

# LUDUS

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# TO BE

# OR NOT TO BE

**RESOLUTION No 786**  
**November 10 1992**  
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# BORA TAYLOR IS THE BEST

*According to the jury which spent nine months in session and, in the end, split its votes, the best Serbian post-war play (from 1945 to 1993) was written by Aleksandar Popović*

The Development of Bora Taylor — a scenic characteristic in four instalments, by Aleksandar Popović, is the best play written (and performed) in Serbian language from 1945—1993. Such was the decision of the jury of theater reviewers and teatrologists sitting in its tenth, final public (and the TV) session on October 27, 1993, at the Duško Radović Small Theater. Muharem Pervić, Milosav Mirković, Radomir Putnik and Jovan Ćirilov (in absentia), all voted for Popović. "The Traveling Troupe Šopalović", by Ljubomir Simović garnered three votes (of Aleksandar Milosavljević, Milutin Mišić, and Feliks Pasić), while Dušan Kovačević's "The Balkan Spy" earned one vote (of Dejan Penčić—Poljanski). The ninth member of the jury, Boro Drašković, who was also absent, did not vote, but said in a laconic message that he will comply with the majority's decision. The majority, that is, the eight members of the jury, did not hesitate much when choosing the plays — the three mentioned above — among which the best was

to be pronounced. The members of the jury gave short justifications of their choice, while Muharem Pervić, the president of the jury, read a rather long plea in favor of "Bora Taylor", using it to review the whole work of Aleksandar Popović. The decisive vote was that of Radomir Putnik, who left the possibility of choice between "Bora Taylor" and "The Balkan Spy" open until the very end. The members of the jury unanimously accepted the proposal of Muharem Pervić to add to the list of eleven plays — composed at the previous session — the name of the "Himmel Commando", by Djordje Lebović and Aleksandar Obrenović. In this way the jury admitted its "transgression" in failing to include in its anthology of best productions in Serbian the play which, according to every criterion, marks its beginnings. In the anthology (which will be published in Serbian by the Dereta Publishing House, and in English by the Sterija's Theater Festival), except for the "Himmel Commando", the following plays are listed: "Banović Strahinja", by Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz, "Savonarola and His Friends", by Jovan Hristić, "The Development of Bora Taylor", by Aleksandar Popović, "When the Gourds Bloomed", by Dragoslav Mihajlović, "The Stone to Rest One's Head On", by Milica Novković, "Joakim", by Dobrivoje Ilić, "Pigeon Cave", by Jovan Radulović, "The Balkan Spy", by Duško Kovačević, "The Traveling Troupe Šopalović", by Ljubomir Simović, "The Chastising of the People in Two Parts", by Slobodan Selenić, and "The Times Have Changed", by Siniša Kovačević. ■

November 1993

## NATIONAL SCENE

◆ Ten years have elapsed since the production of "Where Rock—Pigeons Nest" ("Golubnjača") was removed from the repertory of the Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad following a bungling political move by the Communist organization there. The banned play, as you will remember, was taken over by the University Students' Cultural Centre in Belgrade, where it saw eighty performances between December 1982 and September 1983. It was directed by Dejan Mijač. Reminiscing on those troubled times in an issue of the daily Borba, the playwright Jovan Radulović says: "It seems to me that Ivan Stambolić and his associates were triumphant because the autonomists had chosen a thoroughly insignificant and inappropriate issue over which to stage a showdown with them intended to make Belgrade appear in the eyes of the Yugoslav public guilty of exporting Serbian nationalism."

January 1993

◆ "My job is acting. I cannot do anything else. I am not a soldier," said in the daily Borba Miodrag Krivokapić, an actor born in Peć, who went to college in Zagreb, and played in Zagreb, Belgrade, Split, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, Subotica. For the time being, his theatrical map includes no stages other than those in Belgrade and Subotica.

November 1992

◆ Rade Šerbedžija was cast as Gloucester in a production of "King Lear" at Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana. In "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", produced at the Belgrade Drama Theatre, he for the first time used



The author of the best drama: Aleksandar Popović (photo by Vesna Pavlović)

ekavian Serbo-Croat on stage. In Ljubljana he acted in Slovenian. While playing the blind Gloucester, he fell into the orchestra pit on the opening night and was seriously injured. Ludus has been told Šerbedžija is getting better and currently is preparing a new role at Nova Gorica, once again with his friend Dušan Jovanović, a director.

November 1992

◆ After spending months abroad, Dušan Kovačević has returned to his country. On a rainy Monday he gave an interview to the daily Politika. The Zvezdara Theatre was then showing his "Uproarious Tragedy" for the 100th time. Said Kovačević: "The production seems to attract greater interest now than it did on its first night three years ago. Due to recent developments, 'An Uproarious Tragedy,' whose title once sounded artful, has unfortunately acquired a very realistic meaning now. So has 'A Claustrophobic Comedy.'"

November 1992

◆ On the premises of the Association of Dramatic Artists of Serbia, the following information has recently found its place on the wall: "I'm selling the costume of Santa Claus — beard, moustache, cap, mantle, boots with applications. Price: 100,000 dinars." The offer is held out to the readers of the "Ludus" as well.

December 1992

◆ Winter is drawing near. Says Dimitrije Ristić, the Belgrade Drama Theatre manager: "Our boiler-room equipment dates back to 1947. We

shall manage somehow to get the spare parts, but the coal has not been bought yet, and should the municipal authorities fail to provide the money, we will have to shut down." Says Stevan Koprivica, the Duško Radović Theatre manager: "We have been frantically looking for sponsors. At the same time we have to try to get hold of what could serve as our own power unit for the winter." Says Branko Cvejić, the Yugoslav Drama Theatre deputy manager: "We are not thinking about the winter. We will all be in the same boat."

November 1992

## THIS ISSUE

The articles in this first issue of Ludus in English have been made selected from the previous 38 Serbian-language issues, published from November 1992 to June 1996, and then make up only 3 percent of all the articles hitherto published in Ludus. Obviously, the selection had to be rather restrictive, but we hope it will provide an insight into what we at Ludus have been doing in the past four years. Needless to say, these four years have been extremely difficult for all cultural enthusiasts, especially those publishing specialized magazines such as this one. We believe that the articles selected for this issue speak as much about the spirit of the time as they do about theater.

◆ The war, and not only the war, has put into disorder the casts in the theatres of Belgrade. The part played by Haris Burina in the play "Zapali me" (Turn me on) is now acted by Nikola Kojo, whereas Sergej Trifunović replaced the same actor in the play "Priateljstvo, zanat najstariji" (Friendship, the oldest trade in the world). In Novi Sad, Zijah Sokolović (refugee in Austria) was replaced by Tihomir Stanić in "Laža and paralaža" (Liar and Arch—liar). When Mira Furlan left for United States, a replacement for her part in "L'illusion comique" was provided by Katarina Gojković. When Žarko Laušević temporarily gave up acting, Dragan Mićanović acted as his replacement in "L'illusion".

December 1992

## EX YU

◆ The National theatre of Kumanovo has presented a dramatization of the novel by Dragoslav Mihailović "Kad su cvetale tikve" (When the pumpkins were in bloom) under the direction of Sašo Milenkovski. Several years ago, in 1969, the production of the dramatization by the Jugoslovensko dramsko pozorište aroused a political scandal which resulted in the play being taken off the repertoire. The Kumanovo premiere has demonstrated that Serbs and Macedonians do have something in common. The subject of Goli Otok, for example.

December 1992

◆ Ludus has been informed that the director Mira Erceg, following her return to Germany, decided to write, amid the political and social turbulence there, a drama whose action would bear on the tumultuous secession of Slovenia from Yugoslavia. Mrs. Erceg witnessed the secession while in Slovenia, just as she attended the demolition of the Berlin wall shortly before.

November 1992

# ONE CANNOT RUN FROM DEATH

*If provoking the feeling of primal fear is the ideal of the theatre—beyond—conventions, an ideal which it endeavours to attain by merging reality and theatrics, I can say that, as a theatre critic and a citizen of Sarajevo, I have experienced the ultimate in the performance of "A Disintegrating State". (From a Goodbye Letter)*

I write this, under the working title "A Goodbye Letter," as I get ready to go into self-imposed exile and with the credentials for the Belgrade theatre of Mair Musafija, a Radio Belgrade Second Channel critic, withdrawn. Viewed in this light, what I am doing looks to me like moving along the vault referred to by Macbeth in his lines about being unable to control his destiny. Why cannot I, then, keep my seat as a critic in the Belgrade theatre, a position I have always aspired to? The role of a theatre critic in the society of "A Disintegrating State" has been changed because theatricalized reality does go beyond the civil conventions that constitute the ultimate limit of the theatrum mundi, which is to say that such reality attains the ideal of a brutal theatre, leaving behind all conventions, and thus theatrical ones as well. In such "unprotected" social surroundings, and under the voracious Moloch's watchful eye, theatre criticism, like any other normal activity, becomes superfluous and worthless. Fear of death materializes as nausea; it is organically based and affects whatever a person does. One can feel the presence of a higher force, just as one can feel the greedy and scornful stare of Moloch, whose authority one would like to defy by behaving normally and keeping one's freedom of observation.

Ultimately, one is left with a choice between fighting and fleeing. If provoking the feeling of primal fear is the ideal of the theatre—beyond—conventions, an ideal which it endeavours to attain by merging reality and theatrics, I can say that, as a theatre critic and a citizen of Sarajevo, I have experienced the ultimate in the

performance of "A Disintegrating State". Following that point, an observer curious to know how the drama ends would have to face death, his own death, a void which replaces all meaning. To be an observer, a theatre critic, is to discover meaning, to see sense in the death of a beggar as well as in that of a king. Death in the theatre, then, makes sense; it is part of a completed whole, of an ideal system within which an idea can be worked out in detail. In theatricalized reality, death makes no sense, because the idea which at one point brings change into the world around us is just an instance of a multitude of such ideas, each realizable in a different theatrical work.

I arrived in Belgrade in order to keep my distance from theatricalized reality, having experienced it at its worst, with all accepted conventions collapsing and man's mortality, his existential weakness, given precedence over all his other weak and strong points. It was April and my arrival in Belgrade looked like coming to a zone of stability where the protection guaranteed by civil conventions was provided by the authorities, whatever they were.

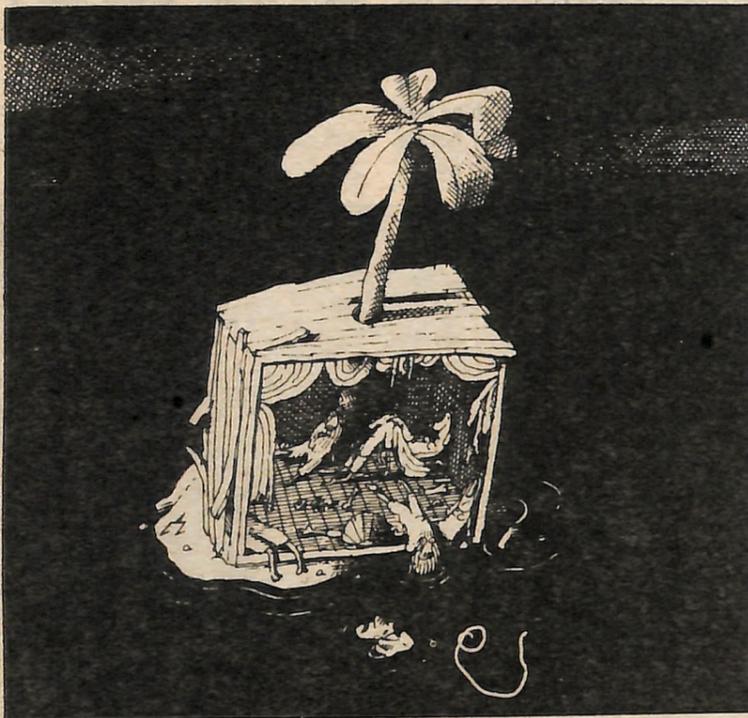
Being a theatre critic and a refugee in Belgrade seemed an advantage of sorts. More experienced and even fonder of the theatre, which was better here than the one I used to cover, I appreciated the privilege of having a theatre critic's seat reserved for me. With time, however, Moloch started to watch for me here too. I don't know for sure whether the signs of disintegration I recognize here—the queues for petrol supplies, other

ver lose my friends and the front-row seat reserved for a theatre critic, but in the hope of restoring and preserving my status and dignity as a citizen.

While taking leave of Belgrade, I hear the warning of an ancient voice (Mitsune): "My friend, when once betrayed you ran to the hills, where will you run thence when adversity befalls you there?"

One cannot run from death. ■  
*Mair Musafija*  
November 1992

# HOW ARE THESE TIMES TO BE ENDURED



*Illustration by Dušan Petričić*

*I do not think that Shakespeare or Corneille can reduce our awareness of our overwhelming misfortune*

shortages, the nervous manner of passers-by, the tendency of politicians to remain entrenched in their views, and many other minor and major manifestations—auger the same collapse of all accepted conventions and the same degradation of man. I do know, however, that I don't want to face fear and anxiety again, to find myself confronted with nothingness again. It looks as if the drama of "A Disintegrating State" has not ended, so this time I have decided to watch its last act from a distance, a distance I am finally to cover, risking to fore-

Naturally, I also find it disturbing to see unscrupulous destroyers of this country making use of the rigorously controlled television and other media to create an impression that we live in a normal state and under unchanged circumstances, that the blockade cannot possibly harm us, that we are indes-

tractible, that from our conflict with, or match against, the rest of the world, difficult as it is, we will eventually emerge victorious. They of course are lying. We will not win the match. It is a match we lost long ago.

But does this mean that theatres should stop producing plays? Would this change anything? Would an impoverished spiritual life help us find a way out of the disaster we are enduring?

I don't think it would. Quite the contrary. I don't think that Shakespeare or Corneille can reduce our awareness of our overwhelming misfortune. Rather, I see our communion with the greatest foreign and domestic artists, with the greatest minds of today, in the theatre and elsewhere, as therapy for our discouraged souls. Hamlet puts the rottenness of the state of Denmark in a philosophical and historical perspective from which our understanding of the present can only gain. At a deeper level the apparently innocuous playfulness of the illusions of theatre makes null and void the primitive laws of blood and land that divide mankind into only two categories of people: the slaughterers and the slaughtered. The blockade imposed on the theatre here is a military and economic blockade. A spiritual blockade can be imposed only in the minds of those who work creatively in the theatre. Petrol shortages do not affect our thinking and creativity. I am glad, in other words, that we have theatre here. To me, at least, this serves as evidence that Arkan and Šešelj are not all the Serbian nation is capable of producing at this point in time. ■

*Slobodan Selenić*  
November 1992

# PROFITING FROM LIVING IN OPPRESSIVE TIMES

*The theatre can do much to restore to this nation the minimum of self-respect it needs for its rebirth. And the theatre will surely do so. It will help, provided there are those who can be helped*

Theatre, or even any kind of theatre, is undoubtedly necessary, even in a society like this. There is no dilemma about whether to produce plays or not. People have felt a need for the theatre for more than a thousand years, and it can hardly be said now is a time when the theatre is no longer needed. Instead, at issue is the kind of theatre we need now.

First, I shall answer this question as a theatre's dramaturge. When you wonder what a Corneille and a Shakespeare play both running at the moment have in common, you will see that, although differing in nature, quality and approach, both go far towards introducing something which is indeed of great importance to this society: a commercial classical drama or, more precisely, a classical drama put to commercial use, capable as well of tricking people into returning to the fundamental values of humanity. This is indispensable if the people inhabiting these regions are ever to find their bearings on this planet again. It may well be the only profit we shall make from living in these oppressive times.

Next I shall try to look ahead from a typically playwright's standpoint. With a way out of the present predicament found, with the disgusting war ended, we shall be needing another, different kind of theatre, a theatre that, for one thing, will focus on the stupidities and criminal records of the preceding period, a theatre which will debunk that optimistic meanness which seeks to commit to oblivion the war it alone brought about. Such a theatre will also have to examine the severe paranoia this society has sunk into, to expose the corruption of its language, to place the war and its advocates in a context they deserve. It will have to deal with both war profiteers and antiwar profiteers (the latter will appear too); with all those who readily gave support when it was the order of the day, but who are now suddenly amnesia-stricken; with all the crime, greed, hypocrisy, all the phoney big shots who ruined the public discourse of an entire society. In short, the theatre can do much to restore to this nation the minimum of self-respect it needs for its rebirth. And the theatre will surely do so. It will help, provided there are those who can be helped. ■ *Nenad Prokić*  
January 1993

- RESOLUTION No 802**  
**January 25 1993**
- RESOLUTION No 807**  
**February 19 1993**
- RESOLUTION No 808**  
**February 22 1993**
- RESOLUTION No 815**  
**March 31 1993**

**RESOLUTION No 816**  
**March 31 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 817**  
**April 7 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 819**  
**April 17 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 820**  
**April 18 1993**

audience. Despite the shells they keep coming and at the end we applaud each other, we sing and we cry, literally. We still have the strength to crack jokes in this misery. I keep wondering at myself and laughing till I grow weak. We help each other. When one of us starts sinking, the others pull him up by the scruff of his neck. True, all of it is happening on the verge of desperation, but man can get used to everything. War is horrible. It is not only the shooting. Many people dear to us have departed, but it is impossible to forget a friendship. Do you know what else can happen to us? The Americans may bomb us! (That was supposed to be a joke.)

A place called SWET (Sarajevo Workshop on Exploratory Theater) was set up here. We're working on Euripides' *Alkestis*, director is H.P. and in a few days we'll be off with a "Play Beckett" project, directed by Susan Sontag who's coming again to Sarajevo from the States. D.J. is directing "In Agony" at the Chamber Theater. With K.D. we should start working on Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". It seems that "Hair" will be opening in the States, but A. is seven months pregnant and cannot travel that far; thus the two of us will remain here. "The Lovers" is a wonderful show. We got an invitation from the Dubrovnik Summer Games, and may yet go there. But all these journeys look a bit like the trip of the proverbial three sisters to Moscow. Sarajevo is under horrible siege. And it is being destroyed by people.

Did I say "people"?  
 Thanks once again for your letter.  
 Say hello to G.Yours A. ■  
**September 1993**

*In "Ludus" No. 9 (September 1993) three "Letters from Theater Sarajevo" were published. They had been written by student actors to their professor who in the meantime came to Belgrade as a refugee.*

# A THEATER LETTER FROM SARAJEVO

Dear I,  
 It is June 27 in Sarajevo today. What has changed since you left? I don't know. The facts say that there are less people alive, and that's the greatest change. And the only one that really counts. Maybe you can get a glimpse of the rest at least in the reports of the foreign TV networks. All those buildings without windows, often without upper stories, or roofs... I believe it is hard for you to write. What is there to write about that still makes sense. But believe me, these few words are sufficient: I still remember you. The stories about all of you who have left are not ugly stories. Each one of us acted according to what we felt at the time. You know how bound to Sarajevo I was. I do not call it patriotism — I was simply stuck to the streets, buildings, and the people in them. These are mournful buildings nowadays because there is not a single one which hasn't seen someone leaving for a place of no return. What is unendurable? It is not the lack of money or food, it is the uncertainty. Is today the day when my number comes up? And I have to go downtown every day. It is either the rehearsal, or the show, or courses at the Academy. There were only two days since the the war started that I stayed home. And the shells are falling every day. Where do they get so many?  
 I have a wonderful class. Six girls and three men. And all of them are still alive. One girl is coming in every day from Hotonja (a suburb between Sarajevo and Vogošća). She has to crawl on her belly for 50 meters on her way to class... Every day we have two to three shows. The Chamber Theater is too small for the number of people who want to watch our productions. And we have a fantastic

# YOUR NUMBER WASN'T UP

*Three women were standing outside a building in Ljubljana Street in Sarajevo. They wanted to say something nice: "Welcome to Sarajevo," they said. The man I was with asked them what they were doing out there in the cold; one of the women answered they had been freezing in their flats*



I went to Sarajevo the other day to see a friend of mine. The last time we met eight months ago, she wore a red cardigan. I thought I would find her wearing the same cardigan again, with her hands in its pockets. And I almost did.  
 The trench I squatted in was some fifty metres across from another, where people could also be seen peeping out. Well, my friend's home was downward from that trench, at the foot of the Jewish cemetery, five minutes' walk from where I was. But I could not make it there because of the gunfire in all directions. I had never seen a war before. Everything looked like in a moving picture. The place was flooded with sound. One heard something thunderous pierced by some sharp squeaks and knocks. That didn't seem real. So I was not afraid. I didn't have the time to be. I was all eyes. I can still see those scenes.  
 It was in Ljubljana Street that we came across three women. They were standing outside a building. They wanted to say something nice: "Welcome to Sarajevo," they said. The man I was with asked them what they were doing out there in the cold; one of the women answered they had been freezing in their flats and so decided to come out to warm up a bit in the sun.  
 We called upon a man. He offered us coffee and slivovitz, as if nothing was going on outside. I declined having the brandy, which I don't like. But he

said: "Come on, have some strong stuff, be a sport." That reminded me of my theatre. People there tell me the same thing when I decline a drink, so I was pleased to hear it again here.  
 Then I saw a crowd of children outside a wrecked high-rise building, playing, running and making noise. I asked what the children were doing there with the gunfire all around. "They have to play for a while or else they'll go fucking crazy indoors," my guide replied as we bent and crossed a street. In another trench I witnessed a meeting between two young men. "Is your father alive, Mikan?" one asked. "He was three weeks ago. Pajda saw him looking out of the kitchen window." At one corner of Trebević Street I saw a woman hanging out her washing. The house she lived in had no doors or windows. The broken window-frames were covered with blankets. When we entered the yard of another building, our guide told us: "Hurry along now," and we started running. The moment we got round the building, there was a sound like a rock hitting the wall. The man told me: "Your number wasn't up." Embarrassed by not getting what he meant, I just smiled. Afterwards they told me it had been a sniper's bullet.  
 In yet another house we found a boy whom I gave a bar of chocolate. Delighted as he was, he showed much more interest in my American friend. He asked him whether he could write a letter to Schwarzenegger and have my friend take it to America and mail it there. We took his letter when we left; it said: "Dear Schwarzenegger, please send me your photo. I too would like to live in America rather than in Sarajevo, because there is war here." ■ **Ivana Dimić**  
**January 1993**

*This seems not to be real: the Sarajevo scene, war years*

# ALL THOSE SANCTIONS...

The children's theater "Runner Jovica" of Subotica came to Varna, Bulgaria, to participate at the International "Golden Dolphin" Festival, but remained off stage. According to the Tanjug News Agency report carried by the Borba daily, the members of the Subotica theater were officially invited, and only upon their arrival, on October 1, were they told by the organizers that owing to the embargo they might not be allowed to take part in the festival. And that it exactly what happened: on October 3, they were prevented from presenting their production "A Hollo" (The Raven). They were offered to stay in Varna until the closing of the festival, but they refused. The ban on their participation was issued, according to Tanjug, at the intervention of the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Sofia.  
 Several days prior to these events, the Drama Theater of Skopje failed to show up at the Vršac Fall Festival held regularly in this Serbian city. They were supposed to play Shakespeare's "The Tempest". Blagoja Čorevski, the manager of the Skopje Theater, and Pavle Vlahović, the manager of the Vršac Festival, said they did everything to secure the participation of the Macedonian group. However, the Macedonian Minister of Culture, quoting strict adherence to the international sanctions, did not allow the Theater to leave for Vrsac. ■  
**October 1993**



# BITEF IN THIRTY SCENES

## Scene One, 1967

**B**ITEF (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) 212. The number 212 identifies the location of the happening: the avant-garde theatre Atelje 212. New Theatrical Tendencies. First performance: *Ramayana*, Katakali Theatre from Kerala. The Living Theatre arrives: Judith Malina, Julian Beck and their two month old daughter Isha Manna. The Board of Directors has secured a nanny. The Americans draw much attention with their unconventional clothes and behaviour, but the real shock comes with their performance — Sophocles' *Antigona* — ruthlessly and mercilessly the actors vent their righteous anger on the audience. Jerzy Grotowski in his *El Principe Constante* changes the relationship of the audience and the performers: they are together on the stage. We are arriere-garde, says Grotowski. David Esrig and Teatrul de Comedie from Bucharest show a fascinating *Troilus* and *Cressida*, and Otomar Krejča brings *Divadlo za branou* and *Three Sisters* by Chekhov. Bulat Okudzava borrows the guitar for his poetic evening from his Belgrade friend, Danilo Kiš.

## Scene Two, 1968

Arrabal with *Cimetiere des voitures*, Johan Nestroy with *Measure for Measure*, *Petites-bougeoises* by Gorky, *The Daughter-in-Law* by D.H. Lawrence, *The Bath House* by Mayakovsky, *Amedee* by Ionesco. Directors: Victor Garcia, Otomar Krejča, Peter Zadek, Georgiy Tovstonogov, Jozef Szajna, Jean-Marie Serreau, Alwin Nicolais and *Imago*.

## Scene Three, 1969

Schechner, Ronconi, Schumann, Menzel, Gaskill, Peymann, Barba. Belgrade performance of *Hair* was not in official competition. Schechner, the director of *Dionysus* in 69: "When they ask us if we play nude, we put on some clothes." Guests of BITEF: Grotowski, Handke, Bond. Compania Nuria Espert and *Les Bonnes* by Jean Genet: the first Spanish actors on a Yugoslav stage.

## Scene Four, 1970

Classics In the Manner of the Seventies. Jan Kott, a guest of the Festival: "Today's world is a period of tragedy, a period of hopeless hope and hopeful despair." Roger Planchon, the director of *Berenice* by Jean Racine played Titus instead of Sammy Fray who was unable to come to Belgrade due to a film engagement. La MaMa and *Arden of Feversham*, directed by Andrei Serban. *A Dream Play* by Strindberg, directed by Ingmar Bergman. *Philoctetes* by Mueller, direc-

ted by Hans Lietzau. *Ivanov*, directed by Otomar Krejča.

## Scene Five, 1971

Free Forms 71. Ariane Mnouchkine and 1789, Jerome Savary and *Zartan, the Unloved Brother of Tarzan*, Pip Simmons and *Superman*, Joseph Chaikin and *The Terminal*, Charles Ludlum and *The Bluebeard. Five Yugoslav performances.*

## Scene Six, 1972

**D**irectors Of New Reality and Roots. Six hours of *Oresteia* by Aeschylus, directed by Luca Ronconi. Stein and *Torquato Tasso* by Goethe, Miklos Jancso and *Brilliant Winds* (Fenyesszelek). Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Merce Cunningham and John Cage. Roots: *Lament* (Quejio) from Seville, *Kantan* from Tokio, *Renga Moi* from Uganda. Uganda's president, Idi Amin, received Robert Serumaga before he left for Belgrade and wished him success. Comments of a critic after the African performance: "Their greatest virtue lies in the fact they have learned nothing from the European theatre." The audience give their votes to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, the festival jury leaves the generally acclaimed best performance without a prize.

## Scene Seven, 1973

The one hundredth BITEF performance: *L'aveu* by Sarah Bernhardt, directed by Pierre Spivakoff. A renowned critic says: "Spivakoff mocks Sarah Bernhardt in a masterly fashion, I only don't know why." Awards: *Trei fratti gemeni venetiani*, directed by David Esrig (Bucharest), Bond's *Lear* (Lietzau, West Berlin), *My Father's Home* (Min fars hus) Odin Teatret from Holsterbro (Eugenio Barba), *Village Yard* (Stallerhof) by Frantz Xavier Kroetz (Ulrich Helsing-Karl Kneidel, Hamburg). *Golgotha* by Miroslav Krleža, in a factory workshop.

## Scene Eight, 1974

Theatricalism 74. Nineteen performances. Wilson and *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, Efros and *Don Juan*, Swinarski and *Liberation* (Wizwolnienie) by Wispinski, Bergman and *Till Damascus*, Branko Pleša and *Tarelkin's Death* by Suhovo Kobilin (Yugoslavia). Question for Geogre Tabory: Why did you produce some parts of the performance (Michael Kolhaas) in an exaggerated straightforward way? Answer: I reply only to questions beginning with how.

## Scene Nine, 1975

Between Myth and Reality. La MaMa and Andrei Serban: *The Women of Troy*, *Electra*, *Medea*. Peter Stein and *Summer Guests* (Sommergaeste) by Maxim Gorky. Planchon and *Tartuffe*. Theatres from Greece and Tunisia take part in BITEF for the first time. Mira Trailović, director of the Festival: "BITEF resembles the theatre of the world."

## Scene Ten, 1976

BITEF as the Theatre of the Nations. Theatrical elite is in one place: Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud, Lybimov, Victor Garcia, Barba, Brook, Patrice Chereau, Zadek, Wajda, Wilson, Gaskill. Yugoslav team: Dušan Jovanović, Miroslav Be-

lović, Ljubiša Ristić. Vissocky as Hamlet, Beckett as director of *Waiting for Godot*, *The Ik* by Peter Brook, Zadek's *Othello*, Wilson and *Einstein on the Beach*. Peter Schumann and Bread and Puppet Theatre join BITEF at the last moment. Odin Teatret plays a specially conceived performance for gypsies in a nearby gypsy settlement. In return, the hosts show them their authentic dances and the art of jumping fire.

## Scene Eleven, 1977

Post-avant-garde 77. Lindsey Kemp and the shocking *Salome* by Oscar Wilde. Why a man in a woman's role? Kemp: "On stage, an artificial diamond is often more brilliant than the real one". Four hours of the exciting *Hedda Gabler* (Schillertheater, Peter Rudolph). Beckett as director once again: "That time — Footprints. Pina Bausch and *Bluebeard* (Blaubart). A feminist performance? Pina Bausch: "Our performance is not against men, nor against women, neither for men or for women, it is a play about people for people." Tadeusz Kantor and *Dead Class* (Umrla klasa). Puppets from Sicily: *Morte di Orlando* from Catania.

## Scene Twelve, 1978

**A**ntoine Vitez tries the patience of his audience playing four dramas by Moliere in two days. Four hours of Strindberg *Father* (Schillertheater, Guenther Kraemer) — the audience takes it in a breath. Two Shakespeare plays: the disappointing *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Krejča and the provocative *Hamlet* by Beno Besson. Puppets from Hungary and China. *Peer Gynt* from Norway. Another Peter Stein: *A Trilogy of Union* by Botho Strauss. Theatres from Georgia, DRG, USA, Italy, Japan, Yugoslavia. A special fourgon brought a white horse from Zagreb for the *Liberation of Skopje*. President Tito awarded high Yugoslav decorations to: Jean-Louis Barrault, Roger Planchon, Radu Beligan, Peter Stein, Nuria Espert and Peter Brook.

## Scene Thirteen, 1979

Fin de Millenaire. Roberto Ciulli at BITEF for the first time: Euripides' *Cyclops*. Lindsey Kemp again: *Cruel Garden*. Pina Bausch, again. Theatres from Bulgaria and Estonia for the first time. From Yugoslavia: Bulgakov's *Dog Heart*, *King Lear* and *1918 — to Miroslav Krleža*. Awards: Ciulli, Squat Theatre from New York and Werkteater from Amsterdam.

## Scene Fourteen, 1980

Between Realism and Abstraction. Jerzy Jarocki with Yugoslav performance of Babel's *Dusk*. Six additional Yugoslav projects. Ciulli and *Alcestis*, *Brief Rest* from Iceland, Cuban *Bloody Weddings* (Bodas de sangre), Aborigines from Australia. Berta Martinez, director of the *Weddings* explains the differences between the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary understanding of Lorca's dramatic works: "It was the Cuban revolution that provided a clear comprehension of Lorca's themes."

## Scene Fifteen, 1981

Fifteen Years. Possibly one of the most fertile and most dramatic periods in the history of modern theatre. Mira Trailović and Jovan Ćirilov, the founders and artistic creators of the

# REMEMBERING THE FUTURE

## For Mira Trailović

It was in 1967. We were founding the festival of the new tendencies. We had chosen the performances which we thought were the future of the theatre.

Today, after thirty years, we are in the middle of the dreamed future.

Is this the future we imagined?

What were the messages of the theatre prophets of the first Bitef to the future?

Did The Living teach us not to make, but to live our theatre?

Did Grotowski bequeath to us his truth that the real avant-garde is actually the defending of the ancient laws of the theatre performance? Was that confirmed by Barba, Schechner and Chaikin?

Did Brook, Bergman, Planchon, Mnouchkine, Stein, Liubimov, Krejča, Efros and Ciulli convince us in the possibility of synthesis between avant-garde and tradition?

Did Wilson realize the surrealist dream of the oneiric theatre?

Did Pina Bausch, Kresnik and La Fura dels Baus triumph over the verbal theatre?

The BITEF 30 is one of those possible futures we remember?

Did we dream of this future, Mira? ■

Jovan Ćirilov

Festival: "Will something new be born from the new of this moment or the new of yesterday? Will we be able to recognize the new thing in the future?" Kemp for the third time: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Jarocki directs Mrozek's *On Foot* (Pieszko), and Stein the *Class Enemy* by Nigel Williams. *Mass in A—minor* by Ljubiša Ristić, already labeled politically controversial in Yugoslavia, joins the best performances of BITEF (awarded). Belgrade sees Beijing Opera for the first time: *The Monkey King Rebels in the Heavens*. Bernhard Minetti, the oldest active German actor in Bernhard Thomas' *Weltverbesserer*.

## Scene Sixteen, 1982

Erotic and Samurai Fantasies. *The Tangerine Boy* from Tokyo, *Hamlet* from Prague, ten-minute long *Hamlet* from Zagreb, Wedekind's *Lulu* from Boston, *Danton's Death* from East Berlin. A moment of catharsis? *Marat/Sade*. A theatre from the Hungarian city of Kaposvar. Director very young: Janos Acs. A report notes: "Last night, people were crying in the theatre, even some critics and actors. The worst audience sample." The closing scene brings back the deserted panorama of Budapest in the tragic year of 1956.

## Scene Seventeen, 1983

**H**istrionics 83. One actors — whole theatre: Ladislav Polivka in *Court Jester*. Scenes reminiscent of Wilson and Pina Bausch: *His Double and Paradise*, Serapions Theater from Vienna, Sophocles' *King Oedipus* played in 45 minutes by gypsies from Skopje. Nuria Espert as Prospero. Another *Midsummer Night's Dream*, by Roberto Ciulli. The best performance *End of Europe* from Poznan. Europe dies somewhere else, not in the theatre. Janusz Wisniewski is a student of Cantor's, but also a graphic artist. He seems to identify the theatre with the visual content of graphics and the two-dimensional art becomes alive.

## Scene Eighteen, 1984

First BITEF without a Grand prix. The jury awards only a special prize to Jan Faber for his *Power of Theatre Follies*. Those who went to see Wilson were subjected to a torture of memory. Five long hours and twenty

naked men on the stage. From Vilnius: *Pirosmani, Pirosmani* by Korostilyev, directed by Elmuntas Necroshius. Jan Kott, during an intermission: "This is divine punishment for socialist realism." From Mali: innocent humour of *Village Worries*. From Prague: Gogol's *Cardplayers*. From Amsterdam: Dogtroep and *Automatic Scenes*. From Cologne: Geothe's *Faust*.

## Scene Nineteen, 1985

Classics and Anti-classics. Johann Kresnik attends BITEF for the first time: *Sylvia Plath* (awarded). Efros again: *The Cherry Garden* (awarded), *The Lower Depth* by Gorky (special award). A hen is slaughtered on stage in Slovene performance of *The Beauty and the Beast*. The scene starts a passionate debate on the difference between the theatre and the slaughter-house, on the bounds of life and theatre which may not be exceeded. A rarely played Brecht: *The Roundheads and the Pointheads* (Die Rundkoepfe und die Spitzkoepfe), directed by Alexander Lang, from East Berlin. Very pale *Lucrezia Borgia* by Antoine Vitez. Two amusing performances: *Les Femmes Savantes* from Stockholm and *Charivari* from Lon-

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ak of the Festival: *Crazy Days*, from Zagreb, directed by Paolo Magielli, combining two very different works — *The Marriage of Figaro* by Baeu-marchais and *Figaro Divorces* by Oe-doen von Horvath.

### Scene Twenty — Two, 1988

New Definitions 88. *SUZ/O/SUZ* is outside and definition. La Fur dells Baus, in sound and fury, win the Grand prix. What is the meaning of the title? A member of the Catalan group responds: „It cannot be translated. One interpretation out of a thousand could be — the fish that bites its own tail and thus constantly swims in a circle, like our performance. What have they been astonished with? We were surprised to see the audience leave and this is a festival. If we killed twenty each night, there would be no audience left.“ Another kind of shock, from Elmuntas Necroshius and his radical revision of Chekhov in *Uncle Vanya*. Sound and fury, here, again; the performance is an obscure farce. Ballet theatre of Carolyn Carlson in *Dark*. Johann Kresnik comes closer to the essential nature of the theatre in his *Hamlet*. Exciting *Electra* from Split, by Paolo Magielli. Ideologically provocative Mrozek in *The Portrait*, directed by Jerzy Jarocki.

### Scene Twenty — Three, 1989

Mira Trailović died on August 7. The very soul of the Festival, BITEF is dedicated to her memory. Grand prix (ex equo) to: *The Inspector* by Gogol (Katon Jozsef Szinhas from Budapest, Gabor Zsambeki, director) and *Kaspar*, by Peter Handke (Theater a.d. Ruhr from Muelheim, Robert Cullli). The young critics give their award to *Sheherazade* from Slovenia. Beijing Opera, this time from Beijing; a folk-opera *Gashiram Kotwal* from India. Interesting dining in *Dog Heart* and *Notes from Underground* from Moscow, *Bacchanalian Revel* from Muelheim, *Svedenborg's Angels* from New York. A spectator, on *Svedenborg's Angels*: „It's boring, but nothing happens in eternity, either.“

### Scene Twenty — Four, 1990

Theatre and Paratheatre. An introduction into the theatre of the twenty first century? Six out of ten selected performances belong to ballet or musical—dance theatre. Dramas: *Talabot*, Odin Teatret and Eugenio Barba, Marivaux's *Contacts and Conflicts* from Martin (Czeck and Slovak Republic), *Faust* from Maribor (Yugoslavia) and Genet's *Les Bonnes* from Moscow. An influential Belgrade critic singles out the following from the first group of plays: *The Fall of Icarus* (Fédéric Flamand, Belgium) and *Ulrike Meinhof* (Johann Kresnik). A penetrating remark: „Many have felt during this BITEF like the voyagers on the Titanic — while a dramatic historical sequel is getting ready in the country, maybe a stage for a new civil war, we pretend to enjoy the theatre which, with honourable exceptions, is none of our concern, with its brilliant but meaningless shadows.“

### Scene Twenty — Five, 1991

Jovan Ćirilov, BITEF artistic director: „BITEF has lived for twenty—five years, despite the wars in the world, and this time it should stay alive despite the civil war in its own country.“ Should the Festival be held in such conditions? One of the replies: „That is an essentially false and hypocritical dilemma. Why should it be morally more improper to go to the theatre than sit in garden restaurants, while the war is on?“ A chronicler notes: only those who do not resent to resemble the passengers of a haunted ship have come. Among others: Roman Viktyuk and *M. Butterfly*, Lyubimov with *Boris Godunov*, Wladislav Zorko and the *Horned City*.

### Scene Twenty — Six, 1992

BITEF under sanctions. Only local performances. Foreigners are denied access to — Belgrade.

### Scene Twenty — Seven, 1993

Wanderers and Dreamers 93. Poetry in absence of other evidence. Jovan Ćirilov on this quixotic project: „What could not cross the real or imaginary border of the embargo, political or moral, will come partially with video projections, as shadows of a shadow, as information or a sign of friendship and solidarity of all the artists of the world.“ Groups from Australia, Poland and Russia did come.

### Scene Twenty — Eight, 1994

New Energy 94. Silviu Purcarete and *Deccameron 646*, Laszlo Rokas and *Titanic and Me*, Theodoros Terzopoulos and *The Persians*, Stalker Stilt Theatre and *Angles Ex Machina*, Compania Semola Teatre with *In Concert* and *Hybrid*, Theater Titanick and *Titanic*, Generik vaporeur and *Bivouac*.

### Scene Twenty — Nine, 1995

The Director of Altered Reality. BITEF at the time of partially lifted sanctions. Directors: Lev Dodin, Johann Kresnik, Silviu Purcarete, Ljubiša Ristić, Jozsef Nagy, Nigel Char-nock, Sašo Milenkovski, Slobodan Unkovski, Robert Wilson, Jagoš Marković, Branislav Lečić.

### Scene Thirty, 1996

Remembering the Future. ■

# MIRA, THE BEST OF STAGE

She adored  
beauty and youth.



She was at war with  
women whom she  
thought insufficiently  
insolent and bright,  
while she let men  
who wanted to  
become her coworkers  
or friends prove  
themselves to her for  
a long time

Another BITEF passed, and everyone still misses Mira Trailović. And keeps on missing her: more and more with all the passing of years, and with our ever—increasing misery.

It is not the idea of BITEF that is in question. Jovan Ćirilov has been doing his best and still does to preserve the high level of the Festival, to bring to Belgrade all the important groups from abroad even when all the approaches to our city were closed down. This year, Mira would be happy to see the Austrians and the Poles walking through Belgrade on stilts during the BITEF procession, to be present at the KPGT opening of its Belgrade stage during the Festival, to note that BITEF on the Video was attended as if nothing had changed. It is not a question only of the productions, round tables, TV talk shows and presentations, of the regular old audiences, nor of some new kids crazy about old tapes of Pina Bausch's coreodramas. BITEF survived, as some members of its regular public adamantly claim, first of all because of the persistence of Mira's alter ego, Jovan Ćirilov, who will see to it that BITEF goes on, despite everything.

But, is this really true? Who has been whose alter ego for some twenty years? Has Mira been Jovan's alter ego, or was it the other way around? Who traveled around the world to see productions and to bring in the most exclusive ones, at the right moment? Who used to wait for whom at the airport, and which one of these two long—time friends had a better feeling to chose the best from the new and modern trends in foreign and domestic theatrical practice? Indiscrete questions are indeed tedious: you may try as much as you wish to answer them with your entire knowledge of irrefutable facts, but you wi-

She loved to be loved: Mira Trailović

It still fail to describe anything properly. But one thing is certain: there would be no BITEF without Ćirilov, the rest is Mira, her alter ego and — kitsch.

The kitch is what I have been missing all this time since she had left BITEF's stage for the last time. All of that which initially appeared as a lack of taste, as sensationalism, narcissism, provincialism — her dresses, statements, jewelry, her feeling for coexistence with some truly dumb and primitive people — all the stuff out of which life itself is made of, that is what I miss. The easy—going frivolity of life. The faith in the little as well as some great people. The apolitical attitude accompanied with tons of patience to deal with petty bureaucrats, politicians of the worst kind, writers of evil intent and little skill. Everything she did she did for herself — and she was the best part of the theater, of her theater mundi in which each one of her friends played his own role, but in accordance with her taste, will—power, and choice. She wasn't afraid to make mistakes, and correct them. She openly showed whom she liked, and whom she didn't. She adored beauty and youth. She was at war with women whom she thought insufficiently insolent and bright, while she let men who wanted to become her coworkers and friends prove themselves to her for a long time.

She would't like Belgrade as it is now. She could never stand squalor. It was hard for her to forget the general poverty that came in aftermath of World War II. If there was any Serb nationalist bragging during her appearances at the Ušće mass rallies in those years, it all melted down rather rapidly. Today, Mira Trailović would be the first to invite theaters from the former Yugoslav republics to show themselves in Belgrade. This also she would do only to please herself: she loved to be loved, especially by those who feel guilt when Theater, Beauty, and Youth are mentioned. She could not stand blood, as she could not stand weak women. Mira was as weak as her favorite „Mir—Jam“ novels. The kitch, but not throughout: a real feeling for beauty, for what is good, successful, worthwhile, unusual, sensual, silky, rich, and emerald.

Mira would never go to the front with her theater, and would not play for the war invalids. She was for absolute peace and order, without killing, without blood, and without fratricidal bickering. She would openly tell Clinton what he deserved, and would do little to spare his local Yugoslav minions. Afterwards, she would invite the best US group to come to Yugoslavia — at their own expense. She would not invite Halmut Kohl. Instead, he would ask Kinkel to help her put on her astrakhan fur coat, obtained before the war. Where is that fur coat now, I wonder?...

I miss everything that had irritated me when Mira Trailović was in question.

Like, I guess, life itself. ■

Zorica Jevremović

October 1993

Mira Trailović (1924—1989), theater director, long—time manager of *Ate-lje 212*, the avant—garde Belgrade theater; the founder, with Jovan Ćirilov, and until her death the director of the Belgrade International Theater Festival (BITEF).

# "MAY THIS GLASS PASS ME OVER..."

*Theatres are linked with the invisible Ariadne's thread, while Minotaurs, arrogant and drunk with the air of death, cannot understand who is the one that is defeating them, who is opposing to their vigour, their triumph*

When a dear friend of mine, Feliks Pašić, called and asked me to write something for the "Ludus", I said I would and asked him what I should write, what about. Let's say, about theatre and sanctions, theatre and blockade, Feliks suggested.

I agreed, a month has elapsed, and that is exactly what I want to write about. However, I am entirely unable to describe theatre in such condi-

ons. Actually, as soon as the scene is lit up and the actor utters his first words, the solitude is gone and the play begins of a great theatrical brotherhood throughout the planet. Who can say where and who is playing Richard III or Cyrano in this very moment, and who knows how many people are experiencing the same emotions in all the languages of the world, this very evening, this very second.

There are no frontiers there, no ideologies, hatreds, fires, bombs, destroyed cities, hunger or death — there is an imitation of them which has been giving warnings and alarms for centuries now, sometimes quite conspicuously. But, people cannot learn from the theatrical experience but from their own passions and shames, leaving theater, actors and their poets to speak to the times and nights of the audience and history.

Everything had been already said on the stages, and everything was then repeated, more clumsily and cruelly. Thus, theatre is always lone and isolated, but never lone and rejected.

When the Hellene tragic poet Phrynichus wrote his play "The Fall of Miletus" and presented it to the Athenians with his stirring description of Persian crimes and disappearance of the city where Thales had lived, with his quest for the essence and the ultimate cause of the world where people had traded, worked and loved, he was punished by the Athenian elders to pay a fine for his cruel descriptions had upset the audience. And Miletus had really been destroyed and plundered. Probably much more cruelly than Phrynichus could have described... But! The world wanted to be better than it was, and theatre has always wanted to show the mirror to a prophet, and to unveil the face of virtue.

*Illustration by Yugoslav Vlahović*

Therefore, I am not quite sure as to how the theatre may be isolated? From the fringe of frightful fates and events it keeps communicating with the last vestiges of humanity and reason in a time of madness. Unimportant and forgotten in the times of cataclysm, it still is more powerful in its powerlessness than all forces of hatred and fury.

It has been always saying: "Nolli me tangere", but the bullies and stupid, the politicians, do not listen, they attack, destroy, put on fire, and spew hatred instead of verses.

The world is shaking before them, people are on the run, they die or disappear. Nobody perceives the sky, nobody can hear the wind, or the sound of autumn waters — only the thud is heard of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

And after it all, a boy or a girl on the stage, before the beings deprived of comfort, will utter: "Hail, Father, if it is in Your power, may this glass pass me over..." And see how the blind hope is pulling out from Pandora's box, clumsily and inevitably, it is pouring out from the beat of our veins, echoing through the labyrinths of our souls.

Theatres are linked with the invisible Ariadne's thread, while Minotaurs, arrogant and drunk with the air of death, cannot understand who is the one that is defeating them, who is opposing to their vigour, their triumph. Therefore, instead of giving an answer, I would like to pose a question: is there a human being that may deny time — the past, the present, and the future?

Who is the one that can bind them and press them into the narrow instincts of one's lowness and madness?

Whoever may stop the three times, will stop the world. But such an assumption is impossible because, at

moments, even the smallest stage becomes larger than the Cosmos, carrying us over the fire and the water, over the Sun and clouds; from the East to the West, from Delphi to Hiroshima, telling us that we are not dead, that the glass might pass us over.

Perhaps the question is not well-formulated, perhaps the answer is wrong. And yet, how can the soul, invisible and undeniable, be captivated, how can the river be held back which carries Ophelia through the Eternity, how can Antigone be stopped? ■ *Velimir Lukić*  
December 1992

## TWO CUBIC METRES OF SHORE

*It is not a radio on the pile, but its shell only, void of its electronic soul; this compound collection of ordinary things will never fulfill its function in a play whose name I have never even learned*

Whenever a piece of work takes me down into the small basement room in the Bitez Theatre, which, being the only spare room, holds our paints, brushes, nails and other bits and pieces indispensable in a theatre, I always stop in front of a neatly arranged pile of stage accessories in the middle.

Beside two little props, the items are arranged from the sum of which an essence of the content might be guessed: a white kitchen-cupboard with crocheted drapes, a small couch, a common kitchen table, two low stools painted with white oil paint, kitchen dishes, a radio, made here in the late 60s. Attached to the cupboard with a pin — a list of the items. All of them are quite ordinary; extraordinary is the fact that the sum of them, packed in less than two cubic metres, makes me stop, without exception, and distresses me. Me, the man who, as he himself feels it, is at the threshold of his theatrical ageing, professional search through theatrical depots, collector of bizarre and needless old stuff that has witnessed the dusty chaos of theatrical storerooms.

It has been almost a year now since that nice spring noon, when a friend of ours, Mladen Materić, the founder and director of the Obala (Shore) Theatre in Sarajevo, entered the manager's office of the Bitez Theatre and, upset and in a bad mood, delivered a confused story. He talked about passing through Belgrade on his way

to Israel, about the Obala having set off to perform its new production in Tel Aviv, about his being here alone with the driver of the truck carrying props, about a true war having broken in Sarajevo and a half of the troupe having been left behind, in the city, about cancelling the tour. He asked us to take care of the truck, and, two days later, to see about the props only because the driver was to go back to Sarajevo to pick up the rest of the troupe. We have never seen each other since.

When I met Mladen and the others from the Obala, four years ago, I thought a fine theatrical friendship was being born. They were invited by the Bitez Theatre to set in motion the newly founded Belgrade playhouse, and they left, five days

later, having entrusted us with their formula for the loyalty to and love of theatre. The new sensibility, anti-conformist and anti-petty bourgeois, they radiated with, the unrestrained rock 'n' roll sort of attack they launched against the "newly-composed" mentality, made them a part of the tender wave of fresh thought and aesthetics which we all, joyous prematurely, took for the winning side which could not be impeded even by the European frontiers. So I stop in the basement, as if in a crypt in front of a sarcophagus, and it occurs to me that the formula which Mladen and the Obala had left behind must be buried somewhere here, and I wonder if that formula, without them around, is attainable at all. Where are all those brilliant young people now — Mladen, Haris, Prle, Mire and others — are they in Sarajevo, Belgrade, Paris, Edinburgh perhaps? Are they alive? Are they dead?

That is the moment which makes me stop. And then, I realize — this is nothing of a church crypt, it is a damp basement of a theatre, and the arranged pile represents nothing but ordinary theatrical props, dusty and a bit dirty, as anywhere when the stage lights are out. Nor can be heard the music of the "New Primitives" for it is not a radio on the pile, but its shell only, void of its electronic soul; this compound collection of ordinary things will never fulfill its function in a play whose name I have never even learned.

And as I stand in this black darkness wondering what brought me here, it seems to me: the Obala is somewhere around, if only the lights were put on again. ■ *Todor Lalicki*  
March 1993

**RESOLUTION No 845**  
**June 18 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 847**  
**June 30 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 855**  
**August 9 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 857**  
**August 20 1993**



**RESOLUTION No 859**  
**August 24 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 869**  
**September 30 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 870**  
**October 1 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 871**  
**October 5 1993**

# GODOT IN BELGRADE

*Waiting for reality, and not for absurd, these days*

can see more and more clearly what could become of the theatre of the absurd at the end of the second millennium after Christ. Instead of the famous waiting for Godot, there is an increasingly concrete paraphrase of the even more famous saying: "You'll see your Godot." Many have already seen him, languishing in the corners of cold flats, by the silent telephone (because both Electricity—Supply Public Services and Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Administration use every occasion to cut off one's power and "communications"), sifting through petty cash for daily bread. These days, waiting is the reality, and not the absurd. What would be another excuse for Vladimir and Estragon in queues for daily papers! Waiting for news? They got bored squatting under their tree, so they looked for sympathizers? Newspapers are like drugs, only from there will they learn what to think and what more to wait for? Choose among the offered answers. Vladimir and Estragon are also present in other everyday situations. You can meet them, for instance, by the river. In order to eat something, they go hunting and fishing, they angle for small fish near the famous city (please excuse my using the term) "bu!shits", the places where the sewerage flows into the Danube and the Sava rivers. However, before starting with fishing, they undertake hunting — for baits. Baits are expensive, so Didi and Gogo deploy into marksmen, finding well—to—do victims. They scrounge for worms, angles, maggots...

Who would resist the looks cast by two decrepit clowns? Truly, those impenitent resist them due to a shortage of maggots. Fat and greasy worms are imported from Hungary, so they are expensive and rare. Those who are impenitent and well—to—do wait even for several days to get them. In this country, besides the shortage of dailies, there is also a shortage of maggots.

*Vladimir:* Where to?  
*Estragon:* To join the queue.  
*Vladimir:* To wait for what?  
*Estragon:* For one's turn, and generally to queue up.  
 Didi and Gogo sometimes drop in to the theatre. To have a free coffee at a press conference. At times they fail. They are met by the janitor and the guards, like the other day in the National Theatre, and sent away. The conference has been cancelled because "an actor died". Since Didi and Gogo know all the actors, some of them from the papers they managed to lay their hands on, and others from the queues, they are interested in — who died? "I don't know", says the guard, "an actor, that's all I was told." Probably he himself did not manage to buy the paper this morning, it occurs to two decrepit clowns, and they rush back to the queue. In the queue for newspapers, Vladimir and Estragon are most upset by its being without order. The worst are those who intrude out of their turn, most often journalists thinking they have special rights.

Didi and Gogo have finally understood. They have found and got their Godot in the line, but also between the lines, suffering because of the shortage of news and maggots. Although, when they add it all up, the lines for newspapers also look like a tree, ramified and gnarled. The difference is only that here the crowns are not used for suicide, but the more suitable part is the one near the root — the newspaper stand, where people are the most furious. If by any chance you happen to think that the decrepit clowns stand in the queue to wait, your are wrong. The news (not the news reports), therefore the news (since the news reports are the surrogate of those, and thus you get the answer to the prize question from the first paragraph) spread the fastest in a line. And that is exactly where Godot is.  
*Vladimir:* What does he say?  
*Estragon:* The left embraces the right.  
*Vladimir:* What can that be?  
*Estragon:* Straitjacket, of course. ■ *Maša Jeremić*  
**November 1995**

## 1993 ANNUAL CHRONICLE

### JANUARY

"We are totally broke", declares Bora Gligorović, Drama Director at the National Theatre in Belgrade. Aleksandar Berček gives notice on his position as actor in the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. For TVS he says he has nothing to say in connection with his appointment to the position of General Manager in the National Theatre. Aleksandar Berček assumes his new

position. Miodrag Đukic, Serbian Minister for Culture, appoints himself the president of the Managing Board of the National Theatre. Status report on Belgrade theatres: "Boško Buha" — flooded; Belgrade Drama — cold; Small Theatre — closed.

### FEBRUARY

Irfan Mensur is beaten up in the "Stupica" club. The Presidency of the Union of Dramatic Artists of Serbia writes a Warning Message: "We hereby request that all those responsible, the relevant offices and our entire public make utmost effort that cases similar to this fascist outrage be firmly suppressed". Irfan Mensur: "I don't think I should apologize to anyone because my name is Irfan Mensur, because I was born in Sarajevo and because I gave Belgrade much more than those boasting their genes". Curtains are down in all theatres for one night, except in the National Theatre where they have a ballet performance. Mihajlo Radojičić, journalist, writer, actor (Shok), was condemned to five months in prison in Podgorica (two years on parole) because he had, as judged by the court, "mocked the president of the Presidency of Montenegro..."

### MARCH

The 22nd Festival of Comedy was held in Jagodina. The audience selected Ray Cooney's A Crazy Night in the Hotel as the best performance. It was directed by Aleksandar Đorđević. Goran Stefanovski's Sarajevo: Tales about Sarah, had its premiere in Antwerp, the European Cultural metropolis. It was directed by Slobodan Unkovski. Dušan Kovačević: "I feel a little bit uneasy about the fact that all of my stories are my own feeling of claustrophobic element of living in the Balkans. All those characters are the glaring figures from this geography, and I would venture to say — Slavonic. Most of the plays have been produced in almost all of the former East European countries — as if they were their own stories."

### APRIL

Forty-five years of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. Five Beckett's short plays (Act without Words, Steps, Ah, Joe, Play, First Love) were part of the Beckett—fest in Podgorica. Their director is Slobodan Milatović. Nenad Prokić, on the premiere of his "La Divina Commedia" in Maribor (directed by Toma Pandu): "I believe that our endeavours will encourage others to make the effort to look around and think about what they are wasting their years on, what will be left after this is over. I presume we will be proven right."

### MAY

The 38th festival "Sterijino pozorje"

has begun in Novi Sad. Vida Ognjenović has invited seven performances for the official competition part of the Festival: Koštana by Borisav Stanković (National Theatre, Niš), Vasilisa Prekrasna by Miodrag Stanišavljević (Boško Buha, Belgrade), Our Fathers by Vojislav Jovanović Marambo (Belgrade Drama Theatre), The Miracle of Šargan by Ljubomir Simović (Serbian National Theatre, Novi Sad), The Cripple by Atila Faraĝo (Ujvideky Színház, Nova Sad) and Kir—Janja by Sterija (National Theatre, Belgrade and Serbian National Theatre, Nova Sad).

After a two—month stay abroad, Irfan Mensur returned to Belgrade. At a press conference, the Managers of Belgrade theatres state that the reduced circumstances and utmost privation may close the theatres. No response from the authorities. Boro Stjepanović recollects: I had been drafted, for about a week, and then they gave a gun. Gave a gun to me, who comes from a family where for generations nobody even went hunting. I was practically amnestied, I could decide on life and death, kill everyone I see on the other side, be he a friend or neighbour. I could. It was a God—like position for those who had previously made no decisions at all: they were suddenly forced to decide in such a way. I didn't want to be part of it. Until June 8 I had been a target and got used to it. But, as of June 9, I was able to kill and be absolved. I was never afraid to be shot myself. In the sense that I lived a worthier life in at least fifty of my students. However, all of a sudden I was given the liberty to kill, for the sake of sheer survival. Well, that was no keeper of my life". Hair is on at Sava Centre.

### JUNE

The Miracle in Šargan was voted the best performance at the 38th festival "Sterijino pozorje". The chairman of the jury, Slobodan Selenić, asks: "Should one scrub the deck of a sinking ship?", and replies "I think one should. Ought we to keep this festival, is a senseless dilemma. There is no reasons why we should sink with a dirty and neglected deck".

### JULY

The first Yugoslav festival of children's thatres was held in Kotor. Dejan Vražalić ("Vans"), producer of Burn This, Noises Off, La Dame aux camelias: "You are happy to see one hundred nights of a performance, but you know that only one thousand of them could bring profit".

### AUGUST

Miloš Žutić, actor, has died. Ognjenka Milicević, his one—time professor, says: "His intelligence did not impede his emotions, his heart and his mind worked in concord, the technique and spontaneity were in permanent competition, suspicion put self—assurance on trial, sending back questions, and more questions, and

all this under the wings of natural harmony".

### SEPTEMBER

The 27th BITEF is in progress. Foreign troupes come from Poland, Australia and Russia. The National Theatre from Uziče has returned from a tour to Uzhgorod (Ukraine) where they played Chekov's The Seagull, directed by Vitalij Dvorcin.

### OCTOBER

KPGT opens a scene in Belgrade, in Generala Ždanova street. It will be called Histriion. In that regard, Ljubiša Ristić says the following: "We are a very rational theatre. We do not spend much on sets and costumes, but use the rich depots of the theatre in Subotica. Our directors are not extravagant and the entire ensemble adapts to the given situation. When there is no money, we work for free". The Development of Boris Tailor has been selected by a television jury as the best drama in the Serbian language after the Second World War. Its author, Aleksandar Popović, remembers: "They produced Boris Tailor in Croatia, as well, and there were those then who said the drama was written in Serbian, and that I was a Serbian writer. I learned to read and write in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. I went to a school called Car Uroš (Tzar Uroš) and my teacher, Dr. Tihomir Kostić, was also the king's teacher. He taught us to read and write the Serbo—Croatian tongue and I have used it ever since, and intend to do so in the future. Nobody can take that right away from me, because, among other things, I learned that language from Tin Ujević as well.

### NOVEMBER

Ludus celebrates its first birthday with a party in Atelier 212. Dejan Mijač will select performances for the 39th festival "Sterijino pozorje". Velimir Lukić is appointed Artistic Director of Atelier 212. On the occasion of Crnjanski's birth centennial, the National Theatre in Belgrade shows his drama Mask (director, Nikita Milivojević). Mija Aleksić — seventy years of life and sixty years of acting — this will be celebrated by special performances in Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Belgrade.

### DECEMBER

Milan Đokovic has died. He was a writer, drama director of the National Theatre and manager general of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. Dark Is the Night — the 100th performance in Teater „Kult“. The ensemble is packing for a tour to New York. Winter recess begins in Atelier 212 and Theatre T. Theatre ticket have not yet accumulated — nine zeros. ■  
**January 1994**



# TRANSPORTŠPED

D.D. ZA MEĐUNARODNU I UNUTRAŠNJU ŠPEDIČIJU

INTERNATIONALE UND INNENSPEDITION - INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FORWARDERS

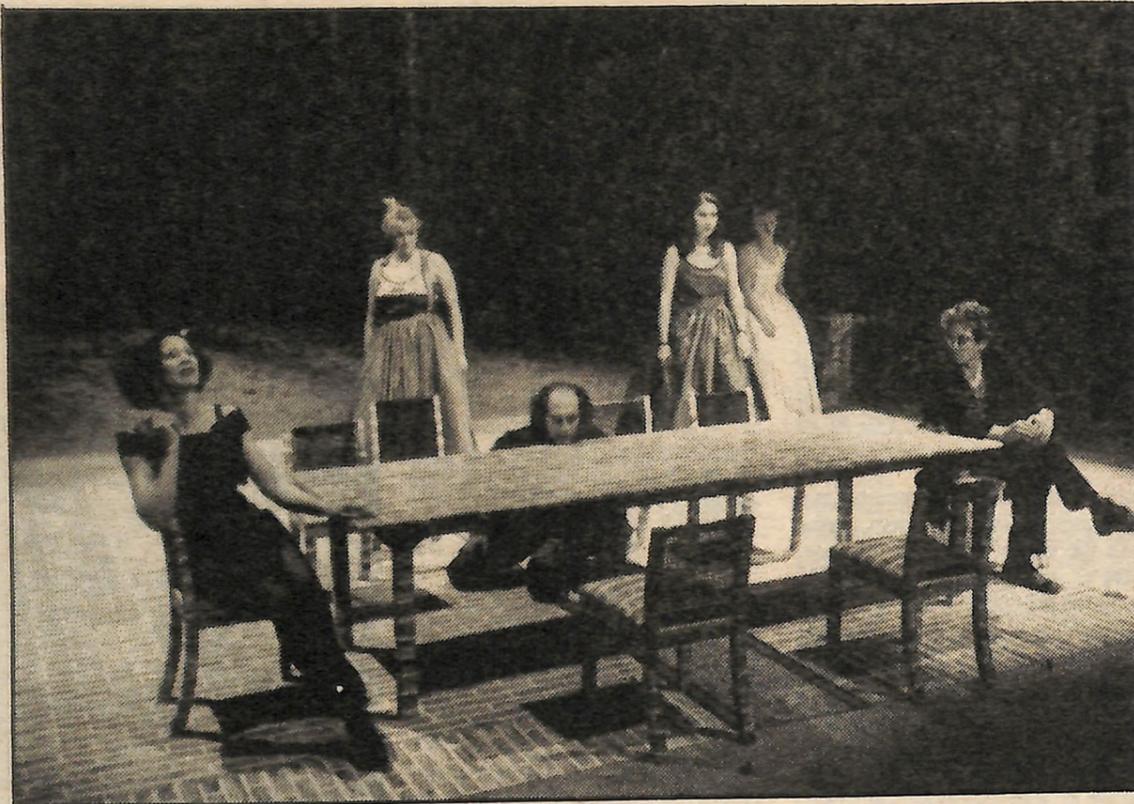



# ŠĆEPAN PLAYS A GENERAL

*In Antwerpen, Voja Brajović acts in a language he has never studied, with actors who speak a tongue he cannot understand, in a modernized Flemish ballad which, it seems to him, he understands much better than his Flemish colleagues*

**W**hen you open this issue of "Ludus", Voja Brajović will again be in Antwerpen, or perhaps in Amsterdam, where the production he plays in — "The Ballad of Mr. Halevin" — is supposed to go on tour. Brajović left for Antwerpen, this year's cultural capital of Europe, several days after his Belgrade premiere of the "False Emperor Šćepan the Small" in order to prepare the role of the General in the recently established International New Scene Theater in Antwerpen. He has already performed it at least a dozen times, returning in the meanwhile to Belgrade to do three additional performances of "Šćepan" on his home stage, the Yugoslav Drama Theater, and then to head once more towards Antwerpen in late November.

**H**ow did he manage to get to Antwerpen? The answer is simple: he was invited by Slobodan Unkovski, his friend and director with whom he had worked together during the staging of the "Croatian Faust" and the "Theatrical Illusions". Unkovski invited him, and Dejan Mijač convinced him to leave by saying: "You have to overcome your peasant obstinacy and go!" He obeyed. "As much as I was scared when I entered the deserted factory turned into a theater with the ultimate modern equipment, Slobodan Unkovski was worried even more about me, wondering whether I will make it through." He left for Antwerpen to play a role in English, a language he never studied, and to play with actors who speak Flemish. "I will speak with my hands and feet, I said. I did not try to conceal my ignorance in front of my new colleagues, nor did I conceal what was in my heart. They liked it." How he managed to get by? "Even a monkey can be taught a bunch of things." "Voja Brajović plays in English," reported Nieuwsblad. "In



the beginning it sounded somewhat strange, but the text could be understood even by those who are not experts in the language of Shakespeare." The reviews were, altogether, favorable.

Contrary to his expectations, he was not swamped with questions about the war and Balkan politics. In any case, in Belgium it is impolite to talk about politics or money. Only after his seventh or eighth performance his colleague, Hilda Cornette, who manages the theater with her husband Charles, asked him: "You are half Serb and half Croat, aren't you?" "No, I am wholly Serb, half Serbian and half Montenegrin." Mrs. Cornette didn't require any additional explanation. He believes that the question was asked only because of the other people who were sitting at the same table with them. Once, he tried to explain our situation picturesquely. He told them: "In the city of Tuzla, in Bosnia, there is a soccer team named "Freedom", in which only Muslims play. What do you think our Muslims look like?" They said: "We have our Muslims too: Moroccans, Algerians, Yemenis..." Then he told them: "Our Muslims look like Swedes." I think they got the picture. He noticed that, in general, the Belgians he spent time with were at a loss to understand many things about us but, as well-behaved as they were, would try not to show it — except by expressing mild surprise. For instance, they marveled at the almost "suicidal" way in which he joined the project. He rehearsed for about eight hours altogether, spending additional eight hours practicing with Unkovski. They couldn't believe that the six performances of "Šćepan the Small" were seen by four thousand people. They were amazed that "Šćepan the Small" was actually a historic figure. He told them that he has been playing in a particular production for over twenty—two years. They asked him: "You played in it when you were 22?" It was very difficult for him to explain that for 22 years he had been playing in the "Bug in the Ear." He told them how theaters in his city are always full. They asked him: "Why do people go to the theater?" Because, he said, in the theater there are no tricks and no lies, and because one can leave the theater easily, which in real life is not so often possible. ■ Vidan Savić  
December 1993

## COMING UP FOR AIR

*Milena Dravić, after her third Macedonian tour: "My colleagues came, primarily those in the movie business, then theater actors, directors. It seemed to me as if we had been separated only for a brief while, but nothing was really lost between us."*

**T**hey didn't even ask for my ID. They knew I had come to do a show, and only said: Go on! It was the same on my way back. I talked to them, everyone was extremely nice, I had a feeling they were glad to see me..." Milena Dravić thus describes her experience at the Macedonian — Serbian border: the only frontier in former Yugoslavia which could be reached directly, instead of having to pass through foreign countries. She is now getting ready for her fourth Macedonian tour in a row, with her show "Milena in the Men's World", based on texts by Duško Radović. "The first invitation came to me from the Drama Theater in Skoplje, last December. Afterwards, they invited me to Bitolj; I played in the National Theater. Then I traveled for the third time; I had two shows, one in the Skoplje Drama Theater again, and the other in Kumanovo. Around mid-April I am booked to go Ohrid, Struga, Djevdjelija... Even the pieces themselves aren't that important any more. It was the encounter of the audience with all of what I have done, with everything that I managed to achieve so far, that has become such a

treasured memory to me. My colleagues came, primarily those in the movie business, then theater actors, directors. It seemed to me as if we had been separated only for a little while, but nothing was really lost between us." Everywhere I went, says Milena, I felt that people want to keep in touch, to do anything to avoid a complete break between us.

**N**either has anything changed in their emotions towards us. There is that official border line, the only thing that is dividing us. Everyone makes fun of it, indeed, but — it exists. What is most important is that we want to keep doing things together. Before me, Zdravko Čolić, Bajaga, Miki Jevremović, and Miroslav Ilić all went to Macedonia. They also got standing ovations. It seems to me that many of my colleagues will go on Macedonian tours now, because the public wants it. It is not mere courtesy: those people were loved before, and they are loved now just as much. I still remember the shock my group experienced during our first tour. There were tears, and everything. This is why we shouldn't give up; a society which acts as if it has no room for art and culture should quite seriously ask itself what is wrong with it. I am sad that there are no possibilities for us to contact our colleagues from other parts of former Yugoslavia. I sincerely believe that the present break will not prevent us from meeting again; there are many of us who are hoping for that.

And then she says: "I feel hemmed in and it is horrible. I feel awful, and have this terrible urge to come up for air. Even our former territory was too small for me. It is not my feeling only, all people in our business share it. We hoped that the sanctions will be lifted; it seems to me that we would have accepted even honorary engagements only to be able to work, not to sever contact... These tours of mine also show how senseless isolation is, and how tragic it could be. I don't know who can profit from it. If we shut ourselves off completely, we will be stricken off from the list of the inhabitants of this world — we will become a concentration camp. It is an illusion to think that everything can be endured. ■ S.V.  
April 1993

*No cheating, no lying in theater: Voja Brajović (in the middle) in the show "The Ballad of Mister Halevin" in Antwerpen*

## EX YU

◆ "The New York Times" recorded, and the "Vreme" has passed the information on to us that the Chamber Theatre in Sarajevo gives a performance every day, at 1 p.m., provided that the intensity of battles allows of it. The actress Kaca Celan and the choreographer Slavko Pervan made a wartime adaptation of the Broadway musical "The Hair", which has been performed twenty times within two months.

November 1992

◆ Milena Zupančič, the actress, and Drago Jancar, the playwright, were granted the annual Presern Award, the greatest Slovene award for arts. Mrs Zupančič said on the occasion: "I must confess that I now feel limited to a very narrow space. Our audience was suddenly reduced from 22 million to two million potential spectators. I think that the resonant space of Yugoslavia was to the advantage of all. Slovene productions and their authors were not only recognized throughout Yugoslavia, but often praised even higher than here, in Slovenia. I feel as if I were expelled from the house and captured in a small room which I can't leave."

November 1992

## ITI WITHOUT YUGOSLAVIA

A regular session of the International Theatrical Institute (ITI) is scheduled for late May in Munich. The representative of new Yugoslavia will not attend it, for two reasons: owing to additional sanctions against our country and because for many years now Yugoslavia has not been paying its membership dues. The Yugoslav ITI Section has long been lacking foreign currency needed to pay them; the failure to pay the fees automatically excludes any member from this most important theatrical organization operating under the auspices of UNESCO.

May 1993

**RESOLUTION No 877**  
**October 21 1993**  
**RESOLUTION No 900**  
**March 4 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 908**  
**March 31 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 913**  
**April 21 1994**

**RESOLUTION No 914**

**April 26 1994**

**RESOLUTION No 936**

**July 8 1994**

**RESOLUTION No 941**

**September 23 1994**

**RESOLUTION No 942**

**September 23 1994**

The first sentences in the first issue of "Ludus" are from your poem: "What use is theatre when we are at close grips with poverty?"... That question was put in a different, more direct way by the "volkesdeutscher" Maitzen in a dialogue with Vasilie Shopalovich: 'You don't mind this?... This shadow of the gallows falling on your stage?' But here they are, the death shadows are falling on us all, and the actors are still playing. Are they keeping us, and themselves, in an illusion that we live?

Your question evidently requires many answers. First, my poem begins with the verses you quote, the problem is just stated in them; while 'what the poet meant', his solution to the problem is, as usual, in the final verses of the poem. These verses could be the answer to your question. Second, the theatre is not solely an illusion, nor it creates only illusions. Most particularly not those which should deceive us and hide the reality from us. The theatre reveals reality. Or, to be more precise: the theatre magnifies reality! Even when it is all woven out of illusions!

Third, there are no arts, therefore it includes the theatre, which flourish only in peaceful and benevolent times. Sometimes the most substantial, most relevant pages were written in the extremely arduous circumstances. Villon wrote his ballads and quatrains literally waiting under the gallows to be hanged. André Chénier wrote his famous "Les Jambes" waiting to be guillotined. That was the literal shadow of the guillotine. The shadow of the gallows falls across the stage or the paper one writes on, even when there are no gallows: the shadow of the gallows might come from the future, from some gallows that will rise tomorrow or the day after. Therefore, the shadow of the war that falls on our stages and books is something neither unknown, nor unexpected. If the shadow of gallows falls on your paper, it is not the reason to throw your pen away. It is one reason more to write! You fight that shadow with your writing...

You said once: 'If we should stop writing because of the cannon fire, that would mean handing everything over to the cannons'. But the cannons keep roaring, smothering our words and our speech, so that not only their power but even their meaning is questioned. Something like that is also happening to the theatre. Perhaps we will be happier, like your character Phillip in "The Travelling Troupe Šopalović", if we

could completely intermingle life and theatre, erase the border between life and art, establish some reality of our own. Or is it only possible in poetical fantasies?

A fantasy is also some sort of reality. A fantasy can also be effective. I would remind you of an Emily Dickinson poem:

*To make a prairie it takes a clover  
and one bee,  
One clover, and a bee,  
And revery.  
The revery alone will do,  
If bees are few.*

At the end of "The Touring Company Shopalovich" Phillip dies because he is not aware of the reality. The Hasan Aga's Wife dies in the reality which had cruelly toyed with her life. She is the victim in the male games of politics. In a certain way we are all — some more, some less — exposed to similar misfortune. What remains for us now?

Evidently we cannot accept that our destiny is in the someone else's hands. And how we are just putty in these hands, being moulded into this or that usefulness. As I recall, the Hasan Aga's Wife says "clay", not "putty", and fights against being clay from which, according to the will of some potter—demiurge, she can be moulded into a vase, a pot or a bowl. For us remains to fight against those who are trying to mould us like clay. And remains the fight against our destiny being decided on the level of butchery.

"We can say everything, but we cannot do anything." It is as if these words of yours have touched the lowest point of resignation. On the other hand, you like to quote Rousseau: 'I have realised that everything is rooted into politics, and that no matter how well an individual can get along, one people can never be anything but what the nature of its government had made of it'. What is then our role in this theatre?

When I first read this Rousseau's thought, it frightened me. And when I realised how true it is, I was horrified. The proof how veritable it is are the results of our last elections. The present government had contributed to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, contributed to the accompanying huge devastation and numerous victims of this dissolution, contributed to the breakdown of the legal system and rise of crime and violence, ruined our economy, obstructed the development of our science, turned all

*With the playwright  
Ljubomir Simović  
talks the editor  
Feliks Pašić*

*The shadow of the gallows falls across the stage or the paper one writes on, even when there are no gallows: the shadow of the gallows might come from the future, from some gallows that will rise tomorrow or the day after. If the shadow of gallows falls on your paper, it is not the reason to throw your pen away. It is one reason more to write!*

Photo Vesna Pavlović

The brilliant poet, the wise essayist, Ljubomir Simović wrote his first theatre play "The Wife of Hasan Aga" in his mature years, persuaded by Velimir Lukić, also a poet and a dramatist, then (1972) the director of the National Theatre in Belgrade. After "The Wife of Hasan Aga" (Hasanaginica) came "The Miracle in Šargan" (Čudo u Šarganu), "The Travelling Troupe Šopalović" (Putujuće pozorište Šopalović) and "The Battle of Kosovo" (Boj na Kosovu). With these four dramas Simović is already highly valued in the history of Serbian play writing. Ljubomir Simović answers the ten questions for "Ludus".

# THREE BOARDS





our friends into our enemies, broken all our relations with the world, placed us into economical, cultural, political and moral isolation, hindered the democratisation process, hastened the emigration of our young — in one word, government left us with no perspective, and it still wins the elections! That victory cannot be explained only by partly rigged elections. During the fifty years of its rule, this type of government had successfully 'produced' the obedient and submissive people suitable for its notions of state and society organisation, for its mode and manner of ruling. We are transformed into a nation afraid of each and every change. And any responsibility. It is easier for us to blindly follow the blind leader — as in the satirist Domanovic story — who is shepherding us into doom, then to take the initiative and the responsibility for our initiative. The things might be even worse. Serbian civilians, children and old in this war are dying in multitude not because of the strength and mightier force of the others, but because of its own undisciplined and disorganized fighting units. You cannot defend yourself from the enemy if you are drunk! A messy, dirty, unshaven captain cannot demand of his soldiers to be clean, sober and disciplined! I said captain, but the generals are no better. The victories of Serbian Dukes in World War I are studied in the world's greatest military academies. While our military Dukes from those times could organise the biggest and most complex battles, the present generals are unable to organise and protect the convoy of a few cars! I have in mind, of course, that general of ours who drove through Sarajevo sitting up front, while behind his back the vehicles were stopped, privates and officers were killed and taken prisoners. Such generals, and such officials, and such workers were produced by the present government, and this, as I have said, proves the validity of Rousseau's reasoning. Our people had become what its government wanted to make of it.

**5** At the closing of the play the poor Shopalovichs depart into the distance, toward the gray skies. Even the words cannot reach them any more, they do not hear Simka's yelling that torturer Drobac hanged himself from a pear tree. After that final scene, the essayist Jovan Hristić wrote that the spectator leaves the theatre with a cleansed soul. When we saw the performance seven years ago, we could experience the finale as the poetic symbolism. I am afraid that today we would leave the theatre with a different feeling. The darkness into which vanish the Shopalovichs and that Drobac who was leaving the trail of blood behind, both had in the meantime crossed over from symbolic to harshest reality. Had Drobac really died? And that night which drags into itself the Shopalovichs, has it already engulfed the stage and the audience?

That 'night' has undoubtedly engulfed both the stage and the audience, but undoubtedly it has not drowned them for ever! I think the question is not whether Drobac really died, but: is Sofia possible? In other words, can the theatre do what Sofia did to Drobac? We cannot know the answer until we try.

However, while I watch how the autonomy of the Belgrade University is repealed, how the leading party now controls the University Clinical Centre, Radio and Television, and theatres, and museums, and what are the election criteria for the new directors and executives in the most important institutions of culture, we can only conclude that this government is determined in its intention to make of us a firmly controlled state. In the realisation of this objective it will use anyone, stop at nothing. From petrol industry to theatre, from kindergarten to army, everything is in their hands. For us will remain only the stage like the one in "The Travelling Troupe Šopalović": 'three boards on two tubs'. If we have nothing else, we will write for that stage. And on that stage we shall act.

**6** We have recently seen again "The Miracle in Šargan". The two worlds of your play — the earthly one and the one beyond — the director Egon Savin has united and placed in the space of a filthy and featureless cafe bar. Together with ghosts from World War I walking among the living, on the stage were now also the fighters dressed in uniforms from the later wars. As if this multiplication of uniforms by itself multiplies the misfortunes which the guests of your canteen are destined to live in. We are again with the symbol overtaken by the reality. Particularly nowadays in your play seems relevant the question: what might be the perspective, and is one in any way possible, can these people on the margins of life and history develop any kind of self awareness? Or are they destined to experience the real drama only when grazed by a bullet?

Before I answer your question, I would say something about that fusion of the 'earthly' and 'beyond'. These two worlds were experienced and written as one. In principle I care very much for the recognition of the unity of these two worlds, and pre-

servation of this unity should be borne in mind as one of the first things when staging "The Miracle in Šargan".

Otherwise, your question suggests a hopeless answer. Unfortunately, there is a reason for that. What you ask me, and what I can answer to your query is still in connection to that Rousseau's quotation. Between Serbian people and its awareness about itself were placed numerous obstacles in order that they do not attain such awareness. The information and school systems, same as everything else, are organised to deny us the achievement of this self-awareness. Because, if we should attain it, we would first refuse them our obedience. The proof that the government employs the greatest energies and greatest determination to prevent the awakening of our awareness, so that we can be kept in the state of obedience and submission, can be seen in its effort to subjugate Belgrade University — what we just talked about. The system is huge and highly developed. This system has more black days in store for us. Recently, in conversation with the professor and theatre critic Vladimir Stamenković, I said that I would not so much fear the ordeal which probably awaits us, if I could believe how we would be purified and strengthened through such ordeal. Our present drama is not in our suffering but in our uncomprehending of that ordeal.

**7** Your belief that there is no real life without real suffering, I should say, you put to test in your playwriting. But it might seem that as we suffer more, we are at greater distance from real life. Is there a paradox? And how to 'read' Ivo Andrić when he says that through suffering one matures more quickly?

I do not know of any knowledge, of any experience, that is as stable, even effective, as the knowledge and experience we had obtained through suffering. Besides, it is one of the general truisms. But we have forgotten even the general truths. I do not know of a people that had suffered more and gained so little knowledge from its suffering. That is why I so much fear the impending ordeal. ➔

# ON TWO TUBS

**RESOLUTION No 943**  
**September 23 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 947**  
**September 30 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 958**  
**November 19 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 959**  
**November 19 1994**

**RESOLUTION No 967**  
**December 14 1994**  
**RESOLUTION No 970**  
**January 11 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 981**  
**March 31 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 982**  
**March 31 1995**

if centuries had passed since 1989 and since the glamorous premiere of the film "The Battle of Kosovo" which, as I recall, the former president of Yugoslavia Janez Drnovšek attended as well. Has this period in between released you from possible deceptions?

Your question again demands many answers. I shall begin with the easiest and most irrelevant one: the 'glamorous' premiere of that TV film. The producer even forgot to give me the ticket for the premiere, and it is the best indication of my position in that 'glamour'. The film itself and the circumstances it was made in was something beyond my influence. I can only talk about the book "The Battle of Kosovo".

The question about the pictures carried on the rallies of the so called anti-bureaucracy revolution has manifold relevance. It had the effect of a wonder when after the first reigning iconography, those pictures of Lenin, Marx, Engels, Tito and Stalin, and afterwards those of Kardelj, Ranković, Moša Pijade, Djilas, Blažo Jovanović, Pucar, Kidrič and so on, suddenly appears an old, till then forbidden and persecuted, almost forgotten iconography. You know that a number of things were pronounced here the manifestations of Serbian nationalism, and how all that was punishable and punished. The pictures of St. Sava, Njegoš, Tesla, Karadjordje, Dositej, the pictures of the Dukes Putnik, Mišić or Stepa Stepanović have emerged as an absolutely unexpected horizon! We had hoped that the Serbian nation, out of whose memory and consciousness were systematically for decades expurgated all the signs and traces of its national identity, had managed to retain somewhere deep in its conscience these signs and is bringing them out into the light of day! We hoped that this awakened conscience will speed up our liberation and take us into the world of democracy. Instead of democracy we had lapsed into some kind of socialist nationalism, we might call it that. Socialism, defeated in all of eastern Europe, now fading out and disappearing, tried to save itself by putting on national masques: pictures of St. Sava,

Njegoš, Karadjordje, Serbian military Dukes. Because it could not profess itself any more as the protector of the working class interests, it tried to survive as the protector of the national interests. The feeling of threatened nation and the awakening of the national consciousness were never so misused and abused as in this defence of the last country of socialism. Everything was incorporated into this defence, thus also the celebration of 600—th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo. They have celebrated the 600 years of the battle of Kosovo with greatest pomp and with exaggerations customary for such occasions, and then they forgot both the battle and Kosovo. When I say that they have forgotten Kosovo, I do not mean the one six centuries ago, but the present one where none of the numerous problems were solved. The Serbs and Montenegrins rule there now, not the Albanians, but nothing has either changed or improved. Serbs and Montenegrins do not use the power to renew and strengthen our Kosovo roots, but to secure for themselves and their nearest the move from Kosovo to Belgrade. Everyone has only one's own interest in mind, and the government most of them all. As far as the Kosovo myth is concerned, it is the absolute opposite to their ideology and it could not fit into it no matter how. However, the fact that Kosovo myth cannot be incorporated into their ideology does not mean it cannot be incorporated into their politics. The present government supports itself through people who cannot see the difference.

10 After "The Miracle in Šargan", while commenting your theatrical success, you warned us: 'Do not forget that I am still just a poet who wrote two plays'. Since then you have written two more. Would you say today: 'I am just a poet who wrote four plays?' Or perhaps five? I still only dream about the fifth play! ■  
 February 1993

# THE "ŠOPALOVIĆ" IN GENEVA

*An unsuccessful attempt to entangle politics into the theater*

The first night of "The Travelling Troupe Šopalović" by Ljubomir Simović in Geneva at the Saint Gevre Theater, on 28 March, was greeted with 'salvos of applause', as reported by the Tanjug correspondent. This confirmed once again the universal value of this play which was written in 1985 and which in addition to its Sterija award on home terrain was declared the best theatrical creation in France three years ago. What made the Geneva performance an exception, however, is to be found in the non-theatrical circumstances that preceded the premiere and in which the philosopher Bernard Henri-Lévy played a central role. With a group of like-minded persons, he publicly raised the question: could a play by a Serbian writer be performed in Geneva while the war was raging in Bosnia? Stressing that Simović's play extols the Serbs, Lévy wanted the play directed by Anne Vouyouze and Josef Emmanuel Veaufrey to be taken off the repertoire. The pressure was so intense that the Theater decided not to cancel the first night but to arrange on April 11th a 'round table' at which Lévy's film about Bosnia would be shown and then follo-

wed by a confrontation of views. The debate reached a boiling point even before it began. Poet Simović's eminent colleague Georges Aldas, translator of the play and the Lausanne publisher Vladimir Dimitrijević, who described newswoman Sandrina Fabry's article about "the poet's bloody role" as a printing error, so inaccurate and slanderous it was — rose to Simović's defence. "When one's nationality of itself is sufficient to slander a poet and condemn those who try to present his work in your country, that kind of behaviour is identical with that which your paper has for years been condemning. Should one use the explicit word for such behaviour?" asked Dimitrijević the newswoman of the Journal de Geneve.

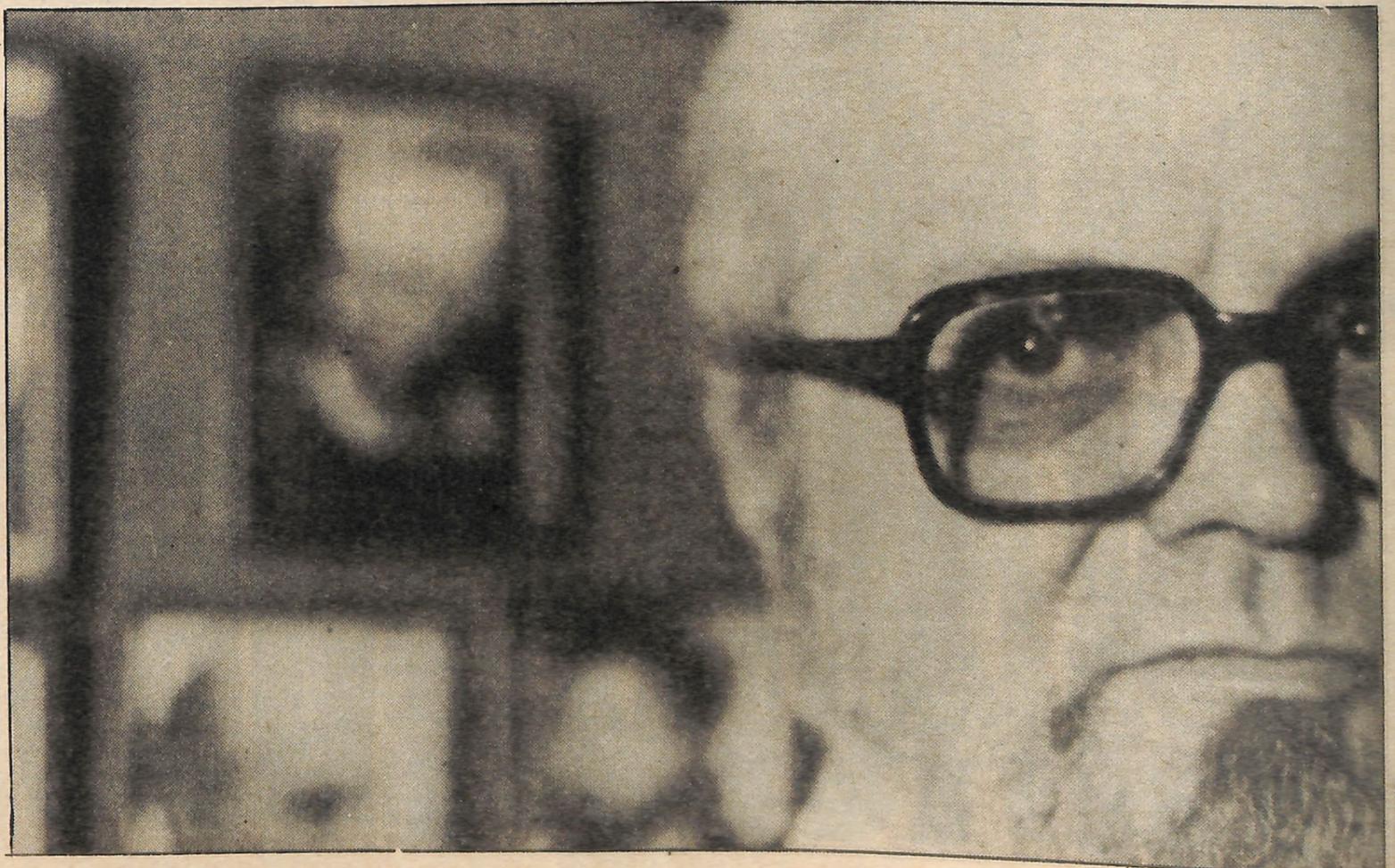
This scandal, however, did not shake the performers who had been gathered around this project from various theaters in the French part of Switzerland. The Šopalovići have been performed every other day to a full house while the critics have spared no praise in their reviews of the play. Even in the Roman Catholic "Courier", as Tanjug reported, Simović's play was lauded because "by setting it in the Balkans, the poet had raised some of the universal questions of conscience and responsibility, not only of the cast, (whether or not to perform it while the war lasts) but also of every individual, both yesterday and today.

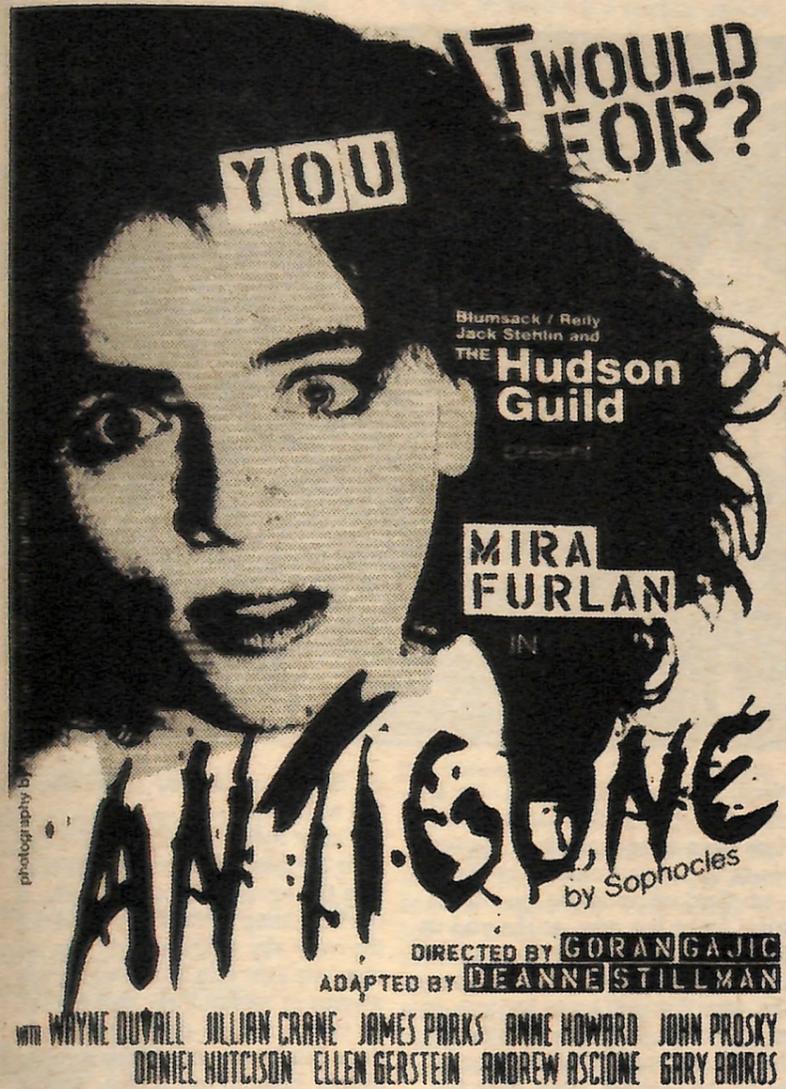
The "Traveling Troupe" had scheduled a formal premiere in Geneva to which Simović was invited. The performance was then seen in Lausanne and Montreux. Simović himself did not wish to comment on the dispute about the play, believing, as our newspapers recorded, "that this was impossible". But even before he set out, Swiss public opinion "worked for him". The public swarmed to the theater not bothering about the delicate issues of history and politics, thus confirming the assertion made by the director of the play Vince, who stated: It is very mistaken to interpret the present war in the Balkans through a theatrical play". ■  
 April 1995

8 The Beggar in "The Miracle in Šargan" realises too late his self deception that someone else can undergo sacrifice for us, carry the burden of our troubles or, like him, suffer someone else's wounds. The times we live in actualise the story of the Beggar. Do we understand it better today than we did seventeen years ago, when it was told us for the first time by actor Slobodan Perović in Atelje 212?

We live today in completely different circumstances, even in another state, and in a world different from the one on October 24, 1975, the premiere date in Atelje 212. There is now the new director, the new generation of actors, the new generation of spectators. Of course, they have read and understood "Šargan" in a way different from the one of the actors and spectators in 1975. Today's understanding is also an outcome of these different circumstances. The performance in Atelje 212 was the remembrance of an old war, while the performance of Serbian National Theatre (Srpsko narodno pozorište) in Novi Sad was happening simultaneously with the new, real war, and so this performance simply could not overlook that fact. In the context of the news from the war zone we see and hear every day, and in the entirety of such atmosphere of war and refugees, all those words acquired a new sound, new meaning, new authenticity. This new understanding and new reading of that play do not disprove Slobodan Perović. He is only verified with the new evidence.

9 Your fourth play "The Battle of Kosovo" was published in 1989, the anniversary year of the six centuries of this battle. You were at that time asked whether you are nourishing the glorification of the Kosovo myth, 'the nationalist seed of evil'. You were — then — encouraged by the feeling that the Serbian people are on the way of regaining the national and historical consciousness. The iconography of the populist rallies included the pictures of St. Sava, Njegoš, Tesla, Vuk Karadžić, Karadjordje, Duke Mišić, and one saw in it, then, a sign that people know which persons and ways it should turn to so that it can continue its existence... As





## DEDICATION TO EXILED FRIENDS

Mira Furlan is *Antigone* in the performance of Sophocles' tragedy directed by Goran Gajić in Los Angeles

Towards the end of September, the Hudson Guild theatre, situated on the Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood gave the premiere of Sophocles' "Antigone", the play which had the following question as a slogan: "What would YOU die for?" It was given a warm reception by both the audience and the critics, and it will be staged in this independent and non-profitable Hollywood theatre four times a week, until 31st December. The play was directed by Goran Gajić of Belgrade, while the title role is played by his life companion — Mira Furlan.

After Lorca's *Yerma* in Indiana and several roles in Los Angeles (Shaw's "Don Juan in Hell" (Man and Superman) and Brecht's "Baal"), this is Mira's fourth leading role in the United States, rewarded by flattering appraisals by the Los Angeles drama critics. After the premiere, a critic noted: "Pervaded by memories of her personal pain, Ms Furlan created an irri-

sistible role." In moments while *Antigone* laments Polynic and when she addresses the audience directly with words about the pain of the disgraced and humiliated, her entire body becomes a terrifying chasm of horror and misfortune, such as we have seen on Munch's canvas "Outcry". The role of Kreont is performed by the increasingly popular American actor Wayne Duvall.

Goran Gajić, a movie director who has produced a theatrical play for the first time, is familiar to our audience mostly by the third story ("Do Not Send Me Letters") in the omnibus-film "How Rock—and—Roll Decayed" (1989) and by the interesting TV performance from the life of Yugoslav workers abroad (in which Mira also played) "Video Fir — Green Pine" (1990). *Antigone* starts by a series of stroboscopically lightened spectacles of war bestialities, while contemporary costumes and post-modernistic stage by John Iacovelli, consisting of scattered rubbish, sharpens the meaning: the director Gajić and the adaptor of the piece, Deanne Stillman base their version of the tragedy on war horrors of the former Yugoslavia, but owing to skill and imagination, they leave such simplified premisses far behind them.

Gajić's solution of Sophocles' chorus deserves special attention: skillfully edited responses of common street passers—by who, answering to the question from the play's subtitle, express their attitude towards the discord on the stage, are broadcast on television sets hanging along the stage, between scenes performed live. The performance ends by ingeniously conceived curtsey in which one after the other, all the characters are put to death. The accompanying song of this play — "United Anthems" — is the work by another cult personality of Belgrade, Koya the Black Tooth from the "Disciplina Kičme".

In the programme of the play, Goran and Mira addressed the American audience to explain why this performance is put on just now. They said that, first defeated in the state in which the world had become black and white, while all the others had been defamed as cruel beasts and primitive criminals, today they feel as members of the "party" which has the holy right to fight for freedom and to redress historical injustices, regardless of consequences. This play was a modest occasion for them to voice the following message: "Stop! Think about mankind, and not about states! Think of mankind, and not of nations! Think about mankind, and not about allies and enemies! Think of mankind, and not of maps! Think about bridges, and not frontiers!" They dedicate the performance to all their friends who were forced to leave their homes in order to save their lives, both in the physical and the spiritual aspect. Some of them participated in the creation of the performance, which is the proof that nothing can prevent communication between artists. The married couple Furlan—Gajić wholeheartedly support "those people from the former Yugoslavia who are displaced and wrenched from their lives and homes in order to agree to new maps, conceived in hell".

In the United States, Mira Furlan continues to play the character of Madam Ambassador Dylan in the mammoth science fiction television serial "Babylon 5" produced by Warner Bros. She writes to a friend in Belgrade that she is extremely satisfied because "Antigone" is "ours", stemming from our misfortune and pain, intensive, strong, genuine, without letup and developing quickly as lightning (or more precisely — bullet). ■ Lj.M. November 1995

## I CANNOT KEEP QUIET

Slobodan Snajder: „Grant God that from the civil war remain only dramas

November 1982, the Yugoslav Drama Theatre: the opening night of the "Croatian Faust" by Slobodan Snajder. Directed by Slobodan Unkovski, roles played by Miki Manojlović, Vladica Milosavljević, Aleksandar Berček, Žarko Laušević, Branislav Lečić, Zoran Cvijanović ...

The drama which will mark the turning point in the life and career of Slobodan Snajder, the writer considers today, is in no way the best thing he has "ever written", but the fate turned it into his trade mark. Be that as it may, even thirteen years later, the "Faust" has not had its "real, big premiere" in Zagreb, but nevertheless, it has been played by German and Austrian actors. Two seasons ago, on the stage of the Viennese Burgtheatre, the "Croatian Faust" was greeted by the audience

— "the Vienna smart set" — with 20-minute ovation, recalls Slobodan Snajder: "Judging by all the external signs, it should have been a great success in the professional sense. Unfortunately, without knowing it, I was thrust into a local war between the manager of the Klaus Payman's house and the Viennese press. The play itself was saved — it was the topic of serious, theatrical analyses. Regarding the performance by Hanes Holman, after two years, one can say that it does not belong to the rhythm of this time. As a professional, I know that — had they granted me half an hour of rehearsals — I would have arranged the performance in such a way that it would have been played up to this very day. However, I did not have any special chance in the Burgtheatre, where I was regarded — being a living writer — as a tolerated trouble." The premiere in Vienna ensured solid positions to Snajder, so that up to now he has had another two premieres of new dramas, written in Croatian, and then translated into German language. "That is a curiosity in itself — I write in Croatian, and the premieres are played in German, as if there exists a parallel life in another language. That brings some beauty, but also frustrations. Namely, my works have not been played in my own language for five years already! I am an "exported" writer — partly by my own will, partly by the will of my homeland. That took place maybe as early as in 1987, in the performance with Culi, which was staged more than a hundred times in the entire Germany and all over Europe. I have no problem with placing my plays today. Just recently, in Frankfurt on the Oder, they played my new drama, the "Consolation of Northern Seas" — a drama about Germany. It was written from the aspect of a man who does not feel quite at home in that country, but he is also no longer an outsider, which means that he lives in a certain double between the cultures and languages."

The other new Snajder's drama, the "Snake's Slough", focuses on mass rapings which were carried on during the civil war in Bosnia. The main heroine's name is Azra, and she has with her a child born from such a relation, while opposite her is — a "Serbian non-regular fighter" ... The play, for which Snajder found the outline in a folk tale titled "The Snake Groom", in Vuk Karadžić's anthology, has already been presented to the audience in Tübingen, while it has also been rehearsed for a theatre in Oslo, in Norwegian, under the guidance of directress Mira Erceg. Regarding this delicate topic, Snajder says, there was no dilemma whether it has any sense, or, whether it is "worthwhile" to deal with the current history, the present situation: "Grant God that from the civil war, which I call the thirty-year-war, in thirty years remain only — dramas. People who write are certainly very different, each of them has his own scheme and alibi, but nevertheless, due to the pressure by events, which is too strong — one cannot wait for eternity. I think that, in the end, a writer is not free in selecting topics. My basic motive here was to interrupt the suppression of the "useless history". When I realized that these women are no longer anybody's interest, a certain rage appeared as the last impulse prior to acting. I do not think that I could have avoided that topic." With a remark that the performances

on which he worked in "this part of Yugoslavia" fall among the best of his life experiences, Snajder inquires after Manojlović, Vladica, Lečić, Berček, Mira Karanović ... "I have already been writing for four years a play in which there is a role for Mira, which could be her life role in some other circumstances ... She can take this as a love statement over a thousand and five hundred kilometers, and over the five years that have passed since we last heard from each other. The play talks about the actress Gena Bojic, born in Zagreb, who was, like me, both German and Croatian, and who made a great international career abroad, but committed suicide in Vienna in 1914. She committed suicide exactly on the day when the forces of monarchy occupied Belgrade, in December 1914, at the age of 32. Why did she do it? I suppose that behind all that, there is a dark love story, a professional crisis, but it was all connected with World War One. She killed herself partly because she could not bear the fact that Croats and Serbs were on two opposing sides in that war. The cards were, certainly, dealt in a different way in this war, but I have been working with analogies all my life, so it will again be like that. Gena Bojic did not have material problems, but she was left without any theatre engagement after a period in which she was a great star. That woman was unhappy because she had many criteria, she knew what she wanted, and she could not get it. This means that what I am working on is a love drama, but not also a sentimental one. In a world which discourages love and which immediately turns everything into soaps, I have been trying to write a pungent story, about a pungently profiled destiny."

Since Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade are the only three cities in the world where his plays could be staged in the original language, Snajder says that — when the "two angry states one day recognize each other" — he would be happy to see his dramas again played in Belgrade. The discussion then goes back to the unavoidable "Croatian Faust", the drama which he would sometimes "like to forget": "Everything that happened around that drama, the violence with which it was disputed, was for me an unpleasant surprise. I wrote it as a piece on the stage in a bad time, not as a play about Serbs and Croats!" ■

Tanja Petrović  
September 1995

RESOLUTION No 983  
March 31 1995  
RESOLUTION No 987  
April 18 1995  
RESOLUTION No 988  
April 21 1995  
RESOLUTION No 990  
April 28 1995

**RESOLUTION No 992**

**May 11 1995**

**RESOLUTION No 994**

**May 17 1995**

**RESOLUTION No 998**

**June 16 1995**

**RESOLUTION No 1003**

**July 2 1995**

*The catastrophic symbolism:  
A scene from the show  
„Titanick“ performed at the  
28th BITEF, 1994, by the  
Theater Titanick from Koeln.*

denial of our existence by our former brothers who often justify their mutual hatred by insisting on the odium of what Yugoslavia has meant to them. They call me a jynx, a hybrid of no account, a trick played on them all by history, a destroyer of the rights of small nations — they deny my existence and curse me, but I still love them: the Serbs, the Muslims, the Croats, the Slovenians, the Montenegrins, the Albanians, the Hungarians — all those who used to live peacefully with me in that same Yugoslavia whose memory they now drag through the mud. Maybe that Yugoslavia was indeed sinful, poorly conceptualized and still more poorly realized, maybe it was, though I do not believe it, a stepmother to some and a fairy godmother to others, but, no matter how inadequate it was, I cannot deny the simple fact that it gave me life, and I cannot cease to exist only because it has disappeared, unloved by others who did not share my feelings.

# I STILL LOVE THEM ALL

*„I am a Yugoslav of a Yugoslavia that no longer exists. It is dead, but I am still alive.“ This is what Hadi Kuric wrote in his confession for the Yugoslav magazine „Bridges“, published in Spain.*

**W**ho am I? I was born in Serbia under the name of Mirhad, out of the marriage of the daughter of an Orthodox priest who was a communist, and a descendant of a Muslim aristocratic family; I myself am married to a Protestant Slovak with whom I used to live in Sarajevo. Who am I then, and what are my sons? The answer which once used to be such an easy one, is now hard even to utter.

I am a Yugoslav of a Yugoslavia that no longer exists. Of a country that has shaped me, and which — now deceased — is no longer interested in any future studies that some historians might write about it. It is dead, but I am still alive. The fact that almost no one among the world's politicians recognizes my existence does not hurt me all that much. Had they not been so busy denying my existence, they would have to admit that there are Czechoslovaks, Soviets, and many other millions of people similar to me, whose rights they have disregarded so blithely in their struggle for power, concealed under their slogans of a battle for „just“ goals. Much more painful to me, however, is the

**B**ecause we do not take sides in the Balkans War, we, the Yugoslavs — a handful of deprived wretches — are also neither loved, nor needed, and will probably in time be silently dropped from the history books written by the victors, simply to disappear. But for the time being, as long as we still do exist, like the people of Atlantis left without a homeland, we will leave our mark on this earth, merely by asserting our cultural identity. Not with the purpose of starting an eventual future struggle for the reunification of our country, but in order to preserve — in the totality of world's heritage, like a rare old book — the single thing that makes us different from the others — our cultural uniqueness.

It is true that because of our atheistic upbringing we were more open towards the wisdoms of Christian Orthodoxy, Islam and Catholicism; it is also undeniable that the multicultural influences have materialized in our roots. Though an Eastern Orthodox church, a Catholic cathedral, and a mosque will never again peacefully stand side by side in Sarajevo, in our memories and feelings they will forever remain united. Every single Yugoslav is — all by himself — both Sarajevo and Belgrade, and Skoplje... This is an undeniable truth and it cannot be taken away from us. We are obliged to keep saying it for the sake of our children, in order to save them from groping in the dark in search of their origins. If we fail to explain the past to them, the eclectic nature of Yugoslavism will keep confusing them and the elusiveness of their roots will endanger their personalities. If, owing to uncontrollable circumstances, we have lost our country, the least we can do now is save the cultural identity of our children, consisting as it is of the totality of all cultural values of the former Yugoslavia.

Therefore, I made a production about the civil war from our Yugoslav point of view. And, it takes no sides in the conflict; it only analyses the eternal theme of Cain and Abel, of brothers fighting each other, of executioners and their victims, brothers all, forever and always. ■

*Hadi Kuric  
February 1994*



## THE APPEAL OF ROBERTO CIULLI TO THE GERMAN PUBLIC

**A**s an art director of the Theater an der Ruhr in Mülheim, which gave home to the only Romany theatre in Europe two years ago, I make an appeal to the personalities of the culture, politics, economy, sports, and, naturally, theatre — to attend some of the performances that the Romany company is going to give on its tour called „Theatre against violence“. Obviously, theatre is not able to offer short-lived solutions to the political problems. And yet, a visit to a performance of the Pralipe Theatre will be the announcement of one's wish to live in peace with Romanies as a community. Being an Italian I do know that there is another Germany, and that Germany demands that we should set ourselves against the increasing hatred for foreigners. ■

*December 1992*

## GOD, TOO, LOVES BITEF

**O**n one of those shivery days, an unusual domestic participant in the 28th BITEF rumbled past me. Uninformed Serbs asked themselves the meaning of 'Zenerik vaper' (Generique vapeur) inscribed on a large van in big Cyrillic letters, when the word 'Jugodrho' (Yugoslav

Wood) was printed in the Latin alphabet on the vehicle's canvas cover. Here was a living example of our topsy-turvy times: formerly as 'Yug-wooders' we could use the international script but now, at the end of the century, we were breaking up the foreign world into the Cyrillic one. The fact that we have become so compressed did not seem to bother the robust young men from Marseilles, in the slightest. With their heavy-art they vaporized Prince Mihajlo himself by putting a petard in the place where he was weakest and so willy-nilly the bronze Prince was shaken for an instant on his horse and covered with avantgarde dust.

In recalling this fairly zany BITEF, one cannot but conclude that its participants had pyromanic inclinations. There was fire in most of the performances; the burning was sad, symbolic but also genuine — a veritable conflagration. In the darkness of the old sugar refinery, the cinders reached all of us, — the media actors of war, from the Ristic-Jovanovic "Antigone". For the Semola Theater from Barcelona, fire, among its whole range of meanings, was also an extreme erotic threat.

Were there no BITEF, would our small children see fireworks in this country where sports meets have been replaced by obscure meetings. For this reason, despite the catastrophic symbolism, the "Titanik" Theater from Cologne bestowed upon Belgrade's sky a rich display of fireworks. BITEF was, nevertheless, dominated by 'aquamanics'.

I don't know if over there, in Cetania, there is rain or how their plumbing system works, but the members of the Semola Theater were non-stop drenched in rain under the jets of their own theater. In their productions there were also other forms of wet exhibitionism: for instance, in the "Hybrid" performance, two very stable-looking persons quietly devoured spaghetti in a bath and did not interrupt their eating even when a whole tub of water swamped their lunch and a naked neighbour was served into their meal. In the finale of the watery bacchanal in the same production a naked bride falls into a miry puddle from her marital idyll.

The Tašmajdan stadium was subjected to a veritable flood in the act of the sinking of the "Titanic". Meanwhile, the spectators cursed the hour they managed to get front row seats and the actors masochistically delay-

ed their perdition by submitting to the waterfalls.

We must thank the Almighty for allowing all these disasters to remain within the boundaries of theater. For, at the beginning of BITEF it seemed that the very sky would burst. But this was only light rain as against the new sources of energy of the theater. It also rained several days later but by then BITEF was under a roof in the church building on Bajloni Square. There were attempts by the sky to interfere and assist the Aquarius of the "Titanic", but only a few 'tear drops' fell from above. And, then, a fortnight later, when the last Festival exaltation was over, Belgrade was again in the throes of frost The Almighty did, indeed, root for BITEF. ■

*Branka Krilovic  
October 1994*

## RISTIĆ IN AMSTERDAM, OHRID AND LONDON

In late June director Ljubisa Ristic staged his "Antigone" written by Dušan Jovanovic in Subotica. The show has been invited to the BITEF. Less than a month later, he was already in Amsterdam, where he worked with Dogtroep on a deserted dry dock on the show "Noordwester Wals". Performances were given every day except Sundays, from August 10 to 27, and seen by 1,600 people each. Theatricality of the spectacle was enhanced by 1.2 million liters of water gushing for 17 minutes, followed by a (prearranged) 20 meter high flame. Immediately after this opening night, Ljubisa Ristic came to Ohrid where with the ensemble of the National Theater from Bitola he did a six-hour long "Macbeth". The performance began on a boat, continued on the island of Sveti Naum, and finished on rafts toward the spring of Crni Drim. With this creation the director became this year's winner of "the Isis of Ohrid", the award of the Ohrid Summer. Beginning in October, the show will be on in the Bitola theater.

While in Macedonia, Ristic received a letter from Vanessa Redgrave inviting him to direct "the Liberation of Skopje" by Dušan Jovanovic in London next year, with Rade Šerbedzija and herself playing the leads. The show is supposed to be ready for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of victory over fascism, and the opening night has already been fixed for May 8.

*September 1994*

# SANCTIONS ARE BROKEN IN BELGRADE

Ronald Harwood, the President of the International PEN Center and the author of "The Dresser", published in London the diary of his January journey "There is not a dash of hope, but we know we must try", Harwood writes

December 1993

The Director of the Yugoslav Drama Theater, Jovan Cirilov, invited me to the opening night of "The Dresser" in January. The British Council, which is still active there, is going to cover my travel expenses, if I agree to give a lecture. I accepted immediately, because in this way I can fulfil my promise to visit the Serbian, the Croatian and the Slovene PEN Centers.

Friday, January 14, 1994

Because of the sanctions you can't fly directly from London to Belgrade. So I'm flying to Budapest, where the British Council secured me a minibus. They warned me about the shortages, so I'm setting off equipped with a soap, toilet paper and two bathtub plugs. From Budapest we left at about 1 P.M. for a journey more than 300 kilometers long. The day is cloudy and cool, drizzling all the time. Time and landscapes become irrelevant. The night falls. We reach the town of Roska at the border, where the line of cars waiting is endless. I was told that crossing the border may take three hours, even more. However, the driver is experienced. He dodges the row, getting in and out. In 20 minutes we passed passport control. At 8:20 he left me in front of the magnificent Hyatt Regency Hotel, where I was welcomed by dr Predrag Palavestra, president of the Serbian PEN, Jovan Cirilov, and a photo-reporter. Later on dr Robert Snell, acting director of the British Council, joined us.

When I entered my hotel room I exclaimed loudly: it is spacious, luxurious, comfortable, with a well-equipped bathroom. French soap, toilet paper and yes, a bathtub plug are at my disposal. I turned on the TV and was surprised when I saw CNN, Sky, BBC News and the usual cable trash. The dinner in the hotel dining room is also abundant.

The conversation immediately shifts to Serbia (which is officially and funnily called Yugoslavia) and the war. Here a dollar is worth over a billion

dinars. Milosevic is a suicidal person with four suicides in his family, including his father, and now he wants the whole nation to commit suicide along with him: oil is a luxury difficult to get: Moslems are getting arms from Saudi Arabia: the sanctions merely consolidate the regime, while the poor suffer. Incities there is little food, and when you go to a hospital you have to bring your own anesthetic. There is a lot of pain and despair, expressed cautiously and with dignity.

They leave me about 11 P.M. and I sleep like a log until 8 in the morning.

Saturday, January 15

I am speaking at the meeting at the Serbian PEN. About 30 members are present. Some of them compare themselves with writers in prison and demand the International PEN to fight against culture sanctions. I said I was against culture sanctions and was breaking them by coming to my opening night. If a government wants to censor plays and books, it is its own business, but I will not do it on its behalf. I remind them that the International PEN defends the freedom of expression. They accept it, but this is not exactly what they wanted to hear.

After that I have a private talk with Palavestra on the role of the International PEN in the region, but this is supposed to remain between him and me.

I am taking a walk around town and I see a long line of predominantly elderly people waiting for bread. It is distributed by political parties eager to win votes. Another line is for newspapers, paid for by checks. In the evening, dinner at the house of Slobodan Selenic and his wife. He is a leading Serbian novelist, and she used to be a ballet dancer. A beautiful couple and excellent hosts. The outside world seems not to exist any more. I am among Central European intellectuals, well informed, cultivated, and yet I feel some hidden unhappiness and unvoiced, but present anxiety.

Sunday, January 16

A lunch with Jovan Hristic and his new wife in their cottage almost next door to one of Tito's villas. From the toilet on the first floor you can see

his garden, which provokes the usual jokes.

In the evening I go to the opening night. Only standing room is available. Two magnificent actors: as Sir — Ljuba Tadic, who returned to the stage after a lengthy absence, and Petar Kralj as Norman. The production is fair and professional.

"The Dresser" has a special echo here today. I will quote a press announcement: the play "may offer an answer to the question what art is like in extraordinary circumstances and who needs it". The audience applauds frequently and unexpectedly — at lines about rationed supply, about barbarian bombardment of cities, about culture as self-defense, etc. The applause at the end is deafening. I had to make a bow, floodlit in the middle of the orchestra, but I knew I would have to pay for it.

Later on in the restaurant the two leading actors are greeted with applause when entering. The twelve of us, are served a generous dinner. Four men at the neighboring table, who saw the show, offer to pay the bill. The offer is accepted. Nouveaux riches, somebody said. "War profiteers", says another.

Monday, January 17

Press conference. About 30 journalists and TV cameras. The expected questions: What do you think of the performance? Do I think that writers can do anything in the current situation? I answer the latter question thus: If some Serbian writers have been accused for being the first to let the poison of nationalism out of the bottle, than others must find an antidote. I was surprised they knew about my meeting with Boutros Boutros Ghali in Geneva four days ago. Did we talk about the Balkans? It was a private meeting, I reply clumsily. Lunch with Palavestra and Cirilov. Good company. Palavestra, a noble university teacher, recently lost his brother who starved to death in Sarajevo. Cirilov is a "nerve", slim and ironic. The cloak-room attendant at the restaurant, young woman of exquisite beauty, thanks me for coming to Belgrade. My good colleagues are surprised, just as much as I am.

In the evening I give my lecture. A short history of English theater at the British Council. A full house once again. ■  
June 1994

# A REAL DEVIL

This has been said by Saša Petrović, one of the translators, on the occasion of the edition of Shakespeare's complete works in a single volume which, for once, classifies us among the leading ones

After a three-week journey from the printing-works in the Italian town of Treviso, via Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, the "Complete Works of William Shakespeare" have recently been smuggled into Yugoslavia. In that way, thanks to the Newspaper Publishing House "Sluzbeni List" and the Firm of Publishers "Dosije", we are the third nation in the world, after the English and the Germans, having all Shakespeare's works in a single volume. On 2,000 pages of thin paper, which is usually used for printing the "Bible", there are all Shakespeare's plays (37 of them). "Hamlet" is presented in two translations, by Velimir Zivojinovic and by Aleksandar Sasa Petrovic. All of Shakespeare's poems and sonnets are also included, as well as three supplements. The first one comprises works which have not been published in our country so far — the poem "Shall I die?", the authorship of which was only established in 1986; a fragment from the play "Sir Thomas More" and the play "The Two Noble Kinsmen" written in collaboration with John Fletcher. The second supplement consists of 15 most famous sources of Shakespeare's plays. It is well known that in Shakespeare's time writers used the works by other authors, and it is interesting how Shakespeare made masterpieces of these mediocre models, sometimes fully in keeping with the source, while at times taking over only certain scenes, most often changing the turn of events. The third supplement presents verses about Shakespeare, epigraphs and prefaces to the first edition of Shakespeare's works, published in 1623.

It is interesting that this edition in 1,500 copies is the second smallest circulation in the history of publishing Shakespeare's works. The first smallest circulation was issued as the so-called folio volume, which was

prepared seven years after Shakespeare's death by the members of his theatrical company John Heminges and Henry Condell. Up to now, 24 copies of that edition have been preserved, and in 1991 one of them was sold at an auction in London for 2,890,000 German marks. "Our edition will certainly be much cheaper even after 400 years, yet anyhow it is a challenge to collectors," says the manager of the Firm of Publishers "Dosije", Veljko Topalovic. Topalovic explains the importance of translation in preserving the authenticity of Shakespeare's works as much as possible. This edition was worked on by 21 translators. There are three approaches in translating Shakespeare's plays in our country. The first one is along the lines established by Svetislav Stefanovic. He translated syllable by syllable, verse by verse, whenever it was possible to translate in that way the great number of monosyllabic English words used by Shakespeare. In the translations by Velimir and Branimir Zivojinovic, there is often more text than in the original, but they translated all the meanings of Shakespeare's sentences. The translations of Aleksandar Sasa Petrovic have been made for dramatic performances. His sentences are clear, rhythmic and easily articulated, while being of the same value as those in looser translations. ■ Olivera Milosevic  
November 1995

## OUR PLAYS IN LONDON

In the beginning of August a three-day festival entitled "Plays from Former Yugoslavia" was held in London's Tricycle Theater. British actors presented five productions: "Images of Sorrowful Events", by Deana Leskovic, "A Growth", by Goran Stefanovski, "What Ever Happened to Leonardo", by Evald Flisar (a Slovenian author and playwright who lives in London), "Stefica in the Jaws of Life", by Dubravka Ugrešić, and "My Name is Mitar", by Vida Ognjenović. Gina Glendor, an actress and a producer, who along with the group of the London theater enthusiasts organized the festival, is convinced that Yugoslav theater production is among the best in the world and that it is well worth keeping in touch with.

September 1993



Two magnificent actors: Ronald Harwood with the Belgrade protagonists of "The Dresser" Ljuba Tadić (left) and Petar Kralj (photo by Srdja Mirković)

RESOLUTION № 1004  
July 12 1995  
RESOLUTION № 1009  
August 10 1995  
RESOLUTION № 1010  
August 10 1995  
RESOLUTION № 1015  
September 15 1995

**RESOLUTION No 1016**  
**September 21 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1019**  
**November 9 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1021**  
**November 22 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1022**  
**November 22 1995**

# IN KIŠ'S CONSTEL- TION

*The diary of a trip  
 through France,  
 written by  
 Aleksandar  
 Milosavljević, in  
 charge of selecting  
 plays for "Sterija  
 Festival" (Sterijino  
 pozorje)*

**R**eisefiber: I am told to prepare notes from my trip through France, and at the same moment I realise that the high standards of writing notes in the form of diary concerning theatre, and not only in "Ludus", are established by Mr Jovan Ćirilov. I am a beginner, and as such, I can only be a not overly successful imitator of this grand traveller and skillful chronicler of many journeys all over the world. The aim of my trip is Marseille where I will see the play "Travelling Theatre Shopalovitch" written by our greatest living drama writer Ljubomir Simović and performed by Theatre "Sablier" from Camaret in Orange.

## Wednesday, 15th February

On our way to Belgrade airport Branko Maširević is instructing me how to "use" Paris. His instructions are based on his personal mythology established during his staying in this city. "The roots of the game" are familiar to me, thanks to my friendship with Branko. For example, I must visit the cafe where Susanne Sontag and Danilo Kiš talked for the first time (Danilo Kiš is one of the key personalities of our common mythology). My friend had been enjoying the

rituals of student life in Paris for years, and consequently he drew his own map of this city, and is handing it out to his friends.

My "French connection" is waiting for me at Orly — Mrs Jelena Paolini. My hotel is on La Place de la Republique. A receptionist says that he hasn't got neither my reservation nor my train ticket to Marseille, although he did get a hand written fax signed only by name, and unreadable for that matter, in which that person reserves a room for certain Mr Alexander. I am the one. Just in case, I try to reach by telephone Theater Torsky and Mrs Isabel Garcia from Orange Theatre. The receptionist doesn't get it: if I am the guest of Orange Theatre, why do I care that much to reach Marseille? It is not his wish to interfere, but Marseill is not in Orange. I know, I say. I manage to reach Marseille, but no one there has heard about Mrs Garcia. Yes, the Orange actors are there, and wouldn't it be more simple to explain my situation by fax? The problem is not solved before nine o'clock P.M.

## Thursday, 16th February

I was wandering through Paris boulevards all morning. I have lunch at Mrs Danica Leko's home. She has just finished the translation of "The Life of Queen Jelena" written by arch-bishop Danilo II Petchki at the beginning of XVth century. She did it on short notice, but her motive was strong: collection of mediaeval texts will not contain serbian texts if her translation does not meet a dead line. The translation is finished in time and in front of me I have a letter from the publisher who praises Mrs Leko's work. I realise that the exploits like this one are the result of individual efforts, of perseverance and hard work of individuals, and have much more meaning than actions loudly announced by so called official state cultural politics, which are mainly never put to work.

Associations lead me further on: the name of the theatre performing "The Travelling Theatre Shopalovich" is "Sablier", which means "The Sand glass". I refuse to accept that this is merely a coincidence. Nomen est omen. I feel that the name of this theatre is a good omen, like a blessing of Kiš hovering over the adventures of mind that link different cultures and traditions. Many cultural, artistic and literary influences and connections are interwoven in this wreath and their ties are getting stronger thanks to, among other things, spirit and fountain pen of Danilo Kiš, to translations similar to this one of Danica Leko, and to the beautiful drama of Ljubomir Simović.

I am leaving Paris by fast train which arrives to Marseille after only four hours, and the distance in question is 800km. The train is comfortable like an airplane. I wonder if Isabel Garcia from "Sablier" Theater would wait for me on Marseille train station (as we previously agreed), holding a board with the name of her theatre written on it. Mrs Paolini told her: "Please, take care of Mr Alexander. He is my favourite cousin, and he looks like Pavarotti." I walked out of the train boldly, stepping like an opera singer, but I was quite shocked when I realised that Madame Garcia did not lie: with two actresses she

was conducting a sort of Indian dance right there on a platform, shouting "monsieur Alexander", and "monsieur Pavarotti". I thought of trying to escape, pretending I haven't seen them, but my Pavarotti image forbade me to do so. When they spotted me, three singing and dancing "Indian women" surrounded me, and I admitted my identity. Pavarotti, of course.

I am approached by Prospere Diss, the director and manager of the Orange Theater, sturdy man with sharp eyes and energetic walk. He said: "No English." I wanted to reply: "No French." From that moment on we communicated through a translator. He told me he was tired and hungry. I was only tired. They drove me to the hotel and explained I had to use special cards and codes if I wanted to enter anywhere, my room included. I tried to play smart, as if I never go around without cards and keys, not even at my own home, and so I said: "Of course, give me the card, tell me the code." They told, they gave, they left. Forty five minutes later I finally entered my splendid suite in "Citadines" hotel, overlooking the Arc de Triomphe. That night I dreamed of bunch of Indians threatening they would take my scalp unless I told them the secret code that stops a fast train conducted by monsieur Pavarotti.

## Friday, 17th February

I wonder through Marseille the whole day, visiting the docks, I admire hopelessly naive Americans who buy souvenirs, I pose to Japanese tourists, eat "plat de jour" in a restaurant where I refuse to notice other tourists, I discover downtown shops and realise that my wife will not get a perfume as a present, and in the evening I reach the beautiful modern building of Theater Torsky. I wander what kind of audience is interested in a play of a certain Ljubomir Simović and in traveling troupe Shopalovich performing in Serbian city of Užice year 1941? The audience turns out to be the intellectual elite of Marseille, young people mostly. Before the beginning of our play, happy Mme Garcia introduces me to a young man. He says: "I will be your translator." "Great", I say. "Where are you from?" "I've been living in France for twenty years now", he says. I persist: "Yes, but where are you from?" "I ha-

ven't visited Yugoslavia for six years", he says. "It's not that bad", I say, "But where are you from, originally?" "Sorry", he says, his face saddened. "From Zagreb." I understand his confusion. "I'd like to go to Zagreb" is the first thing to say that springs to my mind. He doesn't say anything. "But not in a tank", I add. He laughs. The ice is broken. Soon we're relaxed, we talk, trying not to step on a "mine". We are against extremists, we blame politicians for the war, and — the play begins.

Later, the actors surround me, Mr Diss arrives, we talk about the play. First I talk about its drawbacks. We have a discussion. My Croatian friend doesn't manage to translate everything fast enough. I say to the French: "I'll talk in Serbian, the translator will hear me in Croatian and translate in French." Wine arrives. The conversation reaches babilonic dimensions. Suddenly I begin to understand French, I don't wait for the translator but answer in English. It turns out that the French do understand English after all. We slip into discussing politics. I explain why I care so much to see foreign troupes on the stage of Sterija Festival. It would be good for Yugoslavs to realize that we are not hated by the world. They are astonished when they hear the story about the life in Yugoslavia. They thought the sanctions have fulfilled their task. Just before dawn Mr Diss solemnly kisses my cheeks, three times. "How do you know our customs?", I ask. In the area he comes from the custom is the same, he says. (I recall Kiš's boyish confusion after he realised how relative certain national symbols are.) We part. I say goodbye to my Croatian friend. We kiss three times. I tell him: "Not like Serbs, like French." We laugh. This too is possible. When I reach the hotel it's dawn, when I open all the doors it's time to go to the station.

## Saturday, 18th February

I'm in Paris at noon. Mrs Paolini waits for me at Gare de Lion. She asks about my hoarse voice. I say I sang the aria from "Figaro". Pavarotti, n'est pas? I still have to buy toys for Ivan and Isidora. How else will my children believe I was in Paris?

## Sunday, 19th February

On Belgrade airport my whiskie and cigarettes fall a victim to customs of-

ficers. Luckily, I didn't buy a perfume to my wife. Mercilessly pushed around, tired, annoyed, my clothes all wrinkled, I leave behind me a plastic bag with cigarettes and shards of whiskie bottle. "Wellcome to Belgrade", says Branko Maširević. He looks as if he hasn't left airport for all these five days. ■

*Aleksandar Milosavljević*  
 March 1995

# INTERNATIONAL SCENE

## "GORDANA KOSANOVIĆ" GOES TO MEZENCEV

The "Gordana Kosanović" prize for this year has been awarded to the Russian actor Aleksandar Mezencev, presumably an exceptional talent brought to Moscow from Siberian Chelyabinsk. German papers list also all former recipients of the award, named after our prematurely deceased actress, mainstay of Muelheim theatre for five years: Ulrich Wildgruber, Miki Manojlović and Veronika Drolce, Kirsten Denne. The 15.000 German marks award will be officially handed to Mezencev in September, when TADR is expected to play Macbeth in Moscow, during their Russian tour. April 1994

## THE GLEMBAY FAMILY IN THE CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE

The Director of the Croatian National Theatre, Georgij Paro, has completed the production of The Glem-baj Family in his theatre. Its premiere on March 9 marks the reopening of the oldest theatre house in Croatia, after the flood from last July, when a broken water pipe in the cellar damaged the vital areas of the building. The basic reconstruction costs were around one million German marks. Rene Medvešak plays Leone, Vanja Drach is the old Glem-baj, Ena Begović plays the Baroness Castelli and Alma Prica is Beatrice. Other roles are played by Siniša Petrović (Silberbrandt), Žarko Potočnjak (Puba Fabrici), Spiro Guberina (Fabrici's father). The set was designed by Dinka Jeričević and costumes by Zlatko Bourek. April 1994

## ON EX-YUGOSLAV THEATRE IN FRANCE

Number nine of Les Cahiers Comédie Française contains a thematic block on the theatre in former Yugoslavia. There are passages from Snajder's Croatian Faust and Goran Stefanovski's Sarajevo; the "case" of Mira Furlan, who left Zagreb for the United States of America after a series of unpleasant reviews; a story about the difficulties Irfan Mensur had in Belgrade and how Rade Šerbedžija departed from Belgrade. The magazine also has a description of the theatre life in Sarajevo, and a text by Dževad Karahasan. The editor of this thematic block is Mireille Roben, who translated into French the novels of Slobodan Selenić and Dubravka Ugrešić. April 1994



*The Travelling Troupe Šopalović: A scene from the performance by Yugoslav Drama Theater, the first time in 1985.*

# ACTORS AS FIGHTERS

Dragana Varagić renders an account from Toronto: what the current Canadian theatre is like, and how she finds her way in it

Exuberance. As well as diversity. This is, in a special supplement of today's (1st March) "Toronto Star", the first sentence of a critical summary on theatre in Toronto at present. "From serious plays up to frivolous entertainment, from intelligent analysis of media critic's theories up to painful balance of accounts of life in Idi Amin's Uganda. The mirror of multi-cultural structure of Canadian society." Plus: "The Phantom of the Opera", miss Saigon, in preparation for the autumn: "Beauty and the Beast" and "Sunset Boulevard", the announcement of tomorrow's premiere of "The Who's Tommy". There follows a list of 30 professional active theatrical companies with a brief description. This is the point of unanimous agreement, both oral and in writing: a great shift has been made. (I wrote "shift" to spite my friend Srdjan, who claimed that this word does not exist in our language. The discussion went on up to late at night, with many examples for and against.) However, with reservations due to my experience of only a year and a half, and without flattering to myself that I am fully informed about everything, I would like to add my comment. I agree that the Canadian theatre is diversified, but the strongest influence on it is exerted by the Canadian drama, and vice versa. The world literature and experience mostly lie aside, in the impossibility of breaking through to the most important stages in Toronto. The huge theatrical potential, which is in excellent actors and large production of texts, is measured, above all, by itself. Genre examining is rare. Mostly realism, sometimes brilliant or in bad examples, what I called "sentimental realism" in my reflections. The difference in quality between the actors and the director (with honourable exceptions), whereupon the director is mostly the bearer of the project, gets the actors into the position of merciless fight for a role, and when they get it, the fight for success, the quickest possible. That is why skill is the most important quality. (I am personally satisfied, because I had to learn to think quicker and to do things quicker.) Market laws do not allow greater risks and research, time for more subtle and complete reliance of actors on each other and larger freedom of the director. Certainly, there are different examples, but their influence is not yet crucial. I think that Toronto, as the third theatrical scene in the English-speaking area (after New York and London), must rely more on world theatrical striving. Only in that way will its identity fur-



*The liberation of Skopje: A scene from the Zagreb staging of Jovanović's Play (1977), directed, like the London one, by Ljubiša Ristić.*

ther sharpen and deepen. I hope that the indisputable "shift" mentioned in the beginning, leads just to that. And something more: here, there are no missed rehearsals, unprepared assistants, unlearned texts, and everybody exerts maximum concentration to use each rehearsal to the utmost. Three weeks are only three weeks. There is no delay of premieres. Such discipline enabled me to discover that speed is not always a negative category.

Peter Hinton, the director with whom I worked on the first play, is still my favourite director. The "Sky" — a new Canadian play written on the basis of a short story, a small production, occupying a prominent place — afforded me one of these goings to the theatre after which I am glad to be an actress. The story on the surface, narrated fluently and simply, is only the motive. The bottom layer is almost mystic, beautiful and frightening. Exciting moments of connection and combination of the present with the past. The scenography is simple, yet so correctly grasped from the text. The performance is a co-direction of Peter Hinton and Tanya Jacobs, an actress whose name is pronounced by young directors with awe. My acquaintance with Tanya was "destined" already from my audition for Hinton. It waited for a few

months and today I am grateful to her for all moral and expert support before every audition of mine, for encouraging me to carry my difference and energy with me to the stage, as this city can recognise and accept it.

"The Stillborn Lover" — a play highly appreciated both by the critics and the audience, judging by the packed theatre. A political thriller, seasoned by an unusual love story. It deals with the relation between love, power, loyalty and treason. Skilful direction, solid actors who are excellent at certain instants.

A nice custom from the Canadian theatre: each performance has at least one pwy (pay what you can) day. This enables those who cannot pay the regular price of the ticket to come to the theatre as well.

As for me, I have seen many more plays, starting from "Bluebeard's Castle" directed by Robert Le Page, up to the Rhubarb festival (but I wrote only about the latest ones). I played in the "To Damascus" (the Mother) staged by a young director with extreme visual articulateness who worked together with the already mentioned and unique Robert Le Page, then in "Julius Caesar" (Calphurnia) directed by Ned Vukovic (an interview with him was published in the previous issue of "Ludus") and Matti in a new text consisting of three short monodramas. I did not expect that the last one would be my best role so far. And a comic one. That is how it turned out. It is nice to act when the audience loves you. Now, I have a feeling that we know each other a little better — the Canadian audience and me. We looked into each other's eyes all the time. ■

Dragana Varagić  
March 1995

# POLITICS IN THEATER

A letter from London: why critics cut up "The Liberation of Skopje" and why "Mujo, Suljo and Fata in Japan" was not played at a VE Day remembrance festival

How can one write about modern theater in the former Yugoslavia and not mention politics? How to tell the anonymous reader of Ludus who eschews TV and daily papers that London's leading drama critics have cut Dušan Jovanović's "The Liberation of Skopje" into pieces, claiming almost unanimously that it is not a good production? It's easy. Just face the facts, readily supported by quotations from Britain's most respectable newspapers. The theater columns in The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Independent and the Financial Times devoted an exceptionally huge amount of space to a theatrical production that for political reasons was scheduled to open a drama festival entitled "Remembering VE Day". The festival was conceived by internationally renowned Vanessa Redgrave and her brother Corin. But it's easier said than done. Who can believe that the British critics were influenced only by their impressions of the performance and not also by political convictions — their own and those of the Redgraves. Add to this the political views of directors Ljubiša Ristić and Haris Pasovic and the apolitical attitudes of some other homines ludentes from the former Yugoslavia who invested a great deal of work in this project (which, by the way, began with a protest by the Sarajevo Festival Troupe and the resulting cancellation of the opening performance), and you will get the classic plot thickening in the story about an itinerant theatrical company from the former Yugoslavia. And one should not think that London's most prominent drama critics were familiar with details of Ristić's political activity or that Charles Spencer knows what JUL, the abbreviation for the political party whose president Ristić became recently, stands for. It was Spencer that wrote in The Daily Telegraph that "I cannot stop wondering how a play like 'The Liberation of Skopje' could have had successful world tours" and that "one of the best protagonists was the white horse Penny".

The lack of relevant information is to be blamed on the UNPROFOR-like behavior of the organizers, notably the Redgraves, who made a special effort to hush up the controversial particulars. A respected actress, Vanessa Redgrave has been very unpopular for years for her leftist views. The tabloids,

ever bent on gratifying their readers' lowest instincts, jumped at the opportunity to scoff at the local comics. The Daily Express wrote that "Vanessa's Bosnians", angered by the presence of Serbs, refused to take part in the ambitious international theatrical project commemorating the 50th anniversary of VE Day. As the Yugoslav crisis is no longer in vogue, the dislike for the Redgraves, who are now also busy supporting Bosnia's cause, was the main reason for publishing these kinds of articles. The fifty-odd people who came to the opening of the festival at the Riverside Studios to see the Sarajevo Festival Troupe's "Silk Drums" were officially informed that the performance had been cancelled in protest at the renewed shelling of Sarajevo. According to unofficial reports, the Sarajevo troupe, led by director Haris Pašović, refused to perform under the same roof with supporters of the Serbian regime. Debates about "the situation" substituted for the cancelled performance, and on the next four evenings the audiences were treated to political discussions. The prices of the tickets were halved, and once again politics proved more marketable than drama. Had it been different, we would have watched a play in three acts inspired by Japan's traditional theater. The first two acts drew on the advanced No theater, as established by Kanami Kiyotsugu and Zeami Motokiyo in the 14th century. The third act, a kyogen, was a comical musical farce with the subtitle "Mujo, Suljo and Fata in Japan." (Mujo, Suljo and Fata are traditional Muslim names often used in jokes about Bosnians — translator's note.)

Those drama critics who did their job more seriously were irritated by the way in which Ristić used the music of the Macedonian rock group Leb i Sol. The use of film editing methods on stage, especially in Act One of "The Liberation of Skopje", prevented the audience from fully understanding Jovanović's play, competently translated into English. Fortunately for Ristić, he had changed his original conception and left the pigeon-killing scene out. Had he not done so, Britain's numerous animal protection societies would have seen to it that he was barred from entering their country ever again. Even most of those capable of understanding this kind of naturalism believed it would not have been politically correct for them to say so. Because of the pigeons, not politics, that is. ■ Rialda Kadrić  
May 1995

**S V E T L O S T**  
**TEATAR**  
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„Svetlost teatar“ projektuje, oprema i izvodi: urbanističku dispoziciju, arhitektonska rešenja, enterijer, koncept tehnologije scenskih prostora, scensku mehaniku, scensku rasvetu, tehnološke audio-video sisteme.

- RESOLUTION No 1023**  
**November 22 1995**
- RESOLUTION No 1025**  
**November 30 1995**
- RESOLUTION No 1026**  
**November 30 1995**
- RESOLUTION No 1027**  
**November 30 1995**

**RESOLUTION No 1031**  
**December 15 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1034**  
**December 21 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1035**  
**December 21 1995**  
**RESOLUTION No 1037**  
**January 15 1996**

*Kača's audience was the whole Yugoslavia: Kača Dorić—Lešić (photo by Vesna Pavlović)*



ans only, and that at eight for those few Serbs who have not yet left Prishtina," said Miftari. That was about the only thing I recall from our brief exchange of courtesies. It was supposed to be funny, so Schweik and I burst into laughter, our only weapon against stupidity and all kinds of nuisances.

**A**fter that, our hosts continued to slight us. The funny thing was that no actor, Albanian or Serb, came to the Theater Club to talk to us. In Pancevo, I'm used to saying hello to anywhere between five and ten thousand people every day, but here I walked about desperately, accompanied by my soldier buddy and staring at faces whose sullenness was of a magnitude previously unknown to me. It was early in the afternoon, but I never saw anyone smile or even shake hands. I only remember a large silent mass of people moving slowly and glumly up and down the dirty alleys, steering clear of police, who outnumbered the leaves on the trees. "What kind of place is this, for God's sake," I thought. "These folks sure don't feel like laughing, my dear Joseph." How would we fare that evening? My alter ego, my respected orderly Schweik, had no answer to that question. He had never seen people that morose and was consequently as tense and fearful as a Brett-Schneider dog. And just when I had lost almost all hope of meeting anyone happy in that depressing place, I saw a lady coming towards us with a smile on her face, in stark contrast to the rest of Prishtina's citizenry. That was my respected colleague, Rada Radovanovic—Djurdjevic, who was a guest actress in Prishtina. Both of us, Schweik and I, felt we could breathe again. Especially the Czech prankster. He was so elated by the sight of a civilized creature that he started spinning yarns without end. "Shut up," I thought, "don't drive Rada away with your prattling. We need at least one regular person around before the show begins. We'll manage somehow afterwards." Eventually I shut Schweik up.

**B**y then it was already time for the first show. The one or the Albanian audience at six o'clock. If someone had told me what it would be like, I would not have believed him. The auditorium was full to bursting, but the silence was complete. No pre-performance murmur came from the audience. Nobody smiled. There was neither a courtesy applause at the beginning nor a reward applause at the end. And, needless to say, there was no applause in between. I had a feeling I was performing for members of some primitive tribe who had never seen a play performed before. My impression was a tad more favorable after the second show, the one attended by men wearing traditional Serb caps. However, no one told us a single word after either show. We only said goodbye to beautiful Rada and went to the railway station instead of to the hotel Grand. As we were leaving the theater building, we were approached by a youngish gentleman who said: "Please, most honored artist, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Hasan Merdzan. I'm a journalist with a Tur-

kish—language magazine called "Tan", which means dawn in Serbian. The two of you performed that monodrama wonderfully. I'd like to congratulate you." Schweik and I stood dumbfounded. The only person that actually liked our ridiculing of the Austrian—Hungarian Empire turned out to be a Turk. A few days later, Mr Merdzan sent us a clipping from "Tan", which read as follows: "Oyunun aksionu ole bir eritme postasidir ki, orada kisilir dusunce ve soz olurlar vr olmaldiral da. F. Durrenmatt." Durrenmatt was the only word in that short excerpt I was able to understand. ■ **Miroslav Žužić**  
**May 1996**

**MIRA ERCEG IN OSLO**

Mira Erceg, living in Berlin, has been invited by the National Theater in Oslo (Norway) to stage Slobodan Šnajder's play "The Croatian Faust" or his new drama "Snake's Slough", about civil war in Bosnia, in Autumn 1995. The topic of Quislings is very familiar to the Norwegian audience, since Vidkun Quisling (1887—1945) was actually the Norwegian collaborator during the German occupation. The same theater still has in its repertoire "Maria Quisling", the drama on the fate of Quisling's wife Maria, a woman of Russian descent who after the country was liberated and her husband shot in 1945 lived in the voluntary confinement in her house until her death in 1982. The lead is played by the manager of the famous Oslo theater Elen Horn — the only role she has kept after becoming the theater's head. This season at Anhaltisches Staatstheater Mira Erceg is directing her adapted version of Strindberg's "Miss Julia". The whole three—member family of Mira Erceg's is connected with theater. Her husband, the renowned German director Horst Hawemann, teaches at the Theater Academy in Berlin, and their son Alexander Hawemann has been invited to stage a play of his own choosing at the large stage of Volkshuehne, in the opinion of many the best theater in Berlin today. In October Mira Erceg staged a play by her husband, a scenic fairy—tale "King Drosselbard", in the theater of the city of Dessau. She has recently finished her play "The Sarajevo Alcestis", to be published in Germany during this publishing season.  
**December 1994**

**SCHWEIK IN KOSOVO**

*The auditorium was full to bursting, and the silence was complete. There was neither a courtesy applause at the beginning nor a reward applause at the end.*

**H**ello, Prishtina?" "Hello, this is Prishtina. Hazim Miftari speaking." "I'm calling about the arrangements for my friend Schweik and me to visit Prishtina. We spoke a few days ago. I hope you remember." "Of course I remember. We've already booked a double—bedded room for you two. You'll give two performances at the National Theater, here in Prishtina, on March 16." The year was 1985, and my faithful pal and I set off for Kosovo (which had no "Metohija" in its official name at the time). We took a train to Kosovo Polje. From there we hoped to reach Prishtina somehow or other. We also took a third companion with us, Stevan Zivković, the lighting operator, scene painter, stage manager, recording engineer, ticket taker and fireman. He had to carry out six important tasks in order that Schweik and I could perform "as best we can", as the late Pistika Nemet used to say. No one, Serb or Albanian, welcomed us at the railway station. It was still early in the morning when we got to the National Theater. Around noon I was shaking hands with its manager, Hazim Miftari, an Albanian. "You'll perform your monodrama twice, at six and at eight. But don't be surprised if you find the two performances completely different. You see, the one at six o'clock will be for Albani-

**THERE GOES MY ANTIGONA INTO THE WIDE WORLD**

*Or, why I did not interview Kača Dorić—Lešić, former actress and theatre director from Sarajevo*

**D**ear Feliks, I am sorry you did not meet my sister, former actress (and director) from Sarajevo, Kača Dorić—Lešić. In mid—December she left Sarajevo in one of the convoys, together with her husband, Dr. Zdenko Lešić, professor of Literary Theory and Theatre Studies. We met them, provided board and accommodation, and as soon as they recovered from cold, hunger, humiliation and despair, as soon as they were able to collect an atom of strength, they left for London. Dr. Lešić had been invited to teach litera-

ture at London University. Kača accompanied him as his wife, not as an actress.

As they said, they were leaving in search of a place in this world where they would be, at least for a single day, treated again as human beings, real human beings. And to attain somewhere in the world the right to be buried in a cemetery. That's what they said and I did not understand completely. Then Kača explained: "You don't know what an honour and privilege it is to be buried in a cemetery! To have your own grave! There are hosts of our friends in Sarajevo who could not be buried in cemeteries and do not have proper graves."

And so, they left with no hope for future.

All they had worked for and reared for decades, honestly, honourably, with devotion and humane endeavour — all that had collapsed together with their city and died with their friends, Kača's fans, Zdenko's students, acquaintances, admirers, with all of those to whom Kača and Zdenko had dedicated their lives, their work and talents. And their souls — if it does not sound too pathetic.

And so, like a deranged Antigona seeking her right to a grave, there goes my Kača into the wide world.

They belonged to those inhabitants of Sarajevo who refused to leave the city. They did not believe there could be correct or honest ideas, or politics, at the end of this century, which were worth killing for, or forsaking ones' homes or cities...

**T**hey left (Sarajevo) when they finally understood that nobody, absolutely nobody, was interested in the fact that 90% of the people from Sarajevo wanted to continue living together. They left with an awareness that this reality and truth were not mentioned by anyone in any of the ongoing talks, negotiations and trading...

By their personal determination both Kača and Zdenko were Yugoslavs. By birth she is Serbian (from Vojvodina) and he a Croat (from the island of Ugljan). They have not yet decided what nationality their daughter should be. They will toss up a coin.

Kača's audience was entire Yugoslavia, the one of six republics and two autonomous regions. Zdenko taught and wrote books on Yugoslav literature.

After the "just" division of Bosnia is over, there will be no place for Kača in two out of its three parts. In two different ones, there will be no place for Zdenko. And in which one of those three parts would they be able to gather all of their friends still alive for a birthday or a first—night celebration, without risking their lives and freedom? Kača and Zdenko decided they did not belong to this divided, ethnically split up Bosnia, since by their deepest determination they had nothing in common with it.

Therefore, Kača did not want to give any interviews in Belgrade, although she received many invitations. If she had decided to talk, she would have talked only to you, I am sure. But, she thought that as an actress she did not exist at the present time and any such conversation with her would be redundant. Particularly for "Ludus". She has no place to act in any more, and no audience to act for (or direct for). God only knows if things would ever change... ■

*Regards from Kača's brother — Radoslav Zlatan Dorić, author and director*



# THE UNKNOWN RUSSIA — AGAIN

Moscow Diary

March 4, 1995

On board the JAT flight to Moscow I am reading "Guilty Without Guilt". In the "Vakhtangov" Theater I am to see the famous play by Piotr Fomenko. Not only the Russians, but also my friends in other European capitals were telling fairy tales about it. Franco Quadri was trying in his Milan editorial office to explain to me, when I insisted, what is the secret of success of this play. He was using such words as: subtlety, originality, correct use of the old even obsolete actors in the new context, taking it out of the ordinary by moving it from one ambience into another. Nevertheless, I can still not precisely picture the play. I must see it myself. My every new encounter with Alexander Ostrovsky, in our present situation, is striking me again with its actuality (tangibility). The sudden riches and just as sudden poverty, with moral shatters in his plays, so much alike what is happening to us now.

At the airport, Ludmila is waiting for me. She is lecturing at the Moscow University the history of Slavic countries in the Balkans, with an emphasis on the 19th century. It turned out that she knows this matter very well and has her views on all of us in the Balkans, without prejudice, but also without illusion. She has her own opinion, again without illusion, about the relationship between Russians and Serbs, but she is speaking about this with caution, fearing to hurt the feelings of every guest from "the ground", even my own.

Already on my way to "Moskva" Hotel I notice a new iconography of the city. Large advertising panels along the road, just like in the West, only written in Cyrillic alphabet. Churches reconstructed after their destruction by Stalin, an atheist zealot who spent his youth studying theology. In front of "Moskva" Hotel, Maneznaya Square full of deep excavation under the ground. A forest of crane machines. Muddy earth. In the distance, the Maneznaya (Horse Riding School), at one time an arena of important developments in fine arts in the history of Moscow (do you still remember the dialogue Neizvesny—Khrushchev?). I am seeing the play at Krasna Presnye, Gogol's "Marriage". At one time Spisivev was the order of the day, was ruling the roost, a modernist of the Khrushchev era, and now here is Jury Pogrebenko, a post-modernist of the Yeltzin era. "Marriage" with the remnants of all the cultural lay-

ers: from the Nicholas's epoch up to the epoch of plastic kitsch of the 90ties — small fountain, a boat, metal walls, a tin can with tar resin. Russian actresses have a different look from before. Now they have long, clean hair, no longer bleached and provincially curled.

I enter my hotel room. There is no electricity. I call the plump legendary lady on duty, with dutifully disgruntled face, to solve the problem. She asks for my key. And triumphantly pushes the plastic key—holder into the switch. She pushes it around a bit and electricity glows over the entire suite. Lady on duty manifests elements of a genius, as if she was personally Tesla, the inventor of alternate current and also Makarenko himself. Then she lectures me on how we, the guests, are terrible electricity consumers: when we leave our room we leave the TV on, refrigerator and all the lamps lighted. I was pushing in and out the plastic key—holder over the next days, together with my inborn fear of electricity. My courage did not always bear fruit, so I was mostly crawling around the room lighted only with the ghostly reflections of light from other rooms.

From the TV box some new Russians are putting me to sleep — this time the protest songs singer Alexander Sklyar, his head completely shaved, dangerous looking and exhausted with the ecstasy of "artificial bliss".

March 5

What is an early-riser to do in a city which wakes up late. I get an idea to go to the museum. In front of Pushkin Museum, a queue. Exhibition "Twice Salvaged" and the demand of Germany for Russians to return this war booty incites the attention of all those who have found themselves in Moscow these days. It is Sunday. A queue also in front of the box—office. On the box—office the information: for foreigners 20,000 rubles. I offer the money only for the Moscow local tariff and my pulse beats faster. Lord, will they recognize me that I am not one of them! I pass as a Russian. But, trouble again: the checkroom is full. Until the first group of visitors goes out it will pass at least two hours. I give up on the exhibition.

I find myself in Arbat.

I am to meet Ludmila there. We go for lunch to Natasha Vagapova. There are almost no taxis at all. And it is dangerous to ride a car with an unknown driver.

In the evening, the play "Wolves and Sheep" by Ostrovsky. Studio Fomenko. The ambience is filled with anti-

quated furniture. This could have been an excellent play if only young people were not playing the old ones.

Just before the play begins I hear the melody of a language which reminds me of Serbian. A youngish lady and a boy. "Are you Yugoslavs?". "Yes, Macedonians. But, it might be interesting for you to know, Mr. Cirilov, that I am the mother of the "Powder Cake" author Dejan Dukovski, and this is his younger brother Darko." I am delighted with this chance encounter in the city of eight million people. We agree to meet after the play. The young Macedonian director comes to show them to their seats in the theater. He is Ivan Popovski, Fomenko's student. He had a great success with directing the play by Alexander Blok "Balaganchik" in the "Fomenko Workshop" at the last year's tour in Paris within the Russian season and with directing "The Cvetayeva Case". He is the hope of the young Moscow stage. By the way, he is also acting in the play "Wolves and Sheep".

In the home of Dukovskis. I am introduced to father Slobodan who is in the branch office of a Skopje construction company in Moscow. He is telling us how in Krasna Strela, on his way to Sanct—Petersburg, a few days ago, he was put to sleep and robbed, together with his colleague. He woke up dazed and completely unaware of what had happened. And his money was gone. He says that they are no longer booking their guests in my hotel. It is too dangerous! Darko is driving me to the hotel. He is telling me how some Moscowites ran into his car yesterday from the back. Immediately and on the spot they paid him for damages. Only to avoid the police.

At the advise of good people, I am piling up furniture on the door of my hotel room. There is a chain at the door but they say that "for them" it is a toy.

At midnight Vladimir calls, Vikchuk's producer, to meet with me these days.

March 6

Alone in Petrovka. The passage is glittering like all the others in great western metropolis. Video sets, household appliances, Armani, Cardin, small coffee—shops with two or three tables, a new and unknown face of Moscow. I still recall "the wonderful old times" when for hours one had to wait for the seat in a restaurant. There were no coffee shops at all then.

In the evening it is "Pygmalion" in the Theater "Sovremenik". Galina

Volchek is trying to return this attractive London story to the original Hellenistic myth. This is the work of the Moscow fashion designer Pavel Kaplevich.

In the intermission the critic Alla Zaslavskaya is foaming, qualifying Koljada — a dramatist successful in the West — as a falsehood of contemporary Russia. She tells me to remember the new names of directors: Adolph Shapiro (with Tabakov) Perminov and Zhenivach (Mala Brona), Levinsky ("Eermolova") and Fokin (Maneznaya). They have had enough of things somber, what they need now is brightness and belief.

March 7

A hard day ahead of me.

I go to the Ministry of Culture of Russia. The Kitay—town. After many years, meeting again with Misha Shvidkoy. At one time a young hope of the Soviet theaterology, he is now a middle-aged modern politician. Cordial. Fast. He is already thinking about his next appointment, but does not forget to give me his book about the foreign theater of the second half of the 20th century "Secrets of Lonely Comedians". "Why do you want 'Guilty Without Guilt'? You are not Srejavic to collect archaeological antiquities. Take something modern!" Lecture at the Institute of Arts about the present moment of the Yugoslav theater. Curious eyes of my colleagues.

Somehow, almost a serene atmosphere. One can truthfully say the truth about Belgrade theater which is up to its times. I am saying, with us in Belgrade theater refuses to be just the foam of the day, but also an abstraction beyond its times.

Rushing to reach on time the matinee play of "Vahtangov". Late for the first time. Enters Uljanov, the famous actor, an official of the Russian Actors Association and the manager of the theater. There is something plebeian about him, but at the same time urbane. Contrary to a few years ago, in his classic—style offices he is now cordial, warm, hospitable. He is inquiring after Belovic who directed Krljeza and De Phillipe there. He wishes to come to the BITEF festival at the beginning of October. They are now free. The prologue of "Guilty Without Guilt" is being played on some sort of a balcony in the theater lobby. We are practically next to the actors. An intimistic atmosphere. Fedorov. In the second part of the play, we are in a large lobby with the coffee shop. Again next to the actors. The old generation composed entirely of celebrities is acting with high temperament and, truthfully saying, singing in the fame of theater. Charges of passion and exuberance.

Maksakova, Borisova, Ulanov, Jakovlev are simply dashing through the stage. I almost feel sorry when at the end the audience is torturing them with the applause for another twenty minutes. They continue to dance with the music and run around in circles in front of us. I am sorry that I did not go to them to congratulate them. But I never like to disturb the actors in their dressing rooms, although for some forty years now I have been living with them under the same roof.

I am running to see the Bashkiri play of Crommelinck's "The Magnificent Cuckold". Highly professional, but

From the old album: the Moscow Art Theater at the beginning of 20th century (drawing by V.I.Semenov)

nothing beyond standard. A lot of southern temperament. In the intermission, during a small cocktail party, I meet Ulanov. I am happy to be rid of the embarrassment because after the play I did not go to Uljanov to tell him of my impressions about their play. I am recounting my enthusiasm.

I leave after the second act. Long journey into the theatrical day has ended. I pile up furniture in front of my hotel room door and go to sleep.

I talk long into the night with my long—time friend, a theaterologist and always smiling Larisa Solnceva. She says that the play "Guilty Without Guilt" is refreshing for all of us, a balm on our souls because of its joie de vivre. She draws my attention to the young Czech director Piotr Lebl of the Prague theater "Na zabladi".

March 8

In the lobby of the famous concert hall "Tchaikovsky", the most absurd of meeting places, before the concert begins devoted to Rossini, I have a friendly—official talk with one and only Roman Viktyuk. He says that he is working in Maribor with Pandur on "Maestro and Marguerite". I suggest that he soon comes to the JDP (Yugoslav Drama Theater, Belgrade) to direct Lermontov's "Masquerade". He says he is looking forward to it.

March 9

In the GUM (Moscow's largest department store). Unrecognizable cleanliness. All is white and glistening, as if there is a lasting continuity between capitalism and czarism in Russia. As if there never was either the Stalin era or the real—socialism, as if Lenin is no longer resting in the Red Square. But he is. Foreign goods, glittering and inviting. Only the sales girls are the same, grumbling, as if ready to scorn if you ask for too much. "To open the perfume! Are you out of your mind! How can I sell it then, if you do not buy it! And I doubt very much that you will! I buy the perfume out of spite..."

Lady on duty in my hotel charges me for the glass which I took from her because there was none in my room. What worth are all those exotic fruit juices in the hotel lobby if you have nothing to drink it from. ■

Jovan Cirilov  
April 1995

**RESOLUTION No 1038**  
**January 15 1996**  
**RESOLUTION No 1043**  
**January 31 1996**  
**RESOLUTION No 1046**  
**February 13 1996**  
**RESOLUTION No 1047**  
**February 29 1996**

**RESOLUTIONS**  
**OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**ON FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**  
**November 1992 — February 1996**



## LETTERS

### ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?

Dear editors,  
Just the other day I came across the first issue of your newspaper the "Ludus" in a bookshop. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw that the paper issued by the Association of Actors was given such an ugly name — "Ludus" (lud = mad, crazy, in Serbian). Are you out of your mind to take your colleagues for some kind of clowns and lunatics who joke around and tickle the audience? Neither their most fervent enemies nor dark conservatives call them like that any more. Change the name of the newspaper right away, before it's too late. I would be the first to abstain from buying it if I were a member of that honourable profession which, as I hear, requires quite a lot of education. The tests being difficult, it's impossible for every fool to get there. I can hardly add the formal "Respectfully yours" in the end, but let it be added in the name of my hope that such an ugly and offensive name should be changed as the newspaper is not all that bad after all.

Miloš Srđak, Beograd

#### EDITORIAL STAFF IN RESPONSE-

Dear Mr. Srđak, You had no reasons for such an anger. The name "Ludus" is an abbreviation standing for List Udruženja dramskih umetnika Srbije (Newspaper of the Association of Dramatic Artists of Serbia). The abbreviation itself has nothing to do with our adjective "lud", but with the Latin noun "Ludus" which means — play, leisure, entertainment, performance, but the dramatic performance only, not a circus show. You are familiar with the term "homo ludens", launched by the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), who chose to call "homo sapiens" by that other name: "the human being who plays".

**FOND FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY**



We will appreciate any help. After all, there would be no Ludus without the help of its friends. Our giro account is: Savez dramskih umetnika Srbije, Beograd Terazije 26/1 40806-678-2-10628 (specify: for Ludus)

## YEAR 1992

### 400 Years Ago

Shakespeare wrote "Richard III".

### 200 Years Ago

On November 23, 1792 the famous Czech dramatist Vaclav Kliment Klicpera was born (died in 1859), the founding father of the contemporary Czech drama. He wrote some sixty realistic, satirical and historical dramas, many of which are still being played today ("Comedy on the Bridge", "Fight of Women", "Bozena").

### 100 Years Ago

On December 10, 1892 drama by Herman Sudermann "Honor" was presented for the first time in the Serbian language. On December 18, 1892 in Theater Marijanski in Saint-Petersburg was the opening night of the ballet "The Nutcracker", with the music composed by Peter Tchaikovsky, in the choreography of L. Ivanov.

## YEAR 1993

### 700 Years Ago

The Frenchman Adam de la Halle wrote a merry pastoral play "Le Jeu de Robin et Marion".

### 200 Years Ago

On February 6, 1793, the greatest Italian comedigrapher Carlo Goldoni died, one of the most played Italian playwrights in the world. He wrote some 250 plays. The most popular in our country are his comedies: "Mirandolina", "Fishermen's Squabbles", "La Locandiera", "Two Masters' Servant" and a "Summer Vacation Trilogy".

### 100 Years Ago

On February 5, 1893 one of our most famous actors of romanticism died, Tosa Jovanovic (born in 1845). He had spent most of his career — from 1869 until he died — on the stage of the National Theater in Belgrade. He was playing in the Croat National Theater in Zagreb from 1873 to 1878. Further to his roles in the plays of local authors (Jaksic, Subotic, Kostic), he is also remembered as Romeo, Otello, Lear and Shylock.

On July 7, 1893 Miroslav Krleža was born (according to the new calendar) and Vladimir Mayakovski (according to the old calendar). This means that Maiakovski in the village of Bagdadi in Georgia was born twelve days after Krleža in Zagreb. Krleža wrote dramatic plays between the First and the Second World War, among them the dramatic trilogy about Glembay family, and after the war "Aretaeus". Maiakovski was writing mostly poetry but he is also the author of several dramas: "Mystery-Bouffe" (1918), "The Bedbug" and "The Bath House" (both in 1929).

In October 26, 1893 Serbian poet Milos Crnjanski was born in Ilanca (Rumanian Banat). He wrote dramas "The Mask", "Tesla" and "The Court". He died in 1977.

## YEAR 1994

### 300 Years Ago

On November 21, 1694 the encyclopaedian Voltaire (François Marie

Arouet, pseudonym Voltaire) was born in Paris. He wrote novels, stories and poetry, but also several plays, most of them almost forgotten today: "Brutus", "Caesar's Death", "The Prodigal Son", "Algira or the Americans", "Fanaticism or Mohammed the Prophet", "Meropa", "Semiramis", "Pandora", "Orestse", "Tancrede", "Inn at the Swede", and at one time his most popular tragedies "Zaire" (1762) and "Meropia" (1743). His novel "Candide" was frequently dramatized and the American novelist Lillian Helman wrote a libretto for the musical of the same name. He died in his native Paris at the age of 84.

### 100 Years Ago

On January 2 or 3, 1894 Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was visited in Melihov by the famous theatrical artist, director, dramatist and the future founder of the MHAT (where Chekhov is to experience world fame as a playwright), Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko. On January 21, 1894 in Belgrade, the greatest Serbian poet of the time of realism Vojislav Ilić died, at the age of 34. His plays were performed posthumously on the stage of the National Theater in Belgrade — "Radoslav", "Death of Pericles" and "The Poet", all of them in the year 1901, and "The Argonauts on Lemnos" in 1906. He was born in Belgrade, in the distinguished family of poets, on April 4, 1860. His plays are now forgotten.

### 100 Years Ago

On September 1, 1894 for the first time in our country, on the stage of the National Theater in Belgrade, Schiller's drama "Fiesque's Conjuraction in Genoa" was played, directed by Milorad Gavrilović, who also played the main role, while Vela Nigrinova played the role of Juliet. On September 30, 1894 Hugo Klajn was born in Vukovar, a psychoanalyst, theatrical director, a pedagogist and a critic. He studied in Vienna with Freud and translated his works. On "the orders of the authorities" as of 1947 he becomes a director at the National Theater. His outstanding directions were: "The Forest", "Merchant of Venice", "Romeo and Juliet", "Diary of Anna Frank", and most of all "The Caine Mutiny" (Herman Wouk). He translated Shakespeare and wrote a book "Basic Problems of Directing" (1951) and also published theatrical essays and critics.

### 100 Years Ago

On October 6, 1894 in Gornji Milanovac, Serbian poet Momcilo Nastasijević was born. He wrote dramas "At Tap Eternal", "Master Mladen's Daughter" and "The Uncalled", which are played only seldom. He died in Belgrade on February 13, 1938.

### 100 Years Ago

National Theater in Belgrade celebrated on November 20, 1894 a quarter of a century since the inauguration of the new building by playing the tragedy "Djuradj Branković" by the Hungarian writer Carl Obernick, directed by Andrej Fijan. The work was translated and adapted from the original by Jovan Djordjević. The main role was played by Dimitrije Ružić. The interesting feature of this play was that the director Fijan also play-

ed a small role of the Despot's second valet.

## YEAR 1995

### 100 Years Ago

On February 4, 1895 the building of the Serbian National Theater was inaugurated in the courtyard of the palace of the wealthy proprietor Gedeon Dundjerski, who constructed the building with his own money and bequeathed it to his people. The building was later burnt down.

On February 5, 1895, the Novi Sad premier of the play with singing "Djido" by Janko Veselinović and Dragomir Brzak (with the music of Davorin Jenko) opened the season. Belgrade opening night was played three seasons earlier, on June 7, 1892.

Nine days later, on February 14, 1895, Serbian writer Milorad Šapćanin died, twice the director of the National Theater of Belgrade: in 1877 and from 1880 to 1893.

### 100 Years Ago

On April 3, 1895 for the first time "The Balkan Empress" was presented in the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad, the drama by the Montenegrin King Nikola I Petrović, directed by Pera Dobrinović, who even played as much as three roles — Kale, Osman Pasha and Gusle—player — with Dimitrije Spasić and Dimitrije Ruzic, Tinka Lukic and Jelena Vasic in the other roles.

### 100 Years Ago

On September 26, 1895 in the National Theater in Belgrade, the opening night was held of "The Chase", "a play from Serbian national folklore with singing" by Janko Veselinović and the actor Čiča Ilija Stanojević, who also directed the play. Music was written by Davorin Jenko.

### 100 Years Ago

On January 22, 1895 in Koracica near Mladenovac, Živko Milićević was born, a poet and essayist and a theatrical critic. He wrote theatrical reviews published in the Belgrade daily newspaper "Politika" from 1920 to 1927. In this newspaper he remained active as editor until the year 1941. He was also editor-in-chief of the Subotica publishing house "Minerva". He died in 1962.

## YEAR 1996

### 100 Years Ago

On February 18, 1896 in Tinchebray (Normandy, France) André Breton was born, the founder of surrealism. The movement is theoretically based on Breton's famous "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924). Breton died in Paris on September 28, 1966. He did not write plays, but surrealism had its influence on the vanguard movements in the theater throughout our entire century. While commenting on the play "Deaf Mans Gance" by Bob Wilson, Aragon in an open letter to Breton writes that in this play all of

his most beautiful surrealist dreams have come true.

On February 28, 1896 Marko Marković was born in Zvornik, the writer and historian of the theater. For some time during the two world wars, he was the director of drama at the National Theater in Belgrade. He died in Pale in 1966.

### 100 Years Ago

On March 19, 1896 in Novi Sad on the stage of the Serbian National Theater, Shakespeare's "Hamlet" was presented, translated by Laza Kostić. The title role was played by Dimitrije Ružić and the play was directed by Pera Dobrinović, who also played the role of the First Grave-digger.

### 100 Years Ago

On April 26, 1896 in Perlez, in the family of actors, Milorad Dušanović was born. He appeared on the stage for the first time in the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad in 1913, and retired as a member of the National Theater in Belgrade. He was playing dramatic roles, among others in the plays by Ibsen, Ostrovsky, Sterija, Glišić, Pecija Petrović and Ivo Vojnović.

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