



West Side Story is a co-production between Aarhus and Aalborg Theatre.

Experience of the Month, Denmark

## A meeting place for everyone

Aalborg Theatre is a place to discover everything from epic dramas to artistic experiments, where the audience can escape reality and witness performances full of nerve, presence and community. It is a meeting place for everyone – even those who would not usually step foot in a theatre.

By Ingrid Opstad | Photos: Allan Toft

Located in Denmark's fourth largest city, Aalborg Theatre has become a cultural institution and a popular meeting place. Established in 1878, the theatre is rich in history and tradition. Here, performances are reflections of society and of the time and culture in which we live. Aiming to both inspire and engage with the reality outside its walls, the theatre invites its audiences to reflect on literature, the visual arts, politics and many other topics throughout the year through talks, lectures and artistic performances.

### Change and culture initiative

"For me, Aalborg Theatre is big enough, but also not too big, with room to grow

and change while staying true to its traditions," argues theatre director Hans Henriksen. After taking over from Morten Kirkskov in 2015, Henriksen has focused on further enhancing the theatre artistically and making it more audience-oriented. An important part of this effort has been to change the way it produces its own shows. "We will soon be moving from the previous system, where you present a performance in blocks at a time, to what we call repertory theatre, which is more flexible and provides a more varied programme for the audience."

Another of Henriksen's initiatives is involvement in a significant cultural pro-

ject in Aalborg, with the working title AMPLify. Aalborg Theatre has teamed up with two other major players on the city's culture scene, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art and the Musikkens Hus music venue, to create an event of international importance, where the three art forms collaborate to create exciting artistic and cultural experiences. "The project is planned for 2021 and is intended to be a recurring event, following the example of other cultural festivals in, for example, Bergen," he says.

### International repertoire

Over three different stages, the audience is invited to experience traditional drama, comedies and musicals. All performances are currently in Danish, but the theatre has recently introduced an option for guests to read subtitles in English. "Aalborg is a very international city, with people living here from all over the world. To make sure we have something to offer

for everyone, we have therefore added text to many of our performances," Henriksen explains. "Our aim in the future is to invite guest performances from other countries to expand our international repertoire even more."

Henriksen is also a firm believer in making sure that the audience can engage with performances and has therefore introduced three different concepts to the theatre café, designed to appeal to all ages. "With 'Dialogue', we discuss issues with celebrities, either in connection with performances or regarding other current affairs. Another, similar concept, 'Format', encourages conversations, music and artistic events for the younger generation. And finally, we have Larsens Teatersuppe, which is two hours of 'hygge' with music, stories, and exciting guests for pensioners," says Henriksen.

### New plans

Aalborg Theatre is currently situated in its original building, but plans are in place to move to a new site in around 2020. "A brand new and spectacular district is in the making in an old industrial area on Aalborg's waterfront. The theatre will hopefully move here and become part of this exciting urban renewal," Henriksen reports with a smile. With larger, modern premises, the theatre will have more room to grow and can be adapted to future plans regarding flexibility and repertoire.

During the summer months, the theatre is closed, but when the doors open once again in August, the acclaimed musical *West Side Story* is on the programme. "With director Rune David Grue and scenographer Karin Gille, we present an amazing musical show full of energy," Henriksen concludes. "We have great expectations for this production."

### Upcoming shows:

- *West Side Story*, musical, 30 August to 13 October 2018
- *Alle Mulige Ting Til Salgs*, Danish drama by Henrik Szklany, 8 September to 13 October 2018
- *Et Juleeventyr*, family Christmas show, 15 November to 22 December 2018
- *Spatify og Radio Luxembourg*, theatre concert with young and senior citizens, 2 February to 6 March 2019
- *Fyrtøyet*, fairy tale by H.C. Andersen, 2 February to 23 March 2019
- *The Sound of Music*, musical, 4 November to 23 November 2019

Web: [www.aalborgteater.dk](http://www.aalborgteater.dk)  
 Facebook: [aalborgteater](https://www.facebook.com/aalborgteater)  
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The Sound of Music. From left: Bolette Nørregaard Bang and Sébastien Henry Aagaard-Williams.



Larsens Teatersuppe for pensioners.



Theatre director Hans Henriksen.