The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

New European Theater Comes to Moscow

The festival is celebrating its 20th year

By Andrei Muchnik

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A scene from "No43 Dirt" from Estonia **Courtesy of NET**

NET or New European Theater, a privately funded annual theater festival, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Its original objective was to showcase the best new performances by European directors, but over the years NET started including Russian productions as well. For its anniversary year NET put together a truly exceptional program, and The Moscow Times selected the must-see performances. All the shows are performed in the original language with Russian "sub-titles" projected above the stage.

The Trials of John Demyanyk. A Holocaust Cabaret

Dec. 4

This play by Canadian Jonathan Garfinkel is based on a real court case, in which a U.S. citizen of Ukrainian descent, Ivan Demyanyuk, was accused and in the end found guilty of being an accomplice to murder of almost 30,000 prisoners in a Nazi camp. Following in Bertolt Brecht's footsteps, Director Ilya Moshinsky turned this grim story into an ironic cabaret production.

Theater Moderne. Spartakovskaya Sq. 9/1. Metro Baumanskaya.

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The Salt of the Earth

Dec. 5-6

NET is known for its experimental performances, and this Israeli production by PuppetCinema Theater definitely falls into that category. On stage you'll see a doll, a camera and a thousand of pounds of salt. Based on a dystopian novel by Amos Keinana, this is a story of a nonconformist writer running from war to hide in a kibbutz. The audience sees part of the story "live" on a screen.

Theater of Nations. 3 Petrovsky Pereulok. Metro Chekhovskaya.

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Hymn to Love

Dec. 12

A German-Polish co-production of several theaters, "Hymn to Love" is a statement about the contemporary European politics. Director Marta Gornicka, who also happens to be the author of the idea and libretto, calls her work a "monstrous national songbook." Her production combines pop lyrics and church liturgy with folk songs, sung by an onstage choir, which consists of 25 participants of different ages, professions and social backgrounds.

Theater of Nations. 3 Petrovsky Pereulok. Metro Chekhovskaya.

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NO43 Dirt

Dec. 19

NO43 Dirt, a new performance by the Estonian Theater NO99, was produced by a duo of directors, Tiit Ojasoo and Ene-Liis Semper. It was inspired by two famous novels – "The Petty Demon" by Fyodor Sologub and "The Possibility of an Island" by Michel Houellebecq. There's no plot -- this is visual theater in its purest form. Nine artists in a pavilion filled with dirt use their bodies to provide commentary on disorder and the imperfection of the world.

Meyerhold Center. 23 Ulitsa Novoslobodskaya. Metro Novoslobodskaya.

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The Witch Project: Ether

Dec. 20

"The Witch Project: Ether" is a co-production between Gornostai and Stanislavsky Electrotheater, directed by Klim Kozinsky, a graduate of Boris Yukhanov's Studio of Individual Directing. The main characters are Albert Einstein and Nikola Tesla played by female actresses, who manage to turn complex scientific ideas into something sensual, even sexy. The project was produced with the support of Jan Fabre Theater.

Stanislavsky Electrotheater. 21 Tverskaya Ulitsa. Metro Pushkinskaya.

For detailed schedule and tickets, please refer to the festival's web site.

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