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Piccolo Teatro di Milano – Teatro d'Europa

PRESENTE INDICATIVO
Milano Crocevia

14 – 30 May 2026

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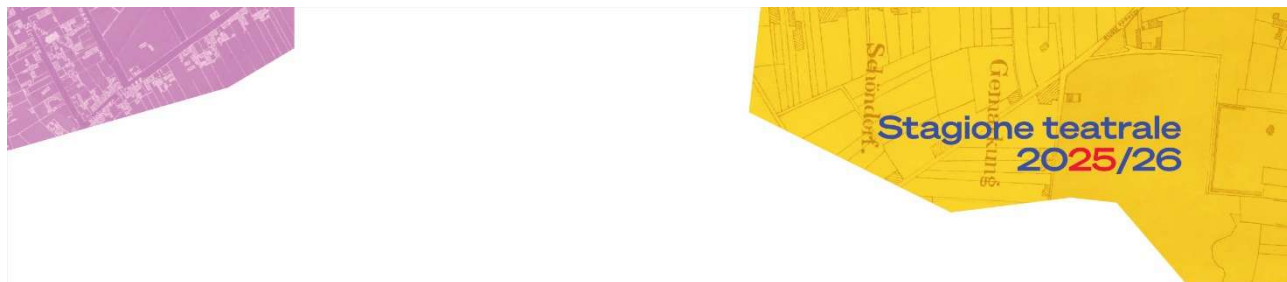


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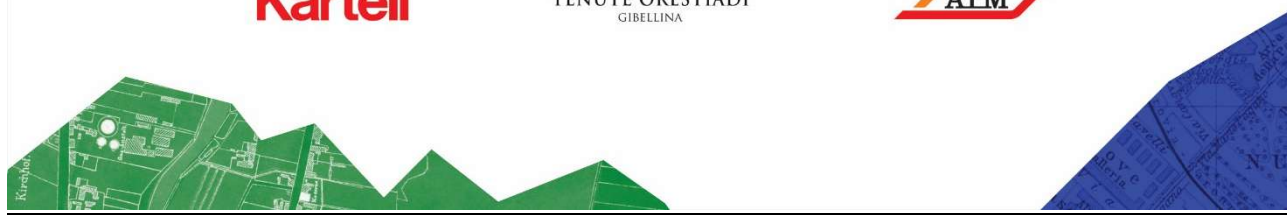
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PRESENTE INDICATIVO

Milano Crocevia

Stories, artists and communities through
tradition and contemporary perspectives

Festival
internazionale
di teatro

Milano 14 - 30 maggio 2026

sotto l'Alto Patronato
del Presidente della Repubblica

Con il sostegno di



Main Partner

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l'Albo d'Oro del Piccolo Teatro e Federica Olivares
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Piccolo Teatro di Milano
Teatro d'Europa**

2025/2026 season
The Seventy-ninth anniversary
of the foundation

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And now a few steps / from wall to wall / up those stairs / or down the others / then slightly to the left / if not the right / from a wall within a wall / up to the seventh threshold / from wherever to wherever / to the very intersection / where your hopes, errors, failures, / efforts plans and new hopes / cross paths / so as to part.
WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA, *Labyrinth*

THE VOICE OF THE BUTTON-MOULDER (*behind the house*) Peer, we shall meet at the last cross-roads, and then we shall see if... I'll say no more.
HENRIK IBSEN, *Peer Gynt*

In the vast and shifting spectrum of dialogue, meetings, discussions, collaborations, encounters and clashes to which the 25/26 season at the Piccolo Teatro is devoted, examining the nature of the intersubjective relationships that represent the most authentic material of theatre - or perhaps its truest essence -, a special place is, indeed, dedicated to exchanges with the artists “associated” with our Theatre; those men and women of theatre who have transformed their experience with the Piccolo into a profitable and fertile opportunity for complicity and dialectical nourishment, a moment for understanding oneself and others through similarities and differences to gain clarity in their view of the world and of the theatre and who, reciprocally, the Piccolo Teatro has chosen as privileged interlocutors in its striving to comprehend the transformations taking place within contemporary theatre (and in our present), not simply to map them but also to confront them with honesty and determination. Over the course of three years, embracing the slender yet solid thread of the relationship of “association”, with its epiphanies and incomprehension, convergences and differences - as is always the case with human relations, fatally played out in the enigmatic and extraordinary territory of the clash between “you” and “I” - the Piccolo Teatro and Milan - respectively home of artists and legendary middle ground of sacred air, set between plains and rivers - have become a cross-roads of creative paths, of visions, dreams, fantasies and utopia, together expressing our era. Following the same guiding light that has set the course of the season, while also staying true to its vocation - a global exploration of the impetuous tumbling of the great “worldly theatre” (or of the vast “world of theatre”) from the present to the future, the third edition of the *Presente Indicativo* Festival looks to the looming celebrations for the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the Piccolo Teatro (May 2027) and offers a programme that plots a manifold landscape (or impassioned novel) of the contemporary scene and its vibrant shifts “forward”, its leaps and its risks, which it entrusts to the intuition and sensitivity of the international associated artists of the Piccolo Teatro for the 2025-2027 period and of the new Italian associated artists who joined the creative galaxy of the Foundation in 2025. What emerges is a courageous (and one trusts fascinating) glimpse (or phantasmagorical tale) of our theatre “at a turning point”, interweaving the skilful and moving probing of memory attempted by Tiago Rodrigues, with the sorrowful and ironic grace of a seemingly benevolent Pierrot, simultaneously “critical” and “participant”; the agonising linguistic odyssey of Caroline Guiela Nguyen, a nomadic artist perpetually travelling cultures, bent on examining, in a “Pascalian” manner, the irrational reasoning of the heart; the boundless “global works” of Łukasz Twarkowski, in his role as ambitious and omnivorous expert of the hieroglyphics of scientific thought, projecting theoretical illumination and profoundly private leaps of biography through psychedelic cinema-live performances dispersed with the exploded shards and rubble of reality; the courageous “trial” generously danced by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker to tell of her challenge to the “insults of time” and her fragile attempt to penetrate the ever fleeting mystery of identity, based on an examination of “other”, chasing and hunting on the tracks of its disappearance. There is even room for the underworld in the history of Daria Deflorian, driven by the eternal desire to lend flesh and breath (her own) to literature, giving an identity to the inexpressibility of memory and of her wounds; for the metaphysical-existential temptation of Lino Guanciale, representative of an overflowing and

transitory theatre, with its shifts in meaning and vortices of language, fighting darkness and shadow in the manner of Melville, Coleridge and Conrad; for the biting satire of Niccolò Fattarappa, with his dizzying account of the foretold death of desire in an anaemic present ridden with depression, and for the sharply defined representation of our daily lives, choreographed by Parini Secondo in contrast to the frenetic pace of our times, creating an unsettling celebration - refreshingly counter-current - of "slowness" and its irresistible seductiveness.

The customary nature of thoughts and projects inevitably leads to a familiarity of place and an intimacy of scenarios- and thus the conversations with associated artists are reflected and find correspondence (and common framing) in the intersection of paths and studies, with twinned festivals, from the "Festival d'Avignon to the Ruhrtriennale, from Romaeuropa to Wiener Festwochen, of which *Presente indicativo* this year, in a perfect sharing of intent, presents the oratorio *Il processo Pelicot*.

Thus, a multicoloured tapestry of our times is woven here, in Milan, a trivium of corners, horizons and vistas, a quadrivium of fellow travellers and masters, friends and passers-by; a tapestry whose wealth lies in its variety but that is rooted in a shared founding language, marked by the most crucial and complex words: past, future, body... and, perhaps, heart.

I listen to your heart, city. Milan, "learned and meditative", is an "exquisitely peripatetic and dialogic city", according to Savinio, echoing Marie-Henri Beyle and her conviction that: "Milan est la ville d'Europe qui a les rues les plus commodes". And Clio, in the meantime, responds, quietly yet firmly: "[...] Believe me: Milan is one of the few places on Earth in which the word *humanitas* maintains its true meaning".

Claudio Longhi

With *Milano Crocevia*, we are delighted to mark a new chapter for the Festival of international theatre *Presente Indicativo*, the third edition of the event created by Claudio Longhi in 2022, presented this year under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic. Over time, the Festival has become a spring ritual of encounter between theatre and the city, staged on that piazza that, from in front of the Teatro Strehler, opens joyfully onto the city. For two weeks in May 2026, the Piccolo will once again present itself to the city as a shared space, a point of contact between the geography of European theatre and the complex nature of the present. The focus this year is Milan: a city-quadrivium, the crossroads of Europe, a hub for transit, culture and language that gathers and combines the multitude of artistic experiences that flow from the continent towards Milan, and from Milan to the world. A flow that we examine with this third edition, continuing our reflection on Europe, deciphering its historic legacy and focusing on the essence of this cultural and imaginative hummus that continues to bring forth forms of expression that are both diverse and yet extraordinarily connected.

Choosing to conjugate the "present indicative mood" of international theatre entails, for the *Piccolo Teatro d'Europa*, honouring a title and a mission rooted in its history and identity. The origins of the calling to push boundaries and draw on art as a form of aggregation and dialogue between nations lie in the project that, in the midst of the Eighties, brought the Piccolo Teatro di Milano, the l'Odéon in Paris and the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona together under the umbrella of *Théâtres de l'Europe / Theatres of Europe*. The title was officially granted to the Piccolo - the only Italian establishment - in 1991, reflecting a commitment that has continued ever since and that is expressed as much through the productions that accompany the season, the projects shared with European and international partners and the tours, as it is through the decision to embark, as is the case with *Presente Indicativo*, on a special temporal examination of the artistic geography of Europe and the world. We now continue to interpret that mandate, choosing Milan as the prism for this third edition of *Presente Indicativo* and reflecting it on the stage, a laboratory of discussion and a workshop of language, the heart of a dialogue that crosses geographic boundaries with an increasingly dynamic and inclusive viewpoint that follows two guidelines. The first is the public, the "all" that we aim to address, opening

our theatres to a wide-ranging community, diverse in terms of age, origin and experience. Citizens of Milan - including hundreds of new subscribers under 35 who, in recent months have joined our devoted audiences -, together with the community of “international Milanese” who, either living in or travelling through the city, contribute to defining its cultural make-up. A multi-faceted audience to which we continue to listen through the *Interesse Pubblico* convention - launched in the Autumn of 2025 with a study of the Milanese suburbs, destined to continue in 2026 as part of the Festival, with an international approach, and ending in 2027 on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Piccolo, with a final discussion examining the national audience. The second guiding aspect is the network of collaborations between institutions and artists: from academic organisations to companies, from European theatres to new generations of research, the Piccolo is an enthusiastic participant in the systems of cooperation that bring together the most important festivals in an articulated web of co-production. A true “festival of festivals”, the programme for *Presente Indicativo– Milano Crocevia* embraces the works and authors that form the core of the most important events in Europe— from the Festival d’Avignon to Ruhrtriennale, from FIND Berlin to Romaeuropa and the Wiener Festwochen. Thus, we continue to strengthen the bonds we share with institutions and audiences, interpreting the mission of an *Art Theatre for All* with the concept of an idea of openness and accessibility that - in the wake of the title that oriented the 2025/26 theatre season - finds its expression in relationships. To be a *Theatre of Milan and of Europe* means, for us at the Piccolo, continuing to lend form to the project created by Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, building what Grassi himself defined as a “‘European’ Milan, [...], an expression of cultural and civil values [...]”.

Lanfranco Li Cauli

Milano Crocevia_ *Presente Indicativo*, the international Festival of theatre, promoted by the Piccolo Teatro di Milano– Teatro d’Europa, will be taking place from 14 to 30 May. The subtitle this year is *Milano Crocevia* (Milan as a crossroad).

Il Piccolo, Theatre of the City, il Piccolo, Theatre of Europe: ever since it was founded, in 1947 – celebrations for its **Eightieth anniversary** are currently being planned –, and since the Ministerial Decree of 1991 that recognised its international scope, the Piccolo has represented a cross between its authentic metropolitan roots and a tireless urge to go beyond, representing a constantly and enthusiastically active threshold for and onto the world.

The biennial Festival concentrates, into a period of two weeks, a lively, multicoloured and elaborate geography of art that is reflected in the auditoriums of the Teatro and in its plaza, a joyful terrace looking out over the city. For the 2025/2026 Season, whose motto, *Complemento di relazione* (Expressions of relationship), sums up its aim of examining ties, bonds and associations, the paths taken by the Festival, interwoven with those of fellow events such as the **Festival d’Avignon, Ruhrtriennale, Romaeuropa** and **Wiener Festwochen**, are plotted by the associated artists for the **2025/2027 period**; both foreign - **Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker** (Belgium), **Caroline Guiela Nguyen** (France), **Tiago Rodrigues** (Portugal), **Łukasz Twarkowski** (Poland) - together with the latest acquisitions from Italy (**Daria Deflorian, Nicolò Fattarappa, Lino Guanciale** and **Parini Secondo**).

From 14 to 30 May, **eleven performances (surtitled in Italian and English) will be staged at Teatro Studio Melato, Teatro Strehler, Teatro Grassi and the Chiostrò Nina Vinchi. Of these, eight are co-productions (seven international), one is a world premiere and three are Italian premieres.**

The Festival will open on **14 May**, the very date on which, **79 years ago**, the Piccolo Teatro di Milano raised its curtain for the first time ever. Having now become a truly regular feature of the theatrical calendar, **Piccolo Day** offers a programme of activities for the entire day.

The programme begins at the Teatro Strehler, with special performances of *Benvenuti al Piccolo! Nel paese di Teatro*, a theatrical guided visit organised by Michele Dell'Utri. Organised by the Department of Public Promotion and Cultural and Educational Activities at the Piccolo Teatro di Milano, the tours continue at the Teatro Grassi with *Teatro Aperto*, open to the entire community and offering a presentation of how the life of the Milanese theatre is intimately interwoven with the history of its home city.

This will be followed by the traditional *Walk_Talk*, a tour interspersed with readings that follows a route connecting the **Milan Triennale, the Brera Academy and Gallery, the Teatro alla Scala** and the **Teatro Grassi**, hubs in a veritable "citadel of culture" in the heart of the Lombardy capital. The afternoon will see the presentation of the new book published in collaboration with **il Saggiatore**, the fourth in the series dedicated to Giorgio Strehler that comes in the wake of *Lettere agli italiani, Shakespeare, Goldoni, Brecht* and *Un teatro necessario*. The focus this time is ***The Threepenny Opera*** by **Bertolt Brecht**, which made its debut seventy years ago, in 1956, and which will be featured in the 2026 edition of the Piccolo's programme.

On the evening of **Thursday 14 May** (and again on **Saturday 16 May**), the **Teatro Grassi** will be welcoming **Tiago Rodrigues**, playwright and director, and since 2022 the director of the Festival d'Avignon, who will mark the opening of the programme with his eulogy for memory, ***By Heart***, which sees ten spectators taking to the stage to learn a poem in a reflection that blends reality and fiction, examining the role of oral transmission in society. On **Friday 15 and Saturday 16 May** he will be at the **Teatro Studio** with his most recent work, ***La Distance***, an international co-production for the first time ever last July as part of the programme for the Festival d'Avignon. A dystopian and moving interplanetary conversation between a father and a daughter, kept alive through lengthy and extremely long-distance telephone calls, offers the opportunity to examine the limitations and the possibilities for communication between generations.

A family rift also lies at the heart of ***Valentina***, the new work by **Caroline Guiela Nguyen**, who has been the director of the National Theatre of Strasbourg and its Entertainment School since 2023. In the wake of ***FRATERNITÉ. Conte fantastique, SAIGON*** and the co-production ***LACRIMA***, the director continues - again in co-production with the Piccolo and in collaboration with Romaeuropa - on her nomadic exploration of language as a bridge between cultures. **Between 15 and 17 May**, the **Teatro Strehler** will be staging the modern tale of a child suspended between two languages and divided between two countries: Romania and France, forced to handle family secrets that she struggles to interpret.

Among the constellation of new Italian associated artists, **Niccolò Fattarappa** will be contributing to the Festival programme on **21 and 22 May** at the **Teatro Studio**, with ***Orgasmo***, a play that made the finals at the 2023 Riccione Award and that examines the crisis of desire in post-COVID society. The stage presents a world where the only pleasure allowed is work, while the EU Agenda predicts that the last orgasm on Earth will be had by 2030.

Lukasz Twarkowski returns following the extraordinary success of ***Rohtko***, his extremely well-received debut in Italy during the last edition of ***Presente Indicativo*** and winner of the 2024 Ubu award for best foreign play presented in Italy. Translation as a function of relationships, in the shamanistic guise of cryptography, is the focus of ***Oracle***, co-produced with Ruhrtriennale and performed for the **first time in Italy** at the **Teatro Strehler** on **23 and 24 May**. The Polish director takes theatre to the frontier of multimedia, to encounter Alan Turing, the mathematician and one of the founders of computing who, by deciphering the ***Enigma*** code, changed the course of the Second World War. Through immersive soundscapes and film projections, the show blurs the lines between reality and illusion, examining the digital future that Turing himself helped to imagine.

From the Wiener Festwochen, Italy welcomes a **sole performance**, on **Sunday 24 May** at the **Teatro Studio**, of ***Il processo Pelicot***, an oratorio inspired by one of the most shocking legal cases of our time. **Milo Rau**, currently the director of the Vienna festival, and **Servane Dècle** stage interrogations, statements and comments concerning this historical debate, creating a powerful act of memory and denouncement of gender-based violence and rape culture while paying tribute to the woman who has become a symbol of this battle: Gisèle Pelicot. The proceeds from this show will be donated to the *Casa delle Donne in Milan*, an association that, in collaboration with other women's associations in Italy and abroad, is committed to combating gender-based violence, promoting talent and celebrating female wisdom, also through the language of theatre.

Flusso, written by Christian di Furia, winner of the "Franco Quadri" special mention at the 2021 Riccione Award, and staged by **Lino Guancia** together with **Gianmarco Saurino**, is a monologue for two actors, two lives and a sole character. **From 25 to 30 May**, at the **Teatro Grassi**, a room suspended between the present and past recollection is the setting for a poetic exploration of the sense of identity, time, growth, death and the impossibility of ceasing to exist.

On **Wednesday 27 May**, at the **Teatro Studio**, **Daria Deflorian**, as part of a *special programme* dedicated to her in the current Season, will be presenting ***Che dolore terribile è l'amore***, a *work-in-progress performance*, co-produced by the Piccolo, based on *We Do Not Part*, the latest masterpiece by the winner of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature Han Kang. The play examines the consequences of the 1948 uprising on the island of Jeju, South Korea, which saw the massacre of thirty thousand civilians; an open wound that continues to torment two friends, just as it did the mother of one of them, a direct witness of this crime.

In *Presente Indicativo*, great dance is represented by **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker** and her visionary and geometric scores. The choreographer, an iconic figure in contemporary dance, was recently celebrated in Tokyo with the **Praemium Imperiale 2025**, known as the "Nobel for the Arts", which this year also went to Marina Abramović and that has, in the past, been won by Renzo Piano, Merce Cunningham, Sylvie Guillem and Robert Wilson, among others. The Belgian artist comes **to the Piccolo for the first time ever**, with ***BREL***, performing for the **first time in Italy** at the **Teatro Strehler**, **from 28 to 30 May**, co-produced by the Festival d'Avignon, where the play made its debut last summer. A duet with the dancer and choreographer **Solal Mariotte** to the music of Jacques Brel, a monumental figure in French song, whose view of the world— in a blend of social justice, love, ageing and rejection of violence— becomes material to be evoked, explored and put into motion.

Performing at the **Teatro Studio** in the same period - a dance-style coincidence - is the young women's collective **Parini Secondo**, who recently joined the ranks of associates, with the **world premiere** of ***SLOOOOOW - il tempo della festa***. In the show, co-produced with the Piccolo, Parini Secondo and Bienoise set in motion a process of choreographic and musical slowing to examine the relationship between hyperproductivity and memory. It will be preceded on **26 and 27 May** by ***HIT OUT***, a *site-specific* performance for the **Chiostro** that offers an initial taste of the work of the collective.

During the Festival, a full parallel programme - ***Oltre la scena*** - offers a series of encounters and conversations (*Parole in pubblico*), and book presentation (*Segnalibro*) led by Graziano Graziani. *Parole in pubblico*, taking place in the plaza in front of the Teatro Strehler, audiences will have the opportunity to meet **Tiago Rodrigues** (16 May at 5 p.m.) and **Łukasz Twarkowski** (21 May at 6 p.m., joined by Camilla Lietti and Maddalena Giovannelli, who have curated a monograph dedicated to the author). With *Segnalibro*, the shows will be followed by encounters with **Caroline Guiela Nguyen** and Chiara Elefante (16 May), **Niccolò Fetta**rappa (21 May), **Daria Deflorian** (27 May), and **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Solal Mariotte** (29 May). The programme for *Teatro in*

platea involves **two masterclasses**: on Tuesday 26 May from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Reading Room (4th floor) of the Teatro Grassi will play host to *Frottole*, a masterclass in playwriting held by **Christian di Furia**, and on Saturday 30 May at 11 a.m., the Carpi rehearsal room at the Teatro Strehler (6th floor), will see *Make your cardio an art: Jump-rope meetup with Parini Secondo powered by MarcRope*, a masterclass held by **Parini Secondo and the MarcRope team**.

In addition to the opportunities to get to know the artists, throughout the Festival the plaza in front of the Teatro Strehler (**la Piazza**) will be full of life, thanks to the participation of **mare culturale urbano**, with workshops, collective events, multilingual readings, social knitting, encounters (*We Africans United & Refugees Welcome Italia*, an event organised in collaboration with Black History Month Milano and Nalini Vidoolah Mootoosamy), yoga training and tai chi, all set against the fundamental backdrop of music and fun with the bar, DJ sets and live performances, as well as a **grand Party to mark the end of the Festival**.

Lastly, the international aspect of *Presente Indicativo* provides the perfect context for the second edition of **Interesse Pubblico**, the three-year observatory promoted by the Piccolo Teatro di Milano on the present-day role of the spectator and the transformations observed in the way that theatre is seen, experienced and shared. In the wake of the October 2025 convention dedicated to **I pubblici della Milano che cambia** (The audiences of an evolving Milan), the focus of the day of study, entitled **Connecting International Audiences** and taking place on Saturday 23 May 2026 at the Teatro Grassi, will be **international audiences**.

The leading question “Who, today, does the All of an ‘Art Theatre for All’ refer to?” becomes the driver for a wider-ranging discussion that extends beyond national borders to generate a shared query: is there such a thing as a common international audience? And how does it develop alongside the experience of theatre, festivals and the many international art and cultural organisations that exist both in Europe and beyond? Who are the individuals or the groups of which they consist, and how to they behave? The discussions and speeches from international guests will be accompanied by a presentation of the results of the survey carried out by ABA - the Advisory Board for the Arts - among the members of its art and culture network. The day of study will also be an opportunity to present the latest issue of IF magazine, an online publication created by ItaliaFestival and dedicated to the world of festivals.

The show *The City of Arrival* by **Thomas Verstraeten**, announced as part of the Festival, **from 16 to 24 May**, will be rescheduled in autumn 2026.

The shows will be subtitled in Italian and English

CALENDAR

14 and 16 May 2026	Grassi	<i>By Heart</i>
15 – 16 May 2026	Studio	<i>La Distance</i>
15 – 17 May 2026	Strehler	<i>Valentina</i>
21 – 22 May 2026	Studio	<i>Orgasmo</i>
23 – 24 May 2026	Strehler	<i>Oracle</i>
24 May 2026	Studio	<i>Il processo Pelicot</i>

25 – 30 May 2026	Grassi	<i>Flusso</i>
26 – 27 May 2026	Chiostro	<i>HIT OUT</i>
27 May 2026	Studio	<i>Che dolore terribile è l'amore</i>
28 – 30 May 2026	Studio	<i>SLOOOOOOW</i>
28 – 30 May 2026	Strehler	<i>BREL</i>

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