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CROATIAN THEATRE



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editorial

Dear readers,

We are happy to present you with the third issue of the *Croatian Theatre* magazine. Although its concept has partially changed, it still has one basic aim: to present current events and tendencies in Croatian theatres and stress the ones we believe might be interesting to foreign audiences. This is why we have given special attention to theatre personalities who have brought a motivating restlessness and tension into Croatian theatre thanks to their original concepts, their tendency towards explorative theatre and towards the phenomenological dissection of the society they live in. Director Saša Anočić is the only one among them who has managed to combine the commercial and the artistic (with dramaturge Tajana Gašparović writing about his successful plays), while Shadow Casters/Bacači sjenki (a group that theatre expert Višnja Rogošić covers in her text) and director Borut Šeparović (presented through an interview with theoretician Suzana Marjanić) permanently remain on the margins of Croatian theatre where very often the best things happen. Dramaturge and theatre critic Hrvoje Ivanković shows us how a mainstream theatre, in this case the Zagreb Youth Theatre (ZKM), can become part of unconventional and explorative theatre.

In the previous two issues we presented new dramatic works by Croatian authors, via short supplements, that might be of interest to foreign theatres. This time, however, we are featuring only one author: an author of the younger generation, Ivor Martinić, and the translation of his latest text *The play about Mirjana and those around her* that is currently being staged at eminent theatres in Ljubljana and Belgrade. As in the previous issues we present an overview of events in Croatian theatres in the last season (written by theatre critic Bojan Munjin), and a report of the activities of the Croatian Centre of ITI, the publisher of this magazine. Naturally, we have added the addresses of every important Croatian theatre institution with the hope that some of our texts will inspire you to contact them. In case you are interested in our previous issues, may we remind you that they can be found on our web page <http://www.hciti.hr..>

Editorial Board

Bojan Munjin

A YOUNG GENERATION OF DIRECTORS

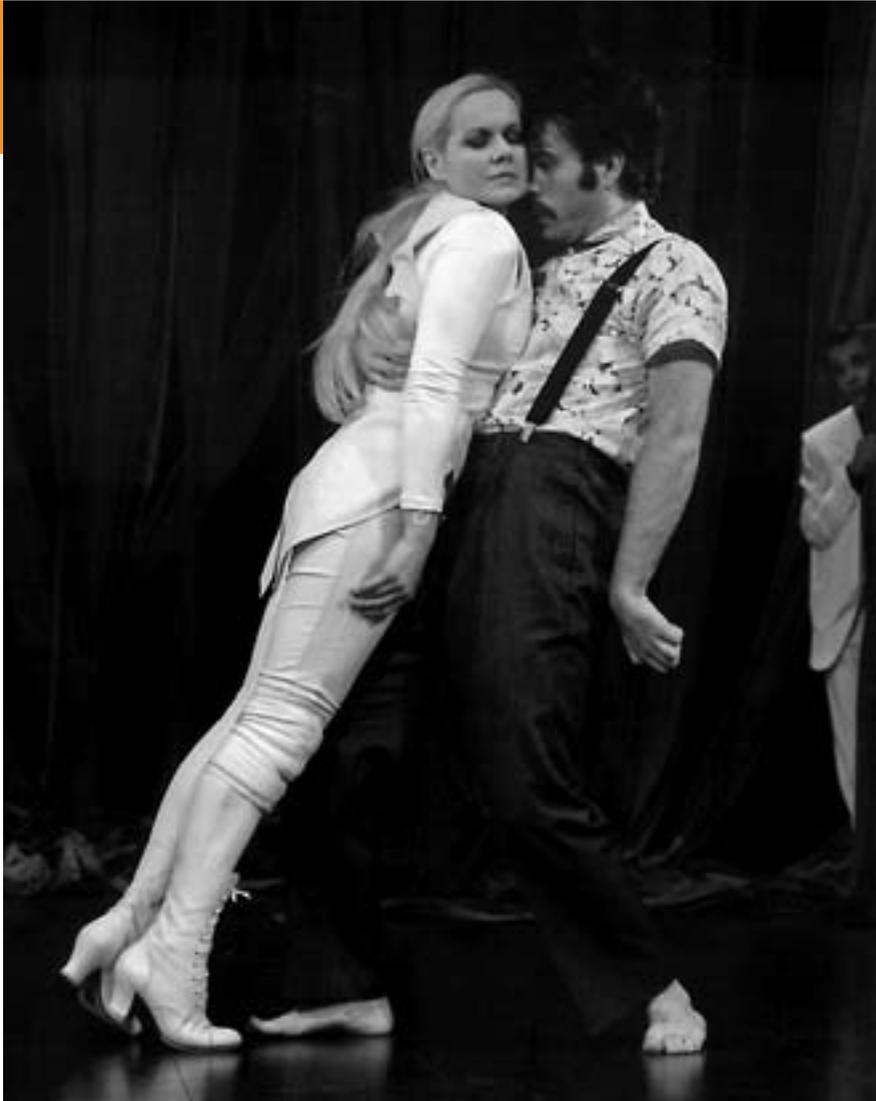
The last theatre season (2008/09) was a season of changes for some Croatian theatres, for others it was a season of continuity, and for some even a season of continuous changes. The last can surely be applied to &TD Theatre from Zagreb which has lately been deliberately promoting a different kind of theatre, one that is cynical towards our social reality and mocking towards conventional theatre practice. Traditional theatre experts would say "O.K. - new is new, but good is good", however, &TD Theatre is not paying attention to mainstream opinions and is uninterruptedly staging plays - whatever their quality may be. It is experimenting with dramatic pieces, modes of staging and the role of actors on stage, while contemporary dance plays a major role along with frequent experimentation with audiences - in order to ridicule the comfortable middle classes - who have been turned into guinea pigs at performances in which the boundary between the stage and the first row has ceased to exist. The first thing you notice when entering this theatre, which is a part of the Student Centre, is an altogether disarranged café which is everything but an "actors' salon" and which looks like a kind of continuous interactive workshop - in an impenetrable cloud of smoke - where everyone who finds themselves in the theatre at that moment becomes a participant, picturesquely said. This is roughly how plays in 2008 were staged at this theatre, and although classical texts were used in abundance - *The Idiot* (Dostoevsky), *Sympathy for the Devil* (Shakespeare) and *The Pianist* (Jelinek) - all the plays were mostly enjoyed by those who love fragmentary theatre, decomposed texts and atonal voices from the stage. &TD Theatre is not an aesthetic novelty - there are unpolished plays made by beginners or students, everything is somehow chaotic and turned upside down - but a cultural and aesthetic fact for all the curious ones under the age of twenty-five.

A note for contemporary dance fans: the Zagreb Centre for Dance recently opened in the city centre (on Ilica Street) and the renowned Dance Week Festival that has been held for the past 25 years will soon move into its new premises.

Croatian mainstream theatres, on the other hand, were mainly devoted to Marin Držić, the most celebrated Croatian Renaissance playwright, marking the 500th anniversary of his birth in 2008. Along with his most famous plays *Dundo Maroje* and *The Miser* being staged in Zagreb, Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik and Varaždin, an international conference was held with an important subject - the topicality of Držić today.

When we talk about the continuity of Croatian mainstream theatre in the last several years, we think about the constant renewal (with occasional innovations) within the mainstream Croatian playhouses; sometimes we deal with melodrama, sometimes simply with middle class salons and sometimes with classic plays - in a new fashion. Regardless of whether we are talking about *The Snowstorm* (Puškin) at Zagreb's Gavella Theatre or *Night Sings its Songs* (Jon Fosse) at the Zagreb Youth Theatre, *The Tempest* (Shakespeare) and *Mourning becomes Electra* (O'Neill) at the Croatian National Theatre, or *God of Carnage* (Yasmina Reza) at the Croatian National Theatre in Split or almost identical plays at theatres in Dubrovnik, Zadar,





Varaždin, Virovitica and Osijek, what we get – from *The Glass Menagerie* to *A Flea in her Ear* – are comical and sad scenes of theatre realism or theatrical agitation within the boundaries of law. The only question is whether these plays are well packed for today's usage and whether the actors are giving their best.

Director Paolo Magelli has always been an expert in disturbing his audience within the boundaries of the permissible. That is why his plays *Zagreb Pentagon* (five one-act plays on Zagreb; awarded as the best Croatian play in 2009) at the Zagreb Youth Theatre and *Wolves and Sheep* (Ostrovski) at the Kerempuh Theatre, contain all the good elements that Magelli very often uses: the grotesque as a social critique, the parody of sex that pushes the limits of good taste so as to disturb intellectual frames of mind and a morbid spectacular quality that does both.

After many years, we had the opportunity to see another "different" example of mainstream theatre in 2008 that crossed the border between the stage and the audience more explicitly than is usual. The play in question was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare) at the Zagreb Gavella Theatre directed by Aleksandar Popovski from Macedonia. Popovski based his *Dream* on the premise that the world, worn out by wars and politics, should experience a turn towards playfulness and he was right. Actors from the Gavella Theatre played the famous scenes of lovers in the woods and games by the Gods, rulers and elves – with mild irony towards Shakespeare himself and our times – simply with the task to play and that is why both the stage and the audience were in high spirits.

The major news in that period – a step forward from the predictable – were the authorial plays by a generation of new directors. One of them is Saša Anočić – director and

actor – whose plays abound with so much histrionics and theatricality that just when we start thinking how theatre has become stuck in its own routine and worn out poetics, Anočić takes it back to its roots – the magic of the actor's craft.

That is why his play *Cowboys* at the Exit Theatre in Zagreb (which received the award for best play in Croatia in 2008 and numerous other awards at festivals) is not just a light parody of the Wild West, although there is an abundance of western details. *Cowboys* is a contemporary neurotic antimusical that comprises questions of bare survival, a desperate wish for forgotten joy, a histrionic contempt of all kinds of pettiness of mind and an intimate story on loneliness and friendship. The three-hour show passes by in a moment: it begins with a story about the formation of a troupe, more precisely, a group of losers who work on a cowboy comedy, but beneath this surface filled with "little" people there is a feeling, known to all of us, that everything that we've done "seriously" in life, has fallen apart and when we've become numb with indifference in the end – we desperately want to do something for ourselves. The heroes of this play don't know how to handle the text, themselves or others and in a self-ironical way insist on showing us in detail how a real "ship of fools" functions in impossible circumstances. The way the play was made is very interesting: Saša Anočić is the author of the idea and the synopsis for the play, and



everything else was done by the troupe. The rehearsals took six months accompanied by "blood, sweat and tears", but the *Cowboys* would never have seen the light of day if there hadn't been the eight actors along with the director. The troupe *Shadow Casters / Bacači sjenki* from Zagreb under the guidance of director Boris Bakal and dramaturge Katarina Pejović use a similar way of workshop practice. They don't make classical plays based on dramas with a story, plot and finale, but "out of almost nothing" they create a kind of performance with a strong poetic and social impact where actors and the audience are equal players who bring their own experiences, and this can – but doesn't have to – create a theatrical effect. After the very successful antiplay *Ex-position*, their new play *Vacation from History* that was performed last year, could freely be translated as a laboratory for the reanimation of male fantasy where everything is upside down except – memo-



ry. The play *Vacation from History* is a magical fairy tale on the border between reality and dreams, performed in libraries, barracks or warehouses but not in theatres, the actors are here and there, they're more like members of a family or friends, while the audience doesn't sit but lies on folding beds because it doesn't watch but – sleeps. The play is performed in the dead of night; every performance is done only in front of an audience of 16 people who don't have to do anything but surrender themselves up to weariness and their own thoughts. What the audience hears before unavoidably falling asleep are the indistinct voices of the actors, segments of family conversations, intimate dialogues between four walls, echoes of distant quarrels, music that sounds familiar... Boris Bakal's concept as a director is based on the intention of showing us how daily reality – in which we often cannot link numerous details – keeps accumulating a mass of information whose meaning we cannot decipher. That is why we reach the pictures of the real history of our lives in a state of semiconscious haze – alone with ourselves – because that is the only thing we can do... Surely, no one will remain indifferent to this imaginative concept, and it gives Croatian theatre an indispensable grain of fantasy.

Oliver Frlijić is the third author who has shaken up spirits in Croatia in the last couple of years. The performance of his play *The Bacchae* (Euripides), produced by the Croatian National Theatre in Split for the festival *Splitsko ljeto 2008*, was prohibited 48 hours before its premiere by the general manager of the theatre who was afraid of its political implications. Nevertheless the play was performed due to intense media pressure. It was awarded best play at the prestigious International Small Scenes Theatre Festival in Rijeka but its destiny is still unclear regarding its home theatre. What is it all about? Frlijić's play *The Bacchae* is not

just a contemporary view on an old Greek text about violence, but functions as a practical use of antiquity in a fight with contemporary demons in one's own courtyard. We're talking about the raid of today's unpleasant reality into the theatre. There was not much left of Euripides. Moral, social and political taboos were thrown at the audience. We saw – in an almost documentary style – quite a lot of well known moments from our recent past which almost nobody dares to question; the speech by the former Prime Minister in which he stands up for the defendants in The Hague, political murders or humorous views on "culture" and civil politeness. Animal meat thrown on stage, an actor's "jacket" made of beef and the ritual burning down of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, were not a visual trick: *The Bacchae* is a play that is skinned of conventions, good taste and empty moralizing in order to be able to gain sight of the other side of reality – "a bad night in a bad inn" – that we really live in. Frlijić's authorial play *Turbo-folk*, which won numerous awards at festivals in 2009, talks about political myths and mass culture with short shocking cuts in a furious rhythm, emphasizing that they have anaesthetized and enslaved us and don't allow us, as free and responsible persons, to look reality in the face.

And finally, the youngest authors of this four-leaf cluster are director Anica Tomić and dramaturge Jelena Kovačić. After their very much praised play *Sons of Bitches*



(based on a novel by Ágota Kristóf) and guest performance at the Eurokaz Festival, their following authorial project *Excuse Me, Can I Tell You* performed in 2008 at the Zagreb Youth Theatre, deals with the younger Croatian generation that cannot find its place under the sun and within the chaos of moral, political and national uncertainties... They regard the older generation with a lot of bitterness and sadness because they cannot tell the young people the truth about themselves, the war and more recent events that have determined the destiny of the younger generation in a painful manner. The poetics of these two authors is very simple but strong and honest; an ordinary story about an ordinary parent's celebration among friends is interrupted all the time by neurotic scenic "outbursts" that are not a result of the story but subconsciously burden the characters. Everything is full of flashbacks and outbursts of dark

memories although nothing can disturb a middle class family idyll on the surface...

Finally, after a long time a new generation of directors has emerged – that's the most important news that encourages – unlike any other that, along with the usual repertoire based on classics and realism, creates authorial work so it can play, for its own pleasure, with problems that concern all of us and that have to be discussed more thoroughly.

Translated by: Sabine Marić

Hrvoje Ivanković

ZAGREB YOUTH THEATRE - A FACTORY OF GOOD THEATRE

In the last several years the Zagreb Youth Theatre (in Croatian Zagrebačko kazalište mladih, shortened to ZKM) has been the most propulsive Croatian theatre as well as the one most present on the international theatre scene. It has had guest performances in Berlin, Bruxelles, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Lyon, Maastricht, Moscow, Nitra, Plzen, St. Petersburg, Sarajevo, Varna, Vienna, Vilnius, Wiesbaden and numerous other European cities, while the Croatian public has had the opportunity to see numerous top-level productions from worldwide theatres via the World Theatre Festival (ZKM has been its producer since 2005) or via its regular "European Theatre at ZKM" series program. Founded in 1948, ZKM was meant to be a central place for the artistic education of children, and that is why its dance, drama, puppet and music studios with several hundred members are still an important part of its program. ZKM started with its regular repertoire during the 1950s, initially aimed for a younger audience. A portion of its plays are that even today. Its repertoire widened along with the gradual professionalisation of the ensemble and that is why ZKM acquired the reputation of being a serious drama theatre at the end of the 1960s. A period of upswing happened between 1987 and 1991 when it was finally given its permanent premises: a former concert hall in the Zagreb city centre, with a step-like auditorium and a spacious stage. Since then ZKM has had its ups and downs, but its most successful period began in 2005 with its general manager, theatre critic and dramaturge Dubravka Vrgoč. Her repertoire concept had three starting points from the very beginning: to enable the best representatives of Croatian authorial theatre to continue their work under the best production conditions, to stage unconventional or problem-focused contemporary dramatic works, and to revitalize 20th century cult writing (prose, drama, screenplays), directed by

Croatian and foreign directors well known for their extremely modern style.

Part of the first group are numerous plays in which actors often participate in the development of each element of the theatre act, including the text. That is how on ZKM's stage Bobo Jelčić and Nataša Rajković continued their intriguing questioning of the relationship between an actor's privacy and theatre fiction, and about the (im)possibility of communication in the accelerated rhythm of our everyday lives. Their play *On the Other Side*, which premiered in 2006, still has guest performances on stages worldwide as the most representative work of contemporary Croatian theatre.¹

Two young authors, director Anica Tomić and dramaturge Jelena Kovačić, use a similar workshop method while making their plays. Last year they staged the play *Excuse Me, Can I Tell You...?* in which four actors, via futile attempts to tell stories, explore the paths our repressed frustrations, fears and passions can lead us along. Young critic Matko Botić described this explosive play as an "honest outburst of rage by a generation whom nobody has asked anything".

Borut Šeparović, founder and manager of the Montažstroj group that had a decent international reception in the 1990s, joined ZKM's list of authors this year. His project *Generation 91-95* was realized with members of the ZKM College who belong to the generation the play

Anica Tomić/Jelena Kovačić: *Excuse Me, Can I Tell You...?*



talks about. The play is based on oppositionist journalist Boris Dežulović's novel *Who gives a damn about a thousand dinars now*. The starting point of the novel is soldiers from opposing Croatian and Bosnian armies who have the same idea during one of the war episodes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: they put on the uniforms of their enemies so as to deceive them during a reconnaissance. Šeparović stimulates the young actors to form and scenically express their opinion towards the actual event and historical context and uses different expressive means: classical theatre, physical action, documentarism and the observed worldview differences between actors that he aptly uses as a driving force. The result is an exciting play that talks about the psychology of a generation defined by postwar traumas as well as

the fatality of prejudices and so-called "unyielding attitudes".

An unavoidable segment of the repertoire is the work of Rene Medvešek, a former ZKM actor who has realized the majority of his director's work in cooperation with his former colleagues from the actors' ensemble by using their partiality towards team play and creative sharing in the working process. But in distinction to all the above mentioned authors whom one could call theatre iconoclasts, Medvešek has a tendency towards the attractive and poetic scenic pictures most of his plays develop from. The most recent ones



are *Best Soup! Best Soup!*, an unconventional scenic homage to painter and film artist Vlado Kristl, and *Next Door...*, a grotesque and critically strong parody of well known models of behaviour, media stereotypes and situations characteristic for the chaotic everyday life of transitional countries.²

In the introduction I mentioned ZKM's dedication towards contemporary dramatic works, with a special interest for dramaturgically innovative and socially critical works. This is also why the repertoire included the subversive drama trilogy by Croatian writer and performer Ivana Sajko *Archetype: Medea/ Woman-Bomb/Europe* that three differ-

ent directors (including the writer) staged in different places within the theatre; as well as representative examples of post-transitional plays like *Grasshoppers* by Serbian author Biljana Srbljanović and *Lightning Bugs* by Croatian author Tena Stivičić. Both plays (they were successfully directed by the German director of Polish origin Janusz Kica) dissect the psychology of the "new little man" lost in the whirlpool of the globalized world, similar to the play *Night Sings Its Songs* by popular Norwegian writer Jon Fosse whose play was staged by director Dino Mustafić from Bosnia

and Herzegovina. A special place on the repertoire is reserved for the play *Zagreb Pentagram* (Agram is the German word for Zagreb frequently used in the past) that was recently proclaimed the best Croatian play in 2009. Director Paolo Magelli gathered five authors from the young and middle-aged generation (Filip Šovagović, Nina Mitrović, Igor Rajki, Damir Karakaš, Ivan Vidić) and ordered a short play from each of them dealing with Zagreb, even though some of them had never written anything for the theatre before. He received exactly what he expected: a genre and thematic *rashomon*, a combination of a social and love drama, fairy tale, theatre of the absurd and dream, and proceeded to weave a picture of an invisible Zagreb (or any other city in Mitteleuropa); at the same time sad and comic, serious and infantile, real and impossible.

An interesting co-production on the repertoire was the play *Polet (l'Envolee)*, based on the black humour play by contemporary French author Gilles Granouillet. The play was directed by French director Jean-Claude Berutti with two different actors' ensembles and theatres: ZKM and La Comédie de Saint-Étienne, but in an almost identical stage set. Audiences in both cities saw both performances as well as the one in Liège as the Théâtre de la Place was also included in the co-production.

In the last few years this has become a regular way of making theatre for ZKM: a great number of co-productions were made with Croatian and foreign theatres and festivals such as the Dubrovnik Summer Festival (Rene Medvešek's project *Voices from the Mountains* based on the works of Croatian





Renaissance authors Marin Držić and Petar Zoranić or the Antwerpen's Troubleyn Company (Jan Fabre's plays *Requiem für eine Metamorphose* and *Another Sleepy Dusty Delta Day*). The presence of ZKM in the international theatre context will be improved by its membership in the European Theatre Convention [2008], whose vice-president Dubravka Vrgoč recently became. Together with five other ETC members, ZKM successfully realized the project *Orient Express* which was envisaged as a theatre laboratory with the aim of questioning the diversity of cultural experiences and identities through the direct artistic contact of the European West and East. Six theatres from Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Germany contributed to the project with their plays that were performed in a train travelling from one train station to another, from Ankara to Stuttgart where finally all six plays were performed (ZKM staged the play *Seven Days in Zagreb* by Tena Štivičić).

Besides co-productions, guest performances abroad, frequent guest performances of foreign artists on its stage, ZKM has stressed its openness towards the exchange of experiences with foreign artists through the frequent cooperation with foreign directors.

This has been noticeable in the repertoire segment mentioned last, that is, in the actualization of classic works from the 20th century. The only one who has moved the borders backwards is Russian director Vasilij Senin; two times with the subtle staging of two master-pieces of Russian literature (*Ana Karenina*, *Seagull*), while some questioned the power of modern classics in collision with theatre poetics, experiences and searches from the 21st century with various successes – intellectually one of the most demanding Croatian directors Ivica Buljan (Francis Scott Fitzgerald: *Great Gatsby*), two directors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, one based in Sarajevo (Haris Pašović staged *Victor or Power to the Children* by Roger Vitrac), and the other in New York (Tea Alagić Vlašić recently staged *The Marriage of Maria Braun* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder).

Along with the main features of its repertoire for adults, ZKM has also retained communication with its youngest audience. Directors with a recognizable dramatic style, cult works for children and teenagers, high performance and production standards are a feature of this segment of the repertoire. Among the current plays worth mentioning are *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift directed by the enfant terrible of the Croatian theatre Oliver Frljić, who didn't miss the chance to talk about the perverse political paradigms of the world we live in, and two more gentle plays by Krešimir Dolenčić



suitable for children: *Balthazar or the Search for the Magic Droplet*, a combination of a fairy picture book and dynamic slapstick, which is the first instance of the staging of professor Balthazar, the main character of the most famous Croatian animated film of all times, and *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne, an entertaining show. Proof that ZKM does not believe that a theatre for children is based only on amusement and the animation of characters from required reading can be found in the future project of Anica Tomić and Jelena Kovačić: a play about juvenile violence, initiated by the recent murder of a Zagreb teenager.

To sum up, ZKM is a little factory of modern, reflective and actively engaged theatre; an engine that works without pause (while this text is being written it is preparing the opening night of one of its new shows in New York's La Mama theatre), a successful repertoire theatre and a place

where art and provocation coexist. When we add its two-way role in linking Croatian theatres to foreign ones, it is clear that we are talking about one of the main spots on the theatre map of south-east Europe.

¹ A more detailed report about the work of Bobo Jelčić and Nataša Rajković and their play *On the Other Side* can be found in the 2nd edition of *Croatian Theatre*. An online version of the magazine is available on the Croatian Centre ITI web page at <http://www.hciti.hr>.

² For a more detailed review of Rene Medvešek's theatre and his play *Next Door...* please see the first edition of the *Croatian Theatre* magazine. An online version of the magazine is available on the Croatian Centre ITI web page at <http://www.hciti.hr>.

Višnja Rogošić

AWAKENING THE CONSCIENCE OF SOCIETY: SHADOW CASTERS

Process – in – progress

They call their artistic projects time-space sculptures, their spectators poetic detectives and themselves navigators of performative events that make space for fruitful fusions and "short circuits". Shadow Casters were launched in 2001 to become one of the most intriguing non-institutional occurrences in Croatia by the end of the decade. Actor-director Boris Bakal and dramaturge and intermedia artist Katarina Pejović, founders of the platform and its creative core, have made good use of the possibilities at hand on the independent scene: an extended creation process, a diversity and fluctuation of collaborators and the interdisciplinary nature of their expression. Since the very beginning, Shadow Casters have chosen to work on long-term projects, defying the actual pressure of rushed creation, meticulously preparing each subsequent level of project realisation. Through continuous accumulation of "platform workers", it took only eight years of Shadow Casters' activities to create a network of over a hundred professional performers, artists from various fields, amateurs, scientists, international partners, "outsiders" and "insiders". Last but not least, by rejecting limitations imposed by any kind of external factor – be it an umbrella institution, market or "investors" – Shadow Casters have shaped their creative basis as interdisciplinary and intermedia, still preserving the act of performing as crucial to their works. Each performance evolves out of the performers' personal material and "breathes" with each new show, remaining eternally *in-progress*. They keep discovering the theatrical and performative essence of dozens of diverse performing and non-performing spaces – theatre halls, city streets, libraries, museums, schools, concert halls, old cinemas and/or abandoned buildings. They immediately offer their recipients of various profiles new creative roles of visitors, co-performers, sleepers, travellers, creators of narrative puzzles... Shadow Casters explain this visceral need for





expanding viewpoints by stating that they are “mainly pre-occupied with abolishing distance.”

An inclusiveness and readiness to share the risk of creation lies at the basis of their initial project *Shadow Casters* (2001-2003) through which they outlined their area of interest, methodology of creation and mode of “platform” activities thus justifying their name. *Shadow Casters* was envisaged and realised in several world cities, from Zagreb to New York, as a several-hour to several-day urban journey for one or more travellers/explorers guided by direct instructions or traces but also compelled to make choices with each new step. The active analysis of public space occurred as a spontaneous result of strolling through the maze of city stories told through a great number of events and occurrences: a video projection on the surface of a river flowing through the city, a sound installation in an abandoned warehouse, an encounter on the green market or in a large private flat, old graffiti found in city courtyards, messages on the mirrors of cafés and shop windows... Their first shadow-casting already featured the focal themes of all their works to come: the awakening of long forgotten senses, the de-automatisation of the world around us and today’s living in a community. Submitted to the heightened attention of the spectator, the city turns into a stage, its inhabitants into performers, and each event into “a sign sent out from the stake”.

Man is Space

Shadow Casters went on further exploring the city and dealt with its humanisation within the frame of their distinctive performative features, dissolving the syntagm “site-specific” in search for its true meaning. Deeply convinced in being harmoniously rooted in their own surroundings through a full understanding of its historical continuity, they dedicated two long-term projects to achieving this harmony: *Vitić Dances* (2004-2009) and *Re-Collecting City/Re-Collecting Time* (2006-2009).

Vitić Dances entered the space of an important monument of Croatian Modernist architecture – a 10-storey Zagreb condominium designed by Croatian architect Ivo Vitić – to detect through a series of small actions new strongholds for the renewal of lost identity and the quality of co-habitation of numerous tenants of the building. From “Extended

House Council Meetings” (a body that was non-existent at the time in the building for almost 25 years), where it was initially the invited guests – architects, sociologists, engaged artists and art historians – who would simulate the tenants/co-owners of the building until the real ones showed up, to concerts of classical music or dance performances on the roof of the building, the engagement of Shadow Casters has brought about, among the many tangible effects and actions, the creation of the condominium’s joint archive through collecting and connecting the private material memories of all its tenants. This model was soon transposed into a more ample variation in which the lively images of one condominium were dispersed into *recording/re-collecting* the cultural memory of an entire city/cities. Aiming at a critical outlining of a wider historical context of an area of high political instability, Shadow Casters initially decided to create a material and Web archive of documentation on artistic, political and other actions in public spaces that have taken place in the capital of Croatia – Zagreb, mainly from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. A city that in this time span has “found” itself in six states with different (totalitarian or more democratic) political systems and national identities, Zagreb is at present jeopardised by politically correct “invented traditions” and the production of collective amnesia with its inhabitants often feeling as strangers in their own home. *Re-Collecting City/Re-Collecting Time* was envisaged firstly as a *dynamic preservation* of the past – which is a pre-condition for a future with more awareness – while the archiving process has adopted all the features of a site-specific collective performance. “Open Offices” – a seven-day-long cultural events action hosted by different

public spaces – served as a polygon for collecting the testimonies of citizens along with material documentation and for debates on creating collective and spatial identities. Through “Wall Newspapers” – photo-text collages displayed in the street displays of the Croatian Cinematheque in seven locations in downtown Zagreb – different models of real and apocryphal archives were offered while their readers/visitors were compelled to take a walk to all the displays and thus compose their own experience of stroller/spectator. Finally, through a series of several-day workshops held in different cities in Croatia and the West Balkans, Shadow Casters opted for dispersing their own methodology and instigating the renewal of other “citizens’ collectives” who scrutinise other cities. “What came first: the space or event? Was it the event that became spatial or the space that became eventful?”, they keep asking themselves...

Powerful fragility

The flipside of their reflection on the politics of public space is a deep faith in being exposed and dedicated to others as a prerequisite for aesthetic action by which they enrol in the ever-growing world scene of Community Art as well as that of artists with activist sensibility. Acting as sensors of Croatian society in transition, ravaged by poorly concealed greed, Shadow Casters propose a creative community putting at stake their own fragility. Thus all their projects are of a participatory nature, dependent on others both during the process of creation and during the performances, which evoke the *spectator* in each of us. This is the realm in which the trilogy *Process_City* (2004 – 2008) unfolds, the laureate of several festivals in Croatia and abroad. Its parts were created in reverse order, from part three to one, bestowing a central position to intimacy while managing to safeguard it from banalities. Born through a collaborative process of “inventing”, *Process_City* affirms the multitude of performative discourses enriching the spectator’s experience both content- and media-wise. Connecting performers, musicians and video artists, the trilogy fractalises its post-modernity to the meticulous and delicate operating with sound impressions, virtual video spaces and improvisers’ juggling with the actual moment. On the other hand,

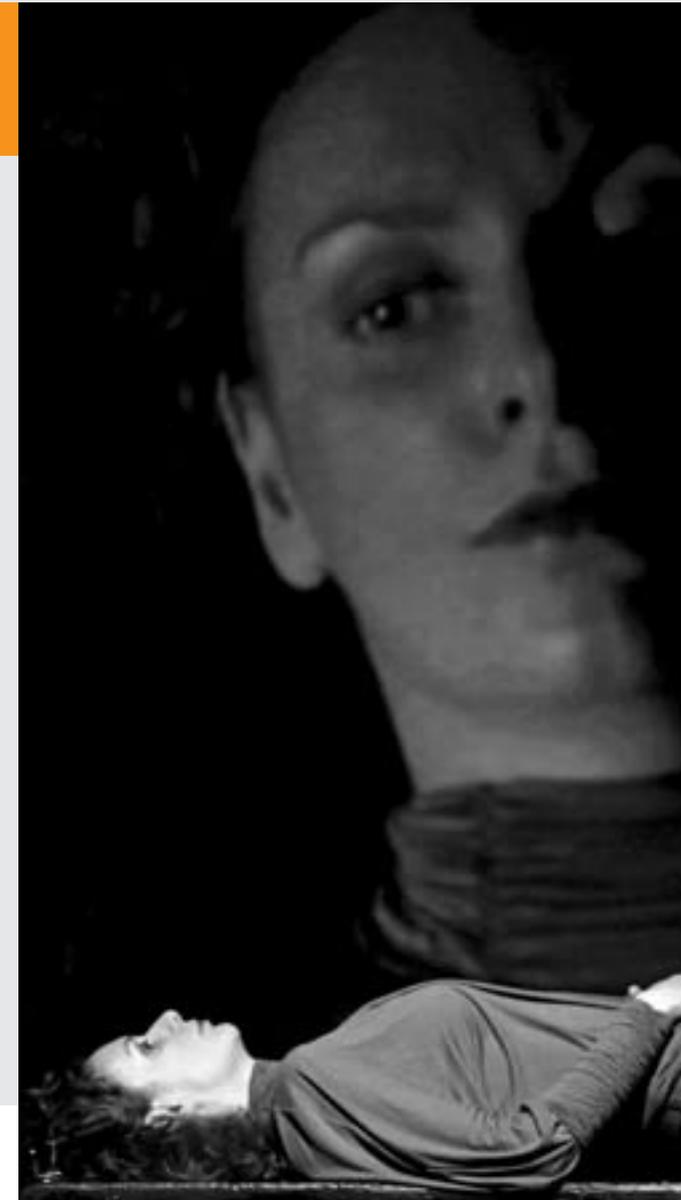
instead of the illusion of a dead author’s voice, it offers a symphony of living quotations: private moments, smells caught on the fly, a hand touching you...

Inspired by Franz Kafka’s novel *The Trial*, the trilogy was launched with part three, *Process in Progress*. This performance formally maintains the conventional spectator’s distance while juxtaposing the actors’ performing the adaptation of Kafka’s work with “video-anxiety” – a simultaneous projection of details of the performance as a surrealist frame for the staged action. Part two, *Ex-position*, is performed in various spaces devastated by *transition*, such as abandoned factories, schools, cinema theatres, hotels, sustaining Bourriaud’s understanding of relational aesthetics. *Ex-position* almost in its entirety focuses on the sensorial encounter of the co-performers – actors and visitors – framed by their own histories. In a three-segment dramaturgical structure, spectators pass through different initiation levels: the collective waiting to “enter the story”; the individual journey – liminal isolation during which the hardened un-consciousness is peeled off and the numbed senses dissolved; finally, the acceptance into the circle of adepts. The first segment of *Ex-position* is a performative analogy of Kafka’s parable Legend of the Law, which tells of a peasant who waits by the gate of the Law, wrapped into the autobiographical performance of the Gate Keeper retelling his true-life memories to spectators bidding their time in the corridor. The second segment provides a three-dimensional quality to the narrative requiring active co-play from the (blindfolded) spectator in a private performance/walk through the performing space and nearby streets with one of the actors as a guide. The third segment opens the door of the so-called Control Room, a place where all the secrets/stories told and lived during the indi-

vidual journeys are being exposed live on video monitors and through the earphones. Emotional and spiritual profit is always gained through risk: hence the insistence on risky participation, surrendering and interaction culminates in part one of the trilogy, *Vacation From History*. This “meta-physical journey on the edge of collective and individual consciousness” steps into the realm and atmosphere of dreams releasing us from the burden of overwhelming excessive information in order to make space for that which is important. Visitors are gently placed in beds in joint bedrooms and subsequently tempted to succumb to the dispersed soundscaping that leads them to sink into sleep, and to observe through their eyelashes the jittery performance, barely visible in an almost pitch dark place.

“The intention of this project is for it to be unfinished”, Shadow Casters would comment on one of their creative endeavours; yet this sentence might easily be implemented for all their long-term and dispersive investments in dialogue and active exchange. Those persistent evokers of the conscience of society combine social responsibility and sensitive imagination harmoniously in their artistic endeavours. They keep opening new potent activity outlets on the Croatian scene sharing them readily with the like-minded, restoring performative power to the spectators and amplexness of movement to the theatre, with the discreetness and persistence of a shadow.

Translated by Katarina Pejović



Tajana Gašparović

PORTRAIT: SAŠA ANOČIĆ

In Search of an Innocent Feeling of the World



If we had to single out a Croatian theatre individual in the 2008/09 theatre season who has been awarded the highest number of major prizes, it would surely be Saša Anočić, an actor who has imposed himself as one of the most interesting authors in Croatian theatre in the last decade. The most awarded play last season would be his authorial project *Cowboys*, produced by the independent *Exit Theatre*. In his plays, Anočić always has an interest in the so-called *little people* and “details that make all the difference in the world”, while his hybrid poetics mixes seemingly incompati-

ble influences and extremes – the grotesque and the tragic, the excessively ludicrous and dark, the wildly cheerful and pessimistic. On the one hand, one can easily note the influence of the film industry in his plays, especially the masters of comedy (Chaplin, Keaton, Tati) and animated films (Tom and Jerry), the poetics of the absurd (from Jarry, Ionesco’s theatre of the absurd to the *Pythons* and trash poetics), and on the other

hand Anočić’s noticeable preference for the romantic feeling of the world (the motive of the superfluous man; the relation between the imperilled individual and the hostile world), dark romanticism (inspired by the gothic novel with a strongly emphasized element of horror), as well as American literature about losers that repeatedly questions disturbing human relationships (which introduces strong dramatic elements to some of his plays).

The Mythical Space of Childhood

But for all the mentioned film and literature tendencies in his authorial work, Anočić answers the question about influences without a lot of thinking and with only one word: childhood.

During childhood we lived life to the full: we experienced everything for the first time, everything was a major event. I’m talking about the time of immortality when everything had meaning. And now, as grown-ups, we have to search for it. In the theatre we have given ourselves the chance to search for meaning, and in order to find it we have to reach out to our childhood and recall those authentic insights and feelings, comprehend the greatness of everyday things that seem meaningless to us today. That is probably why all my plays, mostly intuitively, are full of details that, according to my opinion, make all the difference in the world. Or make some kind of difference in our world depending on how much we are aware of them – how much we are capable of recognizing them again and again, of feeling them and enjoying the authenticity and uniqueness of the moment. That is the thing – sadness and happiness at the same time – a mixture that gives a unique taste. Painfully recognizable and common to all of us.

Cowboys – the Most Awarded Croatian Play in the 2008/09 Theatre Season

Following Anočić’s memories of childhood days, his last great success *Cowboys* (produced by the independent *Exit Theatre*), a play about a handful of losers that meet at an audition and start making a play about the Wild West, is illuminated from an additional angle – the sanctification of childhood, imagination, dreams. This exceptionally praised and awarded off-musical with step choreography, western iconography and strong humour sequences is a specific mirror image between the mythical Wild West where anarchy reigns and our transitional everyday life steeped in corruption. But the play *Cowboys* can also be regarded as a sanctification of one’s own childhood, an escape from the grey everyday life of grown-ups who have stopped dreaming into a mythical place with an authentic hero of the Wild West who is in fact only one of Anočić’s transformed losers. Another lonely individual who stands opposite a hostile and ruthless world. There is something childlike and touching in these escapes, in the guise of the antihero as hero, in the game that the world can be a better and more beautiful place. At the end of the play, the mirror image of reality and dreams is inverted – the stepping forward into the space of the movie world of dreams (a play within a play) ends tragically – the mythical hero loses the two women in his life and although he takes revenge on the criminals, he rides off lonely into the night. But dreams break into the real world because the losers from the first part of the play become successful musicians in concert. From what I know, *Cowboys* is Anočić’s only play with a happy ending that is really a self-referential dramatic moment. With their last song Anočić’s actors, in fact, roaringly celebrate their own possibility to create other worlds, the chance to search for meaning in the theatre, to further dream unfulfilled dreams. That is why the end is not a mere happy ending but a kind of ode to one’s own artistic work, bound to a strong feeling of togetherness.



The Togetherness of *Alaska Jack*

Anočić always wanted to assemble a theatre troupe, and managed to do so in the last couple of years. That is why the majority of his plays are independent productions with actors from his home theatre (Children's Theatre Trešnja). This aspiration was explicit even in his first successful play in 2000 – *Alaska Jack*, a generational stepping out by students of the dislocated acting department of the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Arts in Osijek, that was directed (and partly written) by the, then, young actor from Osijek. The play *Alaska Jack* was mainly based on texts by contemporary American authors (the main representative being Raymond Carver), as well as Croatian playwrights and dramaturges (Davor Špišić, Selma Dimitrijević, Sanja Ivić). The final mosaic of the fragmentary dramaturgy was made through improvisations by actors in cooperation with Anočić, and an abundant use of music and movement.

The Other Side of the American (and Croatian) Dream

The fact that he was attracted to Carver, an author that always referred to the everyday problems of the lower and middle class, to the destiny of the so-called little people, an

author who grew up in a working class family and who worked as a doorman, delivery man, worker at a petrol station... isn't surprising if we know that Anočić comes from a similar social milieu and that he spent his teenage years quite unusually for Croatian circumstances – he grew up on the street, ran away from home and supported himself by doing various jobs during high school. For that reason it is perfectly clear why he could easily identify with representatives of the American beat generation and their successors who write about the other side of the American dream.

One should watch this play as if it were poetry, said Saša Anočić after the opening night of *Alaska Jack*. And the language of poetry is close to the language of music, an art that, to a large degree, determines and inspires Anočić in the most intimate and profound way. *Alaska Jack* was in fact a kind of music-drama project (Anočić's favourite band from Osijek *Dogo Argentino* and some members of



the Osijek National Theatre orchestra and choir appeared live on stage during the play; all music sequences had not just a decorative but a dramaturgical function within the mosaic structure).

Let's Laugh at Absurdity

In addition to the live music performances, there is a rich assortment of music in *Alaska Jack* – from the Walkabouts, to P.J. Harvey, Louis Armstrong. The emotionally strong, even psychedelic atmosphere that filled the scenes thanks to the music reminds me of a description often used for Nick Cave, a musician that would perfectly fit the mentioned selection: the brightness of a dark star. I feel that certain segments of Anočić's creative work are flooded with a simi-

lar light. Part of that feeling is also the fact that death is a kind of leitmotif in Anočić's plays. In *Alaska Jack*, Anočić (who is also one of the actors in the play) repeatedly utters the sentence: *We are all going to die, but nobody believes in it*. (It should be mentioned that the play *Alaska Jack* was a direct result of the tragic death of one of his colleagues.) The motif of death is also present in his later plays: *Only God Knows*, *Cowboys*, and in the play *The Meaning of Life by Mr. Lojtrica* it is the main driving force (the anti-hero finds out that he has a mortal disease). Anočić has a very honest relationship with this motif – he's

not judgemental, he doesn't lecture, he doesn't believe in the afterlife. He doesn't know. He simply does what he says in *Alaska Jack* – he underlines that death is a part of and an unavoidable factor of life. Anočić is mainly an intuitive person in his artistic work and the motifs in his plays arise from life experiences that have marked him permanently. The leitmotif of death is therefore deeply connected to the fact that Anočić spent part of the war on the frontline.

I can see suffering, pain, fear of loneliness, fear of death, but – let's laugh at that absurdity, is another sentence that Anočić utters in *Alaska Jack*. Almost paradigmatically, this sentence contains one of the basic principles of his poetics that originates from the tradition of the absurd and the mixing of genres in 20th century art. The way Anočić laughs at absurdity, the way he uses humour to the fullest arises from the poetics of the absurd (from Ionesco to The Physicists). Anočić is possessed by themes that deal with almost fully disturbed intimate and social relationships that he turns into absurd situations.

Three homo ludens in the Play *Only God Knows*

In regard to the fact that Anočić's theatre is based on the innocent and vehement feeling of the world that is strongly present during childhood and youth, as well as on the actor and his/her skills, that is, the homo ludens, it seems quite natural that this kind of theatre has an emphasized ludic dimension, and for that reason an entertainment dimension (without an a priori belittling overtone). It takes a lot of skill to play with trash poetics, walk a thin line between clichés and sketches and not fall into the trap of cheaply vulgarizing art.

The mentioned dimension of playfulness is present in all of Anočić's plays, but it was most explicit in yet another unfor-

gettable play of the Exit Theatre (still on its repertoire) – *Only God Knows* (opening night in 2004, co-produced by NUS Barutana from Osijek). The show was a real hit among the younger, more alternative audience; it contemplated on human relationships from childhood to old age. The link between the dispersed, fragmentary dramaturgy in a play is a game that functions according to the principles that Huizinga states. The game as a fight, a competition and a play. Three actors are three homo ludens and their game offers manifold reflections – the actors play that they are children who act that they are adults, and those adults are characters that play the privacy of actors... The strongly stressed dimension of infantilism, the foolish naiveté of children, ludism, buffoonery and gags, remind us again of Anočić's idols from silent films, their slapstick humour whose origin is circus-vaudevillian, and the subversive burlesque that is used as a basic communicational model for the mocking of serious social themes. This play revealed Anočić's frequent use of "ass" humour (which includes abundant cursing, spitting, farting...) that quite harmoniously fits into the mosaic of his eclectic poetics. Let's remind ourselves of one of the first plays he directed, Jarry's *King Ubu* that scandalized the public with its frequent use of the word *merde* (shit), at that time unthinkable in the theatre. Moreover, the powerful grotesqueness in Anočić's play is strongly underlined and therefore turns

into tragedy, just like in Jarry's plays. Considering the mentioned social segment of his work, it is worth stressing that Anočić is not an author of political theatre – his social critique is not based on his knowledge and questioning of the socio-political situation, but always derives from and stays within the framework of stories dealing with the so-called little people. He is surrounded by their destinies and watches the world through their eyes.

On the other hand, the play *Only God Knows* contains explicitly strong drama sequences that question the intimacy of human relationships. Along with Anočić, the three

actors of the play are co-authors of the text – Daria Lorenci, Bojan Navojec, and Rakan Rushaidat who will become more than Anočić's chief support – his dramatic alter-ego. *While working on a play, the most important thing is my relationship with the actors. People should know each other in order to create together. Actors have to feel free during rehearsals, they have to bring all their problems with them. For example, while we were making the play Only God Knows, the*





relationship between Daria and Rakan was on shaky ground, and they were fucked up, moody, indisposed during rehearsals... I started using them as they really were, I used their private problem, their feelings and built them into the play. A director is a kind of thief. Even when I'm using set dramatic works, I use the privacy of the actors. For example, if an actor cannot carry out a scene, express an emotion, I change and improve the text, adjust it. I try to turn the actor's shortcomings into a success.

Anočić's Anti-heroes – Mister Lojtrica and Nobody Nothing

Between the two mentioned successes, *Only God Knows* and *Cowboys*, we shouldn't forget another play – *The Meaning of Life by Mr. Lojtrica* (2006), produced by KNAP (still on the repertoire). Announced as the first part of the Trilogy of Losers (that presents the conditions in the public sector with humour; the first part of the trilogy is dedicated to the health system, the second to the legal system), it has found its primary impetus in

the legendary British comedy show *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. *The Meaning of Life by Mr. Lojtrica* follows the theatre principles of contemporary (anti)morality in which the anti-hero is confronted with a mortal disease that fragments his identity to the fullest (he loses everything: his job, wife, friend, in the end even his own brief-case). In this way Anočić deeply tackled the social question of the Here and Now: the non-acceptance of Otherness, the impossibility of facing taboos (one of them being death) and the rejection of all kinds of outsiders. Because of his mortal disease, poor Lojtrica is condemned to complete alienation from all segments of society (even the most intimate ones), to absolute loneliness where only a dialogue with Death itself is possible. It is worth mentioning that the character Mister Lojtrica (in the masterly, unforgettable creation of Rakan Rushaidat) is based on Anočić's film idols – Chaplin's Charlot (Little Tramp) who always addresses oneself to the degraded and offended, and Buster Keaton who doesn't have just one enemy like Charlot, but the whole world around him like Lojtrica. What distinguishes him from Keaton is the final outcome: although Keaton is always alone, he usually ends up as a winner, while the unfortunate Lojtrica is and remains a lonely and



abandoned victim. Anočić questions the position of losers brought to the outermost position of victim in his first and recently staged second, and unfortunately much less successful part of the trilogy (*Nobody and Nothing*, 2008). In contrast to Carver's characters who are dissatisfied with their lives and fight this problem every day (unstable household budgets, unpaid bills, tensions in close relationships...), the starting position of Anočić's anti-heroes Lojtrica and Nobody Nothing is very different – although they don't have much, they are satisfied with their small, modest lives. They are in fact part of the mythical space of childhood, of the innocent feeling of the world that Anočić searches for, and that is why they are not like grown-ups but children.

The Theatre of the Absurd at the Children's Theatre Trešnja

Anočić follows his own theatre line of direction even in his plays for children that he directs in his home theatre Trešnja. For example, his *Alice* (based on *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll) is a ludistic spirited play that points out the influences of his favourite poetics of the absurd, and functions on several levels, and that is why both grown-ups and children watch it with the same interest. Carroll's novel perfectly fits into one segment of Anočić's creative mosaic because it outlines a parody of British society at the time with absurd language games and logic turned inside out. It is of no surprise that the play guessed the sensibility of the novel with extremely skilful dramatic jokes. On the other hand, there is *Frankenstein* who perfectly delineates another, completely different segment of Anočić's creative mosaic. His preoccupation with the romantic motif of the superfluous man is in some way present even in the first two parts of the Trilogy about

Losers, and which especially came into focus when he staged the gothic novel by Mary Shelley. This choice is not surprising because Anočić flirts with the elements of horror (for example, his play *Pinocchio* was a dark story full of ghastly scenes of violence). The romantic motif of the superfluous man is not only present in the works of Russian Romanticism, its traces can also be found in *Frankenstein*, in the creation of the Monster who is a stranger, an absolute Otherness in the world and whose cruelty is the result of not being accepted by anyone, not even his creator. Frankenstein and his Monster are part of the long list of Anočić's losers and outsiders, regardless of how much they differ from the others.

The extremely attractive visuality in Anočić's plays for children in the theatre Trešnja is worth mentioning as it is in contrast to the utter visual minimalism of his plays for adults.

Idealist-utopist in Search for a Better World

I doubted myself when I started directing. My question was, what can I as an uneducated director offer these actors... Today I regret that I'm not more well-read, more educated. I feel that I'm lacking knowledge...., says Anočić during our conversation. But he is aware that he can move actors with his energy, intuition, motivate them to work on a play for more than six months, work for five, six, eight, nine hours a day, just the way the play



Cowboys was made. And this is a quite unusual way of doing theatre in Croatia. I believe that the reason is an inexhaustible love and the grotesque sense of humour that it produces when he is dealing with the anti-heroes of his plays (that is why there is so much heartiness in them). This is all because he is an idealist-utopist, as he himself states. A humanist in search of a better world in which Lojtrica and Nobody Nothing will know and be able to function. In fact, we are returning to the search for a mythical space of the innocent feeling of the world, for a space of *immortality when we were living to the full and everything had meaning*.

Anočić is like Ionesco (according to Višnja Machiedo in her work "Ionesco's Theatre of the Absurd and Beyond It") – *a dreamer that hasn't forgotten the heavenly taste of childhood. A dreamer that hides profound anxiety and disconsolateness under the mask of a clown... And his pessimism doesn't get us down, it leads to a kind of catharsis, purification, because it is the search of a tireless dreamer.*

Translated by: Sabine Marić

ON THE VISIBILITY OF ABANDONED EXISTENCES – BOTH ANIMAL AND HUMAN

Interview by Suzana Marjanić

An interview with director Borut Šeparović in relation to the play *Timbuktu* – a monologue for a dog on the *Montažstroj* stage (performed by an actor in the audience), adaptation of novel: Jasna Žmak and Borut Šeparović, Zagreb, Zagreb Puppet Theatre, Travno Stage, 3-19 October 2008.

Right off I would like to start this conversation with a sentence/prayer by Janusz L. Wisniewski that he wrote on his web page (http://wisniewskis.de/index_JLW.html): "Lord, help me be the person my dog thinks I am". What do you think – what kind of man are you in the eyes of your Labrador Max, for whom, as you've pointed out, you dedicated this play?

I can't rationalize this marvellous thought at the moment; I feel it through and through. In fact, the play has less to do with my own dog than with some other dogs. However, my dog Max did inspire me to do this play. Auster's novel *Timbuktu* made me cry when I read it for the first time and it moved me so much while rereading it that I thought it should be put on stage. But I didn't dare to do that at the time. My dog Max is now well advanced in years and he was very ill two years ago. He had some problems with his prostate gland which is typical for dogs that haven't been castrated. But he fortunately didn't have a tumour. This situation was an emotionally unbearable experience for me and I started thinking about the day when one of us wouldn't be around anymore. It was then that I decided to make a play in order to bring my emotions under control. Of course, I don't know if he seems to be a better man because of that. When he's not sure what I feel or think, he simply sniffs at me and after that he's pretty sure of the outcome of our associating and the way we're going to spend the day. Max and I understand and tolerate each other perfectly – I get along with him much better than with humans. (Laughs.) Dogs, namely, have a very good opin-

ion about humans; they don't think about us as bad persons, they can tolerate and bear all our weaknesses and imperfections because they depend on us. I'd also like to say that staging *Timbuktu* was a very painful experience because of the dogs at the shelter and the homeless people – a feeling of bitterness and helplessness remained because I couldn't do anything to help them.

Filtrated pain – both canine and human

On top of that you discuss one more dichotomy in your play, the racial difference between a pedigreed shepherd dog who got the part of the actor and the homeless dog – performer. In other words, the main part (Mr. Bones – Kosta) can only be played by a trained, pedigreed dog who submits to the control and punishments of a trainer, while homeless dogs, dogs who can be adopted thanks to this play – if there's a good soul in the audience – are performers, or as Sven Medvešek points out – they are not actors, they are real dogs, they don't have a master, they don't have anything, but they have a story similar to Kosta's. Of course, it's no coincidence that the pedigreed shepherd Cap was trained; no mongrel was taken, as the homeless dog Mr. Bones from Auster's novel calls himself. Consequently, what is pedigreed, hierarchically good in the animal world, is predestined for good training, and mongrels usually end up behind the bars of a city pound. The same applies to life; peo-



ple nevertheless prefer buying status and pedigree dogs and cats rather than saving homeless dogs and stray cats. What kind of destiny awaits the homeless dogs from the City Shelter for Abandoned Animals in Dumovec who were part of the play? It seems to me that only the reviewer Nataša Govedić stressed that "although nobody explicitly says that the dogs who won't be adopted will probably end their lives with a lethal injection, it is extremely difficult to watch their playful bodies and patient looks, knowing that only two dogs have been adopted during five performances".

I simply cannot make myself visit those dogs because this decision is still too painful for me. True, this wasn't just a play about dogs but a play about people and dogs. Obviously the majority of it was focused on dogs, that is why the problem of homeless people was pushed aside. A lot of things remained an open wound after the play because as an artist I realized that I can change so little, if anything. Maybe theatre can at least revive some problems. The fact that we had to have eleven performances to find a home for only three dogs shows that our influence on reality is negligible. Intimately I felt completely powerless, primarily as a human being, not as an artist. This feeling of helplessness remained quite invisible to the audience. There are many more problems than the ones we've presented; e.g. it was painful to experience the attitude of the theatre as an institution towards those destinies. Some were against the idea of bringing those people and those dogs on stage, and some of the comments were "How did such a stupid idea cross your mind?", "Don't let them shit and stink up my theatre!" – that is why I'm not quite sure that I experienced the feeling of liberation I have after finishing a play. The only thing I felt deep inside was a lot of sadness, despair and misery – human and animal. Maybe a positive thing is that people who watched *Timbuktu* went through a very similar emotional experience;

maybe they will start thinking differently, maybe they will do something; of course, this is beyond my control. My eleven-year-old daughter was also on my mind; I wanted to know the way children would experience this play, but I didn't want to curry favour with the youngest. The fact is that the play wasn't boring to children although it is a static play. I didn't want to make a spectacle with a lot of effects; I thought it more effective to "empty" the play. Maybe the most painful part is that I'm not sure I could do this again – I have a feeling that I would surrender and strain myself to the fullest, and that everything would stay the same and that the final result would be poor.

Regarding *mongrels*, I even tried that. But when you work with a dog as a director you don't work with him but with his coach. In other words, I tried to work with such a dog but his coach wasn't able to handle the pressure and the circumstances of a theatrical project. Soon I realized that a dog cannot be concentrated if the coach isn't concentrated enough because we're talking about an exchange of energies. Dogs experience all those relationships intuitively; by smelling or looking – it is true that they use their sight a little bit less, and more the emotions they recognize in their coach's voice and the 500 words they understand... It is said that the majority of people refers to dogs as watch-dogs and often promotes the attitude "Kick them with your foot!". Dogs can identify our feelings very eas-

ily; whether they understand them or what they feel is another question. I can perfectly understand Auster because he watched his dog long enough to be able to write such a touching novel about their communication. It is by chance that the pedigree Border Collie dog Cap was chosen in the end. The dog had to satisfy some visual criteria, he had to have white spots so that he could be seen against the black background of the scene. That is, with a black dog against a black background we would get an inversion of Maljevič's "white square", and that wouldn't be right in this case. Therefore we had to take into account things that weren't important at first sight because the dog had to be clearly visible, he had to at least resemble a mongrel, he had to be a male dog of medium height, he had to be extremely disciplined, and his master had to have enough time for exhausting rehearsals. Cap was the perfect choice.

On slaughter-houses, humans and dogs

Of course the question remains what will happen to the others – the twelve homeless people from the society Zagrebački bokci and the City's homeless shelter in Heinzelova Street who voluntarily registered to participate in the realisation of this play-monologue? In other words, you openly talk about our sterile reality in which, unfortunately, most of us don't have time for those others – those who are sick, helpless, abandoned, lost, those we see doubled up like dogs on city benches, and who most of the city treats like social garbage. Or as Ivan Mašina, one of the homeless people that participated in the realisation of the play *Timbuktu*, said in one of his interviews for a daily newspaper – he was roaming through Maksimir "bench number 8, bush number 4" before he was given a place at the homeless shelter in Heinzelova Street, adding that unlike him even dogs have their guardians. How did you get in contact with those people and their destinies?

First we visited the society Zagrebački bokci and afterwards the City's homeless shelter in Heinzelova Street where supervisor Milivoj Prugovečki introduced us to the homeless. We introduced ourselves and had some extensive conversations with them. Of course it was the wage that interested them most. It is illusory to think that they would participate freely considering the horrible situation they are in. Everybody participated voluntarily in the realisation of the play and all of them were punctual for each rehearsal; they even came earlier than everybody else. They organised themselves and caused no inconveniences that people usually do during a project. They felt as if they were a part of something, and we did everything to make them feel comfortable and welcome. I would like to add something to what the supervisor of the shelter said: just as people very rarely help dogs on the street, friends and family very often abandon those who have stumbled. I listened often to their stories while they were waiting to enter and do their scene. I got the feeling that they were satisfied with the offered situation, that they believed that someone had given them an identity and dignity. I didn't want them to feel as tools. One of the things I asked the actors (Vili Matula, Bojan Navojec and Mario Kovač) was to talk and sit with them during the performance and before entering the auditorium. I think that they felt they were being treated like real persons. They were part of the project, had the same rights which was very important. Nobody point-



ed at them and commented "It's your own fault, you're nobody"... The only thing I asked them to do was to represent themselves; to carry out the simple task they were given, which maybe wasn't complicated acting rather "non-matrix" acting. If they felt uncomfortable, they could quit. There are some very interesting moments caught on video at <http://www.dailymotion.com/montazstroj> in which some of them even told their life stories.

That is how one of them told us about his dog Piko with whom he would go to the bar Mali raj to drink a "couple of rounds". As we spent several months with them, mutual trust developed between us, and the same thing happened with the dogs that we had to get to know before the dress rehearsal. We had to be extremely cautious during the dog casting because we wanted to avoid bloodshed on stage. Some dogs don't get along with other dogs just as some people don't get along with other people. The only difference is that one can notice this immediately when it comes to dogs – they attack and bite each other while we handle it in a roundabout way. Although some people would have been happy watching a fight on stage because of its excessiveness, I didn't want that and therefore we had to choose those dogs very carefully. The only thing I wanted at that moment was to make those dogs and people visible. After all, if all the dogs had been adopted there would soon be another twelve of them. That is why we can perform this play all the time, but we can't solve the problems because their cause lies somewhere outside the theatre. We tried to fix something that cannot be fixed.



On the visibility of training mechanisms

The subtitle that you gave the play itself – a monologue for a dog on stage (performed by an actor in the audience), during which Alen Mareković, the trainer of the Border Collie dog Cap is physically present (he sits in the first row and Cap performs all his tasks according to his commands), unlike you – leads to the question how much the training of dogs as well as the mastering of actors is a question of dressage. But Alen Mareković clearly stressed the difference between training and dressage regarding this pedigreed shepherd and now actor Cap: "We started with the rehearsals in May. The majority of things Borut proposed, Cap already knew how to do. Although running around in circles and pulling down the flag, the American flag, was something he had to learn. But I believe that an experienced person can easily notice that he liked to do that the most. This means that we performed a good job. In fact, I joke all the time that Cap never stops thinking about the flag. I have to admit that the word dressage gives me the creeps. It reminds me of the poor animals in circuses. Or kids that undergo dressage. I'd say that I work with dogs, that I train them and tutor them. The main difference between basic training or dogs that are trained to lead a normal life in an urban setting and advanced training or a working dog is in the length of the dog's concentration. A working dog can concentrate longer on a task, or more precisely, on what his owner says in order to be able to cooperate more successfully." What is your opinion regarding such training methods?

Personally, I would allow someone to train my dog. My Labrador Max is a quite undisciplined dog because I didn't want to have a working dog but a friend. While I was watching Alen (Max's veterinarian recommended him) and Cap –

that is his wife's dog, actually – I really got the impression that Cap could hardly wait to do something. The tension we believe he feels is in fact a feeling of expectation; similar to the one felt by actors. Once I had the feeling that Alen was exaggerating with his tasks but afterwards I realized that he only had to return the dog's concentration again. He never yelled at him or insulted him. Although I don't know much about shepherd breeds, I didn't feel as if it was dressage because we weren't dealing with circus tricks. Besides, it is true that dogs spend their days lying around and sleeping and Alen only had to teach Cap not to fall asleep while lying around during some scenes. Cap easily performed all those tasks he usually performs in his everyday life, they were even simpler because he is used to more intensive agility training. Acting for him was in fact taking a rest. True, even I question myself what we're allowed and not allowed to do on stage with animals, especially for what reason.

At the beginning Alen had some problems with my request to openly show his communication with Cap. He felt uncomfortable because he'd never worked in such a way in a theatre. Of course we could have hidden Alen's way of giving orders but we wanted this mechanism to remain visible. We didn't want it to remain hidden as in circuses; we tried to deconstruct everything by Alen's presence in the first row of the audience. This way we showed the principles and mechanisms the theatre functions

on and problematized a series of relationships: on stage we have the actor (Sven Medvešek), the trained dog (Cap as Kosta, or Mr. Bones), some other untrained dogs (homeless dogs from the City Shelter for Abandoned Animals in Dumovec), homeless people (from the society Zagrebački bokci and the City's homeless shelter in Heinzlova Street), and one actor (Mario Kovač, Vili Matula or Bojan Navojec) among them as their representative. I wanted an actor to talk for them; I thought it more convenient than to single out one of them. There were even some comments that I should've let them walk behind the wire and bark at the same time, but I wasn't interested in that kind of literalness. I think that's really stupid. I felt that the best solution was to let them enter and walk in procession while the door is loudly being closed, and while one of them is a professional actor who is their speaker and plays Willy. I don't claim that this was an ideal situation, but I think that it was the best in those circumstances and I wouldn't change it. It is true that at first I thought they would be represented by a different actor every time but only the three above mentioned participated at our eleven performances. That is how they weren't bound to one actor as their spokesperson, they were multiply represented. Some commented that the scene with the homeless dogs behind the iron fence and the Iggy Pop song *I wanna be your dog* should have been done with another song because this one was an S/M one. I chose the song precisely because of the lyrics, and the fact that the music ideally represented the given atmosphere.

Between nature and culture

Theatrolgist Nicholas Ridout (*Stage Fright, Animals and Other Theatrical Problems*, 2006) questions the use of animals on stage and stresses that within the theatre the strangeness of the animal on stage is not the result of the fact that it does

not belong there but of our presentiment that there is nothing strange about it and that the animal can be used just as human actors are. Do you think that the animal within the theatre is nevertheless more liable to manipulative exploiting because it doesn't end up on stage due to its own will but due to the decision of the director and trainer? According to Ridout: "When talking about animal exploitation there is an uneasy sense that the animal on stage, unless very firmly tethered to a human being who looks like he or she owns it, is there against its will, or if not its will, at least its best interests."

Do I want to be here or don't I; in general, animals can't formulate that. I had the feeling that Cap adjusted to the space very quickly, the stage was very interesting to him, and the homeless dogs just saw it as another space for peeing and some of them demonstrated this very impressively. Just as Jasna Žmak and I pointed out in the dramatisation of Kosta's part: "This stage doesn't mean the world to me, it is just another territory I can pee on. I believe that everybody present is familiar with the basics of dog philosophy. The basics? It goes like this: If you can't eat or fuck something, pee on it." Tatjana Zajec, the manager of the animal shelter commented that the stage was just another meadow for the homeless dogs. I realised that they were playful and happy on stage because they were out of their cages and not chained. I realised that participating in the play was a relatively pleas-

ant experience. If dogs are pure nature they wouldn't want to live with us – logically. But the truth is that dogs are on the border between nature and culture, the natural and the human, the space in between. But they are fully orientated towards humans. Of course we can discuss the question whether they are conscious what is expected from them in those circumstances, whether they know what a relationship with the audience is... But unfortunately I've seen too many people who have remained a part of the theatre because of some kind of feeling of pleasure or displeasure and stayed there although it is questionable if they wanted to. That is why manipulations in the theatre are present on all levels and I'm not sure that they can be attributed solely to directors. Namely, I wanted to stress that for most of the actors it is a question of pure economic logic – I work and get paid. It is obvious that those people do not work out of pure pleasure, but they are forced to work in the theatre in order to survive. That is why in theory this problem is interestingly put by Ridout but it seems that we can find the same problem among people. Besides we can put the same question to homeless people as to homeless dogs; to what degree do they want to be exposed on stage or do they want to be exposed at that moment at all?

Ethics and/or aesthetics or about a dog who died for art

In the dramatization/novel adaptation itself, it is clear that as a director, you are ethically troubled by using animals as objects of art. You mention the case of Guillermo Vargas Habacuc in 2007 when he took a stray dog, tied it up, and according to one media version, let it die of starvation in a gallery. Namely, he exhibited the dog in a gallery, put food in one corner and water in another, while the rope it was tied with was not long enough to reach the food or water. The

artist and visitors of the gallery thus watched the agony of this nameless dog for several days until, according to one media version, it finally died. In the text of the play/novel adaptation you and Jasna Žmak stress how Willy called this animal victim *A dog who died for art*, who died on the floor of the gallery while visitors ate canapés from a nearby table. What is your opinion regarding the sacrifice of animal lives in the name of art as e.g. Vlasta Delimar did in her performance *Marička* (2006) where she justifies the sacrifice of a rooster's life with the concept LIFE = ART or her performance *Tražim ženu* (1996) when her victim was a hen so that she could eat something that day.

I disagree with these concepts both on an artistic and ethical level. I haven't seen Vlasta Delimar's performances but I simply cannot understand them. If the case with the stray dog presents some kind of radical gesture or very effectively presents a certain problem, I still can't understand why the artist didn't starve himself to death: only then could I believe this [wolman as an artist]. It may sound cruel, but starve yourself, drop dead yourself – and the message will be even more direct and far-reaching. I think that these acts are really repulsive and I simply don't want to understand or justify these so-called radical, so-called artistic gestures. If one inverts these gestures, its ethical component then falls flat because you are taking the power you have over someone's life. Why don't you – if you

really want to be consistent – apply that concept using your own life? And what’s even more disgusting is that visitors eat and chat while the dog is dying. And the very idea that this act be repeated at the Biennale in Honduras is unacceptable. You can believe this to be art, you can use it as framing, maybe it is art, but I think that this kind of art is repulsive. I cannot accept the act of hurting animals and that is why I find Vlasta Delimar’s performance of slaughtering animals, because they are slaughtered every day anyway, to be repulsive. I believe using animals to tear off a flag is something completely different although some people don’t think that way and disliked Cap tearing off the American flag. I can even imagine that Cap was OK with that. One can say that this is my projection, but it is interesting that dogs want to attract attention by doing something indecent, just the way kids do. My dog has made innumerable stupidities because he wanted me to notice him. Sometimes he comes up to me and doesn’t stop barking because he wants me to pay him some attention. I would never separate ethics from aesthetics. Nowadays when everything is aestheticized, ethics should be a part of aesthetics, if we can find enough space to occupy ourselves with it. But the truth is that I cannot handle the question of ethics profoundly in all of my performances, because this would be a task too difficult even in life. Sometimes you make a play that is simply just that – a play, and you don’t take a further step and don’t question your positions. I think that it is ideal to sometimes ask yourself the question – what are we really representing – when we talk about theatre, if theatre can have some implications except for some purely aesthetic ones. Personally I think that the play *Timbuktu* is a happy combination of ethics and aesthetics. Auster inspired me with his story about Willy and Mr. Bones because he shows us that the dog isn’t any different from us and in this way offers enough to radicalize this initial

attitude. What Guillermo Habacuc said – that the stray dog he used for his project and let him die of starvation, would have DIED ANYWAY, is the worst statement I can imagine; it is actually one of the worst statements I’ve ever heard, because the possibility to do something is what art offers to us. He chose the worst option possible – leaving him to die is the worst thing art can (not) do. Just as Auster mentions Laika in his novel as the dog who died for science, we thought we should mention a dog who died for art.

Middle-class drama with dogs

Regarding the question to what extent is Cap (in the role of Kosta - Mr. Bones) aware of this unusual situation – his acting – on the theatre stage, Cap’s trainer Alen Mareković stressed the following: “Although I could claim that he doesn’t act but thinks about the tasks he has to do, sometimes I have the feeling that he knows that he is ‘acting’. His interaction with Sven’s voice and his foreseeing of the scene that follows fascinated me.” I am interested in knowing to what degree can animals be aware of acting, even though Aldo Milohnić stresses that animals bring a tiny part of “reality” on stage and this is why they are the “purest distillate of presence in the theatre”, thus proving that *animals aren’t actors* (*Frakcija*, 5, 1997)? Besides, in your dramatisation/ novel adaptation you mention that several years ago some pedigreed German shepherds played a two-hour salon drama with a happy ending in The

Netherlands. What kind of project are we talking about?

This was about Wim T. Schippers, a Dutch, Fluxus artist who trained six German police shepherds for nine months for a middle-class salon drama *Going to the Dogs* (1986). They read the papers, watched TV, barked when they saw another dog on the screen, looked through the window, and there were no actors around. This kind of concept was very radical at that time. The play was performed two times and even the BBC reported about the dog salon drama in five acts. It seems that it is easy to train a shepherd. Kosta talks about the play. I used references because I like to stress this fact so everybody knows that we weren’t the first who did this.

On un/responsibility and the liberating of animals=people

Dramaturge Jasna Žmak stressed the following question in the zoo essay in relation to the play: “Is it frivolous, superficial, irresponsible to fight for animal rights in times when even human rights aren’t respected?” Martin Puchner asks the same question at the beginning of his essay about actors, animals and philosophers *Performing the Open* (*TDR: The Drama Review* 51:1, T193, 2007). People often believe and say that activists for animal rights care more about animals than human beings. This is without doubt true for some individuals, as Peter Singer stresses in his book *Animal Liberation*. But historically viewed, activists for the rights and liberation of animals care about human beings more than individuals who don’t care about the lives of animals at all. It is well known that organizations for the protection of animals that were founded in the 19th century were initiated by the same activists who founded associations for the abolition of slavery and for women’s right to vote. This is how numerous individuals during history show us that there is some correspondence between activists fighting for the rights of black peo-

ple and women, and ones fighting for animals. They even show us a parallelism between racism, sexism and speciesism. That is why activists for the rights and liberation of animals often stress the following slogan: “The liberation of animals is the liberation of people!” Regarding the slogan about the simultaneous and obviously only possible liberation of the human and non-human animal, to what level is Puchner’s question justified and what is your opinion about the existence of animals in everyday life regarding their basic rights to life, in other words, regarding food and clothes made from animals?

As I’ve already stressed, homeless animals served as the channel to talk about homeless people. Of course, dealing with the rights of animals is a very serious matter; that is an effective statement, but I think that we shouldn’t treat animals as *animals* because it is very easy to start treating humans as animals. I have an ambivalent position towards eating meat. Personally I eat meat. The ambivalence is the result of the following – I believe that the human race is genetically predestined to eat meat, but another matter altogether are today’s slaughterhouses and the inhumane ways they are organized. This problem appalls me, and most of the time I do not dare to confront it full on. But I am eating less and less meat because it is getting more difficult for me to cope with this problem. An interesting story is the experience I had when I ran over a duck on a Dutch highway. I’ve never eaten a

duck after that incident because I took the life of one of them incidentally. I could never kill an animal on purpose, especially not to feed myself. But I still haven't decided to stop eating meat, although I understand and support those who do. I tried to make my daughter conscious about that through long conversations because young children don't understand how milk comes to the table, they don't connect cows and milk, and even less do they understand the way meat gets to their table. But according to a traditionalist point of view it still seems to me that it is natural and desirable for people to eat meat because we are omnivores. I often function according to this *schizophrenic* attitude. Sometimes I feel extremely disgusted by the meat on the table, and sometimes I play ignorant. I'm afraid to raise my child as a vegetarian or vegan; I think that she should have both options at her disposal.

On the so-called social responsibility of corporations/capital

While on the one hand with the help of Auster's novel you severely criticize the American dream about liberal capitalism and global Americanization, every visitor was ironically welcomed by a bottle of Coca-Cola on their seat at the Travno Stage, because Coca-Cola sponsored your theatre project. Why did you accept the sponsorship of a corporation that has often been connected to the violation of human rights and pollution? On the other hand, it is true that the largest organizations for the protection of the environment, e.g. *Friends of the Earth* and WWF, were founded thanks to the donation of oil companies so they could fight against nuclear energy that was flourishing then in the 70s, according to William Enghal in *A Century of War*.

As this is a play about homeless people and dogs, a play with homeless people and dogs, I quickly realised that I couldn't talk to most of the corporations about any sponsorship. All

the companies refused to identify themselves with homeless people, and our project was lightly dismissed as a charity. That is why we decided to leave out this problem in the description of our concept. Unfortunately, without any success. Not even Pedigree® which promotes only pedigreed dogs and the entire accompanying industry, nor the company Pet center and other producers of dog food wanted to be sponsors. Nobody wanted to identify themselves with this context, and this is how it became clear that we shouldn't mention homeless people in our announcements if we want to attract an audience, a priori – no, a posteriori – yes. Dogs on stage are an eccentric phenomenon, they represent something that an audience wants to see. Homeless people certainly weren't appealing – most of the people have an aversion to them, but the play was powerful because of the homeless people and not because of my affinity to dogs. The novel *Timbuktu* is extremely impressive in that sense – in the description of the relationship between a homeless person and a dog: Willy, the homeless person dies and his dog Mr. Bones becomes a homeless dog and the story enters a never-ending circle. These people are invisible although corporations brag all the time about social responsibility. It is frustrating when you realize that you have to filter information beforehand in order to attract a large audience or on the other hand – remain with the audience you want to see in the theatre. Capitalism has perfectly organized its

PR; it gives only that amount of information that is necessary to attract its audience – its target audience. That is why I couldn't put pictures of the homeless people in my announcement because parents wouldn't have brought their children. But we knew that we would attract a large audience with pictures of dogs that need to be adopted. And when you show homeless people without announcing them I believe that some will think about the connection between homeless people and stray dogs. Honestly, the whole project was a very painful experience for me; from the preparations and conversations with corporations up to the opening night when some were appalled how I could allow dogs on a stage that is reserved for people, professional actors. I cannot understand the disgust people feel towards dogs that piss and shit on city property.

Coca-Cola simply had to be part of the play because the American flag was symbolically not strong enough. But using the American flag also caused some problems. I had to sign a letter I received from the Zagreb Puppet Theatre that all theatre employees disassociate themselves from Cap pulling down the American flag. I had to sign a document that this act was solely my artistic responsibility. I didn't want this absurd decision to become public because this way I would turn all the attention from the main problems to a political level and discussions regarding the U.S. If I had wanted to talk politics, the whole play would have dealt with another topic, and that wasn't my intention. It is true that Auster is quite critical towards his own country and we stressed the mentioned additionally. Coca-Cola is mentioned in Rammstein's song *Americ/ka*, and that is a perfect starting point: *Coca-Cola, sometimes war; We're all living in Americ/ka*. By the way, Coca-Cola wasn't able to give us any financial support, but donated these bottles instead. Personally I don't drink Coca-Cola but it was interesting to

watch people play with the bottles on their seats and listen to the sounds they make during the performance. One can leave out such elements in a play and have a perfect representation, because I know what this corporation does and what it ultimately represents. But I think that by introducing ethically questionable things one initiates potential discussions. To put plastic Coca-Cola bottles on the seats is an act that can start an avalanche of discussions about America, about the commodities we have, and what this means in the end. It's quite another thing to tie a dog to a leash and let him die in the name of art. It is true that both things are ideologically problematic, but we're dealing with different levels.

And finally, did you send a copy of the play to Paul Auster who gave you permission to adapt his novel?

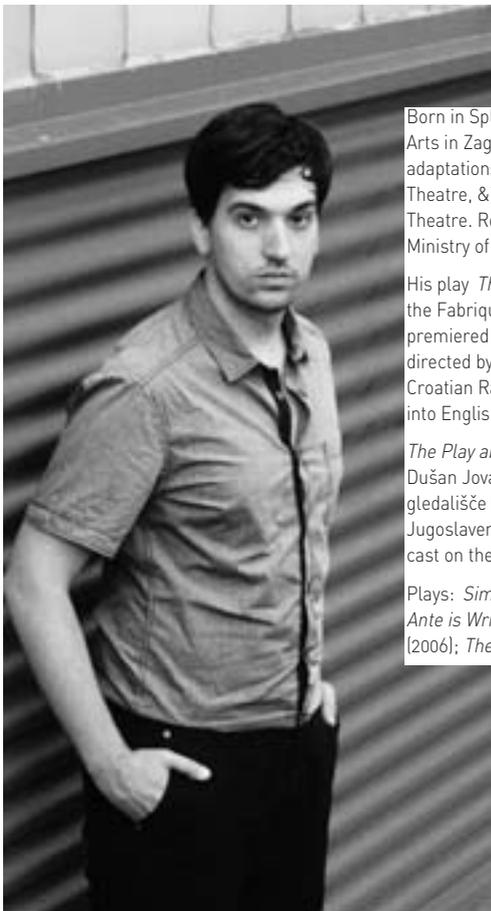
I didn't send him a copy because it is very difficult to make a good one, but I think that the photos represent it well enough. To make a good copy one has to have three cameras and edit the material, and we only had one camera. Besides, further efforts would have been necessary for the subtitles although it would be interesting to hear Auster's opinion about our dramatisation. By the way, Auster was very affable. His only condition was that we mention that the play was inspired by his novel. Maybe it is important to also point out that this is the only dramatization of his novel so far.

Translated by: Sabine Marić

newcroatian play



IVOR MARTINIĆ (1984)



Born in Split in 1984. Senior student at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb. He has been working as a dramaturge/author of adaptations at the Children's Theatre Dubrava, Mala Scena Theatre, &TD Theatre, HNK Varaždin and the Zagreb Youth Theatre. Recipient of the Marin Držić award by the Croatian Ministry of Culture in 2005 for his play *Simply: (unhappy)*.

His play *The Title of the Drama about Ante is Written Here* won the Fabrique en Croatie award by the REZ Association. The play premiered at the City Youth Theatre Split in May 2009 and was directed by Ivica Šimić. It was broadcast as a radio play on the Croatian Radio Drama Programme. The play has been translated into English, French, Norwegian, Spanish and Slovene.

The Play about Mirjana and Those around Her will be directed by Dušan Jovanović for its premiere in March 2010 at the Mestno gledališče ljubljansko and by Iva Milošević for its staging at the Jugoslavensko dramsko pozorište. Its radio version was broadcast on the Croatian Radio Drama Programme.

Plays: *Simply: (unhappy)* (2005); *The Title of the Drama about Ante is Written Here* (2006); *A Nun, A Boy and Other Passers-By* (2006); *The Play about Mirjana and Those around Her* (2007).

THE PLAY ABOUT MIRJANA AND THOSE AROUND HER

Title: **THE PLAY ABOUT MIRJANA AND THOSE AROUND HER**

Premiere: Jugoslavensko dramsko pozorište, February 2010

Number of characters: 5 female + 3 male

Length: one-act play

Translation: Slovene, English

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SUMMARY

The Play about Mirjana and Those around Her does not fall short of one's expectations from the title: the everyday life of 40-year-old Mirjana and the people that surround her are at the centre of the playwright's interest. Mirjana lives with her 15-year-old daughter Veronika, a girl whose adolescent dreams about becoming a star make her show childishly cruel contempt towards the bad financial situation of her mother. After several years Simon, Mirjana's ex-husband and Veronika's father, begins calling them on the phone occasionally promising financial help that should arrive any moment. Mirjana hasn't stopped living her life after her divorce, and in addition to having an affair with an older colleague she starts a short-term relationship with young Lucio which ends because of a younger woman even before it gets into full swing. Mirjana is visited by her friend Grozdana, an unhappy woman who foretells her own suicide, and her mother Violeta who dies of a stroke at the end of the day. Three hours after Violeta's death, Veronika goes to bed unable to show any emotional reaction regarding her grandmother's death. Mirjana sits alone, smoking, drinking coffee. Living.

ON THE AUTHOR'S POETICS:

Ivor Martinić is an exceptional member of the younger generation of Croatian playwrights that accurately recognizes the major neuralgic points of a harsh postwar life. Martinić writes about a time and place he knows very well; his writing is deeply embedded in the recognizable everyday life of low earnings and bad human relationships, middle-aged vegetating and adolescent wishes for a life that is slow in coming. *The Play about Mirjana and Those around Her* is written in a youthful and fresh but also skilful way, with the warm ironic distance of a writer who gives meaning to his characters in a multi-layered and convincing way. Short dialogues lost in the monotony of everyday lives alternate with rare monologues full of accumulated frustrations in a drama whose open structure of place enables the characters to meet and part without unnecessary stage settings.

This way *Mirjana and those around her* have a personal chronicle of surviving that succeeds in presenting the spirit of the time it was made in, at the same time being convincing in a documentary way and poetically touching in a subtle way.

ivor martinić



A PLAY ABOUT MIRJANA AND THOSE ROUND HER

by
Ivor Martinic

Translated by Maja Tonkovic
Adapted by Joel Horwood

CHARACTERS

MIRJANA, (40)
VERONIKA, Mirjana's daughter, (15)
VIOLETA, Mirjana's mother, (70)
SIMON, Mirjana's ex-husband, (50)
GROZDANA, Mirjana's friend, (35)
JAKOV, (50)
ANKICA, Jakov's wife, (45)
LUCIO, Mirjana's and Jakov's colleague, (30)

Silence.

Mirjana enters. She sits down at the table. She takes a sip of coffee. Then, she adds some milk. She takes a pack of cigarettes and lights one up. She's smoking. There's some soft music in the background.

MIRJANA: I'm Mirjana. I'm sitting at the table. I had a sip of coffee from the cup. Then, I added some milk. I took a pack of cigarettes and I lit one. I am smoking. There's some soft music in the background.

She's smoking.

MIRJANA: I'm smoking.

She's smoking.

MIRJANA: I live.

She lives.

There are people passing by behind her. They live.

MIRJANA: I'm tired.

VERONIKA: You're tired.

MIRJANA: My back hurts. I still haven't been to the doctor's. It's all because of my job. I'm a secretary. The chair's old, no money for new office equipment, they've cut the budget.

JAKOV: Fools.

MIRJANA: There on the wall...

VIOLETA: Where?

MIRJANA: Cobwebs under Christ, up there. I wonder how I've not noticed them before. I'm lying, I've seen them. They've always been there, I just don't feel like cleaning them off. Coffee.

LUCIO: What?

MIRJANA: I like coffee. I drink 5 cups a day. By Thursday and Friday I get the shakes, too much coffee. I love the coffee we have here, Turkish. It's never the same.

ANKICA: Never?

MIRJANA: Never. I make good coffee.

Silence.

MIRJANA: Did I say my name was Mirjana? I did.

She lives.

MIRJANA: I was at work this morning. I've been getting up early for years now. I got here a moment ago. I don't like this flat. It's old and dingy. Veronika will be back from school soon.

VERONIKA: Mommy, do you love me?

MIRJANA: Of course.

VERONIKA: I got an 'F' today. I won't tell you about it because you love me.

MIRJANA: It was cloudy today, I brought my umbrella, but I didn't use it. My umbrella is light blue. Usually when it rains, I wear a light blue pullover. How's your husband?

GROZDANA: My husband's very well. He fell asleep quite early last night, but he got up early as well. He coughs in the mornings, that irritates me.

MIRJANA: Men often cough in the morning.

GROZDANA: He slammed the door twice on his way out. I think he's making a point. Letting me know that he's the one who make a money in the family. Later on I called him at work and I said: "What the fuck was that, why did you slam the door this morning?" He said he didn't remember slamming anything.

MIRJANA: Maybe he's forgotten.

GROZDANA: *[A big smile]* My husband does forget things.

MIRJANA: Yes, sometimes they forget.

Silence.

MIRJANA: I'm going to put out my first cigarette and light another one. I'm going to smoke the second cigarette. I'm going to take another sip of coffee.

Mirjana puts out her first cigarette, and then she lights up another one. She smokes the second cigarette. She takes a sip of coffee.

MIRJANA: So, I sit and keep quiet.

ANKICA: What?

MIRJANA: I'm smoking, drinking coffee, and thinking. I fear my own silence. Silent people are suspicious.

JAKOV: Now what?

MIRJANA: There should be some talk. I don't know what's normal anymore. I have a

daughter, years behind me, memories, and this flat.
That's all.

VIOLETA: That's all?

MIRJANA: They say the world's a big place. I went to Switzerland, once, but that's it. I'll have to take their word for it.

LUCIO: Yes, you'll have to.

MIRJANA: Just like I'll take their word for it that after you die, you go to heaven. That would be lovely, going to heaven... I love the colour blue.

Dark.
Mirjana is alone. She's smoking.

MIRJANA: *(Singing quietly)* The world is a colourful ball, colourful ball, colourful ball...

Grozdana comes to Mirjana. She sits next to her. They keep quiet for a while.

GROZDANA: Hi, Mirjana.

MIRJANA: Hi, Grozdana.

GROZDANA: How are you?

MIRJANA: Bearing up...

GROZDANA: Yeah, sure...

MIRJANA: Weird weather we're having. You?

GROZDANA: I wasn't very good this morning.
I had a hard time getting up.

MIRJANA: Maybe the air pressure dropped.

GROZDANA: I was up late last night. Baking fairy cakes. Only got to bed around two in the morning. I threw away the first batch, I was watching that new TV show, they introduced a new actor, very handsome, you could see his bare bum, so the fairy cakes burned. I really upset myself. I make good fairy cakes, even though my husband complains about about having to eat the same ones all the time. A while ago, while I was washing my face, I thought I could kill myself.

MIRJANA: But you wouldn't do that.

GROZDANA: No. Not now. In two years. Don't tell anyone.

MIRJANA: I'm your friend. I can keep a secret.

GROZDANA: I'm not going to leave a message.

MIRJANA: Doesn't matter. The neighbours will know why you did it.

GROZDANA: Will he feel sorry?

MIRJANA: Not sure.

GROZDANA: Neither am I. You? How's work?

MIRJANA: Fine.

GROZDANA: Cloudy today. No change...

MIRJANA: Yes.

GROZDANA: I haven't gone out at all. I had some bread, from yesterday.

MIRJANA: I sometimes have yesterday's bread, just put it in the oven for a minute.

GROZDANA: I freeze it sometimes. It stays there for couple of days, warm it up and it's fresh again, just eat it warm.

MIRJANA: Yeah, it's best warm.

GROZDANA: Did you cook anything? Any dinner?

MIRJANA: Not yet. Later.

GROZDANA: Yeah, no hurry.

MIRJANA: Veronika probably ate in the city, so the pair of us will have something later.

GROZDANA: Yeah.

MIRJANA: The weather really is funny.

GROZDANA: Yeah.

Silence for a while. Grozdana goes away.

SIMON: Rushing off?

LUCIO: Work.

SIMON: Yeah, course... Work's important.

LUCIO: Did you need something?

SIMON: Oh, no. Nothing special...

LUCIO: I've got a bit of time, if you need something or...?

SIMON: No, I don't need anything. Just wanted to say hello. I can see you're busy.

LUCIO: Capitalism loves the young. Suits don't always look as good as they do on the youngsters, do they?

SIMON: I heard you were getting a promotion.

LUCIO: I think so. The boss's secretary has started saying hello to me. I do deserve it.

SIMON: I believe so.

LUCIO: I should probably get going...

SIMON: Course, yeah, time is money.

LUCIO: Money is time.

SIMON: Sorry about this... See ya.

LUCIO: Bye.

Ankica, in her night-gown, sits next to Mirjana.

MIRJANA: Ankica, I haven't seen you for a while. How've you been?

ANKICA: Fine.

A moment of silence.

ANKICA: You?

MIRJANA: Fine.

ANKICA: I'm glad to hear it.

Silence.

MIRJANA: You look nice.

ANKICA: Do I?

MIRJANA: I like the hair-cut. Is it new?

ANKICA: My hair-cut? No.

MIRJANA: Oh.

ANKICA: Yes.

Silence.

ANKICA: I bought these earrings, maybe that's what it is.

MIRJANA: Did you, oh, let me see.

Ankica pulls back her hair uncouthly and shows Mirjana her tiny earrings.

MIRJANA: They're lovely.

ANKICA: They were expensive, but...

MIRJANA: They are lovely.

ANKICA: Thank you. Is my husband here?

Jakov is dressed in his pyjamas and he's about to lay down in bed.

MIRJANA: Yes, he's about to lie down.

ANKICA: Thanks.

Ankica walks to the bed. They talk to each other, with their backs turned.

ANKICA: You are my husband.

JAKOV: Yes.

ANKICA: I am your wife.

JAKOV: Good.

ANKICA: How are you?

JAKOV: It's hot in here.

ANKICA: I've opened the window.

JAKOV: We should've got that air conditioner.

ANKICA: Yes, we should have.

JAKOV: Do you love me?

ANKICA: I've forgotten.

JAKOV: Do you have a favourite colour?

ANKICA: I do.

JAKOV: What's my favourite colour?

ANKICA: Blue.

JAKOV: Yeah. Blue. That's yours too?

ANKICA: I detest the colour blue from the bottom of my heart.

Silence

JAKOV: Has our 20-year-old baby Josip called?

ANKICA: Not today.

JAKOV: Why's that?

ANKICA: I don't know.

JAKOV: You should've called him.

ANKICA: We don't have to talk to each other every day. He's probably been working.

JAKOV: You should call him.

ANKICA: I'll call him in the morning.

JAKOV: You do that.

ANKICA: I will. Good night.

JAKOV: Wait.

ANKICA: What?

JAKOV: How tired are you?

ANKICA: Pretty tired.

JAKOV: Well, are you tired or not?

ANKICA: Sort of.

JAKOV: Well... How about a blow job then?

ANKICA: I can't right now.

JAKOV: Come on. Do it.

Silence.

ANKICA: Ok.

Violeta comes to the table where Mirjana's sitting, carrying a travel bag in her hand.
 MIRJANA: Hi, you came.
 VIOLETA: Here I am.
Mirjana gets up and they hug clumsily.
 MIRJANA: How are you?
 VIOLETA: The train was late, hardly my fault, is it?
 MIRJANA: You should have called, I could've picked you up.
 VIOLETA: My bag's not that heavy, and you live on the first floor.
 MIRJANA: Come in. Come in.
 VIOLETA: The girl's not here?
 MIRJANA: No. She'll be here soon.
 VIOLETA: Lovely.
 MIRJANA: Have a seat.
 Violeta takes a seat.
 VIOLETA: It's... fine.
 MIRJANA: What is it?
 VIOLETA: The flat.
 MIRJANA: Bit mucky, didn't have time to clean up, I've been a bit busy.
 VIOLETA: I could give you a hand.
 MIRJANA: What time's your appointment tomorrow?
 VIOLETA: Eight o'clock. I'll get up at six. You have to tell me which trams I need to take, taxis are too expensive, I paid fifty kuna from the train station to here. Probably be there around seven, you have to be there early because of the numbers, probably be seen around eight.
 MIRJANA: When are you planning on going back?
 VIOLETA: I can go tomorrow. I thought we could...
 MIRJANA: Tomorrow's a bit of a nightmare day at work.
 VIOLETA: Ok, I can go back tomorrow.
 MIRJANA: Were you planning on staying?
 VIOLETA: I'll just go back tomorrow.
 MIRJANA: It's no problem if you want to stay. Veronika will be around, and the neighbours have the spare key...
 VIOLETA: No, it's ok... I'll go.
 MIRJANA: Fine.

Silence.
 VIOLETA: I'll decide tomorrow.
Silence.
 MIRJANA: Ok.
Silence.
Mirjana lights up a cigarette.
 VIOLETA: There was an old man on the train. He must have smoked two whole packs. And the smell! It was dreadful.
Mirjana puts out the cigarette.
 VIOLETA: Oh, don't do that. I didn't mean that you had to stop, you just reminded me, that's all.
 MIRJANA: It doesn't matter.
Silence.
 ANKICA: You know...
Silence.
 JAKOV: What?
 ANKICA: I thought you were asleep.
 JAKOV: What is it?
 ANKICA: Nothing. I was just wondering whether you could go to the butcher's tomorrow.
 JAKOV: Have you run out of meat?
 ANKICA: There's some left but my birthday's coming up. I wanted to get some lamb. You know more about the stuff, he always gives you better meat.
 JAKOV: Tried to screw you over again, did he?
 ANKICA: No. It would just be better if you went. You always bring back the best stuff.
 JAKOV: When's your birthday?
 ANKICA: In two days.
 JAKOV: Did you plan to invite anyone?
 ANKICA: Not really... I'll have some neighbours over for a slice of cake, but I thought you and I could have lamb for lunch. We haven't done that for quite some time, really.
 JAKOV: Ok, I'll go.

ANKICA: Good. That's all I wanted.
 JAKOV: Ok.
Silence.
 VIOLETA: It's our fiftieth wedding anniversary next month, we're going to celebrate in church.
 MIRJANA: Already?
 VIOLETA: The years fly by, surprised me too! After the ceremony, we're all going to have lunch in a restaurant.
 MIRJANA: Did you invite many people?
 VIOLETA: No, just you, and some relatives from father's side, the ones who still haven't died. You know they'd get angry if we didn't invite them to these things. You have to come.
 MIRJANA: Of course I'll come.
 VIOLETA: Father Jerko is going to conduct the ceremony. He called me the other day, Father Jerko, said he'd heard about your divorce.
 MIRJANA: What the fuck does he care?
 VIOLETA: Don't swear, please. You took the heavenly bread at Christmas Mass, that's why he asked.
Silence.
 MIRJANA: I forgot. I haven't been to church for a long time, I forgot about that.
 VIOLETA: That's why he called me. You can't receive the Communion during the ceremony, divorced people must not receive it...
 MIRJANA: Ok, I'm sorry, I forgot.
 VIOLETA: Why don't you go to church here? It's messy, living like that...
 MIRJANA: I don't know, I just don't.
 VIOLETA: What about Veronika? Does she go?
 MIRJANA: No, she doesn't.
 VIOLETA: She should. There are so many things wrong in this world, especially drugs. She should go to Mass.
 MIRJANA: Ok, Mum, I'll tell her!
 VIOLETA: Not right now, you don't have to right now... Ok, fine. You know your father always used to say that you were a good-for-nothing. Did you know that?
 MIRJANA: Of course I knew that. He told me, you are always going to be a good-for-nothing. I believed him too.
 VIOLETA: You never stood out in school and you weren't pret-

ty. You were an ugly child, I dug out some pictures the other day. A really ugly child! I remember once we visited the Bečić family, you'd just hit puberty, your face was covered in white heads, all these pustules and... Your hair was always greasy, what could you do? You were sweaty. Sweating all the time. While we were walking to their house, before we got there, your father asked me, quietly, why we had to bring you at all. Over dinner, he was telling you to sit up straight, watching you all the time, he was embarrassed. When we got home, you hadn't made your bed and I yelled at you. I cried that night, embarrassed too. Your father and I didn't mention it the next day, we were ashamed. But, days were passing by slowly, and you were blossoming little by little. You had the biggest tits in your class, boys used to walk you home. We were pleased with that, sort of, despite the fact that your exam results got worse. I thought, Oh, well, at least she'll be sexy, and everything will turn out ok.
 MIRJANA: Ok.
 VIOLETA: Now I'm old.
 MIRJANA: You look fine.
 VIOLETA: Please.
 MIRJANA: You look good for your age. Do you want some coffee?
 VIOLETA: No, thanks.
 MIRJANA: Biscuit?
 VIOLETA: No, no. I ate on the train.
 MIRJANA: You know, when the teacher failed me that time, and my breasts still hadn't started to grow, you didn't say anything. You complained about it to your colleagues, I noticed the looks they gave me when I came to the bar to see you. Sometimes you cried, but you never said anything. You would sluggishly put eggs and meat on my plate. Suddenly, we didn't even get deserts, and the phone would ring

a lot. You would shut the doors while complaining to your sister. Father wanted to hit me, but he was already tired of the family. Sometimes he would send me to my room to study, and I would feel grateful. You know, I was really afraid then, and couldn't fall asleep all night. It was hard for me, I failed a class, but I didn't consider myself stupid. Why is life even worth living, if it's bound to be worthless? You became a stranger. I wish you'd hit me, I wish you hadn't given up on me.

VIOLETA: I'm sorry.

MIRJANA: Never mind. I haven't been buying you birthday presents since then. When I call to wish you a happy birthday, you always say, "So many people came, I got some wonderful presents, really beautiful presents..." And I never ask what you got.

VIOLETA: You've distanced yourself.

MIRJANA: I've moved to a different city.

Silence.

MIRJANA: How's dad?

VIOLETA: I don't know. I haven't asked him for a long time.

MIRJANA: There're some clothes to be ironed over there, maybe you could do them.

VIOLETA: Of course.

Violeta gets up and starts ironing the clothes. Grozdana enters.

GROZDANA: Am I interrupting anything?

MIRJANA: No, stay.

GROZDANA: I'm sorry, I didn't know she was here. I came because the kitchen got so stuffy. The furnace I'm going to throw myself into in two years, it's broken. Leaks gas. We'll have to fix it as soon as possible. How am I going to make Christmas cakes? How am I going to kill myself at Easter?

MIRJANA: I've got the number for a good handy man.

GROZDANA: Thanks, Mirjana.

MIRJANA: No problem.

GROZDANA: When do you start work?

MIRJANA: Soon.

GROZDANA: I'm leaving in a minute. I'm almost out the door.

MIRJANA: Ok.

Grozdana and Mirjana sit silent for a while. Grozdana soon gets up.

GROZDANA: I'm off.

MIRJANA: Bye.

Simon and Lucio meet at the intersection of Dalmatinska and Frankopanska Street.

SIMON: You again.

LUCIO: Yeah, just passing by.

SIMON: I was at your flat, you know?

LUCIO: Really? When?

SIMON: Small, isn't it?

LUCIO: It's a bit studenty. I bought it more than five years ago, my folks sold the holiday home. I'll sell it soon, get a loan, buy a new one.

SIMON: Good idea, cos this one's very small. In Germany, people on social welfare have flats almost as small as yours.

LUCIO: It's enough for now.

SIMON: And what if something happens with Mirjana?

LUCIO: I don't know. I haven't thought that far ahead.

SIMON: I see you haven't, yeah.

LUCIO: I don't really understand how it concerns you.

SIMON: In your bathroom, there were some pills for hair loss.

LUCIO: My father went bald quite young.

SIMON: You've a good head of hair on you.

LUCIO: I'm going a little thin, here.

Lucio shows Simon his head.

SIMON: Mirjana doesn't like bald men.

LUCIO: I'll bear that in mind.

SIMON: Ok.

LUCIO: I'm going to be late for work.

SIMON: Yes, yes, course. Go.

LUCIO: Bye.

SIMON: Bye.

Mirjana sits for a while longer, and then she comes to Violeta.

MIRJANA: How's it going?

VIOLETA: It's going.

MIRJANA: Is it too much for you?

VIOLETA: No, I'll be done soon.

MIRJANA: Would you like some juice?

VIOLETA: No, I'm fine.

Mirjana returns to the table.

ANKICA: Are you asleep?

JAKOV: Yes.

ANKICA: Why aren't you asleep?

JAKOV: It's too hot. What is it?

ANKICA: Nothing, I could see that you weren't asleep so I was just... nothing.

JAKOV: What's the matter with you?

ANKICA: I can't sleep. I don't know.

JAKOV: Neither can I. It's the full moon.

ANKICA: No, it was full last week.

JAKOV: Maybe it's full again.

ANKICA: It doesn't matter, go to sleep.

JAKOV: Good night.

Mirjana takes a cleaning product and wipes the table.

VIOLETA: That's not really very good stuff, that.

MIRJANA: No?

VIOLETA: Bit cheap, leaves stains.

MIRJANA: Works for me.

Violeta comes closer.

VIOLETA: It leaves stains, look.

Mirjana looks at the table, seemingly.

MIRJANA: I can't see them. I think it's fine.

VIOLETA: Look here, that's a stain.

MIRJANA: Can't see it. Are you hungry? I could make some lunch.

VIOLETA: No, I'm fine.

MIRJANA: Come on, you must be hungry.

VIOLETA: What do you have?

MIRJANA: I've got a chicken. I thought I'd roast it.

VIOLETA: Ok. When is Veronika coming?

MIRJANA: She'll be here soon.

Mirjana and Violeta sit down and wait for Veronika to come in.

Silence.

Veronika comes in.

VERONIKA: Hi!

VIOLETA: Darting.

They kiss.

VERONIKA: Granny, when did you get here?

VIOLETA: Just a while ago.

VERONIKA: Great.

VIOLETA: You've grown.

VERONIKA: You always say that.

VIOLETA: Well, it's true.

VERONIKA: Course it's true. Have I changed?

VIOLETA: Yes, you have. You're getting prettier every day.

VERONIKA: You really think so?! Thanks!

VIOLETA: Grandmothers lie. Don't you forget it. We just pretend we're innocent and soft-spoken in front of our grandchildren. It's a battle for survival, our lives are in your hands.

MIRJANA: Come on, you two. Lunch is ready.

VIOLETA: Already?

MIRJANA: I'm a fast cook.

Veronika and Violeta take a seat at the table and Mirjana brings the chicken and a side dish. They set the table.

VIOLETA: So, what's the news? How's school?

VERONIKA: It's ok. Do you know that I sing now? I bet Mum didn't tell you.

VIOLETA: No, she didn't.

VERONIKA: Knew it. Well, I sing in a band and we do awesome stuff, mainly foreign, covers, you know.

MIRJANA: She's going through the 'I want to be a popstar' phase.

VERONIKA: It's not a phase.

MIRJANA: We'll see.

VERONIKA: Granny, I'm doing great, you know. Really great. The other day there were these guys listening to us from in front of the garage where we were jamming, you know, and afterwards they said we were wicked. And they play too, they're in this band, really well-known, called Rastrig. Have you heard of them?

VIOLETA: Erm... I don't think so, no.

VERONIKA: Never mind, they are awesome though, they've a couple of really cool songs and a video on telly and everything and they reckon I've got a better voice than like ninety percent of the people already in the business, can you believe that?

VIOLETA: That is wonderful.

VERONIKA: I know. Mum doesn't think so. She doesn't like my voice.

MIRJANA: I like it when you sing like a normal person, now you're just howling.

VERONIKA: You're supposed to sing like that, it's soul. You are so clueless.

MIRJANA: There you go.

VERONIKA: If we had some money we could record an album that would fly off the shelves. I sent a song we recorded to some friends in America, over Myspace. Do you know about Myspace?

VIOLETA: Not really.

VERONIKA: Never mind, it's the Internet, anyway they loved it! They were all like, 'Oh, you're a great singer!' and that. If I had some money I'd definitely make it in America. For sure! It's so easy to record an album over there. You just have to have a bit of money, only a few bucks, you don't even have to know anyone. You just pay a little and they give you a studio and everything. There's even a list of record companies that you can send your CD's to. Only, the recording needs to be professional. I don't have that. We don't have any money. Mum's not giving me any.

MIRJANA: Because I don't have any.

VERONIKA: I'd definitely be a success. I'm talented. I know I am. Sometimes, before I fall asleep, I imagine being rich, having rich parents who financed my professional CD, and I'm singing in America at a big stadium. I always dream about it, and everybody says my voice is amazing.

MIRJANA: Come on now, eat.

VERONIKA: Granny, I'm really talented. Seriously, I am.

VIOLETA: I used to sing.

VERONIKA: Yeah?

VIOLETA: Did your mother never tell you?

VERONIKA: Mum, why haven't you told me this?

VIOLETA: Oh, it's not big, only a few times, in a bar. I was good though, talented, like you.

VERONIKA: I'm more talented.

VIOLETA: Of course.

VERONIKA: You know, granny, I wanna be famous and I know I could do it.

VIOLETA: Do you, dear?

VERONIKA: Yeah, I sing really well, I'm a great singer.

MIRJANA: Eat your food.

VERONIKA: No! Granny, everybody says that, absolutely everybody, I don't think they're lying, I know they're not lying. I really could be a famous singer. Famous, granny!

I want to be famous

I want to be beautiful

I want to listen to myself on the radio

I'm really talented

I'm wonderful and nice, really

I am amazing, happy and brilliant

I am a star. A true, true star.

Yeah, I am a star...

Talented star...

MIRJANA: She went to see a manager and it didn't work out. You've got to have luck too. Talent isn't enough. I know that she sings well, I'm not deaf. I sing well too, only I never do it. I don't tell her she sings beautifully because she has to think about school and life. She flies high. People can't fly. If we could, God would've made wings for us.

VERONIKA: Mum, what is life?

MIRJANA: Life is a cup of coffee.

VERONIKA: Mum, what is love?

MIRJANA: Love is the remote control.

VERONIKA: Mum, who am I?

MIRJANA: You are my child.

VERONIKA: Mum, what's a child?

MIRJANA: My love.

VERONIKA: Mum, what is love?

MIRJANA: Nothing.

Ankica gets out of the bed.

JAKOV: Where are you going?

ANKICA: To the bathroom. Did I wake you?

JAKOV: What's the time?

ANKICA: We'll get up soon.

JAKOV: Ok.

ANKICA: What is it?

JAKOV: A bad dream.

ANKICA: Again?

JAKOV: Yeah.

ANKICA: Shall I make some tea?

JAKOV: No, it's fine.

ANKICA: I have to go to the toilet.

JAKOV: Yeah, you go.

Ankica walks towards Mirjana. They watch themselves in the bathroom mirror, in the office.

MIRJANA: Don't use the one on the left. It doesn't work.

ANKICA: Your bra's showing.

MIRJANA: What?

ANKICA: Do another button up.

MIRJANA: I'm sorry, I don't understand.

ANKICA: I've got friends here, I know everything.

Silence.

MIRJANA: What do you know?

ANKICA: You know.

Silence.

MIRJANA: I am sorry.

ANKICA: Don't be. That's all.

MIRJANA: I didn't plan any of this.

ANKICA: Which one did you say didn't work?

MIRJANA: The left one.

ANKICA: Thanks.

Lucio and Simon watch themselves in the mirror.

SIMON: When I had money, I bought a shirt from Zara once, lasted me ten years. That looks good on you.

LUCIO: You don't think it's too formal?

SIMON: She'll be dressed up too.

LUCIO: I've only been wearing shirts for the last couple of years. I think they look quite good on me.

SIMON: How are you feeling?

LUCIO: Nervous.

SIMON: Me too.

LUCIO: You think it will be ok?

SIMON: I don't know.

LUCIO: Wish me luck.

SIMON: No.

Mirjana is putting on her make up and talking to Simon.

MIRJANA: So...

SIMON: How is she?

MIRJANA: Fine.

SIMON: She can come to mine this summer, if she wants to.

MIRJANA: She doesn't.

SIMON: You haven't even asked.

MIRJANA: And what do you think she'd say?

Silence.

SIMON: She should at least be asked.

MIRJANA: Ok, I'll ask her.

SIMON: Good.

Silence.

SIMON: I'll send you something next month.

MIRJANA: Yeah, right.

SIMON: No, really, I will. I've been doing well lately.
MIRJANA: I'm happy for you.
SIMON: How've you been?
MIRJANA: Ok.
SIMON: I'm happy for you too. Still working in the office?
MIRJANA: I am.
SIMON: I knew you'd make it.
Silence.
SIMON: Are you seeing anyone?
MIRJANA: I don't wanna talk about that, Simon.
SIMON: Come on, you've always been good-looking...
MIRJANA: I am not seeing anyone, ok?
SIMON: Fine. Sorry. Shouldn't have asked.
Silence.
MIRJANA: Are you still seeing that woman?
SIMON: I am.
MIRJANA: How is she?
SIMON: Ok. She says hello.
MIRJANA: Is she listening to this?
SIMON: Well, yeah.
MIRJANA: Simon! Oh my God...
SIMON: What? We haven't said anything wrong.
MIRJANA: Ok, fine. Fine, Simon.
SIMON: I can tell her to leave the room. Fani? Come on...
MIRJANA: Don't tell her...
SIMON: We need a little privacy for this, Fani.
MIRJANA: Stop forcing her to go. Look, we're finished...
SIMON: Ok.
Silence.
MIRJANA: Tell her I said hello.
SIMON: Mirjana says hello to you... Fuck it, she just left.
MIRJANA: Give her my best later.
SIMON: Yep, won't forget.
MIRJANA: Whatever.
SIMON: When's our girl back from school?
MIRJANA: Half an hour.
SIMON: Shall I call back then?

MIRJANA: Don't. She's got advanced maths early in the morning, I don't want her upset.
Silence.
SIMON: What? Still...
MIRJANA: What did you think, Simon?
SIMON: Well... I don't know.
MIRJANA: Yes, still, she still cries.
SIMON: She always holds up well when I talk to her. Last time she asked me about where I lived, things like that.
MIRJANA: Alright, Simon, great, but she still cries.
SIMON: Don't say that. It's not true.
MIRJANA: Ok, it isn't.
SIMON: Don't lie to me, I'm not stupid.
MIRJANA: What the fuck, Simon? Who's lying to you? The girl cries every time you call. What did you expect? You disappeared for five years, then suddenly started sending her Christmas cards. You didn't even write in them, you had that woman of yours do it. What's the matter with you?
SIMON: You're screaming again.
MIRJANA: Just go, Simon. I don't want to hear your voice, go. Go. Please, go. Just go.
Silence.
MIRJANA: I'll talk to you later.
SIMON: Ask her to call me.
MIRJANA: Ok. Bye, Simon.
SIMON: Bye.
Mirjana sits down on the chair.
VIOLETA: Who is he?
MIRJANA: A colleague.
VIOLETA: Have I ever seen him before?
MIRJANA: Don't be silly. Where would you see him?
VIOLETA: I don't know. On TV?
MIRJANA: No. You haven't.

VIOLETA: Has he seen Veronika?
MIRJANA: It's still too early for that.
VIOLETA: But, he knows about her?
MIRJANA: Of course, Mother. I'm not a child.
VIOLETA: And he doesn't mind?
MIRJANA: I'm not getting married, Mum.
VIOLETA: So, it's nothing serious.
MIRJANA: Nothing serious.
VIOLETA: Mirjana, you're not that young anymore.
MIRJANA: I have to go.
VIOLETA: You'll be cold. Do you want that black scarf of mine? Don't say it's old fashioned, it's not old-fashioned, young women can wear it. I bought it in a nice place.
MIRJANA: I'm late, I made the couch up for you and I won't be late back.
Mirjana runs to Lucio. She throws herself into his arms. They dance. Veronika, wearing too much make-up on, starts to sing a soul song on the stage.
LUCIO: Hey, woah woah...
MIRJANA: I'm sorry, the wine's gone to my head. You're a good dancer.
LUCIO: You think so?
MIRJANA: You haven't stepped on my feet. Not once.
LUCIO: That's a real success.
MIRJANA: It is. You should've seen the men I went out with...
LUCIO: Have you been out with loads of men?
MIRJANA: Would you feel bad if I had?
LUCIO: No, it's just...
MIRJANA: I haven't. I went through a phase where I just wanted to fall in love so I went out, met boys. Idiots mainly. Just because I'm divorced doesn't mean I am a whore. Everybody thinks I'm desperate... That we have to do it that same night... Shit.
LUCIO: Idiots.
MIRJANA: Yes, idiots.
LUCIO: Why are you with me?
Silence.
LUCIO: I'm serious...
MIRJANA: I don't know.

Silence.
LUCIO: Did you have fun tonight?
MIRJANA: Yes. Yes, Lucio, I did...
LUCIO: You don't sound like you did.
MIRJANA: I really had a great time. Really.
LUCIO: Do you want to do it again some time?
MIRJANA: I do.
LUCIO: Seriously?
MIRJANA: And you?
LUCIO: Of course.
MIRJANA: You like me, don't you?
LUCIO: Yeah, I like you.
MIRJANA: When did you start liking me?
LUCIO: While I was watching you at work. You're pretty. People like you.
MIRJANA: Do you love me?
LUCIO: I think... Yes.
MIRJANA: I don't love you.
LUCIO: You don't have to say as much.
MIRJANA: I want you to know.
LUCIO: I do know. No need to repeat it.
MIRJANA: I won't. I want you to love me more, it suits me. Is that going to bother you too much?
LUCIO: No.
MIRJANA: But later on? When I'm even older?
LUCIO: I don't think about the future.
MIRJANA: You must have noticed how people look at us when we walk into restaurants?
LUCIO: I have. Yes.
MIRJANA: Those people... Your parents could be like that. Then what?
LUCIO: They're going to care about you and me being good together, that's all.
MIRJANA: Like hell it is. You know nothing about life.
Silence.
MIRJANA: You have to promise me that you will never leave me.

LUCIO: I am never going to leave you.

MIRJANA: And what about me leaving you?

LUCIO: I don't think about that.

MIRJANA: You won't cry for me, will you?

LUCIO: No.

MIRJANA: Ok. I can deal with that. But remember...

LUCIO: ...Yes?

MIRJANA: You can't dump me first. I'll be the one who does the dumping. I have more experience. I know how to do it. I'll dump you the minute before I feel like you could dump me. I hope that's okay with you.

Veronika finishes her song. Mirjana and Lucio turn around.

VERONIKA: Mum?

MIRJANA: Go to sleep, love. Grandma's on the couch in the living room. Don't wake her.

VERONIKA: Mum, I don't want to sleep.

MIRJANA: Darling, it's late, go to sleep.

VERONIKA: No, Mum, I won't. I don't want to sleep.

MIRJANA: Don't be like this, you've got school in the morning.

VERONIKA: Shut up! Mother, please, shut up! You really don't have a clue. I put on your shoes, the high ones, and tonight, while you were here, I've been walking around. Walking around town in your shoes. I've got a good arse, my friends at school tell me. The boys at school spank me in the corridors all the time! All the time, Mum! And I'm just walking around, looking at the stars, Mum.

MIRJANA: Veronika...

VERONIKA: Shut up! [She's crying] Mum, you know... Did you know it only takes seven hours to get to America on a plane. Yes, Mum... America is only seven hours away. Nothing. The same as the seaside on the train. You can get there and back the same day. Get there, grab lunch, home in time for dinner. Mum, it's so close. Sometimes I imagine that you're rich. That my real Mum knocks on the door, in an expensive coat, with an expensive accent, and she says, "You are my daughter". Then takes me to America. I'm sorry. I love you, but you don't understand. I can really sing, I sing beautifully, I'm better than most of them out there, everyone says so, and I can act. I could be famous, Mum. I could. Famous people aren't always thin.

I'll be thin when I'm through puberty, I know that, you say that, and I'll be beautiful. You can do anything these days, with money. Not even that much money and a bit of luck. I'll be walking down the street and a car will stop and they'll say, "You're beautiful". And give me money and I'll be rich. It's not that hard, Mum, it can be done, so don't tell me to sleep cos nobody made it by sleeping. You don't like my singing. But other people do, you should know that. And I've sent my song to America, over the internet, it's daytime there and it's twenty-three degrees, you can wear short sleeves... Mum, I haven't been able to sleep for ages. I shake a lot and look out at the moon because everyone can see the moon, even in the day. Even Americans. Even the moon's not that far away. Everything's so close. Seven hours, Mum. I'm gonna wear my favourite shirt, I'm gonna go out in your shoes and everyone will look at me and I'll sing. I'll sing a song and everyone will hear my beautiful voice, even you. Even you with no money. Then all these Mummies and Daddies will come over and say how great I am, how wonderful I am... [She's singing] They will say *how wonderful I am...*

And amazing...

How incredible I am.

And amazing...

Silence.

Ankica is sitting at the edge of the bed.

ANKICA: It's seven am.

JAKOV: What?

ANKICA: Seven.

JAKOV: Ok, I'll get up.

Silence.

ANKICA: Shall I make some coffee?

JAKOV: I'll have some in the office... No, no second thought, do make some.

ANKICA: If you want, I could go and get some bagels, it'll only take a minute...

JAKOV: No need, just coffee.

ANKICA: Alright.

Ankica gets up and goes to the table. Grozdana brings her some cups. Ankica clears the table, and Grozdana drops a cup on the floor, with a strong, sudden movement.

GROZDANA: Oh dear... Look, I dropped a cup of coffee on the floor... It's really very sad that I dropped it. It's sad, but I am not crying. I usually cry over things like this. I'm not even going to make a fuss and I am definitely not going to say, GOD, dear God, this was my favourite set. His Mum gave it to me! These cups have been in the family for decades. They must have been expensive, they must be from an exotic country. I am so clumsy, Jesus Christ. Look what I've done. His mother, who's supposed to drop in unexpectedly next week, she'll notice, she'll say how she wishes she'd given them to his brother's wife, who graduated from 2 universities whilst looking after two kids and still had the time to send e-mails about environmental issues. I won't even do that.

ANKICA: Clumsy.

GROZDANA: People call me that. It was his Mum's favourite set, it's been in the family for decades now, she's gonna go ape-shit. I'll have to get her a straight jacket. Maybe they do black straight jackets. She always wears black. Her husband died ten years ago, still she only wears black.

ANKICA: I'm not sure they make them in black.

GROZDANA: You know, Ankica, he liked sipping from that cup. Made him feel important. His grandfather used to drink from a cup just like it. The importance is tradition. Endurance. I'm a dried up plant, they'll replace me soon.

ANKICA: Is everything ok?

GROZDANA: Yeah, no, it's just a small thing. One minor detail.

ANKICA: You looked like you might cry.

GROZDANA: No. I don't cry in front of people.

ANKICA: Finished here? My husband will be here any minute now...

GROZDANA: I'll be done soon.

ANKICA: No, no, you're not in the way.

GROZDANA: I'll just clear it up. Pretend I'm not here.

ANKICA: I can't do that.

GROZDANA: I'll be quick.

Grozdana picks up the broken pieces and puts them in a dustbin.

Mirjana and Jakov are in bed. They're getting dressed after having sex.

JAKOV: Please, don't cry.

MIRJANA: I'm not crying.

JAKOV: I thought you were crying.

MIRJANA: No.

JAKOV: You wanted this to happen, right? You invited me.

MIRJANA: Yes, I did. I haven't said anything, have I?

JAKOV: I thought you were regretting it.

MIRJANA: I have regrets all the time, so what? Leave me alone now, please.

JAKOV: Is this about work? I haven't done anything to you.

MIRJANA: I know you haven't, sorry Jakov, it's my fault.

JAKOV: It's nobody's fault. Don't say that. It's nobody's fault, right?

MIRJANA: It's nobody's fault.

JAKOV: I thought you didn't want this anymore... You couldn't resist, could you?

MIRJANA: Oh, Jakov, shut up.

JAKOV: Admit it...

MIRJANA: I don't know what came over me. It won't happen again.

JAKOV: You like a good fucking, don't you?

MIRJANA: Jakov, you're annoying me.

JAKOV: You women are...

MIRJANA: You've got a meeting at two.

JAKOV: I know.

MIRJANA: There's a stain on your tie. I'll buy you a new one. You can't go to a meeting like that.

JAKOV: Use the company card.

MIRJANA: Any preference?

JAKOV: Don't know.

MIRJANA: I'll pick one.

JAKOV: Ankica has made some coffee, if you want some...

MIRJANA: No, thanks.

Jakov gets up and goes to Ankica. He sits down.

ANKICA: The coffee's bitter. I can't remember how you take it, so there's sugar if you want it.

JAKOV: Has our twenty-year-old boy Josip called?

ANKICA: No.

JAKOV: You should call him later.

ANKICA: I will.

JAKOV: Ask him if he needs anything.

ANKICA: I'll ask him.

Silence.

ANKICA: I called Mirjana to tell her she didn't have to make you coffee this morning.

JAKOV: Why did you call her?

ANKICA: Only to tell her she didn't have to make coffee this morning. Why should she bother if you've already had some at home?

JAKOV: You're mad.

ANKICA: No point wasting office coffee.

Silence.

JAKOV: What did she say?

ANKICA: Nothing. That she wouldn't make any.

JAKOV: Don't call her again.

ANKICA: Why not?

JAKOV: Don't call her again.

ANKICA: Ok. I won't.

Silence.

VIOLETA: Morning.

MIRJANA: Morning. Did you sleep ok?

VIOLETA: Yes, I did. I just got dressed and I'm off to the hospital.

MIRJANA: Ok. Today's a better day. At least it's not raining.

VIOLETA: Yes, it's not that cold. Is she still asleep?

MIRJANA: Yes, she doesn't have lessons in the morning today.

VIOLETA: She's pretty.

MIRJANA: She's in the throes of puberty, so she's changing...

VIOLETA: Do you have problems with her?

MIRJANA: What kind of problems?

VIOLETA: I don't know, I'm just asking. Puberty, you know...

MIRJANA: I don't have any problems with her... Except puberty.

VIOLETA: Ok. I didn't mean anything by it. I can see you two are getting along, she doesn't talk about her father as much as she used to. She didn't even mention him.

MIRJANA: She doesn't, but I can tell when she's thinking about him... All of it.

VIOLETA: Does he call?

MIRJANA: Now and then...

VIOLETA: It's not that easy for him either. In a new place, a long way away...

MIRJANA: Well...

VIOLETA: What about that woman?

MIRJANA: They're still together.

VIOLETA: They've been together for a long time now.

MIRJANA: Yes.

VIOLETA: Maybe it's for the best. He's found someone, I'm sure you'll find someone too.

MIRJANA: You're going to be late.

VIOLETA: I'm going, I'm going. When are you heading to work?

MIRJANA: In an hour.

VIOLETA: Oh, ok...

MIRJANA: Do you want me to give you a lift? It is no problem...

VIOLETA: Oh, no, no... I can't wait for you.

MIRJANA: Why didn't I think of it before? I'm such a fool...

VIOLETA: It's not a problem. I'm going.

MIRJANA: Ok, go on then.

VIOLETA: Bye.

MIRJANA: Bye.

Silence.

LUCIO: Mirjana has a child.

SIMON: Yes.

LUCIO: Nice name, Veronika.

SIMON: Thanks.

LUCIO: Do you love this child?

Silence.

SIMON: Yes.

LUCIO: Soon I'll be the one sitting at the table with Mirjana and the girl. I'll be asking how school was, teasing her about boys she's fallen in love with.

Silence.

MIRJANA: Hey, wake up.

VERONIKA: Mhmmm?

MIRJANA: Breakfast's in the kitchen.

VERONIKA: What are you doing on the bed?

MIRJANA: Just thinking.

VERONIKA: Where's granny?

MIRJANA: She's gone to the doctor's.

VERONIKA: What happened?

MIRJANA: Nothing, why can't I be here?

VERONIKA: You can, it's fine.

MIRJANA: I wanted to tell you something.

VERONIKA: Here we go.

MIRJANA: I know it's early, but... I found some condoms in your jacket.

VERONIKA: Why were you going through my jacket?

MIRJANA: It wasn't on purpose. Please, don't get all teenaged. There's nothing weird about it.

VERONIKA: Ok, so now what? The birds and the bees talk?

MIRJANA: No, I just wanted to say... I don't know. How long?

VERONIKA: How long have I been having sex for?

MIRJANA: Yes.

VERONIKA: I think that's probably my business, don't you?

MIRJANA: Veronika, please. I'm everything you have, we

used to tell each other everything, why be like this?

VERONIKA: Leave me alone.

MIRJANA: I am your mother!

VERONIKA: What?

MIRJANA: I'm your mother, you must...

VERONIKA: Mother? Is that what you are?

Silence.

MIRJANA: Yes.

VERONIKA: Yes, I can see that, you're my Mum. Give me your hand. Yeah. Now I remember, you're my Mum.

MIRJANA: Your eyes are just like mine, your lips, your hair... How could you forget?

VERONIKA: Yes, I have your eyes, lips, hair. Now I remember. Why did I forget?

MIRJANA: Is this about you not wanting to be like me?

VERONIKA: Maybe. You know, if I could choose a Mum in a, like, a home for Mums, I'd never choose you.

MIRJANA: You can't choose Mums.

VERONIKA: You can't choose daughters either.

MIRJANA: You can't choose daughters either. VERONIKA: Who are you, Mum? Why am I your daughter?

MIRJANA: I don't know. Who are you?

VERONIKA: I don't know. Why am I your daughter?

MIRJANA: I don't know.

VERONIKA: I don't know. You breast-fed me, You put me to sleep, yelled at me, hit me, hated me and loved me all at the same time, sometimes a couple of times a day... All that and I don't know why. Last night was my first time. He told me I sang beautifully. And that I was pretty. He kissed me around my ears... I didn't know about the ear thing... Nobody tells you that kind of stuff. He travels by plane a lot. Once, he

even flew first class. They pour champagne in first class. He's good-looking too. I wouldn't want to be with an older man, Mum. I wouldn't. But, everything was so easy with him. It was nice, Mum. I just kind of happened. I couldn't tell you. It doesn't matter. Don't be scared. I'll go away soon, I'm going to speak a foreign language and you won't be able to understand me.

MIRJANA: You only have one tongue, darling. It's small, like mine. Just the one, my dear.

VERONIKA: Mummy.

MIRJANA: Come on, get up. You'll be late for school. I'm going to work.

VERONIKA: Just five more minutes.

MIRJANA: Don't fall back to sleep.

VERONIKA: I won't. It's on snooze.

MIRJANA: Ok.

VERONIKA: Bye.

MIRJANA: Bye.

Silence.

Ankica brings Jakov's white shirt.

ANKICA: I ironed your shirt.

JAKOV: That's my formal shirt.

ANKICA: You said you had that banquet this evening, so you have to...

JAKOV: Right, I forgot.

Jakov puts on the shirt.

ANKICA: I bought a nice black skirt yesterday, from Anja's shop. It wasn't expensive and my birthday's coming up, so...

JAKOV: If you want money, you can ask.

ANKICA: Oh, no, it's fine. Anja says she's going to the banquet too.

JAKOV: Yes?

ANKICA: That's what she said. She said most of the employees were bringing their wives. You know, I could come, I don't have plans, just, if you me want to?

JAKOV: That's not necessary.

ANKICA: I thought I could bake a cake. You remember how they ate it all last time. People asked me for the recipe, I wrote it down on napkins, remember?

JAKOV: I won't be there long.

ANKICA: I'm going to get my hair done this afternoon. I'd wear that new black skirt, and a top. I'd dress up specially and that cake.

JAKOV: What's the matter?

ANKICA: Nothing's the matter. You don't want me there, do you?

JAKOV: There's just no reason for you to be there.

ANKICA: Is it because I am stupid?

Silence.

JAKOV: You're not stupid.

ANKICA: I don't know... That's what you said last time.

JAKOV: You were talking about things you didn't understand.

ANKICA: You said I was ugly and old.

JAKOV: I was drunk. Let's not get into that again.

ANKICA: I would dress up this time, and the cake. It always turns out perfect.

JAKOV: Come on, Ankica, for God sake! I'm going.

ANKICA: Jakov, wait.

JAKOV: What?

ANKICA: You just try and leave me. Just try to stop arguing with me... Try it and I will kill you. I swear to God.

JAKOV: What are you talking about?

ANKICA: I will go to this banquet tonight and when I arrive you will kiss me and hug me, are we clear? I'm the mother of your child, we've been married for twenty-five years, I don't love you anymore, just like you don't love me. But, we are married, so we are going to act like it, ok?

JAKOV: Ok.

ANKICA: I'll make the cake, I'll do my hair, I'll dress up and go. You're the company's director, I'm the director's wife. Your sub-

ordinates will look at my golden watch, and they'll ask each other about your salary. A salary that enables you to buy such a wonderful watch for your wife. They won't look at me differently, because they know you're cheating on me with your secretary, but I am your wife and you're my man so they'll be intimidated by me. I'll walk with my chin up. I gave birth to your only son, I dress you and I feed you. I am your wife. I am the director's wife. You will kiss me, I'll mingle, talk to people and laugh a lot. See you later.

JAKOV: See you later.

Silence.

GROZDANA: It's so nice to spend time in such a big house, living here, in the world for two more years. Watching TV, listening to the radio, not opening doors. Something always happens in life. Here we are, we've been waiting for our baby for a couple of years now. My belly's growing so slowly! Grow, grow! Never mind. I dump things in the nursery now, the clothes that need to be ironed. Sometimes, in the afternoon, I go in there for a nap. Cute, huh? Sleeping in the nursery. His mum gave us a beautiful, bloody rocking horse. Her father had made it for her. She had another thing coming. Or not. Not from me! I play dumb, she's not getting that beautiful fucking horse back. Her mistake! It's her mistake. I think he might leave me tonight. Yeah, tonight is probably the night. I feel it in the air. That's why one should cook and be happy and smile and be sad sometimes, just a bit sad, not too sad. Throw away the essays and exams, not read or answer those messages from friends. Oh, when are those two years going to pass, so I can kill myself!? Ha!

Silence.

LUCIO: Looking good. Are you dressed up for the banquet?

MIRJANA: I've had this for years.

LUCIO: You know, people know about us...

MIRJANA: I didn't know I wasn't allowed to talk.

LUCIO: Oh...

MIRJANA: Is that a problem? I don't understand.

Silence.

LUCIO: No, no... It's not a problem.

MIRJANA: You said you liked me, I thought...

LUCIO: No, it's all fine. We've been together a couple of weeks, so...

MIRJANA: Ok, then.

Silence.

MIRJANA: These rumours about me and Jakov, they're not true.

LUCIO: No?

MIRJANA: It's what they say about all his secretaries.

LUCIO: Jakov's a good-looking guy.

Silence.

LUCIO: Tonight's party... Would you mind if we didn't go together?

MIRJANA: Yeah, we don't have to go together.

LUCIO: Alright.

MIRJANA: Did you want to say anything else?

LUCIO: The receptionist smiled at me yesterday.

MIRJANA: The young one?

LUCIO: The pretty one. Yeah.

MIRJANA: Ah.

LUCIO: I walked by reception again today and she smiled at me again.

MIRJANA: That's nice.

LUCIO: I couldn't believe it. She's really sweet. And young.

MIRJANA: Why are you telling me this?

LUCIO: I just wanted you to know. No one has looked at me for a long time. It felt good, I'd be lying if I said it didn't.

MIRJANA: What do you want?

LUCIO: I just wanted you to know. I think I'm getting more attractive.

MIRJANA: Yes, you are.

LUCIO: It must be the suit. It looks good on me.

MIRJANA: Ok, when would you like me to leave you?

LUCIO: I don't know. You decide. I'll start flirt-

ing with the receptionist tomorrow. She's nice, clever, it won't be easy. I'll be thinking about you. I'll feel bad. I'll have to work hard on it.

MIRJANA: By the end of the week?

LUCIO: Around then, yeah, maybe Thursday or Friday. It was a pleasure.

MIRJANA: Lucio?

LUCIO: Yes?

MIRJANA: You're a bad lover and a twat. Now fuck off. I'll leave you by the end of the week. Thanks for telling me.

LUCIO: You're welcome.

SIMON: Are you dumping him?

MIRJANA: Why do you care?

SIMON: I'm just asking. You were my wife, I want to see you happy. You're the mother of my daughter.

MIRJANA: Oh, Simon, cut the crap. What do you want?

SIMON: Nothing. I just wanted to talk to you.

MIRJANA: Talk to me?

SIMON: Well... Yes.

MIRJANA: Where's that woman of yours?

SIMON: She's gone out. Gone to the gym.

MIRJANA: The gym.

SIMON: What's wrong with that? She's trying to stay fit.

MIRJANA: Are you cheating on her?

SIMON: A little, but she doesn't know.

MIRJANA: You pig.

SIMON: Only a couple of times. It was a lucky streak.

MIRJANA: And she doesn't have a clue?

SIMON: No. She's nice, she works a lot, so... I think we've got a pretty good thing going.

MIRJANA: Oh, ok, I'm happy for you, I have to go, don't call me anymore.

SIMON: I just wanted to check if you got the money?

MIRJANA: Well, no, I still don't have it.

SIMON: I sent it a week ago. Damn that archaic postal service over there.

MIRJANA: Yeah, it's probably the postal service.

SIMON: Here in Germany it takes seconds. Does the post-man travel by horseback over there or what?

MIRJANA: Yep, Shetland ponys, it's hilarious.

What do you really want, Simon?

Silence.

SIMON: Did you tell Veronika about that guy that I laid the tiles for?

MIRJANA: I did.

SIMON: And?

MIRJANA: And nothing. She doesn't want to.

SIMON: Are you sure you told her the correct name? She can google him, the man's done loads, I really think he's worth speaking to.

MIRJANA: She doesn't want to. Simon, I have to go.

SIMON: Wait.

MIRJANA: Simon, why are you calling me?

SIMON: I'm sorry. I was just... It's not easy, living in a foreign country.

MIRJANA: So, you thought you could call me?

SIMON: I just wanted to check.

MIRJANA: And now you've checked.

SIMON: You think it's cheap for me to call you like this?

MIRJANA: It's Sunday, you told me that the calls are free on Sundays.

SIMON: Well, last time I called it wasn't Sunday, that wasn't free.

MIRJANA: Then hang up. If you won't, I will.

SIMON: Ok, ok. I just wanted to ask how she was.

MIRJANA: Ok.

SIMON: That's all?

MIRJANA: She got an 'A' yesterday.

SIMON: Great! 'A' in what?

MIRJANA: Croatian.

SIMON: I used to write good essays. They published one of them.

MIRJANA: This was in grammar.

SIMON: Oh... I wasn't very good at grammar. Probably gets that from you.

MIRJANA: Probably.

SIMON: Here's Fani. She's just walked in.

MIRJANA: Say hello for me.

SIMON: I will later.

Silence.

MIRJANA: She doesn't know who you're talking to, does she?

SIMON: She went straight into the bedroom. Why would she be suspicious of this?

Silence.

MIRJANA: When did you stop loving her?

SIMON: Quite some time ago, now...

MIRJANA: Don't call me anymore, please.

SIMON: Mirjana....

MIRJANA: Please, Simon. Please.

Silence.

ANKICA: I'm here.

MIRJANA: Hey Ankica.

ANKICA: Has the banquet started yet?

MIRJANA: Not yet.

ANKICA: I brought the cake. Is there room in the fridge?

MIRJANA: We'll make some.

ANKICA: You're a darling, thank you.

MIRJANA: You look beautiful.

ANKICA: Thanks.

Silence.

ANKICA: Is my husband here yet?

MIRJANA: He's still in a meeting. There are some problems with the board and the ownership, but it's not a big deal. They'll be finished soon.

ANKICA: Right. Can I help with anything?

MIRJANA: You could fold some napkins.

ANKICA: Ok.

Ankica sits down. Grozdana enters.

MIRJANA: Grozdana, what are you doing here?

GROZDANA: I don't know, I just came along.

MIRJANA: Ankica, this is Grozdana.

ANKICA: Nice to meet you.

GROZDANA: You too.

MIRJANA: Take a seat.

The three women sit down.

ANKICA: Grozdana, you have beautiful shoes.

GROZDANA: Thanks. I don't wear them very often. They're ergonomic.

MIRJANA: Mine really hurt me.

GROZDANA: How's your 20-year-old baby Josip?

ANKICA: He's ok. You know, it's not easy living alone, and so far away, but he's managing somehow. He has his life and we have ours.

GROZDANA: And I have mine. It won't last long. Too bad really, it's a waste of a life.

MIRJANA: Don't worry about your life. It's important that you're ok.

ANKICA: That's what I say.

MIRJANA: Ankica, that cake looks wonderful.

ANKICA: It does, doesn't it?

GROZDANA: I can't seem to bake good fairy cakes at the moment.

ANKICA: You're young. You need more practice.

GROZDANA: But I've only got two years. I won't be able to get very good in that time. Shame.

MIRJANA: You can buy fairy cakes. There are loads of good brands, and they're cheap.

GROZDANA: My husband came home from work today. I was afraid he might leave me, but he was lovely. I even yelled at him but he didn't hold it against me. I do love him, have I said that?

MIRJANA: You haven't.

GROZDANA: I love him. I do. I don't need anything else but him. And he loves me. Less than I love him, but he loves me. The problem is, he also loves his Mum, that old, unfucked bitch. And that I will start to love him more and more and more.

ANKICA: You should know when to stop.

GROZDANA: Yes, but stupid me, I don't understand stopping.

MIRJANA: Oh, come on. Everything will be ok.

ANKICA: Mirjana, what are you going to do next?

MIRJANA: Me? I'm not going to do anything. I'm just going to live. They say life is a gift, but sooner or later you get bored of gifts. You don't know what to do with them, they end up in a drawer, or at the back of the wardrobe. You know what they say...

ANKICA: One should always air out the wardrobes.

GROZDANA: Yeah. You'll find all kinds of things in there.

ANKICA: Moths too.

MIRJANA: So, we've had a nice chat.

ANKICA: Yes, nice.

GROZDANA: Ankica, it's too bad that we don't know each other.

ANKICA: Yeah, pity. You're lovely. What did you say your name was?

GROZDANA: Grozdana.

ANKICA: Grozdana. It was a pleasure.

Silence.

VIOLETA: Mirjana?

MIRJANA: What are you doing here?

VIOLETA: I won't be long. I'm just here to tell you that I'm going to die today, around six.

MIRJANA: I beg your pardon?

VIOLETA: Yes. A stroke. In hospital.

Silence.

MIRJANA: They won't be able to save you?

VIOLETA: Unfortunately not. Poor people, they spent so much time trying to resuscitate me.

MIRJANA: When did you say, at six?

VIOLETA: Yes.

MIRJANA: That's just after this banquet. It'll be no use going home. I'll head to the hospital immediately.

VIOLETA: No need to hurry. They'll take care of me.

MIRJANA: Do they have my number?

VIOLETA: Don't worry. They'll find your number in my coat. Take your time, please.

MIRJANA: It's fine, it's no bother.

VIOLETA: So.

MIRJANA: I'm sorry.

VIOLETA: Me too. My sympathies.

MIRJANA: Thank you.

VIOLETA: Would you let dad know?

MIRJANA: Yes, of course. As soon as I find out you're dead.

VIOLETA: He'll probably want to come here.

MIRJANA: Definitely. I'll sleep on the couch.

VIOLETA: For the funeral... Can you wear something nice?

MIRJANA: I will, yes.

VIOLETA: And please, don't take the Communion.

MIRJANA: I know.

VIOLETA: You know how people are...

MIRJANA: Yes.

VIOLETA: Ok, so I have to go...

MIRJANA: Ok, thank you.

VIOLETA: For what?

MIRJANA: For giving birth to me.

VIOLETA: You're welcome...

MIRJANA: I love you, you know that, don't you?

VIOLETA: No.

MIRJANA: I love you, Mum. I'll cry when I find out.

VIOLETA: A lot?

MIRJANA: A lot. I'll howl. Passers by will help me get up.

VIOLETA: Thank you. I'm off.

MIRJANA: Ok, bye.

VIOLETA: Bye.

Silence.

Mirjana sits down on the chair. Veronika comes.

MIRJANA: Hey.

VERONIKA: So, it's true.

MIRJANA: Yes.

VERONIKA: Grozdana told me.

MIRJANA: She died three hours ago. Grandpa is on his way, he'll sleep over until the body's collected. I'll be on the couch.

VERONIKA: Have you been crying?

MIRJANA: Yes, I have been crying.

VERONIKA: I didn't cry when I found out.

MIRJANA: Never mind.

VERONIKA: I'll probably cry later.

MIRJANA: Do it if and when you feel like it.

VERONIKA: Ok.

MIRJANA: Have you eaten?

VERONIKA: Yeah, in the city. I think I want to go to bed. Is that ok?

MIRJANA: Are you tired?

VERONIKA: Yes.

MIRJANA: Ok, go.

VERONIKA: Ok. You won't be long, right?

MIRJANA: I don't think so.

Silence

MIRJANA: Veronika...

VERONIKA: Yes?

MIRJANA: Your Dad called. He said he did the bathroom tiles for a well-known German producer. He says this man's really nice and that a lot of people record with him. He and Fani have had lunch with him or something. If you want... Germany isn't America, but... Simon has a spare room and the holidays are coming up.

Silence.

VERONIKA: I'll see you in the morning. I'm not going to school tomorrow, am I?

Silence.

MIRJANA: Course not.

VERONIKA: Good night.

MIRJANA: Good night, love.

Mirjana is sitting alone. She takes a sip of coffee. Then, she adds some milk. She takes a pack of cigarettes and lights one up. She's smoking. There some soft music playing in the background.

She lives.



Jugoslavensko dramsko pozorište, Belgrade

THE END

ITI (International Theatre Institute) is an international autonomous professional organisation founded by UNESCO with the aim of advocating theatre cooperation among its members, promoting playwrights and their plays by translating them into foreign languages, organising public readings of dramatic texts and presenting writers and their opuses abroad. The world organisation of ITI today includes approximately a hundred national centres on all continents making it one of the most important NGOs in the field of performing arts.

This organisation initiated the celebration of theatre by inaugurating March 27 as World Theatre Day at the 9th ITI World Congress. This date has been celebrated since 1962.

Coinciding with World Theatre Day, the opening of the first theatre season of the Theatre of Nations took place in Paris the same year with the goal of gathering theatre productions world-wide demonstrating the richness of cultural diversity in the field of performing arts.

The most impressive list of renowned names from the theatre world is certainly the one featuring the authors of messages for World Theatre Day. It is enough to mention just a few: Jean Cocteau, Arthur Miller, Peter Brook, Eugène Ionesco, Laurence Olivier, Richard Burton, Ellen Stewart, Martin Esslin, Edward Albee, Vaclav Havel, Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Lepage, and Augusto Boal among others.

World Theatre Day is an occasion for theatre people to remind the public of the power of performing arts and artistic creation. It is at once an opportunity to develop a culture of diversity and understanding of people all over the world. The theme of the World Theatre Day message always relates to theatre and multicultural cooperation and is translated into over fifty languages each year. Besides the international message, some countries – including Croatia – have their own national message.

Theatres worldwide mark World Theatre Day in different ways: opening new theatre houses, publishing critical texts for the occasion, organising symposia and debates, broadcasting recordings of theatre productions, holding festivals, awarding distinguished artists. On this day, there are charity or free-admission performances in many countries.



THEATRE DAY IN CROATIA

The Croatian ITI Centre organises the distribution of the international and national message in Croatia in cooperation with the Croatian Association of Dramatic Artists (HDDU) by translating the international message and sending it to all theatres and media while HDDU chooses the author of the Croatian message. Both messages are dispatched to all theatres with the recommendation to read them prior to the shows either in their integral version or fragment form. The authors of the national message in recent years have included: Zlatko Vitez, actor and director, Elvis Bošnjak, actor and playwright, and Paolo Magelli, director.

WORLD DANCE DAY

The International Dance Committee operating within the frame of the International ITI initiated the marking of Dance Day by writing a dance message. The chosen date, April 29, is the birthday of Jean Georges Noverre, the father of contemporary ballet. Each year on this day the message from a renowned person from the dance world is dispatched worldwide. The message's authors so far have included: Robert Joffrey, Chetna Jalan, Merce Cunningham, Hans van Manen, Murray Louis, Maya Pliseckaya, Maurice Béjart, William Forsythe, Mats Eck, Sasha Waltz, Akram Khan.

The main idea behind Dance Day is that the public is reminded of the art of movement and the universality of dance language that surpasses political, cultural and ethnic barriers.

DANCE DAY IN CROATIA

Croatia joined the celebration of Dance Day in 1999 when the task of writing the national message was initiated by the informal dance group Llink!.

Ever since, Dance Day has been continuously marked in our country thus becoming an acknowledged and widely accepted event. In 2001 the Dance Committee of the Croatian ITI Centre took over the organisation of writing and distributing the national and international message across Croatia. On that day, national theatre houses as well as independent dance companies and groups strive

to perform dance pieces and read the international and national messages prior to the shows either in their integral version or fragment form. Our national message has been written by distinguished names of the Croatian dance scene such as Milko Šparemblek, Milana Broš, Sonja Kastl, Mirna Žagar, Irena Pasarić, Staša Zurovac, Almira Osmanović and Ivica Boban.



CROATIAN ITI CENTRE

The Croatian ITI Centre was founded in 1994 as a non-profit professional and volunteer organisation. Sanja Nikčević was elected its first President at the founding assembly. Since 2001 the head of the Centre is Željka Turčinović. Following several years of activities, the Centre has grown from a small organisation of theatre enthusiasts into a programmer of theatre projects (International Drama Colony, Motovun – *From Text to Performance*, Croatian Showcase, Foreign Drama and Theatre Days) and promoter of Croatian theatre and drama on the international level. As part of the promotion of theatre and dance, the Centre is the publisher of a series of publications in English (*Croatian Theatre*, *Theatres in Croatia*, *Shortcut to Croatian Dance*).

The Croatian ITI strives to be equally present on the international scene by organising round table discussions, symposia and meetings that raise hot issues of our theatre everyday life in an international context. It is also the publisher of the theatrological and drama series *Mansioni*, and the magazines *Theatre* (for theatre) and *Movements* (for dance art).

Members of the Centre take part in many international meetings while being actively involved in the highest bodies of the ITI organisation (Željka Turčinović – EXCOM, Executive Board of World ITI; International Dance Committee; Jasen Boko, President of the Playwrights' Forum; Želimir Mesarić, Theatre Education and Training Committee; Lary Zappia, Vice-President of the Dramatic Theatre Committee; Tajana Gašparović, Young Practitioners' Committee).

Thanks to Croatian ITI much information on Croatian theatre and drama has found its way to world theatre publications and magazines.

Since 2003 the organisation's office is located in the representative space of Villa Arko in Zagreb's historical Upper Town in Basaričekova Street 24. The space is shared with the Croatian Writers' Association and PEN while the villa's attic hosts the atelier of Zlatko Bourek.

MISSION

- Carrying out international cooperation and the promotion of Croatian theatre, drama and dance;
- Translating Croatian playwrights and introducing their texts through public readings;
- Inviting foreign selectors, programmers, directors, translators and theatre professionals to Croatia and enabling them to see the best theatre and dance productions;
- Striving for the visibility of Croatian theatre and playwrights on the European and world theatre map and making them sought after;
- Publishing promotional publications and magazines on Croatian theatre, drama and dance in world languages;
- Instigating the exchange of writers on the basis of reciprocity (mutual cooperation) so that both theatre milieus present their best writers and pieces;
- Being active, transparent and useful both internationally and nationally.

THE CENTRE'S STRUCTURE

Members of the Centre may be **individual** and **collective** (theatres, associations, organisations, festivals, dance companies...)

The President of the Centre is Željka Turčinović, dramaturge and editor of Croatian Radio's Drama Programme; the Expert Councillor is Tajana Gašparović, dramaturge and theatrologist; the Administrative Assistant is Dubravka Čukman.

The Centre has a Dance Board, established in July 2000, with Executive Secretary Maja Đurinović and Honorary President Milana Broš. The Board presents a stronghold and logistical support to dance companies and projects as a source of information and an outlet for joining dance touring networks. The Board has supported tours of our ensembles to Mexico (Liberdance), Peru (Contemporary Dance Studio) and Cyprus (Dance Theatre Tala). The Dance Board is also the initiator of the dance art magazine *Movements*, promotional publications and the book series *Movements* that features dance theory through the Dance Studies edition and dance critique through the Small Hall (Mala dvorana) edition.



EXECUTIVE AND SUPERVISING BOARD

Executive Board – Relja Bašić, Marija Sekelez, Ozren Prohić, Zoran Mužić, Želimir Mesarić

Supervising Board – Katja Šimunić (President), Urša Raukar, Dubravka Vrgoč, Hrvoje Ivanković, Radovan Marčić

PROGRAMMES REALISED IN 2008

FIRST MEETING OF ITI MEDITERRANEAN CENTRES, April 2008

The first meeting of the ITI Mediterranean centres was held in Turin, Italy, at the initiative and in the organisation of the Italian ITI, with participants from Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Greece, Lebanon, Palestine, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Croatia represented by Lary Zappia. The meeting primarily focused on the issues of the organisation of theatres in the countries of the Mediterranean region. That is why the main schedule allowed for two full days of presentations of individual national centres with particular emphasis on their economical and organisational specifics. The Turin meeting was also an occasion to support the establishing of centres in those Mediterranean countries without such centres and where their theatre professionals have expressed the desire for this kind of cooperation.

The hosts expanded the basic programme with a rich cultural offering whereby the gathered delegates could view three theatre performances each day ranging from informal groups to established state theatres. In conclusion, it was agreed that the coordination of the Mediterranean centres would be taken over by the Italian centre and that the national centres should directly contact it.

PROMOTION OF CROATIAN DRAMATISTS IN THE WORLD

PRESENTATION OF CROATIAN DRAMATISTS IN HEIDELBERG, May 2008

Thanks to the international activity of the Croatian ITI Centre through the programme "Croatian Showcase", Croatia was chosen as the special guest at the prestigious German festival **Heidelberg Stuckemarkt** that was held from May 3-10, 2008 in Heidelberg.



The staged readings presented three plays by Croatian contemporary dramatists – Tena Štivičić and her play *Fragile*, Mate Matišić's *Woman Without a Body* and Elvis Bošnjak's *Spoons and Razors*. Jagoda Marinić, renowned German writer of Croatian origin, moderated the meeting with the audience and German theatre professionals entitled *Croatian Drama and Theatre*. The participants in the conversation included Tena Štivičić, Elvis Bošnjak, Željka Turčinović and Dubravka Vrgoč. Our writers won three out of four possible awards. Tena Štivičić won two Jury Awards namely for Best Play and Innovation in Dramatic Writing, whereas Mate Matišić won the Audience Award.

Three Croatian theatre productions were featured at the festival: *The Door Next to...* by Rene Medvešek, *On the Other Side* by Nataša Rajković and Bobo Jelčić, both produced by the Zagreb Youth Theatre, and *Parachutists* by Ivica Šimić, produced by Small Scene (Mala Scena).

PRESENTATION OF MATE MATIŠIĆ IN RUSSIA

Drama Colony Fateevo, June 2008

The Russian drama colony is a manifestation similar to the programme organised by the Croatian ITI Centre – International Drama Colony *From Text to Performance* – that has been taking place for the past 11 years the first week of July in the Istrian town of Motovun.

The Croatian ITI Centre's representative was Tajana Gašparović, who used her stay in Russia to make a comparison of the two colonies and seek the possibility for the exchange of experiences and ideas.

This year's guest at the Russian colony was Croatia, represented by Mate Matišić's text *Woman Without a Body*, translated by Larisa Saveliyeva. Following the production of Matišić's play, a discussion with the audience took place. Members of the audience had many interesting questions while Tajana Gašparović spoke of Croatian contemporary dramatic production little known to Russian theatre professionals.

Attending such manifestations always proves to be useful as in addition to the presentations it offers the possibility of making contacts and obtaining information on contemporary Russian dramatic production, which will result in the participation of one Russian playwright in our Motovun colony next year.

Theatrologist Hrvoje Ivanković wrote a text entitled *Croatian Directors of Younger and Mid-Generation – Between Text and Concept* for the prestigious publication of German publisher **Theater der Zeit**. The text was translated into German by writer Jagoda Marinić.



Croatian dramatist **Ivana Sajko** was presented at the **Festival of European Dramatic Production** in September 2008 in Chile with two of her texts: *Woman-Bomb* and *Europa*. As in previous years, a staged reading was organised with professional directors and actors followed by a public discussion about the situation in our theatre. The feedback to the Festival was very successful and Ivana Sajko's plays have been translated into Spanish and often produced by student theatres.



MEETING OF ITI'S STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

Tobias Biancone first appeared as the new Secretary General at the EXCOM meeting in Bangladesh in February 2008. He presented his plan for the modernisation and operational improvement of world ITI. Concerning this, he proposed the founding of a Strategic Planning Group. Željka Turčinović was elected to this working group while the Croatian ITI Centre hosted members of this group in Zagreb.

The meeting took place from June 20-23, 2008. The guests to our city included Tobias Biancone, Secretary General of World ITI (Switzerland), Raija Sinikka Rantala, Artistic Director of World ITI (Finland), Emilya Cachapero (USA), Cristoph Hearing (Switzerland) and Željka Turčinović (Croatia).

The themes of the working meeting included: defining the mission of ITI in modern society; basic values that ITI should promote in each moment and situation as well as the vision of work, functioning and organisation goals.

All these themes were applied to the activities of the four vital segments of ITI's structure, namely: the activities and functioning of the Congress, national centres, expert committees, Executive Board and Paris headquarters. The meeting in Zagreb resulted in the outlining of the needs and themes which should be analysed and tackled. The work continued in Madrid and Nanjing.

INTERNATIONAL DRAMA COLONY – From Text to Performance, Motovun, June 29 – July 6, 2008

The International Drama Colony *From Text to Performance* (first held in 1999) took place the first week of July in Motovun. Organised by the Croatian ITI Centre in cooperation with national centres, the Colony has grown in the past few years into an intriguing, useful and relevant programme of presenting local and foreign playwrights.

The main idea and goal behind the launching of the Colony were the assessment of new foreign and domestic dramatic texts in affordable economic conditions as well as the establishment of cooperation between Croatia and other countries through an exchange of playwrights and plays.

The main task of the Colony is to work on staging the text and assessing its scenic qualities. The results of this work are presented in the form of staged readings, without costumes or sets. Actors hold the script in their hands, the characters and their mutual relations are defined and elaborated and the overall work may be labelled as a "workshop" in which the process is more important than the result of working on the text on the route from literary to theatre text. The participants of the Colony are professional actors and directors as well as students of acting from artistic and drama schools in Croatia.

One of the goals of the Colony is to establish reciprocity i.e. the exchange of writers and directors. By taking part in the Colony, foreign partners strive to enable the presentation of a Croatian author and his/her play in his/her country under the same conditions that the Croatian ITI Centre has provided for staging the foreign play in Croatia. Reciprocity has thus far been realised with the USA, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Mexico, India, Greece, Chile and Belgium.



As with the previous ones, the tenth jubilee Colony lasted for seven days and the last day, July 5, was reserved for public presentations of "drama workshops" on the impressive ambivalent "stages" of medieval Motovun. As it was an anniversary year, the plan was to stage four texts – the largest number to date – but this did not work out as the Croatian team had to cancel for objective reasons (illness). The programme consisted of three staged readings:

BELGIUM

Ariane Buhbinder: WHERE DID MOZART DISAPPEAR?

Translated from French by: MILENA BEKIĆ MILINOVIĆ

Directed by: FILIP POVREŽENIĆ

Actors: PETRA TEŽAK, ANTONIJO FRANIĆ

ITALY

Ugo Chiti: THEY

Translated from Italian by: IVA GRGIĆ

Directed by: NENNI DELMESTRE

Actors: ZDENKO BOTIĆ, GORAN SMOLJANOVIĆ

SWEDEN

Sofia Freden: HAND IN HAND

Translated from English by: STEPHANIE JAMNICKY

Directed by: TEA GJERGIZI AGEJEV

Actors: ANA GRUICA, MATEA ELEZOVIĆ, MARTIJA KAČAN, MARKO PETRIĆ, DUJE GRUBIŠIĆ, NIKŠA ARČANIN

Playwrights took part in the work of the Colony thus contributing to the synergy of working on the text and theatre practice. This year, students from the Art Academy in Split participated in the Colony.

32nd ITI WORLD CONGRESS, MADRID, September 24-30, 2008

This year's congress was hosted by the Spanish ITI Centre, which apart from the working sessions of the Assembly also organised the accompanying programme with interesting theatre shows as well as the World ITI Board meetings. A meeting of the European centres was also held.

A new book **World of Theatre** was published for this occasion featuring a collection of texts on the recent theatre situation in each ITI member country. The book is highly useful as it is a theatre guide through the theatre life of a country, especially when it comes to lesser known countries on the world theatre map.

ITI's new brochure and new web pages were also presented. Unlike the previous website, the new pages are modern, clear and articulate. Also, the results of the monodrama competition organised by the Playwrights' Forum were announced along with the winner of the Uchimura Prize traditionally awarded by the Japanese ITI Centre.

The voting for the new Executive ITI Board took place on the second day. The Board consists of 20 members and the President of the Croatian ITI Centre, Željka Turčinović, is one of its elected members.

Our delegation included 6 members: Želimir Mesarić, Tajana Gašparović, Darko Lukić, Vitomira Lončar, Jasen Boko and Željka Turčinović.

All the members were active in the work of their respective committees. Jasen Boko was elected President of the Playwrights' Forum while Vitomira Lončar was Executive Producer of a new project by the New Project Group directed by Ivica Šimić. The project was exceptionally well received and presented twice at the Congress while the second show was attended by members of the Croatian Embassy in Spain along with Ambassador Filip Vrčeka who organised a cocktail with Croatian specialities after the show. The event left a very good impression and ITI's President, Manfred Beilhartz, expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador and to Croatia.

Apart from the official part of the Congress, members of our delegation talked to various participants about possible cooperation modes between Croatia and other countries. The delegation rounded up their task of promoting Croatian theatre, drama and dance by dispatching publications in English.

4th CROATIAN SHOWCASE, November 6-10, 2008

In 2005 we began with a new programme called **Croatian Showcase** which is a review of the best Croatian theatre performances in our selection presented to foreign theatre professionals over a five-day period. Since Croatia as a theatre country is fairly unknown on an international scale, we felt there was a need for such a manifestation that could be handled by us production-wise. Although the phenomenon of showcase is well-known throughout the world, it is mostly organised in theatrically unknown countries with small languages (Sweden, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Russia etc.). The name is a synonym for a window, a display in which the merchandise is being shown – in our case, these are theatre performances. One of the important goals was to invite theatre critics, festival programmers, directors of theatres, teatrologists, translators and writers who would become acquainted with Croatian theatre through watching the selected performances and write about them, invite them to festivals, translate our texts and include them in the repertoire of foreign theatre houses. Apart from the performances, we organise talks with author teams and actors, playwrights and all those from theatre practice that show an interest in presenting their work to our guests. We offer Croatian dramatic texts to be translated into foreign languages and the establishing of a network of collaborators who could or would want to promote our theatre at home. All selected performances are presented with English subtitles.



GUESTS:

JEAN-PIERRE THIBAUDAT, Paris, France, Artistic Director,
Festival Passages (Nancy-Metz)

ILZE RUDZITE-OLINGER, Riga, Latvia, Programme Councillor
of International Festival of Contemporary Theatre HOMO
NOVUS

TARIK GUNERSEL, Istanbul, Turkey, Chief Dramaturge of City
Theatre in Istanbul, writer and translator

FUSUN GUNERSEL, Istanbul, Turkey, Translator

ELENA KONDOYANIDI, Ufa, Russia, Artistic Director of Russian
Dramatic Theatre in Bashkortostan

KSENIA DRAGUNSKAYA, Moscow, Russia, Playwright

IRENE GIRKINGER, Vienna, Austria, Artistic advisor,
Volkstheater Vienna

HERIETTA HULTEN, Stockholm, Sweden,
Dramaturge

LARISSA SAVELIYEVA, Moscow,
Russia, Translator

SUSSANNE ABBREderis, Volkstheater,
Vienna, Theatre dramaturge

MARIO BRANDOLIN, Mittelfest, Cividale
del Friuli, Artistic advisor

DEEGAN LOUGHLIN, Dublin Theatre
Festival, Dublin, Artistic director

ANNA GARLICKA, Poland, Director of
Festival Kontrapunkt

NEMANJA JOVANOVIĆ, Serbia, Actor,
Užice National Theatre

HEDDA KAGE, Member of German ITI
Centre, Founder of Theater and Media
Association Latin America (TMG),
Germany

NATASHA KOLEVSKA-KURTEVA, Bulgaria,
Dramaturge, festival director

ANDREJA KOPAČ, Slovenia, Theatre critic
for "Maska" magazine

BOJAN MILOSAVLJEVIĆ, Serbia, Director

RANKOVIĆ NEMANJA, Serbia, Artistic
director, Užice National Theatre

DIANA SELECKA, Slovakia

AOIFE SPILLANE HINKS, Ireland, Artistic
director, SEEDS

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

Gorica Theatre
B. M. Koltes: *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*
– *DRUNKEN TRIAL*, director – Ivica Buljan

SHADOW CASTERS
VACATION FROM HISTORY – co-authored
Bakal/Pejović/actors

Exit Theatre
COWBOYS, author and director – Saša Anočić

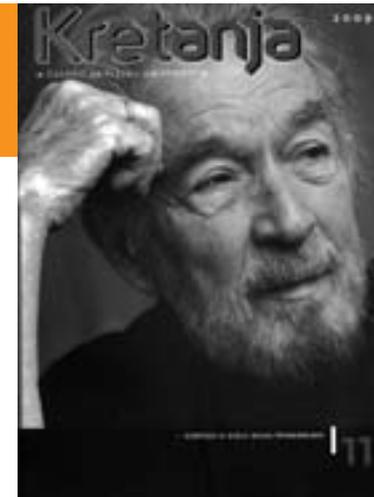
Zagreb Youth Theatre
EXCUSE ME, CAN I TELL YOU...?, director – Anica
Tomić

Exit Theatre
WESTERN RAILWAY STATION, director – Ksenija Zec

Puppet Theatre Rijeka
W. Shakespeare – L. Zappia: *ROMEO (AND JULI-
ETTE)*, director – Lary Zappia

Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, Rijeka
TURBOFOLK, author and director – Oliver Frljić

Zagreb Youth Theatre
Tena Štivičić: *FIREFLIES*, director – Janusz Kica



SYMPOSIUM ON THE OPUS OF MILKO ŠPAREMBLEK, December 2008

The editorial board of the magazine *Movements* (Maja Đurinović, Iva Nerina Sibila, Katja Šimunić and Željka Turčinović) initiated and organised a symposium on the opus of Milko Šparemblek on the occasion of the artist's 80th birthday. The symposium was held on his birthday, December 1, 2008 in the foyer of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb.

The participants of the symposium included dance critics, dramaturges, set designers, teatrologists, dancers, costume designers – people who were part of Šparemblek's creative team throughout his long and fruitful career or those who have followed his work as experts or are fans of his opus. The symposium resulted in a number of interesting phenomenological essays on various areas of his work (ballet, contemporary dance, film, television, TV and theatre choreography, Šparemblek's philosophy and aesthetics...) published in the magazine for dance art *Movements*, No. 11/2009.

PROGRAMMES REALISED IN 2009

INTERNATIONAL DRAMA COLONY, From Text to Performance, Motovun, July 2009

PARTICIPANTS

RUSSIA

Viktorija Nikiforova: HIDDEN EXPENSES

Translated from Russian by: IRENA LUKŠIĆ

Directed by: MATKO RAGUŽ

Actors: MARIJA TADIĆ, CSILLA BARATH BASTAIĆ, ANA VILENICA, MIA BIONDIĆ, DAMIR KLEMENIĆ, DAMIR ŠABAN, BRANIMIR VIDIĆ

CROATIA

Diana Meheik, THE ROSE OF JERICO

Directed by: ANICA TOMIĆ

Actors: ASJA JOVANOVIĆ, NIKA MIŠKOVIĆ, IVANA KRIZMANIĆ, ŠIŠKO HORVAT MAJCAN, IGOR KOVAČ



5th CROATIAN SHOWCASE, November 2009

GUESTS:

KSENIA DRAGUNSKAYA, Russia, Playwright

NINA KIRALY, Hungary, Coordinator of international projects for Europe

MANFRED BEILHARZ, Germany, Artistic Director, New plays from Europe, Wiesbaden

EVA MAARIKA SCHMITZ, Germany, Artistic Advisor, Stage Festival, Helsinki

SARA ELLSTROM, Sweden, Producer

ANDEA PUČNIK DANTY, France, Translator

ANGELINA GEORGIEVA, Bulgaria, Producer, Summer Festival, Varna

OLGA LYSAK, Russia, Director

FABIO TOLLEDI, Italy, Director of Astragali Theatre

ANDREJA KOPAČ, Slovenia, Theatre critic, Maska Ljubljana

PROGRAM OF THE SHOWCASE 2009.

Filip Šovagović: ILLIAD 2001, directed by Filip Šovagović, Gavella Drama Theatre

COWBOYS, author & director Saša Anočić, Exit Theatre

N. d'Introna – G. Ravicchio: NO, FRIEND! Directed by Rene Medvešek, Cherry City Theatre

Nina Mitrović, Filip Šovagović, Ivan Vidić,



Damir Karakaš, Igor Rajki: ZAGREB PENTAGRAM, directed by Paolo Magelli, Zagreb Youth Theatre

Diana Meheik: JERICO ROSE, directed by Anica Tomić, International Drama Colony produced by Croatian ITI

PROCESS_CITY 01, Vacation From History, author of the Concept and Director, Boris Bakal, Shadow Casters

EXCUSE ME, CAN I TELL YOU...? Directed by Anica Tomić, Zagreb Youth Theatre

N. Rajković – B. Jelčić: ON THE OTHER SIDE, directed by Bobo Jelčić, Zagreb Youth Theatre

R. Damonte Copi: EVITA, directed by Senka Bulić, Hotel Bulić

N. Manojlović & Gordan Tudor: THE PLUMBER, &TD Theatre and Musical Biennale Zagreb

PROMOTION OF CROATIAN DRAMATISTS
FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN
DRAMA – Santiago de Chile,
August 21 – September 5, 2009

Lana Šarić and Ivor Martinić, Croatian playwrights of the younger generation, took part in the Festival of European Drama in Chile with their plays that the Croatian ITI Centre translated into Spanish for this occasion.

Lana Šarić presented her play *Skyscraper* and Ivor Martinić his play *Here Stands the Title of the Play about Ante*. The plays were translated by Lina Vengochea, literary translator and Spanish native speaker.

The festival featured plays of contemporary European playwrights from eight countries presented through staged readings in order to familiarise the Chilean public and interested audiences with them.

Lana Šarić's play *Skyscraper* was presented in the form of a "semi-montage" – a term signifying an almost finished theatre performance. Director Ricardo Balic worked for a month on this text with a crew of professional actors.

The text was performed on August 28 and September 4. The first show was followed by a discussion with the audience and the creative team including the playwright who was present at the premiere. The discussion touched on the issues of text, interpretation but also Croatian drama and theatre.

Ivor Martinić's play *Here Stands the Title of*



The play *about Ante* was presented through a staged reading directed by Heidrun Breier. A discussion with the author and the creative team of the performance was held following the reading.

In addition to this, the authors took part in a lecture organised by the Theatre Department of the Chilean Catholic University, which presented Croatian theatre and drama literature through a public debate and discussion with students and the authors. They also took part in a discussion with Chilean directors at the French Cultural Institute.

The festival was an extraordinary occasion to promote European texts in Latin American countries as well as an opportunity for the international public to become acquainted with Croatian literature, authors and theatre art. There remains the hope that the presentation of those two plays will serve as a springboard for possible stagings in some of the countries.

The programme of the presentation of our writers in Chile was organised by the Croatian ITI Centre in collaboration with the Croatian Embassy in Chile.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUNG AUDIENCES, Brussels, November 16-21, 2009

The staged reading of the play *Here Stands the Title of the Play about Ante* by Ivor Martinić was successfully realised twice within the framework of the International Children's and Youth Theatre Festival that was held during the 7th Festival international de jeunes publics from November 11-28 in Brussels. This event took place through the cooperation of the Croatian and Belgian ITI Centres as part of an exchange with the International Drama Colony *From Text to Performance* held every summer in Motovun. The Colony is organised by the Croatian ITI and in 2008 featured the site-specific staged reading of the play *Where Did Mozart Disappear?* by Belgian playwright Ariane Buhbinder.

The guests of the festival in Belgium were Ivor Martinić and Tajana Gašparović. Following the staged reading there was a discussion on Croatian contemporary playwriting.

One of the results of appearing at the festival is that *Lansman*, one of the largest Belgian publishers of theatre editions, has decided to publish Martinić's play translated into French in March 2010.

Additionally, Tajana Gašparović and Ivor Martinić had the opportunity to meet numerous distinguished theatre people who could be potential guests of the Croatian Theatre Showcase (organised by the Croatian ITI Centre) with the fact being that foreign guests are more willing to come if personal contact was previously established with them.

PUBLICATIONS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS

Publisher: Croatian ITI Centre

The Croatian ITI Centre has a rich publishing record both in Croatian and English. Issues are published once a year and play the role of promoters of Croatian drama, theatre and dance. During this year we have published the following titles:

Shortcut to Croatian Dance 2008 (in English)

Editors: Iva Nerina Sibila, Maja Đurinović, Katja Šimunić, Željka Turčinović

Published by the Dance Committee of the Croatian ITI Centre and following the Croatian and English editions of Magazine for dance art *Kretanja/Movements* and *Guide to Croatian Dance*, this publication provides an insiders' view of the current dance scene. The first part consists of five essays by eminent dance and theatre writers on some of the most interesting productions. The second part is a catalogue of the entire professional dance scene.



Magazine for Theatre Art *Theatre*

Editor-in-Chief: Željka Turčinović



Magazine for Dance Art *Movements*

Editor-in-Chief: Iva Nerina Sibila



THE MANSIONI SERIES

In the fifteen years of its existence, with an ample scope of interests connected to theatrological studies, dramatic texts, theatre travelogues, essays and biographical writings, the series "Mansioni" has profiled and established itself as one of the most important Croatian theatrological series. The publications in this series feature both domestic and foreign authors; besides books in Croatian, translations of plays by Croatian dramatists are published in foreign languages with the aim of promoting Croatian drama abroad.

The Editor-in-Chief is Željka Turčinović with guest-editors being hired for individual editions.

PUBLISHED (1994-2009)

THEATROLOGY

Marvin Carlson: *Theories of the Theatre 1*, 1996

Boris Senker: *Croatian Dramatists in their Theatre*, 1996

Nikola Đuretić: *Theatre Travelogues and Milestones*, 1996

Marvin Carlson: *Theories of the Theatre 2*, 1997

Marvin Carlson: *Theories of the Theatre 3*, 1997

Manfred Pfister: *Drama*, 1998

Đurđa Škavić: *The Glossary of Croatian Theatre*, 1999

Antonin Artaud: *The Theatre and its Double*, 2000

Vinko Grubišić: *Artaud*, 2000

Acija Alfirević: *The Australian New Wave*, 2000

Sibila Petlevski: *Symptoms of Dramatic Postmodernity*, 2000

Peter Szondi: *The Theory of Modern Drama 1880-1950*, 2001

Antonija Bogner-Šaban: *The Return to No-Return*, 2001

Adriana Car-Mihec: *The Diary of Three Genres*, 2003

Sanja Nikčević: *Affirmative American Drama or Long Live the Puritans*, 2003

Peter Brook: *Threads of Time*, 2003

Sanja Ivić: *Sturgeons of Second-Rate Freshness*, 2004

Mikhail Chekhov: *To the Actor - On the Technique of Acting*, 2004

Branko Hećimović: *In Theatre's Embrace*, 2004

Gordana Muzaferija: *The Theatre Plays of Miro Gavran*, 2005

Joseph R. Roach: *The Players' Passion*, 2005

Darko Lukić: *The Production and Marketing of Performing Arts*, 2006

Mirella Schino: *The Theatre of Eleonora Duse*, 2007

Sibila Petlevski: *Drama and Time*, 2007

Miljenko Foretić: *Theatre in Dubrovnik*, 2008



PLAYS

Author group GONG: *Repeated Prophecy of Cracks*, 1994

Miro Gavran: *Droll Pieces*, 1996

Davor Špišić: *Foreplays*, 1996

Borislav Vujčić: *White Tragedies*, 1997

Davor Špišić: *Paradise With No Closing Time*, 2001

Ivan Vidić: *Plays*, 2002

Mate Matišić: *Post Mortem Trilogy*, 2006

Feda Šehović: *Comedies and Dramas*, 2009

ANTHOLOGIES

Irena Lukšić: *The Anthology of Russian Dissident Drama*, 1998

Ian Brown: *The Anthology of Contemporary Scottish Drama*, 1999

Borislav Pavlovski: *The Anthology of New Macedonian Drama*, 2000

Sead Muhamedagić: *The Anthology of New Austrian Drama*, 2002

Contemporary Italian Drama-selected authors (edited by Mario Mattia Giorgetti), 2003

Franciska Čurković-Major: *New Hungarian Drama*, 2005

Ivica Buljan: *The Anthology of New French Drama*, 2006

The Anthology of New Czech Drama (edited by Kamila Černa), 2009

TRANSLATIONS OF CROATIAN DRAMA

Tomislav Bakarić: *La muerte de Stjepan Radić* (The Death of Stjepan Radić - Spanish), 1998

Maja Gregl: *The Loves of Alma Mahler/ Die Lieben der Alma Mahler* (Croatian/German), 1999

Mislav Brumec: *Smrt Ligeje/Death of Ligeia* (Croatian/English), 2000

Tomislav Durbešić: *Drames Choisis* (Selected Plays - French), 2002

Different Voices - Eight Contemporary Croatian Plays (English, edited by Boris Senker), 2003

Lada Kaštelan: *Prije sna/ Before Sleep*, 2007

The **Movements** series was launched in 2009 as a natural continuation of the publishing activities of the magazine *Movements*. It is presented in two sub-editions: **Dance Studies** featuring dance theory and **Small Hall** (Mala dvorana) featuring theatre critique and dance.

The Editor-in-Chief of the series is Iva Nerina Sibila and guest editors are invited to contribute to individual publications as needed.

Edition: Dance Studies

Laurence Louppe: POETICS OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Edition: Small Hall

Tuga Tarle: DANCE REVIEWS



info addresses

THEATRE ASSOCIATIONS

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(Hrvatski centar ASSITEJ)

International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People

Association Internationale du Théâtre Pour L'enfance et la Jeunesse

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Web page: www.assitej.hr

President: Romano Bogdan

CROATIAN CENTRE OF UNIMA

(Hrvatski centar UNIMA)

International Puppeteers Union

Union Internationale de la Marionnette

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Web page: www.danceweekfestival.com

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Web page: www.hdpisaca.org

President: Velimir Visković

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FRACTION, Magazine for Performing Arts

(Frakcija, magazin za izvedbene umjetnosti)
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LUKA, Magazine for Puppet Theatre

(Luka, revija za lutkarsko kazalište)
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MOVEMENTS, Magazine for Dance Art

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Director: Stéphane Ré

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THEATRES

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ZAGREB PUPPET THEATRE

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ITD THEATRE

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EXIT THEATRE

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Web page: www.teatarexit.hr
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SMALL STAGE THEATRE

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Manager: Saša Gregurić

CHILDREN'S THEATRE DUBRAVA

(Dječje kazalište Dubrava)
Cerska 1, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 2050 030 Fax: +385 1 2910 487
E-mail: ns-dubrava@ns-dubrava.hr
Web page: www.ns-dubrava.hr
Artistic Director: Leo Vukelić

KUFER

Tuškanac 24, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
E-mail: frankaper@inet.hr
Artistic directors: Franka Perković & Dora Ruždjak
Podolski,

TEATAR RUGANTINO

Ivana Rangera 2, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 1 3700 638
E-mail: rugantino@zg.t-com.hr
Web page: www.rugantino.hr
Artistic director: Ivica Vidović
Manager: Gordana Gadžić

TEATAR GAVRAN

Dugi dol 58c, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 1234 6068
E-mail: info@teatar-gavran.hr
Web page: www.teatar-gavran.hr
Manager: Mladena Gavran
Artistic Director: Miro Gavran

DUBROVNIK**MARIN DRŽIĆ THEATRE**

(Kazalište Marina Držića)
Kovačka 1, 20000 Dubrovnik, Croatia
Tel: +385 20 321 420; Fax: +385 20321 071
E-mail: kmd@du.t-com.hr
Web page: www.kazaliste-dubrovnik.hr
Artistic Director: Jasna Jukić

KARLOVAC**CITY THEATRE ZORA'S HOUSE**

(Gradsko kazalište Zorin dom)
Domobrnska 1, 47000 Karlovac, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 47 614950
E-mail: ravnatelj@zorin-dom.hr
Web page: www.zorin-dom.hr
Manager: Zvonimir Iljić

OSIJEK**CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN OSIJEK**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Osijeku)
Županijska 9, 31000 Osijek, Croatia
Tel: +385 31 220 700; Fax: +385 31 220 734
E-mail: drama@hnk-osijek.hr
Web page: www.hnk-osijek.hr
Intendant: Božidar Šnajder

CHILDREN'S THEATRE BRANKO MIHALJEVIĆ

(Dječje kazalište Branka Mihaljevića u Osijeku)
Trg bana Jelačića 19, 31000 Osijek, Croatia
Tel: +385 31 501 485 Fax: +385 31 501 488
E-mail: djecje.kazaliste@os.t-com.hr
Web page: www.djecje-kazaliste.hr
Manager: Jasminka Mesarić

POŽEGA**POŽEGA CITY THEATRE**

(Gradsko kazalište Požega)
Trg Sv. Trojstva 20, 34000 Požega, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 34 273 161
E-mail: gradsko.kazaliste@gmail.com
Web page: www.gkp.hr
Manager: Tomislav Čmelar

PULA**ISTRIAN NATIONAL THEATRE**

(Istarsko narodno kazalište)
Matka Laginja 5, 52100 Pula, Croatia
Tel: +385 52 212 677; Fax: +385 52 214 303
E-mail: ink@ink.hr
Web page: www.ink.hr
Manager: Gordana Jeromela Kaić

RIJEKA**CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE "IVAN PL. ZAJC"**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Ivana pl. Zajca, drama, opera, balet, Talijanska drama)
Uljarska ulica 1, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia
Tel: +385 51 355 924; Fax: +385 51 355 923
E-mail: zajc@hnk-zajc.hr
hrvatska-drama@hnk-zajc.hr
Web page: www.hnk-zajc.hr
Artistic Director of Drama: Žarko Radić
Intendant: Nada Matošević

RIJEKA CITY PUPPET THEATRE

(Gradsko kazalište lutaka, Rijeka)
Blaža Polića 6, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia
Tel: +385 51325 680; Fax: +385 51 325 691
E-mail: gradsko-kazaliste-lutaka@ri.t-com.hr
Web page: www.gkl-rijeka.hr
Artistic director: Zrinka Kolak Fabijan

HKD THEATRE

(HKD teatar)
Strossmayerova 1, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia
Tel: +385 51377 327; Fax: +385 51 377 328

E-mail: hkd.mfms@ri.t-com.hr
Web page: www.hkd-teatar.com
Artistic director: Nenad Šegvić

SPLIT**CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN SPLIT**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Split- drama, opera, balet)
Trg Gaje Bulata 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 344 999; Fax: +385 21 306 911
E-mail: hnk-split@st.t-com.hr
E-mail: drama@hnk-split.hr
Web page: www.hnk-split.hr
Artistic Director of Drama: Dubravka Lampalov
Intendant: Milan Štrljčić

SPLIT CITY YOUTH THEATRE

(Gradsko kazalište mladih Split)
Trg Republike 1/1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 344 97; Fax: +385 21 321 258
E-mail: propaganda@gkm.hr
Web page: www.gkm.hr
Manager: Ljubica Srhoj

SPLIT CITY PUPPET THEATRE

(Gradsko kazalište lutaka Split)
Tončićeva 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 395 958; Fax: +385 21 394 714
E-mail: gradsko-kazaliste-lutaka@st.t-com.hr
Web page: www.gkl-split.hr
Artistic Director: Zdenka Mišura

ŠIBENIK**ŠIBENIK THEATRE**

(Šibensko kazalište)
Ulica kralja Zvonimira 1, 22000 Šibenik, Croatia
Tel: +385 22 213 123; Fax: +385 22 212 134
E-mail: sibensko.kazaliste@sibensko-kazaliste.hr
Web page: www.sibensko-kazaliste.hr
Manager: Dragan Zlatović

VARAŽDIN**CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN VARAŽDIN**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Varaždinu)
Cesarčeva 1, 42000 Varaždin, Croatia
Tel: +385 42 214 688 Fax: +385 42 211 218
E-mail: hnkqvz@hkvz.hr
Web page: www.hnkqvz.hr
Manager: Jasna Jakovljević

VIROVITICA

VIROVITICA THEATRE

(Kazalište Virovitica)
Trg Ljudevita Patačića 2, 33000 Virovitica, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 33 721 330; 725 220
E-mail: kazalistevirovitica@vt.t-com.hr
Web page: www.kazalistevirovitica.hr
Manager: Miran Hajoš

ZADAR

ZADAR PUPPET THEATRE

(Kazalište lutaka Zadar)
Sokolska 1, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: +385 23 212 754; Fax: +385 23 311 122
E-mail: klz@klz.hr
Web page: www.klz.hr
Manager: Iris Pavić Tumpa

CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN ZADAR

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Zadru)
Široka ulica 8, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: +385 23 314 586; Fax: +385 23 314 590
E-mail: hkk-zd@zd.t-com.hr
Web page: www.hkk-zadar.hr
Manager: Renato Švorinić

CROATIAN THEATRES ABROAD

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN MOSTAR

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Mostaru)
Trg hrvatskih velikana bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 310 506
E-mail: hnkmo@tel.net.ba
Web page: www.tel.net.ba/hnkmo
Intendant: Ivan Ovčar

HUNGARY

CROATIAN THEATRE IN PECS

(Hrvatsko kazalište u Pečuhu)
Anna 17, H-7621 Pecs, Hungary
Tel: +36 72 514 300; Fax: +36 72 210 197
E-mail: phsz@freemail.hu
Web page: www.horvatzsinhaz.hu
Artistic director: Antun Vidaković

FESTIVALS

MARUL'S DAYS, SPLIT (Festival of Croatian Drama)

(Marulićevi dani, Split: Festival hrvatske drame)
Trg Gaje Bulata 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 344 999; Fax: +385 21 306 911
E-mail: hnk-split@hnk-split.hr
Web: www.hnk-split.hr
Manager: Milan Štrljčić
Selector: Nenni Delmestre
Time Held: April

FESTIVAL RIJEKA

(Međunarodni festival malih scena Rijeka)
HKD Teatar, Korzo 16/2, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia
Tel: +385 51 377 327; Fax: +385 51 377 328
E-mail: hkd.mfms@ri.t-com.hr
Web: www.theatrefestival-rijeka.hr
Manager: Nenad Šegvić
Selector: Jasen Boko
Time Held: May

ACTOR'S FESTIVAL, VINKOVCI

(Festival glumca, Vinkovci)
c/o HDDU, Amruševa 19, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4920 717 Fax: +385 1 4920 718
E-mail: hddu@hddu.hr
Web: www.hddu.hr
Selector: Ivo Gregurević
Time Held: May

DAYS OF SATIRE, ZAGREB

(Dani satire, Zagreb)
Ilica 31, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4833 354; Fax: +385 1 4833 348
E-mail: kerempuh@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.kazalistekerempuh.hr
Manager: Duško Ljuština
Selector: Hrvoje Ivanković
Time Held: June

EUROKAZ, ZAGREB (Festival of New Theatre)

Eurokaz, Zagreb (Festival novog kazališta)
Dežmanov prolaz 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4847 856; Fax: +385 1 4854 424
E-mail: eurokaz@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.eurokaz.hr
Artistic Director: Gordana Vnuk
Time Held: June

GOLDEN LION

(International festival of chamber theatre)
(Međunarodni festival komornog teatra Zlatni lav)
Trgovačka 6, 52470 Umag, Croatia
Tel: +385 52 743 447; Fax: +385 52 743 474
E-mail: zlatni-lav@inet.hr
Web: www.zlatni-lav.hr
Artistic Director: Damir Zlatar Frey
Time Held: July

DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL (Drama, Music)

(Dubrovačke ljetne igre - drama, glazba)
Od Sigurate 1, 20000 Dubrovnik, Croatia
Tel: +385 20 326 100; Fax: +385 20 323 365
E-mail: info@dubrovnik-festival.hr
Web: www.dubrovnik-festival.hr
Artistic Director of drama: Dora Ruždjak Podolski
Intendant: Ivica Prlender
Time Held: July & August

SPLIT SUMMER FESTIVAL

(Drama, Opera, Ballet and Concert Programmes)
(Splitsko ljeto, dramski, operni, baletni i koncertni program)
HNK, Trg Gaje Bulata 1, 21000 Split, Croatia
Tel: +385 21 344 999; Fax: +385 21 306 911
E-mail: hnk-split@hnk-split.hr
Web: www.hnk-split.hr
Artistic director: Milan Štrljčić
Time Held: July & August

DREAMTIME ZADAR

(Zadar snova)
Nikole Matafara 2a, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: / Fax: +385 23 254 177
E-mail: info@zadarsnova.hr
Web: www.zadarsnova.hr
Artistic Director: Kristijan Mičić
Time Held: August

ZADAR

THEATRE SUMMER, ZADAR

(Zadarsko ljeto, Zadar)
Široka ulica 8, 23000 Zadar, Croatia
Tel: +385 23 314 586; Fax: +385 23 314 590
E-mail: hkk-zd@zd.t-com.hr
Web: www.hkk-zadar.hr
Manager: Renato Švorinić
Time Held: June & August

WORLD THEATRE FESTIVAL

(Festival svjetskog kazališta)
Testina 7, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4872 554; Fax: +385 1 4872 582
E-mail: vrgoc@zeakaem.hr
Web: www.zagrebtheatrefestival.hr
Artistic Directors: Dubravka Vrgoč, Ivica Buljan
Time Held: September

CHILDREN

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL "THE VERY BEST"

(Naj Naj Naj festival)
Bijenička 97, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 2347 228; Fax: +385 1 2347 855
E-mail: zar-ptica@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.zar-ptica.hr
Artistic Director: Marija Sekelez
Selector: Željka Turčinović
Time Held: April

SLUK, OSIJEK, Meeting of Croatian Puppeteers and Puppet Theatres

(SLUK, Osijek, Susret lutkara i lutkarskih kazališta Hrvatske)
Trg bana Jelačića 19, 31000 Osijek, Croatia
Tel: +385 31 501 485; Fax: +385 31 501 488
E-mail: djecje.kazaliste@os.t-com.hr
Web: www.djecje-kazaliste.hr
Manager: Jasminka Mesarić
Time Held: biennially / April & May 2011

ŠIBENIK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

(Međunarodni dječji festival Šibenik)
Kralja Zvonimira 1, 22000 Šibenik, Croatia
Tel: +385 22 213 123 Fax: +385 22 212 134
E-mail: jassenka_icf@net.hr
Web: www.mdf-si.org
Festival Director: Jasenka Ramljak
Time Held: June & July

INTERNATIONAL PUPPET THEATRE FESTIVAL (PIF), ZAGREB

(PIF, Zagreb, Međunarodni festival kazališta lutaka)
MCUK, B. Magovca 17, 10010 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 6601 626 Fax: +385 1 6601 619
E-mail: pif@mcuk.hr
Web: www.public.carnet.hr/pif-festival/
Director: Livija Kroflin
Time Held: August -September

DANCE

CONTEMPORARY DANCE WEEK, ZAGREB

(Tjedan suvremenog plesa, Zagreb)
HIPPI, Blankinijeva 5, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4641 154; Fax: +385 1 4621 969
E-mail: hipp-tsp@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.danceweekfestival.com
Artistic Director: Mirna Žagar
Time Held: May

FESTIVAL OF DANCE AND NON-VERBAL THEATRE, SVETIVINČENAT

(Festival plesa i neverbalnog teatra, Svetivinčenat)
ZPA, Hebrangova 36, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
E-mail: zpa@zg.t-com.hr
Web: www.svetvincenatfestival.com
Artistic Director: Snježana Abramović Milković
Time Held: July

PUF INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL, PULA, POREČ

(PUF - Pula, Poreč; Međunarodni kazališni festival mladih)
INAT Pula, Sergijevaca 32, 52100 Pula, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385 52 223 915
E-mail: sakud@pu.t-com.hr
Web: www.kazaliste-dr-inat.hr
Artistic Director: Branko Sušac
Time Held: July

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL (MKFM) PULA

(MKFM, Pula; Međunarodni kazališni festival mladih)
INK Pula, Matka Laginje 5, 52100 Pula, Croatia
Tel: +385 52 214 426 Fax: +385 52 214 303
E-mail: bancic@ink.hr
Web: www.ink.hr
Manager: Aleksandar Bančić
Time Held: June & August



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