

PLASTFORMA: A showcase of Belarusian movement theatre

The Culture Centre of Lublin, and the Lublin Dance Theatre in particular, have been collaborating with Belarusian dance and movement theatres for a number of years now. Belarusian ensembles have performed in Lublin at subsequent International Dance Theatre Festivals (2001, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2012), as well as in the city's surrounding towns of Chelm and Krasnystaw, presenting their works and conducting workshops.

The Lublin Dance Theatre was the first of Polish dance theatres to perform at the Dramatic Theatres of Grodno and Vitebsk in 2001 and 2002, respectively. Visits in Minsk, Homel and Grodno soon followed, with Polish artists presenting their work, running workshops and giving talks on dance in Poland and Europe in general. It may surely be said that LTT has the longest and richest tradition of artistic and educational collaboration with Belarusian dance theatre among Polish dance institutions.

The project is special both artistically and organisationally. It is about promoting the most exciting Belarusian theatres performing under the label of "PlaStforma", a name of the first ever joint endeavour of Belarusian dance, movement and mime theatres. On the other hand, the project is an example of extraordinary interest and involvement of Polish and European dance and theatre professionals (artists, curators, producers, critics), who are gathering in Lublin to get themselves familiar with Belarusian artists and support them on the European scene. We are certain that in the present political situation, with Poland being part of the EU, initiatives of this kind are particularly significant, doing away with stereotypical perceptions of Europeans and Belarusians, and opening a way for cross-border understanding.

What is PlaStforma? It is an initiative seeking to become a multilayer forum for dance, choreography and theatre, embracing performance showcases, workshops, debates and meetings. While producing physical theatre, dance theatre and contemporary theatre, Belarusian choreographers are constantly searching for a new form of expression, never losing sight of their roots: mime, meticulous technical movement, flexibility of the body and, finally, visual theatre. Up until now the discussions generated by PlaStforma involved mainly Belarusian artists and audiences. Despite their guest appearances abroad, Belarusian choreographers lack confrontation with European dance circles and could benefit from a systematic dialogue with their representatives. That is how the idea of holding PlaStforma in another country came to life.

The Eastern Partnership Culture Congress in Lublin is a perfect opportunity take the discussions a step further and launch more intense artistic exchange on a cross-border scale. Planting PlaStforma in other countries can only help the project develop fully. Consequently, on 3-6 October Lublin, and the critics, promoters and experts taking part in the event, will see a showcase of Belarusian artists' works and conceptions of new dance and movement theatre, juxtaposed with other disciplines of contemporary art. Also held will be workshops by Belarusian artists, meetings and debates on performance art in Belarus.

Joining their Belarusian counterparts on the stage of the Academic Culture Centre in Lublin will be the event's hosts and organisers, namely artists of the Lublin Dance Theatre and the Contemporary Dance Group of the Lublin Technical University. It will not be the first meeting of the artists from both sides of the border, as they have been collaborating on numerous occasions before, but a subsequent opportunity to compare their artistic visions in their similarities and divergences.

The performances

3 October, Academic Culture Centre “Chatka Żaka”

6 pm Lublin Dance Theatre: 48/4

choreography: Ryszard Kalinowski

7 pm Contemporary Dance Group of the Lublin Technical University “Opium”

choreography: Anna Żak

4 October, Academic Culture Centre “Chatka Żaka”

6 pm Gallery Dance Theatre: *monday morning*

idea, direction and choreography: Aleksandr Tebenkov

6.50 pm Gallery Dance Theatre: *come and go*

idea and choreography: Viktoria Balcer

7.20 pm SKVO’s Dance Company: *Decadence. Dialogi* [Decadence. Dialogues]

choreography: Olga Skvorcova

5 October – Academic Culture Centre “Chatka Żaka”

6 pm Quadro Dance Theatre: *no night train*

idea, stage design: Inna Aslamova

7 pm SKVO’s Dance Company: *Happy Valentine*

choreography: Olga Skvorcova

7.20 pm SKVO’s Dance Company: *Ja do n-tej potęgi* [Me to the power of n]

choreography: Olga Skvorcova

6 October – Square in front of the Culture Centre of Lublin

8 pm InZhest Theatre: *The Emperor’s last clothing*

directed by: Slava Inozemcev

**Admission to ALL events FREE*

Information about the artists

The Gallery Dance Theatre (Grodno, Belarus) was set up in 1994 by professional dancers Aleksandr Tebenkov and Viktoria Baltser, who were actively seeking to find out if there was anything beyond “traditional choreography”. Their first performances took place during exhibition openings at a small, private art gallery, which is where their theatre’s name came from. Starting with etudes, the group perfected their act to become a permanent participant of workshops. The dancers have been looking for their original style and language, and in the process found themselves in what was known around the globe as contemporary dance. As the term “contemporary dance” is rather broad and unspecific, it would be more precise to talk about dance theatre as an element of a whole. Utilising modern-day choreography, dramatic theatre, music, literature and art, the Gallery dancers seek to create unique pieces, overflowing with personal impressions and emotions.

<http://gallerydancetheatre.ru/>

The SKVO'S Dance Company (Minsk, Belarus) was established in 2012 by a group of people who were very different from each other, inside and outside. A designer, doctor, geologist, economist, linguist – each of the members had a specific way of dancing. In 2009 in the dance studio of the Theatre of Contemporary Choreography D.O.Z.SK.I., a group buildup in the form of laboratory took place, resulting in the dancing performance *Happy Valentine*, which premiered on 3 April 2012.

In its short existence the group managed to participate in the following events and projects: a research project about Minsk's modern art, "Radius of zero" (Minsk), the Festival of Experimental Art Projects "FunHouse" (Minsk), The Night of Museums, IFMC (Belarus), "Triennial" and "Biennale" of modern art. The company has also collaborated with the instrumental group Port Mone.

<http://vk.com/club39556404>

The Quadro Dance Company (Gomel, Belarus) was established in 1994 by Inna Aslamova, dancer, choreographer and teacher. Born in Kazakhstan, she has completed a music school and a school of artistic gymnastics; she also holds a university degree in physics. In 1992 at the IFMC festival in Vitebsk she discovered – to her great surprise – the existence of contemporary dance. She then studied contemporary and modern dance, became interested in dance techniques, improvisation and contact improvisation. She started her own practice taking part in various classes and workshops across the globe, studying with Douglas Nielsen (USA), Miroslava Kovarova (Slovakia), or Joe Alter (USA). In 1996 the Quadro Dance Company showed their first pieces: "Random thought" and "The harmony of unsteady balance".

<http://www.dance-web.org/quadro/company-en.htm>

InZhest Theatre (known until 2001 as Gesture Theatre) was set up in 1980 by a group of students of the Minsk Institute of Culture: Galina Yeryomina, Tatiana Tsurko, Sergei Masyko, Sergei Shvec, a Bulgarian student, Ivan Minchev, and others. Today the group may boast a record of impressive productions, ranging from classical mime projects, to improvisation series, to happening performances.

InZhest is an independent Belarusian art group, which for the last 30 years has been an active actor on the scene of contemporary mime, butoh dance, site specific improvisations and open-air performances. It has been led from the very beginning by Slava Inozemtcev, who has been long involved as actor and teacher in multiple international projects, such as Teatr Formy with Józef Markocki (Wrocław, Poland), or "Ten Pen Chii Art Labor" with Joachim Manger and Yumiko Yoshioka (Schloss Bruellin, Germany).

http://inzhest.belorus.by/en/about_theatre

The Lublin Dance Theatre, LTT (Lublin, Poland) was set up in 2001 by Hanna Strzemiecka, who became the group's long-time choreographer and artistic director, and Anna Żak, Ryszard Kalinowski and Wojciech Kaproń, former dancers of the Contemporary Dance Group of the Technical University of Lublin. Starting off as a student initiative, over time, the group managed to create its own, unique dance style, today recognisable both in Poland and abroad, and became a leading Polish contemporary dance company. Owing to consistent implementation of their artistic vision, the group's leaders established a new, professional dance theatre with headquarters in the Culture Centre of Lublin. LTT's

art is a dialogue with the audience on human existence today. Each production is born in the process of its author's individual explorations, thus having a specific dramaturgy and aesthetics. The group has performed at a range of festivals and events in Poland (Bytom, Kraków, Kalisz, Warsaw, Poznań, Łódź, Gdańsk, Toruń) and abroad (USA, Switzerland, France, Hungary, Finland, Spain, Lithuania, Russia, Germany, Austria, Tunisia, the Netherlands, Belarus, Ukraine).

www.ltt.art.pl

The Contemporary Dance Group of the Technical University of Lublin is a group established by Hanna Strzemiecka and operating as a dance theatre since 1993. Its choreographies, based on individual movement and allowing dancers the freedom to communicate their emotions, express themselves and their artistic creativity, have been shown and praised at a range of contemporary dance festivals and theatre events in Poland and abroad. The group's individual style has led its member to establish a professional dance theatre, which still collaborates with the group's young dancers.

Since November 2005 the group has been led by Anna Żak, one of its original members, who is also involved in the Lublin Dance Theatre. The group's core are dancers who became its members in 2004-2005. The Contemporary Dance Group of the Technical University of Lublin brings together students and graduates of the city's different universities and academies. It is constantly developing, taking part in various projects and artistic collaborations.

www.gtw.pollub.pl

The workshops

Crucially, the project includes workshops on movement and choreography conducted by Belarusian theatre managers, soloists and the most experienced artists arriving in Lublin. They will run a series of master classes for Polish dancers, actors and teachers, presenting the experiences and working style of their individual theatres, giving their foreign colleagues an opportunity to encounter Belarusian physical theatre in practice, and develop a better idea how this art is practiced and understood in Belarus.

The teachers

Inna Aslamova, Quadro Dance Theatre

Inna Aslamova is a dancer, choreographer and teacher. Born in Kazakhstan, she has completed a music school and a school of artistic gymnastics, as well as holding a university degree in physics. In 1992 at the IFMC festival in Vitebsk she discovered – to her great surprise – the existence of contemporary dance. She then studied contemporary and modern dance, became interested in dance composition and technique, improvisation and contact improvisation, movement theatre and solo performances. She trained in Moscow, and took part in workshops by Douglas Nielsen (USA), Miroslava Kovarova (Slovakia), or Joe Alter (USA). In 1994 she set up the Quadro Dance Company. She has showed her choreographies at a range of festivals in Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Sweden, Moldova, France, Russia or South Korea. She collaborates with the Dance Theatre Gallery (Belarus), Benno Voorham (Sweden), Sybrig Docter (Sweden), Daria Buzovkina (Russia) and the Voices group of Moldova. She also teaches dance to children and young people, and has produced a children's opera with her students at the school of music in the city of Homel.

Viktoria Baltser, Gallery Dance Theatre

Viktoria Baltser is a dancer, choreographer and teacher. After graduating in choreography in Moscow, she worked as a dancer at the Grodno Philharmonic Hall. Since 1996 she has been working at Grodno's Dramatic Theatre as a dancer, and as a soloist at the Gallery Dance Theatre. She has participated in a range of workshops and classes in Belarus and abroad. She teaches classical, jazz and contemporary dance. Together with the Gallery Dance Theatre she took part in numerous international projects and festivals. She has an extensive experience in conducting workshops, her students having been both beginners and professionals, in Poland, Sweden, the USA, or Belarus.

Olga Skworcova, Skvo's Dance Company

Olga Skworcowa is an actress, choreographer, dancer, performer and teacher. She graduated in theatre from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts. She has worked as actress and choreographer with many theatres and artists in Belarus. She teaches contemporary dance at the State Academy of Arts. Currently, she dances for the Municipal Dramatic Theatre. She has co-founded the Theatre of Contemporary Choreography D.O.Z.SK.I., and has participated in a range of international festivals e.g. in Russia or Germany. She participated as a dancer in the international Minsk-Berlin dance project, choreographed by Olga Kostel.

Slava Inozemcev, InZhest Theatre

Slava Inozemcev was born in 1960 in Minsk, where he lives and works up to this day. In 1977 he entered university, simultaneously beginning his career as a mime artist. In 1980, together with a group of friends, he set up InZhest [Gesture], a theatre of gesture and mime art. In his capacity as director, author and actor, he created over 20 stage and open-air pieces, as well as hundreds of improvised performances, actions and installations. He is a mime artist, actor, artistic director, both teacher and choreographer. He has been involved in a range of international projects for many years now, including ones based in Germany or New York; he also collaborates with Teatr Formy in Wrocław, Poland. He runs his own studio in Minsk, where he runs various workshops, including ones utilising his original, psychophysical training system known as "Dances of Animals".

Additional events

Plastforma is not only performances and workshops. The event is also an occasion for Poles and guests from Western Europe to exchange views with their Eastern neighbours, who have been defying many difficulties and barriers resulting from political restrictions to make physical theatre, and have joined forces to promote the art form they devoted their lives to. To facilitate the dialogue, each evening will feature "**post-performance meetings**" moderated by young Polish critics and students of theatre studies at Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin.

Belarusian artists will also participate in **one-to-one sessions** with managers and curators from Poland and other countries taking part in PlaStforma.

What is more, throughout the festival, **screenings of archive performances** by the participating guest artists and other Belarusian theatres selected by them will be held to make Polish and European curators more familiar with Belarusian performance art.

Organisers and partners

PlaStforma's session in Lublin is hosted by the Lublin Dance Theatre, formally affiliated to the Lublin Culture Centre. The project's partner is the Academic Culture Centre "Chatka Żaka" of the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. The institutions' pooled experience, human resources, facilities and technical capacity is a guarantee of the project's success.

The Culture Centre in Lublin is a culture institution recognised by the Municipality of Lublin. It is one of the most robust institutions of its kind in the whole region of Lubelszczyzna. Its versatile operations include the realisation and presentation of artistic projects, organising workshop sessions, and culture education and promotion. Unlike other cultural institutions of Lublin, which operate in strictly delimited areas, the Culture Centre is an open institution which hosts a wide array of artistic events. To reach the widest possible audience and meet Lublin's residents' expectations, the Culture Centre's programme embraces both mainstream events and independent projects. The institution also puts strong emphasis on collaborating with young promoters of culture, which gives them a chance to learn the ropes of their profession, while injecting a breath of fresh air to the centre's programme.

The Culture Centre is the organiser of Lublin's most prominent theatre, film, music and educational festivals, including Theatrical Confrontations, International Dance Theatre Festival, Lublin Jazz Festival, Złote Mrówkojady. As of September 2013, the centre boasts a modern, newly refurbished (with the help of EU subsidies) and excellently equipped spaces in the former nunnery in Peowiaków street in Lublin, including stages, rehearsal rooms, galleries, guest rooms and offices. The whole facility measures almost 8 000 square metres, and houses also other prominent culture institutions: Provisorium, Nettheatre, In Vitro, Lublin Dance Theatre, Kinoteatr Projekt, or Biała Gallery.

www.cklublin.pl

The Lublin Dance Theatre (LTT) implements numerous artistic and educational projects aimed to promote contemporary dance as a potent means of intellectual and emotional expression. LTT has been particularly concerned with forging relations with other Polish and international cultural institutions in order to build a network of dance promotion reaching out to different communities through performance presentations, dance workshops, talks, exhibitions, video screenings, and out-of-theatre performances. LTT's key projects are: the International Dance Theatre Festival (17 editions), Contemporary Dance Forum (10 editions), Tour d'Europe des choregraphes (addressed to young European choreographers, 2009-2011), and Myśl w ruchu [Thought in Movement], an educational project addressed to 7-year-olds (annually as of 2011).

www.ltt.art.pl

The Academic Culture Centre "Chatka Żaka" of the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin is the largest and most robust academic culture institution in Lublin, and one of few of its kind offering such a rich programme in Poland. The centre is well-known for its role in the integration of academic artistic circles and as a venue showcasing almost all art forms: music, theatre, film, plastic arts, literature. This is undoubtedly the result of the key events hosted by the centre and its affiliated ensembles and studios. Among them are: a grant-awarding competition for organisers of festivals, different recurring events, concerts and other culture-building activities. Chatka Żaka, or Student's Hut, boasts excellent facilities and staff. As of spring 2013, the centre houses the Art Incubator, a

modern and well-equipped (thanks to EU subsidies) space for artistic and educational operations, including a stage, audio and video labs, studios, and conference rooms.

www.ack.lublin.pl