



## Illusions in the mirror of reality

The coming of age of this important international festival will be marked by performances that problematize cruelty, controversies, the collapse of the general value system, the absence of elementary humanity and empathy in the modern world. Although we are talking about cheerful, cautionary themes, the way of their creative and artistic treatment in the selected works offers viewers the opportunity to face numerous social, ideological, historical, sociological, family and intimate events in an extremely turbulent and, in many respects, traumatic era. The most exciting theatre finds its origin in universal categories, myths, legends, stories, events and destinies inextricably linked with the present, proving that human nature and existence are constants that create the necessary preconditions for understanding life in all its manifestations. At the same time, dreams, imagination and the illusion of "the best of all possible worlds" are most often in a tragicomic discrepancy with the realistic picture of reality.

For the 18th Joakimfest International Festival, I propose the following performances:

1. *A Dream of Homeland*, Ivan Velisavljević, director: Milan Nešković, National Theatre Niš  
Based on the play *Stop by, said the man*, with the subtitle *A Dream of the Homeland*. Milan Nešković, together with the author's team and the ensemble of the Niš theatre, staged an effective story about the return of a small, marginal man with big dreams from a faraway world to the bosom of the backwater, whose nostalgic and melancholic atmosphere is accentuated by the despondent tones of unfulfilled ambitions and wasted lives in a pub environment spiced with intoxicating alcohol vapors and the hypnotic music of Šaban Šaulić.
2. *Once upon a time in the Brijuni*, text and direction: Kokan Mladenović, Creative Production "Joca Art", Svilajnac Culture Center and Bitef Theatre, Belgrade  
Starting from the historical facts of the meeting of the Broz couple with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in the Brijuni, in the early 1970s, and on the occasion of the filming of the war film spectacle "Sutjeska," Kokan Mladenović makes an unabashedly nostalgic homage to a country that no longer exists, but also critically examines the ideological and political misconceptions that were eventually some of the reasons for its dissolution. At the same time, together with four great actors, he problematizes the issue of identity and imposed roles in a complex social, historical and cultural context.

3. ***Alabama***, Davor Špišić, director: Dario Harjaček, Virovitica Theatre (Croatia)  
The play by one of the most important playwrights in the region can be defined as a thematic genre combination of black comedy, family drama, engaging text with hints of a sociological and psychological study of class violence, at the center of which is, unfortunately, the brutal and contemporary theme of mass murder perpetrated by a minor in a shopping mall of a small town in Alabama. The action takes place in Croatia, ten years after the crime, where the mother, keeping the ashes of her murderous son, establishes a spiritual connection with him and does not leave him to the tranquility of the other world until the moment of final forgiveness.
4. ***Why are you sleeping on the floor***, based on the eponymous novel by Darko Cvijetić, dramatization: Kokan Mladenović, Mina Petrić, Darko Cvijetić, Dubravko Mihanović and the performance ensemble, director: Kokan Mladenović, Serbian National Theatre Novi Sad, City Drama Theatre "Gavella", Zagreb (Croatia), National Theatre Sarajevo and MESS, Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)  
Darko Cvijetić's poignant, intimate and above all emotional confession about the most recent, bloody conflict in the former Yugoslavia helped the author's team to bring to life on stage a powerful, cathartic, cautionary and artistically valuable play. The curiosity of this regional co-production is contained in the fact that the main role of narrator and actor is played by Darko Cvijetić, who, in a very demanding task and acting challenge, resisted the tempting possibility of stage pathos and told a great, true and anti-war story with inspired partners.
5. ***Hasanaginica***, Ljubomir Simović, director: Dušan Tuzlančić, City Theatre "Semberija" Bijeljina and National Theatre of the Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina)  
Skillfully avoiding unnecessary directorial flamboyance, Dušan Tuzlančić, with the wholehearted help of an excellent acting ensemble, consistently, precisely, with inspiration and more than obvious respect for the author, staged a dramatic text that in a subtle, effective and stylistically refined literary and dramaturgical way illustrates the fate of a woman who, due to a tragic misunderstanding caused by rigid patriarchal customs and laws, comes to an inevitable end.
6. ***Our Class***, Tadeusz Słobodzianek, director: Jasmin Novljaković, City Drama Theatre "Gavella", Zagreb (Croatia)  
The now revered piece by Tadeusz Słobodzianek about the terrible events and the horrendous crime in the Second World War, committed by the Poles against fellow Jews in one small place in this country, impressively and poignantly depicts the false illusion of human tolerance and cruelty and inhumanity in extreme conditions, when the individual shows his primeval nature and character. The Zagreb performance reaches universal meanings and undoubted artistic qualities in every aspect of the theatrical act.

I propose that, in honor of the awardees, the play ***The Hypochondriac***, by J. B. P. Molière, directed by Đorđe Nešović, be performed by the festival host, the Princely Serbian Theater.

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