

Ilya Bocharnikov is a Russian-Latvian director and acting teacher. He graduated from the Moscow Art Theatre (MHAT) School-Studio, first as an actor and then as a director. One of his mentors was Viktor Ryzakov. Since 2017, he has been a recurring director in Hungary.

- *You graduated as an actor and now work mainly as a director and acting teacher. How did you transition to the „other side” of the stage?*
- I graduated as an actor from the University of the Moscow Art Theatre (MHAT) and began working at the Stanislavsky Theatre as a professional actor. Meanwhile, my former teachers asked me to stay and teach at the university. After completing my acting degree, I subsequently graduated as a director from MHAT.

- *Even as a novice teacher, you had the chance to work with students from other nationalities.*
- Indeed, I started working with Russian students and later with American students. I participated in several international programs, teaching at Harvard University and working with American students who came to Moscow. During the summers, I taught courses in Cambridge near Boston, Los Angeles, and Germany.

- *What is your experience of the differences between Russian and American theatre cultures?*
- A significant difference is that in Russia, as in Hungary, we have repertory theatre, which allows us to explore and discover new intonations, colors, and approaches to theatre. This provides us with opportunities to fail while also being in a process of development. American theatre, for the most part, does not have these opportunities. They excel in producing incredible Broadway musicals, but they don't often allocate weeks for experimenting with new theatre.

- *Do you believe there's anything worth adopting from American theatre?*
- I've gained a lot from American theatre and its students. Russian students may possess a

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surplus of theoretical knowledge; they're well-versed in the depth and drama of Russian theatre and the great Russian playwrights. On the other hand, American students are easier to work with, yet it's challenging to encourage them to delve deeper. I think I shared fifty percent of Russian culture with them, and in return, I received the same amount in terms of energy, mindset, and working methods.

- *For the first time, you were invited to Hungary for a summer university course at the University of Kaposvár. What was your initial impression of Hungarian theatre education?*
- The only distinction from my previous experiences was the language. I feel that the Hungarian education system is remarkably similar to the Russian system in which I studied and taught. Both systems are founded on the utilization of the Stanislavsky method and its application to contemporary theatre.

- *At the Kaposvár Summer University, you assumed roles as both a teacher and a director. To what extent do these two professions merge within you?*
- It's quite challenging to separate these two facets of myself; they are inherently intertwined. Particularly when collaborating with young actors, being both a director and a teacher proves immensely helpful. I believe I can provide them with a bit more assistance.

- *During your own training, what were the most crucial principles you learned?*
- At MHAT, the cornerstone of training is instilling great discipline and hard work in the students. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal remains attaining freedom of the stage.

- *Can these principles be imparted across all theatre cultures, or do cultural disparities exist in this regard?*
- As I mentioned earlier, I don't perceive any differences. The way people say „I love you” is the same everywhere, all over the world.

- *In your experience, how receptive is the Hungarian theatre profession to foreign influences? Do Hungarian artists inherently possess curiosity and openness?*
- Providing an absolute assessment is complex. Nonetheless, my encounters in Hungary have consistently demonstrated an open and receptive theatre culture. Hungary boasts an impressive theatre history, while concurrently welcoming theatre from other nations. Hungarian theatre gains valuable insights from foreign directors and instructors who are invited to teach, thereby enhancing its traditions and evolving into a deeper, more diverse, and modern form.

- *The Kaposvár Summer University was a very good example of developing international relations. What other forms do you find effective?*
- The Summer University stands as a brilliant (and also straightforward) instance of international exchange of theatrical ideas between students and teachers. Attila Vidnyánszky has cultivated an outstanding environment for theatre creation and training young actors.

- *Starting from September 2023, you will commence teaching at the Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE). How are you preparing for this role?*
- I'm preparing by learning Hungarian and immersing myself in Hungarian literature. I engage in extensive discussions about the Hungarian theatre tradition with SZFE's instructors. My aim is to contribute my experience to the training while respecting and preserving the Hungarian tradition.

Péter Gemza is a choreographer and director. He graduated as a teacher in Jászberény, then earned a bachelor's degree in dance teaching and a master's degree in dance anthropology in France. From 1994, he worked in the company of József Nagy, and from 2008, he was a member of the Csokonai Theatre, where he served as the director from 2018 to 2023.

- *You graduated as a teacher in 1993, and from the beginning, teaching and pedagogical work played a significant role in your life. When and how did you get involved in theatre education in Hungary?*
- I taught at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Kaposvár between 2009 and 2013, and since 2018, I have been working as a lecturer at the University of Cluj-Napoca. I teach theatre movement and improvisation to BA and MA students of theatre, but my subjects also include the relationship between theatre and other arts, communication, and collaboration with choreographers. I find it a very exciting challenge to be actively involved in training future generations of actors. Moreover, over the last ten years, I have had the opportunity to accompany several young actors on their journey, either by signing them to the Csokonai Theatre or to other companies. It is a common experience that what they receive in higher education they can build on later, so we have a great responsibility to shape them.
- *To what extent did your experience abroad help you integrate into your training in Hungary?*
- Fortunately, I came to Hungarian-language theatre training with a lot of international experience. In France, I was a so-called 'trainer of trainers', which means that I was responsible for the further training of teachers of contemporary dance. This field has always been very close to my heart, and it is no coincidence that we placed particular emphasis on training in dance methodology in the framework of the INTERREG programme. In all areas, I consider self-training and lifelong learning to be very important, but perhaps even more so in the field of contemporary dance, as dance teaching can easily become routine if the teacher does not continue training and embracing new inspirations.
- *As a teacher, you have worked not only with dance students but also with very different social groups. Is it possible to transfer these experiences into arts education?*
- Most notably, I spent two years regularly visiting a prison in France, where I gave movement therapy sessions to inmates. Another very special experience was when I taught the basics of movement development to the youngest age group in a kindergarten, based on training material that we had created specifically for this purpose.

- *In your opinion, what are the most important values of Hungarian actor training, and which is the area that needs the most improvement?*
- I think that one of the most important virtues of our actor training is that it offers a very broad professional palette. However, my experience as an artistic director and director is that the biggest problem for trainee actors and young graduates is voice training. Or perhaps they are not even aware of the problem, but it is the directors and, in bad cases, the audience who perceive that the young artists are not projecting their voices well. That is why I think it is very important for students to spend part of their training in big stage performances, where they realize that what they thought was sufficient for a stage speech will not be enough on the grand stage of the Csokonai Theatre, for example.

- *How much opportunity does Hungarian theatre training provide for foreign experiences? If not, in what ways would it be possible?*
- I feel that this is one of the areas most in need of improvement. It is very important that students have the opportunity to exchange experiences abroad and to build personal contacts during their training. On the one hand, the training does not offer regular opportunities for this, and on the other hand – in my experience – young students lack courage, openness, and curiosity. They are often hesitant to step out of their comfort zone, which is necessary for their development. The summer universities organized at the University of Kaposvár were, in my opinion, a very important initiative in this area, and the study trips to Moscow following the summer universities also provided participants with significant professional experience.

- *What role does movement play in actors' training? Should it play a more prominent role than it does now?*
- Currently, I have direct experience with the training at the University of Cluj-Napoca. There is a great diversity of training in the field of movement, which I am personally quite satisfied with. The faculty attaches great importance to the development of movement and has managed to put together a very high-quality professional team. I am proud to be part of this professional team. Speaking about the training in Cluj, I think that movement occupies an appropriate place, and I do not believe that the number of movement courses should be increased. Instead, I believe the focus should be on deepening the work. Both students and trainers have to meet a very wide range of requirements, which doesn't leave much room for in-depth work, even though progress requires qualitative effort rather than quantity.

- *What are the areas that need to be strengthened in theatre training?*
- First of all, I would like to highlight language learning, and not only because it significantly increases the opportunities for further training and employment. I am convinced that language learning goes hand in hand with a cultural shift, which makes young artists more open and receptive.
- *In the context of lifelong learning, what kind of training opportunities do you see as effective for established artists?*
- I believe that regular workshops are an effective way to develop colleagues in the areas of movement and voice training. At the same time, I am convinced that this training is the responsibility of the institutions that have the company and cannot be passed on to the actors. Simply put, actors don't often have the spare time, so it's up to the institution to release company members for these workshops.

Marfa Gorvits graduated as a director from the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in Moscow. She has received the Golden Mask Award for two of her productions.

- *When did you start working in theatre, and what motivated you?*
- When I was nine years old, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a lot of poverty and hopelessness. I felt instinctively that if I did theatre, I could bring warmth into my own and others' lives. So I started going to the theatre more and more, but at that time, as a child, I was an omnivore, not looking for quality. I felt that theatre was more interesting than life because in the two or three hours I spent at a performance, people put in two or three months of work; it's a kind of 'condensed life'. By the age of thirteen, I understood that where there is art, where there is theatre, it is always more interesting than life.

- *With this knowledge, what kind of high school education did you choose in Moscow?*
- I went to high school at an international theatre school, which I finished at the age of sixteen. It was a much more democratic, free-minded school than existed in the Soviet era. The teachers there were keen for us to learn to think for ourselves, and we had the opportunity to choose our own lessons and masters. It was essential for me that I went abroad to Germany for the first time in my life through this school. We also learned how to secure funding for our projects and experienced what it means to work in theatre 24 hours a day.

- *At seventeen, with such a unique high school experience, what higher education opportunities were open to you?*
- After high school, I had to make the decision that all theatre majors have to make: to choose between the five major universities in Moscow. These were VGIK, which is a university specifically for film, the Shchepkin University of Theatre Arts, the university named after Shchukin, GITIS (Russian Academy of Theatre Arts), and the School-Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre (MHAT). Everyone's priority is to get into a university where they can learn from the masters they care about. I finally got into Shchepkin University, and that's when all hell broke loose for me.

- *What made you feel that this education was 'hell'?*
- At Shchepkin, they taught according to the old model, and I felt that what we learned there was not 'alive' at all. I could describe it as a misinterpreted, stuck-in-the-mold Stanislavsky method. Actor training was based on a naturalism that was no longer valid at all. I spent four years there, which was torture for me because the teachers and I did not understand each other.

- *How did you get through that period?*
- I went to the theatre whenever I could, trying to find my theatre. I really learned the craft through Fomenko's performances. Yet I don't regret those four years because in the theoretical field (philosophy, Russian theatre history, international theatre trends, Russian and world literature), we had excellent training. Moreover, the fact that I was so dissatisfied with my education there helped me ask myself the really important questions. For example, what would make me happy, what I would like to do, what kind of theatre I was looking for.

- *Did you consider leaving university?*
- Of course. I was almost hoping to fail the sophomore screening. However, the masters, who are revered as 'gods' by the students, create a relationship in which it is the ultimate disrespect to quit. I didn't end up quitting either, but in my third year, I did apply to GITIS. During the admission there, I sought confirmation that what I thought about theatre was really working. And it did; it was confirmed as I went through the grids. But in the end, I was not accepted because the teacher who started the class at GITIS would not take on this conflict with my former teacher. However, when I think about it, I didn't make the real decision either, I didn't withdraw from Shchepkin, I didn't take any real risks.

- *How did your journey continue after graduation? Were you finally satisfied with what you got at Shchepkin?*
- When I came out of university, I felt I didn't have a real acting toolkit. I got a job first in a puppet theatre and then briefly in a prose theatre. Eventually, I understood that I couldn't work in a system where the director was a kind of demigod, trying to 'make art' out of his actors based on fear. I made a radical decision: I decided to become a director. I reapplied to GITIS, where Sergey Zhenovach was again starting a class, and he suggested I go to a directing class. I felt during the admission period that I had never put so much effort into anything before. Thanks to that, I was accepted, but then I admittedly rested the first year. At GITIS, I finally felt that I was in the right place: I could do theatre that genuinely interested me. It was during this period that I discovered that I had a basic critical thinking and I really liked training myself.

- *Do people usually come to a directing course with a background as an actor?*
- I was in an actor-director class, and it was very important to Zhenovach that you had a background or some life experience. He also thought it was important because, as the

directing students were a bit older, they were kind of pulling the actors along as a kind of deputy head of the department.

- *Did the composition of the directing class influence your decision to enroll?*
- At GITIS, there are acting departments where there is only an acting class, and there are directing departments where there is an actor-director joint class. We also started one where actors, directors, and visual designers studied together. My choice was clearly determined by the person of the master because Zhenovach was a student of Fomenko, whose performances I started watching as a child.

- *Whether at Shchepkin or at GITIS, was it possible to go on study trips abroad, attend workshops, or work with foreign masters? To what extent were you able to build international contacts organically during your training?*
- Unfortunately, there were not many opportunities for this. Luckily, my brother lives in the Netherlands, where I went to the theatre a lot. And in Moscow, the New European Theatre (NET) festival was launched, for which Marina Davidova selected performances. I think I mostly educated myself in this field by being very curious about everything. I read Grotowski and Artaud, for example, and I quickly understood that these works were not taught here because they were too interesting.

- *After graduating as a director, what subjects did you turn your attention to?*
- When I graduated, I realized that there were not enough contemporary plays. So I found documentary theatre for myself; it became my own theatre laboratory, so to speak. I was interested in how theatrical texts were replaced by documentary texts.

- *Who was the master who most influenced your view of theatre?*
- Fomenko showed me that theatre could be what I imagined it to be. He didn't want to give the audience concrete images but images that the audience could transform into their own story. It was through him that I found the so-called playful theatre. It was something I was instinctively drawn to at the age of sixteen, and after a whole training process, I came back to it.

Andrew Hefler was born in the former German Democratic Republic to American parents. He graduated from the University of Southern California and came to Hungary in 1993. Here, he became a favorite actor for young film directors, starring in films such as *Control* and *Black Brush*. Hefler is credited with introducing the improvisational theatre genre to Hungary. He founded his own company, Grund Theatre, in 2011.

- *In a previous interview, you said that you think actor training in the United States is more advanced than in Europe and Hungary. How do you see the difference between the two theatre training systems?*
- Geographically, I would draw the difference differently. There are many places in Europe where training is very strong, for example, in England, Denmark, or Spain. It is also clear to me that Romanian actors are very well trained and play differently from Hungarian actors. However, I think that the differences in training are not primarily geographical but rather the educational tradition. What I would focus on is the question of practicality. In Hungary, in my personal opinion, there is much more 'superstition,' many more adjectives and adverbs used in feedback, and we don't necessarily know what is behind them. It is as if there is a 'magic trick' that has no explanation. In contrast, in training in England and the US, they do know the explanation. There, it is not enough to say someone is 'clever,' 'brilliant,' 'talented,' because these adjectives cannot be used in a development process. We need a terminus technicus that can be used not only today but also next week and a year from now. In the United States, they can tell you what it takes for a student to develop in a particular area and what development techniques are needed.
- *When we think about the entry process for theatre training, does this also mean that you don't necessarily need to identify 'sparkling talent'?*
- I think talent is easy to recognize in such situations. When someone is confident in their technical knowledge in several areas, they radiate ease, and we recognize that as talent. There are, of course, differences in ability, which is fantastic because we are all unique, but there are so many tools that can be learned and repeated that work consistently for everyone. How one person or another applies a particular tool can be very different, but the tool itself is the same. I think it's worth separating professional assessment and confidence development: one is assessing technical tools, the other is developing the relationship between two people. When we dismiss a skill by saying, of course, it's easy for him because he's talented, I don't like it because he's put in a lot of hours of work to develop that skill.

- *As I understand it, you think it's very important to distinguish between aptitude and ability. You are born with one, you develop the other through work and practice.*
- Absolutely. Of course, you can be born with beautiful, long limbs, which makes you look very good as a dancer on stage. But if you don't dance, it doesn't matter what you were born with. Let us not forget that ballet was invented by us humans, homo sapiens. Over centuries we have developed this special stage language that can be learned.

- *Do you think Hungarian actors would like more concrete, objective assessment and feedback?*
- It obviously varies, but in general, yes. Even among actors, there are the 'apex predators' who are less in need of feedback on their technical tools; they are generally satisfied with their own situation. Unfortunately, a hierarchy develops within the theatre sector, and it is the 'top predators' who are less motivated to improve, whereas in their case, this would be justified. There are various rating scales, which are a little simplistic, but it is worth using them to get a clearer picture of an actor's performance. Often, vanity prevents actors from being open to improvement. I like to illustrate this by saying that the difference between a plumber and an actor is that not everyone is a plumber, but everyone is an actor. Because we play who we are all day long, and in that sense, we are all capable of being actors. But to be able to repeat a performance every night, or to be able to use different techniques, is something you have to learn. Different genres, techniques, stage languages have to be learned. If you decide to become an actor, you have to improve yourself, you have to learn new techniques – just like a plumber. Also, the biggest problem with the evaluation and self-evaluation of actors is that everyone judges the impression an actor makes, but they are not evaluating technical tools, they are evaluating a feeling, the effect on them.

- *Being vulnerable to subjective judgments is a source of a lot of anxiety. What, if anything, does theatre education have to do with this?*
- Ninety percent of an actor's technical training is about releasing anxiety. If training creates further anxiety in the actor, it's going in the wrong direction. I can't respect that kind of training because it's just about the trainer wanting to pass on the angst that's in him.

- *How can improvisation be incorporated into the training, and how do Hungarian actors receive improvisation?*
- Hungarian actors know very little about improvisation techniques. If they have encountered it, it is often in a clumsy form, and therefore they are usually surprised later on how much they have come to love it. Very few Hungarians have any serious

professional knowledge in this field, and many think that improvisation has no real stakes, that it is just „playing a little,” and that it doesn’t matter how it is done. Then they realize that the technical basics of improvisation are the same as the techniques of theatre. I can’t imagine theatre without improvisation. We all know that the content changes, different plays come from season to season, but what remains the same is the relationship system, the play, the audience involvement. It doesn’t matter whether the play is written or improvised; the audience doesn’t care. The audience wants to see that what they don’t dare say or do in everyday life, the actor does.

- *Can the theatre be a safe medium for the actor?*
- The actor needs maximum safety. They need to feel understood and accepted, with all their insecurities and doubts. They need to feel emotionally and physically safe because the stage is a dangerous place.

- *What are the biggest difficulties you face in your workshops for actors?*
- Fear, paralyzing anxiety. Actors try to work from the past and the future instead of exploring the present. There is often a kind of self-image management, and they are constantly preoccupied with what is happening to them, what they are feeling. If all you do with an actor is show them practical things that help reduce anxiety, that’s an achievement. You can’t get anywhere without it, and one of the tools is a partner. In the exercises, we look to the partner as a source of inspiration; we look to them for inspiration, draw strength from them, and they do the same for us. The fact that the actor is not preoccupied with themselves, with managing their own image, but concentrate on their partner, leads to a reduction in anxiety. And the theatre also has latent communication to the audience when it shows that this is a good place to work, it’s good to work here, we respect and like each other, for us, it’s the team, the community that’s really important. When that radiates from the stage, even a mediocre play can leave the audience feeling that the performance shone.

András Kozma is a dramaturg, literary translator, and one of the organizers of the MITEM festival. Since 2011, he has been teaching dramaturgy and drama translation at the Theatre Institute at the University of Kaposvár, and currently at the University of Theatre and Film Arts.

- *How did you become involved in theatre?*
- I became involved in theatre as an intern, in an independent, experimental environment. Already in high school, we formed a self-education circle where we specifically tried out experimental ways of expressing ourselves as actors. Without any strong commitment, it was more a part of my adolescent journey. Even then, I had thoughts of going to further study in theatre, but I didn't feel fully prepared for it. That's how I found myself at the Faculty of Arts, where I continued pursuing my passion for theatre. During my time at the University of Szeged, I also participated in various acting groups where we engaged in more deliberate experimentation, yet I still didn't consider theatre as my vocation. Many different paths were open to me, such as literary theory or translation.

- *Do you remember a turning point or an encounter that helped you choose between possibilities that opened up for you?*
- It was in 1988, at the Szkéné Company, where the IMMT (International Meeting of Movement Theatres) performances and workshops were held regularly. It was there that I first saw a performance by the Japanese artist Min Tanaka, which had an elemental effect on me. It made me realise that it is possible to have a human-actor presence on stage that goes beyond the theatrical forms I know. I was very interested in how performers could enter a trance state that affected me as a spectator. Min Tanaka represents a particular strand of dumb movement theatre that focuses not on the performances but on the inner spiritual journey. After the performance, I started corresponding with him and found out that the company lives in a mountain village in Japan, where they train and create performances while working in agriculture. It is a totally unique way of life. I had the opportunity to attend a month-long workshop with them in the summer, where I got the conviction that I wanted to do this on a long-term basis. I also thought about staying with this international company for a while longer, but I ended up returning home, but I kept coming back year after year.

- *How would you describe the artistic credo of Min Tanaka's company?*
- Min Tanaka called his own workshop Body Weather Farm, meaning that he saw man as a living being that, as part of nature, is able to tune into the big picture and shape his own body consciousness in relation to it. In Min Tanaka's troupe, part of the theatre-making is very serious physical and spiritual training, and a constant connection with

nature through farm work. These experiences have left a very deep impression on me, but at the same time I was doing my university studies, so I was on a parallel path of practice and theory. The two are very difficult to cultivate together, because they imply a fundamentally different approach to the world.

- *A few years later, however, you had another defining professional encounter in your life.*
- In 1994 Anatoly Vasiliev was invited to Hungary to the then Art Theatre. He was staging Dostoyevsky's *Uncle's Dream*, where I first worked alongside the set designer and then I was given a role as an interpreter alongside Vassiliev. It was a completely different theatrical experience, but likewise I was able to experience the impact of one's expressiveness on stage. This time, the director was trying to reach the metaphysical level of the stage text through the actors, not the body. Later, Vassiliev invited Mari Törőcsik, whom he met in this production, to Moscow, where I was able to accompany her, and I think that this was the real university training for me. We got involved in a very closed, very deep community of theatrical research, the Moscow School of Drama founded by Vasiliev.
- *How was the rehearsal process? What new insights did you gain?*
- Over a span of three months, we engaged in highly intensive work that encompassed both a rehearsal process and continuous training. This period was a true state of grace, allowing me to immerse myself in the serious workshop of theatre. Following this, I participated in all of Vasiliev's works in Hungary as an interpreter and collaborator of the director. I even contemplated pursuing a degree in directing at one point, but I sensed that it wasn't my path, so I didn't pursue it. In 2000, I attended Vasiliev's theatre in Moscow with an Eötvös scholarship, marking my official theatre training. In 2001, I contributed to the organization of the Moscow Theatre Olympics, which gave me the opportunity to invite Min Tanaka, and in this way I was able to bring together two masters who were very important to me. Vasiliev had an extremely complex training system, in which I was taught Grotowski training, a range of Eastern martial arts, and I was also introduced to Old-Russian singing techniques. Eventually, due to family reasons, I returned from Moscow, but I continued collaborating with Tanaka and Vasiliev. Simultaneously, I began collaborating with Attila Vidnyánszky, whom I had met in Moscow, and with whom I worked as a dramaturg and assistant director in Beregovo and Debrecen.
- *You've amassed distinctive professional experience collaborating with these three artists. Did you ever contemplate applying this knowledge as an actor?*

- I have indeed considered a career as a performer, having participated in various productions by Min Tanaka. A pivotal experience was my time as an actor with the Hattyú-Dal Theatre, a puppet and street theatre company, from 1996 to 2006. This period provided rich experiences and insights, yet ultimately, I didn't pursue acting as my path. I felt more drawn to organizing and collaborating, finding greater interest and creativity in facilitating the relationship between the director and the company. I had the privilege of collaborating with renowned directors such as Anatoly Vasiliev, Viktor Ryzakov, Vlad Troitsky, Sergei Masloboyshchikov, Andrzej Bubien, and later Valery Fokin, David Doiashvili, Avtandil Varsimasvili, and Theodoros Terzopoulos. I learnt theatre through hands-on experience, and as a translator, I also studied crucial theoretical works, and I developed a theatre mindset that blends various methods, which I began to apply in my own way across different forms of training. It's an approach aimed at achieving a syncretic unity of stage speech, singing, and inner concentration. I do not claim it to be a closed system, I continue to research and experimen

- *How does your method and this very rich corpus of knowledge fit into the Hungarian higher education system?*
- In Hungary, I am known primarily as a dramaturg and translator, so I teach primarily theoretical subjects, dramaturgy and drama translation, both at the University of Kaposvár and the University of Theatre and Film Arts. In Kaposvár, I organised a very exciting form of training for seven years, the International Kaposvár Theatre Workshop. The idea was to invite students and teachers from several countries, and the ten-day intensive course consisted of two parts: in the mornings the students participated in physical and mental training sessions with different teachers and masters, and in the second half of the day they worked in mixed international groups on a theme, the result of which was presented in a performance. Within this course I continued my own trainings, but unfortunately as the main organiser I had less and less time to do so.

- *In your theatre practice, different theatre disciplines and tasks are very closely intertwined. To what extent can or should they be separated?*
- Of course, from a technical point of view, it is possible to separate these tasks. Dramaturgical, translating and interpreting tasks can be delimited, but I believe in a holistic approach to the theatrical process. I think that you cannot be just a dramaturg or an interpreter, because if you don't have an insight into the different segments of the creative process, you remain quite a specialist and don't help the process as you should. So for me, it was an important experience to have the opportunity to try out a lot of different tasks. I think the most exciting job I have done is probably theatre interpreting,

because I have experienced that it is a completely different type of interpreting than, for example, conference interpreting. In the theatre, a much more subtle and sensitive system of communication between the director and the company has to be developed and maintained. I would call it more of a verbal translation, which involves, for example, diplomacy and psychology, because in most cases it is not information that needs to be conveyed, but inner, psychological, and possibly spiritual content. It could even be considered a specific kind of acting, which for me is always a very deep inner work and experience. In me, these tasks exist as a unity, which support and inspire each other.

Zsuzsanna Madák is a director, dramaturg, and specialist in theatre-in-education (TIE). She graduated from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and gained experience as an actor and dancer with various theatre companies. She began her theatre-in-education career at the Hevesi Sándor Theatre in Zalaegerszeg and later became a prominent figure in this field at the Csokonai Theatre in Debrecen.

- *How did institutional education influence your professional journey?*
- Most of what I do wasn't taught in a formal setting. I knew from a young age that I wanted to pursue theatre, initially drawn to acting and dance. Despite not being accepted into any art universities, two things were clear: I definitely wanted to do theatre and I wanted to continue studying. Thus, I pursued a degree in Aesthetics and Hungarian Studies at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). Between 2003 and 2008, while studying, I worked as a kind of studio assistant at the Vörösmarty Theatre in Székesfehérvár, where I had no training but was given small roles. By the end of my fifth year, I was working as an actor, and I was still interested in contemporary dance, so I went to the Artus Studio, to the Hungarian Movement Art Society, and to the Mária Górnagy Theatre School. The latter was particularly important in building a professional network.

- *During your time at the Vörösmarty Theatre, did you sense a lack of institutional theatre education?*
- In Székesfehérvár, I frequently acted as a child actor, and the ballet school I attended until I was 18 was also in the theatre building. So I felt completely at home in the Vörösmarty Theatre and grew up alongside the company. At that time it was unimaginable that I could feel as much at home elsewhere, but of course since then this changed in Zalaegerszeg and Debrecen. Eventually, it was necessary for me to leave Székesfehérvár as I wasn't sure I could ever find my place in that theatre. Nevertheless, already there I began creating studio productions that were considered to be pushing boundaries at the time. I was given creative freedom to put on productions based on my own ideas. It was a very rewarding time for me as it allowed me to experiment with my own style, explore my own abilities and limits, and show what I was capable of.

- *Your involvement as a director began during this period. How did your roles as actor, director, and dramaturg subsequently evolve?*
- It was during the Székesfehérvár phase that I started working with Ágens, creating productions together. At that time it was clear to me that I was not only involved in these processes as an actor but also as a project manager and director. It was at the Ágens Company that I was no longer involved in the production but was listed as director.

Simultaneously, I received singing roles from many places and started working as a contemporary dancer. There were seasons when I had more performances as a dancer than as an actor. I trained in various directions and for a long time it was undecided what I wanted to do. Choreographers invited me as a contemporary dancer primarily due to my stage presence, it was obvious that the dancers from the Ballet Institute had superior technical skills. While I enjoyed this period, I was certain it wouldn't be my final path, I was considering it more of an excursion into the arts as a whole.

- *How did theatre education become part of your journey?*
- During my childhood, Székesfehérvár hosted a youth theatre series with interactive elements. It wasn't nearly as complex as the theatre education programs that the Kerekasztal or Káva had already been doing, but it resonated with me as I felt addressed as a child. While at ELTE, I immersed myself in Budapest's cultural life, encountering exciting theatre education performances and programs. As a creator, I always sought ways to engage young audiences with each production. For instance, alongside my first production, *After Sodom*, I designed a program for high school students. However, my deeper involvement in theatre education began in Zalaegerszeg.

- *How did the Zalaegerszeg theatre provide opportunities?*
- When I was asked to be a dramaturg at the Hevesi Sándor Theatre, I felt uncertain since I didn't perceive myself as a dramaturg at a permanent theatre. I initially considered the company contract an existential decision. However, to my greatest surprise, I soon realized the potential of being a director at a permanent theatre. On the one hand, the dramaturgical tasks for classical large-scale plays proved to be a great experience. On the other hand, I suggested to the management that I would very much like to work in theatre education. I took a completely self-taught approach, creating my first classroom program for *Scapin's Follies*. Teachers in Zalaegerszeg quickly embraced the idea, given the receptive audience established by József Ruszt's introductory theatre work. We moved forward with a classroom performance, effectively kick-starting the youth program in Zalaegerszeg. Afterwards, they offered to work with me on the next production, and that's when I realised how much more there is to learn about this field.

- *Would you say your theatre-in-education work until then was more instinctive and experiential?*
- Until then, I'd gathered tools and applied them, shaping them to my style. Collaborating with InSite Drama revealed how to construct, design, and implement such programs. I essentially had to start from scratch methodologically. I previously knew forms like

'role on the wall' and 'hot seat', but the complexity of the field was new to me. It felt like cooking with ingredients but lacking the recipe. Nonetheless, my genuine attention to young participants and enthusiasm made the system effective. We started a very close professional collaboration with InSite and I attended professional events, exchanges, and workshops.

- *The Csokonai Theatre in Debrecen hired you not only as a dramaturg, but also as a director, and TIE specialist. Have you recently ventured into new professional areas?*
- I think I may be in a phase in my life again where I could do with a more significant challenge. While I've been steadily 'muscling up' in the field of children's and youth theatre and TIE in recent years, I haven't ventured into entirely new areas. However, the truth that the more you know, the more you realize what you don't know remains valid. That being said, there are still challenges within the safe confines. The most recent challenge was in Satu Mare, where I staged a theatre-in-education performance in a foreign language, as we performed *Trigonometry* with the Romanian company alongside the Hungarian one. Also, I had a recent professional journey: with the production *Abraham*, I delved into community theatre.

József Nagy (Nadj) is a dance artist, choreographer, and company founder. He studied mime and movement in Paris and in 1986 founded the movement theatre company Jel Theatre, with which he became known worldwide. For nearly 20 years, he was director of the National Centre for Choreography in Orléans.

- *In your own search for a creative path, what forms of training did you prefer?*
- Personally, I found that free, non-institutional master classes were the most productive and exciting learning opportunities. I also believe that being involved in the work of different ensembles during a creative process is equivalent to a school year of learning. Moreover, inviting guest artists from various fields, not just performing arts but also philosophy, literature, or even natural sciences, is crucial. Performers should be aware of research in other fields and the problems being addressed there; there's much to learn from such interdisciplinary exposure. In Orléans, where I worked for decades, there is a college of fine arts, and they organize workshops every year for a week or two. They always invite important artists from other artistic fields to come and influence the training that goes on there. I was invited once as a guest speaker, however, not on dance, but on installation. Such workshops lead to very exciting results.

- *As I understand it, this model is more about diversity and perhaps less about choosing a master and working with them in depth over a long period. Or can the two complement each other?*
- They can absolutely complement each other; one doesn't exclude the other. However, if there's only one chosen master, there's a risk that the master might consciously mold the young artist into something specific. If a young person is exposed only to one pattern, they might strive to become exactly like that master over time, which might not be beneficial if the young person is 'ready' too quickly.

- *In Hungary, even in secondary school, students interested in becoming actors are expected to be technically ready as soon as possible, so drama schools focus on preparing them effectively for admissions.*
- I once had the opportunity to work in Russia at a school in Saratov, where I had the chance to observe the audition. Those young students were so well-prepared that the etudes they performed during auditions were nearly equivalent to a full theatre performance. With a bit of exaggeration, I could hardly tell the difference between the students taking the entrance exams and the graduating students. I don't think it was a disadvantage that these young people arrived „ready.” Instead, I'd emphasize the importance of flexibility within the training process itself. Without this, a routine can

develop, where students know in advance whom they will meet and how. The more fresh ideas and external stimuli are introduced, the more students can be pushed out of their comfort zone.

- *Different models are used worldwide for parallel or different levels of integrated education in theatre disciplines like acting, directing, visual design, and dramaturgy. In your experience, is it valuable to teach theatre arts in a discipline-specific way?*
- I think it's very positive if young individuals have the opportunity to explore various theatrical activities. This can be ensured from the very beginning by crossing disciplines. However, this should not be made into a system. I believe it should not be mandatory; it should be an option. Early experiences like this are never too early.

- *To what extent is it valuable to have these exchanges as part of a systemic approach?*
- There must be some form of system; otherwise, the training would become too scattered, and especially young people need frameworks and guidance. A balance needs to be struck between flexibility and structure.

- *For decades, it has been seen as a shortcoming of Hungarian theatre training that there are limited opportunities for cooperation with foreign training institutions or learning from foreign masters.*
- Overcoming this bottleneck would be worthwhile. Access to workshops in other cultural and social contexts should be made available as soon as possible. This is most effective when students can gain first-hand experience. While much content is available through video, it's no substitute for face-to-face interaction. Every field, country, and training program remains provincial if it isolates itself and believes that what it has to offer is sufficient. Whether in theatre or any other field, it's crucial to place oneself in a global context. Keeping up with developments worldwide, discovering exciting theatres, directors, and workshops is essential.

- *Is the issue you mentioned a lack of language skills?*
- It is more about mentality. I've observed that in Budapest there is a tendency to look down on rural areas and individuals from across the border. There is a kind of arrogance that has crept into the theatre profession, potentially making or having made it insular. For instance, in Transylvania, in my experience there is no such rigidity. Perhaps Romanian theatre has contributed to more openness there. In Vojvodina, too, there's a fresher exchange of ideas between different theatres and creators due to closer links between the former Yugoslav republics.

- *You conducted a workshop for students from Cluj-Napoca at the Csokonai Forum in Debrecen. Can you tell us a bit about the topic you covered?*
- My primary goal was to make students aware that, irrespective of any task or situation, a performer must constantly work on themselves. They need to develop a personal toolbox or a space of thought, attuning themselves to their own sensitivities. From this foundation, they construct a body of material that they continually work on, each and every day. I encouraged them to develop this private material not only in their thoughts but also in active, practical ways. I find it problematic that students often wait for the director to dictate what a task is about, how to approach it, and what is expected of them. By coming to a session prepared, performers respond more creatively because they already have their own world to contribute. This is what I aimed to guide the workshop participants to do: to select moments, things they have seen or heard, whether from poetry or theatre, that had previously left an impact on them. They should then endeavor to assemble these moments into a body of work they continuously refine, much like a sculptor. I also emphasized to them the importance of embracing new challenges without fear and not waiting until they felt more prepared. During this workshop, I endeavored to place them in a position where they realized they could think with their entire body.

- *Where does movement fit into actor training? In Hungarian entry exams, candidates are often given text-based theatre exercises.*
- It's unfortunate that not enough work is done with movement in training. This is what makes acting and group work so standard. You can see that when you have to solve a movement task by insertion, it usually turns out pretty pathetic. If you look at Vassiliev's training, he has arranged for his students to be exposed to all kinds of movement forms, including aikido. I have seen his performances of Mozart and Salieri, and his actors worked in the movement interludes in a way that amazed me as a choreographer. Otherwise, they have incredible speaking and singing technique of course.

- *In 2009, the University of Theatre and Film Arts launched the Theatre Director-Physical Theatre Choreographer class. Is it worth treating physical theatre training separately, or should it be integrated into the curriculum for actors and directors from the ground up?*
- Everyone needs it. I think students are overloaded during their training because they have to get in too early as trainees for different plays. Horse-riding and fencing are very useful, but as I said, we should have the whole world in mind, so Far Eastern movement techniques should also be learned and mastered.

Mikhail Rahlin graduated as a director from the School-Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre (MHAT) in 2012. During his final year, he worked as an assistant director, and immediately after graduation, he became a teacher in Viktor Ryzakov's class.

- *With what background did you arrive at academic theatre education?*
- I was always told in my family that the only way to get into Moscow art universities was to have connections. So my parents thought I had no chance, and they supported me to study economics in Perm. It went well enough; I graduated with an A, but I didn't like it at all. During my studies in economics, I found the university stage, where they took the work seriously, and I felt that this was my path. After university, I started working in a bank, but I soon realized that it was a depressing environment for me. When I had time, I read while I worked, but I preferred to return to the university scene as a cultural organizer.

- *And how did the decision to turn to institutional theatre education come about?*
- In Perm, I reached a point where what I could do on the university stage was no longer enough. So I went to Germany, and there I decided that I should pursue professional theatre. I intended to enroll at the Ernst Busch Hochschule in Berlin, but at the last minute, I changed my mind, traveled back to Russia, overcame the mental block my parents had instilled in me, and enrolled in a directing course. However, I missed the admission deadline in Moscow, so I could only apply to St Petersburg. I have to admit that I was not prepared at all; I was already on the train when I learned a couple of poems, but the admission committee wouldn't let me recite them either. And of course, I had no chance to answer the questions on theory, literature, and theatre history. What was interesting, however, was that I was offered to enroll in a special director's course for the so-called 'estrada' genres. This was the point at which I finally entered institutional theatre education.

- *In the end, you found your way not in the estrada genres, but in Moscow, more precisely in the School Studio of the Art Theatre (MHAT).*
- The following year, I applied to Moscow. I thought I wanted to go to GITIS, I immediately applied to the second-year directing class, but at the same time also applied to MHAT. The two admissions processes were running in parallel, and I was admitted to both institutions, which again presented me with a major decision. MHAT had the advantage of being in the city center, with a college right next to the theatre, and a close „handholding” of the students during training, while GITIS was a dream. During the first two weeks of the academic year, I attended both universities

in parallel, but of course, neither place knew about it. I finally decided on MHAT. Unfortunately, our head teacher fell seriously ill at the beginning of the course and had less and less time for us. That's when I convinced Viktor Ryzakov to take care of us directing students. At first, I didn't really like him because his teaching principle was to leave the student to cope with the task on his own. This was very difficult for me, especially when, during one of the exams, he let me go in a completely wrong direction. I misunderstood one of his instructions, and he didn't correct me; he didn't guide me in the right direction.

- *How would you describe MHAT's place in the Russian theatre training palette?*
- MHAT has had its ups and downs. In the beginning, there was a lot of interest, and everyone wanted to go there. Later, there was a period when the Stanislavsky method became entrenched and was the only accepted direction. This was unfortunate, but new directors emerged who renewed the method. What is constant at MHAT is freedom, even within the current political system. MHAT's teachers consistently encourage students to find this freedom and experimentation.

- *What makes MHAT special? What does it offer in Russian and European theatre education that makes it unique?*
- MHAT really functions like a family. Co-education of directors and actors is not unique, but what I think is the big advantage is that the actor immediately learns that directors think in different languages. What is special about MHAT is that it has a theatre, the Moscow Art Theatre, so students are immersed in the life of a theatre from the very beginning. Elsewhere, for example in St Petersburg, there is no such opportunity, and there it can happen that students might be very disappointed when they come to a theatre after graduation. If I have to describe what makes MHAT stand out from other institutions, it is that it gives you all the basics based on the classical Stanislavsky method, but it does not teach you that this is the only approach. At the heart of the training is the need for the artist to always remain open and constantly seek new paths. MHAT equips you with tools but lets you use them as you see fit.

- *What is currently changing about the education at MHAT?*
- Primarily, the masters are passing away, and there is knowledge that cannot be passed on. The other change is obviously the political system, which influences MHAT. There's also a lot more rethinking by directors about the material they engage with and how they approach it.

- *To what extent does MHAT have international links?*
- In terms of internationalism, we used to have American students studying with us regularly. They could choose various packages: some stayed for a month, others spent a whole academic year with us, selecting their own courses. We also had a strong exchange with a university in France, where we got introduced to each other's work. Unfortunately, the current political situation does not foster international relations.

- *Is it typical for higher education institutions in Moscow to build education-training links with each other?*
- MHAT usually organizes meetings with renowned actors and directors to discuss their work in a kind of portrait discussion, which is open to students from other institutions. However, there is no formal arrangement for opening up training to students from other universities, primarily because of the competition between these institutions.

Kinga Szent-Ivány Harangozó Gyula Award-winning dance artist, choreographer, dance teacher, associate professor at the Hungarian University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE), head of the movement training and artistic director of the Nemes Nagy Ágnes Art High School.

- *How and in what way did dance education begin in your life?*
- It started in my hometown, Târgu Mures, where I participated in amateur training, and continued in Cluj-Napoca, at the Ballet Institute. In 1988, when my family and I moved to Hungary, I transferred to what is now the Hungarian University of Dance.

- *How did you experience the move from Cluj-Napoca to Budapest, was the transition between the two courses smooth?*
- It was quite a difficult transition. One of the difficulties was that I went to a Romanian language school in Cluj-Napoca, because that was the only option. It was not easy to change, but fortunately the teachers in Budapest were very helpful. Another difficulty was perhaps that the technical requirements were much higher in Budapest.

- *After graduating from the Dance Academy, where did you start your dance career and who were the choreographers with whom you developed a close working relationship?*
- I ended up in Szolnok with Andrea Ladányi, but I also owe a lot to Béla Földi and the Budapest Dance Theatre. After meeting Sándor Román, I became one of the founding members of ExperiDance, and then I met Csaba Horváth on a film shoot. It was under his leadership, at the Central European Dance Theatre (KET), that I started an artistic lineage that still has a great influence on me as a dance artist, choreographer and teacher.

- *Was the training as a choreographer and dance teacher a natural continuation of a career as a dance artist?*
- Yes, usually dancers continue their career in one of these two paths. I first applied to the University of Dance Arts for a degree in modern dance education, and when I graduated, I started a degree in theatre choreography. It was a very intense period in my life, as I was already teaching as artistic director of the Martfű Modern Dance Workshop. It was very physically demanding in both institutions, as well as being a dancer, but I saw it as a great opportunity to see all sides of the profession at the same time. At the stage of my active dancing career, I embarked on further studies. I was involved in everything in parallel, which made for a very active and exciting time in my life.

- *How sharp was the transition between being a dancer and a teacher-choreographer?*
- After KET I joined the Yvette Bozsik Company, and after the University of Theatre

Arts I had children, but in the meantime I returned to Yvette Bozsik, for which I am still very grateful. It was wonderful to dance the same roles before, between and after the birth of two children. It is an experience that I wish all artists from the bottom of my heart. I started teaching at the University of Theatre Arts and now I am also the head of the movement training. I also started the dance department at the Nemes Nagy Ágnes Art High School, which has now been running for ten years, training theatre dancers.

- *When you started out as a teacher, was it easy to put theory into practice?*
- Of course it took time. I think it is almost unteachable at university how to teach dance. Methods, techniques and experience can be passed on in university training, but pedagogical experience is best acquired on the job, in practice.

- *How do the different professional activities reinforce each other, can a synergy develop?*
- In both the vocational school and the university, I am both the training manager and, as a teacher, I am part of the training. I also work as a choreographer, unfortunately less and less often because I have less time for that, so I have experience from several sides. What I experience in a theatre production, where the actors' shortcomings are, what limitations hinder their work, I try to take with me and use it when planning the training and teaching. One of those areas was the need for actors to be at home in all styles, from folk to contra dance, and fortunately the management at University of Theatre Arts gives me the opportunity to do that.

- *Students now in training have significantly more opportunities to develop their movement and body awareness than before. Is there a possibility for further training for actors already in the field?*
- For me, the workshop in Debrecen was a very good experience. I think it's an opportunity that benefits both the company members and the management, because it gives the artists new inspiration and new discoveries. I would make it almost compulsory. I think it would be worthwhile to think together with theatre directors about when such a training session could be a time and place in the life of a company. I could imagine that the new season could start with such a course at the end of August. Not only among actors, but also among dancers and choreographers, I have noticed that as time goes on, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to commit themselves to further training. There is probably also a fear that they might be ridiculed by their younger colleagues. Perhaps we do not have the tradition and culture of this in Hungary, but we should allow ourselves time for constant inspiration.

- *Is there any area that you think is particularly important to include in training?*
- I have recently discovered yoga for myself, and it plays a very important role in my life now, not only as a source of inspiration, but also in terms of prevention and health maintenance. Unfortunately, in our time, prevention was not given much attention, but now, thanks to yoga among other things, it is becoming more and more important.

- *Can there be a dialogue between students and teachers about movement training?*
- For me, this is very important, I talk a lot with the students. We discuss together which areas need further development and where we have already achieved our goals. I try to pay close attention to the students' progress, and luckily this year I had the opportunity to be present at the second and third stage of the acting admission process, and my colleagues gave me their feedback. I think that it is essential for an actor to have a good body awareness and movement skills, and this is becoming more and more important in the training of the SZFE.

Ernő Verebes is a playwright, dramaturg and composer. He graduated from the Academy of Music in Sarajevo in 1989, and then pursued postgraduate studies at the Department of Composition at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. He has composed numerous theatre scores and currently holds the position of dramaturg at the National Theatre of Budapest.

- *What specific methodology did the workshop entitled 'Actor and Text', which was part of the INTERREG project, aim to introduce to the participants?*
- I approached the workshop primarily through music and literature, wanting to show an all-artistic approach that is constantly present in the theatre. The big question is how this affects the actors. Often it is not a conscious process, but it affects them almost imperceptibly. The analysis of these effects, making conscious of these hidden signs, was the theme of the workshop. For example, we looked at how the message of the play affects the actor's movement. What micro-movements within the director's instruction move the actor, even unconsciously. These correlations are very important because they can determine the elegance of the stage presence.

- *Can the perception of these 'hidden signals' be developed, or is there a fundamental gift that is necessary?*
- For me, too, the question has arisen about how much of this can be taught; whether what cannot be taught can be taught. Setting an example occasionally during the creative process is certainly useful, either from the director or the dramaturg, but then it is not a matter of teaching, but rather a kind of initiation. Obviously, the actor must also be a partner and must be made aware in advance that this is a method aimed at achieving a kind of 'being above oneself.' It sounds complicated, but it is not at all because every creative person can experience this. An actor is a creator who uses their body to create. With actors, we try to capture contemplative moments when we feel exactly that what they are doing is good. The more times we succeed in creating such states of being, the more 'moments' the actor creates that sustain their performance.

- *Does the method you mention have a place in classical actor training?*
- Perhaps actor training, classical methodology, does not use this method enough. However, the repertoire of methods is so abundant that perhaps there is no time for actors to try alternative methods. Now, the philosophical and spiritual background of acting has changed, so actors are drawing on this method. The relationship between theatre and other arts and philosophy has become stronger, and theatre now needs more complex personalities.

- *Can so-called alternative methods be hierarchically built on top of classical actor training, or should alternatives be offered during training?*
- In any case, we are talking about a complementary process. The better the basic training and the more solid the base, the more a layer of non-technical training can be built on top. If we are talking about priorities, there is obviously no substitute for classical actor training. However, the spirit of the times dictates a change in approach, with classical artistic categories operating in a kind of fusion. It is not a choice with a positive or negative connotation; it is simply a tendency that affects us from head to toe. Anyone who fails to notice this might be a little left behind. We are talking about a change like the shift between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when the world of faith did not disappear but was transformed, adding the human factor as a way of seeing the world through sciences and arts. We can feel such a process today, but while we are in it, we cannot see it.

- *Is there perceived openness to alternative methods among newly graduated theatre practitioners and university students during their theatre internships?*
- In my experience, this is a personal matter. I think it is a big problem when a newly graduated actor sees themselves as having finished their training. The closedness of the acting profession has become completely fictitious. There is still such a thing because the essence of being an actor is going on stage and acting, but the very essence of what it is has changed. In addition, actors often become theatre-makers and, without desecrating the profession of the director, feel compelled, in a good sense, to try their hand at being real creators. Theatremaking is a 'one-vision' theatre that anyone who feels talented can try. Today, the walls that once bounded the professions of actor, director, writer, or dramaturg have come down. At the same time, the separation of basic training has been maintained, which I think is a good thing. A basic professional qualification is necessary, but then you have to let your talent develop.

- *To what extent do the different theatre courses offer insights into the co-arts?*
- I think it would definitely be worthwhile to broaden perspectives during training. Obviously, it is a different result if these lateral fluctuations have an impact from the very beginning. After all, a compact basic training course can lock students in, after which they will no longer be open to the opportunities on offer.

- *What role do you think international exposure and the work of foreign teachers and creators in Hungary play?*
- For me, international contacts and exchanges of experience are based on friendships that presuppose a strong sense of self-confidence, joviality, and courage. This attitude

is based on the fact that even if I accept influences from other countries, cultures, or regions, mine is rock-solid. In this case, there is no reason to be afraid. Building on the foundations of our own culture, we can think in terms of a kind of universality that requires openness and curiosity. The deposits of Hungarian culture give us the right to stand rock-solid, and there is no room for any uncertainty or doubt. If one dares to see the world in this way, one can also see where we can benefit, whether from neighboring countries, the Balkans, or the Nordic countries.

The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union. (to be used by project beneficiaries, when the case.)