



Photo: Saša Norković

ballet

B
BALLET

The Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka

Artistic Director:
Staša Zurovac

▶▶ ABOUT THE BALLET ENSEMBLE

The Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka has a long history. In the first years of their existence they produced ballet acts within opera productions and the first independent ballet production was created in 1947.

▶ In the following decades, apart from hosting great Russian ballet artists Olga Orlova and Nina Kirsanova, the ensemble also hosted a number of well known Yugoslavian choreographers and ballet pedagogues (Sonja Kastl, Vesna Butorac-Blaće, Miljenko Štambuk, Drago Boldin, Slavko Pervan etc.). In the seventies, famous ballet choreographer and pedagogue Norman Dixon became the artistic director of the ensemble and he produced many successful ballet productions in the ten years of his stay in Rijeka.

Since 2003, the artistic director of the ballet ensemble has been Staša Zurovac, an exceptionally successful choreographer of the younger generation. Under his artistic direction, the ensemble has developed a unique modern ballet vocabulary.

Staša Zurovac has won a number of international awards both as choreographer and dancer. He introduced his work in Covent Garden, London, with Ballet Troupe Croatia, winning the first award at the 5th Festival of Choreographic Miniatures in Belgrade and second award at the 17th International Choreographic Competition in Hanover. He has choreographed in Zagreb, Split, Ljubljana and Belgrade. The repertoire this season offers *Marquesomania* (choreography by Staša Zurovac), *Do you like Brahms?* (choreography by Staša Zurovac), *Love and Loneliness*

(choreography by Gagik Ismailian) and *Circus Primitiff Ballet* (choreography by Staša Zurovac).

▶▶ REVIEW EXTRACT

...the high quality of Zurovac's work reveals itself in the contagious energy and credibility on stage. His technique and dance vocabulary, grotesque and caricature-like as it is, demands excellent technique and precise pace of performance, however, it



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motivates dancing individuality and creativity at the same time. And here, one can see the joy of dancing and pleasure of the game...

Vijenac



Photo| Dražen Sokčević

▶▶ Gagik



Photo | Dražen Sokkević

»» *Do you like Brahms?*



Photo | Dražen Sokkević

»» *Gagik*

The Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre in Split

Artistic Director:
Almira Osmanović

▶▶ ABOUT THE BALLET ENSEMBLE

The Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre in Split was founded in 1940 and since that time it has continually endeavoured to popularize ballet art in the coastal town of Split. Its first choreographer was Ana Roje, a renowned ballet artist and pedagogue.

The ensemble, although smaller than the Zagreb one, has managed to keep some well-known classical and national ballets on their repertoire (*Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Petrushka*, *Firebird* and *The Devil in the Village*) for decades.

Today's artistic director, Almira Osmanović (the national principal dancer) has refreshed the repertoire with some new productions, both classical ballets and contemporary ones. Current classical ballet productions include *Don Quixote* (choreography by Valen-

tina Ganibalova), *The Nutcracker* (choreography by Božica Lisak) and *Swan Lake* (choreography by Valentina Ganibalova), and contemporary ballet productions include *Ballet Evening* (choreographies by Staša Zurovac, Rami Beér and Gagik Ismailian), *Daissa*, *East of Heaven* (choreography by Staša Zurovac) and *Veseljko Suljić Best of* (choreography by Veseljko Suljić).

▶▶ REVIEW EXTRACT

...it is a performance that has really succeeded in cheering up and delighting the audience and, at the same time, achieved very high artistic criteria. Without any doubt, it is already one of the best performances of the Split theatre season...

Jutarnji list



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Photo | Matko Biljak

▶▶ *Veseljko Suljić Best of*

» Ballet Evening

Photo | Matko Bijjak



Photo | Matko Bijjak

» Svan Lake



The Ballet of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb

Artistic Director:
Irena Pasarić

▶▶ ABOUT THE BALLET ENSEMBLE

The beginning of ballet in Croatia is related to the premiere of, up until now, the most popular Croatian opera, *Nikola Šubić Zrinski* by noble Ivan Zajc in 1876. The beginning of professional Croatian ballet marks its time from 1921, when great ballet artists Margareta and Maximilian Froman pursued their careers in Zagreb. In 1937, ballet *The Devil in the Village* by Fran Lhotka, choreographed and directed by Pia and Pino Mlakar, was performed for the first time and it has remained the most performed and most significant Croatian ballet up to today, almost continually a part of the Zagreb ballet ensemble's repertoire. Oskar Haroš and Ana Roje were artistic directors for many years and their repertoire always included the works of Croatian authors along with classical and neoclas-

sical ballets.

The ensemble's repertoire has always consisted of the most significant and popular works of classical ballet literature, choreographies by contemporary ballet authors and Croatian classical and contemporary works. Guest performances by great European ballet dancers, which has been a continuous aim, are always exceptionally well accepted both by audience and critics.

Apart from the titles in its current repertoire (*The Devil in the Village* by Lhotka, *La Sylphide* by Løvenskjold and *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky) and ballets set for the 2005/2006 season (*Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky, choreography by Derek Dean and a contemporary Croatian ballet *Maestro*, music by Boris Papandopulo, libretto by Nedjeljko Fabrio, choreography by Ljiljana Gvozdenović), the Zagreb ballet ensemble

also prepares *Giselle* by Adam in the choreographic interpretation of Iraida Lukašova (according to Perrault), *Coppelia* by Delibes in the neoclassical choreography by Youry Vamos and the reconstruction of the contemporary ballet *Johannes Faust Passion* by Milko Šparemblek, based on music by J. S. Bach, anonymous medieval composers and Neven Frangeš.

▶▶ REVIEW EXTRACT

...the dancers presented the most perfect expression of a ballet company usually seen in white ballets. One could most enjoy the dancing of Edina Pličanić who conquered the audience with her technical perfection and her inborn charm. Vogel, in the role of Prince Florimund, received the most applause due to his perfect technique, soft movement and a very convincing creation of that character. The attractive sets and costumes created by Roberta Guidi di Bagno in the style



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of a fairytale contributed exceptionally to the creation of an unreal world from children's imagination...

Jutarnji list



▶▶ *Sleeping Beauty*

Photo | Saša Novković





Ballet Troupe Croatia

Artistic Director:

Svebor Sečak

Administrator:

Andreja Kovačić

▶▶ TYPE OF WORK

Classical and contemporary ballet

▶▶ ABOUT THE COMPANY

Svebor Sečak, principal dancer of the Croatian National Theatre and an internationally acclaimed artist, founded Ballet Troupe Croatia in 1994. It is a professional touring company featuring principals and soloists of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, Croatia, and other ballet artists. The troupe has smaller classical ballets as well as contemporary and national titles on its repertoire. The troupe has had numerous tours and has given many visiting performances.

The troupe has performed in Japan (Aichi: EXPO 2005), Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of South Africa, UK (London: Millennium Dome, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and

Sadler's Wells) and many other European countries.

▶▶ CURRENT PRODUCTIONS

Hamlet

P.I. Tchaikovsky
choreography: Svebor Sečak
Hamlet, with its neoclassical choreography, contemporary direction and neo-gothic sets, follows the Shakespeare drama through the prism of seven leading dead characters. The clear neoclassical choreographic line is conceived as a counterpart to the rich music of Tchaikovsky. Hamlet's everlasting issues and the complex interpersonal relations are told through the language of classical ballet. Svebor Sečak received the Croatian Association of Dramatic Artists award for best male ballet role for the role of Hamlet in the seasons 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

Graduation Ball

Johann Strauss the Younger
choreography: David Lichine
A colourful ballet performance showing all the elements from great classical ballets such as solo variations, classical and comic duets and ensemble dances.

The Gingerbread Heart

Krešimir Baranović
choreography: Svebor Sečak
The first Croatian national ballet based on traditional folklore elements combined with classical ballet.

The Merry Widow

Franz Lehár
choreography: Sonja Kastl
A very attractive classical ballet performance based on the famous operetta, choreographed by renowned Croatian choreographer Sonja Kastl.

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▶▶ REVIEW EXTRACTS

...Hamlet, a competent sleek production of a classic...

Cue

...Svebor Sečak, with his striking appearance, is a magnificent Hamlet's

Jutarnji list

...excellent performance which the audience awarded with a rapturous applause...

MFA



▶▶ Hamlet

Photo | Saša Novković



Lado – Folk Dance ensemble of Croatia

Artistic Director:
Ivan Ivančan

▶▶ TYPE OF WORK

folkloric dance

▶▶ ABOUT THE COMPANY

LADO is an archaic Slavic word frequently used as a refrain in old ceremonial songs of northwestern Croatia, and is a synonym for words meaning „good“, „lovable“ and „dear“. The ensemble was founded in 1949 in Zagreb as a professional national ensemble.

The ensemble's 36 brilliant dancers, who are also excellent singers, can easily transform the folk dance ensemble into a representative folk choir, while its 15 superb musicians play some forty different instruments. The impressive choreographic and musical repertoire honours original folk art, making the ensemble recognizable and well-known throughout the world.

Because of the ensemble's

unique collection of highly valuable authentic national costumes (more than 1000 costumes), each concert is a kind of fashion show of traditional Croatian costume.

▶▶ REPERTOIRE

Current repertoire consists of more than one hundred various choreographies by the most famous Croatian ethno-choreographers, folklorists and choreographers. In each full-evening programme 10 – 12 various choreographies are presented in which, apart from songs and dances, segments of various national customs are presented: weddings, harvests, carnivals and customs connected with church holidays (Easter, St. George's Day, Pentecost, Midsummer Day and Christmas).



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