

Beyond everydayness Theatre Architecture in Central Europe

Beyond Everydayness - Theatre Architecture in Central Europe is a collective volume of more than 35 theatre historians, architects, curators and art theorists who uncover historical, political and cultural relations in development of theatre architecture of Central European region from XVI. century till present.

The book presents detailed information about the history of 73 of the most important theatre buildings in six countries of Central Europe: Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Each text is accompanied by a wealth of photographic documentation and building ground plans and sections on a uniform scale which facilitates their mutual comparison.

Theatre architecture is recorded in the book as a characteristic component of human culture and as a specific building type which, apart from often being itself a unique and artistically valuable structure, also creates a space for another kind of art – theatre art.

The appearance of the theatres was shaped, apart from the aesthetic standards of the day, also by social, political, artistic and technical influences. Some of these were a manifestation of a world-wide development, others represent specific phenomena in the Central European region – in a specific country or town. The choice of buildings follows the features specific for diverse historical periods. These features are outlined in nine more closely or more freely defined themes which are anchored in time and in a certain way characterize the given periods.

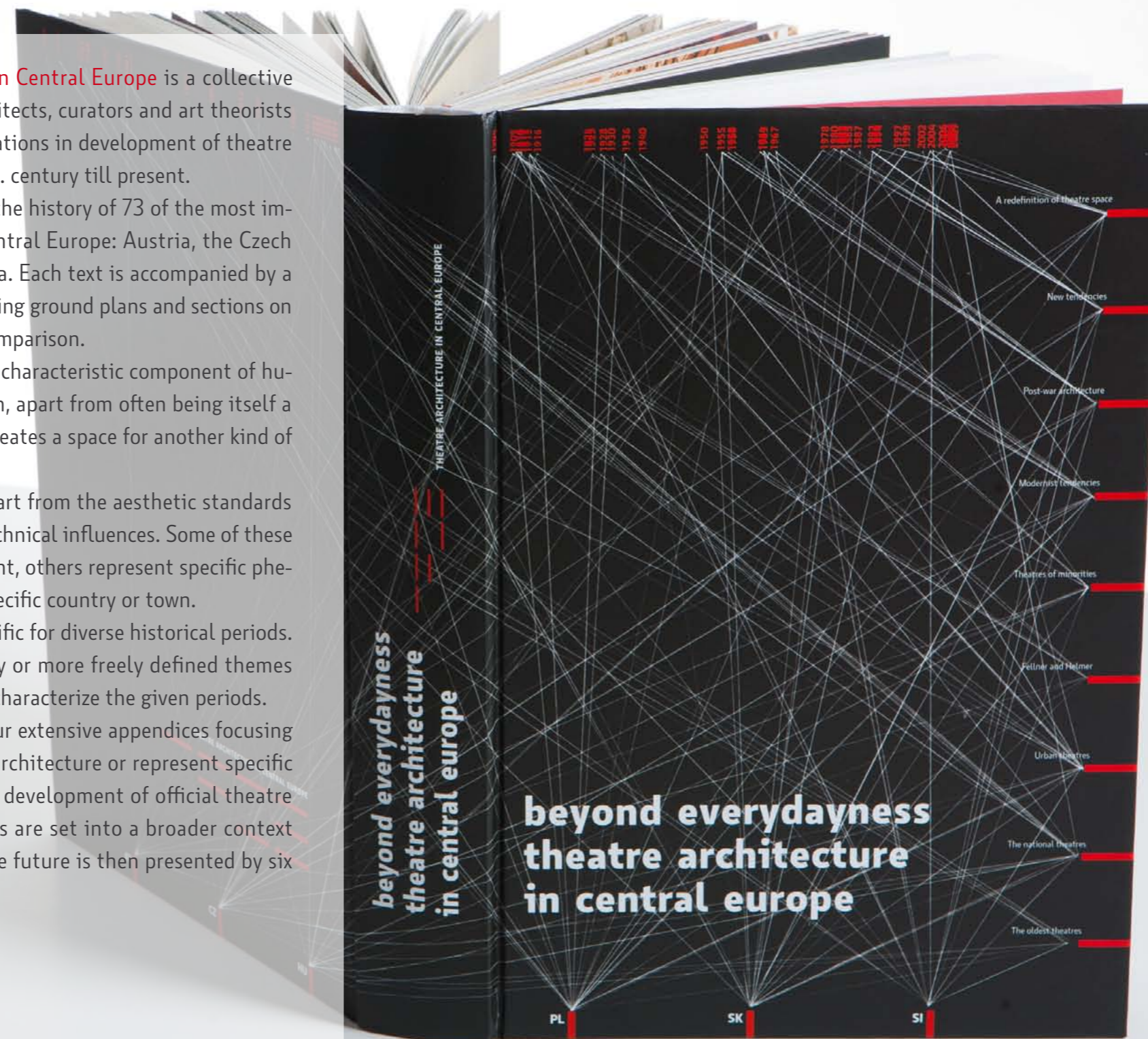
The nine basic themes are supplemented by four extensive appendices focusing on phenomena which accompanied the theatre architecture or represent specific phenomena outside of the 'main current' of the development of official theatre buildings. The stories of the individual theatres are set into a broader context in six historical introductions. An outlook for the future is then presented by six interviews with selected experts.

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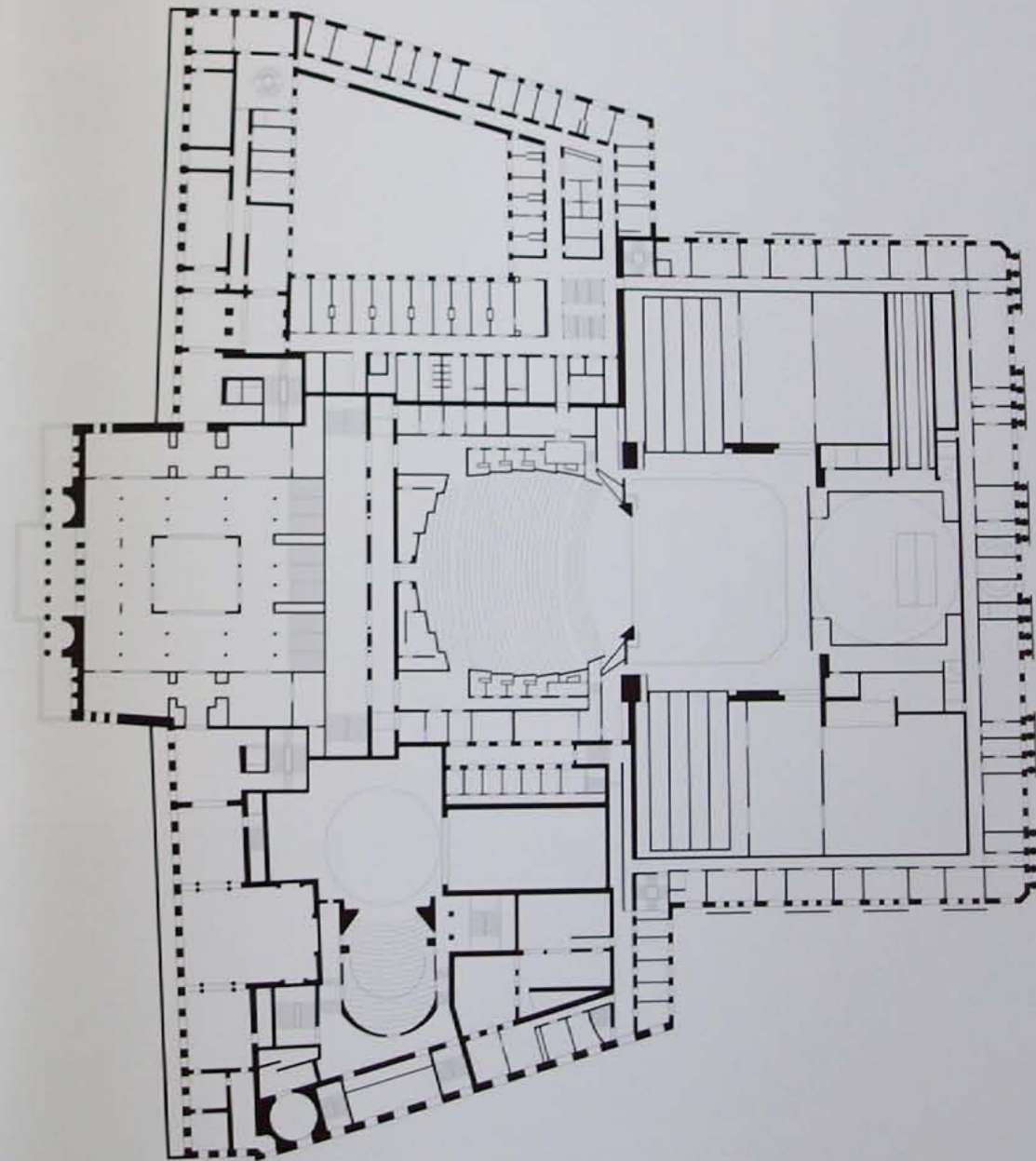
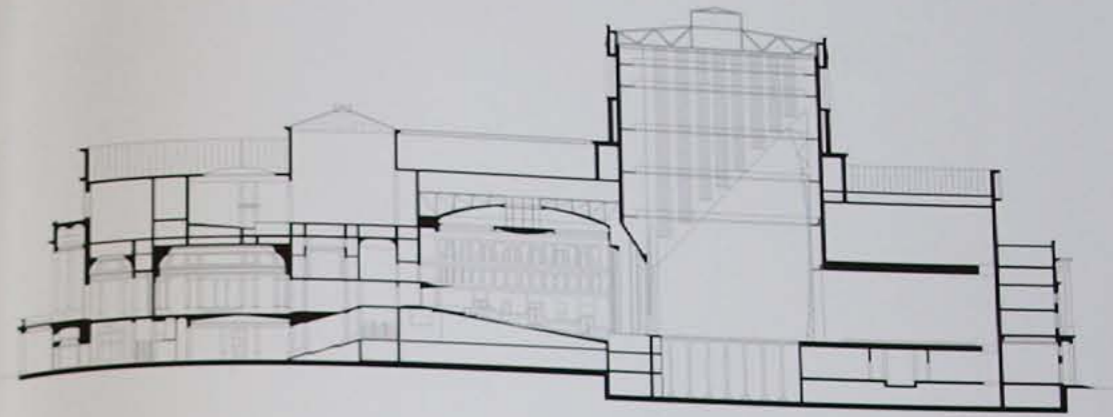


- 6 Balcony (called Reception Rooms). At the present time concerts are held in these grand rooms, and occasionally events and exhibitions by the Theatre Museum. In 1919 the famous Polish director and actor Antoni Ostrowski established his theatrical company here and founded therein The Reduta Theatre (balcony here: the first Polish chamber theatre with tuition in writing. By 1921 the Reduta had become an independent institution, and the school of drama, the Reduta Institute, subsequently operated as part of the Grand Theatre.
- 7 Generously designed Cassiniana aisle of the hall in the deep recess on the left side.
- 8 A view of the monumental theatre building from Street Piłsudski Square.

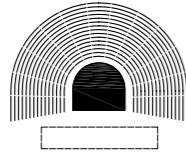
accelerated in 1955 and by 1960 the carcass of the building was ready. A gala concert inaugurating the opening of the theatre was held on 19th November 1965, almost three months after Pniewski's death. The rebuilt Grand Theatre (about 500 thousand cubic metres in volume) was the largest theatre building in the world and could easily house Milan's La Scala.

From 1833 to 1924, in the building's left wing, a dramatic stage was in use, known as Rozmaitości Theatre, since then the National Theatre. Interrupted by fires in 1883, 1919, and 1985, it was reopened in November 1997 after the last reconstruction.

Bożena Grzegorzczak



5th century BC



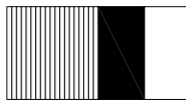
Ritual space / Traditional performance

Many everyday events in the life of society had a performative character, such as initiation ceremonies and rites of passage into adulthood, weddings, or the veneration of spirits or death. These performances primarily revolved around music, dance, and rhythm, all with strong participation from the public, which was made part of the 'performance'. The performances were held in public areas. Probably some natural space emerged where the public would gather, in a circle, a spiral, or a procession, depending on the type of ritual.

2

The theatre was renovated over a period of several centuries. All the earliest classical plays were probably first performed here. It sits directly on the slope beneath the Acropolis, the steepness of which creates the impression of divine unattainability. The slope itself was used as an auditorium before a wooden theatron was built. This structure apparently collapsed under the weight of the spectators, and that led to the construction later of a stone auditorium. Audiences probably stood to watch performances.

From 2nd century BC



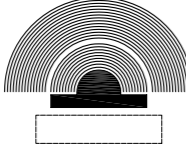
Drama in Sanskrit – Natya Shastra

The Natya Shastra describes nine types of theatre spaces for performing drama in Sanskrit – three shapes (square, rectangle, triangle) and three sizes for each (large, medium, small). A medium-sized rectangular theatre could hold roughly 400 spectators and was 29 metres long and 14.5 metres wide. The auditorium took up exactly one-half of the space and was enclosed to improve the acoustics. The theatre was regarded as representing the universe. Some stages were consequently divided into two levels, with the upper level for celestial figures and the lower level for terrestrial figures. The stage space was also divided into two sections, backstage and performance area, which were linked by a pair of doors.

4

Unlike the Greek theatres, this Roman structure was not carved into a slope but instead built on a flat surface. Space was created beneath the auditorium that could be used as corridors for the spectators to move through. These corridors were lined with arcades along the circumference of the structure. The typical ground plan for a Roman theatre consisted of a pure half-circle encompassing the orchestra and surrounding auditorium.

13 BC

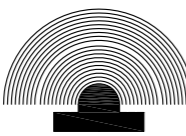


Theatre of Marcellus

Herod's Odeon was built in honour of his wife on the steep southern slope of the Acropolis. It was originally a wooden, roofed space with a three-storey front wall that rose over the city. The Odeon served and continues to function as a locale for enjoying music. It can hold 5,000 spectators. Odeons from earlier dates are also found in Ephesus, Patras, and Lyon in France.

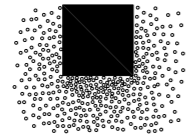
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161 AD



Odeon of Herod Attica

Form c. 10th century

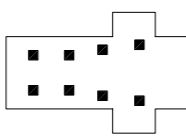


Chinese drama

Theatres were set up in a special part of the city and were called 'pottery cakes' and had flags running around their rims. The stage was usually roofed and often had two storeys. Spectators gathered on three sides and stood to watch performances. Later on, elevated areas and balconies were added. The stage itself was bare, with just two doors in the rear wall through which the performers entered and exited.

6

From 11th century

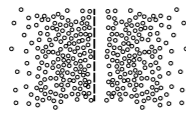


Religious structures

Liturgical drama was performed exclusively in cathedrals and churches during this period. Mansion Stages were small structures designated for representing smaller scenes, events or places. The Mansion was placed along or around the main 'playing surface', the plateau. The choir was often used to depict heavenly scenes, while the crypt, in contrast, was used to represent hell.

7

From 11th century

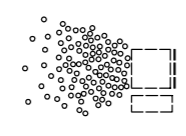


Wayang – shadow puppet theatre

Wayang is a form of shadow theatre, customarily using flat puppets, but sometimes using classic puppets or live actors. Wayang is usually performed in an open area. Spectators sit on both sides of the screen, so some see just the shadows of the puppets, while others watch the actual puppets (colourfully decorated and realistically adorned) and the puppet masters.

8

From 11th century

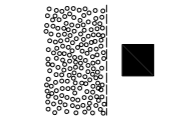


Water Puppet Theatre

Water Puppet Theatre first emerged in the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam with performances in the pools of flooded rice fields. Today the theatre is made up of a 4 x 4 metre pool filled waist-high with murky water. A complex pulley system is located below the water's surface and is operated by puppet masters hidden behind a bamboo set, and this creates the impression that the puppets are walking on water. The orchestra and singers are located alongside the pool. Performances take place directly in the rice fields in specially designed portable tanks or modified buildings.

9

From 12th century

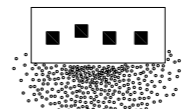


Kuttiyattam (Koodiyattam)

Koothambalam (Kuttampalam) is a specific kind of temple theatre space for Kuttiyattam (Koodiyattam) performances, the only surviving form of Sanskrit theatre. The hall is built according to strict instructions from the Natya Shastra by the Sage Bharata. The hall is usually 16 metres long, 12 metres wide, and includes a 4 x 4 metre podium with columns in each corner. The space is divided into two halves, one for the audience, the other for the performers. The stage is richly decorated. A bowl of rice, bronze lamps, and drums are on the stage during the performance. The hall is regarded as a space as sacred as a temple.

10

From 13th century

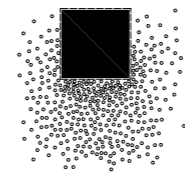


Mansion

Religious drama in this period was already making full use of all the possibilities for staging drama in a church, so it then found its way outside them. For example, the feast of Corpus Christi was 'staged' as a parade. All of the necessary Mansion Stages appeared on the scene when a fixed stage was used. Spectators could thus view all of the scenes that would be used in the play at once. These scenes almost always included heaven and hell, set at opposite ends of the stage.

11

From 13th century

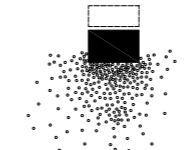
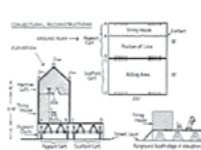


Pageant

During religious celebrations, theatre plays were performed on movable podiums in pageants which moved with processions through the town and stopped at different points. One entire play would be shown on one podium. It would, however, have been impossible to place all of the actors and props on this kind of vehicle, so a flat car would be parked in front of the vehicle and the main scenes would be performed on the car with the vehicle serving as the backdrop.

12

From 14th century

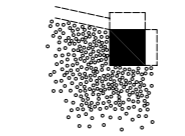


Carros (The wagons)

Moving podiums or carros were used in Spain. These wagons changed into a single fixed stage and were sometimes used even in larger numbers if a more narrative play was involved. The classic European stage, however, was the town square with a podium, or a graded auditorium when the space of an old amphitheatre was used. Spectators typically watched the performance while standing or could pay for a better view from the window of a neighbouring burgher's home. Later on, the number of wagons used in a performance grew to as many as eight. The fixed stage began to be used with the wagons parked on the sides and in back. Carros served as the dressing rooms for the actors and simultaneously as the entrance portals onto the stage.

13

From 14th century

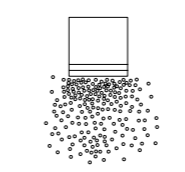


Noh Theatre

The stage space of the Noh Theatre has two basic elements – a roofed stage 6 x 6 metres in area (each of the four pillars supporting the roof has its own particular significance) and a bridge (hashigakari). The rear space of the stage is for the musicians and there is a terrace on the right of the stage for the chorus. Spectators sit along two sides of the stage. The performers and musicians enter the podium via the bridge, at the back of which there are three painted pine-trees – the only decorations in the space (they symbolize man, earth and heaven). A similar type of walkway bridge is also found in Kabuki theatre (where it is called a hanamichi). The chorus reaches its place through a low door on the right side of the stage.

14

From 15th century

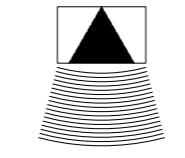


Rhetoric Chamber

Rhetoric chambers were dramatic societies that staged combined productions of poetry, music, and drama on a given theme. The performers used a stage space clearly divided into three levels and equipped with curtains to reveal interior scenes. This type of space anticipated the Elizabethan public theatre. The throne of the figure in whose honour the celebration was held was placed on the top level.

15

1508

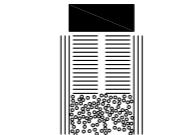


Palazzo Ducale

The first documented use of perspective on a stage. In accordance with Vitruvius' instructions, there were 'stationary' types of perspective stages for tragedy – a grand, royally conceived town full of statues, stairways and palaces – and for comedy – with a folkish, simple picture of burgher homes, balconies and false windows – and Satyr plays – depicting wild nature, with rocks and village features. These prescribed types of scenery were assembled by S. Serlio in the second of the Seven Books on Architectura (as the picture shows – woodcut of the Tragic Stage, from Book II of Sebastiano Serlio's Architettura, Paris, 1545).

16

From mid-16th century

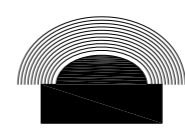


Corrales

Corrales were theatres created out of the space of a courtyard. The courtyard was lined with multi-storeyed covered galleries designated for different classes of spectator. The fourth side was occupied by a covered stage. The courtyards took the shape of a rectangle or square and the centre or 'patio' was left without a roof. The majority of the audience would stand there. Eventually rows of seating were added under the roof alongside the patio and in front of the stage.

17

1585



Teatro Olimpico

Teatro Olimpico - 'A Roman theatre enclosed in a building'. A colonnade with statuary lines the back of the highest seats. To create an airy impression, the ceiling is painted to look like the sky. A vanishing point perspective is applied to the scenery depicting urban streets, turning the stage into a square on which all the action takes place. The perspective is always at the level of the eyes of the ruler seated at the centre of the semi-circular orchestra. The illusion of this central perspective is enhanced by children moving about in the spaces in the rear dressed in the same costumes as the older actors in the foreground of 'the street'.

18

1590

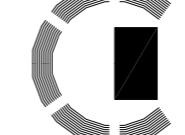


Teatro all'antica

The 'theatre in the classical style' was the first building designated exclusively for theatre performances. The building was purposely built to house theatre and anticipated the fact that it would soon become uncommon to hold performances in courtyards, gardens or large palace halls adapted for the needs of the theatre. The stage did not have a portal, so in its place a corner scene was used, like in Teatro Olimpico, it was somewhat non-modern.

19

1599



Globe Theatre

The Globe was built for William Shakespeare's company. It had a circular ground plan and the stage protruded outwards. It was an unroofed arena space with shelter provided only for the spectator galleries. The theatre caught fire in 1613 and was torn down thirty years later. A copy of the Globe Theatre was built in 1997 close to the original site.

20

10

1833



The national theatres

PL

Teatr Wielki – Opera Narodowa

Grand Theatre – National Opera

plac Teatralny 3, 00-077 Warszawa

Architects:

Antonio Corazzi (original building); Bohdan Pniewski (reconstruction and extension)

Design:

1825 (original building); 1951 (competition – reconstruction and extension)

Construction:

1825–1833 (original building); 1951–1965 (reconstruction and extension)

Artists:

Paweł Benedetti, Szałacki, painting theatre room in 1833, removed; Zofia Demkowska, bronze decorative elements on staircases, 1965; Józef Hilary Głowacki, paintings, set design for theatre of 1843, removed; Tadeusz Gronowski, chandeliers, candelabra, tapestries, stately interiors near the main box, 1965; Hanna Kiedrzyńska-Berbecka, decorative fabrics, 1965; Barbara Krasieńska, mosaic clocks, 1965; Paweł Maliński, Konstanty Hegel, Tomasso de Accardi, bas-reliefs on building from 1833, removed; Antoni J. Pastwa, Adam Myjak, sculpture of *Apollo driving a chariot drawn by four horses* on front elevation, 2002; Antonio Sacchetti curtain representing *Apollo, his temple and Muses* of 1848, removed; Franciszek Strynkiewicz, bas-reliefs with motif *The Rape of the Sabine Women* in 1st floor foyer, 1965

Opening night:

24th February 1833, Gioacchino Rossini, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Barber of Seville)

Historical names:

Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) 1833–1939, 1962–1993; building destroyed by bombs and closed 1939–1945; Scena Muzyczno-Operowa (Music and Opera Theatre) 1945–1948; Opera i Filharmonia (Opera and Philharmonic) 1948–1951; Opera (Opera) 1951–1962; Teatr Wielki – Opera Narodowa (Grand Theatre – National Opera) 1993–1996; Teatr Narodowy – Scena Operowa (National Theatre – Opera Theatre) 1996–1998

Alterations:

1848 refurbishment and alterations to auditorium and stage, new curtain; 1870 gateway changed into two vestibules and a hall, renovation of auditorium, ceiling decorated with emblems of music and garlands; 1890–1891 Henryk Marconi, design for extensive renovation, four-column portico with balcony was added to front entrance, two aisles arranged in auditorium; 1951–1965 Bohdan Pniewski, rebuilding; 1968 Władysław Jotkiewicz, design for Small Stage, modernisation of technical equipment; 2010 renovation of elevations begun

Capacity of auditoria:

1,850 (main theatre – Moniuszko theatre), 248 (small theatre – Młynarski Hall), 150 (main foyer)



There is no doubt that the first theatre building in Poland erected from scratch and meeting fully all the requirements of a professional theatre, was the building of Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) in Warsaw. The theatre was designed by Antonio Corazzi and was built during 1825–1833 on a site created by the demolition of the Marywil buildings almost opposite the main town hall.

Corazzi came to Warsaw after the government of the Polish Kingdom had approached the government of Tuscany in 1818 to send the architect to Poland. The Grand Theatre was not the only work by Corazzi in Poland. He prepared his designs in the style of monumental Neo-Classicism, which later became known as the Neo-Classical 'Warsaw School'. Most of his designs were connected with Warsaw and the best known of them was The Grand Theatre. Corazzi designed about 50 buildings and urban developments, including the building of the Sandomierskie Province Commission in Radom and the layout of Bankowy Square in Warsaw.

In 1825 Corazzi submitted his design for a competition announced by the mayor of the city, Karol Fryderyk Woyda, for the The Grand Theatre project, and it won recognition from Rev. Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki.¹ One possible reason for this may be that his project made good use of an existing building, the Dom Pod Kolumnami (Columned House). In this way a coherent architectural composition was formed, making it possible to create, in front of the theatre building and town hall, a grand square bordered on the East and on the South by Senatorska Street, connecting the Old Town with the new administrative centre.

The Italian architect's concept anticipated the building of an imposing building juxtaposed from three masses. The basic body of the structure where the auditorium was located, together with the adjoining stage and backstage, was enclosed on two sides by two two-storey-high wings. The Western wing in fact already existed. This was Piotr Aigner's the Columned House (built about 1819). However, the eastern wing, with a similar exterior appearance, had been designated for a ballroom.

There were similarities between the thus composed mass of the building and the famous theatre built just a few years earlier on the Gendarmenmarkt



square in Berlin (1817–1821), designed by Carl Friedrich Schinkel². While some certain parallels can be found in the composition of the masses, which in both examples were towering upwards with the most elevated part corresponding to the auditorium, in time looking like an ancient temple, the rooms were arranged differently. Unlike Schinkel, who placed the vestibule on the platform of the concert hall, Corazzi, following the French model, located the vestibule along the longest axis of the building and above the foyer.

The building designed by Corazzi was unquestionably one of the most modern theatre buildings in this part of Europe. Its modernity was demonstrated by both its location in the city and the building's structure, as well as by the functionally arranged and built rooms.

Construction work was interrupted by the Polish November Uprising in 1831, but it was continued after the unsuccessful war against the Russian Empire, but the principles had changed. In 1832 General Józef Rautenstrauch addressed the architect Adam Idźkowski³ to express his opinion on transforming the building into an Orthodox church. Although the idea was never carried out, the dimensions of the auditorium were changed as a result of a box part situated in front of the stage being removed. In addition, in accordance with the general's recommendations, the number of seats was reduced from 1,873 to 1,248.⁴

During the Second World War the theatre burnt down. Only its blackened remains were left: part of the walls, the vestibule in the frontal projection, the main foyer with side staircase and part of the lobbies of the lower storeys. In 1951 a competition was announced for the reconstruction of the theatre, first prize being won by Professor Bohdan Pniewski's team. The architects designed a building that was three times larger than the pre-war one. Construction work

2 $\frac{3}{4} \frac{5}{5}$

- 2 Students watching rehearsal in the theatre.
- 3 Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) auditorium. Last performance before rebuilding. After renovation capacity of the auditorium increased to 1,200 seats; the orchestra pit could accommodate 80 people. A new electric chandelier and two new curtains painted by Antoni Strzalecki were installed. Ornamental decoration of the ceiling had been copied from the Theatre Vaudeville in Paris.
- 4 The main entrance to the building from Senatorska Street. The arrangement of masses and the building's overall imposing impression refers to the High Classicism of Schinkel's Berlin Schauspielhaus in the Gendarmenmarkt (1818–1821).
- 5 Main front. Before 1825 the right wing of the theatre called Marywil was used as a large commercial centre and palace. It was built between 1692 and 1697 by Maria Kazimiera, Queen of Poland. The building, which bore a strong resemblance to a Spanish Baroque town market square, contained shops and merchants' houses, while the central square was used as a marketplace.



6 | 7
8

6 Ballroom called Redutowe Rooms. At the present time concerts are held in these grand rooms, and occasionally events and exhibitions by the Theatre Museum. In 1919 the famous Polish director and actor Juliusz Osterwa relocated his theatrical company here and founded his own The Reduta Theatre 'ballroom here: the first Polish studio theatre with tuition in acting. By 1921 the theatre had become an independent institution' and the school of drama, the Reduta Institute, subsequently operated as part of the Grand Theatre.

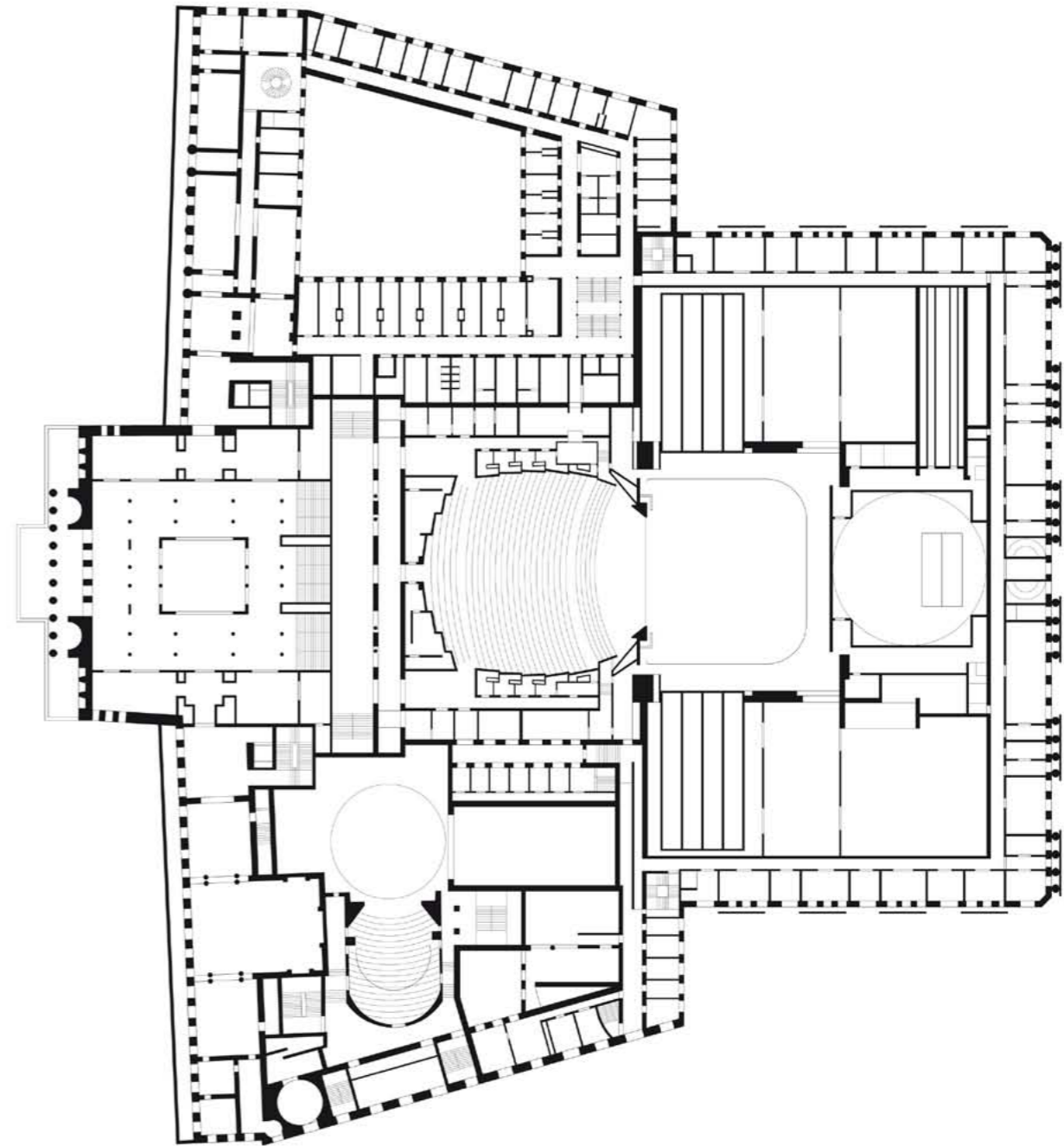
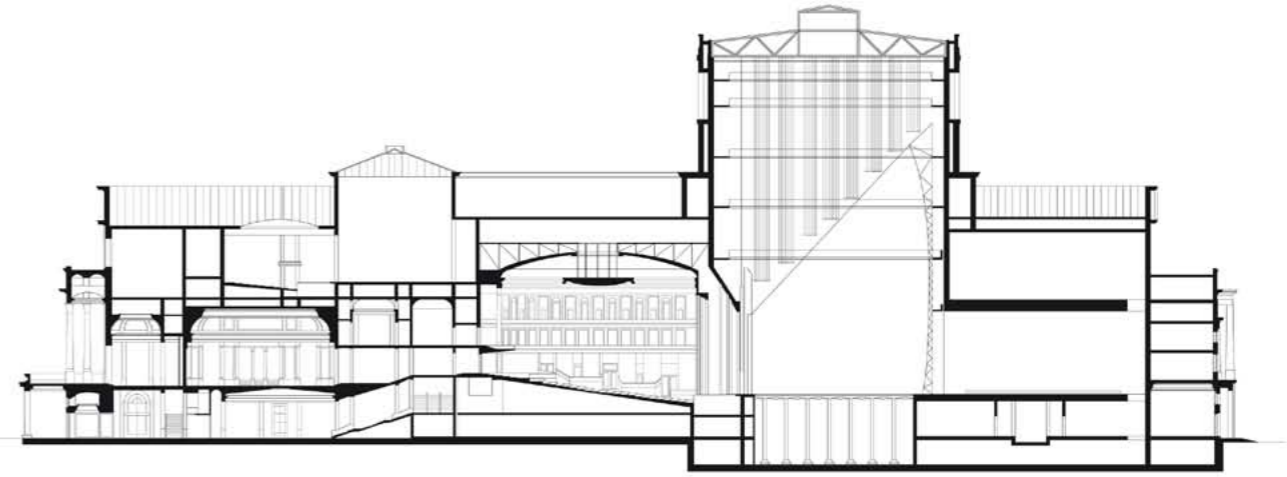
7 Generously designed Classicising areas of the hall in the dress circle on the first floor.

8 A view of the monumental theatre building from Józef Piłsudski Square.

accelerated in 1955 and by 1960 the carcass of the building was ready. A gala concert inaugurating the opening of the theatre was held on 19th November 1965, almost three months after Pniewski's death. The rebuilt Grand Theatre (about 500 thousand cubic metres in volume) was the largest theatre building in the world and could easily house Milan's La Scala.

From 1833 to 1924, in the building's left wing, a dramatic stage was in use, known as Rozmaitości Theatre, since then the National Theatre. Interrupted by fires in 1883, 1919, and 1985, it was reopened in November 1997 after the last reconstruction.

Bożena Grzegorzczuk



1812–1866

1814–1815 The Congress of Vienna established a new balance of power in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon and led successfully to the avoidance of general war throughout the entire 19th century. Conservative powers created a system for preventing revolutions and progressive rights. This also meant introducing censorship and the rudiments of a police state.

1830 In another wave of civic revolutions in Europe, the Polish November Uprising threatened the conservative order and was suppressed by the Russians the following year.

1836 František Palacký began to issue *The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* (5 volumes, 1836–1867), which founded Czech historiography and a patriotic view of the history of Bohemia.

1843 Hungarian was established as the official language on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, where large, mainly Slavonic-speaking minorities also resided. Those spoken only by peasants within a large majority became the object of intensive interest in national revival movements.

1844 Štúr's version of the Slovak language was approved by both Catholics and Lutherans. National revival movements rose throughout Europe with the primary objective of restoring the high language first, because the social elites tended to speak a different language. The national question thus became intertwined with a social one.

1848 A wave of revolutions swept across Europe, undermining the predominant position of the aristocracy in public affairs. Although the revolutions themselves were defeated, their achievements survived, for instance, in the constitution and the abolition of *corvée* throughout central Europe.

1849 The uprising led by Lajos Kossuth for the independence of Hungary was defeated when the army surrendered at Világos.

1851 Franz Josef I suspended the validity of the constitution. Despite the absence of political freedoms, the region flourished economically and experienced rapid modernization.

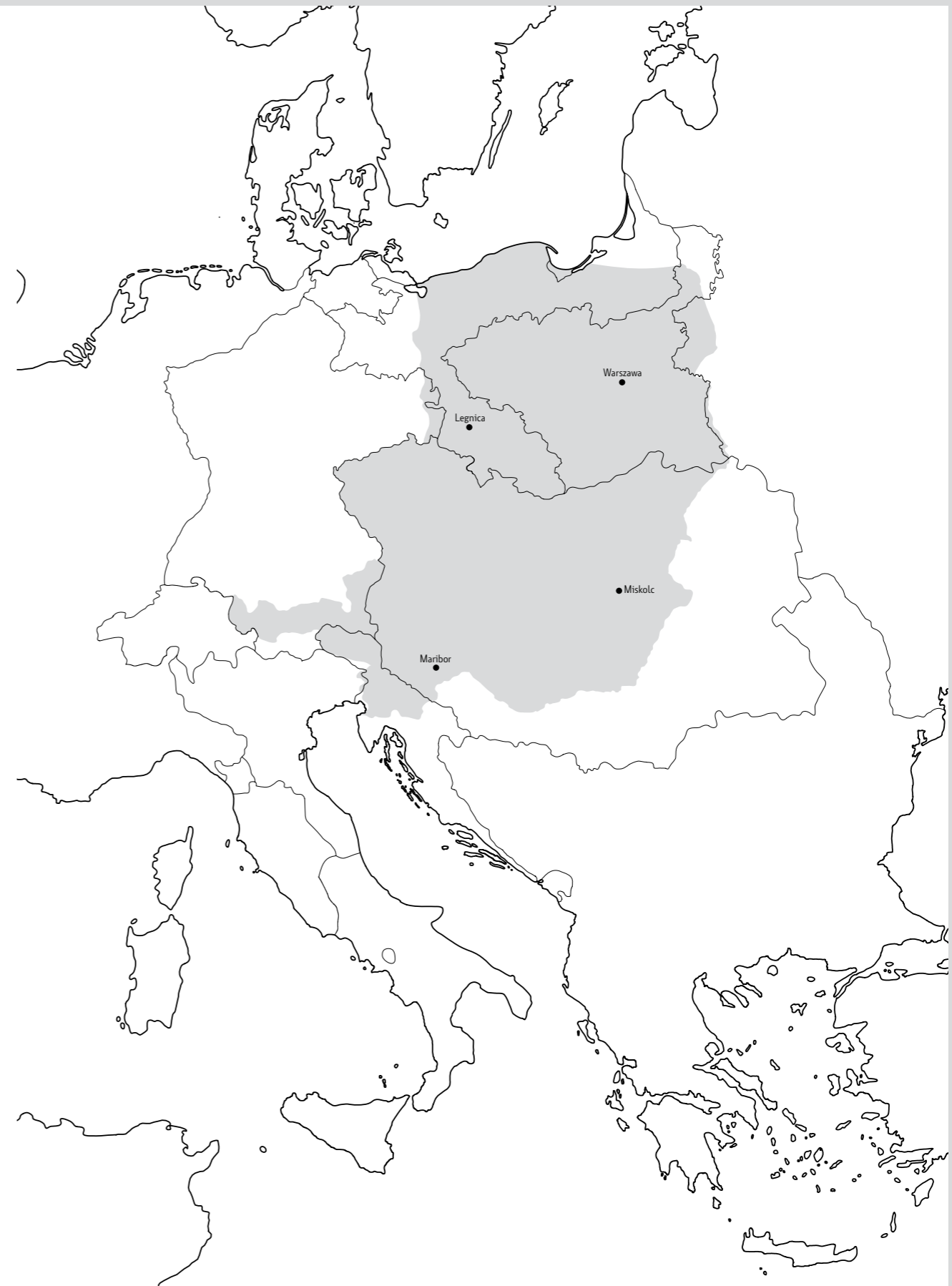
1856–1863 Mendel made thousands of experiments studying the laws of inheritance of some characteristics in plants. His discoveries were later recognized and formed the basis for the new science of genetics.

1859 A new trade law was introduced on the territory of the monarchy that enabled the creation of joint-stock companies and the abolition of guilds. Despite strong GDP growth in the second half of the 19th century, the region largely retained an agrarian economy.

1861 A new constitution was introduced in the Monarchy that signified a landmark change as political rights began to be granted to the larger part of the population.

1863 A Polish January uprising broke out against Russian rule, but the guerrilla warfare was suppressed; these turbulent events, however, led to the abolition of serfdom in Poland.

1866 The defeat of the Austrian armies in the Battle of Königgrätz resulted in the end of Austrian influence on German affairs and undermined the strength of the establishment against the call for national liberties.





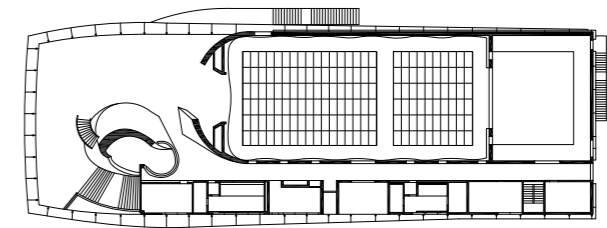
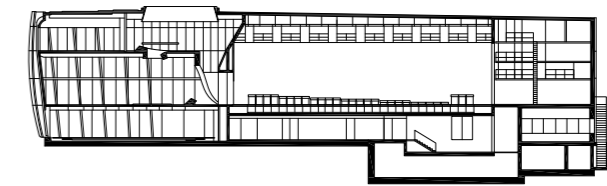


7 | 8 | 9

- 7 The restrained design of the corridor typically expresses the principle of the building's design, founded on a combination of rectangular forms which are dedicated to supporting facilities and theatres, and the free flowing space of the public areas.
- 8 The free flowing space of the foyer is based on a spiral design element linking the auditorium's entrance with the music rooms above. With a movable, wildly rippling gesture, it thus connects three levels of the building. The imposing staircase is a kind of dancing sculpture, an emblematic expression of the whole building.
- 9 The building's cladding is made from a delicate tissue of stainless steel with a mesh structure, which has two purposes: during daylight it serves as a screening blind, and at night, by means of electroluminescent panels, it supplies the building with spectral light, highlighting its arrangement of shapes. The front is decorated with a stylised musical clef whose shadows ornament the floor of the interior. With the construction of MUMUTH the city of Graz gained a similarly iconic building to the Kunsthaus of Peter Cook and Colin Fournier.

projects still under construction: the Spijkensse Theatre (2008–2011) in the Netherlands and the Dance Palace in St. Petersburg, for which the authors won first prize in 2009 architectural competition. All of these buildings are characterised by their flowing forms as well as a digital style, a trademark of UNStudio. Despite mastering up-to-date technology their architecture is far from being just rationally concluded. Ben van Berkel said about MUMUTH: 'We wanted to create a building that would be as much about music as a building could be.'¹⁰

Brigitte Marschall, Fritz Trümpi



A redefinition of theatre space

appendices

houses of culture

open-air theatres

architectural competitions

independent theatres

beyond the present

houses of culture

Pałac Kultury Zagłębia
The Culture Palace of Zagłębie

Dům kultury města Ostravy
Ostrava House of Culture

Aba-Novák Kulturális Központ
Aba-Novák Cultural Centre

Istropolis
Istropolis

Kulturni in kongresni center Cankarjev dom
Cankarjev dom Cultural and Congress Centre

Festspielhaus St. Pölten
St. Pölten Festival House

Houses of culture originated in the *Turnhalle*, a German term for multipurpose facilities in smaller towns. They provide a single venue for a range of events: film screenings, theatre performances and other activities.

Under socialism houses of culture became a propaganda tool for the new ideology. The most famous of them is the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, designed by the architect Lev Rudnev in the Socialist Realist style and built between 1952 and 1955. However, multipurpose buildings located outside city centres are not unique to socialism: today groups of buildings dedicated to the arts, known as cultural clusters, create autonomous sites for arts events and are frequently located outside the organic development of their host cities.

Pałac Kultury Zagłębia
Culture Palace of Zagłębie

Plac Wolności 1, 41-300 Dąbrowa Górnicza

Architect:
Zbigniew Rzepecki

Design:
1951

Construction:
1951–1958

Artists:
unknown

Opening night:
11th January 1958, speech by Aleksander Zawadzki

Historical names:
Dom Kultury Zagłębia (Zaglebie House of Culture) 1958–1964

Alterations:
2006 theatre hall renovated and opened for use; 2007 steel curtain replaced and conserved, conservation work near the driveways; 2008 air conditioning installed in building; 2009 site modernized to conform to fire safety standards, executive and building documentation prepared for the 'Alteration of the Historic Palace of Culture in Dabrowa Gornicza', a heritage site of Zagłębie Dabrowskie

Capacity of auditorium:
699



The idea for the Culture Palace of Zagłębia originally emerged before the Second World War, the aim being to create a modern cultural centre in the highly industrialized region of Silesia and Dąbrowa. The Ministry of Arts and Culture approved the project as a typical example of Socialist Realism, delighting in rich, heavy interior decorations: the halls decorated with marble, the rooms covered with hand-painted tiles, the chamber room and the marriage room finished with wooden wainscoting and mirror panes.

Dorota Buchwald, Piotr Morawski

- 1 Celebrating the 1st May 1979.
- 2 The multifunctional use of the main stage does not offer any specific spatial variation.
- 3 Contemporary state of the building.

Dům kultury města Ostravy
Ostrava House of Culture

28. října 2556/124, 702 00 Ostrava – Moravská Ostrava

Architect:
Jaroslav Fragner assisted by Alois Fišárek

Design:
1954 competition entry, Culture and Pioneer House in Ostrava; 1956 final project

Construction:
1956–1961

Artists:
Alois Fišárek, *The Fairytale Then and Now, Once a Fairytale, Now Reality*, decorative curtain in the Variety Hall, destroyed; Stanislav Hanzík, *Youth and The Secret of Girls*, bronze sculptures for the exterior fountain designed by Jaroslav Fragner; Vjačeslav Irmanov, *Mining, Smelting and Agriculture*, figural reliefs in the Variety Hall foyer; Vladimír Kristin, *New Ostrava*, oil painting in the Variety Hall antechamber, removed; Eva Kršková, K. Pavlis, *Young Life*, limestone sculpture behind the building; Vladislav Martínek, plaster reliefs on the theme of theatre in the theatre vestibule; Arnošt Paderlík, decoration of the theatre's iron curtain, destroyed; Otakar Petroš, relief on the portal of the Variety Hall, destroyed; Mr Straka, reliefs above the theatre's entrance, destroyed; Vladimír Sychra, *Drama, Opera and Ballet*, allegorical reliefs over the entrances from the main vestibule to the theatre foyer; Vlastimil Večeřa, *Music, Sculpture and Sport*, sculptures, and with Jiří Myszak, *Working with Children, Innovator and Chemistry*, sculptures on the parapet of the main façade

Opening night:
16th April 1961, Aleksandr Korneichuk, *Nad Dněprem* (Above the Dnieper)

Historical names:
Dům kultury pracujících Ostravy (Ostrava Workers' House of Culture) 1961–1963; Dům kultury pracujících Vítkovických železáren Klementa Gottwalda (Klement Gottwald Vítkovice Iron and Steel Works Workers' House of Culture) 1964–1973; Dům kultury Vítkovických železáren a strojřen Klementa Gottwalda (Klement Gottwald Vítkovice Iron and Steel and Engineering Works House of Culture) 1973–1989; Dům kultury Vítkovice (Vítkovice House of Culture) 1990–1999

Capacity of auditoria:
576 (theatre), 780 (cultural hall), 200 (upper foyer), 115 (cinema)



This building, originally the basis for a main boulevard – planned but never completed – outside the centre of Ostrava and the housing estates, was influenced by socialist realism, by then on the wane, which combined the building's scale, appearance and location with a remarkable functionality. Throughout its existence it has successfully served as a city arts centre, offering theatre, cinema, fine art, dance and music, as well as providing a venue for lectures and exhibitions. The building itself was the backdrop for May Day celebrations, when a tribune for communist dignitaries would be erected in front of it.

Ondřej Svoboda

- 1 The iconography of the public space in socialist times.
- 2 In the aesthetics of socialist realism the main stage did not occupy a dominant place.
- 3 The monumental aspect of socialist realism had direct classical connotations.

Aba-Novák Kulturális Központ

Aba-Novák Cultural Centre

Hild tér 1, 5000 Szolnok

Architects:

István Zoltai, József Koltai (LAKÓTERV Collective)

Design:

1975

Construction:

1975–1979

Opening night:

2nd July 1979, Ludwig van Beethoven, *Karfantázia*, op. 80
(Choral Fantasy, Op. 80)

Historical names:

Megyei Művelődési és Ifjúsági Központ (County Culture and Youth Centre) 1979–1991; Városi Művelődési Központ (Town Culture Centre) 1992–1999; Városi Művelődési és Zenei Központ (Town Cultural and Musical Centre) 1999–2004

Alterations:

2004–2006 Antal Füzes, László Deák – FORMA Rt., Keszthely, total reconstruction and renovation of the main auditorium to create a concert hall: ninety-degree shift of the stage area to increase depth and decrease width, installation of wall coverings and steel frames on the roof to enhance acoustic properties, levelling of auditorium tiers allows hall to serve other functions, air conditioning installed, service areas refurbished, building made accessible to disabled, glass-curtain walls equipped with motor-operated solar reflection curtains

Capacity of auditoria:

463 (main theatre), 70 (Erkel theatre), 120 (youth theatre)



This closed monolithic block with a glass façade was supposed to be a part of a large-scale urban planning project that was ultimately never implemented. The building is a modern example of the 'open house' and was initially furnished in a very modern style. The building's multi-purpose potential was exploited in an extensive reconstruction project in which it was renovated to host various social events, such as theatre and music performances, festivals, and concerts, and exhibitions, conferences, pensioners' clubs and public balls.

Mihály Vargha

- 1 Glass façades were a self-sufficiency technique of late socialism.
- 2 Comfort as an important part of late socialism.
- 3 New culture and leisure-time functions have redefined the city centre.

Istropolis

Istropolis

Trnavské Mýto 1, 832 21 Bratislava

Architects:

Ferdinand Konček, Ilja Skoček, Lubomír Titl; assisted by Ivan Slameň, Marta Skočková

Design:

1955–1980

Construction:

1968–1980

Artists:

Ladislav Čisárik, Marcela Korčoňová, information system in the entrance foyer; Milan Dobeš, window on the stair landing; Oleg Fintora, Ferdinand Konček, Ilja Skoček, Lubomír Titl, elements of architecture on the ascending areas of the building; Ladislav Gandl, Kvetá Gandlová, new triptych Gobelin tapestry in the main foyer; Michal Jakabčič, chandelier in the Children's House; Jozef Jankovič, sculptor, lamellate ceiling in the main hall; Aloiz Klímo, glass-ceramic mosaic in the Union House; Juraj Marth, ceramic walls in the snack bar; Pavol Mikšík, architect, fountain in the courtyard; Július Nemčík, paintings; Andrej Rudavský, relief wooden walls in the café; Marta Skočková, light sculpture in the Technical House; Eva Trachtová, ceramic walls in the snack bar; Jozef Vachálek, pole for lighting on the plateau; Imrich Vanek, ceramic relief in the journalists' lounge; Alexander Vika, sculptore, symbol of the entrance porch

Opening night:

31st October 1981, Ernest Bryll, *Na skle malované* (Painted on Glass)

Historical names:

Dom odborov, techniky a kultúry. Dom Revolučného odborového hnutia (House of the Unions, Technology and Culture. The House of the Revolutionary Union Movement) 1980–1989

Capacity of auditoria:

1,160 (main theatre), 500 (cinema), 350 (Teátró theatre), 70 (ArtCinema), 30–100 (lecture rooms)



The construction of the Unions, Technology and Culture Centre was initiated by the leadership of the state-wide union organization. In the course of the designing process the building was changed several times. Political functions were added to the original cultural-social functions. The building was intended to serve also as a congress hall for the Communist Party of Slovakia. These grand ambitions were reflected in the monumental form the building was finally given after its long course of development.

Henrieta Moravčíková, Viera Dlháňová

- 1 The architecture of the renewed socialist society in the 1980s.
- 2 Projects for stately buildings have inclined towards luxury interiors artwork.
- 3 Contemporary usage is not clear.

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