



THEATRES IN CROATIA

Editorial

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Croatia has a long-established and very rich theatrical tradition dating back to the medieval ages. Until the mid 19th century, several Adriatic towns – Dubrovnik in particular – were the focal points of Croatian theatrical life, which throughout history subsequently moved to Zagreb and to other towns in the continental parts of Croatia. The first theatre venues in today's Croatia were built during the Roman period – the remains of a Classical theatre can be seen in ancient Salona near Split, and in Pula there are remains of a smaller Roman theatre, both dating from the 1st century. The first theatre venue in more recent history was built on the island of Hvar at the beginning of the 17th century. By that time, but also later, theatre plays were performed in various places, including on squares, at palaces and in public buildings such as arsenals and town halls. At the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century many coastal towns, among them Dubrovnik, Split, Trogir and Zadar, received their permanent theatre premises, while the first venues equipped to serve as theatres were built in Zadar (1783) and Zagreb (1835). The golden age of construction of theatre halls in Croatia came between 1859 and 1895, when large theatres were built in Split, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Zadar, Osijek, Varaždin, Pula, Rijeka and Zagreb. All these theatre venues still serve their primary purpose, with the exception of the New Theatre in Zadar, which was damaged during WWII and later torn down, and Bajamonti's Theatre in Split, which burnt down in a fire in 1881, to be replaced soon afterwards with today's Croatian National Theatre. The dynamic growth of theatrical art in Croatia entailed the opening of new theatre venues throughout all of the 20th century, many of them within the adapted buildings of former movie theaters and cultural centers. This trend continued to the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, when several new theatre venues were opened in Zagreb (Small Stage Theatre, EXIT Theatre, Histrion House), and a number of existing venues have been reconstructed and adapted.



Remains of the Roman theatre in Salona

The main intention of this publication is to provide both theatre professionals and other curious visitors with a brief insight into Croatian theatre venues, primarily into the historic and architectural features of the buildings, the history of the companies and their esthetics and repertory profile. In addition to the venues mentioned in this publication, there are several venues that occasionally serve as theatres and also worth mentioning are various open air stages, particularly in Split and Dubrovnik, which house environmental theatre performances during large summer festivals.





Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb

The building with the neoclassical façade and neo-baroque interior was built in 1895 according to the design by Viennese architects, Ferdinand Feller and Hermann Helmer, who had also designed many theatre buildings in Central and Eastern Europe. The audience area has 809 seats altogether, including the parterre, two-tiers of boxes and balcony. The Croatian National Theatre is also home of the oldest ceremonial theatre curtain in Croatia, called *Croatia's Rebirth*, and painted by renowned Croatian painter Vlaho Bukovac. The paintings of historical and allegoric motifs on the ceiling overlooking the audience area were painted by Viennese painter and decorator Alexander Demetrius Goltz, while the decorations on the foyer ceiling were painted by Ivan Tišov (1909). Both sides of the mezzanine have specially decorated salons, while the first floor houses a formal state box and lobby with busts of notable Croatian drama artists.

The foundation stones for Croatia's central theatre hall were laid in 1860 after the discharge of German actors from the old Stanković (city) Theatre, which was built in 1835 in the Upper Town and is the present seat of the Town Assembly. The Croatian National Theatre has three ensembles. The drama ensemble was founded in 1860, the opera – first established in 1870 – has been performing on a regular basis since 1909, and the ballet – first formed in 1894 – has also been performing on a regular basis since 1909. In principal, the drama and opera repertoires are focused on classical pieces and well-known pieces by contemporary authors. The ballet ensemble also leans towards a more classical repertoire, but periodically also opens up to contemporary dance expression.

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Saša Novković



Gavella Drama Theatre, Zagreb

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This venue was originally built in 1916 for the Helios Cinema. In 1921, the building underwent reconstruction to convert it into a “second stage” for the Croatian National Theatre. The plans were designed by Josip Dyrák, then supervisor of the construction of the Croatian National Theatre. Following a break, the reconstruction works were continued in 1925 and the fully equipped building of the Small Theatre was opened in 1929 with a 13m x 10m stage and 800 seats. The next larger renovation took place in 1953–1954, under the architect Boško Rašica, when the newly established theatre company – the Zagreb Drama Theatre – moved in. After the last renovation in 1995, the theatre has a total of 389 seats on the floor and balcony.

The Gavella Drama Theatre was established in 1953 under the name Zagreb Drama Theatre. Its founding was the result of lasting efforts invested into the institution of a second Zagreb theatre company, which would, through its repertoire and style, create a counterpoint to the mainstream Croatian National Theatre. The *spiritum movens* behind the entire venture was famous director Branko Gavella (1885–1962), who had also brought a number of young actors from the National Theatre to this new theatre. The theatre was named after him in 1970. The theatre’s repertoire is based on reinterpretations of classical drama pieces and contemporary pieces by both domestic and foreign authors. Between 1973 and 1990, and again as of 2005, the theatre has organized the Gavella Nights Festival, featuring a selection of the season’s best productions from other Croatian theatres.

Address and contacts:

Gradsko dramsko kazalište Gavella
Frankopanska 8-10, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4849 222
www.gavella.hr



Comedy Theatre, Zagreb

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The Franciscan Hall, which has housed the Comedy Theatre since its inception, was built in 1938 next to the Franciscan monastery on Kaptol. Up to 1945, the Franciscan Hall was not a public venue, but it was nationalized after WWII. The building was returned to its original owner in 2005, and while anticipating the building of its own premises, the Comedy Theatre took out a 15-year lease on the building. The venue has a 442-seat capacity (269 on the parterre and 173 on the balcony).

The Comedy Theatre was founded in 1950 through the merger of two theatres, both founded after WWII. From the very beginning, the theatre has been dedicated to producing both musical pieces and drama plays, predominantly comedies. The theatre has developed a reputation as a place for the quality production of operettas written by Central European authors as well as musicals. In addition to having staged some of the most popular world musicals, the Comedy Theatre from the end of the 1960s has also contributed to the creation of authentic Croatian musicals and developed a reputation as being the initiator of what is known as the “Zagreb school of musical”. Along with a resident drama ensemble, the Comedy Theatre has a permanent choir, dance ensemble and orchestra.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište Komedija
Kaptol 9, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4813 200
www.komedija.hr



Mara Bratoš

Zagreb Youth Theatre (ZKM), Zagreb

The building of the Zagreb Youth Theatre in 1921 initially housed the glamorous Music Hall cinema (later the Luxor) which in addition to movies featured various entertainment and music programs. In 1949, the building became the Concert Hall Istria, which ceased to function after the opening of the large Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall (1973). In 1977, the building was consequently given to the Zagreb Youth Theatre group (abbr. *ZeKaeM*), but renovations to the building, aimed to convert it into a theatre hall, lasted to 1987. The main hall, still called Istria, with its tiered seating (283 seats) and large stage area (16m x 21m), is ideal for dance performances and habitually hosts a major part of the Contemporary Dance Week (international dance festival) program. The chamber stage, named after actor Tihomir Polanec, has an additional 100 seats.

Founded in 1948 as the Zagreb Pioneer Theatre, the Zagreb Youth Theatre has been active under its current name since 1967. Initially, the theatre aimed at providing education for children and youth while the professional ensemble was founded in 1967. From the move into its own building, *ZeKaeM* has become one of the most propulsive repertoire theatres in Croatia, renowned for its enthusiasm for modern theatre expression and readiness to take on challenging productions. The repertoire focuses on contemporary drama pieces that engage a diverse, multigenerational audience. In addition to serving as a repertoire theatre, *ZeKaeM* maintains its educational function through acting and dance classes, and is also the organizer of the World Theatre Festival (since 2006).

Address and contacts:

Zagrebačko kazalište mladih (ZKM)
 Teslina 7, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4874 560
www.zekaem.hr



&TD Theatre, Zagreb

In 1926, the City of Zagreb donated the Zagreb Assembly (predecessor of today's Zagreb Fair) 32 000m² of land along Savska Street, as a space for their business exhibitions. In the mid 1930s, the Zagreb Assembly built the main management building there along with several pavilions for the Fair, of which three have remained. One of these pavilions is the Italian Pavilion, which was designed by Italian architect Dante Petroni, and built in 1937. The Zagreb Fair moved to another location in 1959, and the area along Savska Street was given to the Student Centre (SC) of the University of Zagreb. The Italian Pavilion became the black box stage of the Student Centre in 1962 and the predecessor of today's &TD Theatre. The pavilion houses two performance spaces: the Large Hall with 230 seats, and the Semi-circular Hall without a fixed audience area. In 1967, designer Mihajlo Arsovski came up with an extraordinary concept for the interior and for the theatre's visual identity which later became &TD's trademark.

&TD Theatre is an independent theatre with a permanent ensemble, and operates as part of the wider scope of cultural activities offered by the Student Centre. Carrying its present name since 1967, the &TD was a landmark in the Croatian cultural landscape up to the mid 1970s, known for being the most provocative and most propulsive of Croatian theatres and for being a place for critical challenges and topical issues of the time. In terms of repertoire and aesthetic expression, its dedication to contemporary drama has always been a very strong feature of this theatre, with an openness for experimentation and artistic practices that were "different" and often marginalized. From the very beginning, its audience has been predominantly students and young intellectuals, and it has recently opened up to independent artistic projects and groups, offering them valuable production support.

Address and contacts:

Teatar &TD, Zagreb
 Savska cesta 25, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4593 677
www.sczg.hr



Kerempuh Satirical Theatre, Zagreb

This reinforced concrete building was erected in 1912, following the design by architect Ignjat Fischer, to serve as Zagreb's first specifically built cinema hall (initially named Apollo, and later Croatia) and contains a 620-seat audience area. After WWII, it was renovated to serve the needs of the Varijete stage's "artistic scene". The building began to serve as a conventional theatre venue in 1971. In 1988, the building was completely renovated and technically modernized. In addition to the central hall, which seats 519 on the floor and balcony, performances occasionally also take place in the ground floor foyer, called Night Stage, which was founded in 1976.

The Kerempuh Satirical Theatre was founded in 1964. Performances initially took place in the Bled Cafeteria and the repertoire mainly included randomly selected satirical and cabaret pieces. In 1971, the theatre merged with the Varijete stage, thus receiving its own venue and, gradually, an ensemble. The theatre's repertoire focuses on classical and contemporary comedy pieces, with an emphasis on satirical content. Since 1976, the Kerempuh Satirical Theatre has been hosting the Days of Satire. The theatre was given its current name in 1994 after Petrica Kerempuh, the traditional folk jester/wise character from Croatian popular literature. Prior to 1994, Kerempuh Theatre was called Badger Satirical Theatre.

Address and contacts:

Satiričko kazalište Kerempuh
 Ilica 31, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4833 354
www.kazalistekerempuh.hr

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Histrion House, Zagreb

The modern building of the Histrion House, designed by Studio 3LHD Architects, has a 230-seat capacity and was opened in 2007 in the courtyard building of a residential block in Zagreb's Lower Town. Throughout past decades this building housed various movie theatres (including Olimp, Kozara and Apolo), and is famous for being the place that featured the first sound motion picture in Croatia in 1929.

The Histrion House is the permanent artistic home to the Histrion Theatre Company, which was established in 1975. The Histrion Company maintains a tradition of popular theatre, simple in expression, rich in improvisation and grotesque. The Company acquired its distinctive character and identity touring intensively on the continent and along the coast (with "floating theatre" tours) and with performances staged regularly during July and August since 1986 on the summer stage of Zagreb's Opatovina Park (known as Zagreb's Histrion Summer Festival).

Address and contacts:

Histrionski dom
 Ilica 90, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4854 714
www.histrion.hr

Sandro Lendler

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EXIT Theatre, Zagreb

This independent theatre without a resident ensemble was founded in 1994. As of 1998, EXIT Theatre has been staging its productions in the renovated building of the former Cultural Centre "August Cesarec" with a 300-seat capacity.

EXIT Theatre is known for its focus towards a contemporary repertoire and diversity in theatre practices, much of it experimental in nature, where the actor often becomes a full-fledged participant in the process of creating all the elements of a theatre act. Along with performances for adult audiences (mostly younger, urban generations), EXIT Theatre also occasionally holds performances for children.

Address and contacts:

Teatar EXIT
Ilica 208, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 3707 626
www.teatarexit.hr



Small Stage Theatre, Zagreb

This is a private theatre, founded in 1988. The theatre venue is located on the ground floor of a building with a rather eclectic architectural design, the current exterior design dating back to 1934. The theatre occupies premises that formerly served as an inn, a cafeteria and subsequently as a local-district community office.

The Small Stage repertoire mainly includes contemporary pieces for children and adolescents, both by domestic and foreign authors. In two periods, between 1989 and 1993 and from 2001 to 2005, the Small Stage Theatre also had its "Night Stage" programs for adult audiences, mainly featuring contemporary chamber drama pieces, adaptable to the relatively small dimensions of its stage and audience area (around 160 seats). The Small Stage Theatre Company became renowned for its superior international cooperation (organizing the Milk-Tooth International Festival which was held bi-annually from 1998 to 2004), and for being the publisher of various theatre related editions.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište Mala scena
Medveščak 2, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4683 352
www.mala-scena.hr



Radomir Saraden

Zagreb Puppet Theatre, Zagreb

Since its foundation, the Zagreb Puppet Theatre has been performing in the building of Jerome Hall, which was built in 1923 by the Croatian Literature Association of St. Jerome's. In addition to hosting various workshops and other cultural and sports events, the hall also housed the String-puppet Theatre, which was founded in 1920 and continued to perform until 1937 with intermittent breaks. Jerome Hall was completely reconstructed on two occasions: from 1963 to 1973, and from 1996 to 2004. The latest reconstruction was carried out by Czech architect, Miroslav Melena, and the building now houses a modern stage and a new tiered audience area with 240 seats. The Zagreb Puppet Theatre hosts the majority of the program for the International Puppet Theatre Festival (end of August and beginning of September).

The Zagreb Puppet Theatre (its Croatian acronym is ZKL) was founded in 1948, leaning on traditions laid down by the Zagreb Puppetry School (the first public performances in Croatian were staged in 1916) and the Youth Puppet Theatre (founded in 1940). Over the past six decades, ZKL has passed through several development-aesthetic phases (the most significant modernization of expression took place during the 1960s). Many reputable puppeteers from Croatia and abroad have mapped out the history of this theatre. The diversity of techniques used is a strong feature of all ZKL performances and the repertoire shows a fine balance between classical and contemporary literature pieces, predominantly engaging pre-school and elementary school children. ZKL also publishes the puppet theatre magazine LuKa since 1995.

Address and contacts:

Zagrebačko kazalište lutaka
Baruna Trenka 3, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 4878 444
www.zkl.hr

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Cherry Theatre, Zagreb

Initially established in 1969 under the name "Small Cherry Theatre", this theatre was located at the building which had formerly housed the "Maksim Gorki" Cultural Centre. The theatre had to vacate the building in 1989 when it became too dilapidated, and when reconstruction work of the building began according to the design by architect Andrija Mutnjaković. The reconstruction process lasted much longer than initially planned and in 2000 the Cherry Theatre eventually moved back to their building, which now houses a modern performance area with 320 seats and has a visually remarkable exterior design, with a tile-coated façade a cupola and cherry logo.

The Cherry Theatre is a children's theatre with productions mainly for elementary school children. Its repertoire is based on Croatian and world classics for children and youth, and in stage terms, the performances are often quite spectacular, with many musical and dance elements. In addition to this repertoire path, the Cherry Theatre (established in 1969 as the successor to the Cherry Pioneer Theatre) has often staged pieces by contemporary playwrights. Another specificity of the Cherry Theatre is the use of the "black light" staging technique, in a combined play of the puppet and "live actor". The permanent ensemble was established in the late 1970s and today includes some twenty members who perform in more than 300 performances each year.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište Trešnja
Mošćenička 1, 10 110 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 3638 556
www.kazaliste-tresnja.hr

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Bird of Fire Theatre, Zagreb

This children's theatre pursues a rather extensive repertoire, including short theatrical pieces, puppet theatre, musicals and choreographed dramas. In 1997, the Bird of Fire became a city theatre and was given the building of the Kozjak Community Centre, which was adapted and technically equipped to serve as a theatre with 220 seats. The Bird of Fire started as a touring theatre and today it has a permanent ensemble. As of 2001, this theatre has been organizing the festival of children's theatres from Croatia, called "The best of the best festival" (Naj, naj, naj festival), which grew into an international festival in 2007.

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Address and contacts:

Gradsko kazalište "Žar ptica"
Bijenička cesta 97, 10 000 Zagreb, Tel. ++385 (0)1 2347 228
www.zar-ptica.hr



Istrian National Theatre – City Theatre Pula

The theatre building in Pula was designed by architect Rugger Berlam and built in 1880. It was initially named Politeama Ciscutti after the entrepreneur and financier of the building, Pietro Ciscutti. In the decades to follow, it hosted a variety of programs, including music and theatre events, entertainment programs, sports events and film screenings. The 800-seat audience area consisted of a parterre, two tiers of boxes, a balcony and gallery. The theatre building underwent complete reconstruction three times in its history. During the last reconstruction in 1989, the stage was extended to its current size of 10.5mx22m, additional premises were built, modern technical equipment installed, a small stage opened, and the audience area was renovated to its initial state.

In 1948, the National Theatre was established in the Politeami Ciscutti, and in 1956 the name of the theatre was changed to the Istrian National Theatre. The establishment of the National Theatre also led to the foundation of a permanent ensemble, or at least a nucleus of an ensemble that continued working until 1971, when the building had to be closed down due to its rundown state. The Istrian National Theatre revived its own production activities in the mid 1990's, when the Drama Studio was also founded. At the same time, the number of visiting performances increased which created preconditions for the re-founding of a permanent ensemble.

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Address and contacts:

Istarsko narodno kazalište – Gradsko kazalište Pula
Matka Laginje 5, 52100 Pula, Tel. ++385 (0)52 212 667
www.ink.hr



Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, Rijeka

The building of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka was designed by Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer and opened in 1885. The exterior of this luxurious theatre building was made in the late renaissance style (a temple-like façade with six columns and gable roof), while the interior was designed in a late-baroque style. The main hall consists of a parterre, three tiers of boxes and a balcony, with some 600 seats. Sculptures and carvings, as well as decorations on the ceiling and in the boxes were created by Viennese painter, Völkl, while the ceiling paintings were painted by Franz Matsch and the brothers Gustav and Ernest Klimt. Many other reputable artists also took part in decorating the theatre, among them the Venetian sculptor August Benvenuti, whose groups of figures called "Drama" and "Music" on the gable joint and Rijeka's coat-of-arms on the gable are considered his masterpieces. A complete restoration of the Rijeka Theatre was carried out from 1970 to 1982.

In the first six decades, the venue was a stage for visiting theatres, primarily for opera performances. As of 1946, the venue became the artistic home to the resident Croatian and Italian drama, opera and ballet ensembles. All the ensembles have a very extensive and diverse repertoire, including domestic and international classics from literature and music, contemporary pieces to a lighter entertainment repertoire. The productions of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka often have notable guest artists from at home and abroad, and in 2004 the theatre became a co-organizer of the Rijeka Summer Festival. The first performance in the Croatian language was staged as late as 1946, and as of 1953, the theatre carries the name Ivan pl. Zajc after the nobleman Ivan Zajc, a conductor and versatile composer (among other works, he composed 19 operas and 26 operettas) who was born in 1832 in Rijeka.

Address and contacts:

Hrvatsko narodno kazalište
Ivana pl. Zajca Rijeka
Uljarska 1
51000 Rijeka
Tel. ++385 (0)51 355 900
www.hnk-zajc.hr



Dražan Šokčević



Croatian House of Culture (HKD), Rijeka

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The Croatian House of Culture is located in a representative building, which also houses a hotel and cafe. This monumental building of modern architecture with its contours and plasticity – showing the clear influence of Cubism and Le Corbusier – was designed by architects Josip Pičman and Alfred Albini and built out of reinforced concrete and covered with white marble stone tiles from the island of Brač. The construction started in 1938 in Sušak – the Croatian part of the then divided town of Rijeka – and was completed some ten years later.

Today the Croatian House of Culture repertoire includes diverse cultural events including visiting theatre performances and productions of independent theatre and dance companies from Rijeka. As of 1993, the Croatian House of Culture is the resident stage and seat of the HKD Theatre Company, known for its contemporary drama repertoire and radical interpretations of classics. As of 1994, the HKD Theatre Company has hosted and organized the International Small Stage Festival, and the majority of programs take place in the Croatian House of Culture. The theatre hall can seat 530 visitors, but theatre performances usually take place in front of a movable audience structure with 220 seats. In addition to the main stage (10m x 17m), performances occasionally take place in the representational atrium at the entrance to the Croatian House of Culture.

Address and contacts:

Hrvatski kulturni dom Rijeka
Strossmayerova 1, 51 000 Rijeka, Tel. ++385 (0)51 377 327
www.hkd-teatar.com



Town Puppet Theatre, Rijeka

The Town Puppet Theatre in Rijeka was founded in 1960 and was known under the name *Domino* until 1993. The theatre is well known for its innovative use of technology and diverse repertoire. As of 1996, the theatre has organized the Fall Festival of Puppet Theatres, gathering the best puppet performances from Croatia and from abroad.

This venue of the Rijeka puppeteers is rather uncommon for a Mediterranean town like Rijeka – it was built in 1912 in the backyard of a secession building in the residential block Brajda. Initially, the building housed the *Teatro Apollo*, which had a central theatre hall with parterre and balcony seats, as well as a separate cabaret stage. Later on, the venue housed the *Alhambra Teatro*, which featured mainly cinema and vaudeville programs, and also served as a music hall as of 1925. After WWII, the building was used by various non-theatrical institutions, and had, for a certain period of time, even served as a police cafeteria. Following its reconstruction in 1996, the venue was equipped with up-to-date theatre equipment and an audience area for 188 visitors.

Address and contacts:

Gradsko kazalište lutaka Rijeka
Blaža Polića 6, 51 000 Rijeka, Tel. ++385 (0)51 325 680
www.gkl-rijeka.hr



Teatro Fenice, Rijeka

Teatro Fenice was designed by Theodor Traxler and Eugenio Celligoi under the influence of Wagner's Bayreuth Theatre, and was built as one of the first large theatres in Europe with bearing surfaces made out of reinforced concrete. Such a construction allowed the building of two large halls one on top of the other, with a joint capacity of 2000 seats. Also, the Main Hall was technically well-equipped and was the first theatre in Croatia to have a flying system along with wind and rain machines. The formal opening of the theatre took place in 1914, but the outbreak of WWI impeded the full realization of the project, which also included the building of a casino and a modern residential building near the Teatro Fenice. However, this venue made of an eclectic mixture of Art Nouveau, Cubism and Futurism, housed a variety of performances, vaudeville pieces and circus shows, concerts, balls, exhibitions and motion picture screenings, and thus became the focal point of social life in Rijeka. After WWII, the Main Hall was converted into a movie theatre, while the hall on the ground floor, called *Sala Bianca* (White Hall), served as a night bar for a very long time. According to existing plans, the government of Rijeka plans on converting Teatro Fenice into a fully equipped modern multifunctional hall.

Address and contacts:

Teatro Fenice Rijeka
Dolac 13, 51 000 Rijeka, Tel. ++385 (0)51 335225
www.rijekakino.hr



Croatian Theatre House, Zadar

The current building of the Croatian Theatre House is located on the site where Teatro Nobile (Nobleman's theatre) was initially built in 1783. Teatro Nobile was glamorously outfitted, with an orchestra pit, parterre and four tiers of boxes. However, it did not have an adequate fire protection system, causing the venue to be closed down in 1882. This run-down building, which mainly served as storage space, was purchased by the entrepreneur Aldo Meštrović, who opened up a 1000-seat movie and variety theatre in 1924. In 1941, the building was severely damaged during an air strike but in 1943 it underwent a major reconstruction and received a new façade. However, soon after another air strike caused severe damage to the building, and also damaged another monumental theatre venue in Zadar, the New Theatre, which was erected in a neo-renaissance style in 1865.

The theatre space was rebuilt after WWII at the time when the first professional drama ensemble was founded in Zadar and which continued working until 1963. In 1962, municipal authorities closed down the venue because of the dilapidated state of its fittings. The next major reconstruction took place in 1968 and then again in 2003, and today the large hall seats 650 visitors. In the past four decades the building has served mainly as a receiving theatre venue for drama plays and operas. After the last reconstruction and upon the gradual employment of actors, the venue also became a producing theatre, which came as an affirmation of the commitment to re-establish a permanent drama ensemble.

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Hrvatska kazališna kuća
Široka ulica 8, 23 000 Zadar, Tel. ++385 (0)23 314 586
www.hkk-zadar.hr



Zadar Puppet Theatre, Zadar

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The construction of a new Puppet Theatre building in Zadar began in 1986, on the location of the former Dominican Monastery in the protected heritage area of the Old Town on the Zadar Peninsula. Architect Snježana Babić designed a massive building of reinforced concrete, which houses a modern theatre hall with a polyvalent audience area for between 210-470 visitors. The stage set and interior design were designed by Miroslav Malena. However, construction was interrupted in 1989, continued only in 2003, and is still ongoing in 2007. Between 1989 and 1994, the theatre company performed in St. Dominic's Church, and later in their old theatre venue in Jazine, which had been closed on two occasions because of its dilapidated state.

The Zadar Puppet Theatre was founded in 1951 and became a professional theatre institution in 1960. In addition to maintaining a classical repertoire for the education and entertainment of children, the Zadar Puppet Theatre has been making a name for itself since 1963 as the modernizer of conventional puppet theatre practices. Their ambitious productions have become famous for an authentic approach to visual, technical and performing aspects of puppet theatre. As of 1973, the theatre has also produced several adult performances from the classical repertoire of Croatian and world literature.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište lutaka Zadar
Sokolska 1, 23 000 Zadar, Tel. ++385 (0)23 212 754
www.kazaliste-lutaka-zadar.hr



Hvar Theatre, Hvar

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The old Hvar Theatre is located on the floor of the marine Arsenal building, which was built in the mid 16th century. In 1612, the building was renovated and several annexes were added to it. Some theories have it that the theatre was built at the same time as the Arsenal building, which would place it among the oldest municipal theatres in Europe. However, the first records of performances held in the Hvar Theatre date back to 1676. The existing interior was designed in a neo-baroque style in the mid 19th century and the floor and ceiling decorations were added during the renovation in 1900. A relatively small stage is located very close to the 160-seat audience area, consisting of a pit and two tiers of narrow boxes, which gives this theatre a unique human touch. The rear wall is decorated with a fresco painting of an unidentified town, which was painted in 1819 as part of a universal set design for the performances held in the theatre.

For centuries the Hvar Theatre served as the hub of social and cultural life in Hvar. During the 19th century, there were over 30 drama plays and operas presented in a single season. In addition to visiting companies, coming mainly from Italy, the Hvar Theatre was also the artistic home to domestic amateur ensembles, whose work intensified in the late 1960s with the foundation of the Hvar Popular Theatre. Reconstruction of the rundown and unsafe building was started at the beginning of the 21st century, and is still ongoing.

Address and contacts:

Hvarsko kazalište
Trg sv. Stjepana b.b., 21450 Hvar, Tel. ++385 (0)21 741 009



Šibenik Theatre, Šibenik

This theatre building with its harmonious renaissance arrangement, subtly interlaced with Romanic and Gothic architectural features, is an illustrative example of 19th century eclecticism. It was designed by Josip Slade and its construction lasted from 1864 to 1870. The audience area follows the pattern of the Teatro Fenice in Venice and the decorative elements, including the ceiling mural which features allegoric scenes and figures of prominent citizens of Šibenik at the time, were painted by Antun Zuccara. The building has been reconstructed several times and in the mid 20th century its eastern façade was extended with a long stone balcony. In 1991, during attacks by the Yugoslav Army and Chetniks on Šibenik, the building took a direct shell hit and had to undergo yet another major reconstruction from 1996–2001. The theatre hall presently has a parterre and three tiers of boxes with a 310-seat capacity.

From 1945 to 1964, the Šibenik Theatre had its first permanent ensemble – the National Theatre Company – which engaged in both drama and operetta repertoires (the latter from 1946 to 1957). Since then, the venue has been the home to a semi-professional ensemble which produces several premieres a year and also serves as a visiting theatre for performances produced in other theatres. Since 1996, the Šibenik Theatre has been organizing the International Children's Festival, which was founded in 1958.



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Tel. ++385 (0)22 213 123
www.child.fest.sibensko-kazaliste.hr/KAZALISTEWEB



Ante Baranić



Croatian National Theatre, Split

The Croatian National Theatre in Split was built between 1891 and 1893 with an audience area shaped like a "sala al'italiana" (three tiers of boxes, a gallery and parterre circle), with separate entrances to the formal foyer area and restaurant. The building was designed by Emilio Veccietti and Ante Bezić, whose approach was that of historical eclecticism. Even though Split only had 16 000 inhabitants at the end of the 19th century, the theatre had a 1000-seat capacity. In 1970, a large part of this rundown building was burnt in a fire. The theatre reopened in 1980, after reconstruction of the original parts (the front façade, the atrium, the foyer, etc.) and the addition of a west wing (the work of architect Boško Rašica). The seating capacity is 660 and the theatre also has a chamber stage, called Stage 55 (Scena 55).

After a failed attempt to establish a permanent drama ensemble in 1898, Split managed to establish its first professional theatre in 1920. It was active until 1928, and briefly revitalized in the 1940/1941 season. The drama and opera ensembles resumed with their work in 1945, and in 1952 the ballet ensemble joined in with ambitious productions. Today all three ensembles maintain diverse and rich repertoires, both classical and contemporary, while the drama and the opera ensembles are particularly dedicated to working with authors from the Mediterranean cultural scene. Since 1954, the Croatian National Theatre has been organizing the Split Summer Festival, with productions by all three ensembles constituting the festival's core program. Also, since 1992, the Croatian National Theatre in Split has been organizing Marulić Days - Festival of Croatian Drama.

Address and contacts:

Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Split
Trg Gaje Bulata 1
20 000 Split
Tel. ++385 (0)21 344 999
www.hnk-split.hr





City Puppet Theatre, Split

Ever since its foundation, the City Puppet Theatre has been a resident theatre in the Croatian House building, which was designed by Kamilo Tomčić and built between 1906 and 1908 in the Art Nouveau style. The Croatian House was home to numerous and diverse cultural associations, but various decorations and sculptures on its façade were removed by Italian occupiers at the beginning of WWII, when the Art Nouveau interior of the building was also devastated. When the City Puppet Theatre moved in, the building was renovated and adapted for use as a theatre on several occasions. The most thorough reconstruction took place between 1974 and 1980 following a fire, and between 1997 and 2006, when parts of the interior were completely reconstructed. The theatre hall on the first floor of the building (with 200 seats) was outfitted with the most up-to-date technical equipment and adapted for use as a theatre and concert hall during the latest reconstruction.

The beginnings of continuous puppetry in Split are associated with the work of the Sokol amateur puppet theatre, which was active between 1933 and 1940. This theatre also performed at the Croatian House, where the City Puppet Theatre was first founded in March 1945 as the Pioneer Puppet Theatre (Kazalište lutka Pionir) which was later (in 1991) renamed into its current name. At first, Split puppeteers only nurtured the string puppet technique, but in the 1960s they started adopting new puppet techniques and opened up to experiments. Today the City Puppet Theatre is known for its openness toward a diverse repertoire, various techniques and artistic expression.

Address and contacts:

Grasko kazalište lutka Split
Tončićeva 1, 21000 Split, Tel. ++385 (0)21 395 958
www.gkl-split.hr



Town Youth Theatre, Split

The Town Youth Theatre is located in the northern front part of a building enclosing Split's Prokurative Square. The same building used to house the Bajamonti Theatre, which had a seating capacity of over a thousand seats on the parterre and four tiers of boxes. The Bajamonti Theatre was opened in 1859 but was unfortunately destroyed by a fire in 1881. However, the southern front of the square, with the theatre's vestibule, has remained largely intact to the present. The Town Youth Theatre is situated on the first floor and had served mostly as a concert venue until 1999, when it was adapted to serve as a theatre. With a relatively small stage (6m x 6m) and an audience area of 155 seats, it is adequate mainly for small productions.

The foundations of the Town Youth Theatre were laid in 1943 in the Croatian refugee camp in El-Shatt, Egypt, where the company initially worked as a cultural and artistic association. In 1953 it developed into a Children's Theatre named "Tito's Sailors," and in 1991 it was renamed the Youth Theatre, providing theatrical courses and educational programs which gave rise to many prominent professional actors. The theatre still maintains theatrical courses for children and youth and it also houses a small professional ensemble, which mainly plays a youth repertoire and comedies for adult audiences.

Address and contacts:

Grasko kazalište mladih Split
Trg Republike 1/1, 21000 Split, Tel. ++385 (0)21 344 979
www.gkm.hr



Marin Držić Theatre, Dubrovnik

The first theatre venue ever built specifically for that purpose in Dubrovnik was opened in 1865 and had long been called Bondi's Theatre after the organizer and main provider of funds for the construction, nobleman Luko Bonda (Bundić). The theatre was designed by Emil Vecchietti in a neo-renaissance style and the building was erected within the walls surrounding the Old Town, at the site where several public buildings stood, including part of the arsenal, the granary and Town Hall. The theatre hall follows the design of the "sala al'italiana," with a parterre and three tiers of boxes (370 seats). The ceiling painting was painted by Vlaho Bukovac in 1901. After major reconstruction in 1989, the theatre also acquired a black box stage, called the Bursa Theatre (70 seats).

In addition to hosting domestic and Italian theatre companies and presenting the work of Dubrovnik-affiliated amateurs, Bonda's Theatre has also hosted a diverse range of other cultural and entertainment events, such as concerts, lectures and film screenings. The first professional ensemble was founded during WWII (1943–1944) and since 1945 the building has been home to the National Theatre. From 1967 the theatre carries the name of one of the leading European renaissance comedy playwrights and citizens of Dubrovnik, Marin Držić (1508–1567). The 20-member professional ensemble is dedicated to playing a diverse drama repertoire, especially including pieces from the Mediterranean cultural milieu and those revitalizing the rich literary and theatre heritage of Dubrovnik.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište Marina Držića
Pred Dvorom 3
20 000 Dubrovnik
Tel. ++385 (0)20 321 006
www.kazaliste-dubrovnik.hr



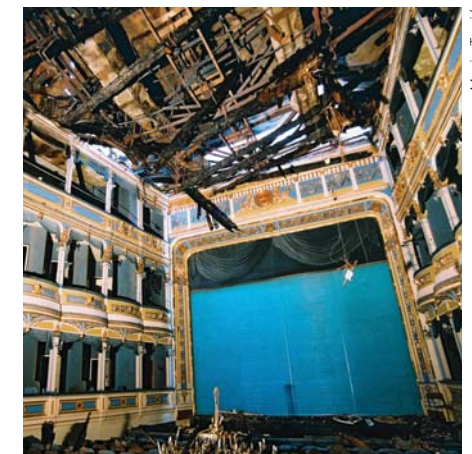


Croatian National Theatre, Osijek

The building was designed by Karl Krausner and built in 1866 in a historic style with elements of Moorish architecture. Originally, the building also housed a casino and ballroom on the first floor. The theatre did not have the necessary auxiliary premises and ever since the establishment of its permanent ensemble in 1907, there was a need for a new theatre building. However, this did not happen and the existing building was reconstructed several times and adapted for theatre use, and the problem was solved only after WWII, when the premises of the former casino and a wing of a neighbouring hotel became part of the theatre venue. During the aggression against Croatia, Serbian forces bombarded and severely damaged the building, which led to its complete reconstruction from 1992–1994. Today, the baroque horse-shoe shaped audience area consists of the parterre and three tiers of boxes which altogether seat 420 visitors.

The first permanent theatre ensemble in Osijek was founded in 1907, and prior to that the venue mainly hosted various visiting German companies. Since its foundation, the Croatian National Theatre Company has maintained diversity in both its drama and music repertoires, which they often perform on visiting tours. During the reconstruction phase between 1928 and 1934, the theatre company was active under various names in various places, from Subotica to Split. Upon returning to their original venue, the company regained its position as the second largest national theatre ensemble and it also remained part of vital theatre movements after WWII, despite growing competition. As of 2005, the theatre also houses a permanent dance group, whose independent productions complement the diverse repertoire of the drama and opera programs.

Osijek theatre after bombing, 1991



Marin Topic

Address and contacts:

Hrvatsko narodno kazalište
u Osijeku
Županijska 9
31000 Osijek
Tel. ++385 (0)31 220 700
www.hnk-osijek.htnet.hr



Children's Theatre Branko Mihaljević, Osijek

The theatre operates out of the ground floor building of the former Croatian House in Osijek's Lower Town. That building was built at the beginning of the 20th century and has seen many renovations – during one such renovation, the original stylish art nouveau interior decorations were covered up. In addition to the main hall with stage, orchestra pit and 260-seat audience area, the building also houses a rehearsal hall for ballet.

36 ■ The professional Children's Theatre was founded in 1957. Its predecessor was an amateur theatre which moved into the building of the Croatian House in 1950 – a year after its foundation. The programming scheme is equally focused on puppet plays and live acting performances and the Children's Theatre Osijek has also gained a reputation as the organizer of the SLUK festival – a biannual selection of the best Croatian puppet performances. In 2006, the theatre was named after Branko Mihaljević (1931–2005), a composer and writer from Osijek.

Address and contacts:

Dječje kazalište Branka Mihaljevića u Osijeku
Trg bana Jelačića 19, 31000 Osijek, Tel. ++385 (0)31 501 485
www.djecje-kazaliste.hr



Virovitica Theatre, Virovitica

The Virovitica Theatre is located in the building of the former Croatian House, which was built between 1927 and 1929 thanks to voluntary donations by citizens. The building housed various cultural events, entertainment programs and even sports events, and from the very start it was also the artistic home to theatre amateurs. In 1954 it began operating solely as a theatre venue and ever since it has been continuously modernized and adapted to serve for theatre needs. During the last large renovation (2001–2004), the stage and audience area were expanded and the venue can seat 300 visitors.

37 ■ Within the context of Croatian contemporary theatre, the Virovitica Theatre is unique because it came to existence gradually, through the dedicated work of theatre amateurs. The first professional members were employed in 1948 and at the beginning of the 1950s the theatre started to engage professional theatre directors for its productions. Today, the Virovitica Theatre has a permanent ensemble of ten actors and a diverse repertoire for a multigenerational audience, which they present both in the venue and on frequent tours, mainly of a regional character.

Address and contacts:

Kazalište Virovitica
Trg Ljudevita Patačića 2, 33000 Virovitica, Tel. ++385 (0)33 721 330
www.kazalistevirovitica.hr



Požega City Theatre, Požega

Požega City Theatre is located in the central town square in a one-storey brick building which was built in the mid 19th century. In 1895, the building was readapted into a hotel with a representative ballroom which in time started serving predominantly as a theatre venue. From 1948 to 1957 the venue also had a professional theatre ensemble. The long abandoned and burnt down building hall was renovated in the meantime and expanded in 1988. Today it can receive 230 visitors and is the permanent stage of the Požega City Theatre (founded in 1995). In addition to theatre workshops and amateur productions, the City Theatre occasionally produces performances with visiting professional actors.

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Address and contacts:

Gradsko kazalište Požega
Trg Svetog Trojstva 20, 34 000 Požega, Tel. ++385 (0)34 272 481
www.gpk.hr



Zora's House, Karlovac

This neo-renaissance building was built in 1892 by the First Croatian Singers Association Zora (Dawn) and its initial purpose was to host various social and arts events, as well as to serve as a public library. It was designed and built by Gjuro Carnelutti, a Zagreb architect of Italian origin. During the building's complete renovation and adaptation between 1987 and 2000, the art nouveau interior decoration was restored to its original design and the stage was enlarged and technically modernized. In addition to a large theatre hall with a 329-seat capacity, the venue also houses two small halls with 120 seats.

Since the very beginning, Zora's House has been the real centre of cultural life in Karlovac. Initially, it served as a theatre venue for visiting companies, later on it also housed drama and opera productions prepared by amateur theatres from Karlovac. Between 1948 and 1963, it also had a professional ensemble. As of 2001, the venue serves as a visiting company theatre and a youth centre, and also organizes professional theatre productions on occasion.

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Address and contacts:

Gradsko kazalište Zorin dom
Domobranska 1, 47 000 Karlovac, Tel. ++385 (0)47 614 950
www.zorin-dom.hr

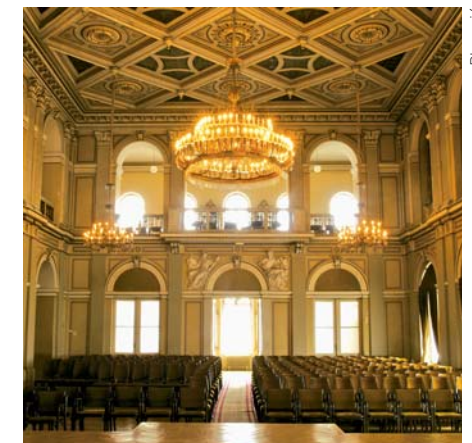


Croatian National Theatre, Varaždin

The Varaždin theatre building was built from 1871 to 1873 by Zagreb-based builder Janko Jambrišak according to the awarded design by Viennese architect, Hermann Helmer, who also personally supervised the construction. This was the first theatre project by a man who, in partnership with Ferdinand Fellner, would go on to build fifty theatres across Europe between 1873 and 1916. With its harmonious neo-renaissance façade, the building is a fine example of early historicism and was conceived to serve both as a theatre and concert hall. The central theatre hall has a 370-seat audience area, which includes the parterre, two tiers of boxes and a balcony. The building also houses a separate concert hall and a small chamber hall in the basement, which was added in 1956.

The Varaždin theatre housed its first theatre company between 1915 and 1923, and they played a drama and operetta repertoire primarily. The Croatian National Theatre was established in 1945, and a permanent theatre company was founded three years later – today it has an ensemble of 20 professional actors. The theatre maintains a diverse repertoire with a special focus on premieres of new pieces written by Croatian playwrights, as well as pieces written by authors from Central Europe. Another specialty of the theatre are adaptations of classical pieces in the local dialect and, in certain periods, a strong affiliation for experimental theatre. On top of maintaining a standard repertoire, the Croatian National Theatre also permanently produces puppet and children's theatre pieces.

Concert hall



Plovanić

Address and contacts:

Hrvatsko narodno kazalište
Augusta Cesarca 1
42 000 Varaždin
Tel. ++385 (0)42 214 688
www.hnkvz.hr

The Croatian Centre of ITI was founded in 1994 as a non-profit, professional and volunteer organization (citizens' association). Within a few years of its being active, the Croatian Centre of ITI grew from a small association of theatre enthusiasts into an organizer of numerous theatre actions and manifestations as well as a respectable publisher of theatrological publications and books. The main task of the numerous programs of the Croatian Centre of ITI is building a bond between Croatian theatre and the world as well as its presentation abroad. Thanks to the work of the Croatian Centre of ITI, a large volume of information on Croatian theatre, the dramatic and theatre tradition of these parts as well as on reputable Croatian dramatic artists have found their place in world theatre publications.

The Croatian Centre of ITI is situated in the prestigious spaces of Villa Arko in Basaričekova Street 24, in the centre of Zagreb. The Centre shares its space in Villa Arko with the Croatian PEN Centre and the Croatian Writers' Association. Villa Arko was constructed in 1938 after the design by architect Alfred Albini.

A section of the Croatian Centre of ITI is its Dance Board which was founded in June 2000. The Dance Board has grown into one of the rare solid strongholds of the Croatian dance scene. It represents firstly the logistic support to dance groups and projects as well as being the source of information and a way of joining the international network on the level of the ITI Dance Boards.

Thanks to the Dance Board, the celebration of Dance Day on April 29 has become a true *holiday* in the Croatian dance calendar. What we consider the most valuable result of the work of our Dance Board is the launching of the magazine for Dance Art *Kretanja* (Movements, 2002), published twice a year, as well as the publishing of the *Guide to Croatian Dance*.

DAYS OF FOREIGN DRAMA AND THEATRE, Zagreb

We have been organizing this program in cooperation with various institutes and centers from foreign countries, whose drama and theatre are not well-known in Croatia. To date, we have prepared the Days of Scottish, Welsh, Austrian, Italian, Macedonian, Hungarian and Czech Drama and Theatre.

INTERNATIONAL DRAMA COLONY – From Text to Performance

Motovun, first week in July

The Drama Colony is one of a series of attractive and useful programs of the Croatian Centre of ITI. It was launched in 1999 and is designed for Croatian as well as foreign playwrights with the aim of verifying the stage quality of their plays in the form of stage readings which have site-specific traits as the stagings take place in the picturesque outdoor locations of the medieval Istrian town of Motovun. The "performances" are staged without set and costume design, and with the actors holding the scripts in their hands.

The basis of collaboration between Croatia and the foreign countries in the Colony is reciprocity; thus our contemporary playwrights and their plays have been presented in the USA, Czech Republic, India, Mexico, Greece and Chile. Our foreign guests in the Colony have been USA, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Mexico, Finland, Greece, India, Israel, Chile, Island, Turkey and Switzerland. The achieved interaction of local and international playwrights and directors in the Colony builds bridges of theatre collaboration.

CROATIAN SHOWCASE, Zagreb

October 20-25

In view of the fact that Croatia is still, unfortunately, fairly unknown on the European theatre map, the Croatian Centre of ITI decided to organize a Croatian showcase – a presentation of the best domestic performances in the last seasons that are still on the repertoire of Croatian theatres. The participants of the showcase are the selectors of international festivals, theatre critics, directors, translators, theatre managers and producers. The majority of performances are followed by encounters with the creative teams and the actors through which the showcase participants can find out more about the production, organization and functioning of Croatian theatres.

PUBLICATIONS & MAGAZINES

HRVATSKA DRAMA I KAZALIŠTE / CROATIAN DRAMA AND THEATRE

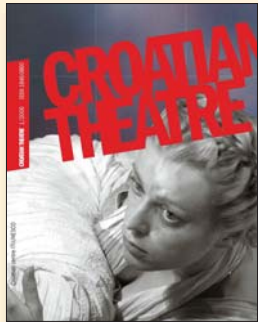
KAZALIŠTE (THEATRE) Magazine for Theatre Art

KRETANJA (MOVEMENTS) Magazine for Dance Art

GUIDE TO CROATIAN DANCE

CROATIAN THEATRE

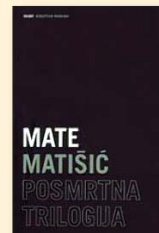
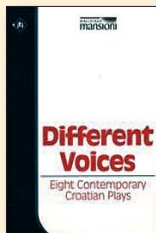
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THE MANSIONI SERIES

In the thirteen years of its existence, and an ample scope of interests connected to theatrological studies, dramatic texts, theatre travelogues, essays, anthologies and biographical writings, the "Mansions" series has profiled and established itself as one of the most important Croatian theatrological editions. The issues in this series feature both domestic and foreign authors; besides books in Croatian, translations of plays by Croatian dramatists are published in foreign languages, with the aim of promoting Croatian drama abroad.



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3. Comedy Theatre
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5. ITD Theatre
6. Kerempuh Satirical Theatre
7. EXIT Theatre
8. Histron House
9. Small Stage Theatre
10. Zagreb Puppet Theatre
11. Cherry Theatre
12. Bird of Paradise Theatre

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