

# QENDRA MULTIMEDIA

A YEAR IN REVIEW 2020

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# A YEAR IN REVIEW - 2020

## WHAT WE DO:

Qendra MULTIMEDIA is one of the main independent cultural organizations in Kosovo. Its main focus is contemporary theater and literature. It is considered as one of the most interesting and provoking theatre companies in South Eastern Europe. Qendra was founded in 2002 by a group of artists aiming to create an alternative form of art production to address political and social issues with clarity, boldness and imagination. Follow us at [www.qendra.org](http://www.qendra.org)

**In 2020,** Kosovo's independent cultural sector was hit by COVID 19 pandemic. Qendra Multimedia was no exception. However, in 2020 Qendra made great efforts to continue organizing its regular activities and program.

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- = **polip - International Literature Festival** – In September 2020, polip gathered more than 30 local and international writers, poets, journalists, editors, cultural and human rights activists to read and discuss on the literary and cultural matters.
- = **Theatre showcase** – In October 2020, the Theatre Showcase gathered more than 25 local and international theatre directors, actors, theatre authors, journalists, editors and cultural activists to promote the Kosovo theatre and discuss on culturally related topics.
- = **Culture for Change program** – During 2020, Culture for change program launched a Third Call to support cultural initiatives. In addition, the Culture for change team organized a series of events to promote and support public libraries and school libraries in remote Kosovo schools.
- = **In-house production** – In 2020 Qendra Multimedia had 2 theater premieres while it was part of online platform to promote Kosovo theatre. Moreover, Qendra instigated a capacity-building workshop to empower youngsters in the field of theatre critic.

# POLIP – INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL

11-14 SEPTEMBER 2020

## **POLIP - INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

Qendra launched the 10<sup>th</sup> jubilee of *polip* on 11 September 2020 in an online format due to pandemic circumstances. In 2020, *polip* gathered about 30 local and international writers, poets, journalists, editors, cultural and human rights activists (online and in person) to read, talk and discuss on post-COVID world, culture and literature. This edition – named *CHANGE YOUR LANGUAGE* – also included and the Showcase of Culture for Change beneficiary initiatives while it is estimated that about 15,000 people were directly and indirectly part of the 3-day online streaming of the program.

## **RESULTS:**

- 4 reading sessions
- 2 discussion panels
- 1 poetry drive (outdoor)
- 1 monodrama screened online



APPROXIMATELY ABOUT 15,000 PEOPLE FOLLOWED ONLINE ACTIVITIES DURING 3 DAYS OF POLIP 2020

# KOSOVO THEATRE SHOWCASE 2020

27 OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER 2020

## **KOSOVO THEATRE SHOWCASE**

From 27<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2020, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Theatre Showcase gathered more than 25 local and international theatre directors, actors, play writers, journalists and cultural activists (online and in person) to promote the Kosovo theatre and discuss on culturally related topics. During the showcase, Qendra hosted the play “*Balava*” from Serbia while other domestic theatre productions were staged at theatres in Prishtina, Ferizaj and Gjilan. During the Showcase was launched the publication on Kosovo theatres while additional talks were held to discuss the impact of pandemic in cultural sector. To our estimations, more than 20,000 people were following the program including talks, plays, discussions during all days of the Kosovo Theatre Showcase.

## **RESULTS**

- 8 theatre performances
- 1 online theatre performance
- 3 panel discussions
- 1 storytelling journey



**BALAVA** OPENED THE ONLINE EDITION OF THE KOSOVO THEATRE SHOWCASE 2020

# CULTURE FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

## **CULTURE FOR CHANGE PROGRAM**

During 2020, Culture for change program supported 10 organizations through Call 3. In addition, the Culture for change team organized a series of events to promote *World Book Day* or *International Translation Day* and to support public libraries, theatre and school libraries in remote Kosovo schools. In this line 5 storytelling workshops were organized with about 100 pupils in 5 Kosovo municipalities. Four talks with cultural activists were organized and launched via social networks. Two promotional videos were launched to encourage pupils visits to cultural institutions while the research on Kosovo's cultural landscape and the Culture for Change documentary were promoted during final event that was held in December 2020.

## **RESULTS:**

10 initiatives supported

5 storytelling workshops with about 100 pupils in 5 municipalities organized

4 talks with cultural operators

1 documentary promoted

1 research published

5 books promoted

1 Final Conference organized



ABOUT 100 PUPILS WERE PART OF *STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS* IN **5 KOSOVO MUNICIPALITIES**

# IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

## IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION –

In 2020 Qendra was playing an essential role in promotion of Kosovo theatre for domestic audience. During April and May 2020, plays produced by Qendra were part of joint calendar of theatre productions that were streamed online, an initiative of Kosovo theatres during pandemic. The plays were very popular among virtual audience since the citizens were under complete lockdown during those months.



QENDRA PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE TO PROMOTE KOSOVO THEATRE PRODUCTION DURING PANDEMIC

On 16 October 2020, Qendra premiered *Kthimi i Karl Majit* (The Return of Karl May) by Jeton Neziraj at Kosovo's National Theatre. The play confronts the audience with the almost-demonizing approach taken by Western Europe towards the East – an assumed cultural, political and intellectual superiority – which, according to Aleksandar Hemon is deeply rooted in colonialism and racism.



THE RETURN OF KARL MAY WAS WELL RECEIVED BY INTERNATIONAL CRITICS AND PRESS

“*The Return...*” received significant critics from Kosovo and international press.

**QUOTE** “Subtitled 'an entertaining play for German people', 'The Return of Karl May' opens with the National Theatre of Kosovo dispatching a troupe of actors on a quest to Berlin – the Volksbühne is in trouble and Kosovars are good at conflict resolution, the play jokes – and also to educate a German audience that, in the world of the play, still thinks of the Balkans like the Wild West, lawless and chaotic”, writes [nachtkritik.de](https://nachtkritik.de).

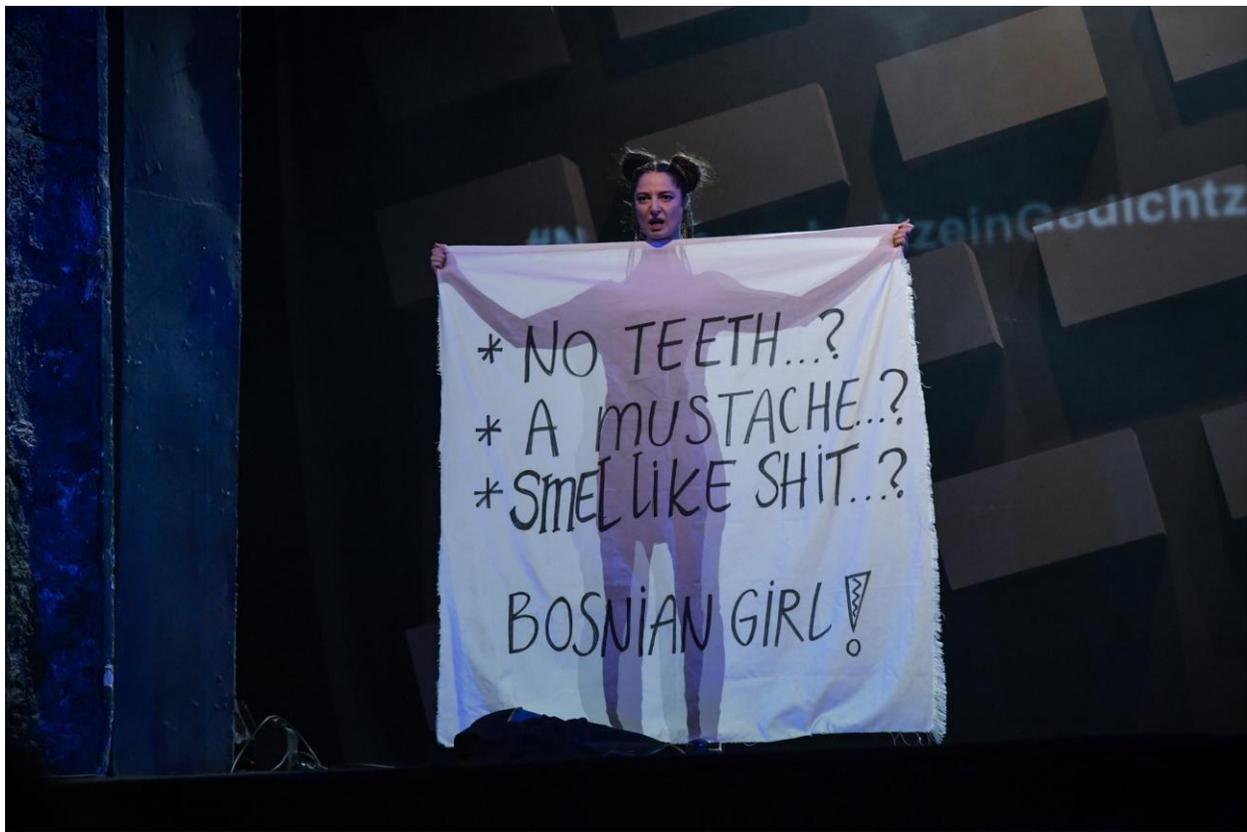
(link: [https://nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=18734%3Aa-letterfrom-kosovothe-return-of-karl-may-by-jeton-neziraj-premieres-inprishtina&catid=1789&Itemid=99&fbclid=IwAR3vYXmvXk\\_6fquLbIpQg3bfHQ12sCVOCMJC9psR11L396V\\_PBr6KZD0uA](https://nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18734%3Aa-letterfrom-kosovothe-return-of-karl-may-by-jeton-neziraj-premieres-inprishtina&catid=1789&Itemid=99&fbclid=IwAR3vYXmvXk_6fquLbIpQg3bfHQ12sCVOCMJC9psR11L396V_PBr6KZD0uA))

**QUOTE** “Return, a co-production with the Volksbühne theatre in Berlin and that began as a joke at the artistic demands of the German company, is a parodic and comical critique on popular German author Karl May’s racist attitudes—his writings are full of clichés and stereotypes of Albanians and Balkan people in general”, writes Howlround.com.

(link: <https://howlround.com/theatrical-talent-in-kosovo-yet-government-doesnt-support-it-properly?fbclid=IwAR3Hlo9xv8mEvxIWS7hPQvqdaYxSH8BCP4SLK0LkLPGYrsYYznMXQvBN8o>)

**QUOTE** “What appears as a public faux pas is in context a very well integrated stylistic decision made by Neziraj. Throughout the play, Neziraj stretches the gray zone between political criticism and entertaining cynicism in an assemblage of elaborate scenes and the restaging of the production process itself”, writes KOSOVO 2.0.

(link: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/the-return-of-karl-may/?fbclid=IwAR1cz6CvUdbxhQiOmCljzC5KvUxZRXRdVqdYbAtMjYwm77J8SqQ6NX11JW8>)



THE RETURN SPEAKS ABOUT THE PORTRETIZATION OF BALKANS IN WESTERN CULTURES AND MEDIA

On 18 November 2020, Qendra premiered *Audienca e Vaclav Havelit* (Audience by Vaclav Havel) directed by Agon Myftari at ODA Theatre in Prishtina. In *Audience by Vaclav Havel*, a director of a theater is visited by a police inspector carrying an investigation file named the “Theater File”. But this is not an ordinary inspector; he is a curious type who, before stumbling from one case to another, studies, analyzes, informs himself and only then starts his investigations.

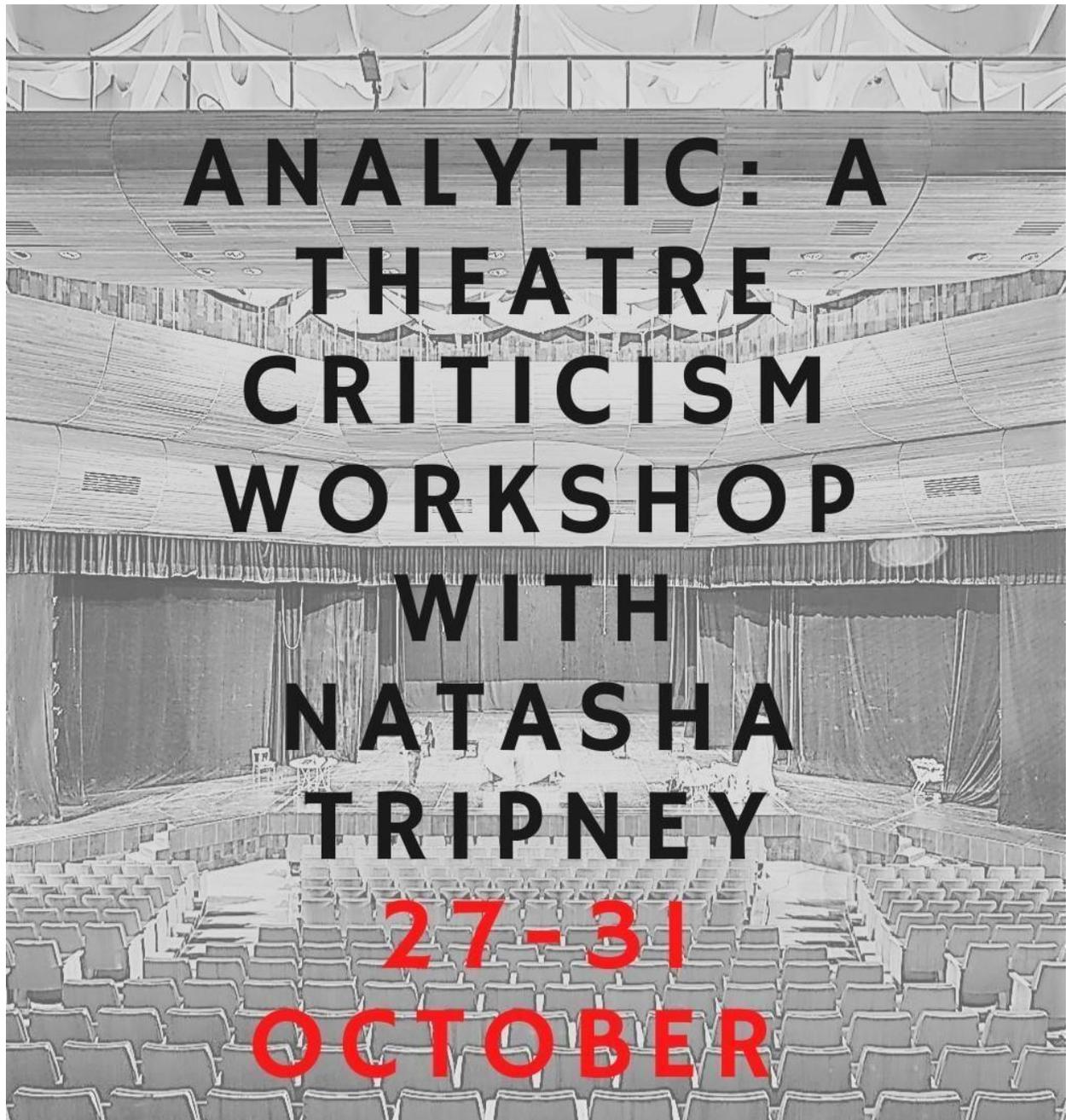
**QUOTE** “Beyond the extremely stinging irony for all that happened at Kosovo’s National Theatre, this drama goes ahead to unmask a state that has redundant laws but the Law is not respected”, writes Koha Ditore.

(link: <https://www.koha.net/kulture/246208/audienca-e-vaclav-havelitperballeshtetit-e-shoqerise-tragjikomike/>)



AUDIENCA BY VACLAV HAVEL WAS GREATLY RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC IN PRISHTINA

From 27 to 30 October 2020, Qendra Multimedia organized a *Theatre Criticism Workshop* with Natasha Tripney, a UK journalist who works for prestigious international media (The Guardian, The Stage etc.). During this capacity building workshop, about 8 youngsters had the opportunity to learn the craft of deconstructing a theatre play while focusing on specific theatre aspects as acting, directing, lights, choreography, scenography, lights or music. Each of the participants continuously worked to write short articles about performances staged during Kosovo Theatre Showcase 2020.



## OTHER NEWS

The prestigious UK theatre magazine The Stage has included Qendra's "55 Shades of Gay" in the list of 50 best stage shows that have been streamed online. (link: [https://www.thestage.co.uk/long-reads/the-50-best-stage-shows-to-stream-right-now-international?fbclid=IwAR3eRN911SMtHWBtE21zX95fhgzbMtkhjVPbWjfdTNRysz8fke\\_56vTM04](https://www.thestage.co.uk/long-reads/the-50-best-stage-shows-to-stream-right-now-international?fbclid=IwAR3eRN911SMtHWBtE21zX95fhgzbMtkhjVPbWjfdTNRysz8fke_56vTM04)).

Jeton Neziraj, the director of Qendra Multimedia was awarded with Europe Culture Award for his services (and also in the spirit of international diversity) — as cultural ambassador between East and West, overcoming national borders and cultural-historical barriers from and to Europe, and establishing meaningful collaborative connections in Kosovo, Europe and the USA. (link: [https://www.kfe.de/post.php?post\\_id=47&fbclid=IwAR2-0Q6an67WI5ZdLthpuhoYU919MC9WV6K1s\\_RFHAw7x4EFG22Lvo80T-Q](https://www.kfe.de/post.php?post_id=47&fbclid=IwAR2-0Q6an67WI5ZdLthpuhoYU919MC9WV6K1s_RFHAw7x4EFG22Lvo80T-Q)).

# THANK YOU! NOTE

OUR WORK WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

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**Rockefeller  
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**AUSTRIAN  
EMBASSY  
PRISTINA**



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