



"Ah, in this tumult wild,
What shall become
of that self locked in me."

/Imre Madách/

MITEM

MADÁCH INTERNATIONAL THEATRE MEETING
NATIONAL THEATRE • BUDAPEST, APRIL 8–MAY 17, 2020.



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INAUGURAL

VII. MITEM • APRIL 8–APRIL 17 • 2020

RADICALLY MODERATE

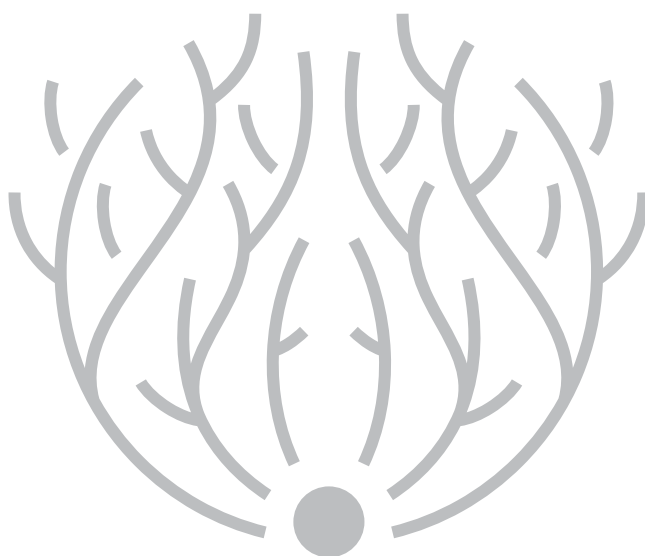
The Madách International Theater Meeting started in 2014, and has arrived to its 7th year. A number that has a special role in our folktales and religions, encouraging us to take a rest, pause and behold distant prospects. Also to see where we came from. When you look at the program of MITEM this year, you can see the amplitude of time unfolding in more than 2500 years of our culture.

For *Mahabharata*, the epic from India, was written that long ago, similarly, the time horizon of Euripides, the Greek tragic dramatist. This is what we can experience and become aware of during the 7th MITEM: this is also what we can be courageously radical about. Inasmuch as “radix” means root or origin, let’s be radical, because we still reap the benefits of this cultural soil today. We bow to the antique Greek authors not only by our theatre’s guest directors’ staging of *Medea*, Eirik Stubø and Michael Thalheimer – who is returning to Budapest the third time already –, and Robert Wilson’s *Oedipus*, but also by a living Greek classic, the *Amor*, directed by Theodoros Terzopoulos. By their performances, they revitalize the antique tradition, allowing us to have a better understanding of our origins, and question what we hear from our ancestors’ words.

During the last six years of MITEM, we always aimed to enter into dialogue with the creators of the invited performances, since we believe that in our era, instead of new rivalries, we primarily need to meet each other. The years behind us have given rise to several artistic collaborations, and brought many friends and intellectual mates. And there are common theatrical resonances that even we find surprising. Both the Slovene National Theatre and the Hungarian National Theatre have rediscovered the up-to-date character of certain films by Luchino Visconti. The show from Maribor, *The Damned*, took its inspiration from Visconti’s classic (same title), while *Rocco and His Brothers*, which was created in Budapest, was also inspired by Visconti’s film (same title). The basic dramatic theme of the latter – the Parondi brothers’ destiny, having moved from the countryside to the metropolis, thus having lost their roots – is implied in MITEM’s current motto, a line from *The Tragedy of Man* by Imre Madách: “Ah, in this tumult wild, / What shall become of that self locked in me [...]” (translation by J. C. W. Horne). The National Theatre of Budapest and the show, *Rocco* was invited to the Theatre Olympics, to St. Petersburg, in September last year. We might hope that the next theatre meeting of worldwide importance can take place in Hungary, in three years.

Attila Vidnyánszky

Director of the National Theatre, artistic director of MITEM



MITEM



FESTIVAL PROGRAM

We reserve the right to change the program!

DATE	AUTHOR / PERFORMANCE / DIRECTOR / THEATER	VENUE
8. and 9. April WEDNESDAY ▪ THURSDAY 07:00 pm	Robert Wilson OEDIPUS (adapted from Oedipus Tyrannos by Sophocles) Director: Robert Wilson Change Performing Arts – Milan, Italy and International	Main Stage
14. April TUESDAY 07:00 pm	Ivor Martinič THE DAMNED (Based on the screenplay by Luchino Visconti, Enrico Medioli and Nicola Badalucco) Director: Dalibor Matanić Slovene National Theatre – Maribor, Slovenia	Main Stage
15. and 16. April WEDNESDAY ▪ THURSDAY 07:00 pm	Based on poetry by Thanasis Alevras AMOR Director: Theodoros Terzopoulos Attis Theatre – Athens, Greece	Gobbi Hilda Stage
16. April THURSDAY 08:00 pm	Omar Fetmouche BRAVO TO THE ARTIST Director: Omar Fetmouche Théâtre SINDJAB de Bordj-Ménaiel – Algeria	Kaszás Attila Stage
17. April FRIDAY 07:00 pm	BELLS & SPELLS Director: Victoria Thierrée Chaplin Bells & Spells produkció – Paris, France	Main Stage
18. April SATURDAY 07:00 pm	Valère Novarina THE IMAGINARY ANIMAL Director: Valère Novarina L'Union des contraires – Paris, France	Gobbi Hilda Stage
19. April SUNDAY 07:00 pm	CRIME AND PUNISHMENT (based on the novel by Fjodor M. Dostojewski) Director: Sebastian Hartmann Staatsschauspiel Drezden – Dresden, Germany	Main Stage
20. April MONDAY 07:00 pm	THE TALE OF TALES Director: Omar Porras TKM - Théâtre Kléber-Méleau – Renens, Switzerland	Gobbi Hilda Stage
21. April TUESDAY 06:00 pm	ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS (Based on the screenplay of Rocco and his brothers) Director: Attila Vidnyánszky National Theatre – Budapest, Hungary	Main Stage
22. April WEDNESDAY 07:00 pm	Panas Myrnyi LYMERIVNA Director: Ivan Uryvskyi Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre – Kiev, Ukraine	Gobbi Hilda Stage
23. April THURSDAY 07:00 pm	Molière TARTUFFE Director: David Doiasvili National Theatre – Budapest, Hungary	Main Stage
24. April FRIDAY 06:00 pm	Géza Szöcs RASPUTIN Director: Sardar Tagirovsky Northern Theatre of Satu Mare, Harag Gyögy Company – Romania	Main Stage
25. April SATURDAY 08:00 pm	Kathakali-style Indian classical dance-theatre STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA Director: Dr. Kalamandalam John Kalatharangini Kathakali School (India) and TTB – Teatro tascabile di Bergamo (Italia)	Main Stage

FESTIVAL PROGRAM

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PERFORMANCES

Robert Wilson

OEDIPUS

adapted from Oedipus Tyrannos by Sophocles

Director: Robert Wilson • *Change Performing Arts* – Milan, Italy and International

Oedipus Rex, based on the tragedy by Sophocles, is the new work designed and directed by Robert Wilson, produced by Change Performing Arts, commissioned by "Conversazioni" - the festival of the palladian Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza - and coproduced by "Pompeii Theatrum Mundi" - the festival of ancient dramaturgy taking place in the ancient theatre of the archeological site. This same tragedy by Sophocles was staged in 1585 at Teatro Olimpico to inaugurate the most famous masterpiece by Andrea Palladio, for which Vincenzo Scamozzi designed the scenery that still adorns the interior of the theater to be admired after more than four centuries. The music composed by Andrea Gabrieli and a monochrome mural painting remains today to allow visitors to imagine the splendors during the time of that premiere.

While the backbone of the performance is the famous text by Sophocles (430 BC) with the classical Italian translation in verses by Ettore Romagnoli (1926), inserts of the ancient translation by Orsatto Giustiniano (1585), and various different contemporary languages will be intertwined to allude to a myth that travels freely across time, geographical and cultural borders.

The performance is dramaturgically structured as an Homeric recitation by an aoidos and the staging concept is highly characteristic to the works by the great American artist and director: Wilson crosses boundaries between theater, dance, music and visual art, and also creates scenes that are not in the original tragedy by Sophocles such as Pitia announcing the oracle of Delphi and the marriage of Oedipus to Jocasta.

The production comprises of seven internationally renowned actors, one musician and seven performers. Music plays a central role in the project, originally composed and performed by Dickie Landry, a saxophonist from New Orleans, who exchanges musical dialogues with Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh.

8 April 2020., Wednesday and 9 April 2020., Thursday • 7 pm and 9 April 2020., Thursday • 7 pm – Main Stage
1 hour 15 minutes without intermission • (Performance in Italian, English, French, German and Greek with Hungarian subtitles)

Ivor Martinič

THE DAMNED

based on the screenplay by Luchino Visconti, Enrico Medioli and Nicola Badalucco

Director: Dalibor Matanič • *Slovene National Theatre* – Maribor, Slovenia

The scope of German political manipulations during the times of the Reichstag fire in February 1933 and, later on, during the Night of the Long Knives in late June 1934, is an important backbone of the play, The Damned. The theme is transposed into the intimate space of Joachim Von Essenbeck's family, a renowned steelmaking dynasty. The times of crisis had imminent effects, as the rapidly decaying old Germany, as well as the alarming emergence of a new German state under the new Chancellor, where of the Von Essenbeck family's destiny is portrayed. After the death of Baron Joachim, the Von Essenbeck family members, being engaged in their small scale feuds over succession, fail to realize that they have become marionettes and mere casualties of a higher political agenda. The Damned uses the juxtaposition of politics and intimate manipulations, especially, from the aspect of interpersonal relations, to show how meticulously the Nazi government manipulated citizens, years before the official beginning of World War II. In the new war, the state needs the cannons, as much as it thrives on corpses and hatred. Thus, Martin Von Essenbeck hands over the whole family to the Third Reich, so, they are to die one after another, should they consider themselves stronger than the state. Consequently, the new state is no longer a place for communities such as family, as it has become the family itself. In turn, Martin will be the one to cast the last stone, and unleash the deadly sweep of the Von Essenbeck family's sadism. This also brings the last judgement on the once powerful dynasty.

14 April 2020., Tuesday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 1 hour 40 minutes without intermission

We recommend the production for people 16 years of age and older! • (Performed in Slovenian with Hungarian and English subtitles)

Based on poetry by Thanasis Alevras

AMOR

Director: Theodoros Terzopoulos • *Attis Theatre* – Athens, Greece

Amor is the second part of the trilogy directed by Theodoros Terzopoulos; it stands between *Alarme* and *Encore*. *Amor* is a scenic composition based on poetry written by Thanasis Alevras. It first premiered on December 2013 and since then has been presented in Attis Theatre in Athens for three seasons and in European tour, being highly appreciated by the audience and praised by the critics.

Terzopoulos turns the stage into an auction house, where everything, roles, theatre props, emotions, memories and even the parts of the human body become commodities which are being examined, appraised, sold and purchased. The prices are affected by the fluctuations of the stock market. The actors observe and make ironical comments for the contemporary situation; they perform extreme behaviors of people manipulating and being manipulated by authority, in an era of global crisis. However, everything is subverted by the promise of Amor, love, which can only function as a drive force of humanizing.

15 April 2020., Wednesday and 16 April 2020., Thursday • 7 pm and 16 April 2020., Thursday • 7 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage
55 minutes without intermission • (Performed in Greek with Hungarian and English translation)

Omar Fetmouche



BRAVO TO THE ARTIST

Director: Omar Fetmouche • *Théâtre SINDJAB de Bordj-Ménaïel* – Algeria

An Algerian artist is searching for guitar strings for an evening event he organises. But he is disappointed as all the music shops have turned into fast-food restaurants or bars.

An old usurer finds him three strings, made of camel leather, in his workshop. The artist decides to leave the country, and his mother sells her jewellery to buy a French visa for her son. In Paris, he enrolls at a renowned music school. To make ends meet and finance his education, he gives concerts at night bars and galas. After three years, he finishes school and purchases an old double bass. Combining its strings with the ones made of camel leather, he builds an instrument with a unique sound and thus, draws the attention of famous musicians. He is invited home to open the doors of the new opera house. Unable to buy a case for the instrument, he puts it in a coffin, which a friend of him meant for his French wife, converted to Islamic faith, but to be buried in her own country. So the artist, pretending to be the widower, travels with the double bass in the coffin all the way to the woman's home village, where a traditional funeral ceremony is held indeed. On the fourth night, he digs up the double bass, but the cemetery guard reports him for desecrating of the grave. During the applause at the opera opening, police arrest him and he is interrogated by the criminal brigade.

Through a show full of humour, the artist raises questions about himself and society. The missing strings make it possible for the great Algerian actor, Achène Azazni to brilliantly depict the lack of creative spaces in Algeria. His partner, Amar Cherifi, a chaabi singer creates a musical atmosphere with a mandolin, as well as playing the role of the narrator.

16 April 2020., Thursday • 8 pm – Kaszás Attila Stage – 1 hour 10 minutes without intermission
(Performed in Algerian Arabic language with Hungarian subtitles)



BELLS & SPELLS

Director: Victoria Thierrée Chaplin • *Bells & Spells Production* – Paris, France

Plenty of humour and a spark of kind little foolishness – that is what can describe the world of Victoria Thierrée Chaplin. In this show, Aurélia Thierrée slips into the skin of a kleptomaniac.

Aurélia opens up her imaginary world pervaded by restlessness and poetry. Immersed in kleptomania), the multifaceted artist portrays a character affected and manipulated by the objects she steals. These objects belong to a world with a mind of its own.

A coat rack begins to walk. The chairs and the table are sliding and slipping away, while the wall splits up and unexpectedly, a dancing couple leaps through. All of a sudden, a skirt comes to life... Here the bizarre rubs shoulders with the supernatural. You are a witness to all kinds of mirage that make you smile and dream. There is no place for logic in *Bells & Spells*, no reason or sobriety. Aurélia Thierrée and Jaime Martinez take you on a journey through hallucinatory lands, where surrealist humour and fairy enchantment unite freely.

"Our work is very instinctive: there isn't any script. Victoria visualises the scenery and the stage, taking inspiration from photos and music to create the stage-setting. Then, I move freely in this universe, which I gradually inhabit." – says Aurélia Thierrée, who grew up in her parents' circus tent and spent her apprenticeship in their shows. Later she performed together with the legendary Tiger Lillies Circus, variety and cabaret shows from Berlin to New York. Her partner, Jaime Martinez, a dancer with Puerto Rico's origins, the co-founder of the Parsons Company and the dancer of several famous ballets, also performs in each staging of Victoria Thierrée Chaplin.

17 April 2020., Friday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 1 hour 10 minutes without intermission • (without text)



Valère Novarina



THE IMAGINARY ANIMAL

Director: Valère Novarina • *L'Union des contraires* – Paris, France

"The *Imaginary Animal* started as a succession of variations on extracts from previous texts. I have always worked in a circular way by digging deeper and deeper. The variation allows one to 'see things differently'. I go back to old paintings, old pages, to make them confess something. Make them say what they only half said. The greatest mystery of painting is in the repercussion of every single gesture. The path of traces. One new touch of colour can drastically change the whole. The same goes for a written piece. One has to find the acuteness of the words again, their sharpness, which sometimes appear by changing just one syllable. The tiniest move can generate a metamorphosis. A performance is like a forest, shimmering and ever changing. Always 'otherly'." – said Valère Novarina at La Colline Theatre in Paris, about his performance, presented this season.

This revisitation of previous texts enables us to use this guest performance in the MITEM festival also as a field for an exciting attempt: two Hungarian Novarinian actors – Nelli Szűcs and Tibor Mészáros who performed in *The Imaginary Operetta*, directed by Novarina in Debrecen – will give a live, simultaneous interpretation of *The Imaginary Animal*. Thus the audience will be able to perceive the unique linguistic universe of Novarina in „another“ language, this time Hungarian, through the power of the spoken words.

18 April 2020., Saturday • 7 pm – Gobbí Hilda Stage – 2 hours 20 minutes without intermission
(Performed in French with Hungarian translation)



Fjodor M. Dostojewski

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Fjodor M. Dostojewski (based on the novel) in the translation "Crime and Punishment" by Svetlana Geier using the "Rede zum unmöglichen Theater" by Wolfram Lotz

Director: Sebastian Hartmann • Staatsschauspiel Dresden – Dresden, Germany

Raskolnikov, the impoverished hero of Dostoevsky's iconic novel, conceives a peculiar theory: there are average and special people. The latter ones have the right to use the others in order to fulfil their own visions and endeavours, and also the right to kill. Everything must be subordinated to the ideas of "great" people because only they can create something new. Raskolnikov tests his belief in real life: he murders an old pawnbroker woman and, as "collateral damage", her younger sister too.

The terms of the title, crime and punishment reflect the ethical and legal questions raised by the show from Dresden. The nihilist philosophy of Raskolnikov as a long shadow implies the sins of the 20th century. Just like in Harman's previous Dostoevsky-adaptation (Humiliated and Insulted, which was selected by the Theatertreffen in Berlin as one of the ten best performances), in Crime and Punishment, the director does not follow the linear plot of the novel. What leads up to the killing? How does this act transform the person? – taking Dostoevsky's questions as a base, Hartmann investigates possible motivations and associations.

The actors, the camera, the sound and the light are equal participants of the play, of which only the main points are fixed. The images, the texts and the process of the play are recreated every time from rehearsal materials that have been discussed and tried out. With every performance, a new world is created out of Dostoevsky's fragmented poetic images, and the quest is reformulated: how much do we carry with us and in our world of the Raskolnikov-syndrome.

19 April 2020., Sunday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 1 hour 50 minutes without intermission

We recommend the production for people 16 years of age and older! • (Performed in German with Hungarian translation)

based on the work of Giambattista Basile

THE TALE OF TALES

Director: Omar Porras • TKM - Théâtre Kléber-Méleau – Renens, Switzerland

"Telling tales or listening to them is always an exhilarating experience! It is allowing yourself to be driven by the giddy depths of imagination, to meander along the paths of the unknown, to risk suddenly encountering our 'naked souls' in the dark forest of ourselves" – writes the Swiss theatre director of Columbian origin, Omar Porras, about the show. Myths and legends have often inspired the works of his company, Teatro Malandro, which now celebrates its 30th anniversary. This time, the company draws on centuries of oral tradition, the spirit of vernacular language and its poetic crudeness. 'The Tale of Tales' is based on a piece by Giambattista Basile, *Il Pentamerone*, a treasure trove of tales collected in 17th Century Italy, from the pubs and streets of Naples, Tuscany, Sicily and Venice.

"These stories are the source that inspired famous writers such as Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Poe, Irving, and so on, throughout centuries. They reinterpreted and refined them to transfer such variations to us that keep circulating in our memory. *Il Pentamerone* itself is an unpolished diamond, untouched, cruel, incredibly entertaining and powerful."

The company of Teatro Malandro started its 30-year adventure in a squat called the Garage, in Geneva, from where their path led to the Dramatic Theatre of Geneva, a workshop they formed in the Sécheron district, and then to the TKM Théâtre Kléber-Méleau in Lausanne, where they have been active since 2015. The present performance is now being created, with a première planned in March 2020, and starting its first tour abroad at the MITEM.

20 April 2020., Monday • 7 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage – 2 hours without intermission • (Performed in French with Hungarian subtitles)

Based on the screenplay of Rocco and his brothers

ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS

Director: Attila Vidnyánszky • National Theatre – Budapest, Hungary

Directed by Luchino Visconti in 1960, *Rocco and His brothers* is a movie based on Giovanni Testori's novel *The Ghisolfi Bridge*. The title evokes Thomas Mann's novel *Joseph and His Brothers*, and not by accident: Rocco Sotellaro, a poet from Southern Italy who sang the lives and traditions of the people there, made a significant impact on Visconti.

Happiness, making a living and a career are what the five Parondi brothers Vincenzo, Simone, Rocco, Ciro and Luca hope to achieve. Following their father's death, they decide to move with their mother from their village in the South of Italy to booming Milan sometime in the early 1950s. The family's path is marked out by moving to the city, defying their destiny, fighting it, and the hope of returning to their village.

Family ties, the struggle for survival, boxing and the gym, romantic love, the brothers' love for each other, their inevitable rivalry, and last but not least, their homesickness fuel the drama that renders their story universal. Decisions, both right and wrong, made on the streets of the city en route to alienation will eventually cause the family to disintegrate: some are to find fulfilment there, some are to find it back in the village.

Attila Vidnyánszky's thoughts on directing the play: "My aim is to show the forces and values that strive to bridge the gap between the purity of rural life with its traditions, and the struggles and opportunities of a metropolitan lifestyle. What makes them surrender purity, and is it necessary to give it up? The answer rests with Rocco Parondi, who replaces his brother in the boxing ring, and whose human qualities mould him into a genuine fighter. It is not by chance that Rocco's figure reminds us of Dostoyevsky's Prince Myshkin. His elementary goodness, almost self-effacing humility, and willingness to sacrifice his own happiness enable the entire family to look into the future with their head held high, whether they choose to return to their native region or not."

21 April 2020., Tuesday • 6 pm – Main Stage – 3 hours 40 minutes with one intermission

We recommend the production for people 16 years of age and older! • (Performed in Hungarian with English translation)



Panas Myrnyi

LYMERIVNA

Director: Ivan Uryvskiy • *Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre* – Kiev, Ukraine

The play, *Lymerivna*, is a work of Panas Myrnyi, a classic of Ukrainian literature. This is a typical example of a traditional mid-nineteenth-century Ukrainian melodrama, where passionate love, indestructible by any compromise, is a driving force of the conflict. Only whole-willed personalities are capable of such love.

As it is usual for most of Ukrainian dramaturgy of that time, the plot is based on folklore, a folk ballad about *Lymerivna*. A poor mother and widow forces her daughter, Natalya, to abandon her beloved but poor Vasyl and marry the unloved Karp, a son of a rich *Shkandybyha*. Natalya loves and pities her mother, a drunkard, but desperately resists her will. However, the mother inclines Natalya to the marriage by cunning, lying and persuasion. The girl subsequently realizes that she has been deviously deceived. After that, everything is left for the only freedom – the freedom of death.

The distance between us and the play by Panas Myrnyi is almost a century and a half. Where are we in relation to the poor girl, Natalka, who loves Vasyl till death? But still, we may see the contemporary contexts in the interpretation of the director, Ivan Uryvskiy, through the eternal questions of love and betrayal, the relations between parents and children, manipulation for the sake of fulfilling desires, the inability to find the guilty person and the attempt to defend one's choice.

The director leaves only the main characters in the play, deprives the plot of its time frame and the purely social and domestic themes. He focuses on the existential problems of the right to choose, as it cannot be guided by either the mother's supposedly good intentions, or more so, by the meanness and deceit of others. Thus, the romantic love story turns into a high tragedy of ancient tensions and of Shakespearean scale. At the same time, it is a discouraging parable about the powerlessness of man in the face of a stronger will, and the helplessness of love under oppressing circumstances.

22 April 2020., Wednesday • 7 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage – 1 hour 45 minutes without intermission
(Performed in Ukrainian with Hungarian subtitles)



Molière

TARTUFFE

Director: David Doiasvili • *National Theatre* – Budapest, Hungary

Tartuffe, a profoundly religious figure, is gaining influence in the wealthy home of the Orgons, and is about to cheat Orgon out of his fortune and get his daughter's hand in the process. Soon everyone sees through Tartuffe's tricks – except Orgon. The family come up with a plan to catch the fraudster out.

A simple comedy plot, implemented ingeniously by none other than the brilliant genius of the history of drama: Molière.

In the original title, Molière thought it important to attach the qualifier „l'imposteur” to the name: Tartuffe or the Hypocrite, a.k.a. sanctimonious, eye-rolling, two-faced, pretender, phoney, lip-server, Pharisee. The fact that a language offers so many words for a concept suggests that it keeps people preoccupied. The best indicator of the popularity of this play is that by now, „a real tartuffe” can be added to the list of synonyms.

The character became synonymous with the trait that Molière pilloried in his piece, so much so that, although the play was presented in Versailles in 1664, influential courtiers convinced Louis XIV to ban it. It would not be re-authorised until 1669. A ban, however, was a great way to advertise even back then, and the audience flocked to the premiere on 5th February. The fact that the enthusiasm would not subsequently fade shows the timeliness and validity of the play. With countless stage interpretations today, every director will find their own Tartuffe, depending on the message they want to convey to the world, and on the social anomaly they focus on. In any case, those who assumed that the play was an attack on faith and banned / embraced it depending on their worldview, may have overlooked these lines by Cléante, wherein Molière expounds his philosophy: “There's just one insight I would dare to claim: / I know that true and false are not the same; / And just as there is nothing I more revere / Than a soul whose faith is steadfast and sincere, / Nothing that I more cherish and admire / Than honest zeal and true religious fire, / So there is nothing that I find more base / Than specious piety's dishonest face” (Translated by Richard Wilbur).

23 April 2020., Thursday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 2 hours 55 minutes with one intermission
We recommend the production for people 16 years of age and older! • (Performed in Hungarian with English translation)

Géza Szőcs

RASZPUTYIN

Director: Sardar Tagirovsky • *Northern Theatre of Satu Mare, Harag Gyögy Company* – Romania

“This play by Géza Szőcs is a historical insight into the collective European and global conscience. It brings historical reality into focus through the fictitious lens of Rasputin. This fiction appears to be the last refuge for a passionate survival in the apocalyptic forest of mankind. It has this childlike desire for world peace, for a situation without killing each other in wars and in society. In the world we create here, all the poetry flirts with reality. All the desires dance with surrender, and all the deeds with philosophy. This drama is just like our contemporary image of Rasputin has become: divine and infinitely human, and at the same time, horrendously historical. It is because the both sacred and sinful figure of Rasputin is incomprehensible. His power is not of the kind that emperors, kings or tsars have, but like the enchanting look of players and swindlers.

I often imagine what it would have been like had there not been so many deaths during the 20th century. What my grandparents, the friends and relatives of my great-grandparents who did not survive the hard times could have been like. There was no end to these people's painful cries in the last century or even in ours. Or even last year. This year. I always believed that we as human beings are able to hear those lost voices through our imagination and empathy. Sometimes, it is not about how exactly something has happened... The point is not how precisely we can reconstruct history, but how we live our truth or truths.

There are as many truths as people and nations, all slightly different. Through the dramatic figure and journey of Rasputin, one can discover the daily, historical and universal truth of extinct eras and characters, and one can relate to people never known. This show will be also a commemoration of all the innocents or people who would never have used weapons, if they had had the choice.” (Sardar Tagirovsky)

24 April 2020., Friday • 6 pm – Main Stage – 3 hours 40 minutes with two intermission
(Performed in Hungarian with English translation)



Kathakali-style Indian classical dance-theatre

STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

Director: Dr. Kalamandalam John

Kalatharangini Kathakali School (India) and TTB Teatro tascabile di Bergamo (Italy)

„What has not been presented in this piece, you would seek in vain in the triple world!” – one can read in the original commendation of the ancient Indian epic. Ervin Baktay, the creator of the shortened Hungarian version, says: „if we only knew Mahabharata about the past of India, it would be enough to reconstruct the ancient Hindu mythology, religion, world view, philosophy, intelligence, habits and art.”

Originally from Kerala, the verdant region of South-West India, Kathakali had distilled the juices of a multiform culture of performing and ritual practices until it was organized in its final and current shape around the middle of the 17th century.

The sumptuous combinations and display of make-ups and costumes, the hypnotic and extremely refined vocal and percussive music, combined with the legendary technical training of its actors, place this art at the top of the world theatre.

For the first time in Hungary, the spectators can experience a full, traditional Kathakali night. Not only a performance, but (followed by chai tea and samosa) it is a little piece of India that the artists conjure here. Sadaanam Krishnankutty, one of the most significant representatives of Kathakali today, participates in the production.

25 April 2020., Saturday • 8 pm – Main Stage – 7 hours 30 minutes with two intermission
(Performed in Sanskrit and Malayalam with Hungarian and English subtitles)

based on the poetry and other texts by János Pilinszky

NIGHTTIME

Director: Kinga Mezei • Regional Creative Atelier – Kanjiža, Serbia

Nighttime uses the language of poetry to tell us about the essential themes of spiritual and mental homelessness of people today, the conflicting beauty and destruction of the created world, human indignity and the threatening lack of prospects in our era. Pilinszky's texts confront us with the fundamental questions of existence. The basic themes of his poetry – solitude and summation, the alienation of people today, passing and letting go, introspection and search for the self, salvation, hope, mercy and grace, and, most importantly, experiencing homelessness and homecoming in a religious sense – give the dramaturgical line of the performance. The show does not tell a story, but processes the feelings that, willingly or not, we all carry in our souls. *Nighttime* unites a variety of art forms, and draws on János Pilinszky's poetry. There will be extracts from the following poems by János Pilinszky: On a Forbidden Star (Tilos csillagon), Apokryph, Heatwave (Kánikula), Revelation VIII. 7. (Jelenések VIII. 7.), I believe (Azt hiszem), The Nadir Celebrated (A mélypont ünnepe), Sztavrogin Takes Leave and Sztavrogin Returns (Sztavrogin elköszön and Sztavrogin visszatér), and miscellaneous others works.

“In *Nighttime* you are between Heaven and Earth, somewhere halfway. (...) Principally, I try to see the poet's world as my source. I attempt to embrace the impulses, impressions and thoughts coming from the poet, then give my own interpretation of them using theatrical language, and transplant them onto stage. A poem might not be recited word by word in the show, but is present in other forms: shaped into an image for instance, or as an inspiration for a musical opus. (...) I find poetry much more inspiring than a set drama, as it allows more artistic freedom. (...) Béla Hamvas (Hungarian philosopher) said that your only tool to bear your ghosts is to laugh at them. What is in question here is an outsider's cheerful frame of mind that can help us to rise above the insufficiency of our lives.” (translated words of Kinga Mezei)

25 April 2020., Saturday • 5 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage – 1 hour 10 minutes without intermission
(Performed in Hungarian with English subtitles)

István Örkény

CAT'S PLAY

Director: János Szász • National Theatre – Budapest, Hungary

„We humans can only suffer and be happy in one way, whether we're at the beginning or at the end of our lives,” – says István Örkény in the Preface to his tragicomedy „The Cats Play”. When we hold a photo of our youth, it seems that our life can be captured in a moment of self-abandonment, and though the years go by, our passion and pain remain just as alive inside. Örkény adds that “The protagonist of this grotesque story is the widow Mrs. Béla Orbán, and the play is actually her never-ending big-mouthed, truth-bending or downright lying quarrel with everyone around her, including her daughter, the woman living next door, Paula, and most of all, her sister Giza who lives near Munich. She fights tooth and nail to force her confused, senseless and hopeless love on the world. She encompasses all the capabilities a person can have: the loud mouth of a vendor in a marketplace and the grace of a tragic Greek heroine. What else could she do? Mrs. Orbán defies the laws of nature as she ignores old age and declares a war on death.”

Cats' Play was first published as a novel in 1965 and was a great success. Örkény was both asked and inspired by young director Gábor Székely to adapt it to the theatre, and in 1969, he wrote the stage version of this epistle-novel. At the time, a play consisting of soliloquies was a pioneering format – by now, it is common “postmodern” practice. In January 1971, Cats' Play premiered in Szolnok, and a few months later, at the request of the Vígyszínház, Gábor Székely also staged it at the Pest Theatre, with Mária Sulyok and Elma Bulla in the leading roles. The Pest Theatre kept it in its repertoire for more than a decade. „Mrs. Orbán will survive us all,” stated Sulyok. She did, indeed. In the year of its premiere, the play was produced at two other theatres in Hungary and also made its debut in Helsinki. Since then, Cats' Play has been staged well over one hundred times in many countries around the world. At its 100th premiere in 1986, it was staged at the Játékszín as a contemporary classic, with a brilliant new cast featuring Irén Psota, Klári Tolnay and Mari Töröcski, who excelled as Mouse. In 1974, Cats' Play premiered as a feature film directed by Károly Makk.

At the National Theatre, Cats' Play will again be a rewarding opportunity for an outstanding cast, and we hope that Mária Sulyok's prophecy will come true again: „The meaning, tone and message of Cats' Play may change, but it will never say goodbye to success. Director János Szász would only share this much of his concept: “This show belongs to the actors. All I have to do is wish them courage and faith for this beautiful and bone-chillingly hard journey.

26 April 2020., Sunday • 7 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage – 3 hours with one intermission
(Performed in Hungarian with English subtitles)



Stanisław Wyspiański

THE WEDDING

Director: Włodzimierz Staniewski • *Gardzienice Centre for Theatre Practices* – Lublin, Poland

"There was once a wedding in a farmhouse near Krakow with many bohemian Krakow artists present, one of them as the fiancé and many as guests. (...) Then, four months later, on 16th March 1901, the audience could see the event on stage. It is known that the characters of *The Wedding* by Stanisław Wyspiański were real people, some of them friends of the author. (...) At the premiere, all of them were doubly present: one part of them was on stage and the other part in the audience. Krakow is a small city, thus the narrow circle of open-minded, bohemian, snobbish intellectuals – a high percentage of the theatre goers – saw their own reflections on stage. (...) [A speech in verse] can bring such mood and atmosphere that makes everything allowed on stage, in contrast to real life and naturalist drama. Ghosts can appear and miracles can happen beyond the scope of common logic. (...) During the drunken night of *The Wedding*, the spirits of Polish historical consciousness take control over the characters' emotions. Wyspiański was the first, and he is still the greatest master to (...) dramatically portray the collective subconscious. (...) His discoveries are similar to the ones of Freud or Jung. However, for him, the spirits as archetypes are defined by their extremely concrete historical and social genealogies." (Text of György Spiró)

The company of Gardzienice, famous for their innovative theatrical solutions, was founded by Włodzimierz Staniewski in 1977. Compared to Grotowski, his former teacher, Staniewski represents a theatrical model, which is more open and leads "beyond the mere exchange of rituals and ceremonies." The company still organises expeditions throughout the world, drawing inspiration from local and archaic cultures. "Mating and wedding are of the few surviving rituals in living traditions, and they use incomparably rich means of theatrical expression. Within such traditions are also living theatrical sessions of evoking ghosts and phantoms from the past. The magic realism is palpably alive." – said Staniewski in 2017, at the premiere of *The Wedding*.

27 April 2020., Monday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 55 minutes without intermission
(Performed in Polish with Hungarian and English subtitles)

Euripides

MEDEA

Director: Eirik Stubø • *National Theatre* – Budapest, Hungary

There are universal themes and figures that keep coming back in new guises. In reality, we know little about them, their characters are shrouded in mystery, but through them, we can express ourselves and our age. One such figure is Euripides' Medea, the unfortunate, betrayed, loving – in Babits's words, "always modern" – woman who commits an inhumane act of jealousy: she takes the lives of her own children. In spite of what she does, Euripides attempts to achieve the impossible by getting his audience to sympathise with this desperate heroine battling against her demons. Through her, he depicts the fate of a woman subjugated to the male world. The fate of a woman who, to make matters worse, comes from a foreign, culture. Euripides' play enacts a familiar theme. And, of course, his adaptation has also been staged in many versions, sometimes including references to the original myth. It is definitely a welcome challenge for both the director and the actors, as with such a well-known subject, the emphasis is on how it is interpreted.

In Eirik Stubø's creative world, lyrics and the musicality of space are of prime importance, perhaps because he comes from a family of renowned jazz musicians. In addition, he always uses the actors' personality as a take-off point, as opposed to foisting an off-the-shelf character on them. The roles of Medea and Jason are a great fit for Nelli Szűcs and Zsolt Trill, the couple who define the history of the Beregszász Company.

Stubø, one of Scandinavia's most renowned directors, has already staged two productions at MITEM: *American Elektra* in 2017, and *One Night in the Swedish Summer* in 2019. Based on his track record, we can look forward to an exciting production.

28 April 2020., Tuesday • 7 pm – Gobbi Hilda Stage – 1 hour 40 minutes without intermission
(Performed in Hungarian with English translation)

Euripides

MEDEA

Director: Michael Thalheimer • *Berliner Ensemble* – Berlin, Germany

Jason has abandoned Medea; she and her children are threatened with banishment. By marrying Kreon's daughter, Jason will receive a definitive right of residence and a socially and economically secure position. Deeply hurt by this betrayal and distraught by Jason's shameless defiance of their bond of marriage and vows of fidelity, Medea plots a cruel revenge. Boundless love turns into boundless hatred: Medea decides to kill their children. What can human beings relinquish, what can be taken away from them, before they lash out with no mercy?

There is hardly another name as fascinating and frightening at the same time as Medea's, and hardly another antique text that has been interpreted and adopted so widely as her myth. The premiere of the version by Euripides, the playwright, took place in 431 BCE. Medea – an immensely humiliated victim, a passionately loving person and a cruel avenger – is one of the most contradictory figures in the world's drama literature.

In 2013, Michael Thalheimer's staging of *Medea* was invited to the Theatertreffen in Berlin, the festival that showcases ten of the best performances from German-language theatres. Constanze Becker in the role of Medea was honoured with the Faust Award, the German theatrical recognition for the best actress. So far, MITEM hosted two shows by Michael Thalheimer from the Berliner Ensemble: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (2018) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2019).

29 April 2020., Wednesday • 7 pm – Main Stage – 1 hour 45 minutes without intermission • (Performed in German with Hungarian and English subtitles)





A O SHOW

Lune Production – Vietnam

The **A O Show** tells the story of how Vietnamese went through the exciting transitional periods, from the quiet and simple village life to modern and busy lifestyle.

The contrast portrait of „Village-City“ is expressed by a unique mix of bamboo cirque, acrobatic acts, contemporary dance and theatrical art, boldly emphasizing the charming beauty, cultural richness of Vietnamese life, in contrast to the nation's racing urbanization. In the show, you may be amazed by how the rhythm smoothly flows with harmony within chaos.

- The show is full of interesting metaphor of the different lifestyles in Vietnam
- A O Show depicts the charming beauty and cultural richness of Vietnamese life in the countryside
- The motion of the performers matches perfectly with each other in great harmony
- Every move of the performers are so iconic that will keep your eyes busy
- The unique stage language captures the essence of Vietnam's fascinating culture
- The show is a rare mix of cirque, acrobatics, dynamic contemporary dance and live music
- See the daily lives of Vietnamese illustrated in a graceful theatrical language
- Amusing body language will capture your overwhelmed feelings
- Creative using of bamboo and rattan props creates a dynamic and visually rich picture of Vietnam culture
- Being touched by vivid romantic moments of life in the countryside

Capital Grand Circus



