



The first year of the international festival of participatory theatre and audience development

Puppet Theatre at Rázcestí in Banská Bystrica 2023
Press release

1st edition of EDUFEST

International festival of participatory theatre and audience development

A pilot project within the context of Slovak theatre, the first in the given area, which will be held from September to December (always two days in a given month) for a different age group of children and teaching professionals working with children and youth, as well as the public. During the Festival, learning workshops will be held on topics such as how to use theatre and the potential of theatre in school and personal practice, how to systematically develop creativity, and facilitate emotional and mental growth using theatre techniques. Learning activities are closely connected to theatre performances with discussions about the analysis of the themes addressed in an analysed piece, and the aesthetic and ethical experience of theatre. 2023 EDUFEST features Slovak, Czech and Ukrainian theatres and distinguished specialist specialists on theatre education, creativity development, human rights topics from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and UK. The Festival concludes on 14 **December 14th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** with an international colloquium **ONE YEAR AFTER THE INITIATIVE BB 22. LEARNING THROUGH THEATRE.**

Part 1 introduces Innovative methods of cooperation between schools, theatre and the public based on experience and participation abroad, which will be presented by leaders in the field from the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and UK.

Part 2 of the colloquium is dedicated to current methods of cooperation in Slovakia. It includes a working meeting of Slovak guests from theatres, universities and independent associations who will analyse the current state of learning through theatre / theatre education in Slovakia. (Simultaneous translation from and into English. Online platform.)

September EDUFEST, dedicated to **learning experience for preschool children, parents and all who work with preschool children** will be held on 21 and 22 September 2023 in Banská Bystrica at the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads (Bábkové divadlo na Rázcestí; hereinafter as BDNR) and the garden of the Central Slovak Gallery. The programme comprises 5 performances (Slovak and Czech) and 2 workshops.





The aim of the first workshop *Principles of Puppet Theatre in Teaching Practice* led by lecturer Barbora Zamišková is to draw attention to the educational function of theatre, to introduce and try individual types of puppets, their animation and use in teaching. The learning and educational role of the theatre is very useful in pedagogical practice. The principles of puppet theatre find their place in all humanities, as well as in improving communication in the classroom (breaking down blocks, establishing rules, open communication, amicable relations, etc.). Puppet theatre is also a child's first contact with the art of drama and can get them enthused about all kinds of art. As early as in 350 BC Aristotle pointed out the attractive influence of puppets on people. Playing with a puppet, a doll, is one of the oldest forms of communication, along with pantomime and shadow play. As part of the workshop, we will introduce and try individual types of puppets, their animation and use in the educational process.

The aim of the second workshop *Drama Play for the Little Ones* led by the Czech lecturer Alžbeta Ferklová is to familiarise the participants with the basic methods and techniques of drama education suitable for working with children of preschool age. Drama education (hereinafter DE) is one of the six disciplines in aesthetic education and art education, in which we work with the means and methods of theatre art, primarily with mimetic play (drama play, role play). DE can also be characterised as learning through direct experience and own experience in dealing, joint solution of a problem (situation) not only using the intellect, but also intuition, involving the body and emotions. DE with the smallest children means discovering seemingly small things in the big world of play, stories and fantasy. It is a period of entering into roles, a period of endless play and spontaneity in a safe setting of firm boundaries and clear rules. The seminar for teachers and students offers, through active participation, an experience of working with a nursery rhyme, a classic fairy-tale and a story with a child character. The participants will thus be able to familiarise themselves with the basic methods and techniques of drama education suitable for working with children of preschool age.

October EDUFEST, dedicated to education by experience for teachers and all who work and live with children aged 6 to 10, will be held on 19 and 20 October 2023 in Banská Bystrica in at the Elementary School of the Slovak Free Broadcaster and BDNr. The programme comprises 3 performances and 4 workshops to be held in the above venues.

The aim of the first workshop in October, entitled **Speaking by Sound** with the Czech lecturer Pavlína Dusilová, is to find out if it is possible to speak by sound? Can we hear the electricity? Together we will explore not only the soundscape we are used to, but, thanks to special electro-hearing, we will explore the electromagnetic waves that abundantly surround us without much notice. As part of the workshop, we will create our own sound composition.



The second workshop, entitled **4th floor**, focuses on the application of theatre methods in general learning subjects at the 1st level of primary school, presented by the EDUdrama association, lecturers Barbora Jurínová and Veronika Kořínková-Willems. Drama techniques that invigorate teaching and deepen knowledge. Workshop for teachers of 1st level of primary school and others interested in the given topics. You will learn how to develop and include drama education methods in your teaching. Experience them yourself – there will be a creative environment and a good mood.

The third workshop, **Comics Book Workshop** for children will be led by Toybox, popular Prague-based street art and comic artist, who collaborated with BDNR on the production of *Kamil*. Comics are a way to teach children to tell stories in a fun way. Drawing cartoons improves a number of key skills: in addition to developing imagination and drawing, the ability to write, formulate and tell a story is also improved through the creation and drawing of cartoons. Children become aware of causes and effects through stories, and have an opportunity to create and develop their own unique worlds instead of indulging in passive entertainment. Toybox works with each child in accordance with their age and personality. She will teach them the basics of cartoon: how to draw comic panels, speech bubbles, how to design a cartoon character, how to write text on a page. It helps children invent and draw their cartoon stories. The entire course takes place in a friendly and respectful atmosphere.

The menu of October workshops closes with the Czech lecturer Michaela Váňová with a workshop **With Kids to the Theatre!** Participants will learn how to develop children's creativity through play and theatre in the first level of primary school. How to communicate with children in the theatre and in the theatre? Why go to the theatre with the school group? The workshop explores the world of theatre for children through three basic lenses: that of the child, the teacher/educator and theatre artist (creator of the theatre performance). In an active form, through small tasks and stimuli, she guides children through the methods of preparing them to visit a theatre performance and various ways of reflecting on it. It helps teachers and parents to realise what is worth to think about before they go to the theatre with their children, and to identify their own expectations from the theatre for children.

November EDUFEST, dedicated to **theatre for all who work and live with teenagers aged 12 to 18**, will be held on **23 and 24 November 2023** in Banská Bystrica in BDNR, The Andrej Sládkovič High School, the BDNR café and the Elementary School of the Slovak Free Broadcaster. The programme comprises 2 performances and 4 workshops.

The first November workshop with lecturer Monika Bosá is entitled **Breaking Gender Stereotypes as a Way to Non-discrimination**. It seeks answers to what is the difference between stereotype and prejudice and superstition, what we like about stereotypes, even if they harm us; whether love is a stereotype or only sometimes stereotyped; how stereotypes are related to discrimination and why there is a lot of noise and disorder when breaking down



(not only stereotypes). The workshop offers space to think about how gender stereotypes affect us in our lives, where they come from and what we can do about them.

The second November workshop entitled **Teaching English through Theatre Education. Introduction to the issue** is based on practical applications of theatre in teaching English as a foreign language. Participants will test the use of various drama techniques and discuss their use in teaching. They will become familiar with drama warm-up activities and their role in language acquisition. Then they will investigate how theatre can be anchored in everyday school practice when working with a textbook; when using a familiar or creating a new story; and to encourage pupils to improvise, if they have a limited vocabulary. Participants will engage in discussions and critical reflections on their own practice and how they can incorporate some of the presented theatre techniques into their teaching. They are expected to be open, collegial and supportive of each other.

In his workshop entitled **Digital Future**, Czech lecturer Michal Kučerák will talk about digital technologies in the future as used for 2nd level of primary school students. Thanks to smartphones, digital technologies have literally gotten under our skin. They are our daily companion. Yet, do we understand how they work? How do social networks recommend posts and search engines advertise? In the workshop, we will focus on the word algorithm – on its meaning and importance in present-day digitally saturated society. We will then explore its relationship to artificial intelligence or machine learning and focus primarily on the complicated moments when artificial intelligence gets out of our control and when it discriminates. Why is it happening? Is anyone responsible for this? The workshop explains all the above concepts in a friendly and comprehensible way, so that they become clear even without advanced skills in technologies and technical vocabulary.

The last November workshop, **Freedom is No Happy End! History of the 20th Century in Education** with lecturers Sandra Polovková and Slavomír Hlásny, will point out that democracy is fragile and is not a mere platitude. Real stories of the 20th century clearly tell us what can happen if we lose democracy. They are the stories of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. How to make democracy interesting for the current generation? The workshop will stimulate the participants in the demo of the Decision-making workshop, inspire them with the methods of drama education, that will enable the participants to get into the characters of the monuments whose stories were documented by Post Bellum for one school day. The workshop will convey how to turn history into an experience in ordinary teaching.

December EDUFEST is dedicated to **education through theatre for all who work and live with young people. With the future *homo creative*. To universities.** It will be held on 13 and 14 December 2023 in Banská Bystrica at the Academy of Arts and the BDNR. The programme comprises 2 performances and 2 workshops.





The first workshop **Inclusion and Theatre** with lecturer Kateryna Lukanienko will focus on getting to know a new form of theatre – the theatre of senses. It is a type of theatre production where almost all human senses are involved in the presentation of the story – hearing, taste, smell and touch, except sight. During the workshop, students will try to create a performance that takes into account the perception of the blind and partially sighted spectators. They will learn the basic principles of working on a performance of this format and start working with an inclusive audience. Participants will receive materials before the workshop (introduction to the topic and tasks to solve).

The second workshop **Gender-Sensitive Theatre in Theatre Practice. Stereotypes of role and gender interpretation on stage** with Iveta Škripková will focus on whether there is a difference between gender-sensitive and insensitive theatre. In what? Does the theatre tradition respect gender? If not, why? How does realistic theatre and realistic staging relate to feminist theatre? How does postmodern and post-dramatic theatre differ from feminist theatre? And what unites them? Are gender roles and stereotypes manifested in theatre practice? In what? In the actor's interpretation? Why the world-famous director Eugenio Barba included role plays in acting exercises? And the feminist radical theatre artist Monique Wittig led the exercises Gesture Dynamics? Many unanswered questions arise with the topic of gender-sensitive theatre in practice. The eponymous workshop partially answers some of them.

Why come to the international festival of participatory theatre and audience development:

- a unique chance to perceive the learning / educational level of theatre and get tips on how to apply it in practice
- see international productions
- learn how to implement theatre elements in work with children and youth at workshops
- to discuss
- every theatre has a learning / educational character, even if it is not created with the aim of educating; in every performance there is a chance for the discovery of various aesthetic and ethical impulses that can be used in practice and in personal life
- to make theatre accessible to the widest possible strata of population (theatre buildings are not important, what matters is live communication with people)
- to experience a wide range of stage productions with elements of new circus, an interactive storytelling production, an interactive outdoor production, musical emotions in the next production from the cycle of toddlers, a theatrical one-act play



- with a tasting of selected words, an author's theatre about Maria Montessori who changed the education of children, an author's docudrama from home and from abroad
- learn how to apply theatre elements to work with children and youth at workshops, because we learn best in an active way
- to meet outstanding lecturers with interdisciplinary knowledge of pedagogy, psychology and theatre
- impulse: from passive visit to theatre to active encounter.

In addition to performances, workshops and discussions, there will also be presentations of books by Michaela Vaňová *With Kids to the Theatre* about why communicate with children in the theatre and about the theatre? How to prepare children for a visit to the theatre? The author connects the practice of a theatre lecturer and actress of the Minor Theatre with theoretical knowledge of preschool and elementary school pedagogy and a series of three comics books based on well-known plays, which were published by the Theatre Institute as part of an international project called *Classics in a Comics Novel*. This project combines a comics novel and classic stage texts with to stimulate the relationship of high school students to the theatre and bring drama closer to them in an engaging and understandable form.

Accompanying events are complemented by an exhibition in BDNR foyer entitled **Watercolour Drawings for the Play Kamil** and student cartoon ideas about the well-known play from the international project of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava *Classics in a Comics Novel*.

Discussions **About Theatre After Theatre** will be held over coffee and led by Ivica Franeková.

Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region is the founder of the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads.

The main convenor of the Festival is the Puppet Theatre at the Crossroads in Banská Bystrica.

EDUFEST is created in cooperation with a range of theatres, educational associations, inter alia DOX Prague, EduDrama Bratislava, Theatre Institute in Bratislava, Kunsthalle Prague, Post bellum, Central Slovak Gallery in Banská Bystrica, Academy of Arts, primary and secondary schools in Banská Bystrica.

The Festival is held under the patronage of the Minister of Culture Ms Silvia Hroncová. The Festival was supported by the Slovak Arts Council and the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region.





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