

Romania – The National Theatre Festival

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the execution of the Ceaușescu couple led to a significant change in the up to then very scarce Romanian festival scene. From the very beginning, the goal of the National Theatre Festival (NTF) in Bucharest, born in 1990, was to present the best Romanian productions of the last season. But the term “national” did not prevent the artistic directors from inviting famous artists from abroad. Robert Lepage, Romeo Castellucci, Katie Mitchell, Simon McBurney, Dead Center Dublin are just some of the names whom the public had the opportunity to meet in Romania's capital, either through guest performances or live during conferences. With Thomas Ostermeier, for example, the collaboration is dating back to 2007, when two of his stagings were presented at the NTF. The “sequel” continued in 2018 with two guest productions of the Schaubühne in Berlin.

But the NTF has also a dance division which includes workshops and performances produced by famed companies (e.g. Peeping Tom, Nederlands Dance Theatre, Angelin Preljocaj). Besides, NTF hosts exhibitions of nationally and internationally celebrated artists, e.g. of French photographer Brigitte Lacombe or Greek artist Dimitra Stasinopoulou. Promoting contemporary dramaturgy is another focus of the festival – among the invited guests were John Clinton Eisner, involved with projects at the Târgu Mureș theatre university since a decade ago and Claudia DiGiacomo from PAV in Rome, coordinator of the “Fabulamundi, Playwriting Europe” project.

Finally, every year the festival offers a chance for numerous inspiring encounters between performing arts professionals from all over the world. Dozens of operators are invited during the ten days, from Macedonia, Iran, Spain, Lebanon and many more. The National Theatre Festival in Bucharest encourages an open dialogue between cultures. *Irina Wolf*