

JTI Encounters, the 20th edition
IT Dansa from Barcelona, for the first time in Bucharest

Bucharest, November 28, 2019 - **IT Dansa**, the dance company of the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona, comes to Romania for the first time, at the 20th edition of **JTI Encounters** – an anniversary edition celebrating youth. For 20 years, **JTI Encounters** have brought to Romania famous dance companies, which would otherwise be seen by the audiences from our country only on the big stages worldwide, as well as performances presented for the first time in Bucharest.

The most talented dancers of the Spanish Institut del Teatre shall present on the 28th of November, at 20:00 at the Bucharest National Theatre, three choreographic performances belonging to important contemporary choreographers: *Whim* by Alexander Ekman, *In Memoriam* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and *The Prom* by Lorena Nogal.

IT Dansa is a springboard for rising stars, whereas all its dancers are selected after graduation by important companies: Nederlands Dans Theater (the Netherlands), Verpommer Theatre (Germany), Euregio Staatstheater am Gämeplatz (Germany), el Ballet Gulbenkian (Portugal), Abcdance Company (Austria) or Companhia do Bailado (Portugal). Globally acknowledged choreographers such as Jirí Kylián, Ohad Naharin, Rui Horta, Nacho Duato, Ramon Oller, Toni Mira, Akram Khan, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui or Alexander Ekman have not only taught, but have also created special choreographies for IT Dansa, with lessons becoming outstanding performances.

Whim, signed by Alexander Ekman, shall be presented for the first time in Romania, at the **JTI Encounters**. “*Whim* is a piece examining the way we preserve our mental health, while deep down, madness takes possession of us. The piece offers a variety of situations inspired by real life. Little by little, I became aware that we had created a sort of bizarre, dark, and sad music. And in the end, you don't really know if you should laugh or not. It's amusing but it's not really funny. It's sad but not really sad. It's pleasant without really being so”, Ekman explains his choreographic endeavour. Alexander Ekman has created many works for dance companies worldwide and received many awards, among which are “*Medea Award – Inventor of the year*” and “*National Dance Award UK*”.

The bond between reality and memory is at the core of *In Memoriam* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. “The dancers explore the movements of attraction and repulsion, magnetism and antimagnetism, in order to examine the meaning of the word ‘harmony’. Tenderness (attraction) and aggression (repulsion) spring from the same source in an intimate game of polarization”, states the choreographer. In 2008, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui received the title *Exceptional Choreographer of the Year*, awarded by Ballet Tanz and a committee consisting of 40 dance critics from Europe for his work in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, he received the *Kairos European Cultural Prize* awarded by Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, and was appreciated by the jury for “having translated questions related to human existence into movements and for the bonds created between various elements of various cultures”. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui was a guest of **JTI Encounters** in 2014, while in 2019, at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, he received a star on the Celebrities Walk of Fame, granted by JTI.

The Prom, by Lorena Nogal, explores day-to-day situations, which seem insignificant, but strongly influence us. „I wonder: are people aware of the amount of small actions that, without realizing it, are able to change our lives? (...) thanks to these small actions, you become who you are or would like to be” (Lorena Nogal). She was trained as a dancer at Institut del Teatre in Barcelona, being acknowledged as a prize-winning choreographer in significant national competitions.

Launched in 2000 by famous ballet company Bejart Ballet Lausanne, **JTI Encounters** have hosted renowned dancers, choreographers and ballet companies: Nacho Duato and Compania Nacional De Danza, Joaquin Cortes, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Tango Pasion, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, Sylvie Guillem and Russell Maliphant, Gigi Căciuleanu and the Chilean National Ballet, Alonzo King Lines Ballet, Vortice Dance Company, Maria Pagés and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Akram Khan Company, Mats Ek, Ana Laguna, Susanne Linke and Dominique Mercy; in 2017 “Noism”, the most important contemporary dance company in Japan; in 2018 the “Martha Graham” Dance Company, and in 2019 the company IT Dansa, of the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona. The event is organized by Art Production Foundation, with the artistic counselling of Silvia Ghiță.