

Theatre Olympics, Wrocław 2016

The Theatre Olympics, a stellar celebration of theatre, comes to Poland! From 14 October to 13 November, the capital city of Lower Silesia will become an international capital of theatre as part of European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. The 7th Theatre Olympics, presented by the Grotowski Institute, will include performances by directors who have redefined twenty- and twenty-first-century theatre, such as Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Romeo Castellucci, Pippo Delbono, Jan Fabre, Valery Fokin, Heiner Goebbels, Krystian Lupa, Eimuntas Nekrošius, Tadashi Suzuki, Theodoros Terzopoulos and Robert Wilson. The festival's six sections will feature theatre performances, workshops, discussions, in-conversation events, concerts, film screenings and exhibitions. Wrocław will witness more than 70 theatre shows and 130 theatre-related events.

The Theatre Olympics is the brainchild of Greek director Theodoros Terzopoulos, who co-founded it in 1993 in Delphi, Greece, as an international theatre festival presenting the work of some of the world's foremost theatre makers. The festival has already completed six editions, each under a different motto, in: Delphi (1995, *Tragedy*), Shizuoka (1999, *Creating Hope*), Moscow (2001, *Theatre for the People*), Istanbul (2006, *Beyond Borders*), Seoul (2010, *Sarang – Love and Humanity*) and Beijing (2014, *Dream*).

Theodoros Terzopoulos expressed his joy that this year's Theatre Olympics takes place in Wrocław: 'There are many theatre festivals in the world, but they share a similar format. As with everything in the world today, diversity and cultural richness are disappearing. The Theatre Olympics is more than a festival – we present not only the best plays, but first of all, the achievements of the great masters of the 20th century, individuality and cultural diversity. I'm very happy that the Olympics is coming Wrocław, a city I have visited several times in recent years, witnessing how this city of culture is turning into a European city of culture.' According to Theodoros Terzopoulos, many questions are being asked about the nature of today's theatre, its function, goals and its future. This is why the 7th Theatre Olympics stands in defence of tradition, but also encourages free expression and recognises the need for theatre research and experimentation.

Presided over by Theodoros Terzopoulos, the International Committee of Theatre Olympics consists of Tadashi Suzuki, Robert Wilson, Wole Soyinka, Tony Harrison, Ratan Tiyam, Nuria Espert, Giorgio Barberio Corsetti, Georges Lavaudant, Antunes Filho, Jürgen Flimm, Choi Chy-Rim, Valery Fokin, Liu Libin and Jarosław Fret.

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The 7th Theatre Olympics is curated by Jarosław Fret, founder and leader of Teatr ZAR, Director of the Grotowski Institute, lecturer at the PWST National Academy of Theatre Arts (Branch in Wrocław) and Chairman of the Board of Curators and Theatre Curator of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. Thanks to his efforts, Wrocław will host this year's Theatre Olympics. In the words of Wrocław's Mayor **Rafał Dutkiewicz**: 'This will be one of the largest theatre projects in the history of Wrocław and one of the major events of the European Capital of Culture.'

The motto of the 7th edition of the Olympics, *The World as a Place of Truth*, is a paraphrase of the title of a speech that Jerzy Grotowski gave in 1976 (published in 1979), in which the founder of the Laboratory Theatre contends that 'We enter the world to pass through it. We are tested by the world, and the world is a place of truth. In any case, the world *should* be a place of truth.'

The 2016 Theatre Olympics is divided into six sections:

- the Main Section (14 October – 13 November 2016)
- Lower Silesian Theatre Platform (15–19 October 2016)
- More than Theatre (22–27 October)
- Dziady Recycling Festival (27 October – 4 November)
- Eastern Line (7–13 November)
- the Grotowski Institute's Programme (15 October – 11 November)

As part of the Main Section we are bringing you performances by some of the finest names in the world theatre: Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Romeo Castellucci, Pippo Delbono, Jan Fabre, Valery Fokin, Heiner Goebbels, Liu Libin (Artistic Director of the 6th Theatre Olympics), Krystian Lupa, Eimuntas Nekrošius, Tadashi Suzuki, Theodoros Terzopoulos and Robert Wilson. They will bring to Wrocław both acclaimed work as well as premiere performances and co-productions created especially for European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. The Main Section will feature 16 theatre productions with performances spanning four weeks. In addition, invited directors will give talks on their artistic credos and take part in conversations with researchers, co-creators and artists from Poland and abroad, discussing the ideas that drive their work, as part of *The Truth and Nothing but the Truth* series. The Main Section will open with Tadashi Suzuki's legendary *Trojan Women*.

Theatre performances featured in the Main Section:

1. Tadashi Suzuki | Suzuki Company of Toga (Japan), *The Trojan Women* (14–16 October)
2. Liu Libin | (China) *Life between Heaven and Earth* (15–16 October)
3. Krystian Lupa | Polski Theatre, Wrocław (Poland), *The Temptation of Quiet Veronica* (15 October)
4. Valery Fokin | Alexandrinsky Theatre (Russia), *Masquerade: Recollections of the Future* (18–19

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October)

5. Jarosław Fret | Teatr ZAR (Poland), *Medeas: On Getting Across* (20–22 October and 6–9 November)
6. Eugenio Barba | Odin Teatret (Denmark), *The Tree* (21–25 October)
7. Romeo Castellucci | Società Raffaello Sanzio (Italy) *Come Down, Moses* (22–23 October)
8. Heiner Goebbels | Stanislavsky Electrotheatre (Russia), *Max Black, or 62 Ways of Supporting the Head with a Hand* (23–24 October)
9. Pippo Delbono | Compagnia Pippo Delbono (Italy), *Vangelo* (26–27 October)
10. Jarosław Fret | Teatr ZAR (Poland), *Armine, Sister* (26–27 October and 2–3 November)
11. Eimuntas Nekrošius/National Theatre, Warsaw (Poland), *Forefathers' Eve (Dziady)* (4 November)
12. Robert Wilson | Change Performing Arts (USA, Italy), *Krapp's Last Tape* (5–6 November)
13. Jan Fabre | Troubleyn/Jan Fabre (Belgium), *Attends, attends, attends... (pour mon père)* (6–7 November)
14. Theodoros Terzopoulos | Teatr Attis (Greece), *Prometheus Bound* (7–8 November)
15. Theodoros Terzopoulos | Teatr Attis (Greece), *Amor* (10–11 November)
16. Peter Brook | Teatr des Bouffes du Nord (France), *Battlefield* (12–13 November)

The format of the Theatre Olympics will be extended to include: new themes and motifs focused around the core idea of the meeting of Europe's foremost theatre-makers who belong to the three generations of the turn of the 21st century, which will be explored in the *Landscape Now* discussion series programmed by Prof Maria Shevtsova, Prof Dariusz Kosiński and Prof Georges Banu; a series of discussions on the great figures and traditions of 20th-century theatre, *The Meyerhold Era*, with participants including Valery Fokin; *The Five Continents of the Theatre*, a dialogue between Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese; and discussions on Heiner Müller and on Theodoros Terzopoulos's book *Powrót Dionizosa (The Return of Dionysus)*. As one of the aims of the Theatre Olympics is to foster dialogue between generations, the festival will also present workshops for actors and directors, as well as a workshop for emerging Polish and international theatre critics, run in partnership with the International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC).

The Theatre Olympics will open with the **Lower Silesian Theatre Platform**, a celebration of Lower Silesian and Wrocław theatre of all genres. Over five days (15–19 October), Wrocław's theatre and non-theatre stages will host 37 shows from Lower Silesia, including from Bielawa, Legnica, Wałbrzych, Jelenia Góra and Wrocław. The programme includes productions for children and adults, repertory and independent theatre as well as circus, outdoor and music shows. A multi-entry pass for one performance trail costs 2016 groszy (20.16 złoty).

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The **More than Theatre** section of the Olympics (22–27 October) centres around the artistic and social issues relating to the art of the disABLED, with particular emphasis on theatre and performing arts. Performers will include: Compagnie de l'Oiseau-Mouche (France); Teatr 21, Teatr CHOREA, Rafał Urbacik and Anu Czerwiński (Poland); Monster Truck (Germany); and VerTeDance and Archa (Czech Republic). More than Theatre will also feature an exhibition of photography by Jan Rosołowski, a concert of Na Górze group and a series of conversations, *Breakfast in Process*, designed to promote marginalised art, encourage experience sharing between the Polish and international artists, and open up a space for in-depth reflection on the work methods adopted by various theatre companies.

Dziady Recycling Festival (27 October – 4 November) explores Mickiewicz's Forefathers' Eve (Dziady) through:

- Zadora's and Nekrošius's productions; the play's past productions remixed by Fret, Kos, Miśkiewicz, Passini, Rodowicz-Czechowska, Szczawińska and Trela; Mahler's music interpreted by Fanshil; and Rutkowski's lecture;
- examines ancestor worship and collective ancestral memory through: Vodou and Candomblé rituals; ritual music; Rybicki Trio's All Souls' Day jazz concert; Guicheney's conformance; Bułaj's live report; Bułaj's, Mądra's and Verger's photography exhibitions; an exhibition of Haitian painting from Kawalec's collection; Kolankiewicz's programme of films; and a discussion hosted by Napiórkowski;
- looks at Dziady as a living Polish myth in a series of discussions hosted by Kolankiewicz, Majchrowski and Sieradzki.

Eastern Line (7–13 November) is a showcase of young, independent theatre from Central and Eastern Europe, bringing together diverse theatrical languages and companies. The festival builds on the idea of 'third theatre', which is critical of both institutional theatre and the avant-gardes of the past. Eastern Line is intended to act as a bulwark against the culture focused on shallow spectacle. Performers will include: Studium Teatralne, CHOREA Theatre, Teatr Porywacze Ciał, Kana Theatre, Song of the Goat Theatre, Teatr ZAR (Poland); Nini Julia Bang (Denmark); Farm in the Cave (Czech Republic); ProFitArt (Slovakia); Zero Point Theatre Group (Greece); and PLAVO Theatre (Serbia).

The Theatre Olympics will also stage the work of artists who have long been associated with the Grotowski Institute. This section will include: *Happy Days* by Warsaw's Dramatic Theatre, with Maja Komorowska and Adam Ferency; *Insenso* with Alexandra Kazazou (dedicated to Melina Mercouri); *Lear* by Roberto Bacci, based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*; and Aftab Theatre's *The Muzzle of Silence*.

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We will also present two photography exhibitions, featuring the work of Jan K. Fiolek and Maurizio Buscarino, and a workshop with Jorge Parente, the continuator of Zygmunt Molik's work.

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Admission to some events is free.

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