



**Contemporary Czech Drama
1989–2004**





Luboš Balák



SMRT HUBERTA PERNY / THE DEATH OF HUBERT PERNA

A play in one act
/ 1 woman, 2 men (all of approximately the same age)

Balák's little play is framed by an introduction and a kind of ironic-passionate epitaph in which the author appreciatively celebrates his hero of heroes Hubert Perna, which compares with the closing line of the office worker Bédi: "What a moron he was", a comment on Hubert's death. The question here disputed is obvious. Hubert Perna is an eccentric and shy handyman shut in his domestic refuge with its trick-wires and mechanisms, into which the outside world can only penetrate by means of a demented radio. Hubert's Ubu-like gluttonous gift of the gab can daringly be measured against the grandiloquence of hyperbolic commentaries of village events, which becomes immediately apparent when someone rings at Hubert's door. The surrounding ether invades Hubert in the form of the twins Máni and Bédi, from whom office workers entrusted with the liquidation of the mad author of a dangerous invention are gradually hatched. It is no accident that the name of the dramatist of the absurd Václav Havel is mentioned in connection with Balák, and not only thanks to the figures of the mysterious liquidators led by the ghostly instructions of an unseen power, but above all because of the language which drags the characters into the most bizarre rhetorical somersaults and associative pirouettes. It is on words above all that Balák builds a situation which flows from the characters like some sort of badge or identity which steam-rollers them into the mechanism of the atmosphere. In spite of the signs of possible friendship and interpersonal contact this always tilts over into hysteria. In the end, is Hubert a panic-stricken animal drowning in his own depths, a madman in the hand of diabolical carers, or a mere delirious emission of the fantasy of his own creator?

ŠVEJKŮV VNUK / SCHWEIK'S GRANDSON

/ 4 women, 17 men, chorus

The author puts on stage the theme of elections and the misused power of the mass media. The location is the contemporary Czech Republic with its fluctuating political scene of the 1990s, at the time of the pre-election roundabout. The story of the eccentric regular Antonín Ištváněk, nicknamed Schweik because of his love of beer and continual commentary on events, begins in the pub At the Red Frog, where he is noticed by an unsuccessful media agent searching for an attractive pre-election slogan. The professional advertising agent decides to make a media idol out of him – the leader of a party with scant electoral preferences. Ištváněk, given the electoral nickname Schweik's grandson, has to be its salvation. So an acknowledged pub crawler, from whom words flow like beer, becomes a dreaded opponent of the other candidates. Ištváněk's face is found on billboards along the motorways. As chairman of the party he appears on a pre-election television show. Thanks to Ištváněk the party wins the elections, but Schweik's grandson becomes uncomfortable for those who created him. Balák sets his sights not only on Czech political folly, the beer culture and the lowering of democratic values, but also the frustrations of Czech voters and their only dream – to express their opinions on the TV screen.

*22. 6. 1970

Luboš Balák is one of the most prolific authors of the younger generation. Most of his plays have been staged in various Brno theatres, in particular the HaTheatre, the Theatre at 7 and a Half and the Studio Marta, as well as in the Petr Bezruč Theatre in Ostrava. Some of his plays have won awards in theatre competitions. *The Death of Hubert Perna* reached third place in the Alfréd Radok Awards in 1994. In 1995 *Fanouš and the Prostitute* won a prize at the Theatre Festival of Young Dramatists in Townsville (Australia). Luboš Balák is also the author of a series of theatre grotesques and parodies, *Komediograf*, which was shown over four years at the HaTheatre in Brno. At the presented time Luboš Balák is concentrating on his work for the Theatre Goose on a String in Brno.

LIST OF PLAYS:

- / *Příběh Josefa Dundáčka*, 1994, première 18. 6. 1995 Studio Marta, Brno
- / *Smrt Huberta Perny*, 1994, première 18. 9. 1995 HaDivadlo, Brno
- / *Fanouš a prostitutka*, 1994, première 7. 5. 2001 Těšínské divadlo, Český Těšín
- / ... *sobě*, 1995, première 18. 6. 1995 Studio Marta, Brno
- / *Musulmani*, 1995, première 18. 10. 1996 Divadelní společnost Petra Bezruče, Ostrava
- / *Klimeš*, 1997, première 16. 5. 1997 HaDivadlo, Brno (in co-operation with D. Jařab)
- / *Aquarius*, 1997, première 26. 9. 1997 HaDivadlo, Brno
- / *Ed a Bo – dvě krysy*, 1997, première 25. 9. 1998 Divadlo v 7 a půl, Brno
- / *Komediograf*, 1998-2001, première 19. 6. 1998 HaDivadlo, Brno
- / *Beskydy*, 1999, première 17. 11. 1999 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / *Kouzelný nos aneb Balábile*, 2000, première 22. 1. 2000 Divadlo Polárka, Brno
- / *Kvartet čili Malé dobrodr...*, 2000, première 18. 4. 2000 HaDivadlo, Brno
- / *Krasnauti*, 2000, première 19. 9. 2000 HaDivadlo, Brno
- / *Švejkův vnuk*, 2000, première 25. 4. 2002 Národní divadlo, Prague
- / *Guma gumárum*, 2001, première 1. 2. 2001 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / *Funebráci s.r.o. 1 – 4*, 2001, première 21. 9. 2001 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / *Městečko na úpatí Vysočiny*, 2001
- / *Don Quijote, Viktorka a Harmon*, 2002, première 2. 3. 2002 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / *Posedlost – The Obsession*, 2003, première 7. 4. 2003 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / *Hvězdy nad Baltimore*, 2004, première 8. 4. 2004 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno

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Miroslav Bambušek



*13. 9. 1975

Dramatist and director. Gained his Bachelor's degree in philosophy and translation studies (French and Ancient Greek) from the Institute for Basic Humanities Education of the Charles University in Prague in 2000. In 1996 he and his brother Tomáš Bambušek founded the theatre group D.I. Lebedung for staging contemporary dramatists in Louny. Worked with the Drama Studio in Ústí nad Labem in the fields of dramaturgy and direction. Since 2001 has been artistic head, dramaturge and director of the Multispace Louny. Presently works as dramaturge at the Theatre of West Bohemia in Cheb. Has been writing plays since he was sixteen. Bambušek's plays are marked by a relaxed quality and concision of form and, in content, represent a compromise between the author's interest in political theatre and a surreal unleashed, at times brutal, vulgar lyricism in the drawing of disorderly and suffering heroes. In 2002 he received second prize for his play *The Sand* in the Alfréd Radok Foundation's Award for Best Czech Play.

LIST OF PLAYS:

/ **Chvalo zpěv**, 1996
/ **Afričan**, 1997, première 15. 6. 1997 Protestant church, Louny
/ **Trať!**, 1998, première 14. 6. 1998 Old Waterworks, Louny
/ **Vyklusaná hlava**, 1998, première 12. 10. 1999 Brno
/ **Komix Fridom**, 1999
/ **Líbači hlav**, 1999, première 13. 12. 1999 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem
/ **V oáze-ve strojku-v New Yorku**, 2000, première 16. 6. 2000 Multiprostor, Louny
/ **Psy**, 2000, première 20. 11. 2000 Old Waterworks, Louny
/ **Hugo**, 2001, première 7. 10. 2002 Divadlo Na zábradlí, Prague (staged reading)
/ **Molière** – projekt, 2001, première 14. 12. 2001 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem (in co-operation with J.Vedral)
/ **Písek**, 2001, première 20. 2. 2004 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem
/ **Spy**, 2001, première 21. 4. 2001 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem
/ **Caligula**, 2002, première 16. 6. 2002 Multiprostor, Louny
/ **Herakles** – oratorio, 2002, première 31. 12. 2002 Multiprostor, Louny
/ **Sebeobviňování**, 2002, première 22. 2. 2002 Multiprostor, Louny
/ **Heikki**, 2002
/ **Mír** – cycle of entertaining programmes, 2003
/ **Lenin**, 2003 (opera libretto)
/ **Herakles**, 2003 (opera libretto)

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

/ **Písek** English – The Sand, Russian – Pesok, Macedonian – Pesok

PÍSEK / THE SAND

/ 2 woman, 4 men, extras

The play is almost contemporary with real time (February 2002). The action is localised in the paradise of tourism: the Canary Isles. The comfortable atmosphere of the community of holiday-makers of different nationalities changes, with the help of the local workforce of light women and drug dealers, into a horror with a political background to the prehistory of the characters. It is founded on the author's critical attitude towards the consumer society with its easy availability of any kind of experience for the appropriate financial remuneration. The blazing sun mobilises the stereotype of a tired Czech husband to a fatal quarrel. Jaruš dies of heatstroke with the assistance of the Serbian war criminal Ratko Gorovič, and Richard too gets a going-over for his deformed idea of freedom after he falls into the clutches of the drug mafia and prostitutes. The bored and wealthy Claudia does not in any way mask the aim of her travelling, but sex tourism gets out of hand for the experienced American fine lady. Her relationship with the young Marco, who she thinks is an "ordinary" gigolo when he is really Gorovič's son, turns complicated. Marco – suffering an inner pain manifested externally by his physical collapse – is some sort of surviving spirit-witness of the suffering of Ratko's victims. The collapse of the idyll and the time levels, and the culminating pain of characters driven to meaningless violence, is expressed in Marco's line: "Here the story begins to crumble like sand." Bullets and lines shower down like grains of sand. "The end of tragedy" as the subtitle of the play says, naturally bears instruction in a Post-Modern spirit: if the war-seasoned Ratko Gorovič blames the superficial tourists for their inability to understand real tragedy, then their typical (to him) representative Claudia returns the blame in the last scene of the play. In some sort of deadly hallucination she introduces the cruel old man as the main star of her strange show. In the unending seconds of his death, Gorovič and his life story pass through total banality – and the wheels of the leisure industry merrily roll on.

The complex story /.../ is a harsh picture of the conscience of a war criminal whose acts do not disappear from the world, but are as it were made constantly present through later generations. (Lukáš Vondráček: V Činoherním studiu se drhne krev pískem, Hospodářské noviny, 24. 2. 2004)

The mission of Bambušek's truly risky travel agency is not to export tourists seeking after sensations, but rather to force them directly, physically. (Martin Pšenička: Vinen, tedy jsem aneb Není dovolená jako dovolená, Divadelní noviny, 13. 4. 2004)

HUGO

/ 2 women, 2 men, gypsy chorus

The author describes the mood of the dramatic miniature as "dramatic disgruntlement". He chooses a special rhythm for it, when scenes written without stage directions and in curt rejoinders alternate with passages from the Biblical Psalms sung by a gypsy choir in French. The recitation of Psalms celebrating God the Creator, his work Man, and God's Justice, function as counterpoint to the behaviour of the characters in the play. Right at the beginning we are standing in the darkened corner of a room with the Mother, witnesses to sexual intercourse between the Father and the Daughter. However, this degeneracy is only the first small link in a chain of horrors accumulated in the family's past, which are revealed by the lost son Hugo. Seven years ago he fled from his cage of a home to Africa, where as a Roma he became close to "his brothers". However, the native black race dies out from plague and Hugo, sick himself, returns from the black continent to "white" Europe. He finds his sister Anna in a very wretched state. The white Father kept his adopted daughter deliberately isolated from the outside world and education, to make it easier for him to abuse her sexually. And the Mother, unclassifiable into most of white society, he hurls first into the institute stove before in the end incinerating her in the cellar of his own home. However, the siblings, whose instincts have not yet degenerated, still feel the evil in the house, and Hugo prepares vengeance. Feigning reconciliation, he invites the Father to the pub under the Christmas Tree, a symbol of the white Christian Christmas, and serves him meat "of three colours": the Mother's, Anna's and Hugo's. The Father runs away and at the end of the play Hugo remains alone. Although at the end of his strength, he begs for a definitive death. It is typical of Bambušek's victims, for whom death is not a sweet falling into unconsciousness, but only an unending pain, because it is not possible to forget the cycle of horrors and wrongs of life.

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David Drábek



*18. 6. 1970

Dramatist, director and artistic head of the auteur Studio of the Burning Giraffe. Graduate of the Arts Faculty of the Palacký University in Olomouc in the field of film and theatre studies. At university he and Darek Král founded the Studio of the Burning Giraffe which specialises in modern cabaret. He is author and director of all the Studio's productions. From 1996-2001 he worked as dramaturge for the drama company of the Moravian Theatre in Olomouc. From 2001-2003 he led the new alternative stage Burning House. In 1995 he received the Alfréd Radok Award for best play for *Joan of the Park*. He received the Alfréd Radok Award for the best original play of 2003 for his play *Aquabelles*. In 2003 the publishing house Větrné mlýny published a collection of seven of his plays. As author, director and dramaturge he works with the Klicpera Theatre in Hradec Králové and the Petr Bezruč Theatre in Ostrava. Drábek's texts are marked by an anecdotal and epigrammatic quality. A major source is film and television, whose styles he enjoys imitating parodying in his grotesque and cabaret texts and which are also a key theme of his dramas: kitsch, the media world, mass and commercial culture.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / **Malá žranice**, 1992, premiére 22. 3. 2003 Západočeské divadlo, Cheb
- / **Hořící žirafy**, 1993, premiére 1993 Divadelní společnost Petra Bezruče, Ostrava
- / **Jana z parku**, 1994, premiére 21. 4. 1995 Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
- / **Vařila myšička myšičku**, 1995, premiére 9. 5. 1996 Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
- / **Kosmická snídane**, 1997, premiére 5. 6. 1997 Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
- / **Švédský stůl – Jiný kafe**, 1998, premiére 23. 2. 1999 Klicperovo divadlo, Hradec Králové
- / **Kostlivec v silonkách**, 1999, premiére 13. 12. 1999 Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
- / **Kuřáci opia**, 2000
- / **Kostlivec: Vzkříšení**, 2002, premiére 1. 2. 2003 Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
- / **Embryo čili Automobily Východních Čech**, 2002, premiére 19. 3. 2004 Divadelní společnost Petra Bezruče, Ostrava
- / **Akvabely**, 2003
- / **Žabikuch**, 2004

AKVABELY / AQUABELLES

/ 6 women, 4 men

A view of the contemporary generation of thirty-somethings. Three university friends conceive a secret hobby: they meet at a hidden reservoir and "dance" in the water. After school their paths had diverged. Kajetán had taken the post of TV moderator and became a true celebrity. Petr stayed at the university as a lecturer and continued his stubborn struggle against consumerism. However, the two friends are caught off guard by Filip. He decides to stay in the reservoir for ever, returning to an existence as a prehistoric water element. Things take off – Petr leaves his wife, Kajetán, influenced by the loss of his friend, causes a brawl in the TV studio. Over a few seconds their certainty has crumbled to dust. In spite of all its gags and humorous situations, the play is permeated with the nostalgia of a generation and in places even a frosty surreal quality.

JANA Z PARKU / JOAN OF THE PARK

/ 4 women, 11 men

The park is a jungle in the middle of the city, a place with a different morality from the "normal" one, a free island, an alternative to life according to a timetable. This is where people meet who have problems with the world outside: the hippie Hash, a man posing as a blue pug-dog, a timid school-leaver, an old actor, tramps and bankrupts and the village girl Joan. Like Joan of Arc she hears Voices who summon her to a journey. Her calling in the post-modern world of confused values is no longer an unambiguous action but a simple challenge: "Try to be yourself." In this she resembles the other characters all of whom want to solve the basic question: "What to do and who to be?" The play reflects the festering atmosphere of the beginning of the 1990s and the transformation of the totalitarian regime when the previous structures relaxed and people thrown into freedom struggled with searching for their place in the new reality. Obviously the author could not, in 1994 when he wrote the play, offer the audience an easy solution; his characters were those who had failed in life, whilst on the other hand Joan resists the allure of the evil spirit Uchuchulo who offers her a standardised conformist idea of a contented life in material bliss. Drábek's play is witty, deft, rich in an unleashed visual quality when the inner world of the characters materialises on stage, even linguistic games with absurd consistency illustrating the ridiculousness of the figures dressed up in new social roles; eg the "black sheriff" (security guard) wears a black mask and furthermore carries the typical gear of a black rapper over his shoulder – a giant tape-recorder.

Like most original plays by young authors, Joan of the Park is a play of fantasy, dream and the magic of the word. (Jakub Škorpil: Jana, Uchuchul a ti druzí v parku, Telegraf, 19. 10. 1995)

Joan of the Park is the author's continuation of a provocative dialogue with the world, in which a bizarre vision of the apocalypse is substituted by a grotesque replica of contemporary reality. A feeling of threat and a flight into "another" world are the starting points of action set in a park amongst skyscrapers. In this "oasis" in the middle of commerce, banal advertisements and rubbish, a group of dubious individuals meet the village girl Joan. (Tatána Lazorčáková: Jana z generačního parku, Lidové noviny, 31. 5. 1995)

EMBRYO ČILI AUTOMOBILY VÝCHODNÍCH ČECH / EMBRYO OR, AUTOMOBILES OF EAST BOHEMIA

/ 3 women, 3 men

Drábek's grotesque can be considered a kind of contribution towards the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU. It reflects the smallness and provincially of the Czech Republic for which, in place of a lion, a better state symbol would be an old woman with a poodle. The eternal cycle alternating between blossom and fall, as we know it from the history of the Czech nation repeatedly swallowed up in and vomited out of the European space, cannot be played anywhere else but in the cage of a Czech sitting room where, entrenching themselves, are the prodigies (teenager Sidonia) and losers (Simple Simon), the ice-hockey fans (butcher Honza) and intellectuals (television magnate Kajetán), screwed-up featherbrains (Irena) and high-minded fine ladies (Kajetán's wife Stella). The comic courtship of Irena and Honza in the first act, which is a muddle of typically Czech disparaging pub humour and themes of global civilisation from the incessant effervescent media massage, culminate in Kajetán's wild attempt to clone modern man; but all he succeeds in bringing to life is an unviable embryo reproducing the drive of mobile communication. And they would not be Czechs without candy floss or without fairy stories: when technology goes mad, time goes mad too and in the end people. In the continual muddle Sidonia, the hope and future of the nation, is transformed into a squirrel and Simple Simon with the wave of a magic wand turns wise. The play also goes under the title of Silicon Baby or, Autobus in the Underworld.

In Embryo Drábek demonstrates a panorama of a Post-Modern mass-media universe, in which various dependencies and cross-gender mutants originate. Their lives become a drama of alienation – and that in spite of the unrestrained black humour. (Nina Chovancová: V zajetí ujetosti, Divadelní noviny, 13. 4. 2004)



Jiří Hubač



* 17. 8. 1929

Czech dramatist and television scriptwriter. Worked as a design engineer until 1955. After finishing secondary school, he was incapacitated by serious illness which became an impulse for him to write. Editor of the journal *Technická politika* (1956-61) and from 1956 worked as a television dramaturge. Dismissed in 1974 for political reasons, when he became a free-lance writer. At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s popular with audiences and critics for his plays *Unripe Raspberries* (adapted for the theatre as *The Good Old Band*), *The Fall of Icarus* and *Migrant Birds*. Hubač was known as the author of a number of television serials – in the 1960s he shared in writing the script for the popular TV serials *Three Blokes in a Cottage* and *Eliška and her Family*, in the 1980s for the serials *Good Water*, *Ambulance*, etc. He wrote the scenarios for the feature films *Dance Teacher* (1994) and *Fanny* (1995). In his dramas, Hubač focuses on questions of transformation in modern society. Individual plays stand on the polarity between philosophical and ethical issues in general, and the emotional world of contemporary man.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / **Král krysa**, 1973–74, première 9. 10. 1974
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / **Komu zvoní hrana**, 1976, première 27. 5. 1977
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / **Dům na nebesích**, 1980, première 14. 11. 1980
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / **Stará dobrá kapela**, 1983, première 18. 4. 1984 Národní divadlo, Prague
- / **Generálka**, 1985, première 16. 4. 1986 Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / **Hostina u Petronia**, 1996, première 31. 10. 1997
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / **Johanka z Arku**, 1999, première 31. 3. 2000
Divadlo Ta Fantastika Praha, Prague

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

- / **Král krysa** German – König Ratte
- / **Dům na nebesích** German – Ein Haus in den Wolken
- / **Stará dobrá kapela** German – Die Studentenkappelle, Polish – Nasza orkiestra, Bulgarian – Dobrijat star orkestar
- / **Generálka** English – Madame General, German – Die Generalin

HOSTINA U PETRONIA / PETRONIUS'S FEAST

/ 2 women, 17 men

The action takes place in the reign of Emperor Nero. Rome serves as a metaphor for the totalitarian past: a time of informing on other people, secret police, allegiance to authority, careerism, omnipotent government and one's own unpredictable fate. Fear rules at Caesar's court and throughout Rome. Nero's man, commander of the Caesarean guard Tigellinus, governs the city. Caesar, who thinks he is a great poet, prepares to take part in a public poetry contest with his bodyguard and friend Ancius. But when it appears that Ancius has written a public defamation of Caesar, Nero cannot forgive the insult and asks the poet Petronius to judge Ancius's guilt. In fear of his life, Petronius – knowing that Ancius is innocent – agrees to his condemnation. It was Tigellinus who wrote the provocative defamation. Clivia, mistress to Ancius and formerly to Petronius, ascribes the authorship to Petronius to save her lover; but Ancius has committed suicide. Petronius decides that pride and honour is worth more than life and sends an offensive letter to Caesar before arranging a feast at his home. Just as soldiers come to the house, he takes his life.

The play is the author's coming to terms with the time of totalitarianism, with the philosophy of what was known as the grey zone. For a free spirit, what are the limits of collaboration with power? In non-normal conditions, what are human feelings like love, friendship and tolerance capable of? (Jana Soprová: Hostina u Petronia nabízí alespoň hostinu hereckou, Večerník Praha, 4. 11. 1997)



Ivan Kraus



*1. 3. 1939

Czech writer, author of humorous stories, plays and television scripts. Born in Prague. Graduated in international economic relations in 1959. Worked as a writer and actor in a number of small Prague theatres, mostly cabaret. Emigrated in 1968 and lived in the USA, Switzerland, Italy, England, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Mexico. From 1971 worked in Germany as a radio and TV scriptwriter, puppet player and writer. In 1976 moved to France where he still lives. In writing his plays, Ivan Kraus was often inspired by his own experiences (*Honey Summer, My Family and Other Earthquakes, Family Congress*). In the Czech Republic he works mainly with the publishing house Academia. His books are based on a subtle verbal humour and play with languages. He interprets his favourite theme of relationships between families or partners with an original absurd or lightly grotesque exaggeration.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

/ **Zahrajte si kabaret č. 2**, 1963
/ **Zahrajte si kabaret č. 3**, 1964
/ **Textbeat**, 1965
/ **Důvěrné hovory**, 1966
/ **Toulavý kabaret**, 1967
/ **Chlubil**, 1970
/ **Kontrasty**, 1971
/ **Komedie z rance**, 1971
/ **Happy Day**, 1975
/ **Rocking**, 1985
/ **Gala**, 1986
/ **Poker bez esa**, 1996, première 6. 2. 1999 Divadlo Pohody, Prague
/ **Víkend**, 1998, première November 2001 Ochotnické divadlo, Bruntál
/ **Na břehu**, 1999
/ **Vše co potřebujete vědět o vzniku bulvární komedie**, 2000
/ **Poučné příběhy**, 2002

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

/ **Poker bez esa** German – Poker ohne As

POKER BEZ ESA / POKER WITHOUT AN ACE

/ 2 women, 2 men, 4 tape-recorded voices

Poker without an Ace is a metaphor for contemporary Western society which functions on the principle "Accumulation, consumption, frustration". The play distinguishes itself by grotesque elements and absurd verbal comedy; in the tradition of the drama of the absurd it lays emphasis on an analysis of language; with the help of language games it reveals the hidden stereotypes of communications. The first scene is played on the stand of two tramps who spend the day aside from life's commotion, philosophising and perusing telephone directories. They are not short of anything essential. Into their seclusion falls the tramp Zrzavec whose existence is absurd; although a tramp, his hunt for "trampish" luxury works on him in an unfree way. After him comes the Sociologist, who in the course of work on her statistics falls into a deep depression because of her own alienated existence. The second scene is the tramps' dream of heaven. Voices of a heavenly radio can be heard. The scene ends with the tramps' attempt to be heard by the Creator. However, all they can hear on the phone is the eternally repeated recording "Don't hang up, you are in a queue...". In the third scene we find ourselves back on earth. The Sociologist again appears on the tramps' stand, having decided to end her consumer existence and become a tramp as well. However, she cannot accept the idea of surrendering civilisation's gains. In the end she

hesitatingly leaves with the energetic Zrzavec. In the moonlit night the tramps again return to reading the endless rows of numbers in the telephone directory.

Two dossers, He and She /.../ are woven from the material of Steinbeck's voluntary renegades and rebels against success. (Richard Erml: Sadomaso, Divadelní noviny, 8.6.1999)

VÍKEND / WEEKEND

/ 2 women, 3 men

Weekend is a bitter conversation comedy in four scenes, in which stereotypes of family relationships (husband and young mistress, wife and young lover) are portrayed with elements of absurd comedy and with a sense for subtle linguistic humour. In the first scene we are witnesses to the early morning conversation of a middle aged couple – about health problems, unpaid bills and bureaucratic summonses. He is preparing for a weekend congress, she for a visit to a friend. In the second and third scene we find ourselves in a hotel where the couple are spending the weekend with their respective lovers in adjacent rooms. The action alternates between the two rooms and we follow the development of the situation of both couples. The young Mistress is jealous of the Wife, and gradually begins to make the same, if not greater, demands. Eventually the Husband is degraded to a "lap-dog", barking and going on all fours. The Lover is shocked by a telephone conversation between the Husband and Wife. In the last scene the two couples meet over breakfast in the hotel restaurant. The married couple betray no sign of knowing each other. The conversation of the foursome, served by the Waiter, reaches a piquant situation, but at the same time painful revelation, softened however by the author's kind-hearted overview and understanding of human frailty.



Lenka Lagronová



*22. 9. 1963

Graduated in dramaturgy from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague under Prof. Jaroslav Vostrý. Wrote several plays whilst still a student which were later presented in the theatre DISK (eg. *Nouzov*). As a dramaturge, she has worked only with the director Petr Lébl at the Theatre on the Balustrades. She devotes herself to writing plays for the theatre and for radio. In her early works she concerned herself with the traumatising experiences of the younger generation, which she describes with a typically rough humour. She writes primarily about episodes in the maturing of young women (*Antelope*). The second part of her work was influenced by her departure from theatrical life and conversion to Roman Catholicism (*Teresa*). In 1998 her play *Teresa* won the Alfréd Radok Award for Production of the Year (Comedy Theatre, directed by Jan Nebeský). In 1999 she received the competitive Czech Radio Award for her radio debut *Please Stand Up*, and in 2002 this play won a prize in the Grand Prix Bohemia.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

/ *Nevím kudy kam*, 1988, première 23. 3. 1990, DISK – Divadelní studio DAMU, Prague
/ *U stolu*, 1988, première 1990 A Studio Rubín, Prague
/ *Nouzov*, 1989, première 23. 3. 1990 DISK – Divadelní studio DAMU, Prague
/ *Pláč*, 1989
/ *Náš*, 1990
/ *Pelech*, 1992, première 1. 3. 2002 Pídivadlo, Prague
/ *Pokoj*, 1992, première 1. 3. 2002 Pídivadlo, Prague
/ *Spinkej*, 1992, première 1. 3. 2002, Pídivadlo, Prague
/ *Srnečka*, 1992, première 1. 3. 2002, Pídivadlo, Prague
/ *Těžko sem někdo dohlédne*, 1992, première 1. 3. 2002, Pídivadlo, Prague
/ *Antilopa*, 1993, première 12. 5. 1995 A Studio Rubín, Prague
/ *Markýza*, 1993
/ *Páv*, 1993
/ *Naši Vaši furianti*, 1993, première 5. 2. 1994 Divadlo Na zábradlí, Prague
/ *Terezka*, 1997, première 7. 3. 1997, Divadlo Komedie, Prague
/ *Vstaň, prosím tě*, 1999, première 2000 Český rozhlas, Prague
/ *Království*, 2002
/ *Miriam*, 2003
/ *Nikdy*, 2003, première 7. 11. 2003 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem
/ *Johanka*, 2004

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

/ *Antilopa* Russian – Antilopa
/ *Království* Polish – Królestwo
/ *Terezka* Slovak, Slovenian – Tereza
/ *Vstaň, prosím tě* Croatian – Ustani, molim te

ANTILOPA / ANTELOPE

/ 2 women, 1 man

The characters of the play stand as if they were isolated with their desires in an emptied world. In a sequence of visions, wild images, nightmares and dreamlike associations, the relationship of a daughter to her mother and to men develops, and through it motifs of death, maturing, physical longings, longings for freedom but also for love and tenderness. At the beginning we find ourselves in a room with white walls during a conversation at night-time between Cilla and her Mother. Their relationship appears in different forms – in love and in selfishness, in concerned care and tenderness, and in an effort to free herself from her mother and to grow up. During the conversation Sebastian appears beyond the glass doors of the room, asking for lodging. Cilla, longing for a man, shuts her Mother into the wardrobe. She is immediately sorry, longing to return to her childish innocence, but it is impossible to stop time. Cilla seduces Sebastian, longs to give herself to him, but he rejects the relationship. The Mother reawakens to life and leaves. Only Cilla and Sebastian remain in the room, and now finally together try to "release the Antelope". Even though the play is written in prose it has strong poetic potential. It is a typical work with language for the author, language full of neologisms, symbols and compulsively returning motifs.

Antelope is an unalterably feminine play. /.../ As though the author were driven to write down her traumatising experiences and recast them into some sort of surreal report. Through inflamed imagery it promotes (and encodes) painful reality – the mother's aching legs grow feathers, birds squawk, and antelopes start turning in her stomach. (Marie Reslová: Obraz, záznam nebo komentář doby?, Svět a divadlo, 1995)

TEREZKA / TERESA

/ 7 women, 1 man, 2 tape-recorded children's voices

This gripping play, shot through with an almost mystic atmosphere, is inspired by the life and writings of St. Teresa of Lisieux. It came into existence gradually, in several versions. The original version has the shape almost of a radio script with freely ordered short scenes from the life of St. Teresa. Lagronová works not only with religious symbolism – a great emphasis is laid on sound (the sirens of lighthouses, the scattering of potatoes, the singing of the nuns) and visual motifs (the petals of red roses). She maps Teresa's decision to become a nun, her entrance into Carmel, her life in the convent and her death. In separate sequences she gradually reveals Teresa's philosophy of "sacrifice for love". Some visions have a dreamlike atmosphere (Teresa's addresses to God) others in a very realistic way portray actual moments of convent life (Teresa takes her vows). Quotations from the works of St. Teresa are included in the play.

Lenka Lagronová's Teresa is not a complicated drama which calls up or even makes visible the complex and painful path to God of St. Teresa of Lisieux. It is in part a lyrical poem, in part a collage, a dramatised legend of the saint written in fervid admiration. (Josef Mlejnek: Mystické nemehlo aneb Legenda o Terezce Lenky Lagronové, Svět a divadlo, 1997)

In her play, Lagronová aims rather at something very different, at a dramatic genre forgotten in today's theatre – at a miracle. (Barbara Mazáčová: Mirákl z konce Milénia, Divadelní noviny, 15. 4. 1997)



Iva Peřinová



*25. 6. 1944

A graduate of the puppetry department of the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. From 1969-2003 worked in the Naive Theatre of Liberec as a puppet player, later as a reader, and from 1990 as a dramaturge. She has written more than 30 plays especially for the puppet and alternative theatre; some of them were later adapted for the straight theatre. She has for a long time been one of the most frequently played Czech authors of plays for children and youth. A number of her plays have been translated and presented on many stages abroad (Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Finland etc.). She has received several prizes at puppet festivals and in literary competitions (the Award of the Czech Literature Foundation and the Alfréd Radok Award). Her successful work for children includes the original plays *The Whale Rocks*, *Fairytales from the Palm* and a fairy-tale on a well-known motif, *The Grandfather Know-all's Three Golden Hairs*; for youth and adults *The Wanderings of Don Juan* or, *The Epidemic of Seville*, a comedy set in a theatre *The Animal Theatre* and the play *Gee Whiz, Dogheads*.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / **Branka zamčená na knoflík**, 1976, premiére 27. 1. 1977
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Poslechněte, jak bývalo**, 1977, premiére 10. 2. 1978
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Pohádky na draka**, 1979, premiére 17. 9. 1980 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Turandot ukrutnice**, 1981, premiére 12. 2. 1982
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Loupežníci na Chlumu**, 1982, premiére 30. 6. 1983 Loutkové divadlo
Drak, Hradec Králové
- / **Košile pro Jánošíka**, 1983, premiére 17. 5. 1984
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Brum, dům, ťululum**, 1984, premiére 21. 9. 1984,
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Putování Dona Juana aneb Epidemie sevillská**, 1985, premiére
12. 12. 1985 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Deset černoušků**, 1986, premiére 11. 9. 1986 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Jak chodil Kuba za Markytou**, 1987, premiére 31. 10. 1987
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Kolíbá se velryba**, 1987, premiére 24. 9. 1988 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Tři zlaté vlasy děda**, 1989, premiére 24. 2. 1990
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Pohádka do dlaně**, 1991, premiére 28. 9. 1991 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Jak dostal Janek princeznu**, 1991, premiére 13. 6. 1992
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Bezhlavý rytíř**, 1992, premiére 16. 10. 1993 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Popelka**, 1993, premiére 17. 3. 1994 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Alibaba a čtyřicet loupežníků**, 1994, premiére 2. 12. 1994
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Alína aneb Petřín v jiném dílu světa**, 1996, premiére 11. 10. 1996
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Vánoce s Kulišákem**, 1996, premiére 5. 12. 1996
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Vodníci pod kamenem**, 1997, premiére 29. 11. 1997
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Čarovná rybí kostička**, 1997, premiére 22.5.1998
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Líný Lars a žabka kouzelnice**, 1998, premiére 25. 9. 1998
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Jeminkote, Psohlavci**, 1999, premiére 11. 10. 1999 Divadlo Alfa, Pilsen
- / **Zvířecí divadlo**, 1999, premiére 3. 12. 1999 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Křesadlo**, 2000, premiére 6. 10. 2000 Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Máme kliku pohádkovou**, 2002, premiére 15. 2. 2003
Naivní divadlo, Liberec
- / **Čerti z Ještědu**, 2003, premiére 11. 10. 2003 Naivní divadlo, Liberec

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

- / **Jak chodil Kuba za Markytou** English – How Kuba Courted Markyta
- / **Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševěda** English – Grandfather Know-all's
Three Golden Hairs
- / **Pohádka do dlaně** English – The Fairytale from the Palm
- / **Bezhlavý rytíř** English – The Headless Knight
- / **Alibaba a čtyřicet loupežníků** English – Ali baba and the Forty Thieves
- / **Alína aneb Petřín v jiném dílu světa** English – Alina or Petřín Tower
on the Other Side of the World
- / **Líný Lars a žabka kouzelnice** English – Lazy Lars and Frog the Magician
- / **Jeminkote, Psohlavci** English – Gee Whiz, Dogheads
- / **Zvířecí divadlo** English – The Animal Theatre
- / **Máme kliku pohádkovou** English – The Crank of Fairytales

POHÁDKA DO DLANĚ / THE FAIRYTALE FROM THE PALM

/ 5 players

A poetic comedy for children about the four seasons. It is divided into four scenes: How Spring Wept for Winter; How Summer has to make Spring Angry; How Autumn made Winter Sad; How Winter Fought with All his Strength. The personified seasons start up their fight for control before an astonished person who has fallen asleep in his room. A coloured shadow play goes on outside his window during their conflicts. Winter leaves behind two snowflakes for Spring. Outside the window these two snowflakes change into animated drops of water, journey below the earth, the sea and sky, turn into vapour and hail. Their transformations and wanderings are brought nearer by a fairytale magnifying glass in the form of short stories. The man in the room protests against these visitors but is nevertheless drawn into this cycle against his will, becomes a bush which buds, flowers, matures and fades. At the end a snowflake is caught in his hand – the theme for the continuation of an unending serial.

If I read and compare all the motifs, if I find their mutual connections, then I cannot shake off the impression that it is humility and a humble wonder before the wisdom of nature, before the miraculous nature of its doings, which is decisive here. (Jan Císař: Komentář dramaturga, Loutkář, 2. 3. 1992)

ALIBABA A ČTYŘICET LOUPEŽNÍKŮ / ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

(Almost a tragic-comedy for a few glove puppets and a large chorus of robbers)
/ 2 women, 3 - 5 men, chorus of robbers

And old story from the Arabian Nights about the kind Ali Baba, the miserly Kasim and the clever Mardzhana who gets the better of forty thieves. This puppet adaptation, written in a slightly archaic language, packs action and humour into the well-known story and, with a view to the chosen type of puppets (glove puppets, and mass puppets for the singing robbers), emphasises the grotesque situation. The play is intended for children over 8.

The biggest success with the public was the chorus of forty thieves, which entered the stage almost chorally with the polyphonic clattering of wooden hinges. (Monika Loderová: S kamarádem hledat štěstí..., Lidové noviny, 8. 12. 1994)

VÁNOCE S KULIŠÁKEM / CHRISTMAS WITH KULIŠÁK

/ 1 woman, 1 man

A simple, gratifying little play for the youngest audience, intended for what is known as "table theatre". The nonsense situations of this little play were inspired by one of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. A smoked sausage moves into a cottage belonging to a little bird and a little mouse; each of them has his own little bed and keep house happily together. The little bird hunts for firewood, the little mouse cooks, and the sausage sticks his feet into the soup to make it smell better. But then the evil bird Kulišák puts the idea into little bird's head to wet his feet in the soup himself, and drive the sausage out into the forest for firewood. The story would end tragically if it weren't for Christmas Eve. This time it is actually Kulišák who prepares the most wonderful Christmas surprise for them. The fairytale is written in simple rhyme.



Antonín Procházka



*25. 12. 1953

Graduated from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. From 1977 was employed in the drama company of the Tyl Theatre in Pilsen. Theatre critics are particularly appreciative of his talent for comedy. In the 1980s he founded his own theatre company, the Theatre of Small Norms, where sketches, text-appeals and paraphrases of literary classics linked him to the tradition of the movement of small-form theatres typical for the Czech theatre of the 1960s. From the end of the 1980s his comedies were performed regularly by the drama and operetta companies of the Tyl Theatre. His play *Keys on Sunday* (1988) was very popular and won the Audience's Prize at the Theatre Actualities in Prague. Other successful titles include *Not with your Daughter* (1994), *Murders and Tenderness* (1996) and *Play it Again, Professor* (2001), which was, as both text and production, declared the comedy of the year at the Pardubice GRAND Festival of Laughter. Procházka, an author of light and comic genres, also directs his own plays, writes TV scripts and guest-directs in Pardubice as well as having once led the Pilsen Theatre of Miroslav Horníček and performed in films.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / **Klíče na neděli**, 1990, première 6.1.1990 Slovácké divadlo, Uherské Hradiště
- / **Malá boční hudba**, 1991, première 12. 10. 1991 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Fatální bratři**, 1993, première 9. 1. 1993 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **S tvojí dcerou ne**, 1994, première 15. 10. 1994 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Vraždy a něžnosti**, 1996, première 12. 10. 1996 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Hledám děvče na boogie-woogie**, 1996, première 14.12.1996 Divadlo J.K.Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Věrní abonenti**, 1998, première 14. 1. 1998 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Holka nebo kluk**, 1998, première 26. 9. 1998 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Ještě jednou, profesore**, 2001, première 3. 2. 2001 Divadlo J. K. Tyla, Pilsen
- / **Muzikvariát**, 2001, première 29. 10. 2001 Divadlo Miroslava Horníčka, Pilsen
- / **Přes přísný zákaz dotýká se sněhu**, 2003, première 25. 10. 2003 Divadlo J.K.Tyla, Pilsen

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

- / **S tvojí dcerou ne** Polish – Męskie zrudzenia

S TVOJÍ DČEROU NE / NOT WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

/ 3 women, 4 men

The comedy Not with your Daughter is about two perfectly ordinary married couples (a bank clerk and a teacher, and the manager of an unsuccessful artistic agency and a librarian) who are trying to overcome a possible married crisis. The author does not however focus on the psychological aspect of the characters; they serve him for construing the situation and introducing witty paradoxical aphorisms. An innocent episode with a simple-minded housebreaker, firmly underpinned by hysteria arising from sexual stereotype and by that reliable comic motor – chance – initially creates (with the addition of an adolescent daughter and her boy friend) a slight twist: gradually however this becomes a geyser of neck-breaking situations, embarrassments, mistakes, exchanges and verbal humour. Just as inconspicuously as the confusion arose, everything gradually returns to its usual rails, but in the end the author doesn't let us get away without a little nudge: on the horizon lurks another crisis. That's life – and not only married life. The play's success at home and abroad demonstrates the author's outstanding talent for comedy.

The emerging would-be playboy spirit of a previously settled man becomes fertile ground for the turning of a roundabout of complicated situations underpinned by witty dialogue. (S tvojí dcerou ne, Jihlavské listy, 22. 4. 1997)

JEŠTĚ JEDNOU, PROFESORE / PLAY IT AGAIN, PROFESSOR

/ 5 women, 6 men

Stereotype, drabness, lacklustre feelings and horrified realisation of a fiftieth birthday as life's terminus are fertile ground for dreaming. Especially when it dawns on the main hero, university professor of Russian literature Ivoš, that the years are passing and he still hasn't achieved anything exceptional in his life. He longs for a great romantic love, and with the help of a computer genius finds himself in the reality of the novel *War and Peace*, where he falls in love with his favourite literary character, Natasha Rostova. Ivoš completely abandons himself to his participation in the novel, but a small mistake is perpetrated when Natasha, her maid and Prince Bolkonsky return with him to our reality. In the following roundabout of misunderstandings Ivoš escapes from Natasha, his wife and children. The disappearance of the literary figures from the novel becomes an international scandal. In the end however the professor persuades Natasha, who is thoroughly enjoying her new life, to return to the book. The experience feeds Ivoš's appetite and he longs for new adventures. The whole comic mechanism goes into operation once more, this time ending in black humour. The professor finds himself in error in Cooks' Land and his own family eats him for supper in a tomato soup. In 2002 Procházka's play was named Comedy of the Year at the GRAND Festival of Laughter in Pardubice.

An inclination towards comedy is very rare amongst contemporary authors, all the more when his comedies always have inventive twists, and humour which draws on the absurdities of the present day whilst not being pre-occupied with cheap topicalities. (Jana Machalická: Pletky s románovou hrdinkou, Lidové noviny, 6. 2. 2001)



Roman Sikora



*3. 7. 1970

Graduated from the Theatre Faculty of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno in 1999 in the field of dramaturgy in Studio D, under the guidance of Professor Bořivoj Srba. At present a doctoral student in the field of auteur – dramaturgy and employed on the night reception desk of the Municipal Theatre in Brno. He is the author of a number of political and cultural essays and short pieces which can be designated "nonsense dramas", and of plays for the theatre, some of which have been performed both at home and abroad. In 1998 he received second prize in the Alfréd Radok Awards for his play *Sweeping Up Antigone*. He is one of the founders of the theatre internet magazine Yorick. Sikora can be characterised as an Angry Young Dramatist. His antipathy towards the totalitarian tendencies of the market system and subjection to the ideology of material bliss and all-embracing technology is built on the stirring strength of the word, which he often uses in provocative, surreal and unusual combinations. His approach as an author is expressed in the title of his key essay, "New Definitive Quality", thanks to which – unlike Post-Modern verbosity, lack of certainty and chaos – he achieves a precise designation of the state in which we find ourselves.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / **Manžel Dituš**, 1994
- / **Kočka na mráčku**, 1994
- / **Sodomagomora**, 1995, première 5. 2. 1996 Studio Marta, Brno
- / **Balada pro jednoho kance**, 1995
- / **Tank**, 1996, première říjen 1996 Východoslovenské divadlo, Košice, Slovakia
- / **Černá noc**, 1996
- / **Smetení Antigony**, 1997, première 6. 4. 2003 Studio Marta, Brno
- / **Vlci**, 1997, première 17. 12. 1997 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / **Krásná hra s jarními květy**, 1997
- / **Sibiř**, 1997
- / **Aut mori**, 1997, played by various swordsmen
- / **Nehybnost**, 1998, première 12. 12. 1999 Divadlo Promiňte, club Amfora, Prague
- / **Rozrazil 3/99**, 1999, première 17. 11. 1999, Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
- / **Holomek z Prasnic**, 1999, shown by a group of swordsmen in Přešov
- / **Opory společnosti**, 2000, première 11. 11. 2001 Divadlo Na zábradlí, Prague (staged reading)
- / **Jitro kouzelníků**, 2003
- / **Největší básník**, 2004
- / **Včera to spustili**, 2004

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

- / **Smetení Antigony** German – Antigone weggefegt

SMETENÍ ANTIGONY / SWEEPING UP ANTIGONE

an attempt at a tragedy
/ 5 women, 7 men, 10 drunkards, 3 surgeons, 3 armed men, 1 hammer

Sikora turns the classical Greek myth on its head. Antigone's revolt is not to bury her brother but to dig him up. The dead Polyneices is the last being with whom she had a deep relationship. The world around Antigone is a display of grotesque caricatures. Haemon's seduction of the naïve Ismene lasts only until his parents find him a politically correct Fiancée. Creon is no more than a career-minded politician manipulating reality with the help of the media, and of information from Tiresias, chief of the secret services. For Sikora, Antigone is an anarchist, who tries to assert her own identity in the face of the emptiness of the surrounding world. She provokes Creon, from boredom wins Haemon over to Ismene, and berates the drunkards in the pub. She embodies the dark principle of night and an antagonistic approach to the world, blindly raging against everyone and everything. Her destructiveness goes nowhere; impotent rage, it ends in itself. In the end it is Ismene, capable of fully

tasting the experiences and joys of life, the exact antithesis to Antigone, who extends a hand to her sister. The play is written in closed, sharply pointed scenes. However, Sikora includes ironic paraphrases of other Greek myths in the form of inserted monologues and mini-stories. The language of the play is varied; the farce-like dialogue is full of journalistic phrases and banal clichés of TV serials, Antigone's monologues weighed down by dark, poetic images. However, the author's requirement in the stage direction repeated in the course of the play: "Fire engulfs the theatre... Panic. No one will ever see the rest of the play", shows that it is advisable to rebel against not only contemporary society, but also against theatrical stereotypes and conventions. The play won second prize in the Alfréd Radok Foundation's competition for the best Czech play. It has been read at the Bonn Biennial and the Avignon Festival in France.

After sweeping up the world there remained a desolate location of debilitated relationships where anything can be acted out. In this way the author disclosed the lyrical starting point of his imagery founded on the Romantic antinomy "I and the World". /.../ It is the most radical lyricisation realised on stage by the young generation of Czech playwrights. (Milan Uhde: Smetení světa, Divadelní noviny, 27. 5. 2003)

NEHYBNOST / IMMOBILITY

Am excremental panoptikum about futures full of flies
/ 4 women, 4 men, 1 fly, 1 freak, extras

Sikora's play is governed by a "spirit of fantasy" – or a magician who "transformed life into stinking, stagnant dishwater". The author however attributes the panoptikum environment – inspired by the Czech and global reality, including its reflection in the local press – to our own idiocy. A pair of lovers, representing some sort of modern vulgarised Tristan and Isolde, are expecting a child. During her fifty-month pregnancy he grows proportionately fatter from boredom and emptiness. She foretells for her child a Messianic role in the world into which she is bringing him and which she ironically calls "paradise". The newly-born freak dies immediately after birth. Thanks to the presence of characters like, for example, the Gamekeeper, a kind of representative of public order characterized by his Nazi past, and the tomfool Three Kings, democratically elected, the play has a politically critical subtext. In 17 short, carefully titled scenes, loony dialogue alternates in a stable sarcastic tone with ironic monologues, orgiastic versicles and banal songs, which only distract us from the deadlock. The play's refrain is the line "Let something bloody happen!" However, right at the start of the play we know that change for the better is impossible.

NEJVĚTŠÍ BÁSNÍK / THE GREATEST POET

Triptych
/ 1 Greatest Poet, his friend, a number of other participants in the festivities

A triptych made up of dramatic nonsenses with illustrative titles: *Evening of the Artists*, *The Greatest Poet Accepts an Award for his Lifelong Contribution to Art* and *Funeral of the Greatest Poet* is targeted at the rigid formalities which are an inseparable part of the institution called "official art". The passionately topical little dramas (written in 2004) are based on various linguistic deformations, expressive points and sharp thematic cuts which inseparably make up a recipe for a true superficial mess. Last but not least, it can be understood as a cheerful commentary of the author's own experience, when the Czech theatre only became aware of him by a roundabout way after "success" abroad.



Miroslav Stoniš



Jan Vedral



* 18. 6. 1938

Writer of prose, poetry, drama, scripts and journalism. Graduated in dramaturgy from the Film Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. Dramaturge for the House of Culture in Ostrava in the 1960s, and editor of a literary monthly. After 1971 worked as a labourer. Author of plays for the theatre, TV and radio; TV serials; stories and poems published in magazines; books and collections of poetry. Stoniš began to form his creative values in the course of the 1960s, when the basic themes of his whole life originated: the partnership between men and women, the idea of home as a setting for this relationship, the accenting of the intimate dimension of human life founded on a dialogue of "I" and "You". The introductory theme of the author's works is love – from desire to spiritual closeness through eroticism as far as pure sex. In a distinctive way, he links issues of morals and ethics along with amorous sentiment into the meaningful structure of his works. One of his characteristics is play with themes, words and meanings. He won the main prize in the competition for an original play, "Paths 2000", for *Promised Land*.

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LIST OF PLAYS:

- / *Sem padají hvězdy*, 1974, premiére 15. 12. 1978
Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
- / *Kde tráva je červená a modrá*, 1978, premiére 16. 5. 1979
Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
- / *Hořké letní herbicidy*, 1979, premiére 28. 3. 1981 Divadlo bratří
Mrštíků, Brno
- / *Maškaráda za plotem*, 1980, premiére 16. 12. 1981
Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
- / *Jezulátko*, 1982, premiére 25. 5. 1983 Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
- / *Námořník karbonský*, 1984
- / *Svatební noci*, 1986, premiére 18. 12. 1988 Státní divadlo
Oldřicha Stibora, Olomouc
- / *Zaslíbená země*, 1999, premiére 29. 9. 2000 Středočeské divadlo,
Kladno
- / *Ani do bronzu, ani do mramoru*, 2004
- / *Potáhнем tu káru dál*, 2004

ZASLÍBENÁ ZEMĚ / PROMISED LAND

/ 4 women, 10 men, extras

The theme, as the title tells us, concerns the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Forty years later, two priests from the Temple in Jerusalem try to capture the Exodus in their writings. They represent two intellectually antithetical concepts of history, the polarity of European thought: old Izachar celebrates the pilgrimage to the Promised Land as a bloody militant campaign; young Ahiram, in the spirit of the tradition of Jesus refuses to believe that his God could be vengeful and cruel. There are flashbacks to the time of the Egyptian captivity, so that even the uninitiated audience gradually learns the historical circumstances of the Biblical events. Amongst those appearing are Moses (always played by one of the priests), Pharaoh Ramases II and his daughter, who became Moses' wife. Another "mixed" pair in this historical fresco would be Ahiram who longs to marry an Egyptian, a representative of the hedonist concept of life. In the end both priests die at the hands of Babylonian soldiers. Old Izachar dies as a defender of Jerusalem, young Ahiram in the Temple with his writings. Stoniš's treatment of the serious and topical themes of intolerance and interpretation of history provide the audience with plenty of room for their own thoughts.

*20. 11. 1955

Graduated from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 1981. Worked as a dramaturge for radio plays in Czech Radio in Prague and for a number of theatres. In the second half of the 1980s became chief dramaturge at the Vinohrady Theatre in Prague. Worked on the first performances of plays by leading Czech authors. After the Velvet Revolution of 1989 spent four years as the Director of the Prague Municipal Theatres. Has been teaching since the 1980s. Publishes theoretical studies, reviews and feuilletons. A major writer of broadcast plays, also interested in radio dramatisations of prose works. A dominant theme in his work is the relationship between the individual and society; often an exceptional individual and a deformed society. His dramatisations of Ajtmatov's *Day Longer than a Century* and Bulgakov's *Master and Margherita* contributed to the atmosphere of increasing civic awareness at the end of the 1980s. He is presently dramaturge of the Drama Studio in Ústí nad Labem and a teacher in Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He recieved the Alfréd Radok Award (3rd place) for the best original play of 2003 for his play *Kašpar Hauser – Child of Europe*.

LIST OF PLAYS:

- / *Polly v Západní Indii*, 1981, premiére 1981 DISK – Divadelní studio DAMU, Prague
- / *Urmefisto*, 1987, premiére 9. 2. 1988 Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
- / *Mistr a Markétka*, 1988, premiére 3. 5. 1989 Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague (using motifs from Michail Bulgakov)
- / *Nadsamec*, 1992, premiére 13. 1. 1993 Divadlo ABC – Městská divadla pražská, Prague (using motifs from Alfred Jarry)
- / *Pěna dní*, 1993, premiére 12. 2. 1994 Divadlo ABC – Městská divadla pražská, Prague (using motifs from Boris Vian)
- / *Bolest a kámen*, 1997
- / *Achilleův syn se ptá na svého otce*, 1999
- / *Obrazy z Francouzské revoluce*, 2000, premiére 10. 11. 2000 Divadlo v Dlouhé, Prague (in co-operation with H. Burešová and Š. Otčenášek)
- / *Molière* – Projekt, 2001, premiére 14. 12. 2001 Činoherní studio, Ústí nad Labem, (in co-operation with M. Bambušek)
- / *Kašpar Hauser – Dítě Evropy*, 2003

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

/ *Urmefisto* German – Urmefisto

KAŠPAR HAUSER – DÍTĚ EVROPY / KAŠPAR HAUSER – CHILD OF EUROPE

/ 4 women, 10 men

Kašpar Hauser, a mentally undeveloped individual isolated from human society until the age of sixteen, appeared in Nuremberg in 1828. He was suspected of fraud, interrogated, examined, taught and educated. In a short time every form of social manipulation was imprinted on him, which he reflected like a grotesque mirror. Kašpar Hauser was transferred from one citizen of Nuremberg to another for his upbringing. A judicial committee ascertained that he could have been the abducted descendent of a local aristocratic family, but the closer it came to proof, the greater the danger he was in. Kašpar Hauser was killed under similarly mysterious circumstances as he had appeared. Some people imagined even his agony was feigned. The author conceived the play as a myth of the modern age, fourteen stations on the way of the cross of modern man, on the basis of studies of authentic period sources. Kašpar's case is presented as a model destiny of an individual in a bureaucratized rationalist society paying lip service to human rights but which does not show itself able to resolve conflicts of race, emotion and human relationships. In separate meetings with the citizens of Nuremberg who have an interest in looking after Kašpar, the author demonstrates the crisis of the concept of man in the European culture of the modern age.



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