

Do not look back in anger

Two years have passed as fast as a water drop in the Danube river flows through Bratislava on its way to the Black sea. Characters, who appeared on the stages of theatres in Bratislava during the last jubilee year of our festival, are already forgotten. Even though, not everyone, but few of us would still remember furious actors throwing apples out in the theatre. Or rebellious German robbers, Lab full of paper boxes or Polish actors who had to survive the marathon in order to keep the timing of individual performances.

All of the plays cannot be easily interconnected by one single topic because of the character of our student theatrical festival. However, all sorts of themes and creative techniques, which we had the opportunity to see through the six festival days, met at one point. It is the fact that each performance contained an effort for the actual, even chilling statement, and that is also the reason for reminiscence.

Interpersonal relationships on various levels were one of the most significant thematic lines of the program. Actors from Bratislava let us delve into the broken love affairs collapsing because of the inability of communication between partners in the play Talk to me. A couple of Croatian actresses showed us a theatrical concert about the addiction of one

person on another. While one of them was physically disabled, the other one, who was not only her roommate but also her home help, tried to start a new independent life on her own. Unfortunately, she did not succeed.

The plays with the effect of the probe into the intimate corners of human lives were alternated with those which reflected society with its ills. For example Shiller's play The Robbers performed by actors from Leipzig or the Italian play Kill the Children about child maltreatment. A wide spectrum of themes was enclosed by a Greek play De Musica which included philosophical thoughts of St. Augustine directed in a non-traditional way. The director focused on Augustine's theory of earthly time passing combined with the principles of musical and physical theatre.

It is not necessary to remind ourselves that we, as the visitors of the festival, have been sitting in the theatre most of the time. We have spent the rest of our free time running across the streets of Bratislava from one theatre to another, or in the editorial office and then at the legendary after-parties in KC Dunaj. Actors, who enjoyed shifting among the characters two years ago, now appeal on spectators. There is no theatre without the audience. We all know that very well...

Ján Balaj

Our Team

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Meaning that stayed hidden in the suitcase

Hanoch Levin: Suitcase packers
Russian state institute of performing arts,
Saint-Petersburg

The story of several people who have one thing in common – they live in the past as well as in the future. The present is disappearing though. The actors bring, carry away and drag their suitcases that are a moving sign of the performance. The suitcases represent several symbols such as sex, death, birth, desires and dreams. The Hanoch Levin's text itself is very fragmentary, despite the fact that there are many characters. Their life and destiny remain disconnected both the text and in the production. The prostitute, craving for a better life, unattractive men looking for a real love, or even a married couple who expect that sending the grandmother to a sanatorium may give their relationship lost power. However, the story does not go anywhere and it ends tragically, with deaths.

The characters live in their memories and dream of a future life. At the same time, they

This questionnaire is inspired by opening production of the festival Animal farm.

Which animal is suitable for ruling the world?

A Frog! Of course a frog must rule, because it can jump out of everything bad.
(Max Sobek, a student of VŠMU)

I think, that the most suitable animal is an ant. When adjusted for weight, the number of all the ants in the world would equal all the humans. Therefore they could rule the world.
(Magdaléna Vrábová, a student of VŠMU)

A chameleon, because it can change its colour, so that it could suit anybody. Everybody is different.
(Michal Novaković, student jury)

Many, perhaps. Definitely not gorillas.
(Ján Balaj, festival journal)

do not know how to live in the here and now. Their suitcases are diversified – similar as their lives are. The characters are not encouraged enough to do a step forward towards their dreams and desires, and even when the opportunity arises – they make a step backwards. It may be a chance to travel abroad or start a long-term relationship. The entire situation is grotesque and tragicomic. Sadness alternates with comedy, but as a whole the production feels heavy.

The plain stage setting (chairs, suitcases, three doors) along with the costumes created an atmosphere of no-time, it was not possible to set it in a specific period.

The sequences in different scenes (party at the disco, funerals, waiting for a bus) caused chaos and many messy situations, rather than a deeper philosophising about life and fulfilment of personal existence.

Subjektíva

A hedgehog, because it eats a lot of beetles and it is very useful. As a bonus, he is also cute. He helps too.
(Juraj Bako, student jury)

At the editor's Office we asked ourselves as well what will happen if...

What will theatre critics do, if the audience don't come to the theatre?

At the same place as if the audience had come. (Dominika Uhlárová)

At the labour office.
(Júlia Pecková)

They will sell hot dogs on the beach.
(Lucia Šmatláková)

At the Theatre institute.
(Elena Zúborová)

Good morning and Bon appétit!

We have started! Once again. You are holding the first issue of our festival journal and reading our column, space where WE will speak to you. The discussion's duo. Diana and Julie. We know it will be very difficult to open your sleepy eyes and the journal after the long nights. However, every morning we will wake up and wait for you at 11 o'clock in the foyer at the faculty theatre. Why? Because the festival goes hand in hand with exchanges of opinions, impressions, delights and disappointments. The morning discussions are exactly for this purpose. We would be really happy if you came and joined us there. Our plan is not to go into deep analyses or critical reflections. It will be just a very friendly talk about the performances that we have seen. You can also meet with the student jury, who will share their opinions and thoughts. We believe that together we will create a friendly atmosphere where thanks to the multicultural confrontation an enriching discussion will be created. And what more, even breakfast will be served! That sounds quite like a good morning. Don't you agree?

different stories and their ways of staging. The production teams showed us how it looks on their home stages and how they perceive theatre. The stage reflected the specifics of each production team, nation and culture. They brought a great diversity and that just filled us with joy.

The inspirational moments are waiting for us also outside of the theatre. That strange buzz on Svoradova Street, where you can hear different languages on every corner and where new worldwide friendships are created. The world literally came to our doorsteps. Not quietly, but with a lot of noise and roar. Music, singing, dance and theatre literally jumped into the streets and suddenly Bratislava smiled.

That is exactly what makes the Istropolitana Project so extraordinary. Let us have fun, share happiness, smile at each other and talk. The morning discussions are a perfect opportunity for that. Over coffee and cakes!

D&J

The first day of the festival is behind us. We met with three different countries, three



Phaedra's love / Israel / foto Eva Miškovičová

	Animal farm	Phaedra's love	Suitcase packers
Diana Pavlačková	😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊😊
Júlia Pecková	😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊
Dominika Uhlárová	😊😊	😊	😊
Elena Zúborová	😊	😊😊	😊

Istropolitana in the heart of Bratislava

VŠMU EU STAGE includes accompanying performances of Istropolitana Project 2016.

Program takes place on the Hviezdoslav Square in Bratislava for 6 days of the festival (Friday, June 10th - Wednesday, June 15th, 2016). Students of Theatre faculty and Faculty of music and dance of VŠMU, but also foreign students from Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, Spain, the UK, Hong Kong, Indonesia or India. At VŠMU EU STAGE, there will be workshops of FabrikArt which is devoted to the production of artistic objects and souvenirs. Additionally, the exhibition of postcards from individual participating countries will take place there as well.

Alfonz Kobielsky, a second-year student of the master's programme of Department of Theatre Management, who organizes VŠMU EU STAGE.

What is VŠMU EU STAGE about?

VŠMU EU STAGE offers accompanying program which supports the main program of the festival. There will be presentations by foreign theatrical performers who are in the main program as well. They prepare a small accompanying performance, for example etudes or musical performances acted for a festival audience or random passers-by. We set up also music concerts performed by students of VŠMU who are dedicated not only to acting or management but also music, singing or playing various musical instruments. They will present their own program during these five days as well.

What can we look forward to?

Specifically, for example, to the presentation of Ukrainian guests who travelled to Bratislava

only because of the performance at VŠMU EU STAGE on Tuesday (June, 14th, 21:00 - 22:00). It is not included in the main competitive program; however, it is the climax of the accompanying program of VŠMU EU STAGE. It is the biggest production which will take place there. Today, there were students from Indonesia who prepared a beautiful performance. Every day, at least one foreign repertory will stage as well as other presentations, such as dancing. Moreover, a discussion on Culture in European Context will take place late in the afternoon of the last day of the festival. It is the discussion about culture of the whole Europe, since European Commission is a partner of this STAGE. However, its content is being created every day.

What awaits on Saturday, the second day of the festival?

We start at 11:00 with the theatrical performance of the students of VŠMU Žofka a Žofka. From 14:30, guests from Bulgaria will present. Music concert, Ingrid Baginová, starts at 16:30 and Mária Danková at 17:30. Dance happening Open Air Milonga begins at 18:30 and Tango of Fire at 19:15. The program of the second day at VŠMU EU STAGE will be closed by theatrical performance of VŠMU Huis Clos by J. P. Sartre, which begins at 21:00. During the day, from 11:00 to 15:00, there will be a workshop by FabrikArt - production of artistic objects and also program in the children playground for the youngest visitors of our festival.

Dominika Uhlárová

I'd rather take the book, please

**George Orwell: Animal farm
Academy of dramatic arts,
University of Zagreb, Zagreb**

A fascinating work of literature is not a guarantee for its stage success. The production of students from Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb is the demonstration of this statement. They brought a dramatic adaptation of Orwell's Animal farm to this year's Istropolitana.

The story of this novel is quite simple. Author depicts turbulent events of a farm: animals at the instigation of the oldest dying pig rebel against their owner. They arrange a power coupe and when the man, a symbol of oppression and evil, is expelled, then they live in harmonic equality for a while. Soon, the pigs find out that they are more intelligent than the rest of animals. They gradually gain power; they even start ugly intrigues among themselves. They make up an ideology called animalism. Whoops! Animals have not even realised it and they are living under the oppression again. But this time, it is not even a man who oppresses them – it is a pig – one of them!

A beautiful allegory about animals has a deeper and timeless idea, but from today's point of view it may seem too simple. During the creation Croatian students have used the original text to a great extent. Probably because of this they got the final shape in which narrative prevails and dramatic situations are missing. Seven actors in humdrum mottled costumes (which reminds of pyjamas) represent citizens of the farm, who, from the beginning when they agreed on kicking out the farmer, act like a group. In several scenes, their acting is restricted to identical movements – e.g. when there is the big fight with the farmer, they synchronously

jump and move away from the farmer's hits. Later, when they are dealing with conflicts there are usually some characters who step aside, but still, acting performances do not step out from the circle of collective stodge. The story goes on, but to us it is represented by long, static scenes, often with no tension at all. There is no revolutionary atmosphere, maybe only in the beginning of the production, when animals gain longed freedom and sing their anthem. In tedious tempo animals crawl to the end which is represented by speeches in political style.

Politics and various controversies, as well as speakers cunningness in defending illegal actions, were the themes prevailing mainly towards the end of the performance. Conflict between the two leading pigs is represented by the character of Squealer – he figures as capable spokesman, who is able to present any information in a way that it is compatible with law and the citizens of the farm do not worry about it. I think I do not have to mention that we can find a parallel to such person also in our little Slovak farm.

Conclusion of the play has the tendency to strongly appeal to today's society, but it is rather scratchy. Animal Farm by Croatian students is based on words and from time to time it seems that stage performance is only secondary. Minimum of the dramatic situations and the tempo of a snail will bore the audience since the first half of the production. On the contrary to the novel, its dramatic adaptation misses the eye-catching and its story statement stays scattered in the uncertainty.

Barbora Forkovičová

Foam orgies of ancient dimensions

Sarah Kane: Phaedra's love
Yorama Loewenstein acting school,
Tel-Aviv

Ancient story of Phaedra and her love for her son Hippolytus was adapted by English playwright Sarah Kane for the conditions of current society. Play emphasizes sexual perversion of rich royal family, which is embodied mainly in the character of Hippolytus. Unlike the classic Greek tragedy, Kane shows all brutality and violence directly on the stage. She emphasizes failure to respect the principles of morality and debauchery of characters, which are not purpose of god's decision or destiny, but of rotten man, destructed from wealth.

Director Dorel Zilberman stresses especially the superabundance of luxury in high-profile social class. Actors move on the stage in luxurious costumes and glittering jewellery. They are constantly under observation of cameras which symbolize the fact that their lives are public for the society. The idea that scandals of the family of King Theseus may be equal to modern spicy stories in tabloids is mediated in the introduction by a character who takes the form of higher divinity, a narrator or also „the angel of death“.

The most dominant character is Hippolytus himself who is a symbol of contemporary issue of the cult of the body. An actor continually demonstrates his masculine physique. He jumps on the rope or does push-ups and behaves as if he was on the bodybuilding contest. In the contrary of the

play, where he is characterized as a person who started to neglect self-care, because of his laziness and fortune, in production is Hippolytus a person whose only interest are his muscles. This is in the contrast with Phaedra's worries about his health, by which director accentuates her excessive care and effort to be in the closest contact with Hippolytus.

The perversion of the snobbish family is emphasized by Hippolytus' character, because he is the most decadent member. Celebration of his birthday is depicted as the debauched orgy during which he indulges in sexual games with men and women. He seamlessly fulfils the perverse desires of his mother or revels in sexual ratio with his sister. Sexuality and eroticism are the leitmotiv of the entire production. Actors illustrate Phaedra's erotic imaginations or sexual acts by dance creations.

The brutal end of classical story is staged with considerable decongesting. When Theseus discovers that his wife Phaedra hanged herself and she stated that the reason was Hippolytus' rape, he swears bloody revenge. But instead of brutal slaughter, we see an explosion of red foam, which symbolizes blood. The ending is thereby in the tone of the entire production where authors tried to alleviate a drastic story by using situational humour. At the same time, they consistently reflect the topic of snobbish society, which is so bored by its own wealth and redundancy of delights, that the only thing they find pleasures in are perverse and immoral acts.

Lucia Šmatláková