

## **49<sup>th</sup> Week of Slovenian Drama**

### **The Selection of Performances**

#### **Explanation**

It has been my honour to watch a total of fifty-seven productions as the selector for the Week of Slovenian Drama. The theatres entered thirty-eight productions; I saw additional ones that spoke to me in one way or the other. While I understand the different codes and the “language of performance”, I believe that a selection is still only a subjective act; it remains such also when seeing performances that go beyond the classical drama writing, those that search for new fields of theatre expressions, and finally those that open questions about the actual role of theatre in society.

The basic criteria for selection were complexity in content and aesthetic, comprehensiveness of the execution of individual performances, and also if the performance touched certain registers that clearly establish a dialogue with the contemporary civic awareness.

I saw performances in institutional and other professional theatres, as well as amateur theatres. For various objective and technical reasons, I saw five performances on video.

The staging of Slovenian productions in 2018 has, in my opinion, remained within the standards of quality productions that thematise the many aspects of contemporary human existence, as well as the very question of performing art; in them, the actors’ expressive self-reflection was often noticeable. The plays in 2018 were clearly marked by a greater presence of the works by Ivan Cankar and the texts and performances by Simona Semenič, the 2018 Prešeren Fund Award Laureate. I would also like to point out the presence of texts and adaptations of Slovenian authors in practically all the institutional theatres, which baptised many a novelty by renowned authors as well as those who are only now entering the theatre audience’s consciousness. Also noticeable is a large share of directors from the younger and the youngest generations, who are contributing significantly to the growth and development of contemporary Slovenian theatre with their sharp concepts.

## COMPETITION PROGRAMME

(not ranked in hierarchical order)

**1. Simona Semenič: *no title yet*; directed by Tomi Janežič, produced by the Mladinsko Theatre Ljubljana**

A complex and diverse landscape of humanity, which reflects the myth of Don Juan in a wide time dimension, and is intertwined with authentic personal states of mind, memory, pain and forgetfulness. Simona Semenič's text organically merges with material that the cast had been assembling for months into a comprehensive whole which through the myth of Don Juan speaks of contemporary fears, hopes and distress ...

**2. Ivo Svetina: *IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER*; directed by Ivica Buljan, produced by the SNT Drama Ljubljana**

An epic family saga and a historical fresco which the director's signature upgrades significantly into the many layers of a cosmos of destinies, marked by loss, pain, death, disillusion and longing.

**3. Vinko Möderndorfer: *A BOY, A GIRL, AND A GENTLEMAN*; directed by Mateja Kokol, produced by the Drama of the SNT Maribor**

An excellent drama miniature, which wittily thematises theatre, acting and human dilemmas, and provides the actors with broad confessional and interpretative possibilities. How to be onstage and how to be in life is a specific skill. In short, art and the art of living can be demanding. A play about a play that reflects beyond and deeply.

**4. Ivan Cankar: *AT DAWN*, directed by Žiga Divjak, produced by Prešeren Theatre Kranj**

An excellent transposing of a prose work into an extremely precise and sensitive theatre narrative, which in today's time echoes the state of mind in contemporary society. A strongly engaged production which touches us on all the levels of theatre language.

**5. Anton Tomaž Linhart: *THE MERRY DAY OR MATIČEK'S WEDDING*; directed by Janusz Kica, produced by the SNT Drama Ljubljana**

Thoughtfully and cleverly freed of local historic nuances, this production doesn't focus on the social and class [situation], but rather on the psychological deepening of the characters and the relationships between them. With precise directorial language, which never loses its discourse, and with a clear visual image – even in dark tones – it discloses the era and us, embedded in it.

**6. Ivan Tavčar: *THE VISOKO CHRONICLE*; directed by Jernej Lorenci, produced by the SNT Drama Ljubljana**

The production reaches into the historic fabric of the novel and its narrative material with an integral story by the actors, who, with their intense creations and transformations as well as their personal enthusiasm, unveil the chronicle of the time and people, and thus open a path to completely identifying with the material describing the broader events. A surprising approach to a creative search of directorial poetics.

**7. Authorial project: 6; directed by Žiga Divjak, produced by the Mladinsko Theatre and Maska Ljubljana (part of the New Post Office project)**

A minimalist staging of the stylistically refined documentarist drama about intolerance and cultural illiteracy, whose directness and authenticity open questions about the absence of responsibility, empathy and civic consciousness, with which we have entered the time marked by migrations and the growing closed-mindedness of individual societies, among which the Slovenian one is no exception.

**ACCOMPANIYING PROGRAMME**

**1. Jure Karas: *REALISTS*, a cabaret for five actors, a drunk and an audience; directed by Tijana Zinajić, produced by the SNG Nova Gorica**

A socially critical cabaret, anchored in Slovenian archetypes and stereotypes. A homogenous whole of scenes that sharply thematise the state of the Slovenian mind and that of the general society. A production that reaches beyond the genre itself.

**2. Uroš Kaurin and Vito Weis: *HERO 2.0 – The Show of all Shows*; produced by KUD Moment and EN-KNAP Productions**

A witty, uncompromising problematisation of theatre creation, experiencing theatre and our perspective of it.

**3. Nejc Gazvoda: *SILENT BREATH*; directed by Nejc Gazvoda, produced by Ljubljana City Theatre**

A family drama, sensitively written through the eyes of a generation that carries inside itself all the fundamental existential questions of modern time.

**4. Ivan Cankar: *SCANDAL IN THE VALLEY OF ST. FLORIAN*; directed by Eduard Miler, co-produced by the SNT Drama Ljubljana, Ljubljana City Theatre, Cankarjev dom**

A grand fresco of the past and particularly the present society and its many facets of sanctimony, lies, hypocrisy and everything that is ever-so-pertinent to us.

**5. Ivan Cankar: *THE KING OF BETAJNOVA*; directed by Maša Pelko, produced by UL AGRFT – 6<sup>th</sup> semester of stage acting and theatre directing**

A fresh approach to thinking about the consequences of uncompromising power.

Marko Sosič

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