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# PROGRAMME

## 12 – 14 MAY 2026

Tuesday 12 May  
Studio 12  
4 pm

### PETR ZELENKA

masterclass of the Czech  
playwright and theatre  
director  
(60 min.)

Wednesday 13 May  
Studio 12  
9 am – 4 pm

### THEATRE AND CIVIC DIALOGUE

International conference

Wednesday 13 May  
Studio 12  
7 pm

### TRIATHLON

Stage reading of the  
shortlisted texts of the 2025  
DRAMA competition  
(120 min.)

Thursday 14 May  
Studio 12  
4 pm

### NEW/ DRAMA IN THE CHAOS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Discussion with the  
dramaturgy board about the  
contemporary theatre  
(90 min.)

# ABOUT LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES

I have been involved with the Nová dráma/New Drama festival for almost my entire professional career. I spent most of my time working as a coordinator of the dramaturgy board, overseeing dramaturgical plans and organizing visits to theatres in Bratislava and around the country. I saw the festival as a place to showcase new trends in staging, and to present experiments in writing and directing — for me, the festival was an open platform that allowed me to reflect on various types of limits and boundaries: theatrical, interdisciplinary, and audience-related. I would never have imagined that the most impactful limitation would be funding.

When Vladislava Fekete stepped down after twenty years at the helm of both the festival and the Theatre Institute, the institution was not in a financial position to seek a new direction or vision that would offer the festival any fresh perspectives. For the festival's twenty-second, economically consolidated

edition, it was necessary to preserve the status quo. The shrinking festival team demonstrated undiminished enthusiasm and determination to continue their work. The programme, compiled by the dramaturgy board, could be broadly described as centering on the theme of preserving human dignity. The selected productions address such issues as care for the elderly, violence against women, the marginalization or neglect of certain groups of people, as well as the way our society treats moral and intellectual authorities.

For the first time in the festival's history, the Theatre With No Home was selected for the main programme, with the production **Medusa in the Kitchen**. For marginalized groups for whom working in theatre is primarily a form of therapy, simply participating in the festival adds significant value. It affirms their social relevance, recognizes their work, and makes them part of the professional field. We were also planning on transporting audiences to the Pôtoň Theatre in Bátovce, not only to see the production **She Left Behind a Beautiful Garden**, but also to get acquainted with their artistic-residential centre, which they operate in the countryside. We intended to introduce the work of established and recognized directors in the main programme — including Rastislav Ballek (**text LAJČIAK**, Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav Theatre), Júlia Rázusová (**OTA**, Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen), the increasingly popular and in-demand Dávid Paška (**ENDSIEG // DOBYTIE**, Small Stage Theatre), Czech visiting artists in Slovak theatres — Kamila Polívková (**Ghosts Are Only Human**, Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre), Anna Klimešová and Boris Jedinák (**Tartuffe**, Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin), and the devised production **Let's Demand the Impossible** rehearsed by the unique artistic team of the Peter Mankovecký Theatre in collaboration with students of the Academy of Performing Arts, or Adam Dragun's documentary-style piece **ALEX** (Project Batyskaf and ARCHA+). The selected productions were to be assessed by an international jury, and the winner was to be awarded

the festival Grand Prix. One of the festival's main goals was also to introduce Slovak theatre to international audiences, enabling them not only to establish mutual professional contacts but also to gain international critical feedback on Slovak theatre and raise awareness about it. After all, our performing arts have always been — and continue to be — inspiring in both form and content.

Another regular feature of the festival was the „Focus“ section, in which we presented the drama of a single country through translations of selected plays into Slovak, in expert lectures, and via staged readings.

This year, we had to give all of that up.

According to the terms of our contract, the Ministry of Culture was expected to release funding for the festival under two priority categories by the end of March. However, this did not happen, and we have therefore decided to act responsibly and cancel the main programme. We cannot afford to put ourselves, the participating theatres, or our funding body at risk. However, to maintain the continuity of the event, we have prepared a supporting programme titled Fragments of New Drama. In choosing this new — and, we hope, temporary — title, we drew inspiration from this year's visual motif: a flag as a symbol of autonomy and the identification of one's own space for fostering creativity. For us, fragments represent small parts, islands of temporary isolation, which will soon come together again to form the original whole. This year's programme features specialized events open to the general public: a masterclass by the Czech playwright and director Petr Zelenka, an international conference, a discussion with the dramaturgy board, and the Triathlon — a presentation of the winners of the 2025 DRAMA competition to find the best original dramatic text. We have maintained a dedicated space for reflection on theatre.

I would like to invite you to join us this year to discuss and explore the boundaries of theatre's commitment, as well as its role and functions. I invite you to the Fragments of New Drama.

**Dária F. Fehérová**

Director of the Nová dráma/New Drama festival



# MESSAGE

# TELLING OUR OWN STORY



This past year has been extraordinary. For the first time in decades, we are beginning to seriously question the meaningfulness of the US foreign policy, the state of the American democracy, and the sound judgment — or even basic sanity — of their political representatives. I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to another American phenomenon which, though often overlooked, is of fundamental importance to the entire world: the export of American films and audiovisual programs in general.

For well over a century, America has sought dominance in a domain that European civilization would call culture, but which America itself views as a commodity — storytelling. The pursuit of quick and guaranteed maximum profit, which has led to enormous uniformity of goods over the last fifty years, has had the same effect on American commercially produced stories. Today, these stories are mostly created by companies based in California and New York, populated by American characters, and have gradually flooded the entire planet.

Under the pretext of free competition, American exporters have been exporting this „merchandise“ all over the world for decades, while at the same time fiercely resisting the import of foreign stories onto the American soil. For the past hundred years or so, stories have thus flowed in only one direction, and after 1989, we, the Eastern European audience, could witness this ourselves (sadly, the same situation also affected most of the so-called popular music).

In other words, under the guise of free competition — which is, in fact, nothing more than a trade war — the American film industry has launched an all-out assault on every form of **non-American** cinema on the planet.

In a typical European country today, seventy percent or more of the films shown in cinemas are American. Countries are considered lucky if domestic productions account for at least a quarter of the films shown in theatres. The remaining five percent include all of the movies from **the rest of the world!**

The situation is similar on streaming platforms. This is certainly not acceptable, and the fact that we have grown accustomed to it and pushed the problem aside does not mean that it is not having grave consequences for us.

One of the inalienable rights of individuals and nations is disappearing — the right to tell one's own story. Every day we are bombarded with so many American stories that there is no room left for our own. Not in our movie theatres, nor — and this is worse — in our mental capacity. Little by little, the direct connection between a country, its people, and the stories they tell has faded away.

Telling one's story means situating oneself in space and time — that is, within a narrative that will have a beginning, a middle, and an end, one that may even offer some catharsis, relief and redemption from the story's transcendent effect. It means catching a glimpse of where we've come from and where we're going and having the opportunity to reflect on the **meaning** of the journey. Without such stories, we might end up feeling lost. Our existence will seem meaningless, confusing, or random. Whatever the case, the result is depressing.

Although this is one of the most alarming present-day phenomena, both the public and experts pay hardly any attention to it. This is partly because the United States is our long-standing and highly valued ally. However, if this alliance is currently undergoing a certain re-evaluation, it would be great to use this opportunity to also re-examine American audiovisual hegemony. For decades, discussing restrictions on imports of American audiovisual productions was taboo. In the 1930s, Czechoslovakia attempted to do so in an effort to boost the revenue of the Barrandov Film Studios. The reaction from American diplomats, however, was uncompromising, and after a couple of years, everything returned to the same old ways. Today, the EU could be one of the entities to initiate a review of the existing conditions. Another reason for the invisibility of this problem is the current paradigm, which operates under the imperative of globalism. In this case, however,

the goal should not be to be global, but rather to find the courage and opportunity to **be local**.

I could not have come up with this critical perspective had I not remained **outside** the film industry and kept my standpoint as a European playwright. European theatre is a space that has successfully resisted the Americanization of storytelling, even if this often happens on an unconscious level. Despite the strong presence of American authors in our repertoires, contemporary theatre serves as a platform where **local** stories can be told (or American stories can be interpreted in a local fashion, thereby making them relevant to local audiences). At least in countries where so-called repertory theatres still exist — that is, permanent companies in theatres established or supported by city districts, cities, or regions. Hopefully, Slovakia is still one of these countries. Much has been written about the irreplaceable nature of theatre. I'd just like to add another piece to that picture: theatre is the last oasis where a person can use a story to identify with their immediate surroundings, community, country, homeland, and, last but not least, with themselves.

**Petr Zelenka**

# M A S T E R C L A S S

Tuesday 12 May  
Studio 12  
4 pm

## PETR ZELENKA

Masterclass of the Czech playwright and theatre director

The difference between writing for theatre and film. Differences in theatre and film practice. The different passage of time in theatre and film, the significance of the intermission in theatre. Working with themes in theatrical texts and film. The difference between American and European understandings of storytelling. Why we are ashamed of liking certain stories, and why some important stories bore us. The audience's identification with a character on the one hand, and identification with the meaning of the story on the other. Catharsis.

### Petr Zelenka (1967)

Czech playwright, screenwriter, film and theatre director and translator.

In 1991, he graduated from the Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague with a degree in screenwriting and dramaturgy. He worked as a dramaturg at Barrandov Film Studios. Between 1990 and 1996, the Czech Television produced four of his television plays. His directorial debut came in 1993 with the fictional documentary movie **Visací zámek**.

He wrote screenplays for and directed several feature films, many of which were also distributed internationally and won prestigious international film awards, such as the Crystal Globe, the Czech Lion, or the Award of the Czech Film Critics: **Mňága – Happy End** (1996), **Buttoners** (1997), **Loners** (2000), **Year of the Devil** (2002), **Wrong Side Up** (2005), **The Karamazovs** (2008), **Lost in Munich** (2015), **Droneman** (2020). **The Karamazovs** were nominated by the Czech Film Academy to compete for the Academy Awards in the international movie category. Zelenka is also the author of several short films or series (e. g. **Therapy I – III**, **Dubbing Street** or **Limits**).

Zelenka wrote a number of theatre plays, some of which he also stage directed: **Tales of Common Insanity** (2001), **Train Departures** (2004), **Teremin** (2005), **Coming Clean** (2007), **Endangered Species** (2011), **Dubbing Street** (2012), **Job Interviews** (2014), **Sherlock Holmes** (2015), **The Elegance of a Molecule** (2018), **Da Vinci** (2021), **Beckham** (2021), **Fifty** (2022), **Frogs** (2024) and **Amateurs** (2025). Zelenka won the Alfréd Radok Award for the best original play in 2001 for the **Tales of Common Insanity** and the same award in 2007 for **Coming Clean**. His plays have been translated into numerous world languages, and some have been published as books, for example, in the French edition *Les Solitaires Intempestifs*.

As a playwright, he creates a world that stands at the intersection of reality, fiction, and distortion. He works with elements of the absurd, hyperbole,

authorial distancing, and dark humour. He explores the paradoxes of our time, reflecting on human existence in the present as well as the peculiarities of everyday life.

As a director, he worked for the National Theatre in Prague, the Dejvice Theatre, Teatr na Woli and Teatr Dramaticzny in Warsaw, Teatr Stary in Krakow, or the National Theatre in Sofia. His plays were staged in many other Czech and European theatres.

Zelenka's plays produced in Slovakia include **Tales of Common Insanity** (Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, 2002; State Theatre Košice, 2013) and **Job Interviews** (City Theatre of Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav, 2016). In 2004, he directed his own play **Train Departures** at the ASTORKA Korzo '90 Theatre. At the end of this season, the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre will present his play **Amateurs**, directed by Eduard Kudláč.

Interpreted into English.



# T R I A T H L O N

# TRIATHLON

**Wednesday 13 May**  
**Studio 12**  
**7 pm**

**Stage readings of texts shortlisted for the 2025 DRAMA competition — a contest of original drama texts written in Slovak and Czech**

The Triathlon was first held twenty-five years ago as an attempt to present the texts of Slovak (and, since 2010, also Czech) plays shortlisted for the DRAMA competition in the form of a stage reading. Since 2005, the Triathlon has been a part of the Nová dráma/New Drama festival. The 2025 DRAMA competition is held by the Theatre Institute and co-organized by the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre, the Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava, the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen, the JORIK Stage of the Puppet Theatre of the Košice Region, the Drama Department of the National Theatre in Prague (Czech Republic), and the Theatre in Dlouhá, also in Prague. The competition's partner is the Slovak Radio and Television — Radio Devín. This year, the Triathlon will continue the tradition of presenting new authors. The event aims to spark audiences' interest in contemporary dramatic works

and to freshen up the ways these works are staged. The shortlisted texts will be presented by the creative team in the form of a stage reading.

This year's Triathlon will again include meetings with the authors, the director of the stage reading, as well as with the expert jury of the 2025 DRAMA competition, to discuss the possibilities and boundaries of contemporary Slovak and Czech drama and to talk about drama contests in general.

Together 58 competing dramatic texts were accepted for the 26th DRAMA competition — out of which 27 were written in Slovak and 31 in Czech.

This year's jury included the following members: Róbert Štefančík (dramaturgy lecturer at the Drama Department of the National Theatre in Prague), Miriam Kičiňová (director of the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre), Darina Abrahámová (dramaturg of the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre), Daniel Majling (dramaturg of the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre), Lukáš Kopas (artistic director of the Puppet Theatre of the Košice Region), Jakub Molnár (dramaturg of the Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava), and Andrea Domeová (dramaturg of the ASTORKA Korzo '90 Theatre and head of the Theatre Institute's Publishing Centre).

The name of the winner of the 2025 DRAMA competition will be announced on 13 May 2026 during the Triathlon, after the stage reading. During the ceremony, prizes will be awarded also by the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre, the Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava, the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen, the JORIK Stage of the Puppet Theatre of the Košice Region, the Drama Department of the National Theatre in Prague, the Theatre in Dlouhá in Prague, the Studio 12 platform of the Theatre Institute, and by the competition partner Radio Devín.

This year, the Triathlon preparations will be carried out by the young director and playwright Martina Havierová, who is a co-founder of the independent Panoptikum Theatre.

**Martina Havierová** graduated from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where she majored in theatre dramaturgy. As a director and dramaturg, she has worked mostly in independent theatres and has been interested primarily in devised theatre and the staging of original dramatic texts or adaptations of older works. She is the author of several dramatic texts that were staged in devised productions or adapted into radio plays. Her dramatic text **Laura and Her (Our) World** won the Radio Devín Award and the Studio 12 Award in the 2020 DRAMA competition. In addition to plays, she occasionally writes prose and poetry, for which she won the 2020 Rudolf Fabry Prize.

**The Panoptikum Theatre** is an independent professional theatre currently led by the dramaturg and producer Petra Nižnanská and the director, playwright, and dramaturg Martina Havierová. It focuses on staging original works and putting on socially engaged productions. In addition to its theatrical activities, the Panoptikum Theatre also organizes artistic and community events that serve as a platform for presenting the work of both professional and amateur artists. The theatre has staged such productions as **Find Ten Differences** (2023), **Spare Your Tears** (2023), **Goat Milk or You Can't Knock Your Head Against a Brick Wall** (2024), and **Orestes, Where Are You?** (2025).

# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 13 May  
Studio 12  
9 am – 4 pm

## THEATRE AND CIVIC DIALOGUE

Since ancient Greece, theatre has served as an open platform where artistic means are used to explore human relationships, values, responsibility, and the way society functions. It allows the audience to ponder different perspectives and fosters cultured public discourse within the safe and aesthetic framework of an artistic experience. Unlike other art forms, it is unique in its topicality, vitality, authenticity, and the immediacy of its connection with the audience. Theatre responds to social impulses, historical events, and current issues. As a form of art that is accessible to the public, it creates space for interpretation, reflection, and contemplation on the status of the individual as a citizen, as well as on the role and boundaries of art in society.

Interpreted into English/Slovak.

# DISCUSSION WITH THE DRAMATURGY BOARD

Thursday 14 May  
Studio 12  
4 pm

## NEW/ DRAMA IN THE CHAOS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

A discussion with the festival's dramaturgy board and the director of the Nová dráma/New Drama festival Dária F. Fehérová about the contemporary theatre and topics that have resonated on the Slovak theatre scene over the past year. Hosted by Zuzana Golianová.

Interpreted into English.

P R O D U C

T I O N S

T H A T

W E R E N , T

# DRAMATURGY BOARD



## VIERA BARTKOVÁ

Graduated in aesthetics, Slovak language and literature, and Art History at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. She also completed her doctoral study there, at the Department of Cultural Studies. She participated in study stays at universities in Budapest, Padua, and Rome. Since 2014, she has worked as an assistant professor at the Department of Aesthetics, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University. At Comenius University of the Third Age, she teaches courses on the history of theatre and fine arts. Her research focuses on interdisciplinary and intercultural relations, the aesthetics of the image, art education, and visual dramaturgy. She examines contemporary Slovak theatre and dance through her academic research and as a critic and reviewer.



## MAREK GODOVIČ

A graduate in theatre studies and Polish studies from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and in script writing and dramaturgy from the Film and Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. In 2017, he completed his doctoral study at the Department of Theatre Studies of the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. At present, he works as an expert employee at the Theatre Documentation Centre of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava. He also works part-time for the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts, where he lectures about Polish theatre and drama. He writes about contemporary theatre and dance and regularly publishes in various Slovak and Czech cultural platforms and professional journals. He is a member of the Slovak section of AICT and a member of the editorial board of the **Tanec (Dance)** magazine. He has worked as a dramaturg and assistant director on theatre and dance productions for various independent Slovak and Czech theatres.



## TAMARA VAJDÍKOVÁ

She graduated from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts where she majored in theatre studies. At present, she is a full-time doctoral student at the Institute of Theatre and Film Research, Slovak Academy of Sciences. In her dissertation, she examines the artificial aesthetics of theatre, with a particular focus on its connection to modern technologies. She is active as a theatre critic and writes for the e-journal **kød – konkrétne ø divadle** as well as for the online platforms **MLOKi** and **Monitoring of Theatres**. Since 2023, she has been the coordinator of the V4@Theatre Critics Residency project, organized as part of the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra.

The dramaturgy board, comprised of Viera Bartková, Marek Godovič, and Tamara Vajdíková, has selected nine competing productions for the main programme of the 2026 Nová dráma/ New Drama festival. Due to budget cuts imposed by its founding body, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, the Theatre Institute was forced to adjust the festival's programme structure. The main programme — a competitive showcase of contemporary drama productions by Slovak professional theatres — will therefore not take place this year.

# NEW DRAMA IN THE CHAOS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Every year, the programme of the Nová dráma/New Drama festival is the result of many months spent watching premieres of theatre productions and devised texts that are not older than twenty years. While in the past, members of the dramaturgy boards focused their attention on just over some 50 theatre productions and performances, in recent years this number has grown, reaching as many as the 93 productions this year. However, despite the increased number of works, our selection process was limited by the financial uncertainty that the festival — like many other cultural events — has been facing in the last few years. This was also the reason why only nine productions ultimately made it into our selection, instead of the almost dozen we had initially considered.

The days are long gone when the Nová dráma/ New Drama festival responded to the scarcity of contemporary plays on Slovak stages. Gone, too, is the period when Slovak theatre addressed the legitimacy of including contemporary Slovak drama in theatre repertoires, as well as its (in)ability to measure up to classic titles proven over years, decades, even centuries. We are now in a different era, both from a theatrical and a sociocultural perspective. This era is rich in themes and the ensuing conflicts, problems, crises, destructions, and catastrophes of the most diverse kinds — ranging from economic, cultural, and ideological to military. These phenomena, however frightening and remote they might appear to some, are very close to us. They are close to our country's borders, right on our phone screens, in our everyday encounters with reality. A turbulent social atmosphere has always been a great challenge for theatre artists, and the current situation is no exception. As we watched the productions during our selection period, a picture gradually emerged of what Slovak theatre is experiencing right now — what themes are of concern, what forms are being discovered or transformed, and how Slovak theatre responds to

the world around it. This year's festival's overarching theme is the reflection of social tensions and the questions concerning freedom: freedom of thought and expression, as well as freedom of artistic creativity. In many of the selected works, the recurring theme is the relationship between the individual and society, and between the individual and the big history that enters a person's life unexpectedly and inevitably.

When selecting the productions, our main criteria were the relevance of the themes, the creativity and inventiveness of the staging methods, and the theatre's ability to reflect on overlooked phenomena that are becoming increasingly prominent due to social, political, or personal crises. In addition to issues concerning socially excluded groups and women's emancipation, the presently most urgent topics included, for example, the polarization and radicalization of society, the fear of the destruction of cultural and social values, the dehumanization of various spheres of human life, the manipulation of individuals and the masses by those in power, and the increasingly strong feelings of threat and frustration.

The issue of social exclusion is addressed in two of the productions in our selection. The Swiss playwright Katja Brunner explores the frequently overlooked topic of caring for the elderly in her play **Ghosts Are Only Human**. The production of the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre, directed by Kamila Polívková, is also a meditation about the humanness of the contemporary society.

The community-based Theatre with No Home will have its premiere at the festival with the production **Medusa in the Kitchen**, directed by Uršula Kovalyk. This work evocatively reflects the struggles of women on the margins of society, as well as their longing for a normal life and a sense of security. It also addresses the issue of how, in cases of rape, the victim is often blamed more than the perpetrator, especially if she comes from a marginalized group.

The production **OTA**, staged by the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen and directed by Júlia Rázusová based on the text by Michal Ditte, reflects on the role of women in our history, with a focus on their subtle but all the more important heroism, resilience, and courage.

The issue of social responsibility when it comes to preserving our cultural heritage and art lies at the heart of the Pôtoň Theatre's site-specific work staged

in collaboration with the Theatre Without a Stage — the performance **She Left Behind a Beautiful Garden** was directed by Iveta Ditte Jurčová.

Director Rastislav Ballek's performative production entitled **text LAJČIAK**, staged at the P. O. Hviezdoslav Theatre warns against an indifferent and distorted attitude toward culture, which can even become a chronic symptom of society.

**Tartuffe** is a production of the Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin staged under the leadership of the Czech director Anna Klimešová. It shows how manipulation and hypocrisy can affect the intimate space of a family and deform the relationships within.

The production **ENDSIEG//DOBYTIE**, staged at the Small Stage Theatre and based on Elfriede Jelinek's text, explores the paths of self-proclaimed messiahs and world leaders, as well as the ways in which they gain and maintain power. Director Dávid Paška has created an ironic and multi-layered work that explores the manipulation of language, propaganda, and the dangers of populist political discourse.

The festival programme also features two works rooted in generational kinship and the desire to depict the reality around us as truthfully and directly as possible through the eyes of a young person. Creative silence, pauses, resignation, but also new impulses resonate in the devised performance **ALEX** by the director Adam Dragun, who not only explores individual life and theatrical narratives but also seeks answers to broader questions about the position of artists in the present uncertain times. Similar questions are posed by the devised project called **Let's Demand the Impossible** directed by Šimon Ferstl and created in cooperation between the Peter Mankovecký Theatre and the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts.

Looking at the final shortlist, one thing stands out: an even distribution of slots between Slovak and international drama, devised performances, and community theatre. However, such balance was neither our intention nor one of the primary criteria for our selection. The composition of the final productions is similarly balanced in terms of their founding bodies — the programme features four independent theatres and five theatres operated by the city, a self-governing region, or the state. We are also satisfied with the selection in terms of generational and gender representation — with the same sense of urgency, the

themes and issues are communicated by five female directors and four male directors from different generations.

Given the large number of productions reviewed, it would be appropriate to mention those that did not make the final selection, even though they caught our attention in many respects. For example, in the SkRAT Theatre's production **Mr. Goulasch: The Laws of Gravity**, the artistic team devised — in their own, distinctive manner — a piece of work that addresses such issues as the Slovak health care system and the chaos and emotional indifference of the contemporary world. Environmental issues were addressed by the artists of the City Theatre Žilina in the form of a „stage stroll“ in the production **Vizihuman (water human)**, based on the text by Miklós Frogács that was written as part of the Theatre Institute's 2020 project GREEN DRÁMA. The history of violence and the debasement of human dignity was brought to life through a series of stories — some well-known, others less so — in the exceptional Slovak-Polish-German co-production **Negatives of Snow: Wetzler, Vrba, Schulman, Lux** staged by the Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava. The director and author Veronika Malgot created a mono-performance for the Jedným dychom dance theatre company entitled **The Culture of an End**, in which she delivered a passionate (and very determined) personal account of the current state of our culture and arts. A different look at the everyday life of people living in marginalized communities or people with disabilities was presented by the productions **Adulthood** by the Theatre in the Passageway, **The Cheeky Eyeless** by the Zrakáč Theatre, and in Peter Mazalán's and Lucia Mihálová's **Etudes**. All these productions also used authentic experience of the devising artists. The latter two works were created in collaboration of the artists with the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre. These productions are noteworthy works on the Slovak theatre scene because, using creative forms, they raise questions about important social issues as well as the boundaries and scope of professional theatre culture. The production **Betty Ford's Clinic** by the NUDE Theatre stood out because of the direction and acting, while the performance **Darkness** by the Blaho Uhlár Institute proposed ways in which Uhláresque poetics can be further developed in absurd times.



Our selection of productions is, in many ways, the outcome of sometimes subtle, sometimes more obvious references to themes, events, and various phenomena that we have encountered in less acute forms during previous editions of the festival. The wealth of themes, ideas, and borderline situations in personal, social, and cultural life has given rise to a large number of productions, often created and staged with minimal financial resources but with great determination. Many theatre companies — not only those in the independent sector — have found themselves on the brink of survival, or rather, on the edge of their financial budgets; this syndrome of uncertainty has manifested itself across the entire cultural sector in Slovakia. The diversity of works, their themes, and forms demonstrates the artists' ability to respond to the world we live in while creating a space for reflecting on where we are headed as a society.

We would like to thank all the theatres — both state-funded and independent — as well as the artists for the more than ninety productions we had the opportunity to see to select the works for the festival programme. We appreciate that you have found — and continue to find — the strength to create, to explore distinctive and socially relevant themes in your works, and to see them through to completion despite the obstacles.

We wish the spectators of the 2026 Nová dráma/ New Drama festival many unique experiences when watching the selected nine productions of the main programme. We hope they will find much inspiration and hope in a time full of challenges.



# Adam Dragun

# ALEX

Fascination, stubbornness, and passion for art are all qualities that can fade with time, lose their sting as a result of one's limited abilities and waning strength, and can easily turn into frustration and apathy. The performance entitled **ALEX** focuses on the perception of an artist via his or her work, routine, mood change, or desperate lack of creative energy. It is a journey that searches for the lost meaning of work. Ideals have lost their resolve, the quest for truth has stalled, and the desire for original concepts and themes has given way to fatigue, resignation, and disillusionment. The director Adam Dragun's original and distinctive directorial and performative style allows him to resolutely address the issue of artistic burnout, presenting the status of artists at a time when success and results are prioritized. Even in his choice of the subject matter — often driven by his personal commitment or, as some see it, by a provocative form of self-expression — he adopts a documentary, even investigative, approach to explore the causes of a situation in which many (if not all) creative artists may at some point find themselves.



direction, script, concept, performance by **Adam Dragun** dramaturgy and idea **Mário Drgoňa** stage design, concept, dramaturgy **Klára Dolník** dramaturgy **Roman Poliak** performance **Anna Tóthová** video, live-cam **Eva Gabrižová** editing **Petra Štefancová** projection, lighting **Ondrej Mankovecký** light design **Lukáš Klíma** music, sound design **Oliver Dragun** production **Ivo Dobrovodský, Barbora Maximová** dramaturgical consultations **Sodja Zupancic Lotker, Wojtek Ziemilski, Olga Ciężkowska, Branislava Kuburović**

premiere **30 October 2025, Project Batyskaf in A4 — Space for Contemporary Culture, Bratislava;**  
**17 November 2025, ARCHA+ Prague**

## Adam Dragun (1998)

Theatre director, performer, and writer. He studied at the Academy of Performing Arts, Charles University, the Theatre Academy of Performing Arts, and the art school Akademia Sztuk Teatralnych in Krakow. He has participated in several internships abroad, including one at the Nowy Teatr in Warsaw. In addition to his own devised projects, he has collaborated with theatres in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland. In his performative works, he blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality, employs intermedia techniques and interdisciplinary approaches, works with documentary methods and aesthetics, and adopts an authorial, commentary-based performative approach. His most recent projects include **Last Time My Parents Were in the Komuna Warszawa** (2022), **Prcat (Bonk)** (2024), or **Reprise** (2024). He is a member of the post-punk band Berlin Manson.

## Project Batyskaf

Project Batyskaf is a multi-genre cultural platform founded in 2015 in Bratislava. It provides organizational and artistic support for emerging independent art in Bratislava and collaborates with artists to create interdisciplinary and site-specific events and projects. Together with the theatre group GAFFA and the Nomantinel Theatre, they established the P\*AKT cultural centre, which focuses on performative, visual, musical, and queer art, as well as on inclusion, education, and community development.

## ARCHA+

ARCHA+ is a multi-purpose cultural space in Prague that was established in 2024 following the transformation of the Archa Theatre. It serves as a social laboratory for exploring new artistic forms and possibilities, promoting dialogue, development, and creativity among the young generation. The space hosts concerts, theatre performances, discussions, workshops, and educational events.

# Katja Brunner GHOSTS ARE ONLY HUMAN

Just as in the past people with disabilities were pushed to the margins of society, today we complacently turn a blind eye to the elderly. In a society obsessed with the cult of youth, aging is almost a taboo subject, even though life expectancy is increasing and the number of older people is growing. The final chapter of our lives is not always pleasant. The Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre does not shy away from topics that „are not to be talked about“ — quite to the contrary. The production **Ghosts Are Only Human** is based on the text by the Swiss playwright Katja Brunner, which reflects her own experiences volunteering at a nursing home — the kind of facility that is generally viewed negatively, particularly by seniors in Slovakia. This „bittersweet, comic collective meditation on old age,“ directed by Kamila Polívková, is not a group lamentation over human helplessness in the face of the relentless passage of time, but rather a memento in an evocative theatrical form, intended to restore our sense of empathy, compassion, and responsibility — in short, to resume all that constitutes the general meaning of the word humanism.



translation **Lukáš Brutovský** directed by **Kamila Polívková** dramaturgy **Mário Drgoňa, Miriam Kičiňová** stage design (concept) **Antonín Šilar** stage design (implementation) **Antonín Šilar, Veronika Traburová** costumes **Zuzana Formánková** music **Pjoni** lighting design **Veronika Traburová** cast **Jana Olhová, Emília Vášáryová, Zuzana Kocúriková, Dušan Jamrich alt. Branislav Bystriansky/Ján Grešo, Richard Stanke, František Kovár, Robert Roth, Jakub Rybárik**

premiere **14 and 15 June 2025, Studio of the Drama Department, Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava**

## Slovak National Theatre

The Slovak National Theatre was established in 1920 and is one of the most important cultural institutions in Slovakia. It comprises three departments with permanent professional ensembles — Drama, Opera, and Ballet. Drama productions are created in three spaces — in the Drama Hall that features the largest audience capacity, in the smaller Studio designed for more intimate productions, and in the Blue Salon which is a relatively new lab scene of the National Theatre, available also for non-theatrical projects, such as stage readings, discussions, and so on. The theatre also organizes various educational projects for children, youth, and adults. In the past, the Slovak National Theatre used to organize the international festival Eurocontext.

## Katja Brunner (1991)

Swiss author and performer, one of the most prominent personalities of contemporary European playwriting. Her work presents a unique synthesis of physicality, political activism and linguistic deconstruction. She focuses on people's physical and psychological borderline states arising from systemic oppression and often addresses taboo topics — ranging from incest and domestic violence to the dehumanization associated with aging. In 2013, at the age of twenty-two, she won the prestigious Award of the Mülheim Playwrights for her play **Stumpy Legs Too Short (Von den Beinen zu kurz)**. The Slovak translation of this text (by Pavol Rohárik and Erik Šimšík) was published in the **Vlna** journal. The play **Ghosts Are Only Human (Geister sind auch nur Menschen)** was originally written for the Luzerner Theater and in it, the playwright reflects on her own experience with her volunteering work at a senior home. Although this is the author's first play to be staged in our country, it is not our very first encounter with her work. As early as 2022, Slovak Radio and Television broadcast her play **The Chance of a Bruise**.

## Kamila Polívková (1975)

Czech director, set and costume designer. Her artistic style is characterized by minimalism, the use of functional materials, muted colours, and an emphasis on cut and silhouette. In collaboration with the Czech director Dušan D. Pařízek, she has also worked at European venues such as the Salzburger Festspiele, Deutsches Theater Berlin, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Burgtheater in Vienna, and Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. Her directorial debut came in the 2009 — 2010 season in the Theatre of Comedy in Prague, where she staged her own dramatization of Thomas Brussig's novel **Heroes Like Us**. In her work as a director, she often focuses on adaptations of prose and post-dramatic texts that explore themes of loneliness and social marginalization. She first came to the attention of the Slovak audiences with her production of Franz Xaver Kroetz's play **Request Concert**, which was staged by the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre in 2023. In 2024, she created the costume design for the production **A Dog on the Road** at the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre, directed by Dušan D. Pařízek.

# Elfriede Jelinek

## ENDSIEG // DOBYTIE

**ENDSIEG//DOBYTIE** is a production strongly responding to the current social situation. The text by Literature Nobel Prize laureate Elfriede Jelinek explores the manipulation of language, the mechanisms of propaganda, and the dangers of political populism — topics that are taking on new urgency in today's world. The director Dávid Paška presents these topics on stage using a contemporary theatrical form that employs the principles of live cinema, interweaving theatrical action with cinematic imagery to create a dynamic, multi-layered media experience. The production not only interprets Jelinek's text but also reflects on the way political discourse is made and spread today — somewhere in between images, media, and the public space. **ENDSIEG//DOBYTIE** thus makes an important contribution to contemporary political theatre and to the question of how theatre can respond to current social tensions.



conceived, adapted, and directed by **Dávid Paška**  
translation and dramaturgy **Martin Kubran** concept,  
set **Julius Leon Seiler** concept, costumes **Maria-Lena Poindl** music **Ivan Acher** camera **Ráchel Rimarčíková**  
sound **Filip Kriváň** lighting **Martin Puškár** cast **Zuzana Fialová, Robert Roth, Annamária Janeková, Dávid Hartl**

premiere **7 and 8 November 2025, Small Stage Theatre, Bratislava**

### Small Stage Theatre

The Small Stage Theatre was created through the transformation of the Ludus Theatre, which for many decades had focused primarily on productions for children and youth. The name change, which took effect officially in April 2025, was also linked to the theatre's relocation to the premises of the former Small Stage STU on Dostoyevsky boulevard in Bratislava. This new era of the theatre is also marked by a new artistic direction. Although the Small Stage Theatre continues to cater to audiences aged 12 and older, its repertoire is increasingly focused on young adults. In the 2025 — 2026 season, the existing repertoire including such titles as **The Odyssey, History of Violence, The Old Man and the Sea, Verbum, or Nox et Solitudo** was extended by another ambitious work — **ENDSIEG//DOBYTIE** directed by Dávid Paška, who, back in 2024

directed Roland Schimmelpfennig's **The Odyssey** in what was back then still the Ludus Theatre.

### Elfriede Jelinek (1946)

Austrian writer and winner of the 2004 Nobel Prize in Literature. She was born in Mürzzuschlag, grew up in Vienna, and her literary voice has become a global symbol of resistance against patriarchy, political ignorance, selfishness, populism, fascism, racism, nationalism, and many other pathologies of power. Her texts are sharp and uncompromisingly ironic and sarcastic, yet at the same time deeply human, standing up for the victims of ruthless power and social violence. Her best-known works include the novels **Women as Lovers** (1975), **The Piano Teacher** (1983), **Lust** (1989), and the monumental epic tale about coming to terms with a Nazi past **The Children of the Dead** (1995). In Slovakia, several of her dramatic works have been staged (**Winterreise, Rechnitz — the Exterminating Angel, What Happened after Nora Left Her Husband, and Endsieg: The Second Coming**).

### Dávid Paška (1999)

Theatre director and playwright. In 2022, he graduated from the Max Reinhardt Seminar at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna with a degree in theatre directing. Together with his regular collaborators, set designer Julius Leon Seiler and costume designer Maria-Lena Poindl, he has staged productions at such venues as the Teatrul National Radu Stanca Sibiu, Romania, the Kasematten Wiener Neustadt, and the Schauspielhaus Salzburg. In Slovakia, he has collaborated with the Ludus Theatre, the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre, the Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav Theatre, and the Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava. Paška specializes in staging classics, contemporary drama, as well as adaptations of literary works and original plays. Several of his productions have been included in the programmes of international festivals.

# Uršula Kovalyk

## MEDUSA IN THE KITCHEN

The production **Medusa in the Kitchen** intertwines ancient mythology with the authentic experiences of women, addressing the pressing issue of violence and the victim-blaming that accompanies it. In the production by the Theatre with No Home, feminist themes gain exceptional power precisely because of the authenticity of the performers, whose personal experiences permeate the stage narrative. The work was created in the difficult conditions of an independent, socially oriented, and community-based theatre, which further underscores its value. Despite these circumstances, this is an outstandingly professional and visually striking theatrical production that combines social engagement with a meticulous stage concept. **Medusa in the Kitchen** is at times harsh and shockingly realistic, yet it is precisely this approach that helps it identify issues that are often overlooked in society. With this production, the festival will feature a voice that is both artistically compelling and socially pressing.



directed by **Uršula Kovalyk** dramaturgy and lighting design **Patrik Krebs** movement supervision **Zuzana Vasičáková Očenášová** set and costumes **Marija Havran, Eva Matkuliaková, Danica Ondrejovič** music **Mila von Chobiak** production **Tomáš Kubiš** cast **Juliana Johanidesová, Uršula Kovalyk, Zuzana Pokorná, Tomáš Kubiš, and actors and actresses of the Theatre with No Home**

premiere **26 March 2025, Theatre with No Home, Bratislava**

### Theatre with No Home

The Theatre with No Home was established in 2005 and, since its founding, has systematically focused on working with marginalized groups — particularly people experiencing homelessness and people with physical, mental, or social disabilities. It is based in the Pistori Palace on Štefánikova street in Bratislava, and in addition to producing plays, it also organizes various community events, workshops, and the ERROR international festival of homeless theatre.

### Uršula Kovalyk (1969)

Slovak author, playwright, director and founding member of the Theatre with No Home. In her work, she has long addressed feminist issues, gender stereotypes, and violence committed against women. She made her literary debut with a win in the 2001 Short Story contest and published her first collection **Unfaithful Women Don't Lay Eggs** in 2002. Her novella **The Equestrienne** (2013) was nominated for the Anasoft litera Award and won the Bibliotéka Prize. Her prose texts, such as **Travesty Show, The Second-Hand Woman, or Pure Animal** are permeated by raw, but empathetic observation of marginalized human experience. Social commitment is an important aspect of her professional work. She earned a degree in social work from the University of Trnava, and at the Theatre with No Home, she combines art with working with people living on the fringes of society.

# Slavka Cíváňová

## SHE LEFT BEHIND A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN

Step by step, we delve into the world of Baroness Sidónia Nádherná, who devoted her entire life to saving her castle in Vrchotové Janovice and the adjacent gardens. Her boundless energy and efforts to preserve artistic values for future generations — and to prevent them from being destroyed by the ravages of historical upheavals and conflicts — inspired the creators, author Slavka Cíváňová and director Iveta Ditte Jurčová, to capture the small and large battles to save Nádherná's inner world, embodied in the form of a garden, art, and beauty. The site-specific performance **She Left Behind a Beautiful Garden** enables the audience to form their own opinions about what they see and hear, while also sending them on a journey of discovery — almost an archaeological exploration — of those fragments of the past that we must preserve for the present to survive. Using the example of saving a unique place, the creators depict pain, trauma, and disappointment, but also the fragile hope and strength to survive today's cultural devastation caused by social and political events.

directed by **Iveta Ditte Jurčová** dramaturgy **Slavka Cíváňová** set, costumes, objects **Markéta Plachá** graphic editing and visual cooperation **Alona Voitiuk** collaboration on product making **František Kovács** music and sound design **Jakub Bielik** technical implementation **Dušan Hvizd** production **Monika Deset Škojcová, Michal Ditte** performer **Simona Hudecová**

premiere **11 June 2025, Pôtoň Theatre, and Theatre Without a Stage**

The production **She Left Behind a Beautiful Garden** was staged in collaboration with the Divadelná Nitra international festival.



### **Slavka Cíváňová** (1979)

Theatre dramaturg and author. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, where she earned a degree in cultural studies. She completed her doctoral studies in aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Since 2020, she has worked as a dramaturge for the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra, and since 2017 as a dramaturgy lecturer and project manager. In 2003 — 2017 she worked as a dramaturg and coordinator of accompanying and educational events at the international festival Divadelná Nitra. She also collaborated with Karol Spišák's Old Theatre in Nitra, the Cap à l'est — Cesta na východ festival in Banská Štiavnica, and the international festival Into the Miracles. She has compiled, edited, and co-authored several publications and research projects, and has lectured at the departments of cultural studies and aesthetics of Constantine the Philosopher University and the

Conservatory in Nitra. She is also actively involved in projects of informal education in theatre and the history of theatre in Nitra.

### **Iveta Ditte Jurčová** (1968)

Theatre director and artistic director of the Pôtoň Theatre in Bátovce. She graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts, where she majored in theatre direction. Besides her home stage at the Pôtoň Theatre, she collaborates as a director with many Slovak and Czech theatre houses (Andrej Bagar Theatre, Karol Spišák's Old Theatre, or the Horácké Theatre in Jihlava, among others). She is the author of numerous educational projects in the field of performing arts, in which she has also worked as a lecturer. She led theatre workshops for the Divadelná Nitra Association, National Centre for Culture, Pôtoň Theatre, Žilina Záríečie Station, Post Bellum, and others. Her productions are regularly featured at major festivals in Slovakia and abroad. Her directorial style is characterized by an almost documentary-like exploration of socially relevant phenomena, presented through a visually imaginative language that often oscillates between realism, grotesque exaggeration, and symbolism.

### **Pôtoň Theatre**

The Pôtoň Theatre was established in 2000, and it resides in the Slovak countryside. In 2003, the original amateur theatre company (2000 — 2003) was transformed to an independent professional ensemble. It now resides in the village of Bátovce. The theatre was founded by the director Iveta Ditte Jurčová and the playwright and dramaturg Michal Ditte, who are still the leading personalities and creators of the theatre's poetics and dramaturgy. Their productions are based on field research and address pressing social issues (such as poverty, national identity, social stratification, and environmental disaster) through metaphorical, evocative language and original directorial and visual techniques. In addition, the theatre also runs educational projects and workshops aimed at engaging the audience and fostering critical thinking. It offers its facilities for residencies for both domestic and international artists. In 2023, they organized the unique international site-specific festival Into the Miracles. The creative duo has received numerous awards for their artistic work and informal education.

# Michal Ditte

# OTA

In the current season, the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen raised red flags in defence of democratic values, and as part of this appeal, stage productions were dedicated to the heroes and heroines of the struggle against injustice and oppression. These cautionary tales tell the stories of people whose actions may not have moved the masses but made a significant contribution to the collective effort toward change. The production entitled **OTA** presents to the audience the story of Ota Plávková, the journalist of the Banská Bystrica section of the Czechoslovak Broadcast. During the reformist 1960s, she drew attention to the flaws of a society that pretended to be exemplary; in 1968, she participated in anti-occupation broadcasts and, as a result, was persecuted during the following so-called normalization period. Michal Ditte's text not only reveals the power practices of the totalitarian regime which painfully targeted its victims in their professional and private lives but also searches for parallels today. The production is visibly shaped by Júlia Rázusová's distinct style of stage direction. Owing to the remarkable creative team and the passionate performances of the cast, the resulting production is bold, energetic, and socially conscious, yet free of unnecessary pathos and apotheosis.



adapted and directed by **Júlia Rázusová** dramaturgy **Ján Chalupka** set and costumes **Katarína Holková** music **Martin Husovský** expert cooperation **Michal Várošík** cast **Dana Karolová, Lucia Letková, Iveta Marcineková, Jana Pilzová, Barbora Špániková, Dominika Výrostek Misárová, Mária Tóčík Knoppová, Ondřej Daniš, Marek Rozkoš, Richard Sanitra, Juraj Smutný**

premiere **10 October 2025, Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen**

## Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen

The theatre was founded in 1949 under the name Central Slovak Theatre; five years later, it was renamed after the prominent playwright from nearby Tajov. Throughout its history, the company has been continuously shaped by important figures and has staged over four hundred premieres. Its repertoire includes productions for children and youth, as well as titles for adult audiences and more discerning viewers. In 2021, the theatre launched an environmental initiative called „Green Wave,“ which promotes sustainability in the theatre not only through its productions but also through practical measures (such as conscious conservation and the use of more durable alternatives in production).

## Michal Ditte (1981)

Slovak playwright and dramaturg, founder and leading figure of the Pôtoň Theatre — the only professional theatre in Slovakia that operates in a rural area. He earned a degree in theatre dramaturgy from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. His work is characterized by a meticulous approach to documentary material, often based on sociological or ethnological field research. He then transforms this authentic material into a distinctive dramatic language. A significant portion of his work is connected to the Pôtoň Theater, where he has also created original projects addressing such topics as poverty, social exclusion, homelessness, identity, and the ecological crisis, for example in the plays **Poverty** (2012), **Terra Granus** (2008), or **Terra Apathy** (2022). Ditte also adapted Martin Pollack's reportage novel **The American Emperor** (2018), which addresses the mass exodus of people from Galicia to America at the turn of the twentieth century. The production won the DOSKY Award for best production of the season. As a playwright and dramaturg, Ditte has collaborated with several Slovak and Czech theatres.

## Júlia Rázusová (1982)

Slovak director. Graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Prešov University in the double major in aesthetics—Slovak language and literature, and from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava in theatre direction and dramaturgy. Rázusová worked as a director in many Slovak and Czech professional theatres. In 2013 she and dramaturg Michaela Zakuťanská established the Prešov National Theatre. When the theatre ceased its operation, it was replaced by the Tears of Janko Borodáč Theatre, which Rázusová co-founded in 2020 with theatre manager Linda Durkáčová. There, Rázusová produced such shows as **Pop Animal** (2022), which is based on the well-known psychological experiment by Philip Zimbardo, simulating a prison environment, or **Outcast** (2024), inspired by Stefan Zweig's famous autobiographical novel **The World of Yesterday**. Rázusová is a three-time laureate of the DOSKY Award for best direction.

# Peter Mankovecký Theatre and students of the Academy of Performing Arts

## LET'S DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE

The devised production **Let's Demand the Impossible** is a generational testimony of students from the Academy of Performing Arts created in collaboration with artists from the professional and independent Peter Mankovecký Theatre (DPM). The work captures the sentiment of today's young generation living in a world of social tension, uncertainty, and the search for freedom and a chance to protest against society's established written and unwritten rules. The production carries the energy of an authentic experience — the desire for a space where one can speak, think, and create freely and openly. It is precisely this generational voice, echoing directly from the experiences of young people, that makes the performance an important contribution to contemporary theatrical discourse. At the same time, it serves as an example of an environment in which the rising generation of artists can grow by engaging in dialogue with the independent scene and its artistic freedom.



directed by **Šimon Ferstl** dramaturgy **Ráchel Rimarčíková**, **Laura Fedorová** costumes and set **Daniela Mesárošová** lighting design **Robert MačKay** — **DBO Lighting Design** movement collaboration **Stanislava Vlk Vlčeková** music **Daniel Zwach** cast **Nad'a Gášeková**, **Michal Kvaššay**, **Richard Labuda**, **Tomáš Pokorný**, **Viktória Vadovičová**, **Daniel Zwach**

premiere **28 March 2025**, **Peter Mankovecký Theatre in collaboration with Academy of Performing Arts, Bohéma Bar, OC Prior, Bratislava**

### **Peter Mankovecký Theatre (DPM)**

The DPM theatre company was established as the initiative of one class of graduates of drama acting at the Academy of Performing Arts. Peter Mankovecký, who gave the theatre its name, was their former leading pedagogue. Since its foundation, the theatre has been creating distinctive productions that explore the feelings and existence of young people in this world — the relationships that shape their lives and their search for personal meaning. Over the course of its existence, DPM has gained considerable popularity with audiences as well as critical acclaim, and its productions regularly appear in the programmes of Slovak and international festivals. On the domestic theatre scene, DPM is now

an established independent theatre with its own artistic vision — one that not only reflects on contemporary themes but also actively shapes them. It currently resides on Kamenné square in Bratislava and is affiliated with the Bohéma Bar.

### **Academy of Performing Arts**

The Academy of Performing Arts is the largest art school in Slovakia that provides comprehensive education in theatre, music, dance, film, and television. It was founded in 1949 and has been preparing artists, educators, and art theorists for professional careers in the arts ever since. Studies at the Academy combine theoretical training with practical experience in studios, workshops, and theatres, providing students with opportunities to foster their creativity and professional skills. The school operates its own theatre, cinema, and concert hall.

### **Šimon Ferstl (1990)**

Actor and director. He graduated in dramatic acting from the Academy of Performing Arts in the class of Peter Mankovecký and Peter Šimun. In 2015, he and his classmates founded the Peter Mankovecký Theatre (DPM). At DPM, he debuted in 2016 as the director of the production **God Is a DJ**, based on Falk Richter's play. The next production he directed was the devised work **Power for One Night**, which was created collectively by a group of actors. Later, he worked on the devised dramatization of Franz Kafka's novel **The Trial**, the theatrical essay **Escape from the Wild**, as well as Lenka Garajová's plays **Smugglers** and **Amateurs**. The production **Let's Demand the Impossible** was created in collaboration with a team of students of the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts under Ferstl's direction. Since the establishment of DPM, Ferstl has worked there as an artistic director, actor, and stage director.

# Anna Klimešová, Boris Jedinák, et al.

## TARTUFFE

The production of a devised project by the director Anna Klimešová and dramaturg Boris Jedinák responds to the unfavourable social situation in Slovakia. The creators have found inspiration in the text of the classicist French playwright J. B. Molière, though one should not expect the story of Tartuffe, but rather a presentation of „Tartuffianism“. The original play is socially resistant and quite flexibly adaptable. It focuses on the phenomenon of hypocrisy as a distinctive symbol of a foul atmosphere in society brought about by a political system that restricts artistic freedom and fosters nepotism. Orgon's family finds itself in the clutches of a dangerous con artist who, while employing manipulative tactics that are effective in the twenty-first century, shares an almost identical goal with the hypocritical and sanctimonious character from Molière's play. The creative team behind the production at the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin boldly „stripped down“ the French playwright's text but managed to preserve its essence — the critique of a negative social phenomenon.

directed by **Anna Klimešová** dramaturgy **Boris Jedinák**,  
**Miro Dacho** set **Mikoláš Zika** costumes **Klára Lustyk**  
music **Michal Cáb** lighting design **Karlos Šimek** cast  
**Jana Olhová**, **Nadežda Vladařová**, **Dana Droppová**,  
**Peter Kočiš**, **Tomáš Mischura**, **Adrián Hudák**

premiere **14 November 2025**, **Studio of the Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin**



### Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin

The Slovak Chamber Theatre was established in 1944 as the second professional theatre in Slovakia. A strong tradition of amateur theatre predestined the town of Martin to become an important centre of theatre culture. In terms of dramaturgical orientation and directorial interpretation, the Slovak Chamber Theatre has always been one of the most unique theatre scenes in Slovakia. It has had a similarly unique and important influence on the development of Slovak acting. Some actors remained faithful to the Slovak Chamber Theatre for the entire duration of their careers, while others would later be established as top actors on Slovakia's main stage in Bratislava. At present, the theatre has

one of the best artistic teams in the country, one that features many distinctive actors and actresses.

### Anna Klimešová (1990)

Czech director. She graduated in theatre and education from the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno and later continued her education at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre at the Theatre Academy of Performing Arts under the supervision of Jiří Havelka. Her focus is on devised theatre, and her productions are known for their high level of imagination, use of associations, and personal touch. She collaborates with numerous Czech theatres across the country, including independent and experimental venues. Her most recent works include **To Oneself** (Four Days, Prague; 2025), **And Why?** (11:55, Prague; 2025), **How to See the Invisible** (Theatre on Dlouhá, Prague; 2025), **Mrs. Dalloway** (Theatre on the Railing, Prague; 2025), **Just a Moment** (National Theatre in Prague; 2024), **Declaration of Dependences** (Masopust, Prague; 2023). She is the founding member of the art group 8lidí and in her home region, the Krkonoše mountains, she initiated the establishment of the community-based culture platform Horní Maršov — Open Museum, where she invites landscape artists and illustrators to work with the locals in the regional community theatre. Her 2025 guest residency at the theatre in Martin was her first in Slovakia.

### Boris Jedinák (1995)

Czech dramaturg. Majored in dramaturgy at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre of the Theatre Academy of Performing Arts, and in ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. While still a student, he established a directorial-dramaturgical duo with Petr Erbes. They created such awarded productions as **Discoland** (Theatre on the Railing; 2022), **Blow on the Head** (Theatre on the Railing; 2020) or **Privatization** (National Theatre; 2025). At present, he is a full-time dramaturg at the Theatre on the Railing; however, he has worked as author, director, dramaturg, and even performer for productions staged in many other theatres. He is a member and important personality of the independent group 8lidí, which he co-founded during his studies at the Theatre Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

# Rastislav Ballek, Mário Drgoňa

## TEXT LAJČIAK

The authors of **text LAJČIAK** – Rastislav Ballek and Mário Drgoňa – do not stage the destiny of the forgotten philologist and art theorist Ján Lajčiak chronologically. Instead, they enter his thoughts about the country, its history and language, and its national consciousness as well as subconscious. Subtly yet multifacetedly, they transpose fragments from his translations and writings – particularly from the monograph **Slovakia and Culture** – into theatrical form. The dilemmas and uncertainties that Lajčiak experienced as a graduate from two universities, returning from the wider world to the impoverished region of his childhood, are also very relevant today. As a visionary, Lajčiak comments on today's events and issues in light of what was happening during his lifetime. Director Rastislav Ballek has created a stage essay in which the themes of a life enriched by culture and education are set against the limitations of the times. The P. O. Hviezdoslav Theatre has put on a spectacular production featuring striking musical and visual elements that depict the relationship between an individual and the nation.



directed by **Rastislav Ballek** dramaturgy **Mário Drgoňa** set **Juraj Poliak** costumes **Katarína Holková** music **Ľubo Burgr** vocal improvisation **Eva Šušková** movement direction **Libuša Čizmárik Bachratá** lighting design **Ján Ptačin** projections **Jozef Sklenka** cast **Peter Martinček, Eva Olhová, Ivana Kološová, Annamária Janečková, Eva Šušková**

premiere **12 December 2025, P. O. Hviezdoslav Theatre, Bratislava**

### **Rastislav Ballek** (1971)

Graduated from Comenius University, where he majored in philosophy and sociology, and from the Academy of Performing Arts, where he studied theatre direction and dramaturgy. He also studied at the Higher State Theatre School in Krakow. He worked as a director at the Slovak National Uprising Theatre in Martin (the present Slovak Chamber Theatre Martin), Alexander Duchnovič Theatre in Prešov, City Theatre Žilina (where he was also artistic director), and in the Aréna Theatre. He regularly collaborates with several Slovak and Czech theatres. At present, he works as a pedagogue at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. His work as a director often offers a reinterpretation – even deconstruction – of world classics, forgotten and marginalized works of Slovak literature, as well as the lives of Slovak intellectuals. He is interested in themes relating to the Slovak national character, the identity

of our society, values, morality, and memory, which he interprets through a distinctive directorial and visual language rich in associations and intertextual references. He is the winner of several theatre awards, including the DOSKY Awards.

### **Mário Drgoňa** (1994)

Theatre dramaturg, director, translator and performer. He graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where he majored in theatre dramaturgy and dramatic art. In 2020–2025, he worked as a lecturer of dramaturgy at the Drama Department of the Slovak National Theatre. He regularly collaborates as a dramaturg and playwright on productions at various state-funded and independent theatres in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. He also does his own projects, particularly with the theatre group Schwarzes Loch Europas. He works part-time for the Slovak Radio and the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. He edited the theatre section of the **Kapitál** journal, for which he also authored several texts. He founded and managed the festival of professional independent theatre called Fokus–Pokus. Since the 2025–2026 season, he has been the dramaturg of the P. O. Hviezdoslav Theatre.

### **P. O. Hviezdoslav Theatre (DPOH)**

DPOH, n. o., is a city theatre stage in Bratislava. It resides in the building of the former Slovak National Bank, built between 1943 and 1947. The building is characteristic for the mosaic stained-glass windows in the foyer, created by the academic painter Janko Alexy. In 1948, the building was assigned to the Slovak National Theatre, which was based there from 1955 to 2007. In 2010–2022, the building was rented to the Bratislava Culture and Information Centre, which operated the artistic activities of the theatre under the name City Theatre of Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav. In 2022, the theatre was restructured and became the city's non-for-profit organization. Since the 2025–2026 season, Vladislava Fekete has been its director. The current repertoire consists of productions primarily related to local history, figures, and settings; productions with socio-political themes; and a series of productions dedicated to Generation Z. In addition to the large hall, the second theatre space is in a former air-raid shelter.

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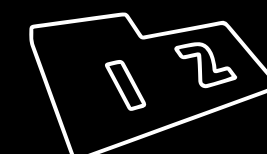
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