Press release

Sibiu, 8 July 2021

**The Sibiu International Theatre Festival, the first large festival in Central and Eastern Europe: more than 600 performances and artists from 37 countries come together under the theme “Building Hope Together”.**

**The Sibiu International Theatre Festival (FITS), the first large festival in Central and Eastern Europe, one of the major festivals in the world, and the biggest performing arts event in Romania, will present, in 20-29 August, over 600 events from 37 countries, from all the continents, in what will be its most complex edition so far.**

Organized under the High Patronage of the President of Romania and with the support of the Sibiu City Hall and the Sibiu County Council, FITS will include great artists of the world stage, offering the audience the possibility to enjoy some of the most appreciated international performances, which have gained world fame and won prestigious awards. The 2021 edition of FITS, suggestively themes “Building Hope Together”, will have three dimensions: in-presence, hybrid, and online.

The Sibiu International Theatre Festival aims to rebuild hope together with its audience, which will have access to a real performing arts feast, i.e. theatre, dance, circus, film, musical, opera, book, conferences, exhibition, performances, music, and street productions. Israel Galván Company, Charlotte Rampling, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, María Pagés Compañía are just some of the great international artists and companies to join FITS 2021.

The representations in the Sibiu International Theatre Festival will be performed in performance halls, unconventional spaces, churches, city squares, and in spectators’ home, via the FITS website, [www.sibfest.ro](https://www.sibfest.ro/en), [www.scena-digitala.ro](https://www.scena-digitala.ro/en), [its Facebook page,](http://www.facebook.com/FITSibiu) and [YouTube channel](http://www.youtube.com/FITSibiu).

*‘The Festival began 28 years ago with three countries and eight performances and is now one of the few festivals in the world - perhaps the only one - that has gone on every year. Last year, we were at a crossroad, as we all went through rough times, having been placed in lockdown, unable to communicate, isolated. All this time, we thought about our spectators in Sibiu, in Romania, and in the world. That is why we made the huge effort of organizing the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, as we felt empowered to go on. And now, thanks to that great challenge which my team and I managed to overcome, we developed the Digital Stage, thus virtually bringing over 7 million spectators from 104 countries around us. This year, our great test was finding a way to see you all physically so we can build hope together. Therefore, in this wonderful community of Sibiu, we have built the most complex festival and its most complex edition. A city that has never been conquered and which, on 1 June 1788, on International Children’s Day, opened the first theatre on the territory of Romania.* It is a wonderful joy to be able to keep the child within us alive, for this empowers us to play, tell, dream, and hold on to hope’, **Constantin Chiriac, President of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival,** said on Thursday, at the press conference dedicated to the Festival.

**Building Hope Together**

This year’s edition is designed to make the hundreds of performances in its programme accessible to as many audiences as possible, which is why the event will have a threefold dimension.

The **in-presence dimension** includes the performances presented inside theatre halls, outdoors, and in other venues where physical representations are scheduled. Another layer is the **hybrid dimension**, in which indoor shows performed in the presence of the audience will be live streamed as well, thanks to five streaming teams, into cinema theatres and other venues in Sibiu and around Romania, in all the places whose local administrators wish to enter a partnership with FITS. These two aspects are joined by a **third, online dimension**, which will make available to theatre fans productions especially adapted for the digital environment. Tickets will be up for sale starting **22 July**, on [www.sibfest.ro](http://www.sibfest.ro/en) and on the [Entertix](https://www.entertix.ro/) platform, starting from RON 20 up to RON 150, for in-presence performances.

Many events in the Sibiu International Theatre Festival programme will be offered to the audience free of charge. FITS maintains the tradition of great outdoor representations available free of charge; moreover, it will virtually stream a series of free performances.

The FITS 2021 programme will be available on [www.sibfest.ro](http://www.sibfest.ro/en).

**Highlights of FITS 2021**

Performed by some of the most valuable contemporary artists, created by great companies of the world, the in-presence highlights of the 2021 edition of FITS are: “The Knight of the Burning Pestle”, Cheek by Jowl/Moscow Pushkin Drama Theatre; “Shakespeare – Bach”, Charlotte Rampling & Sonia Wieder-Atherton; “Outwitting the Devil”, Akram Khan Company; “La serva padrona”, Timișoara Romanian National Opera; “OMMA”, Joseph Nadj; “Plugarul și Moartea”, “Vasile Alecsandri” National Theatre in Iași; “Flamenco Nights”, Barcelona Flamenco Ballet; “ASYLUM”, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company; “TOML”, Sol Dance Company; “An Ode of Time”, María Pagés Compañía; “Eins zwei drei”, Martin Zimmermann; “Itinerary. One Day the World Will Change”, ARCUB & Compagnie des Ogres; “La consagración de la primavera”, Israel Galván Company; “Le tambours de soie”, Maison de la Culture D’Amiens; “The Door”, Lithuanian National Drama Theatre / Jo Strømgren Kompani.

Then, there are the online dimension highlights: “Time for Time”, Marie Chouinard; “YAG”, Batsheva Dance Company; “The Idiot”, Stary Dom Theatre, Novosibirsk; “Memento Mori”, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui – Eastman; “Maria Stuart”, Deutsches Theater Berlin; “The Fluid Force of Love”, Troubleyn/Jan Fabre; “The Demons”, Maly Drama Theatre; “The Silent Burn Project”, Akram Khan Company; “Maestro de Barra”, Israel Galván Company; “chekhovOS/an experimental game/”, Arlekin Theater; Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre.

The most valuable performances representing the hybrid component of the Festival, i.e. live streamed in-presence performances, are: “The Knight of the Burning Pestle”, Cheek by Jowl/Moscow Pushkin Drama Theatre; “Flamenco Nights”, Barcelona Flamenco Ballet; “Asylum”, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company; “TOML”, Sol Dance Company; “An Ode of Time”, María Pagés Compañía; “Eins zwei drei”, Martin Zimmermann; “Itinerary. One Day the World Will Change”, ARCUB & Compagnie des Ogres.

The guests of FITS and the people of Sibiu will be able to enjoy outdoor events which are to be performed in historical places and public squares; the highlights of outdoor productions are: “Galileo”, Deus ex Machina, France, “Quixote”, Grupo Puja!, Spain, “Meraviglia”, Sonics, Italy, “Moby Dick”, Teatro dei Venti, Italy, “Symphonic Concert”, Romanian Chamber Orchestra, “Participatory Monumental Construction in Cardboard”, Olivier Grossetête et les Bâtisses Soeurs, France, “Together Again!, OGE Group, Israel-Germany, “They are Back in Black”, The Black Blues Brothers, Kenya-Italy.

**Sibiu Performing Arts Market, Unique in Romania**

The Sibiu Performing Arts Market is a structure associated with the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, the only one of its kind in Romania, and a trademark registered with the Romanian State Office for Inventions and Trademarks. It started from the festival’s need to give artists, cultural operators, performing arts institutions or cultural networks the chance to meet important producers from all over the world. Through its events, The Market offers participants an ideal context to promote their artistic projects and strike up partnerships in performing arts.

The Market evolved spectacularly from the first edition in 1997 and grew into a notable cultural network that connects festivals and artists, performing arts independent companies or public institutions. Every year, participants from all over the world, representing various cultural organizations (artistic management agencies, NGOs, public institutions, independent companies, etc.), meet in Sibiu to establish connections and start possible future partnerships.

In 2021, The Market will take place in **23-26 August** as a hybrid event, so that both participants present in Sibiu, and those unable to travel, may engage in talks and may build together, via digital solutions. We are thus raising a bridge between the physical and the online dimensions, a place to meet and to dialogue available to all people who work in performing arts.

**Eight Great Artists, on the Sibiu Walk of Fame**

This year, on the Sibiu Walk of Fame, one of the most special structures of FITS, eight new names will join the 43 theatre and culture figures who have received stars starting 2013. The ceremony will take place on **27 August**.

**Denis O’Hare** – the famous American actor and writer, **Jan Lauwers** – who rose to fame through his work alongside Needcompany, which he founded in 1986, and **María Pagés** – internationally renowned dancer and choreographer will, on this occasion, receive the stars of FITS 2020.

**Yoshi Oida** – important Japanese actor and director, the first member of Peter Brook’s international theatre company, **Israel Galván** – renowned dancer and choreographer, who revived flamenco dance, **Helmut Stürmer** – scenographer born in Romania, whose art brought him international acclaim, **Charlotte Rampling** – iconic actress of world theatre and cinematography, **Akram Khan** – one of the most appreciated choreographers of the moment, are the great artists to receive Stars at the 2021 edition of FITS.

The Sibiu Walk of Fame was inaugurated in the Cetății Park in Sibiu, on the occasion of the 20th edition of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival in 2013 as a space for celebration and public recognition of the merits and the contribution of great personalities to the cultural-artistic development of the world. After the Walk of Fame ceremony, the Celebrity Gala brings on stage the figures who were awarded a star on the Walk of Fame in an event dedicated to the public acknowledgement of the merits of the great artists prized in Sibiu and an opportunity to celebrate the professional activity of a cultural manager, through the Excellency Award, as well as the professional activity of an actor and a director, who receive the “Virgil Flonda'' and the “Iulian Vișa” awards.

**Therme Forum, Theatre and Architecture**

Therme Forum is a structure associated with the festival, dedicated to how architectural design, programming, technology, and our evolving communities will shape the theatres and the participatory experience of the future; the event will take place in **27-29 August**. The programme will include conversations with architects, designers, artists, and world-class cultural managers on theatre and the value of big, visionary investments in culture.

Therme Forum inspires and challenges participants through an examination of historic examples, perspectives, best practices and trends from around the world. Through the multi-faceted dialogues, participants will examine the link between performing arts and their venues, and how this relation shapes and impacts the community, its financial and social sustainability, as well as the evolution of the art form.

The conferences will be themedː Sustainability and Culture; Inclusivity and Accessibility; Festival Cities; Governance; Exploring the Future Part A: The Expression; Exploring the Future Part B: The Building; Resilience: Building Back Better after Covid. Some of the confirmed speakers are: Charlotte Nors, Managing Director Singapore Repertory Theatre; Robert Read, CEO National Concert Hall Dublin; Dan Daw, Associate Artistic Director Candoco Dance Company; Tej Tadi, Founder & CEO MindMaze; Svanhildur Konradsdottir, Director Harpa Concert Hall; Yvonne Tham, CEO The Esplanade Co Ltd; John Alschuler, Fondator HR&A Advisors; Paola Prestini, Composer, Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the National Sawdust; Dan Potra, Theatre Designer; Joshua Prince Ramus, Founder of REX; Kai-Uwe Bergmann, BIG; Stefano Mancuso, Director International Laboratory of Plant Neurobiology; Amanda Levete, Director AL\_A.

**The Volunteer Programme**

The Sibiu International Theatre Festival Volunteer Programme is an innovative non-formal school with participants from Sibiu, Romania, and abroad. The programme offers opportunities for training, work experience which will ensure better chances for success on the employment market, development of new skills, familiarization with various operational systems and organizational structures, the feeling of pride for being actively involved in the community, as well as involvement in a prestigious organization.

Volunteers between 16 and 70 years of age from Romania, as well as Poland, France, Japan, China, Canada, Finland, or South Korea join the FITS team every year.

The Japan Volunteer Programme was set up alongside the Land of the Rising Sun, over time attracting over 150 Japanese volunteers, supported by the EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee. The Volunteer Programme brought the Sibiu International Theatre Festival the 2015 Award of the Japan Foundation.

**A Celebratory Edition**

Over the years, the Sibiu International Theatre Festival has turned into an important connection with numerous states with which Romania has longstanding cultural, economic, and diplomatic collaborations.

This year, we celebrate **100 years of diplomatic relations with Japan**, and the Sibiu International Theatre Festival is marking the moment through a rich schedule of events developed alongside traditional friends from Japan, with whom we have collaborated from the very first editions of the festival. Besides, we will mark **140 years of diplomatic relations with Spain** by presenting Spanish performances and companies, **110 years of diplomatic relations with Switzerland**, so we will take the opportunity to bring the audience representations by Swiss artists, and **30 years of bilateral diplomatic relations between Romania-The Republic of Moldova**, through the presence of prestigious companies.

These special moments are rounded by anniversaries of 111 years of diplomatic relations with Luxemburg, 141 years of diplomatic relations with the USA, 141 years of diplomatic relations with Belgium, 101 years of diplomatic relations with Austria, 101 years of diplomatic relations with Finland, 141 years of diplomatic relations with France, 141 years of diplomatic relations with The Netherlands, 101 years of diplomatic relations with Hungary, 96 years of diplomatic relations with Chile, 61 years of diplomatic relations with Cyprus, 141 years of diplomatic relations with Germany, 141 years of diplomatic relations with Greece, 31 years of diplomatic relations with Ireland, 141 years of diplomatic relations with Great Britain.

The importance of these jubilees was also emphasized by the President of Romania, **His Excellency Klaus Werner Iohannis**, in his message to the 28th edition of FITS.

‘For twenty years now, I have had the pleasure to address theatre fans in Romania, in Europe, and all around the world and to invite them to Sibiu or congratulate them for their decision to be guests of this remarkable capital of culture, thus enjoying this wonderful experience of life, freedom, and love offered by the International Theatre Festival!

This is a special year. In the summer of 2021, the word “international” within the name of the Festival acquires an ever more special meaning. First of all, because FITS was designed to once again bring theatre art from three continents to the stages of Sibiu, after a year of interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through theatre, we will celebrate the jubilees of diplomatic relations between Romania and Japan, Switzerland, Spain, the Republic of Moldova, we will explore the cultural expressions of the East and the West, or the dialogue of the Mediterranean world with the fascinating Anglo-Saxon space.

I hereby salute the organizers’ efforts to present to us, whether in-presence or by digital means, the performances of the world in these times of post-pandemic renewal of social and creative energies. FITS 2021 urges us all to build hope, in a common effort of vision and solidarity. During the Festival, together, actors, directors, and spectators will prove that Art is our strength and opportunity.

May the works of the personalities who will watch over Sibiu during this year’s edition of FITS – Brukenthal, Dostoyevsky, Enescu, or Cioran – endow us all with the inspiration and the energy to build hope in our hearts and with the joy of gifting it to those around us!’, said the President of Romania.

National and international personalities, ambassadors and diplomats, representatives of the states with which the Sibiu International Theatre Festival has had a wonderful long-standing collaboration sent their message for the event: **Sergiu Nistor**, Presidential Advisor, **Astrid-Cora Fodor**, Mayor of the Sibiu Municipality, the Romanian Minister of Education, **Sorin-Mihai Cîmpeanu**, His Excellency Toshimitsu Motegi, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mirel Taloș, President of the Romanian Cultural Institute, Her Excellency **Laurence Auer**, Ambassador of the French Republic to Romania, His Excellency **Cord-Meier Klodt**, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Romania, His Excellency **James Noble**, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Romania, His Excellency **Hiroshi Ueda**, Ambassador of Japan to Romania, His Excellency **Arthur Mattli**, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Romania, His Excellency **David Saranga**, Ambassador of Israel to Romania, General Delegate of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and of Wallonia to Bucharest, **David Royaux**, Cultural Attaché of the US Embassy to Romania, **William J. O'Connor**.

FITS celebrates 140 years from the birth of George Enescu through a series of Mihai Eminescu poetry recitals accompanied by the music of the great composer, 200 years from the birth of author Fyodor Dostoevsky, and 140 years from his death, by streaming the performance “The Idiot” directed by Andrey Prikotenko, and the performance “The Demons” directed by Lev Dodin (Maly Drama Theatre). The 300-year anniversary from the birth of Samuel von Brukenthal will be marked through exhibitions organized in the spaces of the Sibiu Brukenthal National Museum. The 110-year anniversary from the birth of Emil Cioran will be marked by the exhibition *“De la Cioran: Trei ecouri artistice la scrierile lui Cioran”* (Painting and glass. Artists: Mirela Vasile, Laurence Bourgeois, Jean-Marc Barrier).

**International Platform of Doctoral Research in the Fields of Performing Arts and Cultural Management**

The Doctoral Research International Platform is a space dedicated to dialogue and academic exchange between young researchers, faculty members and the general public; the event has been taking place yearly since 2014 within the Sibiu International Theatre Festival. This year, it will take place **in 20-21 August**.

The main objective for the International Platform of Doctoral Research in the Fields of Performing Arts and Cultural Management is to promote inter-institutional collaboration and artistic education in the context of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival. For this purpose, the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu has initiated and concluded partnerships with a view to collaborating in the field of performing arts and cultural management doctoral studies with other important universities: Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 University (France), Brown University (United States of America), Suffolk Community College (United States of America), Pace University (United States of America), Japan Women’s University (Japan), Nagoya City University (Japan), Nihon University (Japan), Waseda University (Japan), Tokyo University (Japan), Beckett University (Great Britain), York St. John University (Great Britain), Folkwang Universität der Künste (Germany), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), École Nationale de Théâtre du Canada (Canada), Université de Moncton (Canada), The Central Academy of Drama (China), Hong Kong Institute of Education (China), Beijing Dance Academy (China), Shanghai Theatre Academy (China), Moscow State University of Culture and Arts (Russia), Jerusalem Academy of Dance and Music (Israel), Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts in Chișinău (Republic of Moldova).

The Department of Drama and Theatre Studies at “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu and our doctoral school in the fields of Performing Arts and Cultural Management especially emphasize the practical side of scientific research and artistic creation. One-person shows included in doctoral research programs, performances directed or performed by PhD students, conferences and public lectures held by PhD coordinators or by PhD students are the means to present the results of excellent doctoral research to the academic community, students, scholars and the wider audience: conferences, performances, workshops, scenography exhibitions, etc.

**The Drama and Arts Management Universities Convention**

Every year, the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, through the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, and the “Radu Stanca” National Theatre, organize the Drama and Arts Management Convention, the most notable manifestation of its kind in Europe, which brings the audience iconic performances created by drama schools throughout the world.

The student performances undergo a selection process conducted by a board of international experts, professors at prestigious universities, and the Council of the LBUS Department of Drama, so that the Romanian academic world and the general audience benefit from the experience of artistic products created and presented at a level of excellence.

The objectives of the 2021 edition are to promote multiculturalism and the practical dimension of drama education in Sibiu, by ensuring cooperation between the three BA specializations at the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies within the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu (Drama, Choreography, Theatrology-Cultural Management). The Drama and Arts Management Convention is the only event of its kind in the world organized and unfolded by BA, MA, and PhD students, from the viewpoint of their teaching curriculum, coordinated by dedicated professors.

A Season of Performing arts workshops including internationally renowned participants, and a Publishing program including the (bilingual) Anthology of texts related to the theme of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, the (bilingual) Anthology of plays presented in the Play-Reading section, the bilingual volume Cultural Conversations (edited in partnership with Leeds Beckett University, UK), Aplauze - the bilingual FITS magazine, including performance reviews, are part of this structure’s programme.

The Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, in partnership with the Romanian Broadcasting Society, through Radio România Cultural, presents a unique effort in the European landscape of theatre education. Connected to the publishing dimension of current trends in European dramaturgy (and more), BA, MA, and PhD students of the Sibiu Drama School, under the artistic direction of a specialized professor, will perform the plays in the Anthology of plays presented in the Play-Reading section as part of a novel performance.

**Public’s Access to Performances**

The public’s access to the performances presented in the framework of FITS will observe the sanitary measures imposed in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, while the venues’ seating capacity will be established as per the regulations in effect on the date of the event.

Access to performances taking place in theatre halls will only be allowed if certain sanitary conditions imposed by the authorities during FITS are fulfilled.

Access to indoor events will be permitted to ticket-holders who are able to show an ID, as well as one of the documents below:

* Official proof of vaccination against SARS-VOC-2 (at least ten days after the end of the vaccination scheme),
* A negative PCR test performed no earlier than 72 hours before the event,
* Proof of a negative result based on a quick antibody test performed no earlier than 24 hours before the event certified by a medical institution,
* Medical proof that the spectator tested positive for SARS-COV-2 and the they are between the 15th-90th day period from the positive result.

For indoor access, the organizers will make available to the spectators bracelets which will facilitate a fast epidemiological triage. At the moment, wearing face masks indoors is mandatory.

**Online Streamed Performances**

In the online environment, theatre performances will be streamed at 9 p.m., then restreamed at 9 a.m., dance performances at 7 p.m., and then at 7 a.m., productions of the TNRS Digital Stage will be streamed at 10 p.m. and restreamed at 10 a.m., student performances at 4 p.m. and restreamed at 4 a.m., and free performances at 5 p.m., and restreamed at 5 a.m. Besides these, indoor performances will be livestreamed online.

**Partners and Organizers**

**The Sibiu International Theatre Festival is organized by:** The “Radu Stanca” National Theatre Sibiu, Sibiu City Hall, Sibiu County Council

**Event supported by:** The Prime Minister of Romania, the Government of Romania, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu

**Co-organizer:** The Romanian Cultural Institute

**Event co-funded by:** The Sibiu County Council

**Co-producers:** Romanian Television Society, Romanian Broadcasting Society

**Strategic partners:** The Embassy of France, the French Institute, the Embassy of Japan, EU–Japan Fest Japan Committee, the Embassy of the United States of America, the Embassy of the United Kingdom, British Council, the Embassy of Israel, the Embassy of Switzerland, Swiss Sponsors' Fund, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Goethe Institute, the German Consulate to Sibiu, the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the Embassy of Belgium, Wallonie–Bruxelles International, the Embassy of Spain, the Cervantes Institute, Action Cultural Espanola, the Embassy of the Polish Republic, the Polish Institute, the Embassy of Austria to Bucharest, the Austrian Cultural Forum, the ASTRA National Museum Complex, UNITER.

**Official Partners:** UniCredit Bank, Dedeman, BRD – Groupe Société Générale

**Special partner:** JTI

**Main partner:** Lidl

**Traditional partner:** Raiffeisen Bank

**Partner of Therme Forum:** Therme Bucuresti

**Partner of the outdoor season:** Banca Transilvania

**Mobility partner:** Autoklass

**Health partners:** Medlife, Dent Estet, Clinica Polisano

**Partners:** Allianz Țiriac, Google Arts & Culture, Lenovo, GLS

**Partner of the Sibiu Performing Arts Market and the Volunteer Programme:** Alpha Bank

**FITS official wine:** Cramele Oprișor

**Sponsors:** Aqua Carpatica, Keep Calling, CEC Bank, Heidi Chocolate, Tulipa Flower Shop, Casa Dente, Romfilatelia, Rondocarton

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**Team of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival**

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