from the performances of Slovak amateurs abroad (America, Lower Hungary, Austria)
The popularity of amateur theatre at the turn of the 20th century can be seen from the fact that Slovaks practiced it everywhere where they travelled for work and better life.

Foundation of the Slovak National Theatre

– the First Professional Stage



Members of the Slovak National Theatre Cooperative

The establishment of the Slovak National Theatre Cooperative was initiated by the participants of the August festivities in Martin and spearheaded by the minister for the administration of Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár. The Cooperative was supposed to secure the economic affairs and financial resources for the theatre. It generated funds primarily by issuing individual and collective shares and from the contributions to the Jirásek Fund (1921). This model of financing in the early years caused an almost permanent financial crisis for the theatre, and therefore the funding of the theatre soon transformed to a private business model (1923).

The first step on the road to a national theatre was the establishment of the Slovak National Theatre Cooperative as a shareholding company, since this cultural theatre venue could not count on any significant subsidy from the newly formed state – Czechoslovakia.

The Eastern Czech Touring Theatre Society became the foundation of the national theatre, led by an experienced theatre enthusiast Bedřich Jeřábek. Its touring around the Slovak cities in 1919 helped with the establishment of the theatre society in Slovakia.

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City Theatre, the future seat of the Slovak National Theatre

City Theatre. Stadttheater. Városi Színház. The City Theatre was built by developers Ignác and Alexander Feigler in 1884 – 1886 based on the design of Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer. The theatre had a grand opening on 22 September 1886 with the performance of a Hungarian opera Bánk bán. As late as in the early 1920s the theatre bore its name in all three languages spoken in Bratislava, Slovak, Hungarian and German. The Slovak National Theatre still operates in this historical building.



Members of the Jeřábek Theatre Society on a trip to Košice in August 1919



Václav Jiříkovský with the drama company of the Slovak National Theatre on a trip to Prague in 1926

In the 1920s, theatre was led by a private entrepreneur Oskar Nedbal, composer and conductor. He emphasized particularly the presentation of international theatre forms – opera and ballet. To head the dramatic stage he hired Václav Jiříkovský who pushed for the Slovakization of the theatre. He employed Tido J. Gašpar as the literary director for the Slovak repertoire and also initiated translations of important dramatic works into Slovak.

The expansion of Slovak actors community was greatly influenced by the traveling company Marška, even though it only existed for a single season 1921/1922. One third of their repertoire was staged in Slovak.

Another step toward Slovakization and emancipation of the Slovak dramatic theatre was the division of the dramatic theatre in 1932 into independent Czech and Slovak dramatic stages. This was initiated by the theatre director Antonín Drašar for operational and economic reasons.

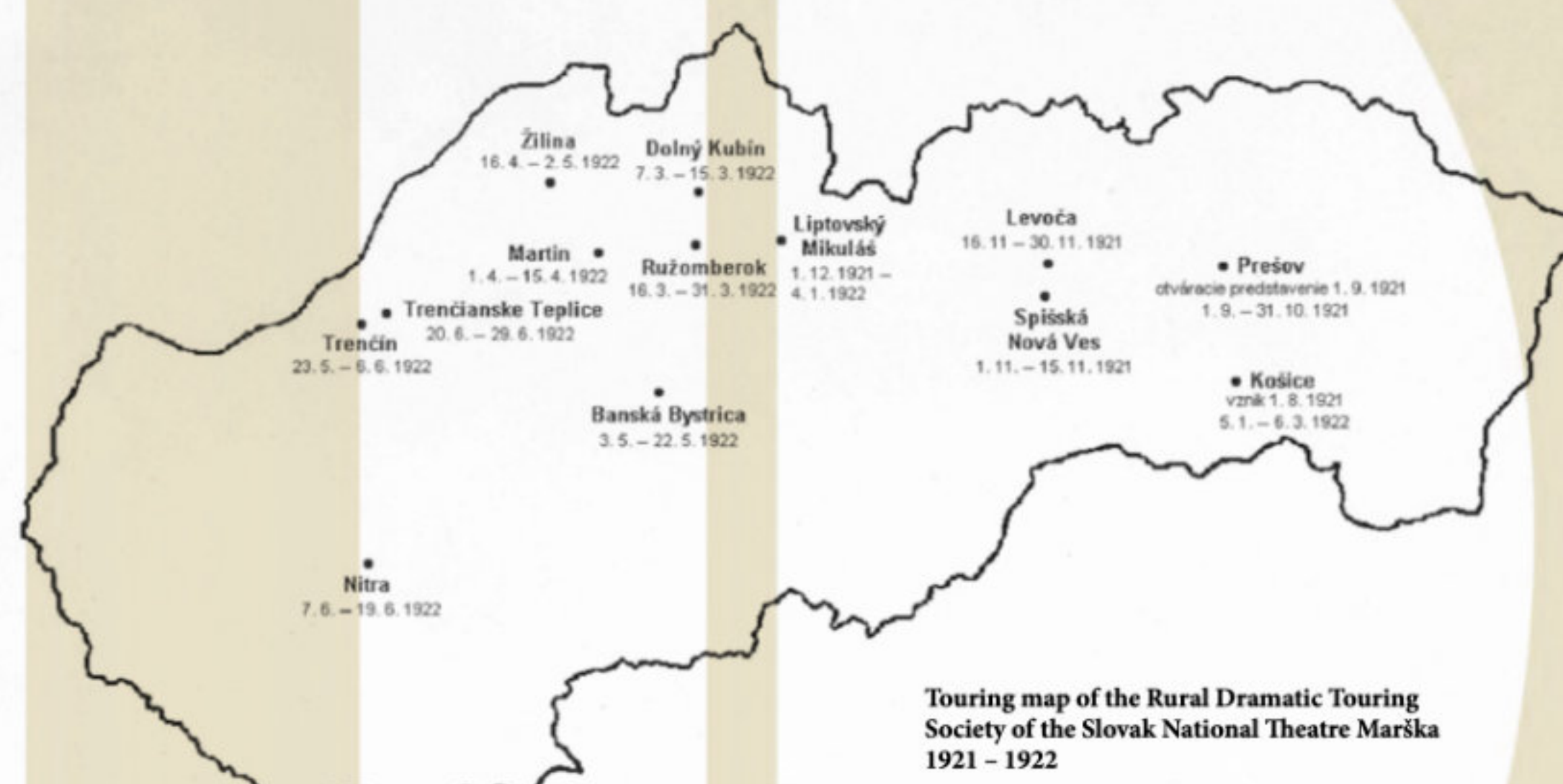
The year 1938 marked a new era for the Slovak National Theatre. The Czech dramatic theatre was disbanded and some of their members were able to join the Slovak company (Jozef Budský, Ján Sýkora, Mária Sýkorová, Mária Želenská, Karel Rint and Míla Beran). Others had to leave Slovakia. However, the new political orientation of the state triggered the departure of not only Czech, but also some Slovak artists (Andrej Bagar, Martin Gregor, Hana Meličková, Ružena Porubská).



Rural Dramatic Touring Society Marška 1921 – 1922

The first premiere of the Rural Dramatic Society of the Slovak National Theatre Marška was the play of Ján Palárik *Incognito* on 1 October 1921 in Prešov.

(standing from left) Adolf Divišek, Gašpar Arbét, Ján Sýkora, Janko Borodáč, Olga Országhová, Karel Balák, Anna Kovaříková, Andrej Bagar, Jaroslav Tumlíř, Jozef Kello (sitting from left) Marta Divišková, Marie Pochmannová, Otto Vrba, Vladimír Jelenský, Hana Lauterbachová-Jelenská, Vilém Táborský, Ella Petzová, (front from left) Marie Slámová, Julie Horská



Touring map of the Rural Dramatic Touring Society of the Slovak National Theatre Marška 1921 – 1922

Another important step toward the professionalization of the Slovak theatre was the activity of director Janko Borodáč in the area of training theatre professionals. From his initiative, the private Music Academy for Slovakia opened the drama division for acting studies in 1925. In 1928 the school achieved a public status, the right to administer exams and issue diplomas valid in the entire country, and was renamed the Music and Drama Academy for Slovakia. Its graduates helped establish the Slovak Dramatic Theatre company within the national theatre in 1932 and became full-fledged members of the opera company. The school became the basic pillar of the future theatre art education.



Czech company of the Slovak National Theatre with director Viktor Šulc, photo from the 1930s



Trip of the Slovak National Theatre opera to Vienna in 1931

The first opera performance was Bedřich Smetana's opera *The Kiss*, 1 March 1920

The first dramatic performance was the Mrstík brothers play *Maryša*, 2 March 1920

The first ballet performance was Léo Delibes' ballet *Coppélia*, 19 May 1920

The first premiere of a Slovak play were two one-act plays of Jozef Gregor Tajovský *The Sin and The Servant*, 21 May 1920

theatre.sk Network of Theatres

The creation of a professional theatre network in Slovakia depended to a large extent on the social and political climate in the country; by the same token the issue of foundation of new theatres and demise of the existing ones often times came from above – by the decision of the government institutions.

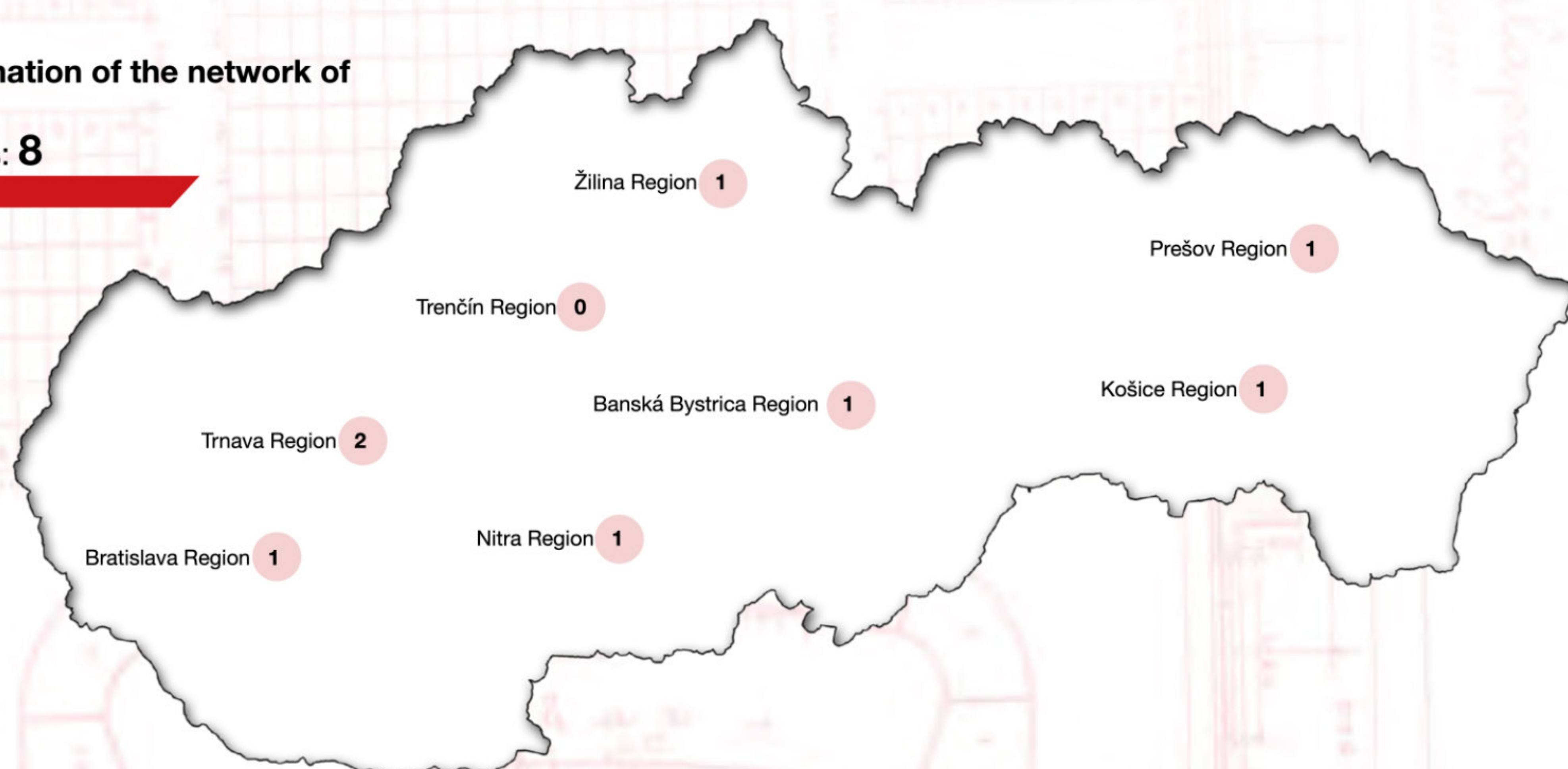
During the time period of the first Czechoslovak Republic, in addition to the Slovak National Theatre, other theatre companies formed privately. They had a pronounced traveling character and their production focused on the regions. In the early 1940s, natural pressure emerged to create permanent theatre stages.

As the network of stone theatres formed after World War II, this paradigm became a rigid organizational model for a long time, thus preventing the formation of theatres based on regional, generational and artistic principles. Certain relaxation came in the 1960s which saw the rise of multiple new forms and genres, which quickly ceased to exist due to political powers. Studio theatres emerged during the years of normalization, but they also generally lasted only very briefly. In 1948, six permanent stages were in operation with the rising but not quite adequate tendency to expand, and in 1989 we noted a total of 21 permanent professional stages.

A significant change in the area of organization of the Slovak theatre only came after 1989. At the turn of the millennium we had 56 permanent theatre stages. Independent creators and particularly the independent and commercially successful theatres started to fully participate. In the last decade we see the rising emergence of multifunctional cultural centres that do not shy away from the performance arts. The today's network of theatres in Slovakia has many branches and counts close to 200 theatres and theatre ensembles (with or without a permanent stage), as well as independently functioning performers and dancers.

The beginnings of formation of the network of theatres (1920 – 1945)

Total number of theatres: **8**



Growth of theatres and theatre ensembles after 1989

Total number of theatres: **164**



interior 13 THEATRE ARCHITECTURE

Specialized Theatre Buildings and Venues in Slovakia



The Slovak National Theatre, historical building 1886
Architects Ferdinand Fellner, Hermann Helmer
Scale model Ján Čisárik, Ladislav Čisárik
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project



Interior of the historical building of the Slovak National Theatre
Photo Olja Triáška Stefanović/Theatre Institute Archive



Exterior of the Spiš Theatre in Spišská Nová Ves
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



Exterior of the Theatre Arena in Bratislava
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive

Exterior of the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



Interior of the City Theatre in Žilina
Photo Olja Triáška Stefanović/Theatre Institute Archive

Exterior of the City Theatre in Žilina
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



Exterior of the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



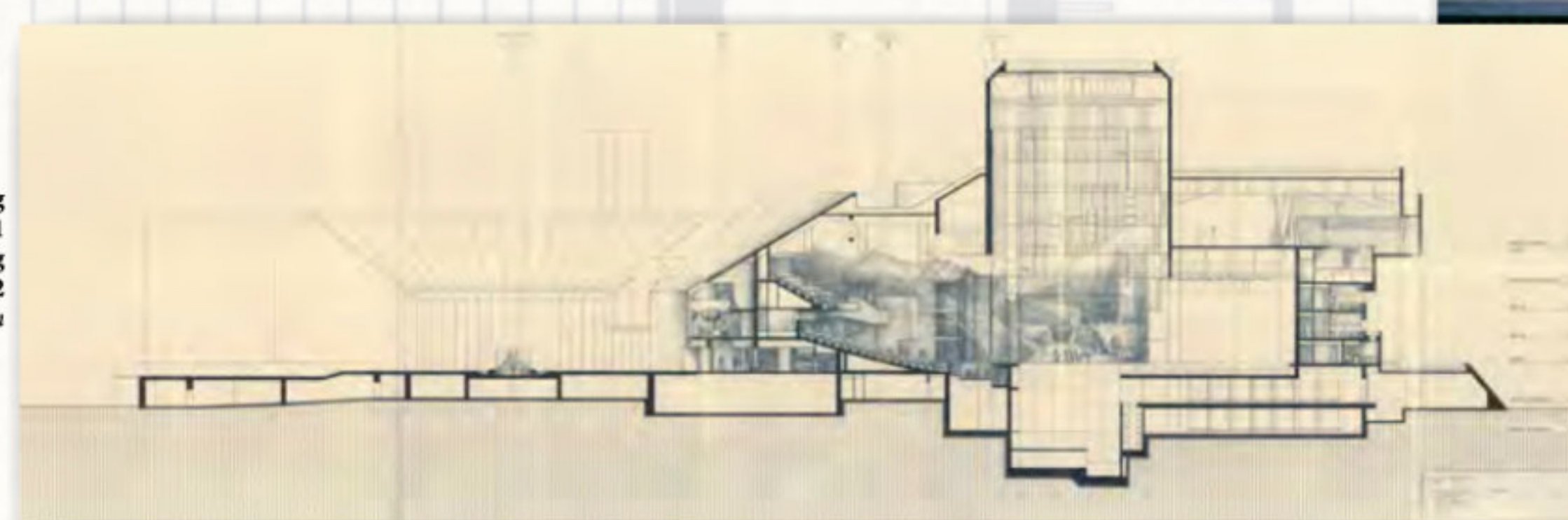
Exterior of the new building of the Slovak National Theatre
Photo Lubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



Interior of the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra
Photo Olja Triáška Stefanović/Theatre Institute Archive



Architectural design of the new building of the Slovak National Theatre 1
Architectural design of the new building of the Slovak National Theatre 2
Photo Theatre Institute Museum



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Theatre architecture in Slovakia has a rich history. The designers of historical theatre building projects were primarily foreign architects whose creative input into the Slovak environment was a great contribution to the development of the municipal and local culture. Their projects brought the latest trends in the European contemporary thought processes.

One of the oldest preserved theatre buildings in Western Slovakia is the historical building of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava. The creators of this unique work in 1866 were Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer. On the Petržalka side riverbank in Bratislava the distinguished, originally summertime Theatre Arena from the turn of the 20th century has been preserved. It has been associated with the early years of work of one of the most acclaimed personalities of the modern European theatre, director Max Reinhardt. A specific type of architecture from the late 19th century is represented by Reduta. Within the context of local architecture, Reduta and the theatre in Spišská Nová Ves occupy a special position. The city of Martin, the seat of Matica slovenská and Slovenský spevokol, plays an important role in the history of the Slovak theatre. Here, in 1888, the first Slovak architect and developer, Blažej Bulla, built the National House, today the residence of the Slovak Chamber Theatre, which also housed the above mentioned Slovenský spevokol. A prime example of the classicist architecture inspired by the Italian Novecento movement is the City Theatre in Žilina.

The building of the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra is one of the modern standalone theatre venues. The building reflects contemporary ideas about flexible and complex theatre spaces. An example of modern architecture is the new building of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava. Three authors created a spatial concept by blending the classical order with abstract modernism. The overall space is divided into an opera stage, dramatic stage and experimental studio with flexible configurations of the stage and auditorium.

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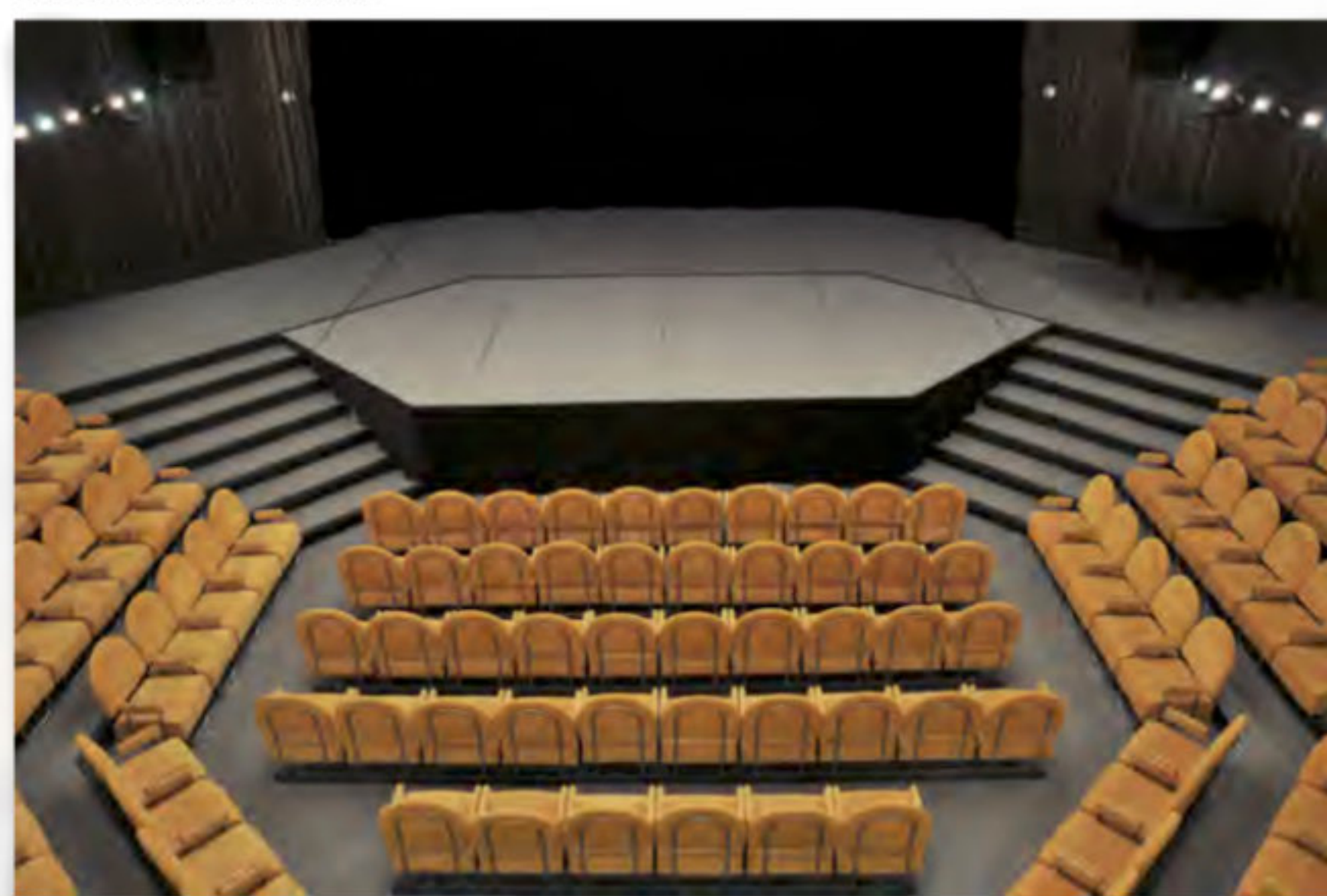
THEATRE ARCHITECTURE

Multifunctional and Experimental Spaces



Dance Studio Theatre exterior
Photo Theatre Institute Museum

L+S Studio Theatre exterior
Photo Theatre Institute Museum



Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav Theatre exterior
Photo Ľubo Stacho/Theatre Institute Archive



Puppet Theatre At the Crossroads interior
Photo Olja Triška Stefanović/Theatre Institute Archive



Žilina-Záriečie Station Theatre interior
Photo Theatre Institute Museum

From the early 20th century, specialized theatre venues were built as a part of administrative or other functional buildings. The Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav City Theatre is located in the former building of the Slovak National Bank. It was incorporated into a multifunctional building that housed various businesses and operations. The effort to come out of the shadows of the large “stone” buildings is associated with the 1960s and the aspiration to come closer to the spectator. The atmosphere of the 1960s brought unconventional theatre venues where the theatre operation adjusted to other different spaces. For instance, the space of today’s Studio L+S has been a part of the Tatra Hotel from the time of its establishment and the operation of the Tatra Cabaret.

All puppet theatres in Slovakia came into existence by adapting the spaces that were originally used for other purposes. The Žilina Puppet Theatre currently uses the space of the former Jewish gym club Makabi. The Puppet Theatre At the Crossroads has been using the space of one of the houses within a city duplex in Banská Bystrica built in the early 20th century. The auditorium is flexible and can be configured into different patterns. In 2010, the Dance Studio Theatre in Banská Bystrica moved from a smaller space within the house of culture to a renovated building of a former construction and engineering high school.

The architectural experiment Žilina-Záriečie Station – S2 was created as a multifunctional space in 2009. It was built from beer crates and it included a 12-meter long old shipping container. Unfortunately, this venue festooned with many awards burned down in 2019. In 2008, the spaces used by the Teatro Tatro theatre, a tent and a trailer, were supplemented with a new dramatic vehicle and a successful project The Magical Theatrical Vending Machine. It had a world premiere at the Cultural Olympics in Canada in 2010.



Teatro Tatro Theatre
(The Magical Theatrical Vending Machine)
Photo Theatre Institute Museum



DRAMATIC THEATRE

The Pillars of World Drama

During the first years of existence of professional Slovak theatre the Slovak language was featured on the stages very gradually and randomly. The dramatic theatre usually spoke to its audiences in Czech. The first dramatic premiere in the Slovak National Theatre (2 March 1920) was a Czech play – tragedy *Maryša* by Alois and Vilém Mrštík, directed by a Czech director Václav Jiříkovský. However, without the help of Czech theatre professionals the Slovak Thalia would have had an even more difficult birth.

Molière: TARTUFFE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 25 May 1946
Directed by Jozef Budský
Wide-screen shot
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Jean-Paul Sartre: THE DEVIL AND THE GOOD LORD
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 18 December 1965
Directed by Jozef Palka
From left Ctibor Filčík, Martin Gregor
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Karel Čapek: THE WHITE DISEASE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 18 May 1958
Directed by Jozef Budský
In the middle Jozef Kroner
Photo Gejza Podhorský/Theatre Institute Archive



Alois and Vilém Mrštík: MARIŠA
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 21 May 1983
Directed by Vladimír Strnisko
From left Gustáv Valach, Anna Javorková
Photo Kamil Vyskočil/Theatre Institute Archive



Slovak theatre was catching up quickly and regularly reached for international plays. As the Slovak dramatic theatre was becoming more European, modern and cultivated, French and Russian drama played a significant role. The creators successfully penetrated the inner world of the story, adopted the demanding poetry as well as melodic ease of the conversational style of French plays, and on the other hand, captured the psychologically complicated inner processes of the characters in Russian dramas.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: THREE SISTERS
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin) 21 January 1967
Directed by Miloš Pietor
From left Elena Zvaríková-Pappová, Alžbeta Barthová, Katarína Hrobárová-Vrzalová
Theatre Institute Archive



Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky: A PROFITABLE POSITION
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 16 December 1984
Directed by Lubomír Vajdička
From left Lubomír Paulovič, Zdena Studenková, Zdena Gruberová, Magda Vášáryová, Emil Horváth
Photo Kamil Vyskočil/Theatre Institute Archive

The Mount Parnassus of the world drama, works of William Shakespeare and the dramatic heritage of the classical culture, became the true test of progress of the Slovak dramatic art. Slovak theatre was embracing this heritage very late because of the lack of contemporary translations. Only from the time of World War II deliberate efforts were made to generate interest in Shakespeare and classical dramas.



William Shakespeare: KING LEAR
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 25 October 1975
Directed by Pavol Haspra
From left Leopold Haverl, Karol Machata, Ctibor Filčík, Jozef Adamovič
Photo Kamil Vyskočil/Theatre Institute Archive



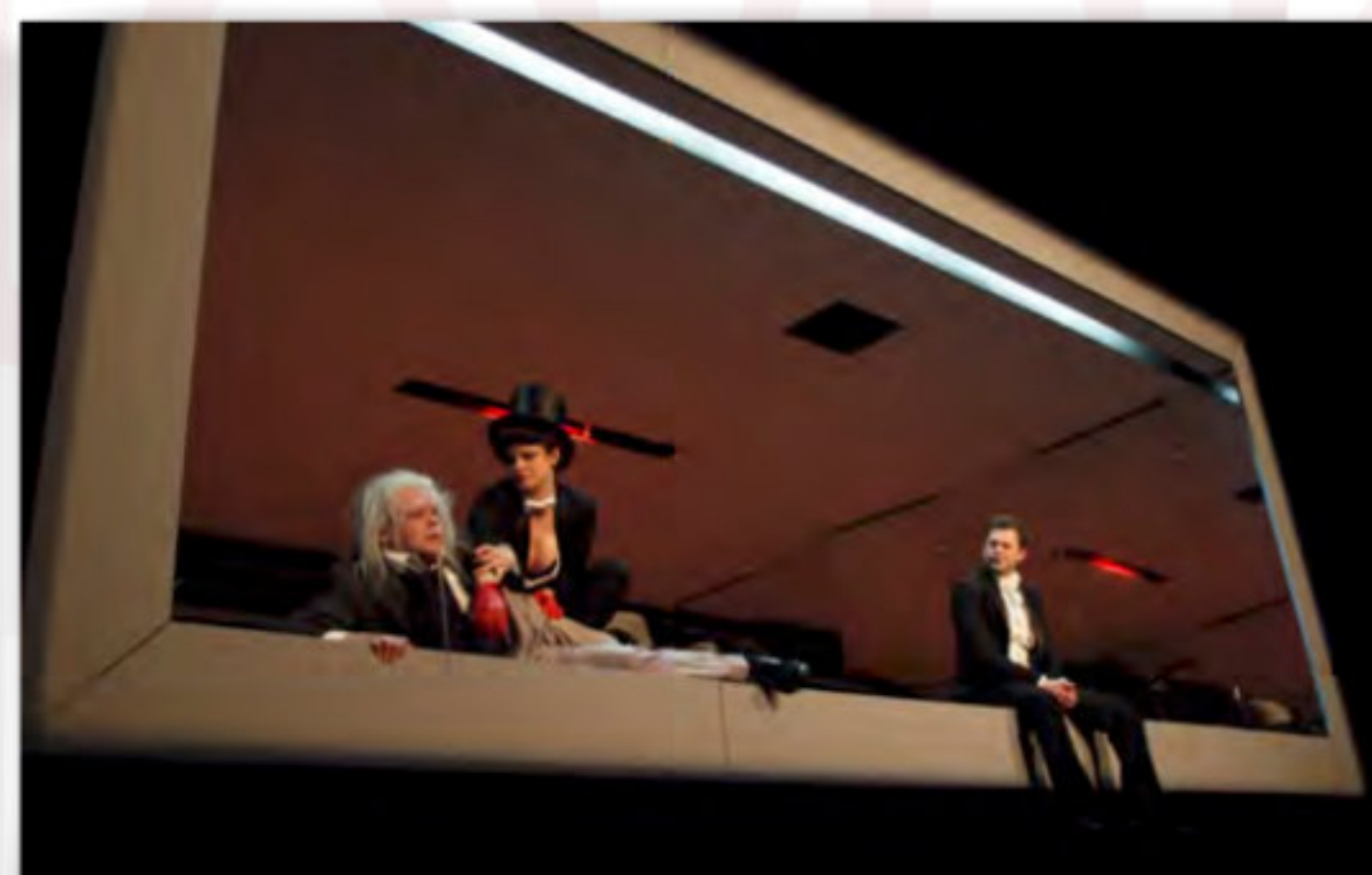
William Shakespeare: CORIOLANUS
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 10 March 1967
Directed by Milan Bobula
From left Brigita Bobulová, Želmíra Kačková, Peter Stražan Jr., Milan Drotár, Gabriela Rumanová, Gita Mišurová
Photo Jozef Fecko/Theatre Institute Archive



Sophocles: OEDIPUS
Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin 16 December 2011
Directed by Roman Polák
In the middle Marek Geisberg
Photo Braňo Konečný/Theatre Institute Archive



Christopher Marlowe: DOCTOR FAUSTUS
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin) 25 June 1982
Directed by Jozef Bednárík
From left Ján Kožuch, Lubomír Paulovič, Ivan Romančík
Photo Jaroslav Barák/Theatre Institute Archive



Johann Wolfgang Goethe: FAUST I, II
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 18 September 2010
Directed by Martin Čičvák
From left Robert Roth, Zuzana Fialová, Alexander Bárta
Photo Oleg Vojtišek/Slovak National Theatre Archive

The monumental philosophical work of Johann Wolfgang Goethe *Faust* met with a similar fate. Demanding philosophical and staging requirements evoked awe and respect from the creators. The first part of Goethe's version premiered in the Slovak National Theatre in 1931, directed by Viktor Šulc in Czech, but the complete Slovak staging of both parts of Goethe's poetic drama had to wait until 2010. In the meantime, we encountered other Faustian plays, and in all cases these were bold and often times also successful dramatic and directorial efforts that proved the refinement and preparedness of the Slovak theatre professionals for this immortal topic of reason and temptation.

theatre.s k Drama

The Pillars of Slovak Classics (1830 – 1930)

The work of Gašpar Fejérpataky-Belopotocký and staging of Ján Chalupka's *Kocúrko* in Liptovský Mikuláš in 1830 is considered the official birthday of the Slovak theatre.

Slovak drama had a difficult birth, and a pretty late one too, compared to the rest of the world, not fully developing until the late 19th century. Despite that, the wide variety of titles is comparable in quality to international works. At the same time dramas were created in our environment that made concrete contributions to the following time periods. Each new staging confirmed their timeliness and theatrical potential.

Ján Chalupka: *KOCÚRKOVO*

State Theatre Košice 12 September 1959

Directed by Jozef Palka

From left Anna Grissová, Elena Kleisová, Jozef Hodorovský

Photo Mária Lietavská/Theatre Institute Archive



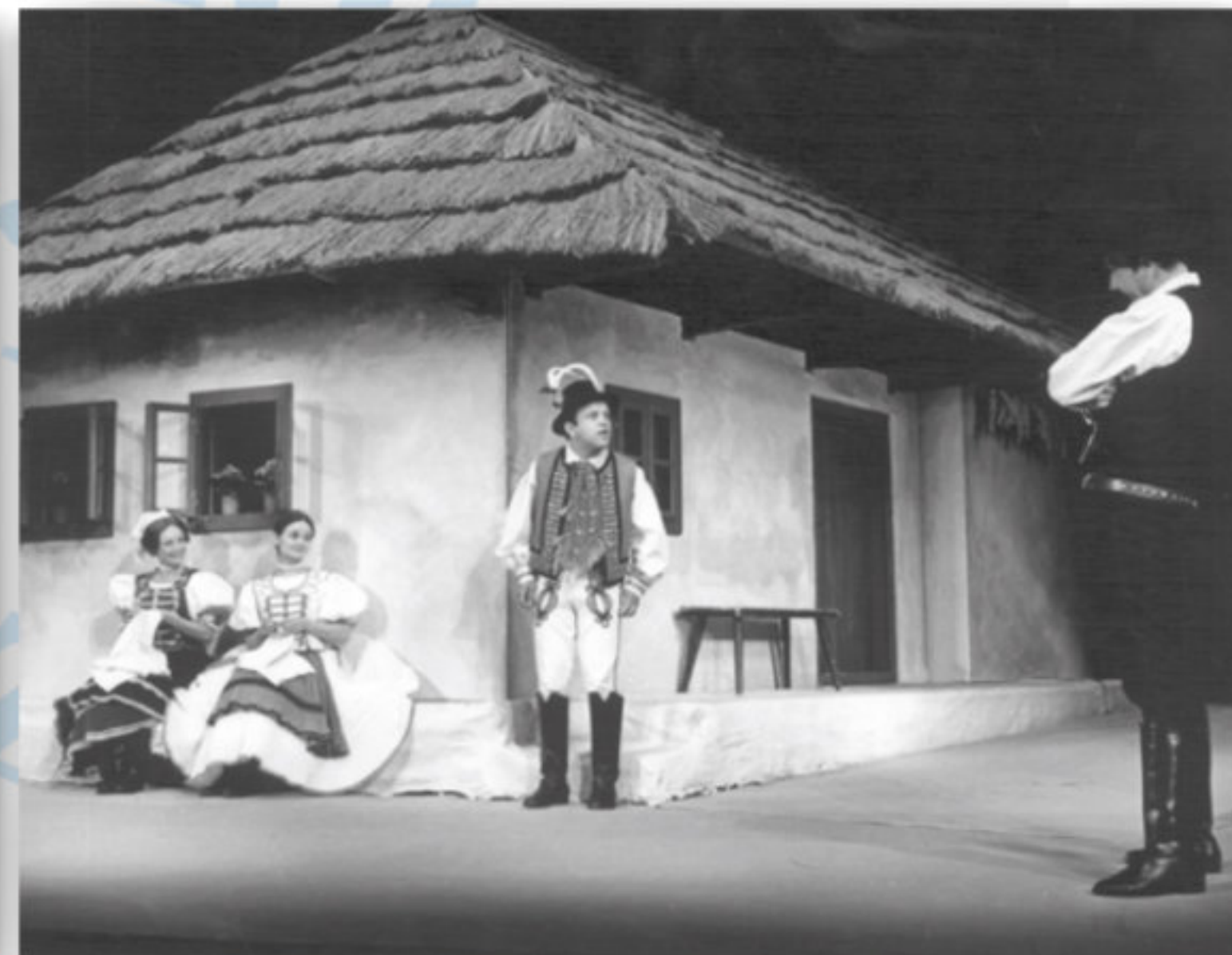
Jozef Holý: *KUBO*

Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin) 25 April 1981

Directed by Ľubomír Vajdička

From left Elena Petrovická, Olga Solárová, Peter Bzdúch, Tomáš Žilínčík

Photo Jaroslav Barák/Theatre Institute Archive



Ján Palárik: *THE TINKER*

Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra 24 May 2019

Directed by Lukáš Brutovský

From left Tomáš Turek, Andrej Remeník, Marián Viskup, Barbora Andrešičová, Peter Oszlik

Photo Collavino/Andrej Bagar Theatre Archive in Nitra



Jonáš Záborský: *THE FOUNDLING*

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 31 December 1966

Directed by Karol L. Zachar

From left Mária Prechovská, Alojz Kramár

Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav: *HEROD AND HERODIAS*

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 28 May 1955

Directed by Janko Borodáč

Wide-screen shot

Photo Gejza Podhorský/Theatre Institute Archive



Jozef Gregor Tajovský: *ESTATES – CONFUSIONS*

New Scene Bratislava 22 November 1972

Directed by Miloš Pietor

From left Magda Vášaryová, Juraj Kukura, Olga Vronská, Viliam Polónyi

Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Ivan Stodola: *THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE*

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 4 October 1928

Directed by Janko Borodáč

Wide-screen shot

Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Ivan Stodola: *WHEN A HONOREE CRIES*

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 15 February 1941

Directed by Ján Jamnický

Wide-screen shot

Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Július Barč-Ivan: *MOTHER*

Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre Zvolen 13 March 1965

Directed by Ivan Petrovič

From left Mária Markovičová, Zora Paulendová

Photo Karol Miklóš/Theatre Institute Archive

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Drama

Overcoming Realism (the 1940s – 1980s)

From the time of its emergence the Slovak drama experienced a not very long, but very rich journey. It was inspired by the European artistic directions as well as the domestic social and political life and the essence of theatre. The Slovak playwrights were unable to escape the trendy fashions and hazards that negatively influenced the form and quality of the plays. Just like the stories and heroes struggled with their own problems and external circumstances, the Slovak drama underwent its own struggles – with more or less success. It left us with important messages about the human perceptions and sensitivity in the context of contemporary and civilizational changes.



VHV (Vladimír Hurban Vladimírov): A SCREECHING LOCK
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin) 5 February 1993
Directed by Štefan Korenčí
From left Ján Kožuch, Jindřich Obšil, Ľubomíra Krkošková
Photo Matúš Olha/Theatre Institute Archive

“The greatest enemies of Slovaks are Slovaks!”

Fischl's line from Ivan Bukočan's play Before the Rooster Crows.

Peter Zvon: A DANCE OVER CRYING

Slovak Theatre Prešov (today Jónáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov) 1 April 1944
Directed by Dezider Stern-Stránský
From left Imrich Jenča, Richard Novák, Štefan Adamec, Andrej Chmelko, Elena Rampáková
Photo Ambrozj/Theatre Institute Archive



Július Barč-Ivan: THE TWO

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 2 March 1984
Directed by Vladimír Strnisko
From left Ctibor Filčík, Martin Huba
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Ivan Bukočan: BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 30 August 1969
Directed by Jozef Palka
Front Jozef Kroner, back Jarmila Koleničová, Juraj Slezáček
Photo Jana Nemčoková/Theatre Institute Archive



Peter Karvaš: THE MIDNIGHT MASS

Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 25 October 2014
Directed by Lukáš Brutovský
From left Anna Javorková, Milan Ondřík, Dano Heriban, Emil Horváth Jr.
Photo Slovak National Theatre Archive



LEOPOLD LAHOLA: SUNSPOTS

Regional Theatre Nitra (today Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra) 30 November 1968
Directed by Igor Ciel
Playbill for the premiere from 1968
Art design Bořivoj Slavík



Peter Kováčik: SLOVAK RHAPSODY OR A PUB UNDER THE GREEN TREE

(A Pub under the Green Tree)
Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre Zvolen 27 October 1995
Directed by Ján Sládeček
From left Miloš Chrápa, Andrej Mojžiš
Photo René Miko/Theatre Institute Archive



Osvald Zahradník: SOLO FOR A (STRIKING) CLOCK

Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre Zvolen 9 June 1973
Directed by Peter Jezný
Poster Igor Hudcovič/Photo Igor Hudcovič, Karol Mikláš

“The trio of his plays The Scar, The Midnight Mass and Antigone and Others represent a milestone not only in his work, but also in the entire Slovak drama. At the turn of the 1950s, the Slovak and Czech dramatic works gradually started to distance themselves from the schematism of the 1950s and turned their attention from the building themes to the issue of a man in the vortex of social changes. Karvaš's dramas attracted attention as well as many controversial questions.”

KOVÁČ, Peter. The Midnight Mass. In: The Fighter. 7 August 2014, no. 16, pages 1 and 5.

“Individual characters are coming down from the top of the mountain to the semi-darkness of a local pub to tell us about themselves, about others, but also about us, how we lived in 1933, but also how we live and what stays with us. The multi-layered text reveals the lives of individuals who are carrying their bundles full of unhappiness, injustice, misery, hope, and through them the author paints the fate of this nation with all its characteristics – goodness, evil, envy, callousness, poverty.”

PODMAKOVÁ, Dagmar. Kováčik again, and about the man again. In: Pravda. 31 October 1995, year 5, no. 252, page 5.

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From Text and to Plurality (Drama after 1989)

"His play forces to think, it was poetry and shock. Horák broke apart the smooth structure of pseudo-Aristotelian poetry exploited by incompetent playwrights, he created a sequence of scenes, a mosaic, a world metaphor. In his plays, an individual struggles, fights and fails like a cog in the wheel of social movement. Horák broke the story apart and created an anti-hero."

"The plays revealed the even deeper, hidden, even animalistic layers of a man, his libido, his perverse ideas and goals, vulgar actions. Mental processes transposed into physical processes, into human glands and fluids."

MISTRÍK, Miloš. Slovak absurd drama. Bratislava: Science, 2002, page 186.

The 1990s saw the arrival of a new kind of poetry, which was later named post-modern or post-dramatic. It includes the processes of the small stage theatre forms and gradually the fixed collective team creations. Its Slovak pioneer was Karol Horák. Currently the brand new original phenomena include a wide array of names from different generations and genders, authors of texts for theatre or the so-called new drama. At present it achieves exceptional diversity, plurality of forms, author's processes and topics.

Roman Polák (1957) [interview]. In: Karol Horák, The Destruction of Soccer in the City of K [play poster]. Prešov: The art management of Jonáš Záborský Theatre, [1990].

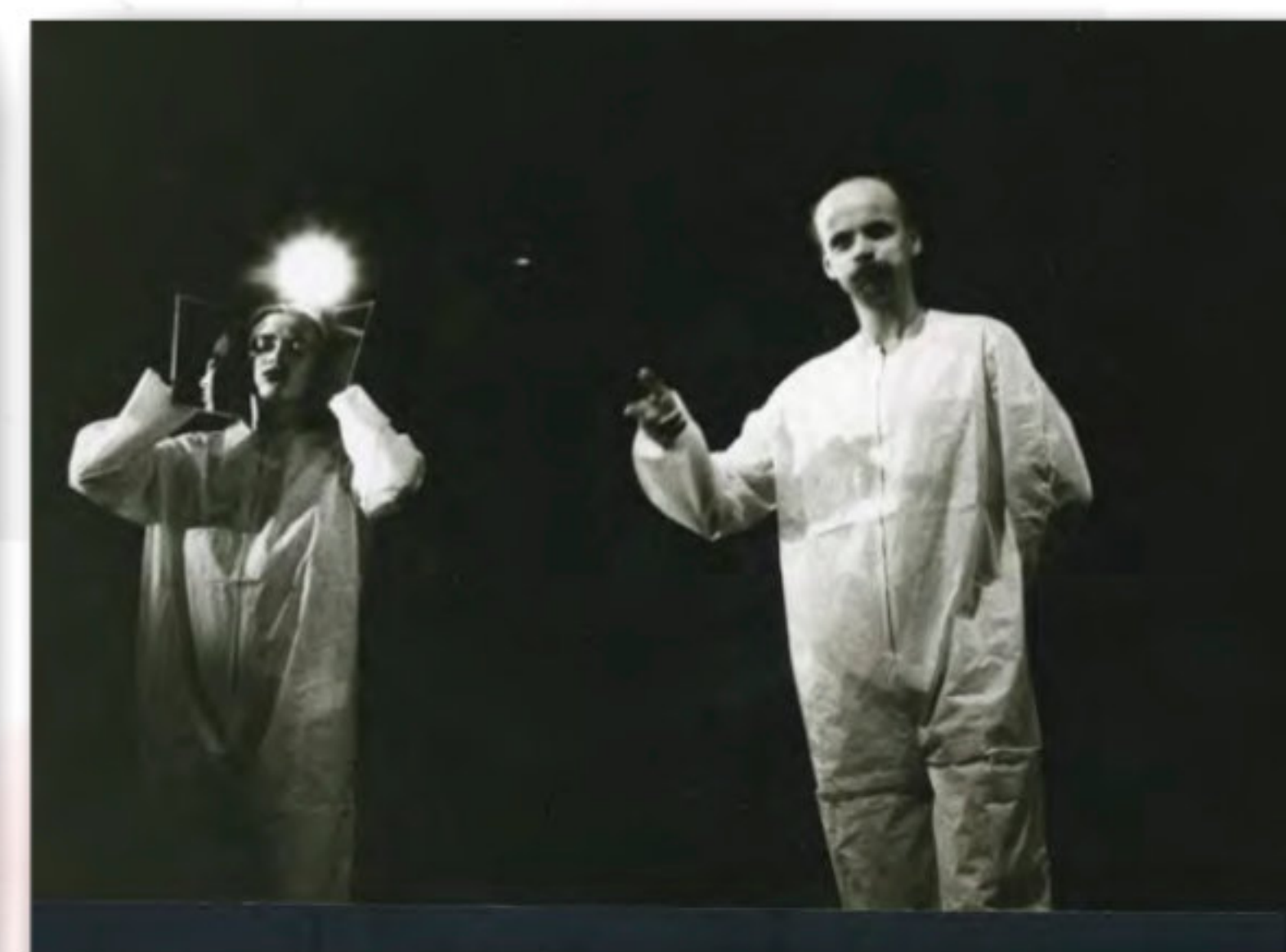
Karol Horák: THE DESTRUCTION OF SOCCER IN THE CITY OF K
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 16 September 1990
Directed by Roman Polák
Jozef Stražan
Photo Ľubor Marko/Theatre Institute Archive



Blaho Uhlár – Miloš Karásek – et al.: THE SECOND-TO-LAST SUPPER
Theatre for Children and Youth Trnava (today Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava) 30 June 1989
Directed by Blahoslav Uhlár
From left Margita Sečovičová, Ladislav Kerata, Viera Pavlíková, Vladimír Oktavec, Tibor Vokoun
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Viliam Klimáček – Ivan Mizera: SONG... (Part Two)
Theatre GÚnaGU Bratislava 23 January 1993
Directed by Ivan Mizera, Viliam Klimáček, Aleš Votava, Karol Vosátka
From left Zuzana Benešová, Vladimír Sedláčko
Photo Vlado Gloss/Theatre Institute Archive



Jana Juráňová: SILVER BOWLS, EXCELLENT CONTAINERS
Studio 12 Bratislava 2 March 2015
Directed by Alena Leiková
From left Danica Matušová, Zuzana Konečná, Rebeka Poláková, Zuzana Porubjaková
Photo Milo Fabian/Theatre Institute Archive



Miloš Karásek: THE PLATFORM
Alexander Duchnovič Theatre Prešov 29 March 2003
Directed by Miloš Karásek
From left Svetlana Škovranová, Vasil Rusiňák
Photo Pavol Koval/Theatre Institute Archive



Rastislav Ballek: TISO
Theatre Arena Bratislava 14 April 2005
Directed by Rastislav Ballek
From left graduates of the Bratislava State Conservatory, the Technician Choir, Marián Labuda
Photo Oleg Vojtíšek/Theatre Institute Archive

"The four most well-known women from the Štúr era, lovers and wives of our famous patriots from the times of national revival come back to life on stage. (...) Speaking about the men in their lives, about the fates of women, about their feelings and conditions at home, they shed light on the private lives of the Štúr generation. At an informal gathering they speak about the social conventions of the mid-19th century, about the customs determining the lives of men and women, about their desires, possibilities and limitations."

LINDOVSKÁ, Nadežda. Feminist challenge for the Slovak drama.
In: Slovak Theatre. 2011, year 59, no. 3, page 280.



Michal Ditte: TERRA GRANUS
Theatre Pôtoň Bátorce 15 February 2008
Directed by Iveta Jurčová
From left Henrieta Rabová, Gabriel Tóth, Kristína Sihelská, Michaela Hrbáčková, Katarína Vákrčková, Mária Danadová
Photo Theatre Pôtoň Archive



Michaela Zakufanská: SINGLE RADICALS
Prešov National Theatre 11 October 2013
Directed by Júlia Rázusová
From left Gabriela Marcinková, Ladislav Ladomirjak
Photo Peter Zakufanský/Slovak National Theatre Archive

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Opera

Slovak and Czech Repertoire

The development of the Slovak opera theatre has not been long, but over the past 100 years of its existence it gained a remarkable character through its intensity and dynamic. The activities in this field took place on two levels: interpretation and composition. In both cases, the Slovak National Theatre played the key role. Building of the professional interpretation level arose from the Czech and world repertoire by staging Italian, French and Russian operas and focusing on the development of the original Slovak opera. This interpretation trend is clear throughout the history of the Slovak opera theatre. Czech opera heavily influenced the emergence of the Slovak opera theatre. Three Slovak opera houses were opened by three plays of the Czech artists: *The Kiss* by Bedřich Smetana in the Slovak National Theatre, his *Bartered Bride* in the State Theatre Košice, and *Eva* by Josef Bohuslav Foerster in the State Opera in Banská Bystrica. Since the 1920s, the Slovak opera scene initiated the development of the original Slovak works. The first steps included Ján Levoslav Bella's *Wayland the Smith* and the first original attempt at national opera *Detvan* by Viliam Figuš-Bystrý, culminating in the full-fledged *The Whirlpool* by Eugen Suchoň. His generational contemporary Ján Cikker wrote a wonderful score about the fate of the folk hero *Juro Jánošík* and set to music Charles Dickens' story *Mister Scrooge*. The works of both authors are alive on the stages of the Slovak theatres to this day. Three Slovak opera stages now feature the works of more recent and contemporary composers: *The Feast* by Juraj Beneš and *Dorian Gray* by Ľubica Čekovská strongly resonated in the Slovak National Theatre. The alternative opera scene is being successfully represented by Slavo Solovic and his *Cirrostratus* or *Coma* by Martin Burlas.

Ján Levoslav Bella: **WAYLAND THE SMITH**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 28 April 1926
Directed by Václav Jiříkovský
Musical direction Oskar Nedbal
Wide-screen shot
Photo Josef Hofer/Theatre Institute Archive



Eugen Suchoň: **THE WHIRLPOOL**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 10 December 1949
Directed by Karel Jernek
Musical direction Ladislav Holoubek
Wide-screen shot
Photo Gejza Podhorský/Theatre Institute Archive



Juraj Beneš: **THE FEAST**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 13 April 1984
Directed by Branislav Kriška
Musical direction Viktor Málek
From left Róbert Szűcs, Elena Kittnarová, Peter Mikuláš, Gustáv Papp
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Bedřich Smetana: **THE KISS**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 30 May 2003
Directed by Pavol Smolik
Musical direction Jaroslav Kyzlink
From left Michal Lehotský, Klaudia Račic Derner, Choir of the Slovak National Theatre Opera
Photo Slovak National Theatre Archive



Ján Cikker: **RESURRECTION**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 9 October 1976
Directed by Branislav Kriška
Musical direction Zdeněk Košler
From left Róbert Szűcs, Marta Nitranová
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Leoš Janáček: **THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 7 April 1973
Directed by Branislav Kriška
Musical direction Zdeněk Košler
From left Milan Kopačka, Elena Kittnarová
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Ján Cikker: **JURO JÁNOŠÍK**
State Opera Banská Bystrica 5 June 2016
Directed by Roman Polák
Musical direction Marián Vach
Wide-screen shot
Photo Jozef Lomnický/Theatre Institute Archive



Slavo Solovic - Viliam Klimáček: **CIRROSTRATUS**
Theatre GUnaGU Bratislava 25 January 2003
Directed by Viliam Klimáček
From left Olga Belesová, Viliam Klimáček, Eva Matiašová, Petra Polnišová, Tony Pisár, Zuzana Ožvoldiková, Michal Kaščák
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Martin Burlas - Jiří Olič: **COMA**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 24 November 2007
Directed by Rastislav Ballek
Musical direction Marián Lejava
From left Milan Chalmovský
Photo Alena Klenková/Theatre Institute Archive



Ľubica Čekovská: **DORIAN GRAY**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 8 November 2013
Directed by Nicola Raab
Musical direction Christopher Ward
From left Aleš Jeniš, Martin Gyimesi, Eric Fennell
Photo Jozef Barinka/Slovak National Theatre Archive

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Opera

Russian opera traditionally occupied a strong position in the Slovak opera life, particularly Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin that essentially never left our opera stage since 1920. Italian opera has been the most popular part of the opera repertoire among our audiences as well as in the world, particularly the works of Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini. The Slovak National Theatre and the State Opera in Banská Bystrica have a long tradition of staging the bel canto style operas of Gioacchino Rossini and Gaetano Donizetti. On all three of these stages, operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart are a fixture. Charles Gounod and particularly his most important opera *Faust* and *Marguerite* became a series of staging milestones in the history of the Slovak opera theatre. Almost every production was a significant theatrical event. Starting with the first plays of directors Josef Peršl and Viktor Šulc in the early days of the Slovak National Theatre, through the expressionist mood of the Košice production directed by Kornel Hájek, the ground-breaking and for many shocking play of Jozef Bednárík, to the last version – in the philosophical introverted execution by the Lithuanian Gintaras Varnas in the Slovak National Theatre.

Charles Gounod: FAUST AND MARGUERITE
State Theatre Košice 31 May 1958
Directed by Kornel Hájek
Musical direction Boris Velat
From left Anna Poláková, Anton Matejček
Photo Mária Litavská/Theatre Institute Archive



Charles Gounod: FAUST AND MARGUERITE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 28 June 1989
Directed by Jozef Bednárík
Musical direction Oliver Dohnányi
Ján Galla and the Choir of the Slovak National Theatre Opera
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Giuseppe Verdi: LA TRAVIATA
Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre – Opera Banská Bystrica (today State Opera Banská Bystrica) 14 December 1968
Directed by Drahomíra Bargárová
Musical direction Vojtech Javora
Oskár Korbela, Edita Gruberová
Photo Karol Miklóši/Theatre Institute Archive



Giuseppe Verdi: AROLDO
Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre – Opera Banská Bystrica (today State Opera Banská Bystrica) 19 January 1993
Directed by Martin Bendík
Musical direction Pavol Tužinský
From left Mária Tomanová, Gurgun Ovsepjan
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: COSÌ FAN TUTTE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 18 December 1971
Directed by Karel Jernek
Musical direction Zdeněk Košler
From left Ružena Štúrová, Magdaléna Hajóssyová
Photo Pavol Breier/Theatre Institute Archive



Claude Debussy: PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 9 May 1995
Directed by Miroslav Fischer
Musical direction Jean-Paul Penin
From left Jana Valášková, Francis Dudziak
Photo Katarína Mareščinová/Theatre Institute Archive



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: EUGENE ONEGIN
State Theatre Košice 19 November 1966
Directed by Václav Věžík
Musical direction Boris Velat
From left Helena Gmucová, Miroslav Hájek
Photo Mária Litavská/Theatre Institute Archive



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: EUGENE ONEGIN
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 16 September 2005
Directed by Peter Konwitschny
Musical direction Pavol Selecký
From left Pavol Remenár, Natalia Ushakova
Photo Alena Klenková/Theatre Institute Archive



Christoph Willibald Gluck: ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 5 December 2008
Directed by Mariusz Treliński
Musical direction Jaroslav Kyzlink
From left Pavol Remenár, Helena Becse-Szabó,
Choir of the Slovak National Theatre Opera
Photo Jozef Barinka/Theatre Institute Archive



Operetta

The tradition of musical entertainment theatre, particularly the operetta, formed in Slovakia thanks to the Hungarian and German traveling theatre companies which brought new other forms of musical theatre – musical comedies, farces and vaudeville. Proximity to Vienna, which became one of the leading centres of operetta in the 19th century, had influence over the cultural life of the residents of Bratislava – they did not have to go through the birth pangs of creating an operetta as a genre, as they were getting the finished products. The audiences loved operetta; the critic refused it. It was one of the reasons why operetta had a difficult life in Slovakia. Time and again it had to prove its validity as an art form – sometimes using the help of the classics, other times through the ingenuity of the contemporaries and frequently also the domestic authors. Even today, in the time of musicals, it is still true that an operetta is a high-quality musical foundation and the performers' maturity and resourcefulness can fill a theatre house.

Oskar Nedbal – Leo Stein: **POLISH BLOOD**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 4 April 1920
Directed by Bohuš Vilim
Musical direction Ferdinand Ledvina
Photo from the play
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský: **BELLAROSA**
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 24 May 1941
Directed by Drahoš Zelenský
Musical direction Juraj Viliam Schöffler
Photo from the play
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Johann Strauss – Ignác Schnitzler: **THE GYPSY BARON**
National Theatre Košice 23 October 1949 (today State Theatre Košice)
Directed by Jurij Seregiy
Musical direction Bohuš Valáštan
Wide-screen shot
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich – Vladimir Zakharovich Mass – Mikhail Abramovich Chervinsky: **MOSCOW – CHERYOMUSHKI**
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 17 October 1959
Directed by Ján Kákoš
Musical direction Zdeněk Macháček
From left Belo Turba, Jozef Kuchár, Jindra Láznicka
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Gejza Dusík – Pavol Braxatoris: **BLUE ROSE**
State Theatre Košice 8 November 1964
Directed by Kornel Hájek
Musical direction Radovan Fest Spišák
From left Božena Hanáková, Ladislav Pačaj
Photo Ondrej Béreš/Theatre Institute Archive



Florimond Ronger Hervé – Henri Meilhac – Albert Millaud: **MAM'ZELLE NITOUCHE**
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 20 December 1985
Directed by Ján Silan
Musical direction Jan Bedřich
Wide-screen shot
Photo Lubor Marko/Theatre Institute Archive



Jacques Offenbach – Hector-Jonathan Crémieux: **ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD**
Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre – Opera Banská Bystrica (today State Opera Banská Bystrica) 10 April 1992
Directed by Martin Bendík
Musical direction Pavol Tužinský
Wide-screen shot from the play
Photo Matúš Olha/Theatre Institute Archive

Milan Novák – Milan Ferko: **FIELD EQUIPMENT FULL OF LOVE**
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 29 August 1957
Directed by František Křištof Veselý
Musical direction Zdeněk Macháček
Photo from the play
Photo Theatre Institute



Franz Lehár – Victor Léon – Leo Stein: **THE MERRY WIDOW**
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 3 February 2017
Directed by Peter Oravec
Musical direction Rudolf Geri
In the middle Miroslav Dvorský and Adriana Kohútová
Photo Ľubor Bachratý/Theatre Institute Archive

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Musical

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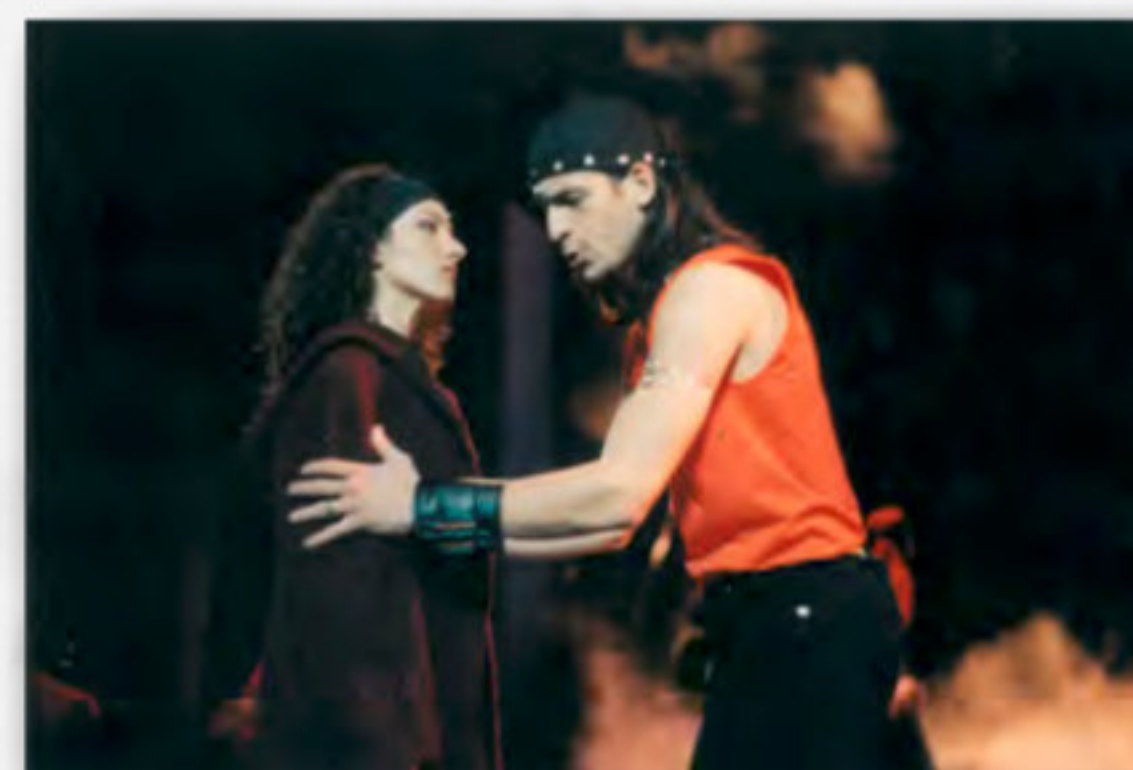
Teodor Šebo Martinský (libretto Ján Turan, Bedřich Kramosil): THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 24 February 1973
Directed by Bedřich Kramosil
Musical direction Bohuš Slezák
From left Ivan Krajiček, Štefan Tkáč, Anton Baláž, Ernest Kostelník
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Pavol Hammel – Marián Varga (libretto Alta Vášová): CYRANO FROM THE SUBURBS
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 8 October 1977
Directed by Ivan Krajiček
Song lyrics Kamil Peteraj, Ján Štrasser
Jozef Benedik, Martin Danko
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Eubomír Horňák (libretto Jozef Urban): KING DAVID
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 19 June 1998
Directed by Jozef Gombár
Musical direction Ivetta Viskupová
From left Katarína Hasprová, Stanislav Slovák
Photo Anton Sládek/Theatre Institute Archive



Jana Kákošová – Martin Kákoš – Henrich Leško: BATHORY
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 11 February 2005
Directed by Martin Kákoš
Musical direction Branislav Kostka, Július Selčan Jr.
In the middle Elena Kušnierová
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Peter Jaroš – Martin Kákoš – Václav Patejdl – Kamil Peteraj: THE MILLENNIAL BEE
Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra 15 November 2013
Directed by Martin Kákoš
Musical direction Július Selčan
Wide-screen shot
Photo Ľubor Bachratý/Theatre Institute Archive

World Musical

Bertolt Brecht – Kurt Weill: THE BEGGAR'S OPERA
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin) 4 November 1961
Directed by Ivan Petrovický
Musical direction Jozef M. Soukup
From left Anton Gymeršský, Štefan Mišovic
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Jerry Herman – Michael Stewart: HELLO, DOLLY!
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 8 October 1966
Directed by Bedřich Kramosil
Musical direction Bohuš Slezák
In the middle Gizela Veclová
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Cole Porter – Samuel Spewack – Bella Spewack: KISS ME KATE!
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 17 October 1969
Directed by Miloš Pietor
Musical direction Vladimír Daněk
A two-act ballet
Photo Jozef Fecko/Theatre Institute Archive



Ernest Bryll – Katarzyna Gärtnerová: PAINTED ON GLASS
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 19 October 1974
Directed by Karol L. Zachar
Wide-screen shot
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Jerry Bock – Joseph Stein: FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov 6 December 2002
Directed by Jozef Bednárík
Musical direction Július Selčan
Photo from the play
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Alain Boublil – Claude-Michel Schönberg: LES MISÉRABLES
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 20 September 2019
Directed by Marie Zamora
Texts of songs Herbert Kretzmer
From left Lenka Machcínková, Marta Potančoková, Alžbeta Bartošová, Titusz Tóbiás
Photo Marek Malíšek/Theatre Institute Archive

The true musical wave splashed through Slovakia only at the turn of the 1970s for multiple reasons, including artistic, political and ideological. In order to create a full-fledged musical repertoire, it was necessary to build up the technical and personnel capacities, which became possible after the end of the war. The network of theatres stabilized, and in addition to the opera stages in Bratislava (1920), Košice (1945) and later also in Banská Bystrica (1959), two theatres were founded with specialized musical troops – The Slovak Theatre in Prešov (1944, today Jonáš Záborský Theatre) and the New Scene of the National Theatre (1946, today New Scene Theatre). The relaxation of the political and social climate in the mid-1950s reflected in the literary management of the musical and dramatic companies. In addition to the established authors, the stages featured the works of banned authors (Voskovec – Werich) as well as Western authors (C. Porter, J. Herman, L. Bernstein and others), and in 1959 the first musical *When It Is Sunday in Rome* (New Scene Theatre) was staged. In the following 14 years, the musical theatre companies wowed their audiences with famous and significant musicals, achieving great popular and critical acclaim at home and abroad.

This journey was arbitrarily halted by the period of normalization. On the other hand, Slovak creators were inspired by the success of international musicals. The first attempts (*The Cormorant*, 1966) yielded the first successes – *The Government Inspector* (1973) and *Cyrano from the Suburbs* (1977). The domestic works were supplemented with setting the classical texts to music (e.g. P. A. Bréal's *Les Hussards*) or with already established Slovak authors (J. Solovič's *Pockets Full of Money* adapted by M. Lasica and J. Satinský), plus also the introduction of the works of the Eastern Bloc authors (*Painted on Glass*, 1974, *The Red Caravan*, 1975 or *Gypsies Are Found Near Heaven*, 1987).

Musical experienced the second wave of great revival after 1989. The theatres tried to build on the success of the plays from the 1960s (*Fiddler on the Roof*, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2007), as well as with the rising self-confidence they reached for new hits from the world production (*The Boondock Saints*, 1993; *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, 1994; *Cats*, 2016). The Bednárík phenomenon was born – Bednárík influenced the position of the musical in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic for many years to come, and thanks to *Dracula, the Musical* toured across several continents. Together with the foreign musicals, the works of domestic authors now appear on stages. Some of them attempt to bring unique stories (*A Poète Maudit*, 2013), others rely on the popularity of the time-tested songs (*The Eighth Continent*, 2011) and story lines (*The Millennial Bee*, 2013; *Pacho Is Back*, 1995; *Kubo*, 2018).

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Dance

Petipa and Fokin Lines on Ballet Stages

Over the one hundred years of its professional journey, the art of dance in Slovakia has evolved to the European level. Dancers of all styles are working on prominent world stages, in renown ensembles, founding dance schools and dance troops all over the world, choreographing inspiring pieces that attract attention of not only the audiences, but also the professional critics. Whether we are talking about ballet artists, contemporary dancers and dance creators, performers, or scenic folklore and modern dancers, they all hold up to the international competition and bring new stimuli into the development of the art of dance.

Ernő Dohnányi: THE VEIL OF PIERRETTE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 20 October 1923
Choreographed by Achille Viscusi
From left Ella Fuchsová, Ferdinand Gabiš
Photo Slovak National Theatre Archive



Tibor Andrašovan: ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 12 March 1949
Directed and choreographed by Stanislav Remar
From left Galina Basová, Stanislav Remar, František Bernatik
Photo Gejza Podhorský/Theatre Institute Archive



Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov: RAYMONDA
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 13 March 1950
Directed and choreographed by Jozef Zajko
From left Elena Sepši, Jarmila Manšingrová, Tamara Isičenko,
Gusta Starostová-Herényiová, Alica Flachová-Pastorová
Photo Gejza Podhorský/Slovak National Theatre Archive



Antonio Vivaldi: "V" FOR VIVALDI
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 15 April 1989
Choreographed and directed by Libor Vaculík
Photo Slovak National Theatre Archive



Sergei Rachmaninov: PAGANINI
State Theatre Košice 15 December 1962
Choreography Marilena Halászová and Andrej Halász
Andrej Halász
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky: THE RITE OF SPRING
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 15 November 1964
Choreographed and directed by Karol Tóth
Zofia Tóthová Červeňáková, Ján Haláma
Photo Jozef Vavro/Theatre Institute Archive



Rodion Konstantinovich Shchedrin - Georges Bizet: CARMEN
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 7 April 1979
Choreographed by Boris Slovák
Jurij Pavlovich Plavnik
Photo Slovak National Theatre Archive



The first ballet premiere in the Slovak National Theatre was Léo Delibes' ballet *Coppélia* (premiered on 19 May 1920), featuring young Slovak dance talents in addition to the German and Czech dancers. The development of dance education caused a boom in the Slovak dance arts and our artists were able to master the Petipa's line of ballet repertoire quickly and fully. Principal creative personalities of the Slovak ballet of the past were Jozef Zajko, Stanislav Remar, Andrej and Marilena Halász, Karol Tóth, Jozef Dolinský Sr. and Boris Slovák. The art management of the ballet companies supported the artistic efforts applying progressive Fokin's choreography style synthesizing neoclassical influences. Similarly, vigorous support was given to the advancement of the original ballet works that developed in cooperation with prominent personalities in the art of music and choreography (Karol Tóth, Libor Vaculík, Ondrej Šoth, Igor Holováč, Natália Horečná, Mário Radačovský and Ján Ďurovčík).

The history of Slovak ballet art is made of distinctive generations of choreographers and dance performers. The founding generation included personalities such as Ella Fuchsová-Lehotská, Gusta Herényiová, Florentína Lojeková, Peter Martin Rapoš, Ján Haláma, Zofia Tóthová, Zoltán Nagy, Miklós Vojtek, Gabriela Záhradníková and many others. The development of the art of dance can be credited to the founding generation of teachers such as Eva Jaczová, Zlatuska Vincentová, Peter M. Rapoš, Olga Markovičová and a great number of their followers.



Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev: ROMEO AND JULIET - JUST LIKE YESTERDAY...
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 13 May 2017
Choreographed by Natália Horečná
Ilinca Ducin Gribincea, Igor Leushin
Photo Peter Brenkus/Slovak National Theatre Archive



Zuzana Mistríková - Ondrej Šoth: M. R. ŠTEFÁNIK
State Theatre Košice 18 December 2009
Choreographed by Juraj Kubánka, Ondrej Šoth, Maksym Sklyar, Lyudmyla Vasylyeva
Eva Sklyarová, Sergii Iegorov
Photo Joseph Marčinský/State Theatre Košice Archive



Cesare Pugni: ESMERALDA
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 18 March 2018
Choreographed by Vasilij Medvedev, Stanislav Fečo based on Marius Petipa
Scene from Act Two
Photo Peter Brenkus/Slovak National Theatre Archive

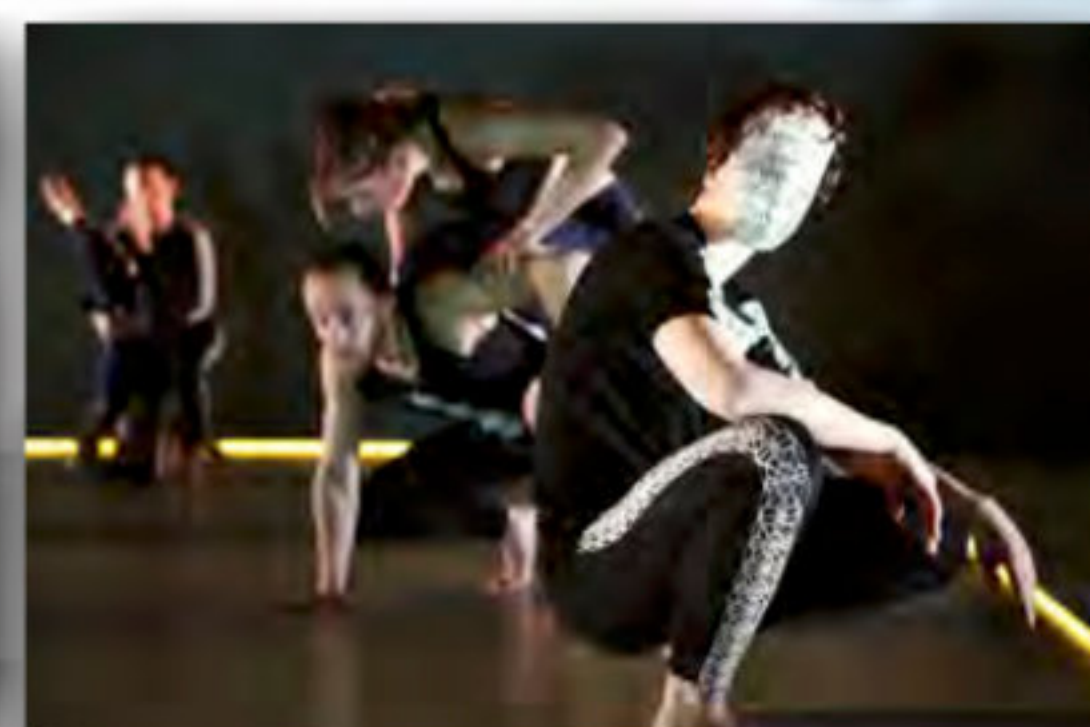
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Modern and Contemporary Dance

Krust and Morgan – R. Gowe: LET IT GO
Dance Theatre Bralen Bratislava 16 March 2002
Choreography Cristina Perera
Dance Theatre Bralen company
Photo Peter Brenkus/Dance Theatre Bralen Archive



Ivo Sedláček: 3x20/SQUAT
Dance Studio Theatre Banská Bystrica 14 March 2019
Directed and choreographed by Martina Hajdyla Lacová
From left Michaela Mirtová, Tibor Trulík, Michaela Hulvejová, Matej Kubuš, Isabel Paladin
Photo Ján Viazanička/Dance Studio Theatre Archive



Michal Novinski – Oskar Rózsa: SMOOTH EDGE
LAB (Laban Atelier Bratislava) 13 December 2009
Directed and choreographed by Marta Poláková
From left Renáta Ptačin, Magdaléna Čaprdová, Vladislav Šoltýs
Photo Noro Knap/LAB Archive



Eugen Gindl – Jozef Vlk: WOW!
Debris Company Bratislava 24 February 2017
Directed by Jozef Vlk
Stanislava Vlčeková
Photo Juraj Chlpík/Debris Company Archive



Jan Burian: ANIMALINSIDE
SKOK! o. z., Garden – Centre for Independent Culture
Banská Bystrica 13 December 2012
Directed and choreographed by Jaro Viňarský
From left Marek Menšík, Jaro Viňarský
Photo Linda Průšová/SKOK! o. z. Archive



Simon Thierree: FRAGMENTS
Les SlovaK's, Europäisches Zentrum der Künste Hellerau 2 November 2012
Choreography Milan Herich, Peter Jaško, Martin Kilvady, Anton Lachký, Milan Tomášik
From left Peter Jaško, Milan Herich, Milan Tomášik, Martin Kilvady, Anton Lachký
Photo Bart Grietens/Les SlovaK's Archive



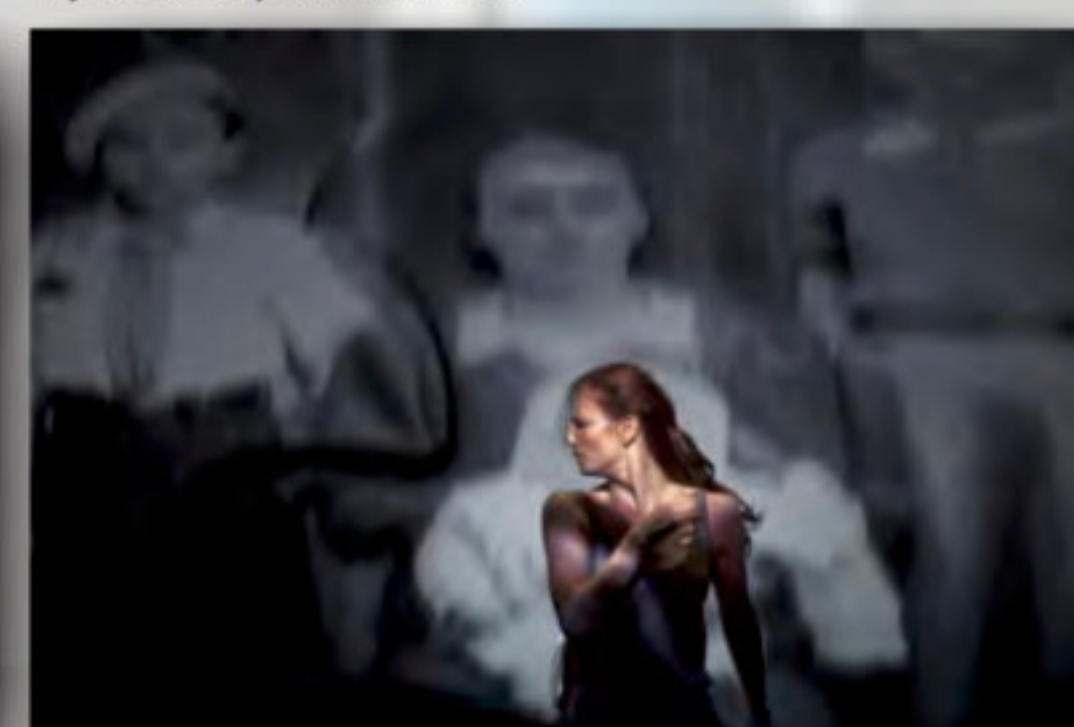
Igor F. Stravinsky: THE FIREBIRD
Slovak Dance Theatre, Bratislava 24 October 2008
Choreographed by Ján Durovčík
Photo Mayo Hirc/Slovak Dance Theatre Archive



Vlado Holina: NIVEAU STABLE
RESERVA, o. z. 7 April 2019
Directed and choreographed by Lucia Holinová
Photo Lea Lovišková/RESERVA, o. z. Archive



Soňa Ferienčíková – Mária Júdová – Alexandra Timpau: EVERYWHEN
BOD.Y 20. April 2018
Directed and choreographed by Soňa Ferienčíková
Vojtěch Brtnický/BOD.Y Archive



Folklore Dance

Svetozár Stračina: EAGLES OF THE TATRAS
Slovak Folk Art Ensemble Bratislava 12 October 1980
Choreographed and directed by Juraj Kubánka
SLUK company
Photo SLUK Archive



Svetozár Stračina: PEOPLE OF HOREHRONIE REGION
Art Ensemble Lúčna, House of ROH, Bratislava 10 June 1983
Choreography Štefan Nosáľ
Dance Company Lúčna
Photo Peter Brenkus/photo Lúčna Archive



In the first half of the 20th century, the art of dance in England, the United States and Germany was significantly influenced by the Bratislava native, dance reformer and choreographer Rudolf von Laban. As the author of *Labanotation* – the dance recording and movement analysis, he was interested in the relationship between the human body and its surrounding space. This thesis became one of the main topics for the contemporary dance a few decades later.

Contemporary dance as it is known today has developed from the interpretive and creative potential of the Slovak amateur modern dance companies, which started to boom in the 1970s. These companies demonstrate sensitivity by reacting to the contemporary social and societal impulses through their projects, often bringing daring productions with engaging motifs to the stage. The nature of their creations supports tolerance and basic cultural values. Their creative approach varies: from the conceptual intellectual projects through acrobatic performances to multi-media fusions of art forms and new technologies in the dance performances.

An umbrella organization for a part of the independent contemporary dance scene in Slovakia is the Contemporary Dance Platform (PlaST). The only company with a permanent stage is the Dance Studio Theatre in Banská Bystrica. Other companies perform as guests in cultural centres and theatres across Slovakia, and a large segment of the artists who became established internationally participate in international co-production projects.

In Slovakia, the professional folklore dance has been developing continuously, building on the elements of folklore expression. It transforms to a progressive stage form close to dance theatre and thus creates an original scenic dance form rich in rhythmic nuances and a variety of folklore steps and movement bonds. The prominent representatives of the Slovak scenic folklore dance are companies SLUK and Lúčna.

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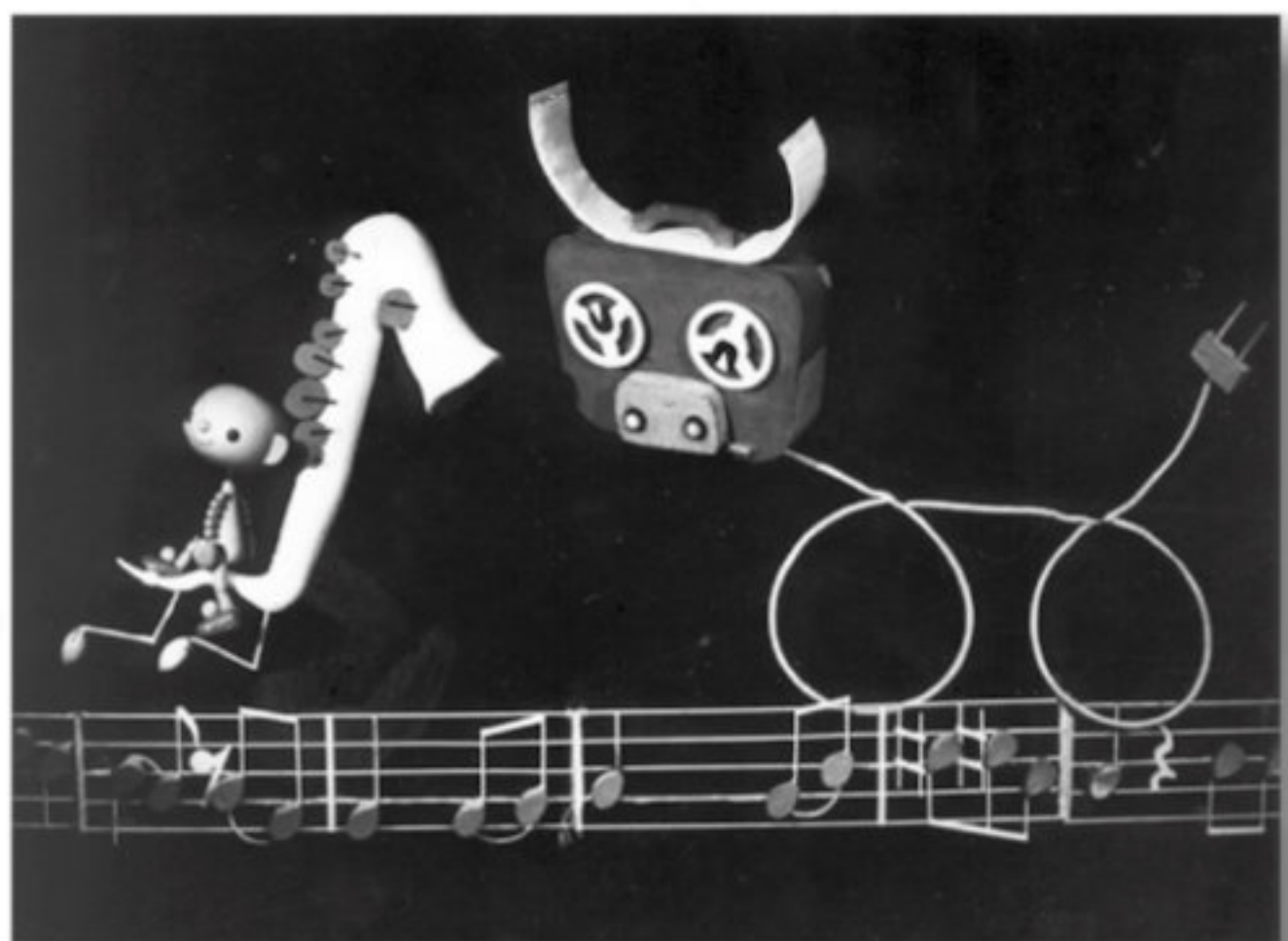
Puppet Theatre

Over the seventy years of its existence the professional Slovak puppetry has undergone development, resulting in the full integration of its unique creative outputs among the other theatre forms in Slovakia. The development of amateur puppet theatre in Slovakia in the first half of the 20th century was shaped by the shared cultural and social background of the Czechoslovak Republic and the tradition of the traveling puppeteers of the 19th century. The pioneer of the Slovak traveling puppeteers was Ján Stražan. At the turn of the 20th century, the world of Slovak puppetry grew with the addition of the Dubský and Anderle families.

In the 1950s, professional puppet theatres slowly started to emerge. Initially they were an administrative part of the regional theatres, and only gradually they were becoming independent. Their formation was closely connected to the active work of amateur puppeteers. Already at that time, many of them used the non-traditional or modern expressive means. The first to arrive was the Puppet Theatre Žilina (1950), another one was formed in Nitra (1951, today Old Theatre of Karol Spišák), in Bratislava (1957, today Bratislava Puppet Theatre), Puppet Theatre in Košice (1959) and in Banská Bystrica (1960, today Puppet Theatre At the Crossroads). Over the following decades, the professional puppet theatres wrote their own original puppet plays (Ján Romanovský, Ján Ozábal, Ľubomír Feldek, Jozef Mokoš, Ján Uličiansky), and in addition to children they started to speak to adult audiences using a variety of types of puppets, gradually shifting to open manipulation, which, in addition to anti-illusion, is dominated by playfulness, metaphor and the partnership relation of the actor and the puppet. These theatres employed prominent directors (Ján Romanovský, Bohdan Slavík, Karel Brožek, Vladimír Predmerský, Milan Tomášek, Bedřich Svatoň, Ján Hižnay, Ján Uličiansky, Ľubomír Vajdička, Jozef Bednárík and others) and set designers (Jana Pogorielová, Hana Cigánová, Eva Farkašová, Ján Zavarský, Peter Čisárik, Miroslav Duša and others).

An important change in the development of the Slovak theatre occurred after 1989. This time period led to the official establishment of private puppet theatres. They were founded by the graduates of the Prague Academy of Performing Arts, College of Theatre, majoring in puppetry, and later also of the Bratislava Academy of Performing Arts, Department of Puppetry. Blending of forms and genres gave birth to syncretic plays with overlapping elements and processes of various theatre forms (pantomime, puppetry, dance and movement theatre). Independent theatres also brought the revival of traditional puppetry craft with its ancient techniques and topics, often transformed into updated frameworks. Together with the establishment of the five public (self-governing) theatres, independent theatres enrich the Slovak puppetry with diverse genres, literary management and plays.

Bohdan Slavík: MOMENT MUSICAL
State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava
17 June 1967
Directed by Bohdan Slavík
Photo Olga Bleyová/Theatre Institute Archive



Karel Brožek – Jozef Mokoš:
JÁNOSÍK (VARIATION III)
Regional Puppet Theatre in
Banská Bystrica
27 September 1975
Directed by Karel Brožek
Photo Karel Hejman/Theatre
Institute Archive



Oscar Wilde – Ondrej Sliacky: THE
HAPPY PRINCE
Puppet Theatre in Košice
25 November 1983
Directed by Ján Uličiansky
Photo Tárna Poláková/Theatre
Institute Archive



Carlo Gozzi: THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES
Puppet Theatre Žilina 6 February 2009
Directed by Milan Sládek
Photo Milo Fabian/Theatre Institute Archive



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Emanuel Schikaneder:
THE MAGIC FLUTE
State Puppet Theatre in Bratislava 9 March 1990
Directed by Jozef Bednárík
Photo Tibor Huszár/Theatre Institute Archive



Iveta Škripková: I FIND YOU VERY TOUCHING...
Puppet Theatre At the Crossroads Banská Bystrica
26 May 1992
Directed by Marián Pecko
Photo Jozef Lomnický/Theatre Institute Archive



Christopher Marlowe: FAUST
Puppet Theatre Nitra
10 January 1995
Directed by Ondrej Spišák
Photo Matúš Olha/Theatre Institute Archive



Agda Bavi Pain: JÁN OŠÍK AND THE AVENGER WITH
THE SHEPHERD'S PIPE
Dezorz Puppet Theatre Bratislava 17 December 2015
Directed by Gejza Dezorz
Photo Jozef Páleník/Theatre Institute Archive



Carlo Collodi – Ivan Martinka: PINOCCHIO
New Theatre Nitra 15 October 2017
Directed by Ivan Martinka
Photo Collavino/Theatre Institute Archive



Katarína Aulitisová – Tatjana Lehenová: ABOUT NINE MONTHS
Theatre PIKI Pezinok 13 June 1993
Directed by Katarína Aulitisová
Photo Theatre Institute Archive

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MODERN THEATRICAL FORMS

The Slovak theatre professionals were also inspired by the avant-garde processes of the first half of the 20th century, and were able to try out the new dramatic processes particularly in cooperation with amateur theatres. At the turn of the 1930s, the directors translated them into several plays staged by the Theatre Company of the Slovak National Theatre. After World War II these tendencies were halted by the social and political changes that did not allow much room for the realization of such forms of theatre and art.

In the early 1960s, young theatre forms emerged in Slovakia mimicking the Czech pattern. The most well-known were the cabaret-oriented Tatra Revue with its critical and satirical plays contemplating about contemporary topics, the Radošiná Naive Theatre, a semi-professional theatre until 1989, with its naive stylistics and the Radošiná dialect as the basis of their poetry, or the Theatre on the Promenade that expanded on the poetry of the small stage forms by live interactions with audiences and attempts to present poetic theatre and text-appeal theatre. By government intervention, Tatra Revue and the Theatre on the Promenade were closed and had to cease their activities in 1971. In the 1960s, the internationally successful Pantomime Theatre of Milan Sládek operated in Bratislava, but after 1970 Milan Sládek decided to remain in Germany, where he opened his legendary Theatre Kefka (Little Brush) in Cologne (1974).

In March 1965 the prominent Slovak poetry group Lone Runners invited the American poet Allen Ginsberg to make an appearance in Bratislava, where he visited the Theatre of Poetry (Divadlo poézie).
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Georg Büchner: DANTON'S DEATH
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 19 October 1940
Directed by Ferdinand Hoffmann
Photo Filip Lašut/Theatre Institute Archive



Samuel Beckett: WAITING FOR GODOT
Theatre on the Promenade Bratislava 21 December 1968
Directed by Vladimír Strniško
From left Martin Huba, Stanislav Dančiak, Marián Labuda
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Stanislav Šteпка: JÁÁÁNOŠÍÍÍK
Radošiná Naive Theatre Bratislava 14 November 1970
Directed by Stanislav Šteпка
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Thomas Mann: TRISTAN
Theatre below the Castle in the Andrej Bagar Theatre
in Nitra 3 February 1980
Directed by Jozef Bednárík
From left Zuzana Jezerská, Anton Živčič
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



The time period of the 1970s and 1980s was not favourable for the development of new studio-type theatres that would be independent from the government institutions, so the new dramatic forms tended to appear more through the amateur and student theatres.

Only after 1990, under the influence of political and societal changes, the possibilities opened up to form new independent ensembles that worked with a variety of novelty theatre aspects such as decomposition of text, fragmentation of stage expression, physical action, using the elements of the physical theatre, new circus, or musical and art performances. Milan Sládek returned to Slovakia to head not only the pantomime theatre in Theatre Arena, but also to organize the international festival of mime art Gaukler.



Milan Sládek: UBU
Theatre Arena Bratislava 25 February 1999
Directed by Milan Sládek
From left Milan Sládek, Dušan Musil,
Mírka Šefránková, Ingrid Portellová, Michal Ševčík,
Peter Tabaček, Radomír Milič
Photo Ctibor Bachratý/Theatre Institute Archive



Blaho Uhlár – Miloš Karásek et al.: IMPASSE
Theatre STOKA Bratislava 22 June 1991
Directed by Blaho Uhlár
From left Erika Fábryová, Ingrid Hrubaničová
Photo Ivan Fintia/Theatre Institute Archive

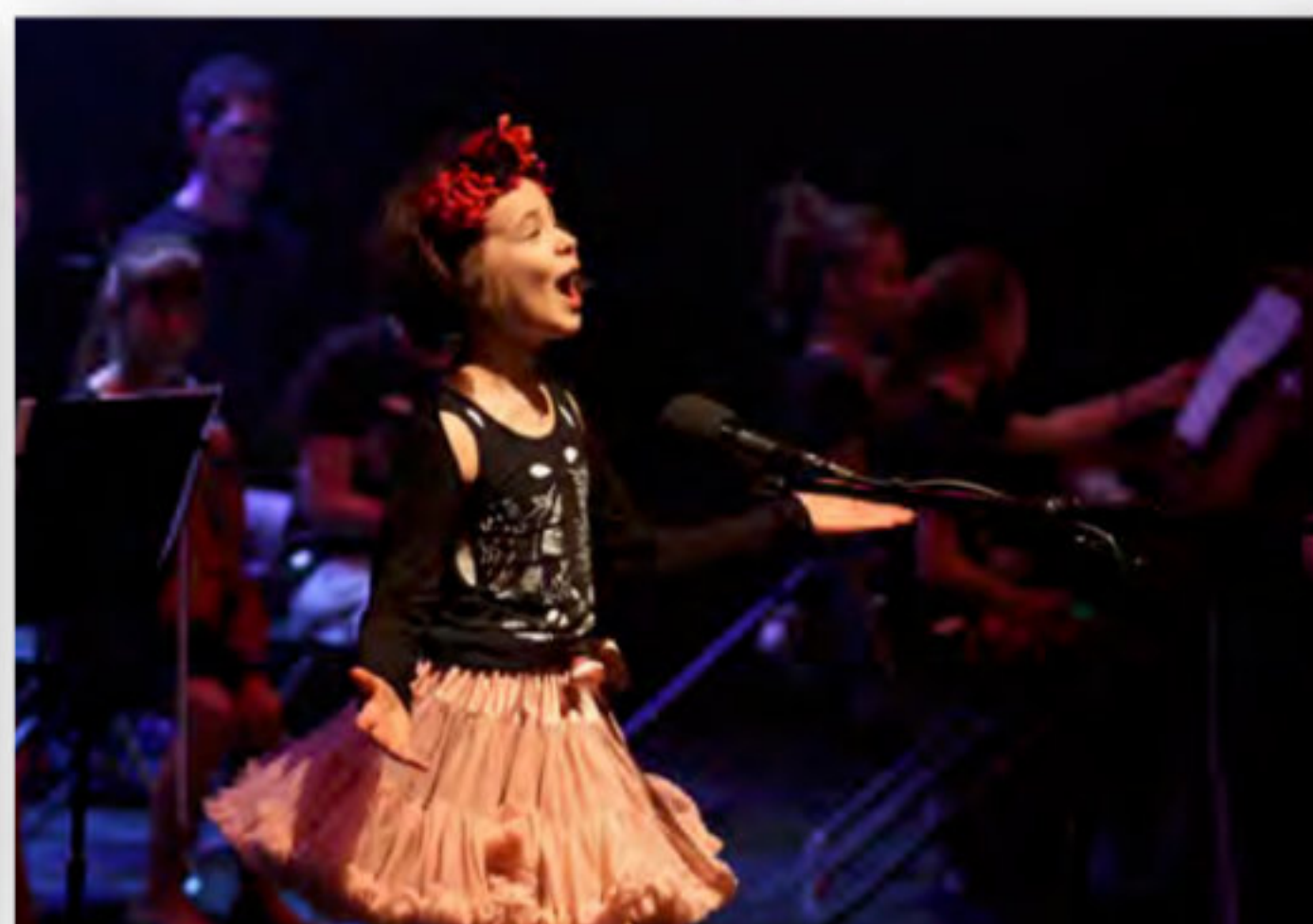
Viliam Klimáček – Karol Vosátka et al.: ENGLISH IS EASY, CSABA IS DEAD
Theatre GUNA GU Bratislava 28 October 2000
Directed by Karol Vosátka
Photo Ctibor Bachratý/Theatre Institute Archive



Gradually, many independent theatre entities emerged that also drew from the ranks of professionals. Some of them affected the theatre activities in Slovakia quite markedly. Also, thanks to the establishment of cultural centres all over Slovakia, the gradually forming independent scene was able to react immediately to the artistic, cultural and social events at home and abroad and became an indelible part of the Slovak theatre.



Tadeusz Słobodzianek: PROPHET ILYA
Teatro Tatro Nitra 26 September 2005
Directed by Ondrej Spišák
From left Lukasz Kos, Milan Vojtela, Milan Ondrik
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Marek Piaček: 2'16" AND A HALF: THE SPACE ODYSSEY
Žilina-Záriečie Station 4 May 2014
Author and conductor Marek Piaček
Photo Natália Zajačiková/Theatre Institute Archive

Iveta Ditte Jurčová – Michal Ditte: MIRACLES
Theatre Pôtoň Bátorce 7 May 2017
Directed by Iveta Ditte Jurčová, Andrej Kalinka, Sláva Daubnerová, Jozef Vlk
Photo Damas Gruska/Theatre Institute Archive



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NATIONAL MINORITY THEATRES

Federico García Lorca: THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA
Hungarian Regional Theatre in Komárno (today the Jókai Theatre in Komárno)
9 March 1966
Directed by József Konrád
From left Zsuzsa Bottková, Aranka Szentpéteryová, Ester Nagy
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



István Kerékgyártó: REVERSE GEAR/RÜKVERC
Theatre Thalia Košice 5 March 2015
Directed by József Czajlik
From left front Erik Ollé, Szilárd Petrik; in the back Andrea Szoták, Lilla Dégner, Henrieta Rab
Photo Emese Tóth/Theatre Thalia Archive



Daniela Hivěšová-Šílanová: A PLACE FOR THE ROMA
Theatre Romathan Košice 19 December 1997
Directed by Ján Šílan, Milan Godla
From left Milan Kováč
Photo Svätopluk Píseký/Theatre Institute Archive



Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol: MARRIAGE
Alexander Duchnovič Theatre Prešov 27 November 1993
Directed by Valentin Kozmenko-Delinde
From left Jozef Tkáč, Igor Latta, Vasil Rusiňák, Ludmila Kozmenková
Photo Pavol Koval/Theatre Institute Archive



One of the features of the Slovak professional theatre scene is the existence of theatres of various national minorities that are equal participants the network of professional theatres in Slovakia by bringing their unique qualities and spirit. In addition to Slovak, Hungarian, Ruthenian and Romani languages can be heard from the Slovak stages. In 1945, the Ukrainian National Theatre (today the Alexander Duchnovič Theatre) opened its doors, in 1952 the Hungarian Regional Theatre in Komárno (today the Jókai Theatre in Komárno) was established in 1952, and later a branch scene Thalia opened in Košice, which after 1989 became administratively independent and today works as Theatre Thalia (Thália Színház). In 1992, Theatre Romathan was founded in Košice. The literary management of these theatres focuses not only on the preservation of traditions and cultures of the national minorities: In its early days, Romathan blended its social assimilation with the creation of dramatic plays that drew from the folklore. The Hungarian theatres and the Ruthenian company also serve as a cultural bridge between their home countries and Slovakia. The national minority theatres regularly bring inspirational and bold titles that resonate with the professional community and general public.

COMMUNITY THEATRE

After 1989 the Slovak dramatic community started to focus on target groups that were either suppressed during the times of socialism or to which the literary management of the existing theatres did not pay attention. The creators focused on the problems, attitudes and contemplations of different communities, particularly of people with physical or mental disabilities, homeless people, LGBTI groups or feminist associations, and significantly helped to advance the social discussion on those topics.

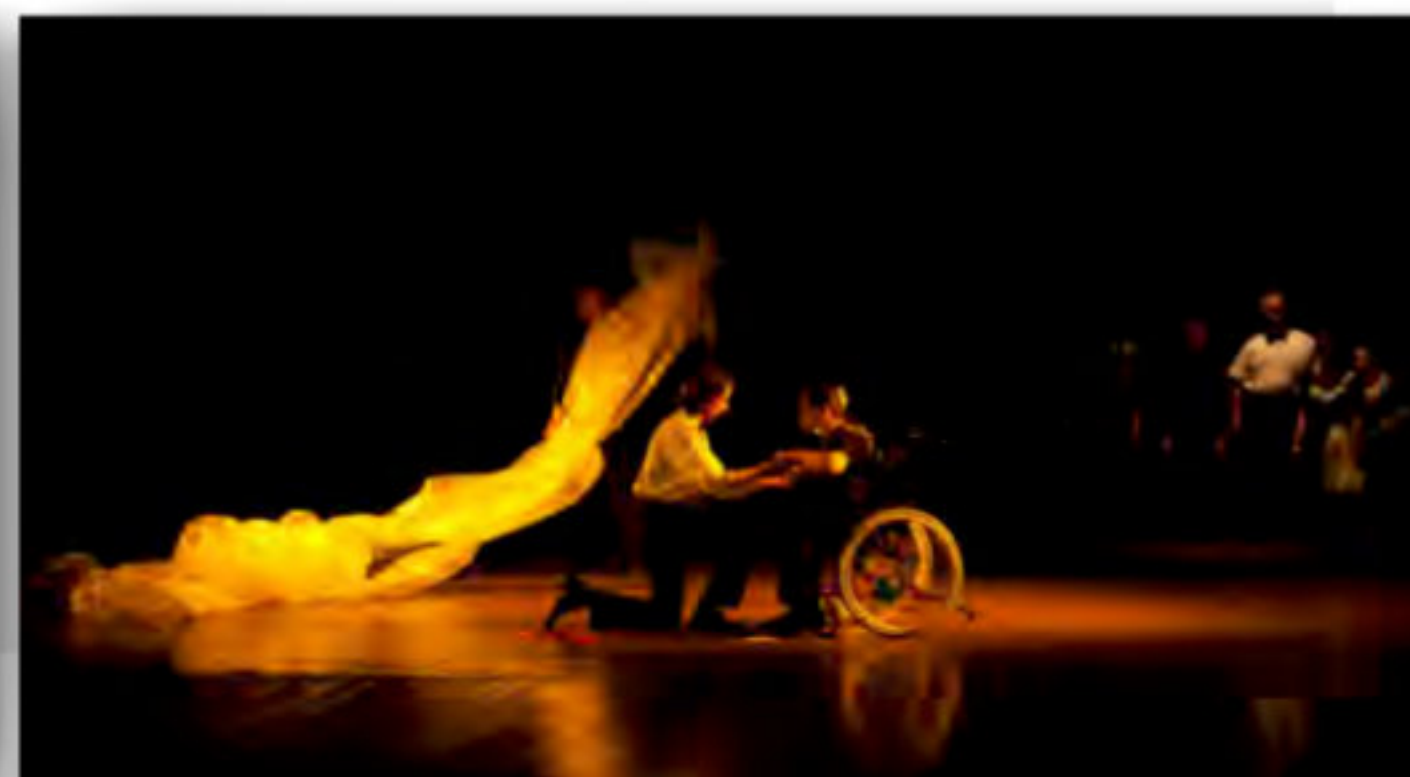
Iveta Škrípková: MOCAD(R)AMAS
Puppet Theatre At the Crossroads Banská Bystrica, Studio T.W.I.G.A.
Banská Bystrica 30 April 2008
Directed by Iveta Škrípková
From left Marianna Mackurová
Photo Dodo Samaj/Theatre Institute Archive



Andrej Kuruc – Michal Hvorecký – Peter Scherhauser: IDENTICKET
Theatre NoMantinsels Bratislava 7 November 2016
Directed by Adriana Totiková
From left Eva Sakálová
Photo Robert Tappert/Theatre NoMantinsels Archive



Viera Dubáčová et al.: PROTECTED AREA
Theatre from the Passage Banská Bystrica 22 May 2009
(premiered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA)
Directed by Viera Dubáčová
From left Theatre from the Passage company
Photo Peter Snadík/Theatre Institute Archive



Silent Sparks: RESPECTIVE
Theatre Silent Sparks Banská Bystrica 12 December 2015
Directed by Valéria Daňhová
From left Peter Vrtó, Michal Hefty, Jozef Rigo, Zuzana Knapová
Daubnerová, Tomáš Máňa
Photo Denisa Pajkošová, Mialn Bielík/Theatre Silent Sparks Archive



Uršula Kovalyk: THE DAY OF THE DEAD (DÍA DE MUERTOS)
Theatre with No Home Bratislava 4 June 2008
Directed by Patrik Krebs
From left Cecilia Maderová, Veve Székérová
Photo Patrik Krebs/Theatre with No Home Archive



George Tabori: JUBILEE
Theatre Zrakáč Bratislava 11 June 2014
Directed by Kristína Chlepková
From left Theatre Zrakáč company
Photo Theatre Zrakáč Archive



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SET DESIGN



Set design: Ľudovít Hradský
William Shakespeare: HAMLET
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava
4 February 1925
Directed by Miloš Nový
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

The works of Slovak set designers significantly influence and impact the development of the Slovak theatre in a decisive manner. The artistic quality of these works reaches beyond Slovakia and gains international attention and awards. The 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Slovak National Theatre is also the anniversary of the Slovak set design. The establishment of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava is closely associated with the first attempts at creating the set decorations. In its infancy, the set design as a profession lacked backing and the Slovak theatre made do with artists, painters and architects from the Czech artistic environment.

The basic pillars of the Slovak set design were primarily laid by architect Ľudovít Hradský, whose work influenced its formation and the following development. His most significant set design work was the scenic design for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in 1925. He used architectural principles to create a functioning set.

In the 1930s, the development of set design was also influenced by the scenic concepts of a Czech architect, set designer and teacher František Tröster. His monumental stage elements presented in various dynamic and perspective views.



Set design Otto Šujan
Franz Lehár: THE MERRY WIDOW
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 14 December 1985
Directed by Branislav Kriška
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Otto Šujan, Ján Hanák and Pavol Mária Gábor were among the first three graduates of set design in Slovakia. Otto Šujan understood the scenic space through architectural visualization. One of his basic principles included the connection of the stage with the audience.

Vladimír Suchánek often used monumental concepts and spatial modelling. He created an impressive scene for the Dostoyevsky's play *The Idiot* (Slovak National Theatre Bratislava, 1965), where he used colour in a simple, but plastic space.

Prominent Slovak set designers Jozef Ciller and Ján Zavarský are the members of the so-called *action set design* generation. Their scenic works of this type in their purest form appeared in Theatre Goose on a String in Brno, where together with director Petr Scherhauser they created remarkable and unconventional scenic solutions.



Autor scénického návrhu Vladimír Suchánek
Fiodor Michajlovič Dostojevskij: IDIOT
Slovenské národné divadlo 9. 10. 1965
Réžia Pavol Haspra
Foto Múzeum Divadelného ústavu / Projekt Digitálne múzeum

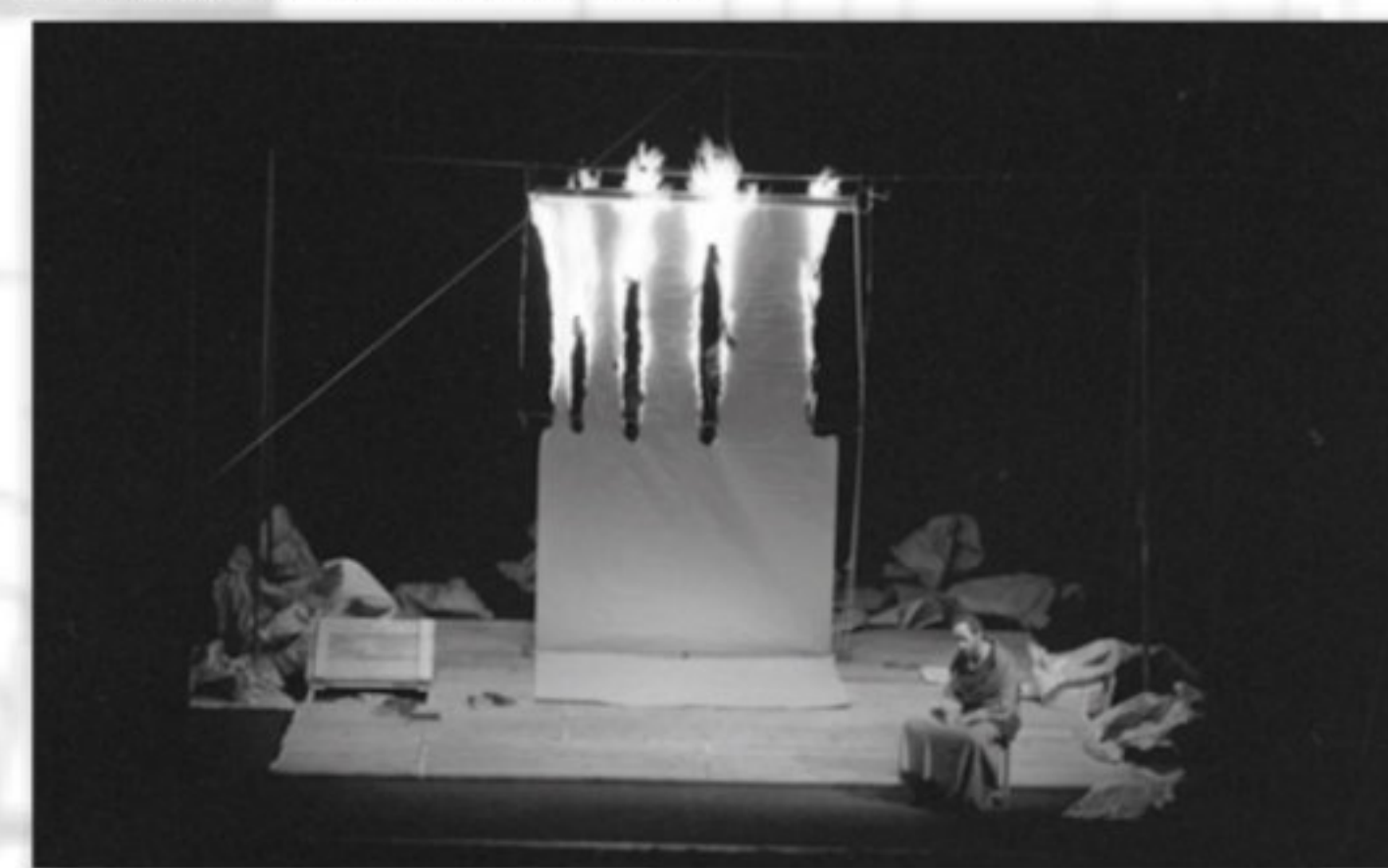


Set design Ján Zavarský
Federico García Lorca: YERMA
Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra 14 December 1996
Directed by Marián Pecko
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: EUGENE ONEGIN
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 8 March 1952
Directed by Nikolai Severianovich Dombrovski
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Set design Jozef Ciller
Bertolt Brecht: LIFE OF GALILEO
Theatre of the Slovak National Uprising Martin (today Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin),
19 January 1979
Directed by Ivan Petrovický
Photo Jaroslav Bardk/Theatre Institute Archive

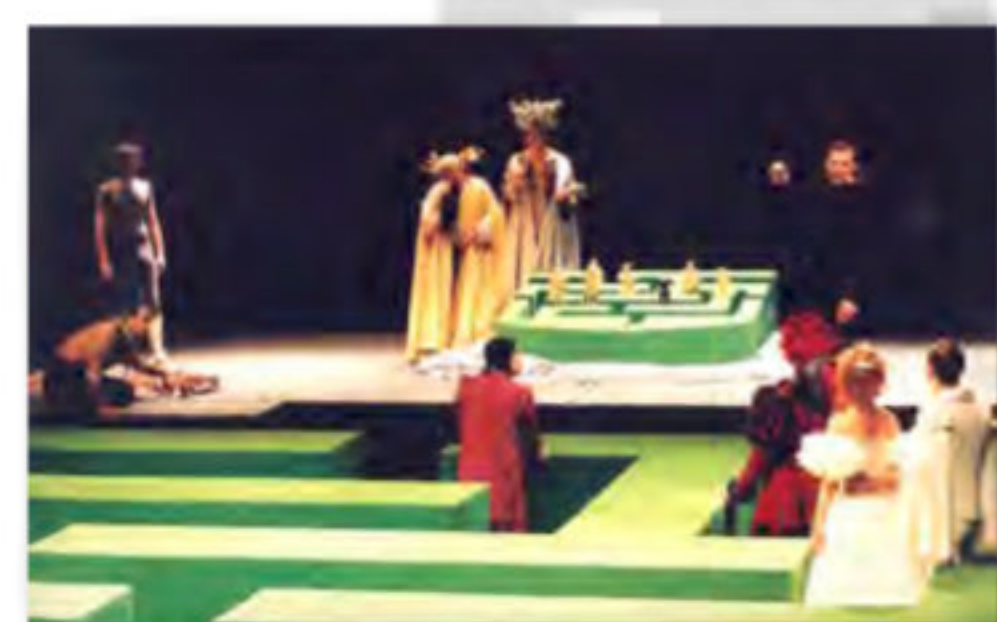


Vychodil's students also included Štefan Hudák, Tomáš Berka and Milan Ferenčík. The multi-talented Tomáš Berka was the set designer for the New Scene Theatre in Bratislava where he created many posters that significantly influenced the development of the Slovak theatre poster. In addition, he composed scenic and film music. The scenic design of Štefan Hudák was heavily characterized by collage and assemblies created from real objects. Milan Ferenčík, particularly in cooperation with director Jozef Bednárik, developed a style of significantly accentuated artistic vision.



Set design Štefan Hudák
Ivan Stodola: THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE
Alexander Duchnovič Theatre Prešov
27 June 1998
Directed by Jaroslav Sisák
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project

Scale model Milan Ferenčík
Eugen Suchoň: THE WHIRLPOOL
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava
9 December 1999
Directed by Juraj Jakubisko
Photo Theatre Institute Museum/Digital Museum Project



William Shakespeare: THE TEMPEST
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 13 May 2000
Directed by Peter Mikulík
Photo Jana Nemčiková/Theatre Institute Archive



Christoph Willibald Gluck: ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 5 December 2008
Directed by: Mariusz Treliński
Photo Jozef Barinka/Theatre Institute Archive

The scenic concepts in the creations of Aleš Votava were colour, space and light. His imagination lied in striking colour compositions, achieving remarkable spatial illusions.

Boris Kudlička cooperates with world renown directors. He created scenes for famous opera houses in Washington, New York, Frankfurt, Prague, Tokyo and others. His works are characteristic in their modern scenic expression, totally abstract design and monumental understanding of theatrical space



Costume Design



Aristophanes: THE BIRDS
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava
20 January 1929
Directed by Karel Vetter
Costume design Ján Ladvenica



Johann Strauss Jr.: THE BAT
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 27 March 1987
Directed by Karol Tóth
Costume design Ludmila Purkyňová



Ján Poničan: THE FOUR
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 11 June 1942
Costume design Ľudmila Brožmanová-Podobová
Photo Theatre Institute Archive



Peter Zvon: A DANCE OVER CRYING
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 8 March 1969
Directed by Tibor Rakovský
Costume design Helena Bezáková

Max Frisch: DON JUAN OR THE LOVE OF GEOMETRY
New Scene Theatre Bratislava 20 September 1964
Directed by Magda Husáková Lokvencová
Costume design Stanislava Vaníčkova



Alain-René Lesage: TURCARET
Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre Zvolen 8 January 1977
Directed by Martin Peterich
Costume design Margita Polónyová



Stanislava Vaníčkova based her designs on precise historical patterns. By reducing the historical elements she achieved a minimalist and civilian form of theatre costume on stage. The older generation also included **Margita Polónyová**, whose costume creations showcased the sense of character irony and exaggeration.



Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol: MARRIAGE
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 1 February 1997
Directed by Lubomír Vajdička
Costume design Milan Čorba
Photo Jana Nemčoková

Kamil Žižka - Zuzana Palenčíková: AND WE WILL WHISPER
Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin 27 March 2009
Directed by Kamil Žižka
Costume design Marija Havran
Photo Branislav Konečný



Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky: ... WE'RE PLAYING THE FOOL!
Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra 27 June 1998
Directed by Valentin Kozmenko-Delinde
Costume design Alexandra Grusková



The representatives of the middle generation, **Marija Havran** and **Alexandra Grusková**, are typical in their clean cuts, simple shapes and deliberate work with colour.

The founder of the professional costume design, teacher and costume designer **Ludmila Purkyňová** was the first to formulate the principles of costume design not only theoretically, but in practice. Purkyňová's costumes are dominated by graphic principles – planes and lines. The original handwriting of Purkyňová's first student **Helena Bezáková** is quite different from her teacher's. She designed her costumes as three-dimensional objects made of collages and by layering of various textiles.



Giuseppe Verdi: DON CARLOS
Slovak National Theatre Bratislava 21 March 1997
Directed by Vladimír Strnisko
Costume design Ľudmila Városová



Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky: FOREST
ASTORKA Korzo '90 Theatre Bratislava 25 April 1997
Directed by Roman Polák
Costume design Peter Čanecký

One of the most prominent personalities of the Slovak theatre, film and television costume design was **Milan Čorba**. His understanding of costume design involved a wider context. His creations were often influenced by fashionable designs and direct copying of historical clothing.

William Shakespeare: RICHARD III
Summer Shakespearean Festivities 2 July 2011
Directed by Marián Pecko
Costume design Eva Farkašová



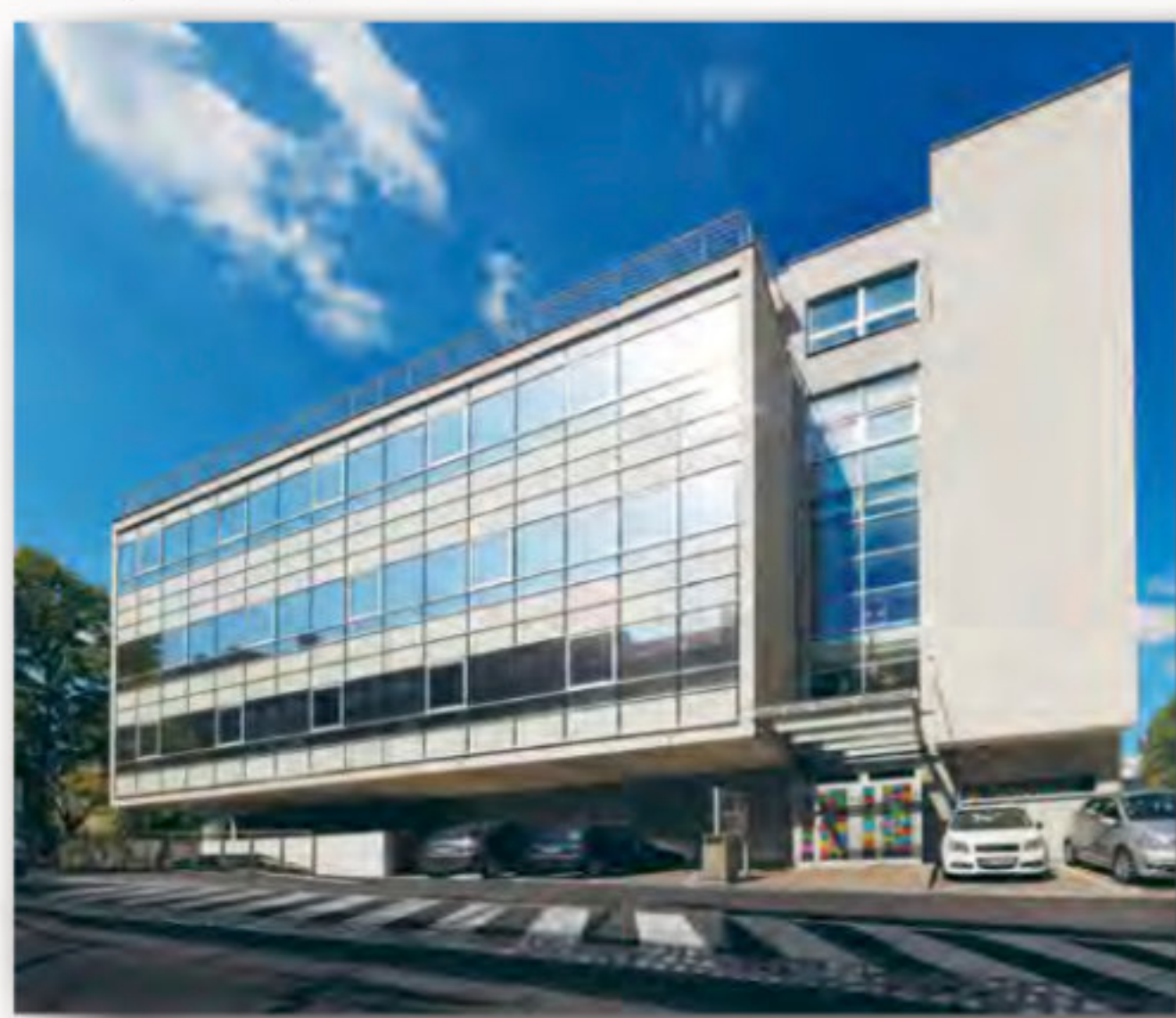
The artistic signature **Ľudmila Városová** is characterized by sophisticated imitation and spirited updating of historical stylistic elements in combination with modern artistic processes. **Peter Čanecký's** costume design involves expressive shortcuts, precise lines and thoughtful colourfulness. It looks for the ideal proportions among the theme, text, music and actor.

The puppet and dramatic theatre were heavily influenced by **Eva Farkašová**, whose works are distinctive for their creativity and ingenuity.

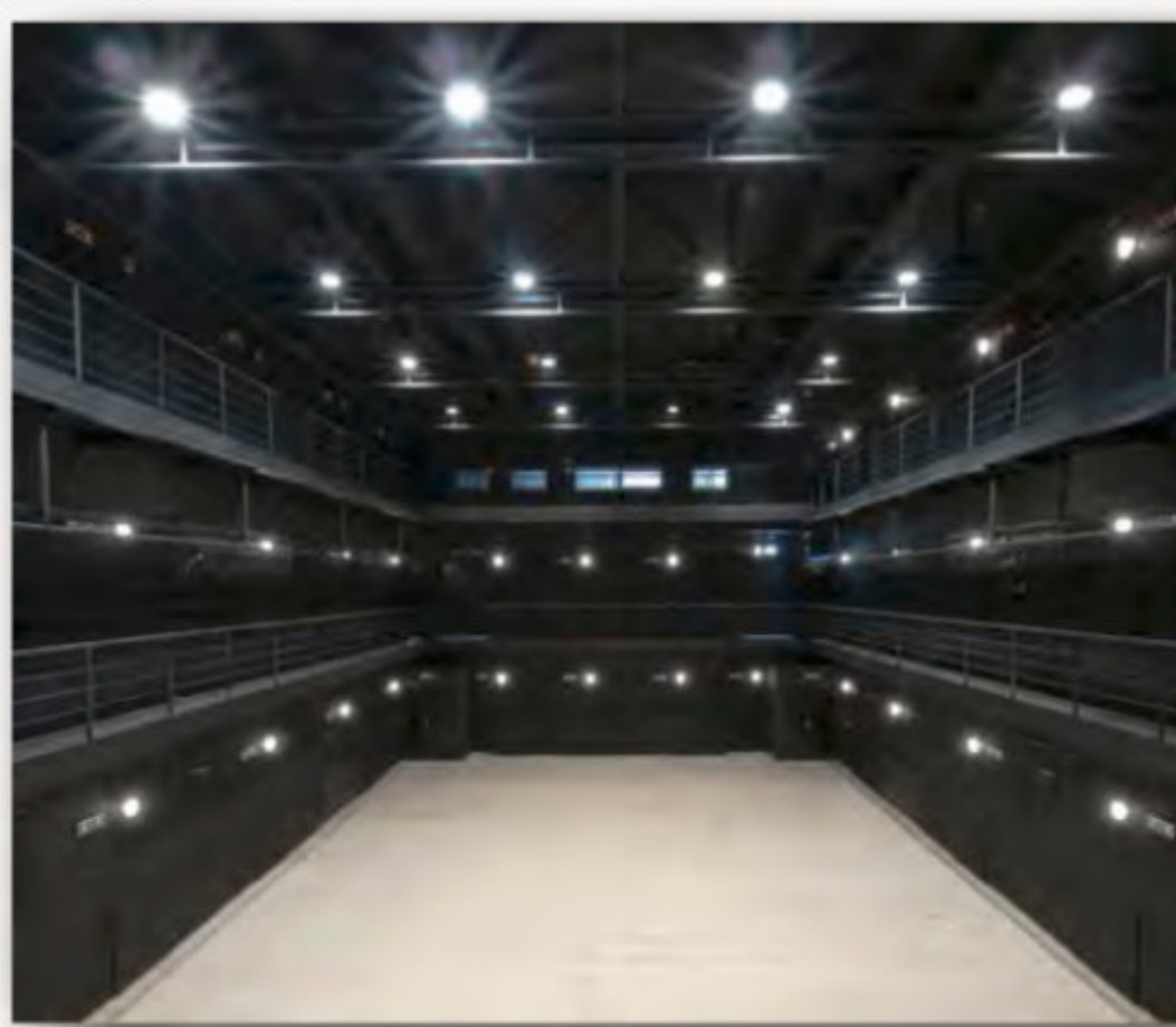
Theatre Schools

Theatre education has a rich history in Slovakia. Its beginnings are tied to 1928 when the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts opened in Slovakia. The graduates of theatre schools become the prominent personalities in the Slovak arts and culture. They create works that go above and beyond the local dimensions. In addition to a number of conservatories dedicated to music and drama teaching on the high school level, the future theatre professionals are being shaped primarily by two universities: **Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (VŠMU)** and **Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica**.

College of Theatre of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava
Photo Štefan Komorný/VŠMU Archive



Interior of the Lab Theatre
Photo Štefan Komorný/Theatre Institute Archive



The **VŠMU** has been present on the map of dramatic educational institutions since 1949. With over a thousand students annually it is not only the oldest, but also the biggest performing art school in Slovakia. Its **College of Theatre** offers studies in the essential accredited areas (acting, directing, literary management, set design, puppetry, theatre science and management), and fosters the development of all forms of art science and research through the basic and applied processes. Since 1977, the activities of the VŠMU students gained an international dimension thanks to the renown international festival of theatre schools, the Istropolitana Project. Every two years it offers a platform for the meeting of the future theatre professionals and gives them space for mutual artistic confrontations. For teaching purposes as well as the public presentation of their projects through a monthly repertoire the College of Theatre uses the Lab Theatre and also the Chapel, Burkovňa and Studio 1.

Address: Divadelná fakulta (College of Theatre), Svoradova 4, Bratislava, www.vsmu.sk

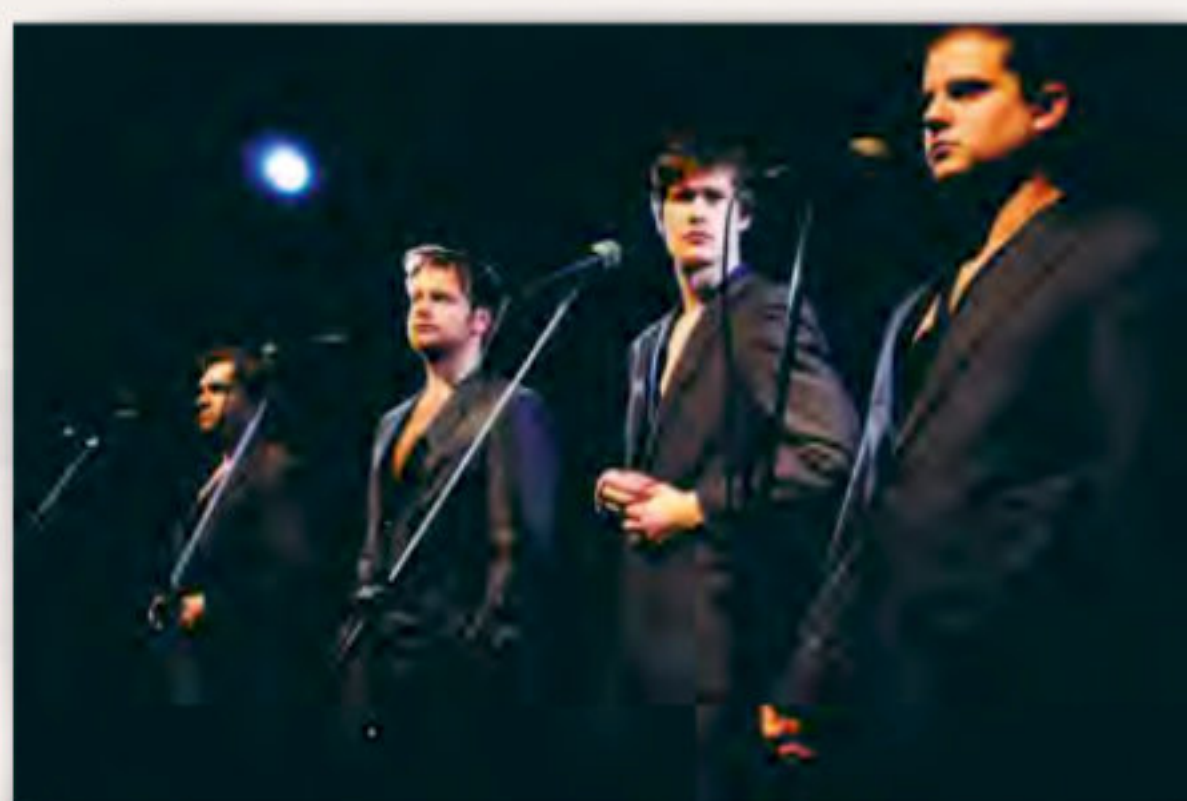
Poster of the international school festival
Istropolitana Projekt
Author of poster MADE BY VACULIK/
VŠMU Archive



Vassily Sigarev: WOLFY
Burkovňa 20 February 2012
Directed by Zuzana Galková
Photo Michal Lošonský/VŠMU Archive



Ján Luterán et al.: THERE ONCE WAS A CLASS
Small Scene of VŠMU Bratislava 23 April 2010
Directed by Ján Luterán
Photo Ján Luterán/VŠMU Archive



Martin McDonagh: THE PILLOWMAN
The Lab Theatre Bratislava 15 May 2011
Directed by Kristína Chlepková
Photo Tomáš Bokor/VŠMU Archive



College of Dramatic Arts of the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica
Photo Lubomír Viluda/AMU Archive



In 1997, the Bratislava-based VŠMU was joined by the second college for performing arts, the **Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica**. Over the twenty years of its existence, its **College of Dramatic Arts** underwent multiple transformations and today offers studies in the areas of acting, theatre literary management and directing, theatre arts. Every year an international theatre science conference is held on the premises of the college, including the international festival of theatre schools Artorium. The school owns several facilities for the presentation of the works of its students: Theatre Studio, and two external facilities, D44 and Club HaD.

Address: Fakulta dramatických umení (College of Dramatic Arts), J. Kollára 22, Banská Bystrica, www.aku.sk



Roland Schimmelpfennig: ARABIAN NIGHT
Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica 5 March 2014
Directed by Petra Kovalčíková
Photo Dominik Janovský/AMU Archive



Vassily Sigarev: WOLFY
Academy of Arts Banská Bystrica 17 December 2015
Directed by Ľuboslav Majera
Photo Dominik Janovský/AMU Archive

Festival Artorium 2019
Author of poster Samuel Borsík/AMU Archive



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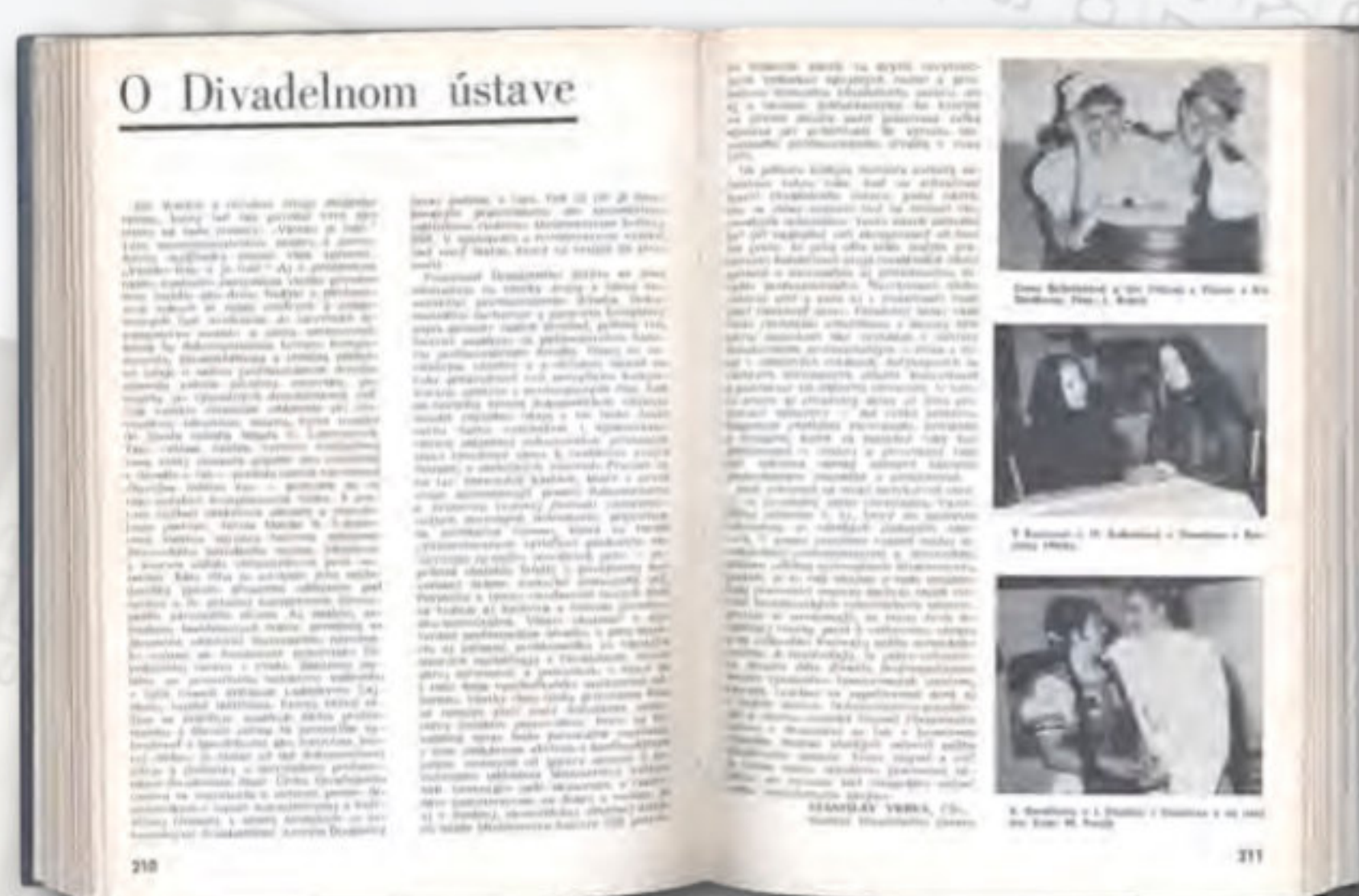
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There are several domestic theatre institutions in Slovakia and international organizations are represented as well. Since the 1960s, the Bratislava-based Theatre Institute (www.theatre.sk) with its specialized departments has been the centre of research and documentation of theatre. The primary roles of the Theatre Institute include collecting and archiving materials about theatre in a specialized archive and in the collections of the Theatre Institute Museum, as well as theatrical research, which is performed in the Theatre Research Centre. It regularly organizes exhibitions and participates in international exhibition projects. As a printing house, it publishes original and translated works, plus the single professional monthly dedicated specifically to professional theatre – magazine *kôd – concretely about theatre*. The Theatre Institute operates a laboratory theatre space Studio 12, which produces projects such as Baby Teeth (incubator for budding artists) and presentations of contemporary art. It organizes festival New Drama, which includes the competition Drama and Dramatically Young, establishes international cooperations, and facilitates presentations of Slovak theatre internationally.

The Institute for Theatre and Film Research of Slovak Academy of Sciences (www.udfv.sav.sk) conducts mostly research and publishing activities, organizes conferences and presentations about theatre on a regular basis and publishes a theatre science journal *Slovak Theatre*. The National Centre of Culture and Further Education (www.nocka.sk) on the other hand is an umbrella organization for the activities of non-professional theatres, particularly in cooperation with the regional structures, organizing competitive showcases that culminate in the Scenic Harvest festival in Martin. It also publishes magazine *Stage*, which together with *Slovak Theatre* are among the theatre periodicals with the longest continuity in Slovakia.

Many international theatre organizations are also represented in Slovakia – the Slovak Centre of AICT is a branch of the International Association of Theatre Critics (AICT/IATC). The centre organizes international exchange programs, underwrites the theatre reflection program Theatre Monitoring (www.monitoringdivadel.sk), presents the AICT Lifetime Achievement Award for contribution in the area of theatre. In 2020, in cooperation with the Theatre Institute it organizes the AICT-IATC World Congress International Conference. Slovakia is a member of the ITI – International Theatre Institute, International Puppetry Association UNIMA, International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People ASSITEJ, and the European Theatre Convention ETC. Many independent non-governmental organizations work in Slovakia as well, such as Contemporary Dance Association, Theatrical Nitra Association, PlaST – Slovak Contemporary Dance Platform, plus many others. Independent cultural centres are a part of the Antenna network (www.antenanet.sk). The key institution for the financial support of independent theatre and performance arts is the Art Support Fund (www.fpu.sk), and partly also the Literary Fund (www.litfond.sk). The copyright agenda for theatres is handled by the LITA organization (www.lita.sk).



The Theatre Institute was founded in 1961, first as a branch of the Czech Theatre Institute. In 1969 it achieved the new statute of an independent cultural and research institution.

VRBKA, Stanislav. About the Theatre Institute. In *Stage*, year 1, no. 7, 1969, page 210.

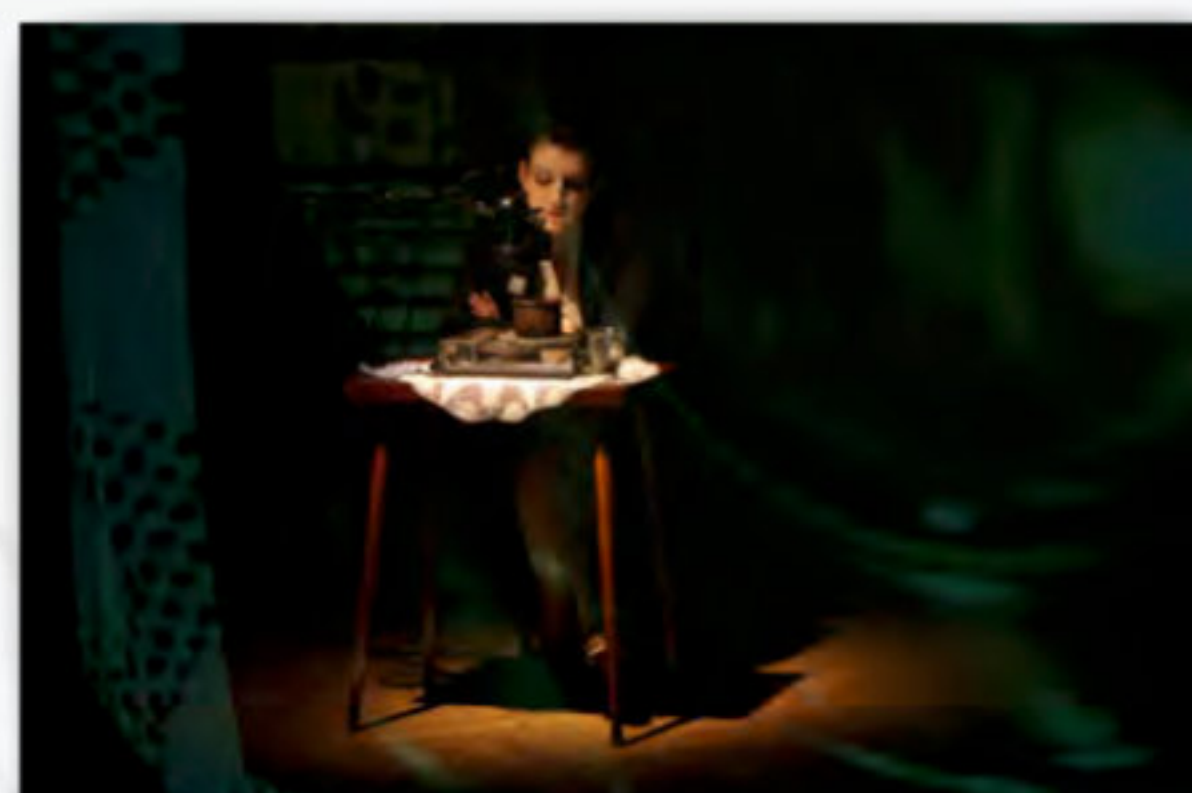


In the so-called research room of the Theatre Institute the scientists work with archive materials stored within various archival deposits and collections.

Research Room of the Theatre Institute Photo Dana Tomečková. / Theatre Institute Archive

Studio 12 saw the development of the successful and prize-winning play of Sláva Daubnerová *M.H.L.* about Magda Husáková Lokvencová, the first female director and also the first documentarian of the Theatre Department of the Slovak Museum in Bratislava, which later morphed into the Theatre Institute.

Sláva Daubnerová as Magda Husáková Lokvencová. *M.H.L.* Studio 12. Directed by Sláva Daubnerová. Photo Branislav Konečný. / Theatre Institute Archive



The Institute for Theatre and Film Research of Slovak Academy of Sciences has been publishing a specialized journal *Slovak Theatre* since 1957. Currently the full text content of this quarterly magazine is available online.

Cover page no. 2/1968, journal *Slovak Theatre*.



Scenic Harvest, organized by the National Centre of Culture and Further Education, is one of the oldest amateur theatre festivals in Europe. In 2022 it will celebrate its centennial. Promotional poster from the 97th year of the Scenic Harvest festival.

Photo National Centre of Culture and Further Education Archive

Map of the independent culture network Antenna which interconnects the Slovak cultural centres and organizations in order to strengthen the position of independent art in the society.



In the autumn of 2018, the ETC International Theatre Conference was held in the Slovak National Theatre, which is a part of the European Theatre Convention network.

Iveta Škrípová participates in the ETC conference "Diversity in Action" in the Slovak National Theatre. Photo Peter Chvostek. / Slovak National Theatre Archive



In 2015, the Slovak Centre of AICT started to give an annual SC AICT Award to theatre critics, historians, theatre researchers, translators and other personalities for their lifetime contribution in their field of expertise. Prominent theatre scientist, Professor Vladimír Štefko receives the SC AICT Award 2018.

Photo Ctibor Bachratý. / Theatre Institute Archive



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Slovak Theatre Criticism

The first sheepish signs of theatre reflection in Slovakia can be spotted before 1920, however, the expansion of professional theatre criticism has been naturally associated with the establishment of professional theatre. The developmental stages of contemplation and writing about theatre copied the curves of theatrical development as such, although the criticism itself often became a target of criticism for lagging behind the dynamic changes in creation. From the awkward beginnings through gradual professionalization in the 1940s, stagnation and servile builder doctrine in the 1950s, upswing in the "golden" 1960 and normalization (self)censorship to the modern existential fights in the era of freedom – the road of the Slovak criticism and theatre studies was quite twisted. All time periods were characterized by polarization and side-taking based on world views (religious or party affiliations), culminating in the 1990s when the disputes about the quality of theatre were suppressed by politically motivated controversies.

In addition to milestones, such as the foundation of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (1949) and the Theatre Institute (1961), criticism was able to develop also thanks to the existence of professional periodicals – starting with *Our Theatre* (since 1928) through *Film and Theatre* (1957), *Slovak Theatre* (1957), *Stage* (1959) and others, up to the brief existence of a biweekly *Theatre at the Turn of the Eras*. The 1990s were turbulent in this regard, dominated by the fight for media space, which was manifested by the rapid emergence and quick extinction of several professional magazines. On the other hand, the new millennium brought a certain reset, which helped stabilize the situation. The journal *kød* – concretely about theatre, under the auspices of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava, has been attempting a complex reflection on the activities in the area of performance arts at home and abroad since 2007. Specialized periodicals focusing on dance theatre or opera were founded, electronic platforms for criticism developed consistently with current trends. Male and female critics (this profession saw a significant feminization particularly in the last three decades after the revolution) in Slovakia, just like everywhere around the globe, searching for and finding the ways to defend the importance and *raison d'être* of criticism in the current dynamic era of enormous technological advancements and overwhelming stimuli in the real and virtual worlds.

One of the first professional periodicals dedicated to theatre started to come out in 1928. *Our Theatre* transformed from magazine *Slovak Amateur* (founded in 1925) to a journal aimed at both non-professional theatre and all theatre as such.



The biweekly *Dialog* was a bridge between two eras, published from January 1989 to the last volume published in December 1990. Thanks to the timing, the magazine managed to capture the course of the revolutionary events of November 1989 in the area of theatre and culture in a unique way.



The journal *kød* – concretely about theatre arose from the need to stabilize the dramatic reflection in an era of worsening situation in the publishing of independent theatre periodicals. Since 2007, it has been the only professional monthly dedicated to professional theatre, particularly dramatic theatre, as well as music, dance and puppet theatre.



Theatre Monitoring (www.monitoringdivadel.sk) is a project of the Slovak Centre of AICT (International Association of Theatre Critics). It is one of the pioneering initiatives in terms of moving the theatre reflection to the internet.



The critical platform at the Touches and Bonds festival is the space where the creators and critics can meet in a mutual dialog.



Magazine *Stage*, devoted to non-professional theatre, facilitates the reflection of non-professional plays and events. The individual volumes have themes, no. 5/2002 was dedicated to theatre criticism, where the theatre studies scholar Ján Jaborník published his comprehensive study about the development of criticism.



Poll about theatre criticism published in journal *Intermagazine* about Theatre in the early 1990.



Festival New Drama 2016 hosted an academic conference *Quo Vadis Theatre Criticism*, *Theatre Magazines* with presentations of critics and editors from the Slovak and Czech theatre periodicals who discussed the state of the current criticism.

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theatre.sk Theatre Festivals

The tradition of theatre festivals in Slovakia dates back to 1923 when the first year of Theatre Competition was held. It was a nationwide showcase of amateur theatres under the auspices of Matica slovenská, but its establishment and operation had significant influence over the development of the spectator community and its demands on the theatre. In the 1950s this showcase underwent multiple organizational changes, and from 1967 it has been known as Scenic Harvest. In 2020, the 98th year of this oldest festival of non-professional theatres in Europe will be held in Martin.

Theatre festivals and showcases offer their audiences an opportunity to see a variety of theatre techniques and forms concentrated in a small space. The audiences can compare different interpretations and glances at theatre, society, man and his problems. While the domestic festivals and showcases bridge the differences between the regions, international festivals help discover and understand other cultures.

Festivals have been hugely important for the development of the Slovak professional theatre culture. Even though many festivals arose from ideological motivations, they still supported the development of theatre culture and positively stimulated the quality of artistic creation. The festivals helped many theatres and companies to go beyond the limits of psychological realism and escape the dramatic stereotypes on the way to modern theatre approaches. These assumptions still apply to opinion-forming festivals today, regardless of whether the plays are selected by the festival directors or are nominated by the theatre. Participation in festivals with critical selection helps the theatres stabilize their internal environment and find their place on the theatre market. Opinion-forming festivals become an important ingredient in the development and stabilization of theatre culture in Slovakia.

The oldest showcases of professional theatres on the territory of Czechoslovakia included **Theatrical Harvest** (1948 – 1961) and **Theatre Festival and Seminar Karlovy Vary** (1959 – 1962 and 1967). The specific feature of Theatrical Harvest was that the jury travelled around the country to select performances that then competed for the highest prizes during the showcase in Prague.

The showcases in Karlovy Vary had a theme – each year was dedicated to a different form of theatre art or a directly to a particular theatre (in 1961 to the Theatre Company of the Slovak National Theatre, and in 1967 to musical entertainment theatres).



Plakát / Archivum Institutu Teatralnego



Zvolen Castle Plays (1973) is the oldest open-air festival in Slovakia that blended opera with dramatic theatre. This summer the Zvolen Castle courtyard will be the site of its 47th year, now only dedicated to dramatic theatre.

www.digt.sk/festival-zamocke-hry-zvolenskej/
Poster Svetozár Mydlo/Theatre Institute Museum



Theatrical Nitra (1992) is known specifically as an international festival primarily dedicated to dramatic works. However, often times it includes other theatre forms (dance, physical or opera theatre, performance forms). In recent years the literary direction of the festival has been trying to declare themes for individual years and to foster international projects.

www.nitrafest.sk
Festival Catalogue/Theatre Institute Archive



In 2001, the **Summer Shakespearean Festivities** came to Bratislava for the first time, to the courtyard of the Academy of Performing Arts. In 2005, this originally Czech project picked up a Slovak partner. From the initiative of Marián Zedníkovič, this year saw the premiere of the Slovak production of *The Merchant of Venice*. The festival expanded its spectrum of open air summer events not only in Bratislava and Prague, but also within the regions in both countries.

www.wshakespeare.sk
Festival Poster using the photo of Pavel Mára/Theatre Institute Museum



The Theatre Institute has been organizing festival **New Drama** (2005) in Bratislava. It focuses on the presentation of Slovak plays of new and modern dramatic texts of domestic and international origin. An appealing and attractive part of the festival are the announcement of the results of the competition for the best dramatic text Drama, foreign playwright – patron of the festival, or Focus highlighting the dramatic works of a selected country.

www.novadrama.sk
Festival Catalogue Martin Mistrík/Theatre Institute Archive

Crystallization of Theatrical Nitra as an international festival created a vacuum in Slovakia for the presentation of the works of Slovak theatres. This void was filled by the festival **Touches and Bonds** (2005) in Martin that took its name from the legendary Martin play of director Roman Polák. As part of a side show it creates room for the presentation of school plays, street theatre and plays intended for children.

www.dotykyaspojenia.sk
Poster Ján Novosedliak/Theatre Institute Museum



The **Festival of Central European Theatres** (2006) has been bringing interesting theatre productions from Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia to Košice audiences. It is indirectly tied to the theatre showcases and festivals dedicated to the works of the Visegrád Four countries.

www.kosicefest.eu
Festival Poster / Theatre Institute Museum



Eurokontext (2014 – preliminary year) is one of the youngest festivals in Slovakia. At the same time, it is a festival of multiple genres – years of dramatic theatre alternate with years focusing on opera and dance theatre. The festival sponsored by the Slovak National Theatre takes place in Bratislava. Since its establishment this festival creates room for the presentation and confrontation of the Slovak and international works.

www.eurokontext.sk
Promotional festival material/Theatre Institute Archive



Puppets' Bystrica (1974) is the oldest festival of puppet theatres in Slovakia. It is a festival with international participation and an exceptionally flexible literary direction that is sensitive to any changes in the social and theatre environment. The festival takes place on two levels – works for children and works for adults, and in recent years thanks to the Banská Bystrica Tour project it has expanded to multiple cities and towns within the region. Other interesting puppet theatre festivals include **Puppets' Žilina** (2009) dedicated exclusively to the presentation of domestic works, and the festival of performance art schools focusing on puppet plays in the Visegrád Four countries in Nitra **Meeting – Stretnutie – Setkání – Spotkanie – Találgozás** (2000).

www.bdnr.sk, www.sdn.sk
Poster Ján Novosedliak/Theatre Institute Museum



Bratislava in Movement is the oldest dance festival in Slovakia. From the beginning it was created as an international dance festival devoted to contemporary dance. In addition to the works of international dancers the festival also presents the creations of Slovak dancers working both at home and abroad. An interesting project was the festival Four Days of Dance for You, today Creative Days for You, which is open to the broader dance community and contributes to the building of a strong professional dance base.

www.abp.sk, www.studiotanca.sk/festivaly.html, Festival
Poster/Theatre Institute Museum



Nu Dance Fest (2006) is an international festival of contemporary dance that highlights the creations of Slovak choreographers. The goal of the festival is to introduce the latest trends in contemporary dance and physical theatre, multi-genre performances and high quality conceptual works with their own opinions. Original festivals of new theatre and dance also include **KioSK**, which takes place in mid-summer in the cultural centre Žilina-Záriečie Station.

www.nudancefest.sk, www.kioskfestival.sk
Festival Poster/Nu Dance Fest Archive

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