

MEMORY AND CULTURAL IMPACT: THE UNION OF EUROPEAN THEATRES FESTIVAL **IN ROMANIA**

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Abstract: This article aims to provide a concise analysis of the trajectory of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe (UTE Fest) in Romania. The first edition of the festival took place in Bucharest in 1995, organized by the Lucia Sturdza Bulandra Theatre, one of the seven founding members of the Union of the Theatres of Europe. Since then, this prestigious theatrical event returned to Romanian stages in 2008, both in Bucharest and in Cluj-Napoca, through the collaboration between the Bulandra Theatre and the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca. In recent years, the festival has been held exclusively in Cluj-Napoca, in 2019 and 2023, under the patronage of the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca. Through the festival, Romanian audiences have had the opportunity to watch productions directed by prominent figures of European theatre, such as Giorgio Strehler, with *The Island of Slaves* by Marivaux, staged by Piccolo Teatro di Milano (1995); Lev Dodin, with *Gaudeamus*, adapted from Serghei Kaledin and produced by Maly Drama Theatre (1995); Declan Donnellan, with *Boris Godunov*, a production created in collaboration with the International “Golden Mask” Festival in Moscow and the Cheek by Jowl company in London; and Pippo Delbono, with *The Lie*, a production of the Fondazione del Teatro Stabile di Torino & Teatro di Roma (2008).

Keywords: UTE – Union des Théâtres de l’Europe/Union of European Theatres, European Union, Bulandra Theatre, The Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca, Gábor Tompa.

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Introduction

The Union of the Theatres of Europe was founded at the initiative of several theatres from Italy, France, and Spain, which decided to form an international alliance under the name Théâtres de l’Europe/Teatri d’Europa. In 1990, the French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, together with the director of Piccolo Teatro di Milano, Giorgio Strehler, officially formalized the establishment of L’Union des Théâtres de l’Europe (UTE).

Among the seven founding members of the Union of the Theatres of Europe (UTE) was the Bulandra Theatre in Bucharest, which at that time was renowned for its artistic ensemble developed under the guidance of director Liviu Ciulei.

We created the Union of the Theatres of Europe at a time when a politically unified Europe was still slow to emerge, and when we—a group of European theatre practitioners who believed in the value of European culture and in the necessity of promoting it—felt that we

could contribute, through theatre, to the culture of our continent. The initial aim was to foster an exchange of ideas and performances, and to get to know one another better. Subsequently, we considered meeting each year in a different member country for a festival lasting one or two weeks, depending on available possibilities. (Strehler, 1998, p. 81-83)

In its early years, the UTE focused on organizing periodic festivals aimed at fostering cultural rapprochement between Eastern and Western Europe. Gradually, the organization evolved into an alliance of European theatres with both artistic and political objectives, capitalizing on existing cultural platforms to encourage professional exchanges and to support an open and culturally integrated Europe.

The first president of the Union of the Theatres of Europe was Giorgio Strehler, followed by a series of prominent directors: Gábor Zsámbéki (1998–2004), Alexandru Darie (2006–2011), Ilan Ronen, former director of the Habima Theatre in Israel (2011–2015), Michael Docekal (2015–2018), and, since 2018, the presidency has been held by Gábor Tompa, director of the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca.

The UTE Festival debuted in 1992 in Düsseldorf, organized by the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus. Subsequent editions were held in Budapest in 1993, hosted by the Katona József Színház Theatre, and in Milan in 1994, organized by Piccolo Teatro di Milano—Teatro d'Europa.

In Romania, the festival was organized for the first time in 1995 by the Bulandra Theatre and represented a prestigious event through the participation of numerous member theatres of the Union, many of which were present in Bucharest for the first time.

We will argue for the cultural significance of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe by analyzing contemporary reviews and by presenting the internationally renowned figures who contributed to the four editions held in Romania, in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. These accounts and influential presences highlight the festival's essential role in promoting intercultural dialogue and in strengthening the connections among European theatres within the context of the Romanian theatrical scene.

1. Giorgio Strehler at the opening of the UTE Festival in Bucharest

In an interview granted to *Teatrul Azi* magazine, Giorgio Strehler emphasized that the Bucharest edition of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe was a genuine success, a fact reflected in the remarkable audience attendance and the considerable number of tickets sold.

The fifth edition of the festival opened at the Izvor Hall of the Bulandra Theatre with *The Island of Slaves* by Marivaux, directed by Giorgio Strehler. Contemporary theatre criticism extensively documented this event, welcoming both the international presence and the indisputable quality of the performances included in the programme.



Pamela Vilarosi, Laura Marinoni and Renato De Carmine in *The Island of Slaves*
Image source: Catalog of the Festival of the Union of European Theaters,
4th Edition, October 17–November 26, 1995

In the pages of *Revista 22*, Irina Coroiu records a memorable moment in the history of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe in Bucharest: during the second performance of the highly anticipated production *The Island of Slaves* by Marivaux, directed by Giorgio Strehler, a power outage occurred at the Bulandra Theatre. Surprised by the situation, the actors of Piccolo Teatro did not interrupt the performance; instead, they adapted and continued to play by candlelight, thereby offering a theatrical experience of remarkable authenticity and intensity: “After a prolonged suspension in darkness, the audience is invited into the magical ritual of an initiatory journey meant to recover the humanity within each individual, regardless of rank or temperament” (Coroiu, 1995, p. 14).

As a result of this unexpected incident, the performance acquired almost magical dimensions, and both actors and spectators became fully immersed in Marivaux’s fascinating universe, transforming the encounter into an unforgettable experience.



Pamela Vilarosi and Mattia Sbragia in
The Island of Slaves

Image source: Catalog of the Festival of
the Union of European Theaters,
4th Edition, October 17–November 26,
1995

The theatre critic Natalia Stancu, recognized for her direct and incisive style, observes that *The Island of Slaves* does not reach the level of some of Strehler's other creations, such as *The Cherry Orchard* by A.P. Chekhov (1974, Piccolo Teatro, Milan) or *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare (1978, Piccolo Teatro, Milan). Nevertheless, she acknowledges the beauty of stage imagery and the clarity with which the director's ideas are conveyed.

The Island of Slaves is a consummate камерал proposition, a true jewel in terms of style and the virtuosity of both conception and performance. It distinguishes itself through simplicity, extreme elegance, and the filigreed precision with which its theatrical tableaux are composed—qualities enhanced by Ezio Frigerio's scenographic solutions, which envision a décor of white canvases functioning as opaque or translucent screens, or as mirrors, alongside costumes in delicate pastel shades. Equally striking is the desire to restore a vigorous theatrical tradition that profoundly shaped European art for several centuries. Also compelling is the intention to revive the Masks, the spirit, and the

style of Improvisation characteristic of *Commedia dell'Arte*, as well as the aspiration to convey through them a message of warm humanity. (Stancu, 1995, p. 15)

Another highly anticipated presence in Bucharest was that of the renowned director Lev Dodin and the productions staged at the Maly Drama Theatre. In her reviews, the critic Marina Constantinescu analyzes the two performances invited to the UTE Festival: *Stars in the Morning Sky* and *Gaudeamus*.

Stars in the Morning Sky by Alexandr Galin explores the lives of marginalized women in the context of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games. During this period, the Soviet authorities relocated individuals considered undesirable, including prostitutes, in order to project a favorable image of the country. The play examines the complexity of human relationships and the profound impact of social policies on the individual, revealing the psychological nuances and moral dilemmas faced by the characters within a restrictive society.

Lev Dodin's staging of *Stars in the Morning Sky* established itself in the theatrical world through the quality and depth of the actors' performances, as the director transformed Alexandr Galin's text into an intense and revelatory experience for the audience. Through his approach, Dodin succeeded in illuminating the psychological subtleties of each character, exploring their inner motivations and the conflict between personal aspirations and the social constraints imposed by the Soviet regime.



Tatiana Chestakova
in *Stars in the Morning Sky*.
Image source: Catalog of the Festival of the
Union of European Theaters,
4th Edition, October 17–November 26, 1995

The production excelled through its meticulous attention to detail and through a mode of actor direction that allowed for a profound exploration of the characters' vulnerabilities and moral dilemmas. Under Dodin's direction, the characters acquired an existential dimension, reflecting on their marginalized status and on the ways in which state policies shaped and influenced their lives.

Rarely does one have the chance to witness on stage such richness of substance in performance, such nuance within a finely accomplished theatrical language. In *Stars in the Morning Sky*, the director placed his trust in the score of each actor's performance. (Constantinescu, 1995, p. 11)

Based on the novella *The Construction Battalion* by Serghei Kaledin, *Gaudeamus* premiered in 1990, within the context of significant political transformations in Eastern Europe, marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the initiation of perestroika in the Soviet Union. The production constituted a sharp satire of compulsory military service in the Soviet Union.

Gaudeamus distinguished itself through its innovative approach and through the manner in which it reflected the social and political realities of the period. In Bucharest, Lev Dodin's staging was highly appreciated for its exceptional acting performances and for its ability to combine elements of realism with symbolism, thereby offering a critical perspective on Soviet society and its impact on the individual.



A scene from the play *Gaudeamus*, directed by Lev Dodin
Image source: Catalog of the Festival of the Union of European Theaters,
4th Edition, October 17–November 26, 1995

The entire performance is a satire of extraordinary cruelty directed at its own aberrant, humiliating, and inefficient Soviet system—a system of indoctrination and dehumanization. The absurdity of situations and language, the clichés, slogans, military drills, and the escapist outbursts into drinking, sex, and drugs acquire an exuberant stage visualization. Hallucinatory are the rhythm of the performance—allowing not a single moment of respite over two and a half hours—its dynamism, the demanding physical condition of the young actors, and the relentless cascades of laughter and tears that follow one another without pause. It becomes a fully realized ballet, continuous, set to classical, pop, rock, and jazz music, in which the entire body—hands, fingers, face, eyes, shoulders—vibrates, moves, tenses, and arches with sculptural intensity. (Constantinescu, 1995, p. 11)

Over the following twelve years, the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe was organized in various European countries, consolidating its role as an essential platform for cultural and artistic exchange among prestigious theatres across the continent. Through its annual rotation across different locations, the festival established a broad and diversified cultural presence, highlighting its international character and its capacity to integrate local artistic influences within a broader European context.

The first edition within this period took place in Poland in 1996, hosted by the Słaski Theatre in Kraków, one of the country's oldest and most respected theatrical institutions. It was followed by Greece in 1997, where the National Theatre of Northern Greece in Thessaloniki contributed to the promotion of Hellenic culture through a representative selection of performances. In 1998, the festival moved to Sweden, at the Royal Dramatic Theatre (Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern) in Stockholm, providing Swedish audiences with access to innovative productions and fostering a significant intercultural dialogue.

France hosted the festival in 1999 at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg, renowned for its emphasis on experimental theatre and its openness to new forms of scenic expression. In 2000, the festival took place at the Katona József Theatre in Budapest, contributing to the promotion of the Hungarian theatrical tradition. Italy was the next host, in 2001, at the Teatro Garibaldi in Palermo, while in 2002 the festival returned to France, at the Théâtre National Populaire in Villeurbanne, a symbol of high-quality popular theatre.

In 2003, Russia hosted the festival at the Maly Theatre in Saint Petersburg, emphasizing the historical and cultural connections between Eastern and Western European theatres. The following edition, in 2004, was held at the

Teatro Nacional São João in Porto, Portugal, strengthening the festival's presence in Southern Europe. Italy hosted the festival once again in 2005, this time at the Teatro di Roma, continuing the tradition of a travelling festival that explores new theatrical spaces.

Germany hosted the 2006 edition at Schauspiel Frankfurt, an important cultural centre recognized for its diverse repertoire and openness to contemporary dramaturgy. In 2007, the festival returned to Italy, at the Teatro Stabile di Torino, demonstrating the continuity of a tradition of European collaboration through the exploration of relevant and contemporary artistic themes. This twelve-year period consolidated the festival as a space for encounter and cultural dialogue, reflecting Europe's artistic diversity and contributing to the development of an international theatrical community.

2. The UTE Festival between Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca

In 2008, Romania became the host of a major edition of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe, a large-scale cultural event held simultaneously in two important cities, Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. This edition, regarded as one of the most complex in the history of the festival, brought together a diverse selection of performances by prestigious theatres from across Europe, alongside prominent figures of the international stage. The parallel organization of the event in these two cultural centres enabled broader public access to a wide range of artistic productions, while also highlighting Romania's essential role as a cultural partner within the European theatrical circuit.

The 17th edition included both classical productions and innovative stagings, each making a unique contribution to the contemporary themes addressed by the festival. The simultaneous hosting in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca underscored the importance of the two cities within the Romanian theatrical landscape and contributed to the strengthening of international cultural ties through the medium of theatre. Moreover, the 2008 edition offered opportunities for collaboration between Romanian and European artists through dialogue sessions, workshops, and creative laboratories, thereby enriching the exchange of ideas and artistic practices at a European level.

The theatre critic Doina Papp, recognized for her extensive experience in evaluating theatrical events, expressed a series of reservations regarding the organization of the recent Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe (UTE), held in Romania. Papp, who had been a regular presence at numerous editions of the UTE festival, including the 2004 edition in Milan, observed that the extension of the festival's duration to two and a half months, divided between

Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca, was not necessarily beneficial for either the audience or the artists involved.

One of her main arguments concerned the absence of large-scale events within the programme capable of generating broad interest and attracting the attention of the general public. From her perspective, extending the festival over such a long period without including essential, landmark moments risked diluting its message and diminishing its relevance. The critic emphasized that, although diversity and long-term openness might facilitate access for a wider audience, the lack of a core of significant events ultimately reduced the festival's attractiveness and overall impact.

Another significant observation formulated by Doina Papp concerns the overlap between this festival and the National Theatre Festival (FNT) held in Bucharest, a major cultural event with a long-standing tradition. According to the critic, this situation may lead to a fragmentation of audiences and to reduced visibility for both the UTE Festival and the FNT. In her view, the overlap of the two events not only disperses spectators' attention but also places logistical pressure on cultural institutions and on artists participating in both festivals, forcing them to choose between the two.

In her assessment of the programme of the 2008 UTE Festival, theatre critic Doina Papp emphasizes the presence of only a few productions of high artistic value that justify inclusion within this prestigious event. Among these, particular attention is given to the production *Life and Fate*, inspired by the work of Vasily Grossman and staged by the Maly Theatre of Saint Petersburg under the direction of Lev Dodin, which brings to the stage a profound and complex interpretation of the text.

Lev Dodin's staging has the merit of capturing multiple actions and biographies simultaneously. (...) The director's engagement in this production is more direct than in his other works. (Papp, 2009)

Papp also highlights the production *Boris Godunov*, adapted after Alexander Pushkin and produced by the Moscow International "Golden Mask" Festival in collaboration with the British company Cheek by Jowl, directed by Declan Donnellan. This production is distinguished by its directorial refinement and the quality of its performances, bringing an innovative and compelling dimension to Pushkin's classical text.

It would seem that, once again, the combination of an intelligent director, modern in his thinking, and Russian actors trained in a school

less technical than the English one and more rooted in psychological realism, in keeping with the Russian tradition, has yielded remarkable results. What we witnessed, therefore, was a strong, solid production in which the medieval mystery of the subject that inspired Pushkin resonates with modern ideas about the struggle for power and the human miseries that nourish this impulse. (Papp, 2009)

The theatre critic Doina Papp records the monographic exhibition dedicated to the set designer Ezio Frigerio, opened at the National Theatre in Bucharest, as a genuine event within the framework of the 2008 UTE Festival. Papp emphasizes the importance of this exhibition within the festival's cultural landscape, considering it a rare opportunity to explore Frigerio's complex and influential body of work, whose scenographic contributions have profoundly shaped the aesthetics of contemporary European theatre.

(...) of impeccable, professional, and striking quality, where one could sense the hand of Elie Malka, former director of the UTE, who ensured that each of the festival's previous editions featured such a retrospective. (Papp, 2009)

The performance *The Lie*, directed by Pippo Delbono, represented a challenge for the Bucharest theatrical landscape. Delbono brought to the forefront an unconventional artistic and thematic approach that challenged both audiences and critics alike. Considered controversial at the time of its presentation, the production marked Delbono's debut on Bucharest stages, in a context in which he was known to Romanian audiences only through another production, *Urlo*, previously presented at the Sibiu International Festival.

The production *The Lie* was inspired by a real tragic event— a workplace accident in which seven workers lost their lives at a ThyssenKrupp steel factory in Turin. This incident, which shocked public opinion in Italy and generated extensive debates regarding workplace safety and corporate responsibility, served as a source of inspiration for Delbono, who explored through his performance issues of profound social and moral complexity. *The Lie* did not limit itself to a simple retelling of the tragedy; rather, it proposed a reflection on the impact of corporate negligence on individual lives and on the community, addressing themes related to responsibility, manipulation, and the nature of social inequalities within the industrial environment.

Delbono's staging was characterized by an intense and provocative style, combining expressionist theatrical elements with a minimalist yet visceral aesthetic

that amplified the tension and emotional impact of the narrative. The director adopted a critical perspective on the mechanisms of corporate power and their tendency to prioritize profit at the expense of employee safety, employing symbols and imagery that evoked human vulnerability and the psychological costs of exploitation.

Audience and critical reactions to this production were divided: while some appreciated the director's courage in addressing uncomfortable and painful subjects, others considered that his intense approach and shocking style might disturb the sensibilities of spectators. Nevertheless, *The Lie* succeeded in generating an essential dialogue on the importance of ethics within the industrial sphere and on the hidden costs of corporate negligence, becoming an eloquent example of socially engaged theatre.

Pippo Delbono's production is not a performance in the conventional sense. (...) To understand his approach, it must be stated from the outset that we are dealing with a theatrical installation. In this way, the eminently poetic structure forged from sounds, energies, violently raw images, and fragments of discourse—at times political, at times lyrical—becomes intelligible. For Delbono's message is rather confusing for the uninitiated; it emerges only with difficulty from the stage if one has not done at least some prior reading, and the fact that the director-performer photographs the audience does little to clarify matters. He is accusing us, spectators say—but of what? You are all hypocrites, Pippo Delbono hurls the accusation at us with a certain ease, performing an exercise in sincerity before our eyes. The actor undresses, removes the mask of compassion, kindness, and faith, and reveals himself naked, with all his physical and spiritual flaws. He exorcises his own lie, his own family traumas. (Stoica, 2008)

Pippo Delbono's performance *The Lie*. SUBLIME! Perhaps I can persuade you to go and see it if I tell you that half the audience walked out during one of the most emotional moments. Those who needed to remain stayed, I hope. The actors spread the "lie" that there was an intermission... they seemed to feel the need to rid themselves of a veeeery large part of the audience... (Afrim, 2008)

3. Two Editions of the UTE Festival Held in Cluj-Napoca

For economic reasons, the Festival of the Union of Theatres of Europe was suspended for a period of eleven years; the festival was thus interrupted, bringing to a halt a tradition of international artistic collaboration that had attracted the

attention of both audiences and critics over the years. In 2019, however, the festival was resumed, marking a new stage in its history, with the presidency of the Union being assumed by director Gábor Tompa, director of the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca. Under his leadership, the festival was organized for the first time exclusively in Cluj-Napoca, a city recognized for its dynamic theatrical scene and cultural diversity.

This relaunch edition represented a manifestation of the Union's commitment to supporting cultural exchange and creating connections among European theatres, despite the economic difficulties that had affected the initiative in the past. By choosing Cluj-Napoca as the sole venue, Gábor Tompa sought to highlight the tradition and quality of theatre in Romania while simultaneously offering a platform for European theatres to present their productions to a diverse and informed audience.

Under the auspices of the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj-Napoca, the 2019 festival brought together performances addressing themes relevant to contemporary society, reflecting the complexity and aesthetic diversity of European theatre. Participants presented their productions within a framework that encouraged both cultural dialogue between artists and audiences and a profound exploration of shared artistic values. This relaunch of the festival in Cluj-Napoca also underscored Romania's role as a centre of excellence in the performing arts and strengthened the position of the Union of the Theatres of Europe as an active promoter of cultural collaboration on the international stage.

Within the framework of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe, held over the course of twelve days, audiences had the opportunity to attend a remarkable selection of performances staged by some of the most influential directors of the contemporary European theatre scene. Among them were Armin Petras, Gabriele Vacis, Simos Kakalas, Andrei Șerban, Giorgio Barbiero Corsetti, Marco Solari and Alessandra Vanzi, Boris Liješević, Yannis Leontaris, Nuno Cardoso, Frank Hoffmann, Botond Nagy, Silviu Purcărete, Margarita Mladenova, Gábor Tompa, Ferenc Sinkó, Michal Dočekal, Klim Kozinsky, Enikő Eszenyi, Yvonne Jansen, and Rafael Sánchez.

This directorial diversity brought a richness of theatrical styles and perspectives, reflecting the cultural and aesthetic influences of each director and thereby contributing to a high-quality artistic dialogue. The festival stood out through a varied programme that brought together productions exploring both contemporary and universal themes, innovating at the level of theatrical forms of expression as well as in their interaction with audiences.

In 2023, the 20th edition of the Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe took place in Cluj-Napoca, marking an important stage in the history

of this prestigious event. Held over a period of sixteen days, the festival brought together eleven UTE member theatres representing eleven countries, in a celebration of European theatrical diversity and excellence.

The festival programme included an impressive selection of performances directed by some of the most respected theatre makers in Europe, whose contributions to the performing arts are widely recognized. Among them were Alexandra Kazazou, Eleana Georgouli, Michal Dočekal, Máté Szabó, Gábor Tompa, László Bocsárdi, Nina Šorak, Attila Vidnyánszky Jr., Ewa Kaim, Erika Z. Galli, Martina Ruggeri, István Szabó K., Margarita Mladenova, Nuno Cardoso, Frank Hoffmann, and András Urbán. Each of these directors made a unique contribution, proposing innovative artistic visions and diverse thematic approaches that reflected contemporary social, cultural, and existential concerns.

The festival, held in an atmosphere of artistic effervescence, was characterized by a varied programme designed to stimulate intercultural dialogue and promote collaboration among theatres within the European UTE network. Thus, the anniversary edition of the festival in Cluj-Napoca offered audiences a high-quality theatrical experience, reaffirming the importance of cultural exchange and artistic diversity within the European theatrical space.

Conclusions

The Festival of the Union of the Theatres of Europe has established itself as a fundamental platform for cultural and artistic exchange among European theatres, actively supporting artistic dialogue and strengthening the connection between the Eastern and Western parts of the continent. The editions held in various European cities have ensured a significant international presence, contributing to the formation of a cohesive and united theatrical community.

The editions organized in Romania, first in Bucharest and subsequently in Cluj-Napoca, highlighted the importance of the Romanian theatrical scene within the European cultural context. These editions, particularly complex and diverse, facilitated profound cultural interactions and collaborations between Romanian and international artists, thereby consolidating Romania's position within the European theatrical circuit. The festival provided Romanian audiences with access to prestigious international productions, reaffirming Romania's role as a valuable and active partner in promoting intercultural dialogue through theatre.

Despite the economic difficulties that led to a temporary suspension of the festival, it was resumed in 2019 under the leadership of Gábor Tompa, with renewed momentum and a reoriented focus toward Cluj-Napoca. This relaunch reaffirmed the commitment of the Union of the Theatres of Europe (UTE) to cultural exchange and collaboration among European theatres.

During the years in which it was organized in Romania, the festival demonstrated its capacity to address themes relevant to contemporary society, highlighting both the aesthetic diversity and the complexity of European theatre. This orientation enabled the festival to become a space for cultural encounter and reflection on shared artistic values and modern concerns. Among the renowned figures present on the festival stage were Lev Dodin, Pippo Delbono, Declan Donnellan, and other distinguished directors, who brought innovative productions and thematically relevant approaches from social and cultural perspectives. These performances were appreciated both for their artistic quality and for their critical reflection on contemporary issues.

The 2023 edition, held in Cluj-Napoca and marking the 20th anniversary, celebrated the excellence of European theatre by bringing together eleven theatres from an equal number of countries. The participation of internationally renowned directors reaffirmed the festival as a major platform for cultural diversity and as a symbol of artistic excellence.

Through its activities, the UTE has consolidated its role as an active promoter of international cultural collaboration. The selection of diverse locations and the adaptation to various cultural contexts enabled the Union to contribute significantly to the development of the European theatrical community and to the creation of a shared cultural space in Europe.

The UTE Festival offered European audiences, including those in Romania, a unique experience by facilitating access to high-quality performances and encouraging a greater openness toward contemporary theatrical art.

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