

Flora Theatre Festival will take over the 'other' Olomouc this May. Ticket sales start after Easter

Olomouc 4 April 2023 | **Drama, dance and opera productions, performances and theatre installations will comprise the genre-rich international offerings of one of the most important Czech festivals, which will run from 11 to 22 May. The 26th Flora Theatre Festival will feature more than sixty events at ten venues in Olomouc, and its twelve-day programme will be permeated by the motto Otherness/Anderssein. Ticket sales for the largest presentation of live art in the Olomouc region start on Tuesday 11 April.**

"Flora has never boasted that it presents the 'best' of Czech or European theatre. We are a thematic event, mapping current production trends, whose programme is fundamentally shaped each year by a specific leitmotif. This year's motto, Otherness, will cover the work of distinctive personalities of the Central European theatre space, interacting with, accentuating and examining it from different perspectives. We want the festival to be a celebration of otherness. We want to show the public the stylistically and aesthetically diverse face of contemporary theatre which expresses itself on important social and specifically artistic phenomena. And, as every year, we want to hold discussions with inspiring guests," states Daniela Hekelová, spokesperson for the festival.

Uhlich, Vittucci, Hód and Kennedy on their Olomouc tour. Naked dance and theatre in virtual space

The festival, whose 'Central European dramaturgy' has long focused on German-language theatre, is giving more space to women this year. Olomouc will thus present distinctive female authors, directors, choreographers and performers working not only in the Czech Republic but also in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary and Slovakia.

The 26th Flora will be graced by the participation of an exceptional figure of the European dance and performance scene, a pioneer of so-called naked dance, a 'visionary of the body' Doris Uhlich, who will unveil herself to the festival audience – in collaboration with Boris Kopeinig – in the visually captivating performance **Tank**. Her Austrian compatriot Teresa Vittucci, a frequent collaborator with the star of last year's Flora Theatre Festival, Michael Turinsky, will join us from Zurich. She won the Schweizer Kulturpreis award for her inventive and witty commentary on the Marian cult **Hate Me, Tender: Solo for Future Feminism**. The Swiss Culture Prize jury praised Teresa's provocative solo for its "systematic deconstruction of political themes". The programme at S-Club, the festival's busiest venue, will open with an atypical experimental production **Soft Spot** by the Hungarian dance icon Adrienn Hód, multiple local Choreographer of the Year, and the renowned Slovak dancers Soňa Ferienčíková and Martina Hajdyla, which earned the latter the fresh title of Dancer of the Year.

During the second weekend of the festival, admirers of one of the most 'radical' directors of the last decade – Susanne Kennedy – will come to Olomouc. While ancient heroes physically went to the oracle in Delphi on a journey of discovery, visitors to Flora, thanks to the inventiveness of the German theatre innovators and multimedia artists Markus Selg and Rodrik Biersteker, will set off to meet their oracle on a breathtaking trip into a fantastical virtual reality environment. Flora invites you to the Archdiocesan Museum in Olomouc for an unrepeatable journey through the inner parts of an unreal world, entitled **I AM (VR)** and exclusively intended for only one viewer at a time.

For the first time this year, a significant part of the festival programme will also take place in the actual backdrop of the largest exhibition hall of the Museum of Modern Art.

Börcsök, Ayivi and other amazing European female theatre artists.

Theatre in the museum, on the carousel and in a church

The Hungarian dancer Boglárka Börcsök and German filmmaker Andreas Bolm will materialise the life and work of three forgotten protagonists of Hungarian modern dance three times in the museum's main exhibition hall. Their site-specific project **Figuring Age** has graced the line-up of major European festivals this season and was recently included in the prestigious Twenty23 selection of the international Aerowaves network. Three times in the Olomouc Museum, Simone Dede Ayivi will welcome empathy and headphone-equipped spectators – on the 'playground' of her theatrical installation **The Kids Are Alright**. This leading representative of the German independent scene will allow the voices of members of the second and third immigrant generation to be heard, confronting the wishes and dreams of their parents and grandparents with their own ideas about life in Europe.

The raw and self-ironic focus on the environment of dance conservatories and the wild 1990s of the **Ballet Dancers** production will be followed by a double performance of **Invisible II. / Barbora Kaufmannová** by the performance artist Miřenka řechová. Through a poignant dialogue with a former classmate, who later became a member of the ballet company, Miřenka develops her urgent theme of the struggle against a despotic, dogmatic system and the loss of one's own identity.

For the third time in a row, Flora will present Johana Pocková's peculiarly poetic work. Her movementally, visually and musically compact impression **To the Madonna with Rust**, dealing with questions of spirituality and the transcendence of ordinary human existence, will enliven the imposing Baroque interior of Kostel Panny Marie Sněžné (the Church of the Virgin Mary of the Snows) for two evenings. Another prominent representative of the domestic progressive dance scene, Tereza Lenerová, will present a dramaturgically and choreographically original reflection on evolution – her production **There is a Sense of Being** and will also lead the movement workshop *The Body as a Landscape* at Flora.

Engaged and experimental Czech and Czech-Slovak drama
and exclusive guests from Hamburg

The complete twelve-day programme of the 26th Flora is framed by two fresh stage adaptations of powerful literary texts. Both of them reflect on stories related in different ways to the most pressing event of our time – the war in Ukraine. Both are 'signed' by established directors and both come to life in the interpretation of top actors and actresses.

Moscoviad by the director Duřan D. Pařízek is a haunting adaptation of the painfully prophetic novel by the Ukrainian writer Yuri Andrukhovych. A phantasmagorical journey through the metropolis of the collapsing Eastern empire, painting a panoptic picture of Moscow in the first half of the 1990s, it premiered on the home underground stage of Prague's Divadlo X10 (first-time performing at Flora) at the end of last year and will kick off the Flora Theatre Festival on 11 May. Thalia Theater Hamburg will provide an exclusive festival epilogue as part of its (also first) Olomouc guest appearance on 22 May. The production with the title **Glorious People** has brought the plot of Sasha Marianna Salzmann's literary prize-winning novel *Im Menschen muss alles herrlich sein* to the stage. The fate of the young journalist Edi and her Ukrainian family 'against the backdrop of great history' is sensitively reproduced by the director Hakan Savaş Mican in collaboration with the renowned ensemble.

Flora will also showcase two adaptations of prose by the French literary star Édouard Louis. Social exclusion, racism and homophobia are the central themes of his works, which are tackled by the at Flora debuting directors Jakub řermák and Tomáš Loužný in their productions **Who Killed My Father** (Depresivní děti touží po penězích ensemble) and **History of Violence** (řvandovo divadlo). After a longer period of time, Divadlo Husa na provázku from Brno returns to Olomouc – with Jiří Havelka's 'purgatorial stage ceremony' **Smokeout** – and Prague's Divadlo v Dlouhé – with the 'meditative stage poem' **Nothing Needs to Be Done Any Longer** by the dramaturge Kateřina Souřková and the director Jan Frič.

Slovenské komorné divadlo Martin, which impressed last year's Flora visitors with its production of Chekhov's **Three Sisters**, and Divadlo Komédie (part of the Prague City Theatres), which had its profile at

the atypical autumnal 24th Flora, will bring their co-production project **Jocasta** to Flora. The original production by the artistic director of the Martin ensemble, Lukáš Brutovský, presents a modern version of the classical myth in which "Ancient and current times clash and the myth itself meets #MeToo".

Berlin music scene phenomenon, Olomouc premieres and a rich accompanying programme

As part of Flora, Olomouc-based Divadlo na cucky will present the new production **Dance of the Dervishes** by the director, author and screenwriter Barbara Herz. The second premiere of Mozart's opus *La clemenza di Tito*, directed by the tandem Veronika Loulová and Jiří Havelka, performed under the title **Titus**, will contribute to the main festival programme with the opera of the Moravské divadlo Olomouc. Its drama ensemble will perform **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** directed by Pavel Khek.

In addition to theatre events for children (thematically linked to the festival's motto), **Stand Up Down** performance by Divadlo Aldente from Brno (where professional theatre artists meet actors and authors with Down syndrome), about twenty talks and presentations open to the public, which are an organic part of the educational Czech-Slovak **FloraLab** programme (designed for university students of theatre-related art and science disciplines), the festival will also traditionally offer a number of music productions. An artist from Berlin, who goes by the stage name **Kid Be Kid**, will take to the stage of Jazz Tibet Club Olomouc. The genre-bending energetic performance – combining expressive soul singing and beatboxing with piano and synths – will certainly be one of the refreshing non-theatrical highlights of Flora. Its 26th edition will feature a total of nine international productions.

Otherness/Anderssein

The festival director Petr Nerušil comments on the dramaturgy selection as follows: "We do not perceive DIVERSITY just as a refreshing element, but as an implicit condition for the healthy, empathy-tinged, functioning and development of any community. During the May Flora Theatre Festival, we will therefore, in the spirit of the festival motto, provide a voice to those male and female artists for whom the various forms of diversity – ethnic, gender or physical – are a source of inspiration, not phobia, to those who enlightenedly ignore outdated conventions and unmask social and theatrical clichés. These are creative personalities who freely, but with respect for cultural and ideological differences, transcend 'staging boundaries' – towards an affirmation or liberating discovery of their own authentic 'otherness'. This year we are giving significant space to women creators in particular, because women are still undervalued in the artistic environment." He also invites everybody to Olomouc: "Together with open-minded viewers and creative guests, we look forward to twelve intensely experienced extraordinary days!"

More information at www.divadelniflora.cz

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The general media partner of 26th Flora is Czech Television, while the main media partner is Respekt weekly. The ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague Mr Andreas Künne took over the patronage of the 26th annual of the Flora Theatre Festival.