

Partner Inquiry Form DoSEL

Provided by

Partner Organization	Estonian Theatre Agency
City, Country	Tallinn, Estonia
Representative	Liisi Aibel

Language

Represented Language	Estonian
Native speakers	900 000

Historical Overview

<p>Classic play titles of key importance for the dramaturgy in this language - minimum 5 <i>(title, author, year of writing, synopsis)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Saaremaa onupoeg” (“The Cousin from Saaremaa”), Lydia Koidula, 1870. A father wants to marry his daughter off to a man she dislikes – a cousin from Saaremaa with a pockmarked face. But his daughter Miina loves another and fights for her heart’s desire. 2. “Libahunt” (“The Werewolf”), August Kitzberg, 1911. “Libahunt” tells the tragic story of the Tammaru family, the love between foster daughter Tiina and son Margus, which was doomed by foster daughter Mari’s desire to have Margus for herself and the superstition that prevailed in society at large. When Mari spread the rumor that Tiina was a werewolf, Tiina’s fate was sealed. 3. “Kauka jumal” (“God of Mammon”), August Kitzberg, 1912. “Kauka jumal” is a powerful character study of greed and family tyranny, focusing on the sharp conflict between money and people. 4. “Tabamata ime” (“The Unattainable Miracle”), Eduard Vilde, 1912. The idea behind the play is inspired by the spirit of the times, which is still relevant today – the desire for fame among those who devote themselves to the arts only ends when they reach the world stage. The central character is Leo Saalep, the tragic embodiment of mediocrity. 5. “Pisuhänd” (“Hobgoblin”), Eduard Vilde, 1913. Civil engineer Ludvig Sander, who has become a writer at his wife’s urging, publishes his schoolmate Tiit Piibeht’s novel <i>Pisuhänd</i> under his own name. However, circumstances change. <i>Pisuhänd</i> not only brings Sander honor and fame, but suddenly begins to serve its actual
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	<p>creator, Piibeleht.</p> <p>6. “Juudit” (“Judith”), A. H. Tammsaare, 1921. The play is a deconstruction of a biblical myth. The main character is Judith, who combines sexual passion with a thirst for power. She desires Holofernes as a man, but also as a source of fame. Holofernes, however, is tired of war and does not want any power, which is why he rejects Judith, who is trying to steer him in that direction. This angers the woman, and in a moment of destruction and humiliation, she cuts off Holofernes' head.</p>
<p>Contemporary dramaturgy (up to 3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>During the 21st century, the exploration of Estonian cultural history has become a dominant topic in drama, ranging from documentary theatre to historical speculations and fantasies. The main characters are often famous artists, and due to that, the plays function as history lessons, national identity anchors, and meta-aesthetic contemplations.</p> <p>The tradition of documentary drama has been present in Estonia since 1980, when Merle Karusoo started to produce theatre based on sociological research, predominantly on interviews. Several theatre makers from the younger generations have decided to carry on this tradition and have staged verbatim productions about so-called rejected topics: Estonian emigrants, mental health issues, domestic violence, motherhood, etc.</p> <p>Considering the quantity of new drama (approximately 70 new texts are written and performed every year), Estonian playwriting is flourishing. In recent years, around 40 to 50 percent of all plays staged in Estonia are original pieces by local authors.</p> <p><i>(quoted and referred from Estonian contemporary dramaturgy: a shift from literature to theatre by Anneli Saro)</i></p>
<p>Significant plays in this language from the past 35 years - minimum 5 (title, author, year of writing, synopsis, existing translations, produced abroad)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “The Highway Crossing or A Tale of a Golden Fish”, Jaan Tätte, 1998. The most internationally successful Estonian play that explores existential themes through a seemingly simple encounter between strangers. The play delves into questions of love, human connection, and the choices that define our lives, and how money affects all of this, making it a profound reflection on modern existence. Translated to English, German, Finnish, Swedish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Russian, French, Afrikaans, Czech, Slovenian. More than 40 different productions all over the world. 2. “To See Pink Elephants”, Piret Jaaks, 2013. “To See Pink Elephants” is a poetic and bittersweet play about lonely, broken people searching for connection. The play charmingly blends reality and imagination and surprises with its unpredictable and powerful ending. Translated to English, Swedish, Finnish, German, Russian, Spanish, Czech, Latvian, Belarusian, and Romanian. It has been produced abroad.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. “Sulfur Magnolias”, Martin Algus, 2014. “Sulfur Magnolias” deals with childhood traumas and the increasingly relevant theme of care for aging family members. With believable characters and poetic language, Martin Algus crafts a deeply human story about reckoning, mercy, and the fragile beauty that can emerge even in the most volatile relationships. Translated into English, Swedish, Finnish, German, and Lithuanian. Has been produced abroad, e.g., in Lithuania. 4. “Beatrice”, Siret Campbell, 2017. “Beatrice” explores the theme where the digitization of human consciousness and resurrection from death have become possible. The characters face questions about the separation of body and mind, as well as the effects of posthumanism on interpersonal relationships. Translated into English, Hungarian, Polish, and Latvian. Produced abroad as a staged reading. 5. “Business as Usual”, Mehis Pihla, 2024. “Business As Usual” is a gripping narrative inspired by the money laundering scandals that rocked Estonian banking. The ambitions and painful lessons of the entire Estonian society are channelled through this fascinating, clever, and deeply engaging play. Translated into English, Swedish, French, and Romanian. Not yet produced abroad.
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LOCAL RESOURCES

Digital presence

<p>Digital database for plays in this language (Y/N, link, type of access)</p>	<p>Estonian Theatre Agency’s database; https://teater.ee/naitekirjandus/naidendid/ (Estonian and foreign plays in Estonian and foreign languages) / https://teater.ee/dramaturgy/play-database/?lang=en (translations of Estonian plays); accessible for all performing arts professionals with a registered account.</p>
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Funding

<p>Structural grants for playwriting (organization, contact information, website, range of financial support: min–max, frequency/period)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dramatic arts endowment – creative work fee (Cultural Endowment of Estonia); naitekunst@kulka.ee; https://www.kulka.ee/endowments/dramatic-arts; no fixed range; four annual deadlines (20 February, 20 May, 20 August and 20 November). 2. Literature endowment – publishing support (Cultural Endowment of Estonia). kirjandus@kulka.ee; https://www.kulka.ee/endowments/literature/; no fixed range; four annual deadlines (20 February, 20 May, 20
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	<p>August and 20 November).</p> <p>3. Writer's salary – for writers (or translators) who wish to dedicate themselves to creative work for the next three years. (Estonian Ministry of Culture) taotlus@ekl.ee; https://www.kul.ee/looming/kirjandus/kirjanikupalk; monthly payment of 1.1 times the minimum wage for a cultural worker (includes health and pension insurance); for a period of 3 years; application round once per year.</p>
<p>Structural grants for translation of plays (organization, contact information, website, range of financial support: min–max, frequency/period)</p>	<p>Traducta (Cultural Endowment of Estonia). Grants to translators and foreign publishers translating Estonian literature for publication outside Estonia. www.kulka.ee/programmes/traducta Address: Suur-Karja 23, 10148 Tallinn, Estonia E-mail: traducta@kulka.ee The annual deadlines for submitting applications are 20 February, 20 May, 20 August and 20 November. The range of financial support depends on the language.</p>

Publishing

<p>Publishers specialized in publishing plays in this language (organization, contact information, website)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Estonian Theatre Agency, info@teater.ee, www.teater.ee 2. Estonian Drama Theatre, info@draamateater.ee, www.draamateater.ee
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Agencies

<p>Agencies specializing in the management and promotion of playwriting (organization, contact information, website)</p>	<p>Estonian Theatre Agency, info@teater.ee, www.teater.ee</p>
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Local cultural institutes

<p>Cultural institutes working in the country (organization, contact information, website, activities)</p>	<p>Estonian Institute; Rävåla 6, Tallinn; estinst@estinst.ee; https://estinst.ee/en/. Estonian Institute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advises and applies for additional funding from both Estonian and foreign funds • creates both universal and targeted content (exhibitions, seminars, guest speakers, digital events) • creates informational materials introducing Estonia and Estonian culture in both print and digital formats • facilitates cultural contacts for organizations, development centers, etc. • advises Estonian representations around the world on cultural work and initiates and facilitates projects
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Books

Books in English to get more information about playwriting in your language

(author, title, publishing House, year of publication)

1. Play collection **"Read Me, Love Me, Play Me! Five Estonian Plays from 1911 to 2020"**, Estonian Theatre Agency, 2025. Compiled and edited by Heidi Aadma and Liisi Aibel, afterword by Sven Karja.
2. Play catalogue **"Choose Me! Like Me! Stage Me! Selection of Estonian Plays"**, Estonian Theatre Agency, 2025. Compiled and edited by Heidi Aadma, Kirsten Simmo, and Liisi Aibel.
3. Play catalogue **"[New Estonian Drama 2](#)"**, Estonian Theatre Agency, 2025. Edited by Heidi Aadma, Liisi Aibel.
4. Play catalogue **"[New Estonian Drama](#)"**, Estonian Theatre Agency, 2019. Edited by Heidi Aadma, Liisi Aibel.
5. Article **"[The travelling of dramatic texts and memory patterns. The case of Estonian memory theatre](#)"**, Nordic Theatre Studies vol 32 / no 2, 2020. Author Piret Kruuspere.
6. Compilation of conference presentations **"[Baltic Lines](#)"**, Estonian Theatre Agency, 2018. Estonian articles by Anneli Saro, Luule Epner, Siret Campbell and Madli Pesti.