

4th CROATIAN THEATRE SHOWCASE

Short info about the plays

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT – DRUNKEN TRIAL

Free Koltes's adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel Crime and Punishment puts its focus upon Raskolnikov's delirium and Marmeladov's alcoholic hallucinations. Marmeladov's tragic and grotesque ending causes Raskolnikov's final desperation. The play is directed by one of the most esteemed Croatian post-modern and post-dramatic theatre directors Ivica Buljan.

OTHER SIDE (DVD presentation)

The author team, director Bobo Jelčić and dramaturg Nataša Rajković, started their research theatre work in the mid nineties and to date they have affirmed themselves as one of the most significant representatives of realism/documentarism in Croatian theatre. In their latest production, Other Side, the textual structure is once again an open form that is put together during rehearsals through actor improvisations. The performance focuses on the everyday loneliness of four "ordinary people" who try to tell their stories and bring the accounts of their intimate breakdowns closer to us. This is one of the most praised performances in Croatian theatre recently.

COWBOYS

Saša Anočić is one of the rare full-blooded author personalities of Croatian theatre who often casts his performances with the same actors thus shaping the text together with them through numerous improvisations. His sensibility is characterised by the concern for a

«small man», stressed humanity and warmth towards an individual, interest for dark states of the psyche and intertwining of tragic and grotesque, with a strong touch of Monty Python's humour and trash poetics. Cowboys - one of the most successful last season's plays, a real hit in the theatre, especially amongst the younger generation – is an extremely funny and original mixture of non-classical musical, tap-dance, western movies (with lots of humorous references) and the story of theatre in theatre where the group of losers gather together to make a play – and actually to escape from their own failed lives. The success of their play (presented in the second part of the play) is their own victory, probably the only one in their lives.

EXCUSE ME, CAN I TELL YOU...?

Anica Tomić belongs to the group of young and promising directors in Croatian theatre. Her new play Excuse me, can I tell you...?, is done through actor's improvisations. There is a family; four people around the table. They are trying to take photographs. They are laughing. Laughter shouldn't stop. Sentences are just accidental. Laughter is the main sentence. The play is focused on the fact that the actors do not represent dramatis personae; they just want to be dramatis personae – that's why they are telling stories. Their need to tell stories is more important than the story itself. The need for happiness is more important than happiness itself. That is why they sit around the table. And they laugh. And they need to take one good photograph, so they would never forget how happy they could be.

WESTERN RAILWAY STATION

The mime performance which emerged from student exercises at the Academy of Dramatic Arts (and was then produced in one of the most

propulsive independent Croatian theatres Theatre Exit) is an exceptionally warm story on loneliness and the attempt by two beings to get closer to each other, using the language of clowns and magic tricks in order to depict the world of infantile imagination and creativity.

VACATION FROM HISTORY (Process_City 01)

The performance is the first (and last to be produced) part of the trilogy *Process_City* inspired by Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* and its philosophical and political implications. *Vacation from History* is a meta(physical) comment on Kafka's work: a travel on the edge of collective and individual consciousness, through the realms of dream and death as the only safe refuges from history.

The third part of the trilogy was at the same time the first to be realised as a synthetic interpretation of the entire corpus of *Trial* on the crossroads of two media – theatre and film – submitted to multiple live editing spanning from VJ'ing to spectator's gaze. Having the *Parable on the Law* as its starting point, the second part, *Ex-position*, opens the gate of journeys into personal histories and the subconsciousness of The Other through a series of one-on-one encounters that promote spectators into sensators, exchanging their institutionalised passivity for compassion, exposing them to public view in moments of their utmost dedication to the intimate, offering them also a bird eye's view of the situation lived moments earlier, all this accompanied with the possibility for the sensator to pass through all positions, stories and phases. At the end of the trilogy, which is in fact it's beginning, stands *Vacation From History*, which tackles directly the mentioned question. Behind the transparent title there hides an onyric voyage through a kafkian day yet deprived of clichés on kafkianism and even on history. Kafka's metaphysical distance that deprives the tragic dimension of pathos in a

humorous manner consists of a paradoxical blend: on the one hand, the categorical rejection of the imperative to leave a mark for eternity; on the other hand, the cheerful complying with the imperative if it proves to be truly inescapable. Indifference towards history makes it irrelevant in a way that saves the relevance of personal experience. From this perspective, personal experience travels through time and space by unrecorded trails, leaving its trace as a view that inevitably alters that, which is being observed; as a thought that, spoken or not, alters that, which is being reflected upon; as an emotion that gives birth to a tone by which all imminent emotions of others will be tuned or counter-pointed: as an entire presence in a particular time-space sequence, unique and unrepeatable, and as such utterly irrelevant as the food for the entropic devourer of historical relevance. What is the shape in which this experience might materialise?

BACAČI SJENKI (SHADOW CASTERS) is a non-profit international artistic and production platform dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration, creation and reflection within the field of intermedia arts, especially in the domain of its implementation in urban spaces. SC stimulate intercultural dialogue through creating projects platforms for active cultural exchange between Croatian and international artists and professionals, at once questioning the existing concepts of individual and collective identity. Through its activities, SC encourages the debate on the nature and contradictions of the on-going globalization process, dealing with those social, political and cultural issues that reveal the “blind spots” and “hot potatoes” of a certain society.

ROMEO (AND GIULIETTE)

Lary Zappia is one of the most successful Croatian directors when it comes to contemporary theatre re-interpretations of the classics. In this

puppet theatre version of one of the best-known tragic love stories in the history of drama Zappia mixes Shakespeare's romantic story with today's ironic view towards the idea of eternal love. He is achieving that view by adding new elements to the original story (for example, Internet chat between present-day teenagers named JC and RM) and by lucid rearranging of the dramatis personae's sentences and functions (the main character in the story is Romeo's ex-girlfriend Rosalina, who is remembering her big love with Romeo). Shakespeare's love scenes between Romeo and Giuliette are presented as scenes between Romeo and Rosalina arising as her memories. In Croatian theatre this play is a rare example of puppet performance dedicated to teenagers and adults (the play is forbidden for audiences under 14).

TURBOFOLK

Oliver Frlić is the most intriguing Croatian theatre director of the younger generation. His plays are characterized by unique and recognizable authorship poetics, always on the verge of social or political conflict, always challenging and provoking our common state of mind. In Turbofolk he is reflecting upon one of the most dominant social phenomena in today's ex-Yugoslavian (and other) countries – so-called turbofolk, presented mostly by specific folk music, kitschy in its nature and appearance. In this theatrical exploration Frlić is not taking sides, he is asking questions by open and inquisitive insight into the phenomenon he is talking about. Actually, his play is not just about turbofolk, even more it is about the contrast between the so-called low and high art – Frlić is questioning what is happening with both of them if we put them into an unusual context. The contrast is displayed very strongly already by the way the play is staged – music and the context of turbofolk are (like in ready-made poetics) placed into the baroque

architecture of the national theatre. Apart from an interesting concept, the play is characterized by extremely vehement collective actors' energy, which is entering into the field of physical theatre. Because of explicit scenes of violence and sexuality, the play is forbidden for audiences under 18.

PROCESS_IN_PROGRESS (Process_City 03)

The performance is the third (and first to be produced) part of the trilogy *Process_City* inspired by Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* and its philosophical and political implications, as well as by the film by Orson Welles. In the space between Kafka's and Welles' oeuvre, we make an attempt to talk about creation in the space and the space in creation; to dig the tunnel that would lead us to that obscure and secret place from which Kafka's voice arises. *Process_in_Progress* is based on the adaptation of the entire Kafka's novel and shaped into a VJ opera-performance, juxtaposing the live mediums of actors and video. The dramatisation includes all existing pieces of Kafka's novel: those published before his death, those selected and published by Max Brod as well as those found in Kafka's legacy. In turn, the spiral labyrinth of Totalitarianism built out of this material is no more than the fruit of individual's "bad habits" and his fear of discontinuity. The concept and implementation of VJ'ing in *Process_in_Progress* (live recording and processing of picture) derive out of this particular reading of Kafka's work, tending to avoid the seductive possibilities that the digital technology offers nowadays in an ad nauseam abundance. The performers have at their disposal a device for expanding their own range of expression and for working on a sort of instant intuitive reflection of their stage actions. The scenes unfolding in real time-space in front of the spectator are being fractalised; reproduction and/or

merging of those fractals construct new entities. As the sum of those strategies, the notorious use of digital mirror in *Process_in_Progress* turns towards the metaphysical: the pixelated gaze subsides, approaching Zen state.

FEAR NOT, I'M SCARED TOO

A man and a woman on a stage. This could have been a nice story about love. Aren't all the stories about that? This could have been a story about loss, the real, really strong story, about a big turning-point, a kind of unchangeableness or just a quiet premonition that breeds big words. He knows what to do with those words. He went to school for that, and she, poor thing, did not. Or, it could have been a story about a gain, so that it would be, like, merry. With a lot of music and wit. Here it could be seen how she dances better than he does. He would probably blush profusely because of that. Or it could be a story about loneliness, well here could and should have been good poetry. As the people say: amazement with the world. Pity. What is left of all this is still only a woman and a man. Larisa Lipovac, dancer, and Dražen Šivak, actor, are He and She. Without a lot of words. By themselves, alone with one another, and all this in front of us - uninvited, but invited guests. They say about the play: „The starting point from which we began to work on this play were the fears: from the fear of darkness, fears of spaces open and closed, to the intimate fears of establishing intimacy, giving and receiving love.“ Dražen and Larisa prepare for the play by passing the last weeks in total isolation. Alone, shut away with their fears. The play is not based on a text, but on six months of rehearsals, experiments, improvisations and facing one's inner and general human fears. Dražen and Larisa create a specific theatrical text, unique, modern and exciting.

FIREFLIES

One of the most acclaimed Croatian playwrights of the younger generation – Tena Štivičić – placed her last play at the airport: the paradigmatic place of our time characterized by fast living, constant meetings and leavings, and, as a result – the time of our growing fragility and more and more shaken stability. In *Fireflies* the airport, usually just a stop in between - became a place of waiting because all the flights were temporary cancelled because of the snowstorm. In such a waiting atmosphere Štivičić is creating a puzzle of accidental meetings, crossing of human's destinies and parallel stories, and she is playing with the idea of freedom of open choices. But, like in Chekov's plays, all her characters will stay stucked between reality and dreams and at the end of the play none of those dreams will become a reality. In such a puzzle Štivičić is making lots of lucid and humorous comments about today's world divided between West and East, threatened by the global warming etc. Therefore, through individual stories she is creating the story about global picture of the world today. *Fireflies* is directed by the well-known director Janusz Kica and staged at one of the most successful Croatian institutional theatres – Zagreb Youth Theatre.
