LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB IN ASSOCIATION WITH MY BALKANS PRESENTS

# MORA THEOTHER SIDE

REIMAGINING THEATRE FROM THE BALKANS EDITION 1.0

La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club

MY BALKANS

Ellen Stewart Theatre
December 4 – 14, 2025, New York



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# INTRODUCTION

We live in a time of relentless and continuous warfare. When the history of humanity is remembered through war, peace appears to be an unattainable goal. When hostilities cease, the resulting trauma and memories linger in the devastated societies, shackled by fear. Under neoliberal capitalism, postwar societies are no longer seen as worthy investments — peace no longer pays.

"The Balkans" is a political and cultural construct, a former war zone that, following the traumas of the late 20th century, entered the 21st century amid ongoing tensions. The region continues its attempt to shift into a phase of development, positioned, as always, at the crossroads of cultures — East and West, the South and the North. It consistently longs to articulate its own identity, an identity that is inherently unstable and shaped by a multitude of factors: ethnic, religious, gender, sexual and beyond.

The other side of this is the Balkans art context - a space of new, vital and, as we believe, fully relevant theatrical life.



FROM THE OTHER SIDE unpacks the phenomenon of Otherness. It addresses the position of women amidst the alarming rise in femicide in the Balkans, the struggles of queer individuals facing institutionalized violence, the consequences of environmental disasters, and persistent national and religious divisions. The showcase presents a society struggling to confront its collective trauma and take responsibility for past crimes, often remaining trapped in narratives of war. It critically examines resistance to the integration and acceptance of minority groups who do not fit into the majority's ideal of homogeneity. FROM THE OTHER SIDE provides a platform for artists who challenge their social contexts, advocating for freedom in societies that remain closed to Others.

At the heart of our program is the desire to make space for voices long forgotten or deliberately ignored – a reminder that we are all part of a shared global struggle. Even when we are not at the center of attention, Balkans artists speak truths that resonate far beyond their borders.



# **SELECTORS' NOTE**

Reimagining The Theatre of The Balkans invites us to open ourselves to new themes, poetics and approaches to theatre performance, and to reconsider its political context through a different lens.

This program was designed as a space for dialogue – about the Balkans, its theatrical landscape, and the role of theatre as a platform for public discourse and engagement with urgent contemporary issues.

Structured into four segments, the program offers both audiences and professionals access to a curated cross-section of Balkan theatre. Each part addresses aesthetic and political questions, while confronting the technical and economic challenges of producing such work under neoliberal capitalism.

Accordingly, the Live Performances section features two productions that offer distinct perspectives on themes of collective and individual memory, tradition and the past. The Stage Readings segment presents a selection of texts that showcase the formal and poetic qualities of contemporary drama recognized across the broader European context. The third segment, Performances on Video or projections of archival recordings, features



important productions from the last 25 years by some of the region's most prominent directors, offering a rare glimpse into significant theatrical achievements. Finally, the Roundtable Discussions will serve as a platform for dialogue on the intersections of art and politics as it is introduced in the chosen art works.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE, Reimagining the Theatre of the Balkans, Edition 1.0 marks a starting point — an invitation to explore the possibilities of this kind of cultural exchange within our current political moment. It also serves as a reminder that many stories and struggles continue to unfold across the world, often in places from which we rarely hear, or choose not to look at. One such story is the ongoing struggle in the Balkans — a region still marked by the rise of right-wing politics, social violence, and systemic discrimination. From the other side of ignorance is listening. From the other side of silence is the act of speaking one's truth. From the other side of inaction is dialogue. Let's reimagine our side — through theatre.

Beka Vučo, Dimitrije Kokanov and Natasha Tripney

SELECTORS' NOTE



12/4

8:00 pm

1:00 pm

ΔRT

1:00 pm

**SAT** 12/6

12:30 pm The Last Girls on Earth

4:00 pm They Are All Gone

8:00 pm They Are All Gone SUN 12/7

12:30 pm Cement Belgrade

4:00 pm They Are All Gone LIVE PERFORMANCES

STAGE READINGS

ROUNDTABLE

PERFORMANCES ON VIDEO

12/13

12:30 pm Zoran Đinđić

4:00 pm
Things That Burn
Easily

12/14

12:30 pm All of a Sudden, a River

4:00 pm
Things That Burn
Easily
Live Streaming

6:00 pm FROM THE OTHER SIDE

dosing discussion

All events are US premieres.
Ellen Stewart Theatre
La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club
66 East 4th Street, New York, NY 10003



REIMAGINING THEATRE FROM THE BALKANS EDITION 1.0



Mirjana Karanović Svetozar Cvetković Alban Ukaj

Maja Salkić, Davor Sabo, Kemal Rizvanović, Matea Mavrak, Hana Zrno, Sanin Milavić, Faruk Hajdarević, Alen Konjicija, Natalia Dmitrieva, Dino Hamidović



Theatre season 2024/202



HEARTEFACT

MY BALKAN

LA MAMA Ibsen Scope FOUNDATION



# LIVE PERFORMANCES

# They Are All Gone

Produced by Heartefact (Serbia) Co-producers: Sarajevo War Theatre SARTR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and My Balkans

Ellen Stewart Theatre
December 4, 5, 6 and 7
Running time: 1h 40'

Written by **Doruntina Basha**Directed by **Andrej Nosov** 

Featuring Mirjana Karanović, Svetozar Cvetković, Alban Ukaj

With voices of Maja Salkić, Davor Sabo, Kemal Rizvanović, Matea Mavrak, Hana Zrno, Sanin Milavić, Faruk Hajdarević, Alen Konjicija, Natalia Dmitrieva, Dino Hamidović

Set Design: **Zorana Petrov**Costume Design: **Selena Orb** 

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Lighting Design: Nemanja Calić

Sound Design: Nikola Erić, Luka Cvetko

Technical Crew: Nikola Erić, Luka Cvetko, Nađa

Vukorep, Nemanja Calić

Sound Recording: Mirza Tahirović / Studio

"Chelia"

Production: Aleksandra Lozanović, Selena

Pleskonjić, Ksenija Milutinović

Dramaturgical Support: Nejra Dabić Halvadžija

Photography: **Nebojša Babić** Visual Design: **Ismar Žalica** 

Translation: Alexandra Channer

Opening Night: May 8, 2025, Heartefact House,

Belgrade, Serbia

In collaboration with Allianz Foundation, Ibsen Scope (2022 winner), Creative Europe, Sigrid Rausing Trust.

This show examines the position of all of us in the audience — how we understand and relate to those who survived the genocide in Srebrenica. It is the artistic way of questioning and trying to understand the fates and consequences of the wars that took place across the former Yugoslavia. You will meet Sadika, a fictional character, and her family — also fictional — whom she lost and never truly had.



Can people truly continue to live if we remember them? And what happens if we forget? Now, as this play is being created and performed, we here in the Balkans are once again hearing similar voices — those who hate, who spread fear, and who deepen the consequences of a war that ended thirty years ago.

Performance languages: Bosnian and Serbian with English surtitles



PERFORMANCES

Doruntina Basha, an award-winning playwright from Pristing, Kosovo, earned her BA in Playwriting and Screenwriting at the University of Prishtina, and her MA in European Humanities through the Erasmus Mundus program, studying in St. Andrews, Bergamo, and Perpignan. Her 2011 play, The Finger won the Golden Aurel for Best Balkan Contemporary Play at the 2012 MESS International Theatre Festival Sarajevo, and in 2011, it was named Best Socially Engaged Contemporary Play, in a Western Balkan drama competition organized by Heartefact Fund, Belgrade (Serbia). Her plays have been published in Kosovo, Serbia, France and UK, and they have been translated in Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian, English, French, Italian and German. She worked in television in Kosovo. She's also the author of several scripts for short films produced in Kosovo.

Andrej Nosov is a theatre director and human rights activist. He founded Heartefact in 2009. He studied at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade and at DAS Graduate School in Amsterdam – DAS Theatre Master (formerly Das Arts). Andrej Nosov uses his directorial engagement to speak out about the problems that afflict contemporary people. In collaboration with dramaturg Biljana Srbljanović, he launched the Belgrade Biennale of New Drama, which will follow the legacy of Neue



Stucke aus Europa in Wiesbaden. He is the founder of the Heartefact Festival and the Pride Theatre Festival. Nosov was awarded the prestigious Ibsen Scope award for 2022 and he is the leader of the Obama Foundation for Europe and a Regan Fascell fellow.

Mirjana Karanović is one of the most acclaimed and influential Serbian actresses, as well as a director, screenwriter, educator, and human rights advocate. She made a powerful film debut in 1980 with the lead role in Petria's Wreath, directed by Srđan Karanović, which brought her instant acclaim and established her as a major talent in Yugoslav cinema. Her international breakthrough came with When Father Was Away on Business (1985), directed by Emir Kusturica, which won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Her performance in Grbavica (2006), directed by Jasmila Žbanić, a well-known director from Sarajevo, earned her widespread international recognition and a nomination for Best Actress at the European Film Awards. Over the decades, Karanović has built a remarkable body of work, collaborating with prominent directors in theatre, film and television and performing on many stages and theatres across the Balkans. She was a professor to several generations of young actors and in 2016 made her directorial and screenwriting debut with A Good Wife, which

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premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Karanović has received numerous awards and honors for her artistic achievements, and she is widely respected for her activism.

Svetozar Cvetković is one of the most versatile actors in theatre, film and TV throughout the Balkans. After the Drama Academy, he became a member of Theatre Atelje 212 in Belgrade. Cvetković won European recognition and the Best Actor Award at the Magdeburg Film Festival in 1994 for his role in Gorilla Bathes at Noon, directed by Dušan Makavejev, a distinguished Yugoslav film noir director. Cvetković covers both classical and contemporary repertoires with stage directors from all over the Balkans. In 2022 he came to La MaMa as part of Balkan Bordello, an international production led by Qendra Multimedia from Kosovo, which was praised by The New York Times. At the height of his career, during politically challenging times, Cvetković took the demanding position of Producina/ Artistic Director of Theatre Atelie 212. He drove the theatre through a period of artistic growth, and also began to reestablish cultural ties between leading theatres of the former Yugoslavia after the Balkan conflicts. Cvetković's film and TV opus counts more than 120 roles with notable directors. He received the Critics' Award for Best Actor for his role in Dimitri



de Clercq's You Go to My Head, which triumphed at WorldFest Houston in 2017. In 2005 he founded his own film production company, Testament Films, which has produced five feature films which were shown at various local and international film festivals.



PERFORMANCES

**Alban Ukaj** is an established and reputable actor of a very specific profile and affinities, well known throughout the Balkans and beyond. Originally from Pristina, Ukaj moved to Bosnia and Herzegovina where he studied acting at the Academy for Performing Arts, and soon after, he joined the resident company of the Sarajevo War Theatre SARTR.

Ukaj's talent is divided between his work in theatre, film and TV. In 2015 he was a lead in Romeo and Juliet, an extraordinary and unique bilingual production performed in the Albanian and Serbian languages. Directed by Miki Manojlović, in an innovative interpretation, the play was performed in both Belgrade and Pristina. Ukaj's international acclaim came with numerous films made with well-known directors, like Jean Luc Godard, Dardenne Brothers, Kjutin Cashku, Danis Tanović, Jasmila Žbanić, etc., many of them shown at major European and North American film festivals. Ukaj wrote and directed the short film Horse, which has been shown at a number of notable festivals. For his work in both theatre and film, Ukaj was awarded a number of prizes, including a special award for his significant contributions to Kosovar cinematography.



Heartefact is a multidisciplinary organization that has been actively shaping the independent cultural scene in Serbia and the region of Western Balkans for 15 years. Through engaged art, activism, knowledge exchange, and various granting mechanisms, Heartefact supports artists, activists and organizations working on important social issues. They focus on contemporary and engaged art through the production of theatre performances, exhibitions, and other cultural events. Since 2022, Heartefact has had its own stage in the center of Belgrade, Heartefact House, with a regular repertoire that explores important social topics. Heartefact has produced more than 50 artistic works, published numerous contemporary plays, and awarded over 100 grants, contributing to a more open, just, and tolerant society, and the organization has been recognized for its innovative cultural programs.



# things that burn easily

### **Vedrana Klepica**

tekst i režija: Vedrana Klepica scenski pokret: Magdalena Reiter scena i kostimi: Petra Pavičić glazba i oblikovanje zvuka: Hrvoje Nikški oblikovanje svietis i izirlec I. uka Matić fotografija: Jelana Janković

igraju Vladimir Aleksić, Hrvojka Begović, Lea Jevtić



# Things That Burn Easily

Produced by Ganz nova kultura promjene (Croatia), POGON (Croatia) & ARTEMREDE – Teatros Associados (Portugal)

Ellen Stewart Theatre
December 11, 12, 13 and 14
Running time: 1h 15'

Written and Directed by Vedrana Klepica

Featuring Hrvojka Begović, Lea Jevtić, Vladimir Aleksić

Set and Costume Design: **Petra Pavičić** Choreography: **Magdalena Reiter** 

Original Music and Sound Design: Hrvoje Nikšić

Lighting Design and Video: Luka Matić

Production and Tour Coordinator: **Silvija Stipanov**Stage Manager and Assistant Director: **Srdana** 

Vrsalović

Photography: Jelena Janković

Visual Design: Sven Sorić

Translation: Marija Andrijašević

Opening night: March 23, 2024, Pogon Jedinstvo Zagreb, Croatia

Coproduction: Ganz New Culture of Change (Croatia),
Pogon Zagreb Center for Independent Culture and
Youth (Croatia) and ARTEMREDE (Portugal) in
association with the Municipality of Santarém (Portugal),
in the scope of the project Stronger Peripheries: A
Southern Coalition, co-funded by the Creative Europe
program of the European Union
Institutional partner: República Portuguesa — Cultura I
Fundo de Fomento Cultural / Direção-Geral das Artes
Support: City of Zagreb, Ministry of Culture and Media
of the Republic of Croatia, Kultura Nova Foundation
(Croatia)

Partner: Belef festival (Serbia)

Space support: Centar mladih Ribnjak (Croatia)

Things That Burn Easily is a contemplative dystopia about a family living on a modest piece of land affected by a catastrophe. Part of the family believes that they have been wronged by irreparable injustice and that a system that will take responsibility and compensate for some of the consequences of it should exist. The other part is sceptical and has modelled for themselves a vision of the world in which every other individual is a potential threat, and the only reliable certainty comes from social isolation. When a big new threat



appears on the horizon, it will trigger an unbearable misunderstanding of these two principles.

Performance language: Croatian with English surtitles





Vedrana Klepica works as a writer and theatre director. Her work mainly focuses on topics of class, privilege and patriarchy, and is influenced by documentary, postdramatic theatre and an interdisciplinary approach to creating content. Her plays have been performed on big and small stages in Croatia and abroad – UK, Australia, Argentina, Chile, Austria, Serbia, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. Her works include: J.A.T.O, To Fuck Because We Want To, The Tragic Death of the Economic Analyst, The Whistle-blower, Prairie Oysters, Our Class, Lepa Brena Project, Instructions for Understanding Multiannual Plants, Keinberg, Mileva, and Walls, Voids and Other Vulgarities. She has been translated into English, French, German, Polish and Spanish.

Hrvojka Begović is a Croatian actress well known throughout the Balkans. She has degrees in acting from the Academy of Dramatic Arts and in philosophy and sociology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, both in Zagreb.

Begović began her professional acting career in 2012 at the Zagreb Youth Theatre in the play Yellow Line by Ivica Buljan and since then has participated in numerous plays within the contemporary and classical repertoire. In 2014, her performance as Elimara in Moliere's Tartuffe in her graduation exam earned her a prestigious



Croatian Theatre Award nomination for leading female role. In 2015, Begović became a permanent ensemble member of the Zagreb Youth Theatre where she has so far worked in more than thirty productions.

In addition to her home theatre, she also took part in plays performed at the well-known Dubrovnik Summer Festival and in about twenty independent theatre productions with &TD Theatre, KunstTeatar, EXIT Theatre and Pogon Jedinstvo. During her professional career Begović collaborated with various well-known directors and theatre authors, such as Zlatko Burić Kićo, Oliver Frljić, Paolo Magelli, Ivica Buljan, Borut Šeparović, Bobo Jelčić, Damir Bartol Indoš & Tanja Vrvilo, Filip

Begović was awarded the Best Female Acting Achievement Award at the Miroslav Krleža Festival 2017 for her role in the play See You in Heaven – Conversations with Krleža.

Šovagović, Ivan Planinić and others.

Lea Jevtić is a professionally trained actress and drama educator with a master's degree in Acting. She has performed in theatres across Southeast Europe, bringing to life both classical and contemporary works. Jevtić's stage career began at the National Theatre in Sombor (Serbia), where she debuted in her original play Pope Joan. Since then, she has collaborated with renowned directors including Dragan Živadinov, Gorčin

Stojanović, Anica Tomić, Jana Maričić, and Vedrana Klepica.

Jevtić's most recent play was Lovers, an adaptation of Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek's text, which she codirected and performed in Zagreb. Begović also played in Every Brilliant Thing, Duncan Macmillan's celebrated one-person show about hope, loss, and mental health. Beyond acting, Begović is the founder of the drama studio The Dreamers, where she works with young people using theatre as a tool for creativity and social change. She has also taken part in international productions, including the large-scale outdoor spectacle Zeniteum 2022, marking Novi Sad's year as European Capital of Culture.

Jevtić is passionate about stories that challenge social norms and give voice to the silenced. She combines her artistic practice with her background in human rights, using theatre as a platform for dialogue, empathy, and empowerment.

Vladimir Aleksić is a Serbian actor, author/director, and producer with a distinguished career in theatre, film, and television, both in the Balkans and internationally. After graduating from the Drama Academy, Aleksić moved to Italy and worked with acclaimed theatre company Motus, contributing to several international productions. In the Balkans, Aleksić continues to work



with distinguish theatre artists. His film and TV career includes numerous international and Italian productions, as well as ones made in Serbia.

Aleksić is also an author and producer known for original productions exploring contemporary social and cultural themes mainly with his company, Flying Ginger. Some of them are Comrades, I Am Not Ashamed of My Communist Past (2016) co-produced with a theatre



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from Belgium, Philharmonic Theatre (2017) done with the Belgrade Philharmonic using letters by known classical music composers, Lepa Brena Project (2019) a production inspired by a well-known folk singer from the Balkans, Journey to the Center Outside the Earth (2021) a play performed on a bus and in an airplane at the airport, Holy Prada (2022) a satirical piece about the fashion industry — from a crocodile to a bag made from crocodile skin, and Private Celebration (2024) inspired by Noel Coward's Private Lives.

Ganz nova kultura promjene (Ganz New Culture of Change) was founded in 2019, as a successor to the long-standing work and programatic development of the concept known as Kultura promjene (Culture of Change), which operated within the Culture Department of the Student Centre of the University of Zagreb from 2004 to 2018. During that time, it received over 70 national and international awards and recognitions for its innovative cultural programs. The organization is composed of artists, curators, and producers, who work at the intersection of performing arts, education, interdisciplinary artistic practices, and environmental art. Ganz nova supports artistic work that explores new performance formats, the political dimensions of art, ecopoetics, and artistic engagement.



# STAGE READING

#### The Last Girls on Earth

Written by **Maja Pelević** / Translated by Maja Pelević Directed by **Alice Reagan** 

Today, more than ever, our system absorbs every facet of human existence and profits from them. The Last Girls on Earth explores a situation in which even biological and emotional aspects like motherhood are marketable goods. A woman's worth is often linked to her status as a mother, making those without children feel devalued and pressured to fulfill that role. This environment fosters the transformation of a fundamental human desire into a commodity, with children becoming a resource to own. The story begins where the womb becomes a factory and the child a luxury product. The Last Girls on Earth received the award for the best contemporary play at the biggest national theatre festival in Serbia.

Maja Pelević is a playwright, dramaturg, performer, director and screenwriter. She is the author of more than 20 plays, dramatizations, and adaptations. She has worked as a dramaturg on over 20 theatre productions and has dramatized several novels. She has written songs for four musicals and scripts for three TV series.

She is the recipient of all major national awards for playwriting. Her plays have been translated into English, French, German, Russian, Norwegian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Macedonian, and Ukrainian, and have been published in numerous contemporary domestic and international anthologies. She worked as a dramaturg at the National Theatre in Belgrade from 2007 to 2010. She taught the subject Cultural Diplomacy at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade, and Dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Montenegro.

December 6 at 12:30 pm / Ellen Stewart Theatre

#### All Adventurous Women Do

Written by **Tanja Šljivar** / Translated by Aida Spahić Directed by **Tea Alagić** 

All Adventurous Women Do explores the social phenomenon of seven thirteen-year-old girls who fell pregnant on a school trip. Here Šljivar gives voice to young female subjects whose speech in public space is prevented, and whose very experiences are often interpreted and processed with certain ideological points of view and from the perspective of the adult world, which does not see girls as equal social subjects. All Adventurous Women Do had its world premiere at



the Deutsches Theater in Berlin and has been publicly read and performed in various countries, including Serbia, Germany, USA, Croatia, Austria and Italy. It has been translated into seven languages so far.

Tanja Šljivar studied dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade and applied theatre studies at JLU in Giessen. Her plays have been publicly read and produced in professional theatres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Spain, Poland, Austria, Finland, Slovakia, USA, and Germany. She also writes film screenplays. She won several awards for her playwriting and has been a guest at writing residencies in Austria, Kosovo, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, and Spain. In 2019, she worked as an artistic director of the drama department at the National Theatre in Belgrade. She teaches playwriting at the University in Belgrade and has also taught at Universities in Banja Luka and Vienna.

December 12 at 1:00 pm / Ellen Stewart Theatre

## All of a Sudden, a River

Written by **Dimitrije Kokanov** / Translated by Matt Robinson

Directed by **Devin Brain** 

Composed of three parts, All of a Sudden, a River, with its dystopian narrative, focuses on themes of colonialism,

international warfare, social oppression, authoritarian regimes, the disenfranchisement of the Other, and issues of the pervasive violence within patriarchal and heteronormative societies. The play is an authentic response to Orwell's 1984. Conceived as a space for silenced voices, this play allows its characters to speak in a way that the world can finally hear — revealing their deepest fears. In its conclusion, the author predicts a radical regression of civilization, reducing society to a distorted version of so-called "traditional" values. All of a Sudden, a River had its world premiere in Slovenia in 2022, and later was published as part of a collection of plays by the same author.

**Dimitrije Kokanov** is a writer, dramaturg and screenwriter. He is the resident dramaturg at Theatre Atelje 212 in Belgrade. His plays have been translated into several languages and performed both in Serbia and internationally. He is the recipient of all major national awards for playwriting. As a dramaturg, he has collaborated on over 70 projects across various performing arts practices (mostly theatre and contemporary dance), both in Serbia and abroad. He also works as a director of radio plays.

December 14 at 12:30 pm / Ellen Stewart Theatre



# PERFORMANCES ON VIDEO

#### The World and All That It Holds

Written by Aleksandar Hemon



Directed by **Selma Spahić**Produced by Sarajevo War Theatre
SARTR and Realstage, Bosnia and
Herzegovina

December 5 at 1:00 pm Ellen Stewart Theatre

This is a refugee epic centered around a powerful love story between two Sarajevo conscripts on the frontlines during World War I. The play confronts us, once again, with the question of how love can survive, in what forms it manifests, and whether it is a strong enough force to keep us alive even in the most extreme circumstances. We remember history through the lens of those who have the privilege of leaving a mark and recording their memories. But what about the history of all those who do not have that privilege?

Aleksandar Hemon is a Bosnian American author, essayist, critic, television writer and screenwriter. He is best known for his powerful novels Nowhere Man and Lazarus Project as well as short stories and novels that explore issues of exile, identity, and home through characters drawn from Hemon's own experience as an immigrant.

Selma Spahić is a well-known theatre director from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina where she attended the Academy of Performing Arts. She works at theatres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and teaches directing at her alma mater. She directs works by Maxim Gorki, Jean Genet, Ferenc Molnar, Frank Wedekind, but also plays by authors such as Simona Semenič, Tanja Šljivar, Karim Zaimović, Dino Pešut, Tom Zajec. Her theatre projects are partly documentary and are developed together with the performers. From 2012 to 2017, Spahić was the artistic director of the International Theatre Festival MESS in Sarajevo.

The Sarajevo War Theatre (SARTR) was founded in 1992 during the war years, bringing together actors and collaborators from three professional Sarajevo theatres. During the war, actors and other theatre professionals from Sarajevo's theatre scene became



affiliated with SARTR and performed more than 200 shows during the four-year siege. Founded during the siege, SARTR stands as a testament to the phenomenon of spiritual and cultural resistance to fascism and aggression. Today, SARTR brings together actors and theatre professionals of all generations in the space of the former iconic Sarajevo Center for Social Activities and works across the Balkan region and Europe.

# **Cement Belgrade**



Written by **Milan Ramšak Marković** inspired by Heiner Müller,
Directed by **Sebastijan Horvat**Produced by Belgrade Drama Theatre,
Belgrade, Serbia
December 7 at 12:30pm
Fllen Stewart Theatre

Inspired by the East German playwright Heiner Müller, Sebastijan Horvat's production, which he developed with Milan Ramšak Marković, is set in present-day Belgrade. The relationship between trauma and memory, political dementia, as well as the conflicts inscribed in our bodies are some of the motifs that characterise this work. The play won the Mira Trailović Grand Prix at the 54th BITEF Festival and many other awards.

Milan Ramšak Marković is an award-winning dramaturg, playwright, and actor from Belgrade. In addition to his work in theatre, he also writes for film and television and is an active member of the Serbian contemporary dance scene and the independent arts scene. His plays have been staged in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Lithuania, and England. As a dramaturg, he has worked in theatre productions across Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Slovenia, Italy, and Serbia. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his work, including the Slavko Grum Award, the Sterija Award, the Mihiz Award, the Award at the Week of Slovenian Drama, among others.

Sebastijan Horvat is one of the most internationally recognized and most creative Slovenian theatre directors. Over the course of his rich career, Horvat has directed in the independent theatre scene, in all professional theatres in Slovenia, and in many theatres abroad. For his theatrical work he has received numerous prestigious awards, among them the Prešeren Fund Award, the Montblanc Young Directors Award at the Salzburg Festival (Salzburger Festspiele), the Borštnik Award for Best Direction, the Šeligo Award for Best Production at the Week of Slovenian Drama, the Grand Prix Mira Trailović for Best Performance, and the Politika Award for Direction at the BITEF Festival in



Belgrade. He is one of the founders of the independent theatre institute E. P. I. Center and a full professor of acting and directing at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana.

Belgrade Drama Theatre was founded in 1947 under the name City Theatre. As the oldest city theatre in Belgrade, it became a model of modern theatre, enjoying great public affection and strong financial support from the state. Today, Belgrade Drama Theatre strives to provide writers and actors with the opportunity to develop a contemporary theatrical repertoire on its stages. An increased number of productions and frequent guest performances make stagings of new plays widely accessible to the public.

### Zoran Đinđić



Author's project by **Oliver Frljić** Produced by Theatre Atelje 212, Belgrade, Serbia

December 13 at 12:30 pm Ellen Stewart Theatre The play deals with the issue of guilt and trauma in society following the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić of Serbia in 2003. This significant and brutal historical moment served as a point of departure for the artists, led by author Oliver Frljić, to question collective consciousness and the responsibility of the entire community. It also raises the issue of artistic responsibility in communicating with the audience on topics that transform and define our individual participation in the life of that very same community. Among many awards, the production won the Mira Trailović Grand Prix at the 47th BITEF Festival.

Oliver Frljić, originally from Bosnia-Herzegovina, works as a director, author, actor and theorist in Croatia, where he studied philosophy, religious studies and directing. His productions have garnered him several awards and invitations to international festivals, including the Wiener Festwochen for his 2010 production Mrzim istinu! (I hate the truth!), and the Heidelberger Stückemarkt new play festival for Black Box Schule, developed at Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf. From 2014 to 2016 he served as the artistic director of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka. In early 2016 he announced that he was resigning out of protest against Croatian cultural policy.



Frljić works throughout the Balkans region and Europe and was closely affiliated with the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin, first as a member of their Board and later, from 2022 to 2024, as the Co-Artistic Director.

Theatre Atelie 212 was founded in 1956 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia [today Serbia]. In its early years, performances were held in a converted hall of the building of the communist daily newspaper Borba (Fight). A new building was designed by well-known director Bojan Stupica and still stands at its original location in downtown Belgrade. Thetare Atelje 212 has become known for its repertoire that explores and follows contemporary dramatic texts from around the world, as well as for being a theatre that experiments with modern acting expressions. The founder and longtime Artistic Producer, Mira Trailović, founded the renowned BITEF (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) in 1967 and led it for many years. The festival brought avant-garde, experimental and exceptional productions from all over the world to Belgrade audiences. Through her close friendship with Ellen Stewart, Trailović first brought La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club's shows to the Balkans



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

## Opening Roundtable Discussion ART and/or/is POLITICS

A panel discussion on the role of arts and culture in the socio-political milieu of the Balkans. The aim of the discussion is to question the position of labor in the arts, and art itself as a space of (un)freedom within oppressive social systems. What are the dangers of the instrumentalization of art for political purposes? What is the role of didacticism in theatre and its potential for enlightenment in contemporary society?

Participants: Mirjana Karanović, Tanya Domi, Andrej Nosov, Natasha Tripney and Beka Vučo Moderated by Dimitrije Kokanov



### Closing Roundtable Discussion THEATRE AND ITS CONTEXT

Some of the topics that could be tackled are: Must everything that is written and/or performed today in the theatre have a political/social connotation? And/or how do the political/social views of the author correspond to the context of the production?

Participants: Dimitrije Kokanov, Natasha Tripney, Vedrana Klepica, an American theatre professional (TBA) Moderated by Beka Vučo



## La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club

La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club is dedicated to the artist and all aspects of the theatre. La MaMa's 64th Season, LA MAMA NOW, focuses on creating solidarity and building community, exploring ways to build connections for cross-sector coalition and invite artists, activists, organizers and community members into the creative process. La MaMa has been honored with 30+ Obie Awards, dozens of Drama Desk, Bessie Awards, Villager Awards, the 2018 Regional Theatre Tony Award, and most recently a 2023 New York Drama Critics' Circle Special Citation. We are a creative home to artists and resident companies from around the world, many of whom have made lasting contributions to the arts, including Blue Man Group, Bette Midler, Ping Chong, Robert De Niro, André De Shields, Adrienne Kennedy, Bridget Everett, Harvey Fierstein, Diane Lane, Charles Ludlam, Tadeusz Kantor, Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, Meredith Monk, David and Amy Sedaris, Julie Taymor, Kazuo Ohno, Tom O'Horgan, Andrei Serban, Liz Swados, and Andy Warhol. La MaMa's vision of nurturing new artists and new work from all nations, cultures, races and identities remains as strong today as it was when Ellen Stewart first opened the doors in 1961



# MY BALKANS

My Balkans is a not-for-profit organization from New York, established in 2020. The guiding purpose in forming My Balkans is to support and encourage people to build a better, more just, and open democratic society in the Balkans and South Eastern Europe using arts, culture and education. Since its inception, My Balkans was oriented to projects where arts, culture, and education, as pillars of a democratic society, play an essential role in human development. These pillars are a powerful platform for tackling today's key social challenges, due to their capacity to elicit powerful cognitive and emotional responses and to promote conflict prevention and resolution. Through very special and unique productions, co-productions, books, consultancy efforts and works with various partners and individuals in theatre and visual arts, music, literature and other artistic areas throughout the Balkans and Eastern and Central Europe, My Balkans established proven and recognized projects that create safe spaces for free expression, exchanges, regional cooperation and mutual understanding, contribute to social equality, cohesion, innovation, and change.

**TUO3A** 

#### The Team

Producer and Creative Director / **Beka Vučo**Co-creative Director and Program Editor / **Dimitrije Kokanov** 

Associate Producer / Dejan Jovanović
Communications Coordinator / Asja Mijović
Technical Support / Vojislav Đorđić
Designer / Dragana Lacmanović
Proofreader / Paula Gordon
Press Representation / Michelle Tabnick, Publicist

Program Selection Committee / **Beka Vučo**, **Dimitrije Kokanov**, **Natasha Tripney** 

My Balkans Board Beka Vučo, Edin Rudić, Peter Matjašič, Bojana Cvejić, Uliks Fehmiu

**MA3T 3HT** 



#### Thank You

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#fromtheotherside