



ASSITEJ Serbia

ALMANAC No. 1

*A selection of theatre plays  
for children and young people*

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**Edited by Milena Depolo and Milan Marković**

**Published by ASSITEJ Serbia in 2013**

**For the publisher Diana Kržanić Tepavac**

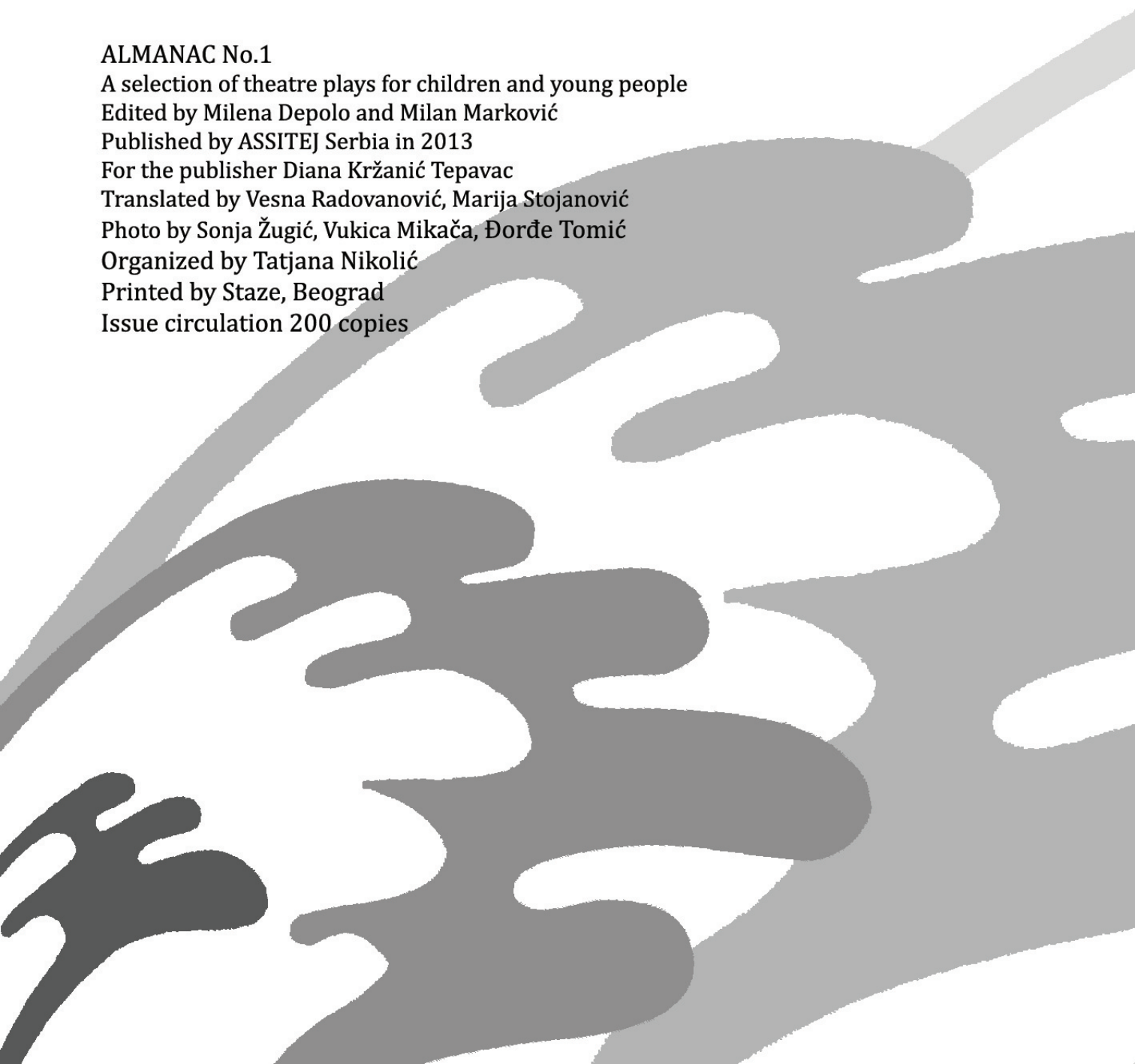
**Translated by Vesna Radovanović, Marija Stojanović**

**Photo by Sonja Žugić, Vukica Mikača, Đorđe Tomić**

**Organized by Tatjana Nikolić**

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The first edition of the ASSITEJ Serbia Almanac was promoted on 20th March 2013, on the World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People, as a part of the campaign "Take a Child to the Theatre Today"

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## **A contribution to the literature for young audience**

Theatre for young audience craves original plays whose topics and meaning would find their way to young people, address them with respect, pose essential questions and follow their needs, and which would manage to stimulate the presently declining interest of young people in age-appropriate theatre. However, it is evident that the majority of theatre managers/producers, as well as a lot of playwrights, show neither sufficient interest in changing the usual choice of topics, nor the courage to introduce a new, provocative and artistically relevant trend in theatre for children and young people. That is the problem most countries are facing. Still, the situation is slowly changing. There is a growing awareness that good texts for certain age groups of children and young people are an excellent strategic investment in the development of a country's theatre for young audience, as well as for its further international recognition.

Hoping to confirm the theses, to find the answer to the question of the place and the importance of dramatic literature for young audience in Serbia today, but also to promote and inspire authors to write for young audience, ASSITEJ Serbia has launched a series of programmes and projects with an aim to gather, inform and support playwrights, as well as to create original plays for children and young people. One of those projects is the publication of this Almanac, which would present a selection of Serbian authors and their translated texts. The Almanac is going to be published twice a year in two languages printed as two separate editions.

This is the first issue which presents a selection of texts for teenagers and young audience. The editors of this first publication are Milena Depolo and Milan Marković, two successful and already acknowledged playwrights/dramaturges, and the members of the ASSITEJ Serbia board. They belong to a younger generation of prolific, talented and acknowledged authors whose texts have influenced the contemporary Serbian theatre production and the production for young audience in particular. We hope that the excerpts from the texts of these authors, published in this Almanac, will raise your interest in their work and in dramatic literature in Serbia in general, and we invite you to get acquainted with each text as a whole.

Diana Kržanić Tepavac,  
The president of ASSITEJ Serbia

## **Editorial**

This wasn't easy.

And by 'this', we mean assembling an almanac that would present excerpts from the contemporary Serbian theatre plays for children and young people. Not because of the lack of playwrights or because of the lack of good plays. The reason is much more alarming – there are hardly any plays. There are several reasons for that. Firstly, theatre for children and young people in Serbia has for a very long time relied exclusively on various adaptations of fairytales. And all the fairytales have already been dramatized. Reaching out for something already written is safer than taking a risk.

Naturally, theatres have their reasons for such a repertoire policy. Those who take children and young people to theatre, (school teachers and parents) are still neither interested nor curious to see a play that they do not recognize from their childhood. Or from their parents' childhood. Or from their grandparents' childhood. And so on. Therefore, sheer survival is the reason why theatres opt for what has already been seen.

As a result, young playwrights are hardly motivated to create something new (not only for children but in general). Still, that is not the problem that only theatre has to face, that is the same in all the branches – there are many (truly many) strong individuals, but there isn't a system that would support them. Even when someone does achieve success, they have to wait for a long time to be given the second chance, and even more to get the third one. Everyone's success is an incident. We hope that our almanac will be more fortunate than that. This is just its first edition which, apart from presenting Serbian plays for children and young people, aims at encouraging young playwrights. Some is watching them after all.

Milena Depolo and Milan Marković Matthis

## **Milena Minja Bogavac**

A writer, dramaturge, slam-poet, and a cultural worker.

She was born in 1982 in Belgrade, where she has graduated from the Faculty of Drama Arts. Her plays have been staged, published, awarded, translated to many languages, selected for numerous anthologies of contemporary plays, and presented at the international festivals in Avignon, New York, Wiesbaden, London, Leeds, Bratislava, Riga. In 1999, she and Jelena Bogavac, a theatre director, founded an informal theatre troupe Drama Mental Studio – DMS, which has produced over fifty performances and art projects. Apart from her work in the troupe, she cooperates with numerous cultural institutions and organizations of independent cultural and artistic scenes. She has received many prizes, including: “Borislav Mihajlović-Mihiz”, for playwriting; “Josip Kulundžić”, a distinguished achievement award in theatre arts; she has received the Little Theatre “Duško Radović” annual award two times, and many others. She writes and performs slam poetry, which has been published by SKC Novi Sad in two collections – “Economic Propaganda Poetry” (2005), and “My Slam is Longer than Yours” (2011). She has performed over one hundred times, and has also initiated and run the first slam-poetry workshop in Belgrade, which was produced by festival *Pesničenje*. She is a co-founder of the internet site [www.nova-drama.org.rs](http://www.nova-drama.org.rs) and has led several international playwriting workshops, with the authors gathered around the platform. She is currently working as a creative director of youth organization *Centar E*, where she runs workshops on the use of drama in education. She is a close associate of Bitef and Bitef Theatre, she writes a column in the newspaper *Večernje novosti*, and her works are frequently published in periodicals and specialized magazines. She has written plays *North Force, Ready, Steady – Go!, The Red, Tdž or the first three, Ballerina/Gamma Cas*, and many others.



## **North Force**

*The play North Force was written in Belgrade in 2001 and had its debut in Bitef Theatre (2002), directed by Jelena Bogavac. Afterwards, it was staged two more times: in Youth Theatre Dadov (2009, and 2011), directed by Ana Grigorović. In 2010, it was performed in the National Theatre of Užice, as a part of omnibus directed by Milan Nešković. It was selected for the anthology of contemporary Serbian plays Premortal Youth, edited by Vesna Jezerkić and Svetislav Jovanov, and published by Sterijino Pozorje in 2006.*

### **A summary**

The plot of the play *North Force* is a simple one. The main character is a member of a football hooligans group that supports Belgrade team *Red Star*. During a fight against a rival group of supporters, he loses his group's flag, and faces a difficult ordeal: unless he recovers the flag, he will never be a member of the group again. The play is written in the form of an antic tragedy: it follows the three unities, and the main characters are accompanied by a collective character, i.e. the choir made of the group of supporters. *North Force*. The play tackles the issues of the narcissism of small differences, the evil of single-mindedness, and the lack of a value system in a society that turns brave young people into hooligans, and their urge for heroic acts into self-destruction and tragedy.

## **Excerpts**

FIRST PART

Confessions

DUJE: The guys aren't to blame for the rage, get it?!... That's like totally clear. Red Star is not why they're like that, supporting it is not why they're like that. One's gotta love one's club. That's how it goes. Get it?! Red Star is what it's always been and what it'll always be. That's somt'n else. That's a tradition. And it's gotta be respected. My grandfather made me member of Red Star one day before I was born. He wasn't a commie, like these cunts. When someone says he's a Serbian and he supports Partisan, I like totally go nuts. Can't take it, man. Serbians aren't commies, get it?! Check it out. My ID. See when I was born, man? My grandfather knew I was gonna be named Dušan, after him, and when my mom went into labour, he went straight to Red Star to sign me up. Do you get it, man?! There's like no dilemma. Red Star's there to be loved. Every nation has its club, that's clear. Yeah, well, then, you can't blame it on Red Star!

SKAR: Don't ever trust anyone. First-hand experience. You never know who's gonna stab you in the back. And who's gonna poke yer eye out, man. D'ya see the scar? Well, do you? Sure you do. You all do. Well, that scar... that's why they call me Skar... that's how one loves Red Star. (punch)

SCENE TWO

Here's the cash, seal, but in steel

NORTH FORCE members are sitting surrounded by several crates of beer, a huge pile of bottles, cigarette boxes, newspapers. They are all drunk. Skar has his hand bandaged... They are retelling the same story for a millionth time that night.

DUJE: They're never gonna mess with us again!

NORTH FORCE: That's right, man! Yeah!

DUJE: Well, you know... That's fair, right?

NORTH FORCE: Yeah!

DUJE: I ask him nicely and he grins like a seal...

ŠONE: What's a seal, man?

NORTH FORCE: Seal, maaan....

DUJE: The seal, kiddo, that they give sardines to and it jumps up like crazy... I ask him nicely... Gimme the beer, man... I'm there with my friends, there was a match, we lost, dammit... you never know, you know... we need some beer and we'll pay when we can...

NORTH FORCE: That's right, man... Sure thing.. Yeah... you never know... Right... That's it...

DUJE: And he's, like, I know you...

SKAR: And I tell him, you know us, you cunt! We're, like, from the hood, man... We're all buddies...

DUJE: So Skar tells him, like, you know we're always good for it...

SKAR: And he won't give us... You won't give us, eh? Won't give us?! So Duje looks at me... (he lifts his hand and makes for the wall ... hits) Aaaa! I mean, aaaaa! Here's the money, seal, but in iron!

DUJE: And now they're quiet, the cunts... The shop's closed, you motherfuckers... Eh, motherfuckers?

NORTH FORCE: The shop's closed!!!

## **Dear Dad**

*The play Dear Dad was written in Belgrade in 2003. It went through several stages of development on various workshops of NADA, the project for development of plays that was organized within The National Theatre in Belgrade. At the competition for the best contemporary play, organized by Yugoslav Drama Theatre, it was given the first prize. It had its debut in 2006 in the same theatre, directed by Boris Liješević. It was played for over one hundred times until 2011. It was translated to English, after which it had its rehearsed readings at the festivals Northern Exposure and Janus (West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, Great Britain, 2006), as well as during the week of Art in the Balkans in Blue Elephant Theatre in London. In 2006, the rehearsed reading of this play, directed by the Australian director Dieter Boyer, opened the Hot Ink festival organized by New York festival and the experimental theatre department at Tish School of Arts (USA). In the same year, the French translation of the play had its rehearsed reading in the Avignon Festival main programme. It has been presented throughout the region and staged in The National Theatre of Pirot (2007, directed by Vladimir Lazić); in Dailes Teatris (Riga, Latvia, 2010), and in Furnou Theatre (Athens, Greece, 2011, directed by Tasos Aggelopoluos). It has also been performed by amateur troupes and students of acting. The latest student production of the play, directed by Mirjana Karanović, currently plays in Cultural Centre "Vuk Karadžić" in Belgrade.*

## **A summary**

The play *Dear Dad* is about the disintegration of middle-class family and the disappearance of the middle class in Serbia after the nineties. The main character is a fifteen-year-old girl with a male nickname Mali<sup>1</sup>. Ever since her father has disappeared, she keeps sending him postcards. As she doesn't know his address, she keeps pasting them onto the wall. After her older brother ends up in prison, her mother commits suicide and her best friend is taken into a juvenile detention centre, Mali stays on her own, in a children's centre. While there, she receives the news that her father has been located but she refuses to see him. *Dear Dad* is a story about growing up and individuation in a concrete jungle ruled by drug dealers, murderers and prostitutes, while the country is represented by indifferent clerks incapable of solving the problems that young people have to face. Written in the style of poetic realism, the play *Dear Dad* combines tragic and comic elements, the brutal Belgrade's street slang, with tender and emotional monologues of the main character.

---

1

Junior (Serbian). Translator's note.

## Excerpts

MALI: Dear dad (sigh, pause, sigh) Happy birthday to me. When we were at the seaside you told me to remind you, you told me I could do a parachute jump with you, when I grow up. I've turned fifteen... Just to let you know. Mali.

*An empty slide. Mali stays still. Another one. Mali turns her right cheek. Yet another one. Mali turns her left cheek. Like an image on a "wanted" circular. Blackout. Henceforth:*

*Wanted circular.*

1

*The cosy warmth of home. Marina, untidy and dishevelled, is walking around, a chipped cup in her hand. She finds a hidden bottle. It's empty. Marina breaks it.*

MARINA: Milica!... (Mali is pasting a postcard onto the wall, ignoring her) Milica!!... Mali?

MALI: What the fuck are you yelling for?!

MARINA: Don't talk to me like that!

MALI: That's how one talks to whores, get it...

MARINA: Milica, I used to be a lady when I was your age, you little fuck.

MALI: Suck it.

MARINA: Go to the shop.

MALI: Nope.

MARINA: Can't you hear what I said?

MALI: I ain't gonna buy any vodka for you anymore.

MARINA: Listen, young lady, there's a difference between you and me... A big difference... And the difference is that I am the mother, not the other way around...

MALI: Listen, Marina, there's a difference between you and me. You're a slut. And a crazy one too. And you buy vodka on credit.

MARINA: Milica?

MALI: Stop calling me Milica. (pushes her away) Stop calling me that! That's not my name!

MARINA: Milica, dammit!

MALI: Call me what dad calls me! My name's not Milica!

MARINA: Miliicaaaaa...

(Pushing her aside, Mali leaves the room. The front door slams shut, then opens again).

MALI: It's my birthday, so you know.

(Before Marina can speak out, Mali slams the door again and leaves the flat.)

MARINA: Today?... Well, it can't be, I know... (yells after Mali) You're lying! Go to your room! Go to the shop! You're lying! ... Mili... Mali!...

(Blackout)

## ***In Half***

*In Half* is a play written in 2009, in cooperation with a director Bojana Lazić. She staged the play in 2010 in Little Theatre "Duško Radović", where it has been a part of repertoire ever since. Milena Bogavac has been awarded the annual prize Božidar Valtrović for the best original play in Little Theatre "Duško Radović". The play has been published in theatre magazine *Scena*, issued by Sterijino Pozorje, and the performance has been included in the selection of the international children's festival "Zvezdarište".

### **A summary**

The play "In Half", bearing the subtitle "a play for big children, and for small moms and dads", was based on the statistical information that, on average, one third or one half of the children in an average class comes from a broken family. The main characters, Tanja and Andrej, are classmates whose parents have divorced for different reasons. Through their lives, the audience learns about the legal and social aspects of divorce, but above anything else, above the psychological process that children undergo during the painful life experience. The play depicts divorce in realistic terms, stripped off embellishment, but conveys an optimistic and comforting message. The play is written in the form of collage and fragmented dramaturgy, and was created through research and a series of workshops conducted with children with divorced parents.

## **Excerpts**

Where does she go, once she sets off? She gets on buses and gets off at terminals... Then she walks around. She observes window-shops. She observes kiosks. At some of the kiosks, she asks to flip through newspapers. She goes to McDonald's. If she has the money, she takes a Happy Meal with a toy. If she doesn't, she takes tea. She takes out her notebook and draws. A Ketí Meluz fashion line. She signs autographs "To my dearest fans, who make me what I am", and she draws a cover for Ketí's new CD. Why would she go to school? She hasn't got any friends there anymore. She'll show her, that fat Ana, who called her mom a slut! She'll show that fat Ana –she'll show her who Ketí Meluz is. She goes to Ada, throws pebbles into water, and then starts daydreaming... I'll show you all, she dreams. I'll show you who Ketí Meluz is. She goes to a shopping mall and wanders about. She inspects the buzzers on clothes. If tomorrow, say, she brought a pair of scissors, and went to a dressing room she could, deftly, snap the buzzer off the blouse... One could never see the hole... And the blouse would fit Ketí Meluz perfectly. Where does she go, once she sets off? Once, she bought a cigarette pack. It reads it can't be sold to minors... She said they're for her dad. And she lied. She hasn't got a dad anymore. Her dad's expecting a new baby. Besides, she's not a minor. She's - Ketí Meluz... Where does she go, once she sets off? She crawls into a cottage in the park, and then lights one after the other. She doesn't smoke, she's just... fooling around. She takes a sheet from her notebook and burns it on the cigarette. She' daydreaming and watching the paper burn ... Her rambling thoughts take her back to the blouse and the

fishnet stockings that would be so right for Keti Meluz. Where does she go, once she sets off?

TANJA'S MOM: Where are you going?

TANJA: What do you mean?

TANJA'S MOM: Where do you go, once you rush out of here? You don't go to school, so much I know. So where do you go?

TANJA: Nowhere.

TANJA'S MOM: I'll ground you.

TANJA: I'll move in with dad.

TANJA'S MOM: You mean with his wife?

TANJA: No, I mean with dad.

TANJA'S MOM: Dad has left you.

TANJA: He's left you!

TANJA'S MOM: What did you say?

TANJA: Nothing.

(In her head, Keti answers her mom's question: "What did you say?" with "Try get a fucking life!"... In her head, all of this is very different. And she is sick of the idiotic situation. She doesn't think about her parents' divorce anymore. For, she is not she anymore. She is Keti Meluz.)



1. *In Half*, Milena Bogavac, staged in Little Theatre Duško Radović, directed by Bojana Lazić, photo by Sonja Žugić

## **Milena Depolo**

She was born on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1981 in Belgrade, where she has finished experimental elementary school *Vladislav Ribnikar* and the Third Belgrade Grammar School. She has graduated in Dramaturgy from the Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade in 2006. Since the season 2006/07 she has been employed as a dramaturge in theatre "Boško Buha", where she has focused on theatre for children and young people, and cooperated with theatre directors of all generations. She is the selector of TIBA festival and a member of the ASSITEJ board. Her plays that have been staged are: *Characters* (City Theatre Podgorica, 2003), *Kharmia Coma* (Dadov, 2004), Fairy Quiz Show (Boško Buha, 2007), *Who is Laurette?* ( Little Theatre "Duško Radović", 2009), *They Wanted Something Entirely Different* "IN Stage, 2009), *The Scool of Rock'N'Roll* ("Boško Buha", 2011), "The Ant and the Grasshopper" (Puppet Theatre "Pinocchio", 2011), as well as several dramatisations. She has also written scripts for TV programmes *Podijum* (RTS), *Stimofonija* (RTS), *We are the Crew* (RTS), *Taktik* (MTV Adria), *So-called Love* (RTS), and the scripts for various events. She has a long-standing cooperation with Narrenschloss Interaktives Kindertheater from Vienna. She cooperated with the monthly magazine *FAME* (2009) and with *Cosmopolitan* (2010). She has received "Josip Kulundžić" prize at the Faculty of Drama Arts in 2004, the prize of the Film Centre of Serbia for the script development, in 2006, and the prize for the best play for *The Ant and the Grasshopper* at the festival Pozorište Zvezdarište, in 2012. She speaks English and French.



## ***They Wanted Something Entirely Different***

*The play They Wanted Something Entirely Different was written in 2009. It was created as a part of workshops forum theatre, through cooperation between the director Ana Tomović, the author Milena Depolo, and a group of high-school children, organized by IN STAGE organization (Centre for Interactive Art „In Stage Organization“is a youth organization whose activity in theatre is based on the belief that theatre can act be utilized as a powerful instrument of social change) . The workshop focused on peer violence among school population, while the text is based on a true story, i.e. a newspaper article that describes the situation when a fourteen-year-old girl bullied two 12-year-old ones. The performance had its debut in UK Parobrod directed by Ana Tomović, and was later played in several high schools. It is currently performed in Student's Theatre in Banja Luka.*

### **A summary**

The whole story begins with a minor clash between two teenage girls over a popular boy in their school, and ends in violence. What is even more tragic than the violence itself is the indifference shown by institutions. Moreover, the last scene shows that the event does not represent an isolated incident, but is rather common in schools. The play consists of scenes, but also of the characters' diary entries, newspaper articles, and the statements made by the professionals dealing with youth violence. The main event is shown in a gripping scene of the violence itself and which, by repetition, and its increasing length, turns into a nauseating and upsetting theatre experience.

## **Excerpts**

SCENE VII

DIARIES

KRISTINA: Dear diary, today is the worst day of my life! I got B in Maths but that's not the most disturbing thing! Dušan approached that kid from the 6D. If I had a gun, I'd kill her on the spot! I hate her, I envy her. What does she have that I don't?

MARIJA: It was really boring today and the three of us had nothing to do, and we wanted something fun to happen, something that would make the others pay attention. Basically, everyone in school knows the three of us and all the good-looking guys are chatting us up like all the time. We like really care to be talked about as the power girls.

TEA: It was totally boring, I mean for them, for me it is fun just being with them. Marija's parents were not at home, so I suggested that we should invite the guys over and have some fun. But, Kristina had the idea to bring the girls from 6D and show them some ropes. That was my chance to teach someone something and become an idol. I totally wanted that.

JELENA: As we're only sixth grade, Tanja was impressed that the cool girls even looked at us, let alone talked to us, and agreed to go to their place right away. As you know, dear diary, I've never liked those girls, actually, they've always struck me as some kind of pathetic stuck-up attention-seeking morons. But, I agreed as I saw how much Tanja wanted to, and I thought, well, you know, nothing can happen while we're together. Well, it turned out I was wrong.

KRISTINA: Tea suggested that we should invite the guys, make a party, and stuff. I was going to invite Dušan and make a move

on him. But, then I thought, what if the snot-nosed sixth-grade girl is all he's thinking of? Then I decided to smack her up. Sure thing, she was ecstatic when we approached her.

TANJA: Aaaaaa, I like totally couldn't believe. The coolest girls in school came up to Jelena and me. We like instantly got up from the bench as we thought they wanted to sit down. But, no, they wanted something entirely different.

Tanja and Jelena stand up from the bench when Kristina, Marija and Tea approach.

TANJA: Wanna sit down?

KRISTINA: Oh, no, you can sit down. Anyone's got a cigarette?

JELENA: We don't smoke.

MARIJA: Really?

TANJA: Well, she doesn't.

JELENA: And you do?

TANJA: I did in my old school.

TEA: Which class are you in? How come we never saw you before?

TANJA:6D.

KRISTINA: Oh, you're sixth grade. You're pretty cool for sixth-graders.

TANJA: Thanks.

TEA: You know, we're on our way to Marija's place, to have a coffee, so if you wanna come along...

JELENA: We have lessons now.

KRISTINA: We'll invite some guy, too.

TANJA: Please...

JELENA: I don't know...

MARIJA: I'm right over there, it's really close to school, so if you wanna go back to school, you can...

TANJA: Marko might come...

JELENA: Right... okay...

TANJA: I love you!

TEA: They're cute...

Back to diary.

TANJA: Aaaaaa, I like totally couldn't believe. The coolest girls in school came up to Jelena and me.

JELENA: They've always struck me as some kind of pathetic stuck-up attention-seeking morons.

MARIJA: We like really care to be talked about as the power girls.

TEA: That was my chance to teach someone something and become an idol. I totally wanted that.

KRISTINA: Then I decided to smack her up.

TEA: I totally wanted that.

MARIJA: We're like really obsessed to be talked about as the power girls.

KRISTINA: What does she have that I don't?

JELENA: I thought, well, you know, nothing can happen while we're together. Well, it turned out I was wrong.

TANJA: They wanted something entirely different.

TEA: To fool around.

KRISTINA: Gun.

MARIJA: Obsessed.

TEA: Fool around.

JELENA: Pathetic morons.

KRISTINA: To smack up.

TEA: Idol.

JELENA: Attention-seeker.

TANJA: But, no, they wanted something entirely different.

### **Test**

*This play was published in theatre magazine "Klaka" in 2010 but, despite the interest from many directors of younger generation, it has never been staged.*

### **A summary**

The story follows a group of seventh-grade pupils in an elementary school, who are confused by the changes they are undergoing, surrounded by adults – parents and the class teacher - who do not show any understanding for them. For each of the four main characters, getting the marks their parents expect them to at the upcoming French test can make a big difference: Maja will be allowed to act in a TV commercial, Tamara's divorced parents might make up, Uroš will get *Nirvana* tapes from his brother, while Đorđe is simply expected be a straight-A pupil. As it happens, none of them gets the expected mark. Therefore, the four of them, otherwise completely different from each other, join forces in the decision to burn the class register book. They manage in their attempt, but the fire kills one of them.

The play is divided into five parts, five days of the week, and every day "belongs" to one of the characters. On the fifth day they are together.

### An excerpt

FRIDAY. MAJA, TAMARA, ĐORĐE and UROŠ (singing together):

Au, što je škola zgodna,  
Leči lenjost i samoću  
Ko da mi je kuća rodna  
Šteta što ne radi noću.  
Kad nisam u svojoj školi  
Mene moja duša boli.  
Nema one družine  
Da delimo užine.  
Nema one s kikom  
Koji ne dam nikom.<sup>2</sup>

#### SCENE I

Schoolyard. Uroš is sitting in a corner. Tamara and Maja come up to him.

MAJA: Got a Prozac?

Uroš doesn't respond.

TAMARA: Sorry about yesterday. I told her there were no feelings involved.

MAJA: That's IN. No feelings.

TAMARA: You had somewhere to crash after, right?

UROŠ: I slept in my room. In my bed. Under my blanket.

TAMARA: How come?

UROŠ: (proud there's at least something he can do properly, even if it is only breaking in): I broke in. My brother taught me how.

TAMARA: What about your mom?

UROŠ: She heard nothing, she was asleep. Her friend as well.

MAJA: My mom's got friends too.

That information makes a bond between them. Uroš gives her a Prozac.

MAJA: One doesn't do it for me.

UROŠ (giving her another pill): How come you don't have one?

MAJA: My mom's caught me. I was stealing from her.

TAMARA: Can I get one?

Uroš gives her a pill. Đorđe appears from behind the wall where he was hiding.

ĐORĐE (to their big surprise): Give me one.

No one's laughing, although he's said something unexpected.

Uroš gives him a pill.

ĐORĐE: I can't die of one?

MAJA: You'd have to take a handful to die. Don't worry.

---

<sup>2</sup> A popular song which promotes school:

School is the greatest place  
Where you're never alone  
Where you feel embraced  
Just like when you're at home  
When out of school  
'm sad and down  
As my friends are not around.  
And the girl with big blue eyes  
I'd never give to other guys.

ĐORĐE: My mom will kill herself.

TAMARA: Why?

ĐORĐE: Because of the test.

MAJA: No, she won't. Even if she did, not a big deal. If my mom killed herself, I could make any commercial I wanted.

TAMARA: When my mom killed herself, my dad would take me to the seaside... Without the moron and her kids.

UROŠ: If my mom killed herself, I'd always had a place to stay.

*Pause.*

ĐORĐE: I love my mom. I don't want to make her miserable. I wish I could make the F in the class register disappear.

MAJA: Me too.

*Pause.*

MAJA: They can. Not only Fs but the entire class register. Uroš, you know how to break in?

UROŠ: Yes.

MAJA: Anywhere?

UROŠ: Most places, probably.

*Pause.* Maja is all mysterious. The others are looking at her with interest.

MAJA: I've got a plan.

### ***Who is Laurette?***

*This play was staged in Little Theatre "Duško Radović", directed by Katarina Petrović. It was performed for school children among whom there were children with Down syndrome.*

### **A summary**

The play *Who Is Laurette?* was based on the picture book by Florance Cadier . The main character is a girl with Down syndrome trying to fit in. Laurette lives in a lovely family with her parents, brother and sister, who love her. Her brother is the only one who reacts to her differentness at times, as he himself is in the tender age, worried if his friends will accept him. Apart from that, Laurette enjoys her family, as well as the special school she attends, and the riding school where she is friends with a specially trained Pony. Her problems begin when she starts a regular school. Not only does she have problems with other children who do not accept her, but with their parents as well, as they fear that Down's syndrome is contagious. The only friend she has is her Pony. However, things change one day when the whole class visits the racecourse. No one can ride except Laurette, which shows them that there is yet another difference between her and the others – there is something she can and they cannot.

**An excerpt**

SCENE VIII

-Who am I? –

Racecourse. Laurette and Pony. In this scene, Pony is a boy.

LAURETTE: Can I kiss you?

PONY: You can.

Laurette kisses him.

LAURETTE: There. Not too bad, eh?

PONY: Yeah, well... no.

LAURETTE: And Klara told me that I kissed her for no reason. As if one needs a special reason to kiss someone. I just didn't know what to tell her when she asked why I don't come to school every day. And I felt happy and I kissed her. And she was surprised.

PONY: Well, what does it matter? It's not like you hit her!

LAURETTE: Yes, but, see, other children laughed at me. And they asked, "who's the Laurette?" I never know what to say.

PONY: Who does?

LAURETTE: Everyone but me, I think. I say: I'm Laurette and they seem to be waiting to hear more than that. And when I want to say something more I stop and get embarrassed.

PONY: Well, tell me, you're not embarrassed in front of me.

LAURETTE: For example.... I am Laurette and I can make an excellent cherry cake.

PONY: Well, there you go. But, that doesn't really tell us who you are. It tells us what you can do.

LAURETTE: Right. I am Laurette. I don't look like other girls. I know I don't because people in the street stop to look at me. When I look into a mirror, I can see my eyes are slanted and my smile is strange. Mom says I'm pretty and my dad calls me "my rare pearl". I'm special, that's true.

PONY: I still haven't heard who you are. You've just described yourself. Besides, I think you're pretty.

Laurette kisses him.

LAURETTE: There, I've kissed you again. People say I'm impulsive. I get happy or angry very suddenly, so they're taken aback.

Pony is rubbing his bottom, recollecting being slapped.

PONY: You should see the riding instructor's reaction when I disobey.

LAURETTE: So, what are you saying?

PONY: I'm saying that no one knows who they are. You're not the only one...

LAURETTE: Do you know who I am?

PONY: Who are you?

LAURETTE: I'm your friend.

PONY: Yes, that is something you really are.

LAURETTE: I'm my mom's and my dad's daughter.

PONY: Yes.

LAURETTE: Elsa's sister. Sebastian's sister, too.

PONY: You are.

Sebastian tiptoes towards them and hears the end of the conversation.

LAURETTE: You know what? I think Sebastian is also not quite sure who he is. But I know who he is. He's my big brother. For me, he's the most gorgeous and the smartest boy in the whole wide world. I wish I was as smart as he is.

PONY: He knows that. He loves you too.

LAURETTE: And, you know what else? When I'm on my own, I really don't know who I am. I only know who I am when I love someone and when someone loves me. I am all the people that I love. I love you too! Let's go!

LAURETTE and PONY: Turn, turn, jump, turn, jump, backflip, jump.

They ride away. Sebastian says alone. His school friends surround him.

## **Milan Markovic**

Born 1978 in Belgrade. Graduated from the department of Dramaturgy of Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade.

Plays (produced and rewarded): „Bench (Klupa)" (Beogradsko dramsko pozorište, direct. Goran Ruškuc; Josip Kulundžić reward, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade), "Green House (Zelena kuća)" (wins the competition, Menchenbuehne theatre, Wiena), „Good Morning, Mister Rabbit (Dobro jutro, gospodine Zeko)" (Duško Radović theater, Belgrade, direct. Jelena Bogavac; Flying Fish Teatricks, London, direct. Jelena Ćurčić; radio play - Radio Beograd), „Good Boy (Dobar dečak)", (Srpsko narodno pozorište, direct. Predrag Štrbac; "Slobodan Selenić" reward, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade), "Long Live Work! (Da nam živi rad)" (Atelje 212, coauthor Anđelka Nikolić), „Znači Marko, kao Kraljević/Pazi vamo (Look Here)" (Boško Buha, direct. Bojana Lazić), „Maja and Me and Maja (Maja i ja i Maja)" (Bitef theatre, direct. Anja Suša), "Sweeping Up the Idiot" (Kraljevo Theatre, direct. Aleksandra Kovačević).

Published plays: "Sweeping Up the Idiot" (Serbian, English - „Scena", Novi Sad 2010), „Good boy" (Serbian, English and Slovenian – Pre-Glej na glas!, Ljubljana 2007), „Good morning, mister Rabbit" (Serbian and English - Scena, Novi Sad, oct-dec 2005; Tmalčart – New Serbian drama, Mostar, Bosnia and Hercegovina, nov 2006.), „Green house" (Teatron, Belgrade 2004)

2007 - 2010 he coordinates the project "New Play in Sterijino pozorje festival". Since 2008, he is a member of the editorial board of theater magazine "Scena". He works as dramaturg on performances in Serbia and Denmark ("Tiggeroperaen", Cantabile2, direct. Nullo Fucchini). 2009 and 2010 he takes part in deschooling project „Raškolovanje znanje"(Teorija koja Hoda, Beograd and Kontrapunkt, Skoplje). 2010 performer in „We Are Too Many"(Bitef teatar, concept and choreography Dalija Aćin), performs real-time dramaturgical intervention „Who Would Want a Mother Like Mine" (Duško Radović theater, concept and choreography Dalija Aćin) and dramaturg „Long Live Work!" (Atelje 212, direct. Anđelka Nikolić). In 2011 he adapted "A Grieving Family" of Branislav Nušić, for National Theatre in Šabac (direct. Bojana Lazić). In 2012 he performed "They live" (together with Maja Pelević) and "Performing Wedding" (together with Nina Mathis, a coproduction of Per.Art and KolektivKolektiv). He is a co-author of "The performance (that is not called Bitter Cunts)" (STATION Service for Contemporary Dance and BITEF, Belgrade and Cikada, Malme) and of "Going all over again" (BITEF Theatre). He is founder and editor of [www.nova-drama.org.rs](http://www.nova-drama.org.rs), archive website dedicated to promotion of new playwriting.



### **Look Here**

*The play was staged in 2010. in "Boško Buha" theatre, directed by Bojana Lazić.*

### **Summary**

Marko and Ivana are growing up alone with their mother Suzi, in the working-class part of Belgrade. Marko is a passionate supporter of the football team Partizan and a member of the ultra right-wing group of supporters. Ivana is trying to become a cool girl in school, but her family's bad financial situation makes it impossible.

While people in Belgrade are rioting against Kosovo's independence (Marko takes part in the attack at the American Embassy, and Ivana in the theft of trainers from a broken shop window), their father Đole returns, although their mother told them that he had been killed in the war. When the children realize that their father is not only far from having been killed in the war as a "Serbian hero" (he was actually in a German prison because of stealing), but is of Roma nationality as well, their lives undergo dramatic changes.

### **An excerpt**

MAŠA: What did you do?!

IVANA: Hi, Maša. I wanna talk to you.

MAŠA: You added these bimbos and I'm not on your friends list. What kind of joke is that?

Ivana takes her to the side.

MAŠA: What are you doing with these dolled-up characters, have you lost your mind?

IVANA: Look, Maša. You and me, we can't be *best friends forever* anymore. Things have changed. I have changed. This makes no sense any more.

MAŠA: What do you mean "can't be"?

IVANA: Sorry, I have to go, they'll stain my iPhone. Have a Snickers.

She gives a Snickers bar to Maša and goes to the fancy girls.

Maša stares at her, shocked.

IVANA: I mean she can't grasp the new social reality, y'know.

Maša kicks someone's bag lying on the ground.

MAIN FANCY GIRL: She's really wild. I don't know how you've put up with her for so long.

IVANA: Me neither.

tag: tomboy

I mean, yuck

I know that type of chicks

hello

/well you got tits not...

I know the type

it's sweatpants, y'know

omg

hey, girL

greasy hair

cheap sneakers

a hood

/it's pathetic

she doesn't know how to use what she's got

HELLO

MAIN FANCY GIRL: *She takes Ivana to one side.*

Listen, I've heard about your dad. I want you to know that we don't have any preconceptions.

IVANA: Pre- what?

MAIN FANCY GIRL: I'm I'm not telling anyone.. We don't care if you're Serbian or Gypsy as long as you are Paris Hilton.

## ***Good Boy***

*The play was staged in 2011. in Srpsko narodno pozorište, directed by Predrag Štrbac*

## **Summary**

Dimitrije, the father of the family, committed suicide in the basement a few years ago. Dragana, his wife, still goes down to the basement and talks to him. Her two children, Darko and Tina, are trying to handle the situation in different ways: Darko is getting more involved in petty crime and street gangs, while Tina is withdrawing into her autistic world of insects and imagination.

## **An Excerpt**

TINA: A kid's stuck in an elevator.

DARKO: Yeah, a kid, stuck in an elevator.

TINA: A girl.

DARKO: Of course it's a girl.

TINA: What do you mean?

DARKO: See, that's just one more reason why I'd never wanna live in a projects.

TINA: What do you mean, of course it's a girl!

DARKO: Boys are more resourceful and independent. They are first to start playing outside, on their own. Of course the kid stuck in an elevator is a girl, it was probably the first time she

went out on her own. She was probably thinking: see, all my friends from kindergarten are playing in the parking lot outside, and me and the rest of the girls can only watch from our rooms. Then she probably bugged her parents for days and weeks to let her out on her own, and when they finally did, she was punished by God for that.

TINA: I started going out before you did.

DARKO: And now she's gonna have issues for years, because she bit off more than she could chew.

TINA: I started going out on my own before you did.

DARKO: Yeah well, but I'm older than you. Anyway, why aren't you in school?

TINA: Schools in the afternoon. The whole week.

...

Someone's in the cellar.

DARKO: Damn! What the fuck's wrong with this burek!

TINA: There's someone living in our cellar.

DARKO: What you talking about?

TINA: There's someone in the cellar.

DARKO: Quit it.

TINA: Someone's living there.

DARKO: C'mon Tina, don't start this shit again.

TINA: I saw Dragana going down with a platter-full of food down there last night.

DARKO: And what were you doing here at a time like that?

TINA: What does it matter what I was doing? See, she locked the door.

...

DARKO: You didn't start going out to play before I did.

TINA: Darko, there's someone down there, I'm telling you.

DARKO: What do I care if there is? Even if this wasn't one of your shit games, which it is anyway, I wouldn't give a fuck. I wouldn't give a fuck even if that was Brad Pitt down there, playing checkers with the sister of Osama bin Laden. Because – you know what the real mystery is, Tina? The real mystery isn't why's this door locked, the real mystery is why those shitheads never put any cheese in this so called cheese burek. See, that's the real mystery. Hey, better yet, an even bigger mystery is why I bother to buy this burek every goddamn morning for breakfast. That's the real mystery.

## ***Sweeping Up the Idiot***

*2013. Kraljevo theatre, directed by Aleksandra Kovačević.*

*Published in English and Serbian language.*

### **Summary**

“Sweeping Up the Idiot” is a little family story about bears and about giving up. After breaking up a serious relationship, Tijana returns to her family home. She returns to the space scarred by elaborate channels of miscommunication between her father who has lost his job but still pretends to go to work day after day, and her mother who, obsessed with a wish to establish absolute control over her family, misses the obvious warning signs. That is why Tijana’s younger brother, Little Idiot, communicates instead of everyone else; just not with people but with objects he throws from the top of the building. In one of those situations, just when he was about to throw the family TV set Little Idiot meets the priest Stevan on the roof. Unaware that by doing so he saves the priest’s life, Little Idiot asks Stevan to help him in his vandalism. While Idiot and the priest are turning into friends through the breaking game, Tijana is facing her old enemy – a huge teddy bear, who waited for Tijana for eight years, starts abusing her physically, trying to persuade her to return to drugs.

### **An Excerpt**

14.

Gordana, Little Idiot and Teddy. Teddy is sitting next to Gordana and smoking, Little Idiot is looking at a stone and writing something in his notebook. Tijana goes out of the room with a bag in her hand.

TIJANA: I am off.

GORDANA: Where?

TIJANA: College. I have my first class.

Tijana goes out of the apartment. Teddy bear jumps after her – she has caught him unprepared.

GORDANA: Something like that simply doesn’t happen. That is simply not possible. In real life you cannot throw someone out just because you don’t like his... his lifestyle. That’s impossible. That’s nonsense. Even if that person, let’s say... let’s say, does something you don’t like. Even then. Or especially then. Because, if our child is problematic, and that’s obvious, at first sight, then, I suppose, in a civilized society the first reaction has to, I suppose, has to be, to try to help that child. To explain him the real values, those... permanent values that are lost today, to take him into your hands, to hug that, that prodigal child, to put it on your breasts, to help him feel the love and that he is not alone, even if it grew up by himself, and he fought all his life for his place under the sun, abandoned by everyone except God, even then, or especially then, to help him understand, to feel he is not alone, that he is a part of a community that takes care of him, community that cares, that understands, that isn't only trying to sell something to you, or grab your place in the cellar

or a parking lot but, on the contrary, a community that understands and takes care of you.

Milan enters the apartment.

GORDANA: Take off your shoes.

Milan takes off his shoes.

**Tatjana Milojevic (born Ilic)**

Tatjana Milojevic is a dramaturge (the Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade). She has written several plays for children based on fairytales – *Three Little Piglets* (for theatre “Boško Buha”), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Puss in Boots...* (for Puppet Theatre “Pinocchio”). She is the author of the play *After the Party* (Belgrade Drama Theatre), and numerous TV programs, the most popular of which was “So-called Love” (RTS).

## ***The Lord of the Flies***

*The play had its debut in 2009 in theatre "Boško Buha" in Belgrade, directed by Đurđa Tešić. In 2010, it received the best artistic achievement prize awarded by ASSITEJ Serbia jury, at the Children's Theatre Festival TIBA.*

### **Summary**

The novel *The Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding, is a cruel story about violence, as relevant today as it was in 1954 when it was first published. For his main characters, Golding chose children, the most innocent population, in order to explore violence as immanent to human nature. Exploring this topic, the society and the circumstances that lead to violence, the author Tatjana Milojević places the story into our society, into our town where brutal violence occurs on daily basis, often among the youngest ones... The story which Golding sets on an island is in this play moved to an abandoned schoolyard. Golding's story poses many questions and states the problem which has still not been completely solved. The story of the play *The Lord of the Flies* is yet another attempt to find the answer.

### **An Excerpt**

*Raša sits next to Dimitrije, to be closer to the fire.*

RAŠA: I'm as hungry as a wolf.

ĐOLE: There's a cat...

RAŠA: Well, haha.

*Pause.*

RELJA: Let's go to the shop, something must be open...

ĐOLE: Nope. That's cheating...

RELJA: Đole, come off it. This is not Counter-Strike... I'm hungry too.

ĐOLE: You know what Pig said. We have to play for keeps. Who gives in, loses...

DIMA: Loses what?

ĐOLE: The game.

RAŠA: Well, pardon me, but since when is this a game?

ĐOLE: Well, right from the start, I guess. It's more fun that way, right? The first one to leave the island loses. Or you'd rather went home and get something to eat...

*Pause.*

RELJA: We'll stay.

*Đole laughs.*

ĐOLE: Right then. Let's see if there's something to eat...

*Relja stands up, they leave...*

DIMA: Why have they painted their faces?

RAŠA: Well, you see they've gone nuts. Like, they're hunters... Đole's dad is a hunter ... He's like, you know, that politician... That's why Đole thinks he's big shot too.

*Pause.*

DIMITRIJE: Do you think there's really something out there?

RALF: No idea. But it is kind a... creepy...

*Pause.*

DIMITRIJE: Đole hates me. He detests me. I know the type.

RAŠA: Well, he's not so crazy about me either.

DIMA: I know. That's because you humiliated him earlier today, because of the fire. *(pause)* And because he wants to be in charge.

RAŠA: I know.

DIMA: He and those like him will never beat me. Never.

Dima takes something out of his pocket and gives it to Raša.

DIMA: There you are...

RAŠA: What is it?

DIMA: That's a cake my aunt's made... In case I get hungry... There's not much left... And as I had brought it before we came, that's not cheating. Eat it... Because you told Đole that it's not a big deal if someone's got no parents and because you're my friend.

*Pause.* Raša takes a piece of cake, gives a piece to Dimitrije, and smiles.

DIMITRIJE: No, you have it.

RAŠA: The cake's good and you're not too bad either, fatso... Though, you're a bit of a bore talking about your aunt all the time.

Dimitrije smiles at him.

DIMA: I don't know if we should still be here...

RALF: Dunno. Though, I think it is better this way... *(pause)* My dad's not at home anyway, he's got to work... although it's holiday... Ever since mom's left... I prefer this to being alone all the time...





2. *Look here*, Milan Marković, staged in Boško Buha Theatre, directed by Bojana Lazić, photo by Vukica Mikača

**Slobodan Obradović**

Slobodan Obradović was born in Belgrade. He has graduated in Dramaturgy from the Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade. He is the member of the editorial board of theatre magazine "Teatron" and the laureate of Sterija Prize for theatre critique in 2012. He has worked as a co-writer for short film scripts, as a dramaturge and as the author of various dramatizations. As a dramaturge, he has worked at the performances "God is a DJ" (directed by Miloš Lolić), "Slipped Disc" (directed by Bojana Janković), "Don Juan" (directed by Ana Đorđević), "Spring Awakening" (directed by Martin Kočovski), "The Treatment" (directed by Aleksandar Lukač)...

## **Pinocchio**

*The play had its debut in Little Theatre „Duško Radović“ on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.*

### **Summary**

The famous Carlo Collodi's novel "Pinocchio" might be considered a well-known fairy-tale of a wooden puppet dreaming of becoming a real boy. Still, to consider it a novel only for children would be wrong. It may be more precise to say that its target audience are all of us who used to be children or, even more accurately – those of us who have managed to preserve their inner child. The literary background of the story with its elements of cruelty typical of *our Kafkaesque world of injustice* became an excellent starting point for the dramatization. In several dramatic fragments that resemble a fast-paced road-movie, the performance reveals the destiny of an individual who faces various temptations, who learns through trial and error, who faces his own weaknesses, and who grows mature by resisting them.

### **An Excerpt**

AIRY: Pinocchio... Jee! Look at you! I can't bear looking at you with those donkey ears!

CRICKET: It's nothing. He's got a tale too...

FAIRYTALE: You should've listened to the cricket.

PINOCCHIO: I can't listen to him, he's constantly talking!

FAIRY: Everyone has to do something. Laziness is the worst kind of illness. You have to nip it in the bud, while you're a child. Later, once you grow up, it's too late.

CRICKET: Well, now he knows it all too well.

FAIRY: I don't know, we'll see. Tell me one thing, Pinocchio: why did you lie to me you'd be good?

PINOCCHIO: I thought you'd trust me.

CRICKET: You might want to zip it up if there's nothing smart you can say...

FAIRY: Tell me what happened. But honestly. All of it.

PINOCCHIO: No problem. I'm always honest. Here's what happened. I really was good but I ended up in circus by accident!

FAIRY: By accident?

PINOCCHIO: Totally!

CRICKET: Well... Pinocchio, you're nose seems to have grown a bit...

FAIRY: And then?

PINOCCHIO: And then the evil Coachman made me go to Toyland!

FAIRY: Made you?

PINOCCHIO: Totally!

CRICKET: Wooow... Your nose has grown and is still growing...

PINOCCHIO: Cricket, you keep quiet, I'm telling a true story!

FAIRY: I can't wait to hear. And then?

PINOCCHIO: I was really struggling. I was yelling, "I wanna go to school, let me go, I wanna go to school..."

FAIRY: Just like that?

PINOCCHIO: Totally!

CRICKET: This is one huge nose! I've never seen a bigger one!

FAIRY: Me neither!

PINOCCHIO: Wait, what's happening?

CRICKET: Careful now, you'll break the window!

PINOCCHIO: It's not my fault, it's the nose! Now this on top of it all! A long-nosed monkey! Why are you laughing at me?

FAIRY: I'm not laughing at you. I'm laughing at your lies.

PINOCCHIO: How do you know I was lying?

FAIRY: There are two kinds of lies, Pinocchio. The white ones and the black ones. And what they have in common is that, in the end, both are very visible!



3. *Who is Laurette*, Milena Depolo, staged in Little Theatre Duško Radović, directed by Katarina Petrović, photo by Đorđe Tomić

## **Maja Pelević**

Maja Pelević was born on February 13th 1981. She has graduate from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts and received a PhD degree at the Interdisciplinary studies at the University of Arts in Belgrade. Her plays have been staged in Serbia and abroad, translated into several foreign languages and published in the domestic and international publications. She has received many awards for playwriting, such as Sterija award for the best contemporary play for "Orange Peel". Besides playwriting, she has worked as a dramaturge on more than twenty shows and for three years she was a resident dramaturge in the National Theatre in Belgrade. She writes plays for children and youth, dramatizes novels and fairy-tale, and together with the choreographer Dalija Aćin she has created two shows for very small children and babies. She lives and works in Belgrade and Bečići.

## **Out of Gear**

*The play Out of Gear was written in the course of a workshop organized by NADA (New Drama) project in the National Theatre in Belgrade. It was presented in the form of rehearsed reading in the National Theatre in Belgrade in 2004. Afterwards, it underwent further development in Royal Court International Residency in London in 2005, and had its rehearsed reading in Royal Court Theatre. The play had another rehearsed reading in West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. The play had its debut in the National Theatre in Subotica in 2005. The play was also staged in Mostar Youth Theatre in Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 2006.*

### **Summary**

The expression “Out of gear” (“ler” in Serbian) has a dual meaning: the first one is when a car is in neutral gear and the second one is a slang expression for a debt that a junky owes to his dealer. And those are the two main layers that the story consists of: the first one is the state of mind of young people that live a life like they are always “out of gear”, going to clubs, heavily consuming drugs and alcohol, trying to avoid any real emotions, just to feel fake happiness and euphoria, going with the flow, not committing to anything or anyone and the second is a very physically and emotionally difficult process of getting clean after a heroin addiction that one of the two main characters Vukan is going through during the play.

There are also two spaces that symbolically reflect the inner world of the two main characters Vukan and Una and through those two spaces that are always connected in a surrealistic way like in the paintings of M.C.Escher we follow the story of six young people that are constantly living on the edge. The first space is Vukan’s apartment where him and Una always in the same manner get high drinking vodka so that they can go to the club called “the Hole”, have fun, dance, drink, consume alcohol, drugs and people and then return to their little intimate closed space where they can be alone and “safe”. Their relationship that is a weird friendship is the main point of the whole play. And the “unknown emotion called love” that they are confronting and not knowing how to deal with is the main conflict between them.

The play consists of 21 scenes and in every scene we have only two characters so the structure of the play is like a web of relationships that overlap. All characters are between 18 and 24 years old or not. Some of the scenes overlap, and some take place simultaneously.

## Excerpts

UNA: ... bullshit.

VUKAN: What is?

UNA: This whole charade of mine. I have to stop seeing this jerk. I really have to draw the line.

VUKAN: You've said it like five times.

UNA: This time I mean it. Jesus, whenever I wake up I'm sick of myself. I can't write about it anymore... I'm totally down ... if only there was a point but there's no point and all of that and this alcohol and everything... I mean, all of this that's not it, you know, I feel and I can't... it's so weird...

VUKAN: I know.

UNA: And whenever I leave his place I have no idea what I was doing there like an amnesia an emotional amnesia and I'm always furious and I always slam the door and I think that's the last time I hear the sound and it's disgusting and the problem is that all of that just disappears too quickly and the horrid feeling of me leaving and I never really put a stop to it 'cause there's no stop and it's all the same all the time and I'm so sick of my pseudo-rebellion as if I was an airhead that doesn't get anything as if I had no better thing to do as if I'm bored all the time so I just kind of have to have fun but it's always the same as if I kept watching the same fuckin film all over again and the worst thing is that it's my own fault.

VUKAN: You're losing it a bit but that's ok.

UNA: No, Vukan, that's not ok. Saying it's ok is the easiest thing to do but sadly enough I'm aware of it all and that's the most

tragic thing that I talk to myself every time on my way from his place and I know exactly what is going to happen...

VUKAN: That's because this a feeling, whatever happens afterwards is just an event, but this is pure and only yours.

UNA: And I think the stuff I write is becoming incomprehensible to anyone but me.

VUKAN: I'll get some vodka. Read this if you want.

UNA: What is it?

VUKAN: A novel. A paragraph, actually.

He leaves the room.

UNA: And you'll let me read it?

Una goes to the computer, turns up the music, sits down and starts reading out loud.

UNA: In a word, I can't stay on course.

Because I'm not going anywhere. I think I never have. I might have been somewhere, but all things considered, it occurred without me realizing it.

I was nowhere, now and always.

The most important thing is that no one knows about me everything that could be known.

Una lies on the bed. She curls up. A while later Vukan returns.

VUKAN: We've drunk up all the vodka.

*Una is pretending to be asleep. He takes a blanket. He covers her. He caresses her pelvis with a rake and lies next to her.*



...

VUKAN: If I only...

UNA: I had a dream...

VUKAN: Had a bicycle...

UNA: I woke up one morning...

VUKAN: Even a small one...

UNA: I had no idea where I was...

VUKAN: With small, slim tyres...

UNA: I set off down the street and finally started recognizing the buildings...

VUKAN: And a big loud bell...

UNA: I got into my friend's building...

VUKAN: I sit on the bicycle and set off down the streets...

UNA: I walk through the corridor.

VUKAN: Around me, everything merges; I have no idea where I am...

UNA: I find the key at the stairs...

VUKAN: I only see the colours passing swiftly, as if on acid...

UNA: As if there's no air...

VUKAN: Water takes me down to the basement...

UNA: I haven't felt light for ages...

VUKAN: You have to swim uphill.

UNA: Finally, I reach the flat 13.

VUKAN: I keep riding but everything around me stops...

UNA: Exhausted, I knock on the door.

VUKAN: As if trapped within a picture.

UNA: Slowly, the door opens.

VUKAN: I was in the room.

UNA: There was nothing except me.

VUKAN: I was sick of remembering.

UNA: I had no friends.

VUKAN: I stopped thinking about love...

UNA: I've heard there's nothing good in it.

VUKAN: Indifference felt great.

UNA: I was crawling along the parquet, listening.

VUKAN: I was marking the place where my body was lying.

UNA: I was killing vermin with my shoe.

VUKAN: Those were the only moments when I made sounds.

UNA: I used no candles.

VUKAN: I hated their light.

UNA: Nights are lonely but comforting.

VUKAN: My mornings oozed emptiness.

UNA: I got bored.

VUKAN: Nothing but me.

UNA: I'll never return.

VUKAN: I'm just bored.

UNA: Irritated.

VUKAN: Tiny stings.  
UNA: Don't hurt enough.  
VUKAN: That's the point.  
UNA: Did you overwinter?  
VUKAN: Socket broke.  
UNA: Eternal love.  
VUKAN: Who fooled you.  
UNA: Light is illusion.  
VUKAN: I closed the shutters.  
UNA: I took of my shirt and approached the bed.  
VUKAN: I screwed in a light bulb.  
UNA: I pressed the switch.  
VUKAN: The lamp leaked the light.  
UNA: For a moment, I saw nothing.  
VUKAN: I think I even couldn't.  
UNA: Then I fell asleep.

### ***Children in Formalin***

*The play Children in Formalin had its rehearsed reading at the festival "Innocence – Project 3" in Novi Sad in 2003. It had another rehearsed reading as a part of the project "The Pearls from Managers' Drawers" in KC Grad in 2012.*

### **Summary**

Children in Formalin is a sharp "in-yer-face" play about young people's search for their identity, the challenges of going astray and the temptations they might run into. What makes this play particularly attractive and authentic, is the fact that it is set in a striking, intense, at times even dangerous music ghetto background, where in garages turned into recording studios hip-hop is created; rhymes packed with rebellion, frustration and anti-conformism of a lost generation. This generational play is set in Belgrade, though it could be set in any other town, and consists of short, intense dialogues, a strong non-articulated energy of youth which rushes into extreme experiences without regret.

The dominance of hip-hop culture in the texts should be taken more as a metaphor than as a genuine presentation of that subculture. The play presents the conflict between two classes of society and two completely different love stories that through their simplicity, ease and modesty tell a story about the confinement of the young generation of today. Children in formalin are all of us who are, in some way, deprived of growth and development – we float like organs placed in formalin, hoping to be revived, hoping that formalin is just an illusion, just a temporary halt.

## Excerpts

TAŠA: I'm pregnant.

IKAR: Pregnant?

MIA: You've heard her. She's pregnant.

IKAR: What can you do about that? You've been fucking around so now you're pregnant. That's how it goes.

BANTU: Want me to roll a big one?

SRĐAN: Bantu, wait.

MIA: Shame on you. Whose fault is it that she's fucked around?

IKAR: Shut it, bitch! She can speak for herself.

TAŠA: I told you what he'd say.

MIA: She's just 16 you moron! I could sue you.

SRĐAN: Mia, you're overreacting!

IKAR: And who do you think they'd believe? We'd smoke some pod with the cops and that's it. And I have witnesses she's fucked around.

BANTU: That's right, bro!

MIA: And you? Say something, you cunt!

SRĐAN: Can't you mind your own business?

MIA: That's all you have to say?

SRĐAN: Please, let's not change the subject.

MIA: No intention.

BANTU: So, bro, what you gonna call it?

TAŠA: It won't be called anything.

IKAR: Wait, wait... both parents have a say. Or, all three of parents.

BANTU: Yeah, man.

IKAR: What's it called, the liquid in which they put brains, kidneys, and the stuff?

MIA: Formalin

IKAR: That's it. We'll put it in it and keep it on the shelf.

MIA: You two should be hospitalized.

BANTU: We can put some fish in, to make it more fun.

IKAR: To have a baby in formalin  
You got and fuck a bitch-queen

BANTU: Right here, on the scene

SRĐAN: With ya motherfuckin' rhyme

IKAR: Then to set a mine - Boom!

BANTU: Bye, bye! Baby's off to Shanghai...

IKAR: That's the thing, you whore,

If you fuck in vagina,

You will end up at a cheap

Abortion in China!

BANTU: What shall we call our son,

IKAR: What will be his first name?

BANTU: Let's put it in the oven, then!

That's the thing, you whore

You shouldn't have fucked in vagina

Whore, you should know  
You should fuck only anal.

SRĐAN: Fishtank, fish, baby, learn how to swim!  
Fishtank, fish, baby in formalin.

MIA: Taša, lets' go.

Taša is sitting still.

MIA: Taša, let's go.

IKAR: She wants to stay.

Ikar kisses her on the forehead.

IKAR: You're staying, babe?

Taša nods.

MIA: Taša?

TAŠA: I'll stay.

IKAR: See?

Blackout.

## ***Strange Loves***

*The play was staged in "Duško Radović" Little Theatre in 2011.*

### **Summary**

*Strange Loves* is a play with songs based on Aesop's fables. The play presents some of the most popular characters – the Tortoise, the Hare, the Wolf, the Fox, the Raven, the Elephant, the Mouse, the Ant, the Grasshopper, the Dog, and the Stork. The fables are used as a starting point in an attempt to explore various kinds of love, while the morale of each of them is knotted into the text and put into an entirely new context.

The play does keep the motifs of the famous Aesop's fables but also creates various twists and links, letting all the characters meet their partners in the end. The loves are not of a usual kind, they really are strange, which shows that nothing is as it seems, and that love, tenderness, and empathy can be found at most unusual places, and that sometimes the most unusual combinations can hide deepest emotions.

## Excerpt

GRASSHOPPER: He believed in his speed

It was all he had

He did everything quickly

So as not to miss a thing

He kept running

And the time passed him by

In speed

HARE: I'm incredibly fast

Speed is important

The most important

When you have it you can do everything very fast

And time is incredibly fast

Without speed time is lost

And once it's lost nothing's left

You just have to be incredibly fast

And I really am

TORTOISE: What do you need the speed for?

HARE: What do you mean?

TORTOISE: What if you catch fire?

HARE: How do you mean?

TORTOISE: Of too much speed.

HARE: That's impossible.

TORTOISE: And then you burn up.

HARE: I can't burn up

I go quickly through the town

I go quickly through the crowd

I do my jobs really quickly

And take up new ones

I think fast

I talk fast

I dream fast

My dreams are fast

I sleep fast

I eat fast

Fast fast fast fast

TORTOISE: Where are off to?

HARE: To manage everything.

TORTOISE: What?

HARE: To live

eat

think

work

sleep

dream

Everything

TORTOISE: I am slow

But sometimes

I am faster than you

---

HARE: Fast

I'll sleep fast

I'll have some fast sleep

GRASSHOPPER: Meanwhile the Tortoise

Slowly went through the town

No hurry

---

TORTOISE: Slow and steady

Steadily slow

The sun comes out

Slowly, so

You see him

But you don't see

How he scrapes the sky

To see him

But not to see

How it is made

Slowly and steadily

the night has come

no one has seen

how it happened

no one has seen

what's really happened...

HARE: Where is everyone?

Whatever

I'm the fastest

The fastest

I'm so fast

I'm so fast

How did you get here?

GRASSHOPPER: We watched the sunset

You weren't here

HARE: What happened?

TORTOISE: I seem to have

Come

before

you.



4. *Strange Loves*, Maja Pelević, staged in Little Theatre Duško Radović, directed by Đurđa Tešić, photo by Sonja Žugić

## **Filip Vujosevic**

He was born in Belgrade in 1977. He has graduated in Dramaturgy from the Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade. His plays have been staged in Belgrade theatres: Atelje 212, Terazije Theatre, Belgrade Drama Theatre, the National Theatre, Bitef Theatre. His play *Half-Life* has been awarded with the special Sterija prize. His play *Ronald, Understand Me* was awarded the best play at the festival Sterijino Pozorje in 2008. He has received numerous prizes for playwriting and dramaturgy. He has worked as a dramaturge on several performances: *Hypernesia* (Bitef Theatre, directed by Selma Spahić), *Born in YU* (JDP, directed by Dino Mustafić), *Workers Die Singing* (Bitef Theatre, directed by Anđelka Nikolić), He is employed with Heartefact Fund as a cultural programmes coordinator.



## **Half-Life**

*The play was staged in the Blue Elephant Theater in London in 2005, directed by Steve Harper. The same year was the play directed by Ana Tomovic in Atelje 212 in Belgrade.*

### **Summary**

In 2005, a group of adolescents spends hours playing the computer game “Counter-Strike” in an abandoned shopping centre close to the metro station Vuk in Belgrade. Krivi is trying to make his way into the team which is to take part in the oncoming game tournament. He receives unexpected help from his girlfriend’s Mila younger sister, fourteen-year-old Milenica. Oblivious to the real life, the kids perceive “Counter-Strike” as life itself. They don’t know that the metro station is one of the biggest construction projects in Milošević’s Serbia. They seem to be haunted by the ghosts of those times...

## **Excerpts**

2

Mila is standing. Behind her, Krivi is at the computer, engrossed in the game.

MILA: We don’t call Krivi<sup>3</sup> that because he’s done something wrong. We call him Krivi because Bole keeps teasing him that he’ll become all humpy like an old guy if he keeps spending days at the computer playing Counter. And Krivi is all straight. For now. And he’s great at Counter. Everyone says he’s getting better and better.

He’ll become the best any day now. With the tournament approaching, we’re all doing all we can to help him. I’m his girlfriend. Although he’s five year older than me. And he’s like so cute. To me, at least.

.....

5

Krivi is at the computer, playing “Counter-Strike”

KRIVI(off): Counter-Strike is not just a computer game. It’s a way of life. It’s a lifestyle, as you have to watch your back at all times. If you wanna be the best, you gotta know some things. Many things, actually. For example, how to shoot a gun, how to shoot a Heckler... Or a sniper gun. Or a Kalashnikov. How to use a knife. You have to know how to get to their base. How to plant a bomb. How to hide so no one can see you and then just to rush out and kill them all. You have to know how to cover a

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<sup>3</sup> Wordplay in Serbian: krivi (adj.) = humpy; guilty. (translator’s note)

buddy. You have to learn how to be faster, smarter, niftier. Time. Distance. Options. How have to know how to fear nothing. You have to learn how to not fear dying. Or taking lives. You have to learn how to be decisive. You have to learn how to appreciate your possessions. You have to learn English. You have to learn what it means when the computer says: "Enemy spotted!" When the computer says: "Cover me!" When the computer says: "Fire in the hole"! When the computer says: "Humiliation."

7

Krivi, Bole and Killer Zvezdara in an entertainment zone.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: We thought you'd be our sixth player.

KRIVI: Come on, why sixth?

KILLER ZVEZDARA: Well, sixth. If someone gets hurt, you're in.

KRIVI: Oh, come on. Who's gonna get hurt, it's not the Olympics. Why sixth?

KILLER ZVEZDARA: You're not good at closing, Krivi. Whenever you're left with just the knife, that's it. You've never slit a throat. You always get killed before you approach 'em.

KRIVI: I have once.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: Ok, but I have hundreds of times.

KRIVI: But I'm the best with a sniper.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: True.

KRIVI: And with a bomb, sort of.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: Sort of.

KRIVI: Come on. I thought we were a team.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: What are you talking about?

KRIVI: Well, why sixth. Who's fifth?

Killer Zvezdara and Bole exchange looks.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: We thought to take Bole. We need someone with experience.

KRIVI: So, I'm out.

KILLER ZVEZDARA: I guess so.



5. *The Lord of the Flies*, Tatjana Ilić Milojević, staged in Boško Buha Theatre, directed by Đurđa Tešić, photo by Vukica Mikača

**Nikola Zavisic**

Born in 1975 in Bela Crkva. He is a theatre director, a dramaturge, and a light designer. He obtained his master degree in Prague in 2003 at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre. He has directed in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, The Czech Republic, and in Holland. He has received numerous festival awards in country and abroad (Kotor International Children's Theatre Festival, Puppetry Festival Novi Sad, Puppetry Festival Niš, Festival of Professional Theatres of Vojvodina, "Zlatni Lav" festival (Umag, Croatia), TIBA festival (Belgrade), ASSITEJ Festival of Professional Theatres of Croatia (Čakovec), etc.) He is particularly interested in experimenting with light and various light sources in his work with the non-formal artistic group "Radio.Nica", which he has been leading for years.

## **Teenage Club**

*The play Teenage Club had its debut in Little Theatre "Duško Radović" on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2008. Its team of authors (director Elizabeta Zemljić, dramaturge Milena Bogavac, and the playwright Nikola Zavišić) received this theatre's special achievement award which is given for outstanding artistic contribution to the development of theatre for young people in 2008. The text was developed as a part of "Future" project carried out as a cooperation between Uppsala Stadsteater from Sweden and Little Theatre "Duško Radović" from Belgrade, the project "Future" was a part of a wider project "Outskirts of Europe" which ran between 2005 and 2008 under auspices of the Swedish Institute.*

### **Summary**

Four teenagers (Marko, Miroslav, Maša and Irena) are passing through a very sensitive phase of their development with the assistance (but also non-assistance) of the Narrator who represents the grownups. At the beginning of their journey of growing up, the four of them are babies, while at the end of it they are promising young people filled with dreams and hope that life can be cheerful and normal in spite of all the growing pains they have to endure during teenage years. The story follows their growing up, their coming closer and drifting apart, their friendships, first loves, their relationships with parents and teachers, their sexual development, and all other aspects of life. As in any other teenage story, music plays a significant part. In this story, the music is called "jump style" – the music for wild and energetic

dance, whose funny and raw energy potential represents the crazy hormone rampage.

### **Excerpts**

The Narrator turns from the Class Teacher into the Principal. The children are in front of her office.

NARRATOR: Next.

Marko comes in. The Narrator is preparing a vaccine.

MARKO: Do we really have to get that?

NARRATOR: You do.

MARKO: Every single one of us has to?

NARRATOR: Every single one.

MARKO: Me too?

NARRATOR: It's no big deal. Come over here.

MARKO: Does it hurt?

NARRATOR: You won't feel a thing.

*Marko closes his eyes and clenches his teeth. The Doctor gives him the vaccine. He doesn't even notice.*

NARRATOR: You can open your eyes. It's over.

MARKO: Really?

NARRATOR: Yes.

MARKO: I can't believe it. I really haven't felt a thing.

NARRATOR: Told you so.

MARKO: Can I ask you something?

NARRATOR: Yes.

MARKO: This, what's happening to me, that's ok? I mean, my voice changing. When will it end?

NARRATOR: I told you last year that you'll have to wait for a while. But, soon it'll settle down.

MARKO: But that, how my voice is changing, that's awful. I really sound horrible to myself at times.

NARRATOR: Don't worry, Marko. That's maturing. That's quite natural, just don't pay attention.

MARKO: But it's irritating.

NARRATOR: I know it is, it's really unpleasant sometimes, but there's nothing you can do about it.

MARKO: Well...

NARRATOR: Call the next one on your way out.

Marko leaves the office.

IRENA: Did it hurt?

MARKO: I didn't feel a thing. Like a mosquito bite. But a needle is half a meter long!

Irena screams.

MARKO: Next!

Miroslav is next. Marko hits him on the head and runs away.

MIROSLAV: I mean really...

He enters the office. He gives his health card.

MIROSLAV: Hello.

NARRATOR: Hello. How are you... Miroslav?

MIROSLAV: I'm fine.

NARRATOR: You know how it goes, right?

MIROSLAV: Yes.

Miroslav rolls up his sleeve and receives the shot.

MIROSLAV: Tell me something, these hairs...

NARRATOR: Which ones?

MIROSLAV: I mean the moustaches...

NARRATOR: Yes. What about them?

MIROSLAV: Well, some tell me I should shave them right away, and others tell me I should grow them, for if I shave them they grow faster.

NARRATOR: But you still haven't got them.

MIROSLAV: What do you mean? Take a look.

NARRATOR: Well... Not much of a moustache yet, Miroslav.

MIROSLAV: Still, they're growing. What should I do?

NARRATOR: There'll be time for shaving. Let them grow for now.

MIROSLAV: Ok. I'll do that.

NARRATOR: And call the next one on your way out.

Miroslav leaves the office, tells Maša to come in.



6. *In Half*, Milena Bogavac, staged in Little Theatre Duško Radović,  
directed by Bojana Lazić, photo by Sonja Žugić

The majority of presented plays can be found at ASSITEJ Serbia website [www.assitejsrbija.org.rs](http://www.assitejsrbija.org.rs).

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**Translation credits:**

Vesna Radovanović for

Introduction of Diana Kržanić Tepavac,

Introduction of Milan Marković and Milena Depolo,

Milena Minja Bogavac`s plays: North Force, Dear Dad, In half

Milena Depolo`s plays: They wanted something entirely different, Test, Who is Laurette

Tatjana Milojević`s play: The Lord of the Flies

Slobodan Obradović`s play: Pinocchio

Maja Pelević`s plays: Out of Gear, Children in Formalin, Strange Loves

Filip Vujošević`s play: Halflife

Nikola Zavišić`s play: Teenage Club

All authors` biographies, plays` biographies and summaries of listed plays except:

Milan Marković`s biography and biographies of plays: Look here, Good Boy, Sweeping Up the Idiot

Filip Vujošević`s biography of the play: Halflife

Maja Pelević`s summary of the play: Out of Gear - translated by Marija Stojanović.

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