Contemporary Czech Drama
1989–2004
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.

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Luboš Balák

LIST OF PLAYS:

/ Příběh Josefa Dundáčka, 1994, premiére 18. 5. 1995 Studio Marta, Brno
/ Smrt Huberta Perny, 1994, premiére 18. 9. 1995 HaDivadlo, Brno
/ Fanouš a prostitutka, 1994, premiére 7. 5. 2001 Těšínské divadlo, Český Těšín
/ ... sobě, 1995, premiére 18. 6. 1995 Studio Marta, Brno
/ Musulmani, 1995, premiére 18. 10. 1996 Divadelní společnost Petra Bezruče, Ostrava
/ Kliměš, 1997, premiére 16. 5. 1997 HaDivadlo, Brno (in co-operation with D. Jafář)
/ Ed a Bo – dvě krysy, 1997, premiére 25. 9. 1998 Divadlo v 7 a půl, Brno
/ Beskydy, 1999, premiére 17. 11. 1999 Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno
/ Kouzelný nos aneb Balábile, 2000, premiére 22. 1. 2000 Divadlo Polárka, Brno
/ Kvartet čili Malé dobrodr... 2000, premiére 18. 4. 2000 HaDivadlo, Brno
/ Rasonauti, 2000, premiére 19. 9. 2000 HaDivadlo, Brno
/ 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 glutonous 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 Mání 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 ghastly instructions of an unseen power, but above all because of the language which drags the characters into the most bizarre rhetorical somersaults and associative picrouettes. It is on words above all that Balák builds a situation which flows from the characters like some sort of identity or which steam-rolls 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?

/ Svějkův 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 Ištvánek, 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. Ištvánek, 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. Ištvánek’s face is found on billboards along the motorways. As chairman of the party he appears on a pre-election television show. Thanks to Ištvánek 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 frustations of Czech voters and their only dream – to express their opinions on the TV screen.
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 does not in any way mask the aim of their 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-Modem 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 âinoherním 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 Pěnějka: Vinen, tedy jsem aneb Není dovolená jako dovolená, Divadelní noviny, 13. 4. 2004)
JANA Z PARKU / JOAN OF THE PARK

The park is a jungle in the middle of the city, a place with a different morality from the "normal" one, a free island, 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. Like most original plays by young authors, Joan of the Park is a play of fantasy, dream and the magic of the word. Like most original plays by young authors, Joan of the Park is a play of fantasy, dream and the magic of the word. Like most original plays by young authors, Joan of the Park is a play of fantasy, dream and the magic of the word.

LIST OF PLAYS:

/ Malá zranice, 1992, premiére 22. 3. 2003 Západočeské divadlo, Cheb
/ Hříči ziráty, 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
/ Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
/ Klicperovo divadlo, Hradec Králové
/ Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
/ Kuřiči opia, 2000
/ Kostlivec: Vzkršení, 2002, premiére 1. 2. 2003
/ Moravské divadlo, Olomouc
/ Akvabely, 2003
/ Žácíkův, 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

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 provinciality 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 Sidonía) 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 unavailing embryo reproducing the drivel 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 Drábeák 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. (Nína Chovancová: V zajetí ujetosti, Divadelní noviny, 13. 4. 2004)

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LIST OF PLAYS:

/ Král krysa, 1973–74, premi`ere 9. 10. 1974
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
/ Komu zvoní hrana, 1976, premi`ere 27. 5. 1977
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
/ Dûm na nebesích, 1980, premi`ere 14. 11. 1980
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
/ Staré dobré kapela, 1983, premi`ere 18. 4. 1984 Národní divadlo, Prague
/ Generá`ka, 1985, premi`ere 16. 4. 1986 Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
Divadlo na Vinohradech, Prague
Divadlo Ta Fantastika Praha, Prague

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

/ Král krysa German – König Ratte
/ Dûm na nebesích German – Ein Haus in den Wolken
/ Staré dobré kapela German – Die Studentenkapelle, Polish – Nasza orkiestra, Bulgarian - Dobrijat star orkestar
/ Generá`ka 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 Caesarian 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 alespoù hostinu hereckou, Veùerník Praha, 4. 11. 1997)
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 ... the couple arespending 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.

**LIST OF PLAYS:**

/ Zahrajte si kabaret č. 2, 1963
/ Zahrajte si kabaret č. 3, 1964
/ Textbeat, 1965
/ Důvěrné hovory, 1966
/ Toulačov kabaret, 1967
/ Chlubil, 1970
/ Kontrasty, 1971
/ Komedie z rance, 1971
/ Happy Day, 1975
/ Rocking, 1985
/ Gala, 1986
/ Poker bez esa, 1996, premiére 6. 2. 1999 Divadlo Pohody, Prague
/ Vikend, 1998, première November 2001 Ochotnické divadlo, Bruntál
/ Na brhu, 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 seduction 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
Lenka Lagronová

*22. 9. 1963*

Graduated in dramaturgy from the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague under Prof. Jaroslav Vostří. 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.

**LIST OF PLAYS:**


**TRANSLATED PLAYS:**

/ *Antilopa* Russian – *Antilopa* / *Království* Polish – *Králewstwo* / *Terezka* Slovak, Slovenian – *Tereza* / *VstaÀ, prosím tû* Croatian – *Ustani, molim te*

**ANTILOPA / ANTELOPE**

/ 2 women, 1 man

The characters of the play stand as it 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?, Svût 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, Svût 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 Mázčová: Miráky z konce Milénia, Divadelní noviny, 15. 4. 1997)
**TRANSLATED PLAYS:**

- **English** – Grandfather Know-all’s
  - *Tři zlaté vlasy děda Vševěda* English – Grandfather Know-all’s
  - *Three Golden Hairs*

- **English** – Alina or Petřín Tower
  - *Alína aneb Petřín v jiném dílu světa* English – Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

- **English** – Lazy Lars and Frog the Magician
  - *Lín˘ Lars a Ïabka kouzelnice* English – Lazy Lars and Frog the Magician

- **English** – Gee Whiz, Dogheads
  - *Jeminkote, Psohlavci* English – Gee Whiz, Dogheads

- **English** – The Animal Theatre
  - *Zvířecí divadlo* English – The Animal Theatre

- **English** – The Crank of Fairytales
  - *Máme kliku pohádkovou* English – The Crank of Fairytales

**LIST OF PLAYS:**

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*, *Fairytale from the Palm* and *The Wanderings of Don Juan or, The Epiphany of Seville*, a comedy set in a theatre *The Animal Theatre and the play* *Gee Whiz, Dogheads*. 

**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 ČiCAM: Komentář dramaturgie, Loutkát, 2. 2. 1992)

**ALIBABA A ČTYŘICET LOUPEŽNIKŮ / 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 LoděrovÁ: S kamarádem hledat štûstí…, 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 Kulíšák 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 Kulíšák who prepares the most wonderful Christmas surprise for them. The fairytale is written in simple rhyme.

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**25. 6. 1944**
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 Ivôš,
that the years are passing and he still hasn’t achieved anything exceptional in his life. He longs for a great roman-
tic 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. Ivôš completely abandons himself to his
participation in the novel, but a small mistake is perpetrated when Natasha, her maid and Prince Bolskorsky return
with him to our reality. In the following roundabout of misunderstandings Ivôš 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 Ivôš’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 Coeks’ 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)
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 paint of his imagery founded on the Romantic antinomy, which is realised on stage by the young generation of Czech playwrights. (Milan Uhde: Smetení světa, Divadelní noviny, 27. 5. 2003)

LIST OF PLAYS:

- Manžel Dituš, 1994
- Kočka na mráčku, 1994
- Sodomagomora, 1995, premiére 5. 2. 1996 Studio Marta, Brno
- Balada pro jednoho kance, 1995
- Tank, 1996, premiére říjen 1996 Východoslovenské divadlo, Košice, Slovakia
- Černé noc, 1996
- Smetení Antigony, 1997, premiére 6. 4. 2003 Studio Marta, Brno
- Krásná hra s jarními květy, 1997
- Slib, 1997
- Aut mori, 1997, played by various swordsmen
- Holomek z Prasnic, 1999, shown by a group of swordsmen in Přerov
- Úspory spočetnosti, 2000, premiére 11. 11. 2001 Divadlo Na zábradlí, Prague (staged reading)
- Jité kouzelníků, 2003
- Největší básník, 2004
- Včera to spustili, 2004

TRANSLATED PLAYS:

- Smetení Antigony German – Antigone weggefegt
- Největší básník / The Greatest Poet

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.
**Jan Vedral**

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 radio; TV serials; stories and poems 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 – from desire to spiritual closeness through eroticism as far as pure sex. In a distinctive way, he links 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 bands of the Euphrates, near the city of Babylon, young Ahiram in the Temple with his writings. Stoniš’ treatment of the serious and topical themes of intolerance and interpretation of history provide the audience with plenty of room for their own thoughts.

**LIST OF PLAYS:**

/ **Sem padají hvězdy** / 1974, première 15. 12. 1978 Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
/ **Kde trvá je červená a modrá** / 1978, première 16. 5. 1979 Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
/ **Hrůšky letní herbicidey** / 1979, première 23. 8. 1981 Divadlo bratří Mlčíků, Brno
/ **Jezulátko** / 1982, première 25. 5. 1983 Divadlo E. F. Buriana, Prague
/ **Námorkník karbonský** / 1984
/ **Svatební noci** / 1986, première 18. 12. 1988 Státní divadlo Oldřichova Libora, Olomouc
/ **Zaslíbená země** / 1999, première 29. 9. 2000 Středočeské divadlo, Kladno
/ **Ani do bronzu, ani do mramoru** / 2004
/ **Potáhnuš tu káru dál** / 2004

**ZASLÍBENÁ ZEMĚ / PROMISED LAND**

* 18. 6. 1938

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**Miroslav Stoniš**

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 radio; TV serials; stories and poems 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 – from desire to spiritual closeness through eroticism as far as pure sex. In a distinctive way, he links 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 bands of the Babylonian soldiers. Old Izachar dies as a defender of Jerusalem, young Ahiram in the Temple with his writings. Stoniš’ treatment of the serious and topical themes of intolerance and interpretation of history provide the audience with plenty of room for their own thoughts.

**LIST OF PLAYS:**

/ **Achilleův syn se ptá na svého otce** / 1999
/ **Mr‰tíkÛ** / 2000, première 10. 11. 2000 Divadlo v Dlouhé, Prague (using motifs from Alfred Jarry)
/ **Ka‰par Hauser – Child of Europe** / 2004

**KAŠPAR HAUSER – DÍTĚ EUROPEY**

* 20. 11. 1955

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 similar mysterious circumstances as he had appeared. Some people imagined even his agony was faked. 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 bureaucratised 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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The Music Department hires music materials of stage works by the top Czech composers, such as Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Bohuslav Martinů and many others.

The Literary Department arranges licences for the foreign publishers to publish literary works by Czech writers, among them Eduard Bass, Tereza Boučková, Karel Čapek, Josef Čapek, Ladislav Fuks, František Hrubín, Vítězslav Nezval, Ota Pavel, Karel Poláček, Jaroslav Seifert, Vladislav Vančura, Jiří Weil, or Josef Lada’s illustrations.

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