



DUBROVAČKE LJETNE IGRE DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL

OD SIGURATE 1 · 20000 DUBROVNIK · HRVATSKA · TEL. ++385 (0)20 326 100 · FAX: ++385 (0)20 326 116
E-MAIL: SECRETARIAT@DUBROVNIK-FESTIVAL.HR · INFO@DUBROVNIK-FESTIVAL.HR
WWW.DUBROVNIK-FESTIVAL.HR

FINAL PREMIERE DRAMA TITLE AT THE 74TH FESTIVAL

The *Melancholy Women of Ragusa* from Thursday in Gradac Park

Dubrovnik, 14 August 2023 – This year's fourth and last drama premiere, Marijana Fumić's *The Melancholy Women of Ragusa*, directed by **Dora Ruždjak Podolski** and performed by the **Festival Drama Ensemble**, is on the programme **from Thursday, 17 August to Monday, 21 August**, and will be staged **in Gradac Park**. On this occasion, a befitting presentation was held at the location of the play, where the director Dora Ruždjak Podolski, the author and dramaturge Marijana Fumić were joined by Director of the OTP Bank Business Center Dubrovnik and Southern Dalmatia **Josipa Vodenac** who spoke on behalf of the donors of the play, while the female part of the cast briefly presented their roles.

– *The Melancholy Women of Ragusa* was supposed to be my creative project, in the sense of a completely free structure and a research modality established between the creative team and the actors, and these wonderful nine actresses were chosen as representatives of the Croatian theatre, as it is today and as it will become. Somehow, in the process, in which we divided the female roles to our interpreters, according to their style, inclinations and aura, it emerged that the author of the text will be Marijana Fumić, who studied the extensive literature on women in Dubrovnik's history from the 13th to the 20th century back when working on the play *Lion House*. This is the story of nine extraordinary women; *The Melancholy Women of Ragusa* is a paraphrase of Shakespeare's title *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the play does not necessarily have anything to do with melancholy, but it has to do with women – pointed out the director of the play, **Dora Ruždjak Podolski**.

In addition to director Dora Ruždjak Podolski, the creative team consists of dramaturges **Marijana Fumić** and **Stela Mišković**, set designer **Stefano Katunar**, costume designer **Manuela Paladin Šabanović**, stage movement advisor **Saša Božić**, composer **Maro Market**, lighting designer **Elvis Butković**, speech advisor **Maro Martinović** and stage manager **Roko Grbin**.

– To me, the material that greeted me is truly beautiful, and I thank all the scientists who have dealt with the history of Dubrovnik and specifically these women that we will talk about. My research is mainly based on them, and the text that was created was inspired by these actresses. I tried to stay true to the women we dealt with, because they were all real women – said author and dramaturge **Marijana Fumić** about the process of research and writing the text.

The cast consists of nine women and one man: Marija Gučetić is embodied by **Nataša Dangubić**, Filipa Menčetić by **Gloria Dubelj**, Maruša hodočasnica by **Anica Kontić**, Jelena Dorotka Hofmann by **Nataša Kopeč**, Jelena Pucić Sorkočević by **Iva Kraljević**, Anica Bošković by **Lana Meniga**, Pavle Čelović by **Lidija Penić-Grgaš**, Lucija Miladinović by **Lucija Rukavina**, Nika Našimoka by **Nikolina Prkačin**, and Marin Klišmanić is playing all their men.

The donor of the play is the Festival's longtime partner, **OTP bank**, and during the presentation of the premiere, OTP Bank Business Center Dubrovnik and Southern Dalmatia **Josipa Vodenac**, presented a donation check worth 24,000 euros to the Director of the Dubrovnik Summer Festival, **Ivana Medo Bogdanović**.

– We are extremely proud of the cooperation between OTP Bank and the Dubrovnik Summer Festival and that we have been helping to realize this prestigious cultural event for Dubrovnik and Croatia, for more than three decades. As a bank that is deeply connected to the Dubrovnik region, we are especially glad that this year we are also supporting a drama premiere that searches for the outlines of the everyday life of the Dubrovnik community and focuses on the life of women during the Republic – concluded **Josipa Vodenac**.

Dora Ruždjak Podolski has directed around seventy theatrical, operetta and opera projects, at the Croatian National Theatres of Zagreb, Split, Osijek and Rijeka, the Dubrovnik Summer Festival, the Komediya City Theatre, the Trešnja City Theatre, the Zagreb Youth Theatre and the Gavella Dramatic Theatre, as well as in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Russia and Canada. She has directed award ceremonies for the Crni Mačak Award, the Porin Discography Award, the Croatian Theatre Award, as well as the Dubrovnik Summer Festival Opening Ceremony and official celebration of Croatia's accession to the EU. In 2001 she founded the Association of Frustrated Theatre Directors (KUFER) with Franka Perković, which has promoted a number of young artists, directors, actors, dancers and choreographers. They have been the leaders of the Ruždjak and Perković Art Organisation (RUPER) since 2012. She has won numerous awards and accolades, including the Goran Award for Young Poets, the Croatian Theatre Awards for her direction of *Chicago* (2004), *Beauty and the Beast* (2008), *Madame Buffault* (2015) and *Black Mother Earth* (2017), and awards for direction of *Black Mother Earth* at the 32nd Gavella Evenings and the 28th Marulić Days and 35th Gavella Evenings award for the direction of *The Miser*. *Rent a friend*, a play she co-wrote with director Saša Božić, won the ASSITEJ Award for Best Dramatic Text in 2012. She is Assistant Professor of acting at the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Art and the Zagreb Academy of Music, and at the Zagreb Academy of Music.

Tickets for the premiere play *The Melancholy Women of Ragusa* are available via the festival website www.dubrovnik-festival.hr or the service www.ulaznice.hr, at the box office in the

Festival Palace (Od Sigurate 1) every day from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and in front of the DTS building (Vukovarska St) from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Dubrovnik Summer Festival – the centre of Croatian and global spirit and culture, a place of creation and not just a place of visit, a place of community, ideas and new artistic expressions, is traditionally supported once again this year by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, the City of Dubrovnik, the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Dubrovnik Tourist Board and numerous sponsors Mastercard, Dubrovnik Airport, ACI club, ALH, Euroherc, Studenac, HEP, Croatian Lottery, Coca-Cola, MG Motors, Kraš, Croatia Airlines, and donors OTP bank, Atlantska Plovidba alongside other benefactors who helped bring this most prestigious cultural event in Croatia to fruition.

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Media contact:

Katija Krečak Jarović

PR and Marketing Department

M. 095 323 20 52 / T. 020 326 111

E. katija.krecak.jarovic@dubrovnik-festival.hr

www.dubrovnik-festival.hr