



**MITTELFEST 2020: Empathy**  
**5 - 13 September, Cividale del Friuli**  
**Artistic direction by Haris Pašović**

**With 25 artistic projects, 10 world/Italian premieres, 3 Mittelforums: the theme of Mittelfest 2020 is Empathy: the vision of a new possible world after the pandemic, conveyed through music, theatre and dance, with open questions.**

**Maintaining an international dimension, European collaborations and nurturing the dialogue between its border territory and Central Europe, this year Mittelfest supports Italian artists in particular with 17 shows.**

**Special attention goes to new digital languages and new technology, in a surprisingly human form, and their increasingly leading role in the present and as bridges for the future. YET how much do they interfere in an empathic relationship and in the perception of reality?**

*PRESS RELEASE*

Will really the dawn of a new way of living arise after the pandemic that united the whole world in a common challenge? And will EMPATHY, the ability to share someone else's feelings, become the launching pad for a common future? And how much respect for specificities is a wealth not to be lost? Then, what are the boundaries that bring value and those of fear? These are some of the inevitable questions on the reconstruction of the world to come, after the world we knew was shaken to its foundations by COVID-19.

Hence **Mittelfest 2020 - festival of music, theatre and dance** from the countries of Central Europe and the Balkans - is dedicated precisely to the theme of **EMPATHY**. Moved from the traditional month of July to September, in order to guarantee a prestigious programme, with international guests and shows all in closed COVID-19-free spaces, the festival will be **on stage in Cividale del Friuli from 5 to 13 September** once again under the artistic direction by **Haris Pašović**, multiple award-winning theatre and cinema director from Sarajevo, in the last year of his three-year tenure, and led by **a new Board of Directors, chaired by Roberto Corciulo, that has set itself an ambitious goal:** not only to strengthen Mittelfest, but to build a new Central European platform that synergistically

manages to combine the performing arts with relationships, business and cultural tourism, to be an active part of a process that leads to a rebirth not only of culture but of Italy.

Among **major national and international** guests, **in numerical terms** this year Mittelfest has **25 artistic projects** - 14 musical, 9 theatrical, 2 dance projects - and 3 forums. These stunningly include **10 world and Italian premieres**. And from August 21, important collateral events will lead up to the actual festival.

## Empathy

So the artistic director **Haris Pašović explains the choice of the theme** of Mittelfest 2020: "If you get injured and bleed, you would prefer to have your dear friend by your side at that critical moment who faints when he sees blood or a competent doctor who can stop the bleeding, acting professionally without any feeling?" This question, posed by the late American scientist Carl Sagan, and some related ideas brought up for discussion by the famous Italian psychoanalyst Massimo Recalcati, sharpen our thoughts on the meaning of empathy. What is empathy? Is a world without empathy possible? On the contrary, is a world with too much empathy - so Pašović still says - completely useless, full of infinite feelings and blurred minds? This is why we have chosen empathy as the main theme of Mittelfest 2020".

## The programme

On **September 5th** the **INAUGURATION** of Mittelefest features two first-class world premieres.

On the one hand, *Il Terzo Reich* (Third Reich), performance with video installation by **Romeo Castellucci**, one of the most famous Italian artists world-wide for the courage and depth of his artistic research, who makes us think about the strength of language and repeated words to manipulate reality with his new performance, accompanied by Scott Gibbons' sounds. On the other hand, **Alessandro Benvenuti** in *Panico ma rosa – dal diario di un non intubabile* (Panic but pink - from the diary of a non-intubable one) presents one of the first plays that emerged from the COVID-19 period, a pressing monologue on his own experience of the suspended months of lockdown, with alternately tragic and comic outcomes. The festival first day presents also two musical projects: the mezzosoprano **Valentina Volpe Andreazza** with the **Abdo Buda Marconi Trio** combine Klezmer, Balkan and Caucasian sounds; in the evening the Duomo hosts a great concert of the della **FVG Orchestra** conducted by **Filippo Maria Bressan**, under the title *Per un Mondo Nuovo* (For a New World), together with the **Choir of Friuli Venezia Giulia** conducted by Cristiano Dell'Oste, with music from Mozart's *Requiem*, dedicated to the victims of COVID-19 pandemic, and from Symphony no.9 *From the New World* by Antonín Dvořák, for an hoped-for rebirth.

In the programme, grouping **performances by thematic areas**, the theme of **totalitarianism**, as a lesson from the past and as a separation and lack of positive empathy, is the protagonist of two events: *Srebrenica* (11 September) by **Roberta Biagiarelli**, in memory of the 25th years from the Bosnian genocide in Srebrenica, and *Deve Trattarsi di autentico amore per la vita* (It must be a genuine love for life, 6 September), **Maddalena Crippa's** reading from *Diaries 1941–1943* by the very sympathetic Dutch mystic Etty Hillesum, who tells the Shoah in an unprecedented way, as a progressive path of inner growth and enlightenment, that is stronger than the perpetrated atrocities. The same theme is developed by the new creation of a much beloved theatre and cinema actor, **Elio Germano**, who in *Segnale d'allarme* (Warning signal, 7-9 September) offers a virtual transposition of his show, *La mia battaglia* (My fight), written with **Chiara Lagani** and taken from the Italian translation of Adolf Hitler's *Mein*



# Mittelfest

*Kampf*. Here the audience is enabled to relive through viewers the theatre piece from the front row by immersing themselves completely and confusing imagination and reality.

**Experimentation and multimedia** characterize also 3 Italian premieres in cooperation with **Dutch Performing Arts**, that renews its support for the second year. First the concert *The Falsify Cycle* by the young composer and inventor of surprising instruments **Akim Moiseenkov**, who questions us and himself about the concept of true and false (6 September, a Mittelfest co-production), followed by *Muhammad* (9 September), a very original concert of **Ikarai** ensemble paying a tribute to the boxing legend, and finally the **Tin Men and the Telephone** (8 September), which take us on an imaginative space journey to a new habitable planet with *The GREATEST Show (Global Relocation of Evolved Apes Towards Exoplanet Suitable for Terraformation)*, a performance that combines improvised jazz music, visuals and audience participation via a smartphone app.

The **fracture between humanity and the environment** is also dealt with in *19 luglio 1985* (19 July 1985, 12 September), a project of prose, great music and choral performances, by **Marco Bernardi** under the direction of **Filippo Andreatta**, which traces the alpine tragedy of the landslide in Val di Stava, where 268 people died.

A **visionary perspective** is offered by **Emma Dante's** theatre, one of the most appreciated Italian playwrights and directors at international level, who resumes her *Misericordia* tour, interrupted by the lockdown (10 September, in cooperation with CSS – Teatro Stabile di Innovazione del Friuli Venezia Giulia), to tell the fragility of women in a marginalized context and in a timeless Sicily.

Inspired by a sort of magical realism was also the theatre of the Slovenian **Tomaz Pandur**, who was repeatedly welcome in Mittelfest and died prematurely in 2016. To him his company pays homage with the posthumous show *Immacolata* (7 September), which investigates the story of Mary, mother of Jesus, depicted from a human and transcendent point of view, by imagining what followed the Passion, in the pages that have never been written about her. From the **Balkans** is also the Serbian family drama in national premiere *Till death do us part* (7 September) by **Mira Furlan**, directed by **Miki Manojlović**, a director renowned at European level: in an almost Chekhovian atmosphere, it tells a family life in correspondence with disappointments in history, but also the glimpses of light that arise from the shadows.

The **great music** programme includes another visionary, for some even a priest of musical notes for his research at the roots of the human and the sacred: **Vinicio Capossela**, who brings his new *Pandemonium* narrative concert (12 September) with a selection of stories and songs from his repertoire which turns thirty this year.

As for classic music, the **Philharmonic String Quartet** (13 September), young musicians of the historic ensemble of the Berliner Philharmoniker, perform music by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Another Italian premiere is **Michele Marco Rossi**, one of the most promising young experimenters on the Italian scene, considered the new Sollima, on stage with the cello concert produced by Mittelfest *Hurt/Heart* (8 September) and Maestro **Giovanni Sollima** himself, an out of the ordinary composer and a cello virtuoso, who performs the *Folk Cello* concert (11 September).

In addition, Mittelfest aims to support the **local musical talents**. In the forthcoming edition they are represented by the Russian pianist **Gala Chistiakova**, one of the winners of the

International piano competition of Friuli Venezia Giulia, who performs a piano recital (10 September, in collaboration with PianoFVG); **Valentina Danelon** and **Nicoletta Sanzin**, award-winning artists who play *Meditations*, a concert for violin and harp (12 September, production by Progetto Musica); **Maria Iaiza**, piano, the wind quartet of **Irene Fiorino** oboe, **Federico Martinello** clarinet, **Nicola Fattori** horn, **Tara Lešnik** bassoon, with **Luca Trabucco** piano, and the pianist **Piero Franceschetto**, selected musicians of the Conservatories G. Tartini of Trieste, J. Tomadini of Udine and Associazione Progetto Musica, protagonists of the *Empatia* concert (13 September, Production by Mittelfest).

**The dance** events include one of the most celebrated regional companies, renown at national level, **Arearea**, led by choreographer **Marta Bevilacqua**, with the show *Il Rovescio* (The Reverse, 10 September), which again develops the theme of the difficult distinction between truth and falsehood, with inspirations from Camus and music by Pink Floyd. Another dance performance brings to Cividale the colours of Africa, *Dannatamente libero* (Pretty damn free, September 9), written by **Sonia Antinori** and directed by **Filippo Ughi**, an Italian premiere which explores once more the relationship between truth and narration by staging the meeting of different cultures and interreligious dialogue.

A **Grand finale** on the closing day (13 September) with two special artistic projects. In the morning the “theatrical concert on boundary areas” *Sconfinati* (Boundless), with the **Choir of Friuli Venezia Giulia** conducted by **Cristiano Dell'Oste**, and in the evening the theatre, music and multimedia show, a world premiere, *Giorgio Mainerio, un mistero furlan*, screenplay and artistic direction by **Marco Maria Tosolini**, co-directed with Paolo Antonio Simioni: a play for words, sounds, bodies, visuals on the mysterious history of Mainerio, musician, priest and, probably, a necromancer in 16th century Friuli, where the sacred and the profane merged. This is a Mittelfest 2020 and ARLeF Agenzie Regionâl pe Lenghe Furlane production, and the audience will also take part in the play.

In addition to the artistic projects, Mittelfest 2020 plays host to **3 in-depth forums**, while two intense weekends will give a preview of the festival from 21 August and will be presented soon.

Mittelfest of course is also its own territory and its city, Cividale, a UNESCO World Heritage Site: a network of audiences, artists, guests, citizens and a network of hotels, restaurants and cafés and bars, in a region whose history, food and drink make it one of Italy’s most renowned. An international food and wine landmark surrounded by the unique landscapes of Natisone Valley, the perfect land for a slow, COVID-19-free tourism.

## Tickets

**Tickets:** online ([www.mittelfest.org](http://www.mittelfest.org)) or in Vivaticket stores from August 15<sup>th</sup>.

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Mittelfest has the **support of** Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, the Municipality of Cividale, CiviBank, ERT FVG (members of Associazione Mittelfest), Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, Fondazione Friuli, Chamber of Commerce of Udine and Pordenone, ARLeF - Agenzie Regionâl pe Lenghe Furlane Convivio Zorzettig, APT, Fazioli, and is **sponsored by the CEI** - Central European Initiative. It also renews its **international collaboration** with **Dutch Performing Arts**, which works on the international promotion of Dutch shows with the contribution of the Performing Arts Fund NL and supports 3 high-level musical projects. **Media partner** of Mittelfest are Radio 3 Rai, Rai 5, Rai Cultura, Rai Friuli Venezia Giulia, Telefriuli. Mittelfest is member of European Festivals Association, Italiafestival.



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