

BIO

Zoltán Balázs is an actor, director, set designer, theatre director and associate professor. He was born on July 3, 1977 in Cluj-Napoca. He moved to Hungary in 1989. Between 1991 and 1995, he graduated from the drama department of the Horváth Mihály High School in Szentes, where he won an award in France for his performance of Baudelaire in French in his fourth year. After three years at the National Theatre Academy (1995-1998), he was simultaneously admitted to the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest and the École des Arts de Paris. Due to lack of tuition fees, he was unable to begin his studies in France, but during the summer he studied in the workshops of masters such as Anatolij Vasiljev, Josef Nadj, Min Tanaka and Robert Wilson. In 2002, he participated in the directing course of the European Theatre Union in Stuttgart. In the same year, he graduated from the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest with a degree in acting, and in 2003, he received a directing degree. As a graduating actor, he spent his professional internship at the Radnóti Miklós Theatre in Budapest and the Szigligeti Theatre in Szolnok. In 1999, while still a university student, he directed his first performance, *This Ancient Anxiety*, at the Merlin Theatre. In 2003, he signed a contract with the Bárka Theatre, where he became a defining member of the company as an actor and director until 2008, seeking new paths. Among his many leading roles (Romeo, Tuzenbach, Mack the Knife, Treplev), the 2005 *Hamlet* directed by the then chief director of the Globe Theatre in London, Tim Carroll, stands out, for which he received numerous professional awards for his portrayal of the character. During this period, 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 theatre workshop *Maladype Theatre* (in Gipsy language *maladype* means meeting), which quickly became internationally renowned and sought after, and of which he has been the director and artistic director ever since. The creative community, which looks back on more than two decades of history and uses a groundbreaking theatrical language - whose permanent company can boast serious professional and audience successes - is today one of Budapest's exclusive theatrical and cultural workshops, where in recent years such artistic individuals as Mária Ambrus, Mari Benedek, Ilona Béres, Gyöngyi Blasek, Claudio Collova, Judit Gombár, Judit Góczán, Ivica Buljan, Pino di Buduo, Károly Kuna, Erzsébet Kútvölgyi, Andrea Ladányi, Anikó Németh, István Orosz, Andrea Petrik, László Sáy, István K. Szabó, András Szöllősi, Kátya Tompos, Mária Varga, Vlad Troickij, Mari Törőcsik and Sándor Zsótér have participated in the creative work. The ensemble, which has won numerous awards, is a regular guest at international theatre festivals in many countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe, and is a cultural export of unquestionable importance, the value of which is well known to everyone at home and abroad. On a *nomen est omen* basis, the *Maladype* community is a real meeting place, where the audience can get acquainted with diverse content and innovative theatre solutions through the special-themed works performed in the theatre.

Zoltán Balázs is a sought-after artist not only with his own company, but also as a director at various festivals and theatres around the world. He has directed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, Germany, Kosovo, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United States of America, but is also a recurring creator of the extremely strong Romanian theatre scene, having worked with the famous *Odeon Theatre* company in Bucharest on several occasions. He frequently gives masterclasses and workshops worldwide, including in Albania, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Croatia, China, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Vietnam and the USA.

He taught acting at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest (2005-2008), the University of Theatre and Film Arts (2005-2017) and the University of Arts in Târgu Mureş (2018-2021). He was a member of the board of the Hungarian Theatre Company (2013-2015) and the Professional Advisory Board of POSZT (2017-2019). In 2022, in her application for the position of General Director of the Opera House, Andrea Rost, internationally renowned opera singer, named Zoltán Balázs as the chief director and artistic director. Since January 2025, he has been the artistic director of the METTRIN Arts Center on the shores of Lake Bánki. Since September 2025, he has been coordinating the theater directing department of the Institute of Theater, Film and Dance Arts established at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pécs as an associate professor, subject manager and department head. His work as an actor and director has been recognized with numerous professional and state awards: the Üstökös Award, the Theater Critics Award, the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary, the Miklós Gábor Award, the Lajos Óze Award, the Mari Jászai Award, the Kálmán Nádasy Award, the Sándor Hevesi Award, the Hanna Honthy Award, the Golden Mask Award.

Zoltán Balázs has successfully applied his conceptual and method-based theatrical thinking in a wide range of genres and styles; he has directed classical and contemporary works, adapted novels and epics, staged dramas, comedies, operas, operettas, musicals, dance plays, puppet plays, performances, non-verbal and movement theater performances, and rock concerts. His performances, which are inspired by different cultures and theater traditions, have received outstanding attention from 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 professional development of future generations, knowledge-based talent management, and as a cover for this 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 theatre methodological ideas called *FIVE GATES*, summarizing his diverse creative experiences, in the form of a comprehensive study.

His unique theatrical language and thinking are based primarily on concentrated workshop work, intensive acting presence and active contact with the audience. He considers it important to develop the performers' analytical and synthesizing abilities, the diverse nature of their expression and the continuous conditioning of the creative part of acting, which immediately and vividly responds to the events on stage. He is a visionary director whose performances walk on the border of unreality, between dream and reality. His all-artistic 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.