



I. CIRCUS AND THEATRE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

HISTORY

Combinations of theatre and circus techniques and themes in Czech theatre to 1989

Since the avant-garde era, the Czech theatre arts have incorporated circus arts and aesthetics. These trends can be traced in the work of the top representatives of the Czech theatre avant-garde, most notably the work of Jiří Frejka, who started out working with the Liberated Theatre (Osvobozené divadlo). The first performance by the Liberated Theatre in 1926, marking its launch, was a new premiere of Molière's George Dandin, adapted by Frejka and staged under the title Circus Dandin (Cirkus Dandin). The production was a mixture of clownery and farce and employed dancers, clowns, jugglers, and harlequins.

During the war years there was Větrník Theatre, which in 1942 staged the premiere of Castaways in the Circus Ring (Trosečníci v manéži), a work that made theatrical use of the attributes of circus clownery with an added element of eccentricity.

After the Second World War satire reached the Czech stage and was best represented by a company called the Theatre of Satire (Divadlo satiry). It introduced itself to Prague audiences with a production called Broken Trilogy (Rozbitá trilogie), which was followed in 1945 with the no less successful authorial work The Tin Circus (Cirkus Plechový). This production showed symbolic and formal links with the circus, and in it the circus served as a strict metaphor for the wartime and post-war world.

Ctibor Turba and Boleslav Polívka were two prominent modern Czech pantomime artists who drew extensively on circus techniques and poetics in their work. Ctibor Turba was a leading artist and pioneer of nonverbal theatre and clownery, but he was also an important teacher. In 1974 Turba won a scholarship to study under Professor Jacques Lecoq in Paris. He worked as a director, a dramaturge, and a mime with theatres in Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Locarno, Paris and Berlin, and in 1990 he started work on the project HAMR – Studio Kaple, a postgraduate centre for mime and dance theatre. He also taught at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU), Scuola Teatro Dimitri (he worked as a director for many years for Compagnia Teatro Dimitri), CNAC1 and the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (HAMU). His most important clown works include the productions Clownery (Klaunerie), Declownisation (Deklaunizace) and A Little Clownery (Malé klauniády), all of which originated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Ctibor Turba was also one of the first theatre artists to begin staging his theatrical clown productions in a circus tent. In the 1990s he founded and had built Alfred in the Court Theatre (Alfred ve dvoře divadlo), which today also stages new circus projects.

The second prominent representative of clown arts in the Czech theatre in the 1970s and 1980s was Boleslav Polívka. After graduating from secondary school he studied at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno and in 1971-1972 he was a member of a company called the Pantomime of Alfred Jarry (Pantomima Alfreda Jarryho) under Ctibor Turba. He became centred in Brno and in

a group called Goose on a String (Hus na provázku), which he joined in 1972. His best-known clown theatre productions included Am a Ea, Pezza versus Čorba, Pepé and Castaway (Trosečník). Boleslav Polívka also travelled with his productions to many European festivals.

CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS TODAY

'New circus' is the preferred term for this genre that is used in the Czech Republic, while 'contemporary circus' and other such terms never took root in the Czech scene. Czech contemporary circus did not emerge so much out of the circus arts as out of the theatre arts, stories, and themes, which then became an important source of the aesthetics of new circus productions.

Theatre artists and dancers familiar with circus techniques or studying them in the creative process have been the main initiators of new circus work in the Czech Republic. Like elsewhere in Europe, contemporary circus projects in the Czech Republic are multi-genre productions that overlap with theatre (nonverbal and straight theatre), dance and music; stage design, costumes, lighting design, and even puppet theatre techniques are other important components in these productions.

II.LEGISLATION AND FUNDING FOR CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

Circus is not yet an established and independent art form in the Czech Republic. In terms of cultural policy it figures between theatre, dance and nonverbal theatre.

There is no special legislation that applies to new circus in the Czech Republic. It is subject to the general legislation applicable in the field of culture.

Czech cultural policy does not apply to traditional circus arts, and despite the fact that there is a long tradition of Czech circus arts it is not even a form of cultural heritage.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Ministry of Culture - Arts Division

At the state level, the performing arts are supported out of the grant programmes of the Ministry of Culture. The ministry's Arts Division provides administrative oversight for the professional arts and once a year allocates grants based on a selection procedure to projects in five areas:

Musical arts - the field of alternative music

Musical arts - the field of classical music

Dance, movement and nonverbal theatre (in 2012 it will distribute 7 million Crowns)

Visual arts

Theatre arts (in 2012 it will distribute 16,300,000 CZK).

Each year there is less and less funding available to allocate to the individual fields supported.

Irregular support for new circus is currently provided in two areas: the theatre arts, and dance, movement and nonverbal theatre. Cirk La Putyka and the Forman Brothers Theatre regularly apply for support in the field of the theatre arts, and other subjects, festivals and companies apply for support in the field of professional dance and nonverbal theatre.

The table below offers a brief overview of the subsidies for the work and the development of new productions for four basic projects that operate year round in the Czech Republic: the Letní Letná Festival, Cirk La Putyka, Décalages – Theatre in Motion (Décalages – Divadlo v pohybu), and Cirqueon – Centre for New Circus. All the projects are funded as one-year grants; the Ministry of Culture does not offer multi-year grants. At present only the Letní Letná Festival has more secure financial support and in its nine years has acquired the position of a priority event of the Ministry of Culture.

www.mkcr.cz

An overview of funding from the Ministry of Culture for selected new circus projects in CZK

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
La Putyka	0	0	150,000	300,000	1,100,000
Décalages – Thea- tre in Motion	0	115,000	0	85,000	130,000
Cirqueon – Centre for New Circus	150,000	50,000	140,000	288,000	220,000
Letní Letná Festival	500,000	325,000	300,000	500,000	400,000

Source: Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, 2012

Ministry of Culture - Department of International Relations

The Department of International Relations of the Ministry of Culture is responsible for supporting the export of Czech cultural projects and presentations. At present grant support for international cooperation is limited to just the export of performances abroad. The sum allocated by the Department of International Relations decreases year by year and at present is just under ten million Czech Crowns.

In 2011 the company Cirk La Putyka obtained support for the export of productions to the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh in the amount of 490,000 CZK, 232,000 CZK for the project Visegrad Days, and 125,000 CZK for the export of the production Up'n'down to Bratislava.

www.mkcr.cz

THE STATE CULTURAL FUND

In 2012 the Ministry of Culture's State Cultural Fund began operating again and this year has 20 million CZK to distribute in the field of culture. The allocation of funding is currently being arranged, but unfortunately neither the rules nor the criteria according to which the committee will select the projects are very clear. Nevertheless, the revival of the SCF represents an additional and very necessary source of funding for culture.

www.mkcr.cz

THE ARTS AND THEATRE INSTITUTE

The Arts and Theatre Institute (ATI) is a state budgetary organisation that falls under the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. The ATI's mission is to provide the public in the Czech Republic and abroad with complex services in the field of theatre and individual services in other arts fields (music, literature, dance and the visual arts). The ATI collects, processes and provides access to collected artefacts relating to the theatre, focuses on research, provides a broad range of services in the field of theatre (with a library, videotheque, and bibliography and documentation departments, and through websites and databases), initiates and participates in international projects, promotes and presents Czech theatre abroad, engages in research, documentation, and collection work, and publishes specialised literature on theatre. The ATI also runs artist-in-residence exchange programmes in the arts.

The ATI's Documentation Centre collects information on new circus arts, organises conferences and seminars, and has significantly contributed to establishing new circus in the Czech Republic.

www.idu.cz

www.theatre.cz

www.divadlo.cz

www.culturenet.cz

CZECH CENTRES

The Czech Centres are state budgetary organisations that fall under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their purpose is to promote the Czech Republic abroad and thus also to support cultural activities in every field including the performing arts.

There are currently 21 Czech Centres abroad on three continents. Czech Centres organise their own cultural events (exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances) in the countries in which they are located and help Czech artists cover the costs of traveling to these countries.

www.czechcentres.cz

III.OPERATIONAL MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL COMPANIES IN THE CR

Thanks to its phenomenal success with audiences it has been somewhat easier for Cirk La Putyka to find partners and sponsors to support this large company. La Putyka does not have any permanent employees, but it has six positions that it would like to offer members of its production team and especially its actors. Other members will continue to work externally. In its first two performances La Putyka employed more than thirty artists and production and technical staff. Because it is a private legal entity, the total budget of La Putyka is not public, and it varies in relation to the number of activities that the group prepares during the year. For a rough idea, La Putyka's production Up'end'down, put on at the Prague stage La Fabrika, is 35% self-sufficient when the performances are sold out.3 Cirk La Putyka is a charitable trust organisation.

The Czech-French company Décalages – Theatre in Motion cofinances its theatre's operations and performances primarily from the commercial events in which they are able to take part thanks to cooperation with and agency backing from the company Art Prometheus. The theatre has two core artists, a production team, and external technicians, and none are engaged as permanent employees. Décalages – Theatre in Motion is a civic association.

Letní Letná Festival has obtained the largest amount of support from public sources thanks to its partnership with Prague City Hall, receiving a sum of 2,000,000 CZK, which is crucial to the project's survival. Nevertheless, the festival's total expenses are higher and higher each year and at present run at approximately eight million Crowns. The festival must consequently also seek funding from sponsors. The festival has no permanent employees and is organised by the civic association Gaspard.

Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary circus in the Czech Republic pursues its activities primarily with the help of volunteers. Some revenue for the project comes from course fees and the leasing of its space, a small amount of revenue is also generated from organising events, choreographic collaborations with professional theatres in Prague, and similar activities. Cirqueon is managed by the charitable trust organisation Zahrada o.p.s.

None of the cited projects attained financial support from the Culture Programme or otherwise directly from the European Union. Cirqueon partakes in smaller EU grant programmes such as Grundvic and Youth in Action .

Two projects not yet noted have a special system of funding worth mentioning. The first is Cirkus LeGrando, which is located in Kohoutovice in Brno. LeGrando operates as part of Lužánky, a budgetary organisation of Brno City Hall. At present Cirkus LeGrando has three full-time employees, and it generates revenue for external collaborators and trainers from course fees and other activities. Brno City Hall provides financial support to cover the costs of three full-time paid employees (plus each year they receive a grant for the project amounting to 20,000 – 30,000 CZK). The costs of operating LeGrando's building are fully covered by the Brno district of

Kohoutovice, which provides use of the building of a former school to LeGrando at no charge.

Another inspirational operational model is that of Cirkus Mlejn, which is based at Mlejn Cultural House (KD Mlejn) in Stodůlky in Prague. The acrobats are employed by KD Mlejn as teachers and performers and they also work on the production side. This enables them to create their own projects, they have rehearsal space and a theatre in which they put on their own and other projects.

A detailed analysis of the situation relating to the funding and activities of companies, festivals and training centres will be elaborated by Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary Circus over the course of 2012.

However, the biggest problems facing companies and organisations working in the field of new circus are already apparent. Above all it is the shortage of suitable training and rehearsal spaces, and there is no support for residencesfor artists, something that is common abroad.

IV. THE MAIN REPRESENTATIVES OF CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

COMPANIES Cirk La Putyka

Cirk La Putyka was founded in 2009 out of a project for a production titled La Putyka. The project was initiated by Rostislav Novák, a puppeteer and actor from the Kopecký family of puppeteers and circus artists. Cirk La Putyka very quickly gained popularity among the general public and after four years of operation became the most successful company in the Czech Republic. It has created four productions to date: La Putyka (directed by Rostislav Novák and SKUTR), Up'n'down (directed by Rostislav Novák), The Circus is On! (Cirkus bude!; directed by Rostislav Novák), and its portfolio also includes an international co-production with the Finnish group Circo Aereo and the performance Slapstic Sonata (directed by Maxim Komaro). At present it is preparing another premiere as part of the international project LACRIMAE directed by Rostislav Novák, this time with an international cast.

www.laputyka.cz

Contact: Vítek Novák, vitek@laputyka.cz

Décalages - Theatre in Motion

This Czech-French company is made up of two acrobats/actors: Salvi Salvatore and Seiline Vallée (former members of Continuo Theatre/Divadlo Continuo). Décalages – Theatre in Motion has been based in Prague since 2007. Seiline Vallée and Salvi Salvatore draw on the techniques and features of contemporary circus and physical, street, puppetry and straight theatre in combination with many other performance arts forms. The outcome of this theatrical transposition is a poetic visual language that is a mixture of aerial acrobatics, music, dance, scenography, and drama. During its existence it has created four productions: Obsession (Posedlost, directed by Irina Andreeva), TaBalada (directed by Zoja Mikotová), Homeless (Bez Země, directed by Véronic Joly) and On a Branch (Na Větvi, directed by Pierre Nadaud). They created their first performance Annual Rings (Letokruhy, directed by Pavel Štourač) in cooperation with Continuo Theatre.

www.decalages.eu

Contact: Art Prometheus, decalages@decalages.eu

Cirkus Mlejn

This young theatre group is founded on the skills of two graduates of the Department of Pantomime and Nonverbal Theatre at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague Eliška Brtnická and Jana Klimová. Both artists specialise primarily in acrobatics on silks and suspended horizontal bars. They started out with their graduation production Put the Kettle On! (Postav na čaj!) in 2010. The production won them warm acceptance not just among the general public but also among experts. In 2011 they staged their second premiere Emilie. Cirkus Mlejn is based in KD Mlejn in Stodůlky and there they organise courses in the circus arts for children, young

people and adults.

www.mlejn.cz

Contact: Dagmar Roubalová, mlejn@mlejn.cz

Forman Brothers Theatre

The Forman Brothers Theatre is not a fixed company of actors or theatre artists. It is an open community of people who want to work together and who are united by the same creative intuitions. The theatre bears the name of its three founders: the brothers Petr and Matěj Forman and a fellow student from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts Milan Forman. Other actors and nonactors join the company for each specific project. Their biggest theatre-circus projects include La Baraque-Bouda (in collaboration with Volière Dromesco) and Obludárium (a co-production with Théâtre National de Bretagne). The company specialises in working with puppets, movement theatre, and visual theatre, with the added use of techniques from acrobatics and clown arts. The Forman Brothers always come out with innovative, bold cross-genre projects - whether this involves the use their own unorthodox performance space the Mystery Boat, or theatre projects ranging from opera to puppet theatre.

www.formanstheatre.cz

Contact: production@formanstheatre.cz

Amanitas

The Prague-based Czech independent theatre company Amanitas was founded by Tereza Georgieva and Linda Mikolášková in 2010. They employ the techniques of physical theatre, circus, street theatre, acrobatics, fireshows and juggling. Costumes and masks figure prominently in their productions. Their successes include, for instance, a performance and narrative put on at Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

www.amanitas.cz

Contact: info@amanitas.cz

Brothers in Trick

The juggling duo Brothers in Trick (Bratři v tricku) is comprised of Václav Jelínek and Adam Jarchovský. Besides their artistic activities they also participate extensively in social-circus projects in the Czech Republic and abroad (with courses for child and adult patients at Bohnice Psychiatric Hospital, excursions to other countries and working with children in troubled regions such as Palestine, Kosovo, India). Brothers in Trick specialise in combining juggling with movement and performance. Their repertoire includes the street performance Painters (Malíři) and they are preparing their first feature performance combining juggling, acrobatics, and subtle comedy.

www.bratrivtricku.cz

Contact: Art Prometheus, office@artprometheus.cz

Other groups working in the Czech Republic include: Daemen, Kufr Theatre/Divadlo Kufr, Facka Theatre/Divadlo Facka, Cirkus TeTy, Long Vehicle Circus, V. O. S. A, Cirkus Le Vitare, Bilbo Compagnie, Circus Sacra, T.E.J.P, Pa-li-tchi, Vojta Vrtek, Squadra Sua, Health Clowns/Zdravotní klauni, Žonglér o.s., A Different Kind of Circus/Cirkus Trochu Jinak.

FESTIVALS

LetníLetná International Contemporary Circus and Theatre Festival

Letní Letná International Contemporary Circus and Theatre Festival is the oldest event of its kind in the Czech Republic. Since 2002 it has been regularly attracting top Czech and foreign contemporary circus companies to perform in the park in the Letná district of Prague. The festival's programme bravely engages large foreign companies and during its existence has introduced audiences to the French companies Cirque Ici, Cahin Caha, Les Colporteurs, Cirque Baroque, Malabar, Cirque Trottola, and the Swedish Cirkus Cirkör. It also of course features Czech companies such as La Putyka, Continuo Theatre/Divadlo Continuo, Décalages – Theatre in Motion, Forman Brothers Theatre, T.E.J.P., Cirkus Mlejn, Krepsko and others.

a two-week festival, August, Prague – Letná www.letniletna.cz,

Contact: Info@letniletna.cz

Cirk-UFF International Contemporary Circus Festival

Since 2011 Cirk-UFF International Contemporary Circus Festival is a regular part of the season of UFFO Trutnov Social Centre, the newly built multi-functional theatre building in the centre of the town of Trutnov. The aim of the first year of the festival was to introduce new circus as a unique artistic form to audiences in Northern Bohemia and to explore this genre in an area where no contemporary circus project had yet been presented. The festival aims to showcase always the best that is to be seen in Czech new circus (Czech Showcase). Foreign guests represent the second dramaturgical direction of the festival, which has presented, for instance, Compagnie EaEo (Belgium), Compagnie IETO (France), Akoreacro (France), Lonely Circus (France), Colectiff and then... (UK). The festival's programme is organised by Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary Circus.

four- to five-day festival, late May and early June, Trutnov www.cirkuff.cz

Contact: festival director: Libor Kasík, kasik@uffo.cz programme director: Šárka Maršíková, sarka@cirqueon.cz

FunFatale

In 2011 a unique international contemporary circus festival took place at KD Mlejn in Prague at which all the performers were women. The programme was centred mainly on smaller companies and stages. The first year hosted a discussion, 'Fatal Network', on the subject of women and circus arts. The festival saw performances from Czech companies Cirkus Mlejn and Cirkus Tety and companies from abroad, such as Jana Korb (Germany) Collectif and then...(UK), Ilona lanti (Finland).

February, Prague - Stodůlky

www.funfatale.cz

Contact: mlejn@mlejn.cz

Prague Juggling Marathon

The Prague Juggling Marathon is a loose continuation of the Czech Juggling Convention that was regularly organised up until 2008. That originally one-day event gradually evolved into a three-day marathon of workshops and performances open to anyone interested and held in a gymnasium located in Prague's Žižkov district. The programme includes fireshows, juggling workshops and a gala show. Teachers from abroad regularly participate in the event.

November, Prague – Žizkov

www.zongluj.cz

V. INFRASTRUCTURE

EDUCATION

No accredited circus school currently exists in the Czech Republic for training professional circus artists or professional new circus artists. Post-secondary institutions that offer dramatic arts programmes, the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno, do not have any programmes of education in the circus arts. Nevertheless, both academies offer programmes that teach at least some circus arts as part of training for a professional career in pantomime and nonverbal theatre.

SCHOOLS

The Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (HAMU)

Department of Pantomime and Nonverbal Theatre

The Department of Pantomime was founded at HAMU in 1992. It evolved out of a tradition of specialised study in the field of dance that was developed in the 1980s by Prof. Ladislav Fialka. After Prof. Fialka, Prof. Ctibor Turba continued the development of this field and introduced the wider concept of nonverbal theatre and comedy. He founded the department and headed it until 1999. Ctibor Turba was instrumental in advancing the field of movement theatre and modern pantomime not just in the Czech Republic but also in France and Switzerland. The programme focuses on three genres of movement theatre: pantomime, clown arts and farce. In recent years there has been growing interest in the study of circus techniques in the department.

JAMU

The Studio of Clown Arts for Stage and Film

Acrobatics and clown arts are circus techniques taught in the Studio of Clown Arts for Stage and Film at JAMU. The studio was also founded by Ctibor Turba and it is currently headed by the French teacher Pierre Nadaud. The studio's aim is not to train contemporary circus artists but to cultivate performers who have an understanding of the current forms of performing arts, including new circus.

CENTRES

Cirqueon - Centre for New Circus

In 2008 Cirqueon – Centre for Contemporary Circus became the umbrella organisation for contemporary circus in the Czech Republic. Its primary activities are aimed at supporting and advancing contemporary circus in the Czech Republic and disseminating information about current events in this field. Since early 2010 it has had its own training centre, where it regularly offers courses in acrobatics and juggling for children, young people, and adults, and which also serves as a base where professional artists can engage in creative work. Cirqueon also has a research, education and information centre with its own specialised library and video library thematically focused on circus arts. In 2011 Cirqueon began to focus systematically on advancing social-circus projects and is currently

coordinating the development of a Czech-Slovak platform (network) for the development of social circus.

Cirqueon is an educational, production, and organisational institution, and thanks to its many contacts abroad and to international cooperation it is able to bring to the Czech Republic essential information on new circus education, cultural policy, management, international creative projects, and more. Cirqueon is a member of the Circostrada network, FEDEC and SIBMAS, and is a partner in the European education project EDUCIRCATION and a partner of the European platforms Circus Next (JTCE) and The Circle Arts.

www.cirqueon.cz info@cirqueon.cz

KD Mlejn

KD Mlejn is a charitable trust organisation that has been operating since July 2006 in Stodůlky in Prague as the successor to what was originally a state budgetary organisation. It courses in the field of culture for the district of Prague 13 and the City of Prague as a whole. KD Mlejn is also the base of Cirkus Mlejn, a group of professional acrobats who have made KD Mlejn their home stage and alongside presenting their own projects also run courses for children, young people and adults specialising in aerial acrobatics. KD Mlejn is also an open space for the presentation of Czech contemporary circus projects, where both professional and semi-professional companies can stage their work. Since 2011 it has organised the contemporary circus festival FunFatale.

www.mlejn.cz mlejn@mlejn.cz

Cirkus LeGrando

Cirkus LeGrando is a project run by Lužánky – Recreational Centre in Brno. It originated in 2005 at the initiative of a group of young jugglers and teachers as a pilot project to develop the skills of children and young people in the framework of recreational activities. It experiments with the creative arts and street theatre projects and organises juggler conventions. Thanks to long-term contacts with colleagues in Germany (Jugendhaus Fasanenhof Stuttgart) it is also part of the European platform. LeGrando's is based in a building in Kohoutovice in Brno and during the summer it also operates out of a small circus tent where it runs projects for children and young people (e.g. workshops, summer camps, suburban camps). Besides recreational activities LeGrando also works to include circus arts in school curricula.

www.legrando.cz

Umcirkum

Umcirkum devotes itself to teaching circus arts to young people and adults. Umcirkum is the only civic association devoted to circus arts in the Moravia-Silesia Region and based in Ostrava. The aim of the association is to organise recreational activities with a special focus on physical activities. It also pursues social-circus projects and engages in prevention work to combat socio-pathological phenomena.

www.umcirkum.cz

Contemporary circus performance spaces

There are both new and reconstructed spaces in the Czech Republic that often present new circus performances as they are equipped with sufficiently large halls and the necessary equipment to do so.

Such venues include Archa Theatre/Divadlo Archa, La Fabrika, KD Mlejn, DIOD and UFFO Social Centre/Společenské centrum UFFO in Trutnov. Smaller new circus groups that do not require special spatial arrangements and can make do with the traditional stage format make use of Prague venues like NoD and Alfred in the Court Theatre. Contemporary circus performances can most often be found at La Fabrika arts centre in Holešovice, which is where Cirk La Putyka is based. The Forman Brothers Theatre had its own 'circus tent' designed by NAPO for its production Obludárium.

Cirk La Putyka has been working out of a borrowed circus tent for several months for its project ChapiteauX.



