

Zoltán Balázs, actor, director, scenographer and theater director, was born on the 3rd of July in 1977 in Cluj. He moved to Hungary in 1989. Between 1991-1995, he graduated from the drama department of Horváth Mihály High School in Szentes, where he won an award in France for his portrayal of Baudelaire in French. After spending three years at the National Academy of Drama (1995-1998), he was simultaneously admitted to the University of Theater and Film Arts in Budapest and to the Theater Academy in Paris. He could not start his studies in France due to the lack of tuition fees, but during the summer he studied in the workshops of such masters as Anatoly Vasiliev, Josef Nadj, Min Tanaka and Robert Wilson. In 2002, he participated in the directing course of the European Theater Union in Stuttgart. In the same year, he obtained an acting degree at the University of Theater and Film Arts, and then a directing degree in 2003. As a graduate actor, he spent his professional internship at the Radnóti Miklós Theater and in the Szigligeti Theater in Szolnok. In 1999, while still a university student, he staged his first performance, *The Ancient Anxiety*, at the Merlin Theatre.

In 2003, he signed a contract with the Bárka Theater, where he became a decisive member of the company as an actor and director seeking for new paths, until 2008. Among his many leading roles (*Romeo*, *Tuzenbach*, *Mack the Knife*, *Trepljov*), the 2005 *Hamlet* directed by Tim Carroll, the director of the London Globe Theater at the time, stands out. It was during this period that he staged his now iconic performances: *Jack*, or *The Submission*, *School for Fools*, *Theomachia*, *The Blacks*, *Empedocles* and *The Tempest*.

In 2001, he founded the avant-garde theater workshop *Maladype Theatre* (*maladype* means encounter in Lovari language), which became internationally famous in a short time and was sought after in many places, of which he has been the director and artistic director ever since. The artistic community, which looks back on a history of more than two decades with a form-breaking theater language - whose permanent troupe can count on serious professional and audience successes - is now one of Budapest's exclusive theater and cultural workshops, where artists such as Mária Ambrus, Ilona Béres, Gyöngyi Blasek, Angela Császár, Claudio Collova, Judit Gombár, Ivica Buljan, Pino di Buduo, Károly Kuna, Erzsébet Kútvölgyi, Andrea Ladányi, István Orosz, László Sáry, László Sinkó, István Szabó K., András Szöllősi, Mária Varga, Vlad Trockij, Mari Törőcsik and Sándor Zsótér have participated in the creative work in recent years. The ensemble, which has been honored with numerous awards, is a regular guest at international theater festivals in many countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe, and is a cultural export of unquestionable importance, a value of which is well known to everyone at home and abroad. On a *nomen est omen* basis, the community of *Maladype* is a real meeting place, where the audience can get to know diverse content and innovative theater solutions through the special themed works performed in the theater.

Zoltán Balázs is a demanded artist not only with his own troupe, but also as a director at various festivals and theaters around the world. He has directed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia and in the United States of America but is also a recurring creator of the extremely strong Romanian theater life, and has worked with the famous Odeon Theater company in Bucharest on several occasions. He frequently gives master classes and workshops around the world, including in Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, China, Croatia, France, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Vietnam and the USA.

He taught acting at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest (2005-2008), the University of Theater and Film Arts (2005-2017) and the University of Arts Târgu Mureș (2018-2021). He was a member of the management of the Hungarian Theater Committee (2013-2015) and the Professional Advisory Board of POSZT (2017-2019). In 2022, Andrea Rost, an internationally renowned opera singer, named Zoltán Balázs as chief director and artistic director in her application for the position of general director of the Opera House. His work as an actor and director has been recognized with numerous professional and state awards: Üstökös Award, Theater Critics Award, Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary, Gábor Miklós Award, Óze Lajos Award, Jászai Mari Award, Nádasdy Kálmán Award, Hevesi Sándor Award, Honthy Hanna Award, Golden Mask Award.

Zoltán Balázs has successfully implemented conceptual and method-based theater thinking in many genres and styles; he directed classical and contemporary works, adapted novels and epics, dreamed up dramas, comedies, operas, operettas, musicals, dance plays, puppet shows, performances, non-verbal and movement theater performances, as well as rock concerts. His performances are inspired by various cultures and theater traditions, and are well received by the profession and the public both at home and abroad. His versatile creative activity is characterized by intellectual freedom, experimentation and entrepreneurial spirit. An integral part of his artistic credo is the development of future generations on a professional basis, the knowledge-based talent management, as a cover of which process he created his own acting technique and creative-communication analytical training called the *Gold-Bug Method* in 2013. In 2023, as an art scholarship holder of the Hungarian Academy of Arts, he formulated his age-specific theater-methodical ideas called *FIVE GATES*, summarizing his diverse creative experiences, in the form of a comprehensive study.

His characteristic theatrical language and thinking is mainly based on concentrated workshop work, intense acting presence and active contact with the audience. He considers it important to develop the analytical and synthesizing ability of the performers, the diverse nature of their expression and the continuous conditioning of the creative part of acting, which reacts immediately and vividly to what is happening on stage. He is a visionary director whose performances are on the verge of unreality, between dream and reality. His joint art productions, which elevate the text to the same level as music, movement and spectacle, provide the audience with a complex theatrical experience that can affect the intellect, emotions and senses.