

MÜNCHENER BIENNALE FESTIVAL FÜR NEUES MUSIKTHEATER

08/05 –
20/05/2026

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SPIELMOTOR MÜNCHEN FESTIVAL
gGmbH – die Festivalplattform
der Landeshauptstadt München
mit freundlicher Unterstützung
der BMW Group

MÜNCHENER BIENNALE, Lothstraße 19, 80797 München, GERMANY

20th Munich Biennale – Festival for New Music Theatre 8–20 May 2026

Editorial

Amid escalating radicalisation, increasingly entrenched positions, and forms of hostility towards democracy that have long ceased to be marginal phenomena, it is becoming ever more difficult to maintain perspective, to remain composed, or indeed to arrive at sound judgements. Our present moment resists simplification; wherever seemingly easy answers present themselves, a certain scepticism is not only advisable but necessary. What we require are spaces in which the incomprehensibility of the present condition can be endured – spaces in which divergent perspectives may encounter one another without being hastily resolved into unambiguous conclusions. Music theatre can offer precisely such a space. As an art form that interweaves sound, language, body, shared space and time, it opens up worlds in which multiple voices, realities and imaginaries may coexist, becoming sensorially tangible in all their contradictions.



The 20th edition of the Munich Biennale also marks the centenary of Hans Werner Henze, the founder of this forward-looking festival. From its inception, diversity of expression has stood at its core. The Biennale understands itself as a laboratory for new works and artistic processes—ones that engage with the present and invite us to remain alert, attentive and open.

The work on the 2026 Biennale has been shaped by numerous conversations: by questions, doubts, and acts of listening. For the premieres of this year's edition, artists from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, disciplines and perspectives come together – each shaped by distinct contexts of origin and generational challenges. In varying constellations, they share with us their perspectives on the present, allowing intimations of alternative futures to emerge between science, myth and science fiction. In Codeborn and V01CES//B0D1EZ, we cast a glance towards the future of artificial intelligence; in Isithunzi and Xochiyaoyotl, we explore cultural and physical archives; and in ENDLICH, we confront the inevitability of

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life's end. We find ourselves caught up in the collective fervour around the foosball tables in FOOSBALL[D], descend into the catacombs of an electrifying anime-inspired world in crypt_, and, in Hidden Heartache, cross the fragile thresholds of mutual understanding. We are especially delighted to present Der Miesepups and Wie das flunkert, two productions conceived with a young audience in mind, addressing schools and families in particular. What unites the artists of these premieres and the Munich Biennale alike is a commitment to experimentation and a willingness to embrace artistic risk. Art has the capacity to move, to inspire, and to challenge. It sharpens perception, opens new perspectives, unsettles familiar narratives, and renders visible possibilities that are easily obscured in the routines of everyday life.



New music theatre is an idiosyncratic yet compelling art form. It may not change the world outright, but it can transform the ways in which we listen to and encounter one another. We look forward to this festival: to its encounters, to the energy of rehearsal processes, and to the distinct artistic voices it will bring together. It is a sense of anticipation we are keen to share as widely as possible. From 8 May onwards, the Munich Biennale opens its doors to a curious public, inviting audiences to join our introductory format What's On?, informal gatherings, interventions in urban space, and events in the festival tent at the Muffatwerk site.

Our sincere thanks go to the Spielmotor team, to all artists, partners and supporters who have made this shared process possible. We extend particular gratitude to the City of Munich, the Department of Arts and Culture of the City of Munich, and the festival platform SPIELMOTOR MÜNCHEN FESTIVAL gGmbH.

Katrin Beck and Manuela Kerer
Artistic Directors