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Andrea Rádai is a theatre critic, editor and translator. She was born in 1979 in Budapest. She studied English, Dutch and Hungarian Language and Literature at ELTE and started to write theatre criticism for Színház in 2005. Since that time she has been writing for several Hungarian (online) periodicals about theatre and culture and recently has a theatre column in Magyar Narancs, a weekly political-cultural magazine. She translates children books for and youth from Dutch and English.

## An Anti-Romeo and Juliet

*Kertész utcai Shaxpeare-mosó (Shaxpeare-wash of Kertész Street)*, produced by Örkény Theatre Budapest, directed by Viktor Bodó, adapted from *Romeo and Juliet*

In recent years Viktor Bodó has become a guest in his own homeland; since he decided to abolish his company Szputnyik due to the erratic conditions they and other independent theatre groups had to (and still have to) manage themselves, Bodó has worked more abroad—especially in Austria and Germany—than in Hungary. After *Diary of a Madman* (2016) and *Krakken Operation* (2018), he returned to Hungary with an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Örkény Theatre.

Shakespeare is literally washed out in the Shaxpeare-wash of Kertész Street. An actor lurches into the back of the stage wearing a Renaissance outfit adorned with a circular collar, then slowly walks toward the proscenium. By the time he gets there, servile youngsters have stripped him naked, washed and polished him, and the Bard has sung the foreword of *Romeo and Juliet* – of course not Shakespeare's original, but Hungarian contemporary poet Peter Závada's version based on Shakespeare. He even apologizes for not strictly following the original text. By the end of the scene, Shakespeare becomes a worker wearing a tracksuit.



The same happens to the play itself: the Romantic fairy tale about the loving couple from Verona is thrown into a machine that transforms it into a story about drug-addicted youths living in the Soho of Budapest. Yet, director Viktor Bodó and writer Péter Závada do not merely transplant the plot into our day and age; rather, they massacre the play, together with several traditions of repertory theaters. *The Shaxpeare-wash of Kertész Street* seems to depict the impossibility of staging *Romeo and Juliet*.

The play loses everything that is elegant and beautiful, poetic and Romantic – and not only at the level of the text. Exaggeration is a tool that Bodó never hesitates to use; however, obscenity, nudity, aggression, movie references and special effects (even a car explodes on the stage), the power of sound and the depiction of drug use are taken to the extremes of the extreme (although the latter may actually be accurate from a sociographic point of view).

Thus, whenever Shakespeare's citations (or references to other interpretations, such as the movies of Zeffirelli or Baz Luhrmann) are heard on stage, they seem outlandish: the "original" text becomes

citation or intertext. Although we undeniably see some beautiful moments, the strength, purity and beauty of the two young lovers gets smashed, too; if there is a classical convention in repertory theaters, it is that *Romeo and Juliet* equals Pure Poetry. The show also shakes up another tradition: it has a bit of fun with the audience when the actors pretend to end the first act, and after half of the spectators go out, they keep playing. Funny joke.

Perhaps the point is that there is no point, especially if everyone is always getting stoned, which might not be far from the truth in Hungary today. True, the performance is so busy, so hectic, that it leaves no time to contemplate this emptiness. Unless maybe when Romeo is washing his dick for a long time in the wall fountain, after making love.

(Photo: Judit Horváth. Text: Andrea Rádai. Translated by: Marcell Nagy)

## A Craziness Wagglng on Stilts

*Káprázat (Auto-da-Fé)*. Produced by Forte Company at Szkéné, Budapest, directed by Csaba Horváth, adapted from Elias Canetti's novel *Auto-da-Fé*



Professor Kien, the protagonist of *Auto-da-Fé*, is a passionate bibliophile, but his world concept, based on books as objects, lacks humanism and the human that one could recognize from books. Nevertheless, with an interesting twist, books are played by people in the performance.

The performances of Forte are often based on multifaceted and visually exciting props (in *The Notebook* there are vegetables that

are being chopped; in *The Rats* piles of secondhand clothes cover the stage; in *Vaterland* beef bones are clattering). *Auto-da-Fé* has everything we admire in the physical theater: visuality and movement form an integral unity, thanks to the stilts present in the entire performance – or rather the actors balancing on them. Of course, this craziness wagglng on stilts is not alien to the world of the novel.

The characters, like ridiculous giants, never stand firmly on the ground. They resemble zombies or robots, as they cut across the space with intermittent moves, as if they were being moved by their own stubborn will. Other times, rarely, they are light and graceful. Lots of shades, interpretive subtleties and gags are born thanks to the stilt legs. The only drawback is that the scenes sometimes



turn into circus spectacles, in which case we admire the arts that distract us from understanding the performance and the plot – not an easy task anyway. (Admittedly, the novel can also be interpreted as a circus in which human narrow-mindedness appears as some kind of an exotic but interesting awfulness.)

The characters often communicate by singing. Music has always played an important role in Forte's performances, and Csaba Horváth here continues the experimenting with vocals and recitative that he started in *The Rats*. The musical motif of *Auto-da-Fé* is very rich, ranging from the pathos of opera to musical ambience and to Brecht's songs.

(Photo: Csaba Mészáros. Text: Andrea Rádai. Translation: Marcell Nagy)

## Puzzle

***El valahová (Away, No Matter Where)* Co-produced by Forte Company, Trafó Budapest and Armel Opera Festival at Trafó, directed by Csaba Horváth.**

Csaba Horváth became obsessed with Sándor Tar, one of the greatest Hungarian writers of the deprived and humiliated. The first stop of his journey to Tar's world was the memorable 2014 Theatre Academy exam performance, *Our Street*, followed by *Your Kingdom* in Trafó in 2015 and *Gray Pigeon* in Studio K in 2017. The latest in this line is *Away, No Matter Where*, which is based on Sándor Tar's short stories and Monteverdi's opera *Tancredi e Clorinda*. The performance recently debuted in MuTh, Vienna, Austria, and came to the Trafó in Budapest this fall.



The communiqué of Armel Opera Festival refers to *Away, No Matter Where* as Horváth's first staging of an opera, which is, only partially true. Music and musicality have dominated Horváth's stage concept from the beginning; the fact that Marcell Dargay has now written music for Tar's texts, selected by Nóra Földeáki and Horváth, does not bring an unprecedented novelty, but rather deepens, explains, and justifies the close relationship of this kind of aesthetics to

music. The buzzing of the radio, the repetitive melody of an old music box, or the sound of sandpaper, all become an integral part of it. Dargay's music is magnificently adapted to Horváth's

stage language (and vice versa) and, of course, to the depressing lyrics of Sándor Tar. This serves as a background for the echoes and references from Monteverdi's rarely performed *Tancredi e Clorinda*. The cut out and reinstated details actually fit well into the musical fabric (this is also the merit of opera singers Zoltán Megyesi and Anna Molnár, who appear and disappear with great modesty on stage images that tend to be static), as for the prose the Monteverdi motifs are connected only through too-loose associations. The bloody love story from the era of knights does not seem to work well in the Hungarian puszta, between two moments of delirium, in a dirty bed.

Back to Horváth and his distinctive imaging: the stage is defined by a large bundle of 3-foot long, chunky, natural wood beams. The opening and closing images have a strict order, but between the two, we witness and enjoy a varied and playful jigsaw puzzle. The beams look very different from the plastic pipes of *Your Kingdom*: man is showing his knowledge and will on a material that is taken from the nature. The actors of Forte continue to bend the unbending material, which provides some really strong moments.

(Photo: Anett Kállai-Tóth. Text: Tamás Jászay. Translated by: Marcell Nagy)

## Tragedy of the Everyday

*Egy százalék indián (One percentage Native American)* Produced by Látókép Ensemble, at various venues, directed by Szabolcs Hajdu.



Látókép Ensemble is a group of artists, theatre and film makers around Szabolcs Hajdu, who has been known in Hungary mostly for his films, like *Bibliothèque Pascal* or *White Palm*. He also took a journey into the world of theatre from time to time, though with much less publicity. In 2015 he directed *It's Not the Time of My Life* (originally a co-production with Company Maladype), which was an immediate success and was also turned into a film that won the Crystal Globe for best film at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. With *One Percentage Native American*, with a

text created during the rehearsal process by the actors and the director, the company has found a very special, condensed theatrical language that is able to grab the essence of daily life among middle-class people struggling with midlife crisis. Not surprisingly, text is an important ingredient:

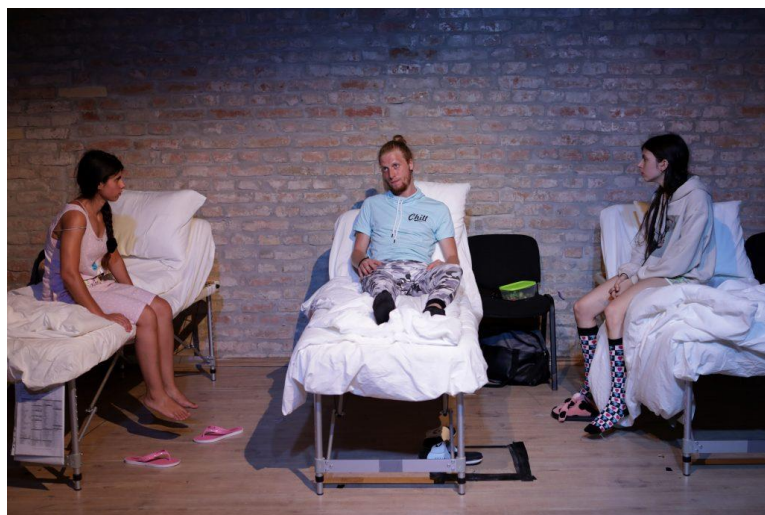
the wording is extremely precise, every sentence sounds natural. And this type of small talk, as well as little conflicts and happenings during the plot, reveals what is tragic in our everyday life. Intimacy is also essential: the performances are played in front of a small audience, on a small stage, and with only some casual set pieces—like a few chairs, a table and a sofa. For this reason, when you watch *It's Not the Time of My Life*, *Kálmán day*, and the newest piece, *One Percentage Native American* (together they make up a trilogy), you have the feeling that you are watching your own life. And it is such an elementary feeling, that it hurts.

While the first piece was about children and the second about (the lack of) sexual intimacy, this last one brings gender roles into focus. The situation is quite simple: three couples meet after the funeral of the men's friends. The couples are on different levels of emancipation; there is a girl who is regularly beaten up by her boyfriend who thinks men have to teach women where they belong. Another couple is made up of highly intellectual people who are even able to reflect on themselves and (kind of) discuss their problems. What is common in all of them is that they are not happy floundering in the roles they inherited or tried to change in vain. *One Percentage Native American* exposes the extremity and invisibility of these structures.

(Text: Andrea Rádai)

## Defective Roma Heroes in the Hungarian Health Care System

*Selejtesek (The Defective)* Produced by Független Színház (Independent Theatre) at RS9 Theatre



Independent Theatre in Hungary has had a great role in the emancipation of the Roma (in theatre). The wider public heard their name for the first time when Máté Gábor directed a play (*Cigányok / Gypsies*) for Katona József Színház, which was about Roma people without any Roma playing in the show. In an open letter, reacting to the performance, Independent Theatre and Rodrigó Balogh protested against this kind of representation, in which theatre makers did not even consult with a Roma person.

Independent Theatre has created several performances about and by Roma people and they are also known for organizing an annual festival called Roma Heroes. The first two of these festivals presented story-telling monodramas; these plays were also published in a book, the very first volume of Roma theatre in the world (a translation in English is in production). The third festival of Roma Heroes this year became international, and showed small-scale productions from Vienna, Berlin, Prague, and Bucharest.

The premiere of *The Defective* by Independent Theatre also took place during the festival—but as Rodrigo Balogh, the leader of the company said, this is only a partial result. Namely, their activities are not limited to the conveyor belt production of new shows; they function more as a workshop where training, and courses enhancing social dialogue, integrity, and cooperation are developed. They also create educational materials. *The Defective*, for example was made during a one-year process in the frame of a scholarship program; young Roma and non-Roma participants worked with the creators 15 hours a week developing a variety of skills. The text of the performance was created by Rodrigo Balogh and Márton Illés from the participants' ideas, experiences, and other interviews. The topic is the health care system. In Hungary, although health insurance is available for almost everybody, it is common knowledge that the quality of the service is very low. Doctors and nurses left the country for better salaries, and those remaining work extremely hard, and in erratic conditions. In *The Defective*, young people are forced to spend a few hours together in the same room in a hospital. The Roma girl with a heart problem, the Roma nurse, the drug-addict, the young guy with testicular cancer who used to belong to an extreme right activist group – together they model special situations and conflicts within society. Their prejudices—and their traumas—are revealed, leading to empathy and understanding among them.

Professionalism and amateurism go hand in hand in *The Defectives*. The dramaturgy is precise, the text is witty, and the players are amateur, but authentic: one sees how much they profited from their training. It is also essential that they do not seem to suffocate under the leadership of their professional trainers: everything we see on stage spouts from the very inside of them.

There is also a kind of happy end. Forging these very different people into one group that takes responsibility and decides to act makes us believe: we are able to change what is around us.

(Photo: Alina Vincze. Text: Andrea Rádai)

# What Comes after the Abolition of the Corporate Tax Donation?

As seen in our previous newsletter, from this year onwards, companies operating in Hungary will no longer be able to reduce their corporate tax liability with donations offered to theaters. Although this system (called “TAO” in Hungarian) undoubtedly had some potential for abuse, officially justifying its abolition, there have been no further investigations or prosecutions for previously-found irregularities. Since Andrea Tompa’s report in the last edition of this newsletter, a state-run compensation system to replace the TAO donations has been established, and the outcome of the first applications has been made public.

**“...independent groups and private theaters (again) are big losers in the elimination of TAO.”**

Apparently, there are theaters that have been particularly lucky, while some others have not received any compensation so far. Although the government has stated that the same amount as last year’s TAO donations of HUF 37.4 billion (some USD 125 million) will be given to performing arts organizations under the new system, the money awarded so far has been distributed to theaters in an essentially ad hoc or inconsistent manner.

One of the biggest winners is the National Theater led by Attila Vidnyánszky that received HUF 400 million, over five times more than what the theatre could have received in the TAO system.

**“In his first statements, the new mayor of Budapest, Gergely Karáscony said that a grand fund would be set up to assist the losers of this new system...”**

Similarly, the Pesti Magyar Színház, affiliated to the Hungarian Theatrical Society, which unites “pro-government” theaters, received five times the money it would have received under the TAO structure.

It also turned out that independent groups and private theaters (again) are big losers in the elimination of the TAO. For example, FÜGE, an umbrella organization of independent groups, still does not know how and whether they will be able to meet their budget – which, of course, also affects their affiliated groups. Although FÜGE did undergo two audits that were supposedly needed to make a “substantiated” decision, they still have no indication of

being rewarded any TAO compensation. Other organizations received a fraction of the money applied for, such as Béla Pintér and his Company or Szkéné Theater, which forced them to raise ticket prices. At the MU and Átrium Theatres, shows and premieres will be cancelled.

The state subsidy system of theaters, which has not been very stable or clear anyway, has become a “pawn” of politics. However, the results of the recent municipal elections in Hungary may bring some changes in this respect as well. In his first statements, the new mayor of Budapest, Gergely



Karácsony said that a grant fund would be set up to assist the losers of this new system, such as Átrium.

(based on the articles of Dorka Czenkli and Noémi Herczog, translation: Marcell Nagy)

## **A Lifeguard for Hungarian NGOs and the Cultural Scene: Autonomous Culture Tender by Summa Artium and George Soros**

The hopeless situation following the withdrawal of TAO has been relieved by Summa Artium, a firm that distributes private funding. The Board of Trustees has decided to support 93 applications, including our periodical.

However, in one of its articles, the government media immediately denounced the Autonomous Culture Tender, which receives support from George Soros. The article “This is How George Soros Builds his Network” denounced human rights NGOs and cultural foundations that the government is trying to disarm because of their dissent, and that have just taken a breath, thanks to this new tender.

A total of 361 valid applications have been submitted by applicants with a grant request of more than HUF 2 billion. The private fund also announced a competition for next year’s contemporary art festivals in the category “Contemporary Art Under Open Sky,” which is due to be announced soon. As there is still no established patronage culture in Hungary, the arts are highly dependent on political support.

Summa Artium said at the time of the announcement: “... it is necessary that potential domestic supporters realize that funding for culture and arts, and in particular the independent field, cannot depend solely on state subsidies. In most developed countries, besides the state, private donors play a significant role in culture, supplementing or assisting the state in areas that are at the bottom of the list of cultural policy priorities, or where the state is not willing to take risks. (...) Nowadays, in Hungary, private supporters of culture and art face the dilemma whether they let the independents disappear, or they try to embrace them. The Summa Artium Cultural Support Private Fund offers opportunities and assistance to the latter.”

Our magazine, *Színház*, also applied for a new podcast series and, in the form of a free university, to disseminate the critical thinking we represent. The support received for these tasks amounted to 3.5 and 4 million HUF, respectively.

## News from Hungary: the Situation of the CEU and the Academy; Municipal Elections

The Central European University (CEU), whose operation was compromised by 2017 legislative amendments that stipulate new administrative requirements for the accreditation of Hungarian universities issuing foreign certificates, started moving its US degree programs to Vienna, Austria in mid-2019. Noteworthy, some hold that the new law was specifically tailor-made for the CEU with the aim of disabling the operation of the university in Hungary. Students enrolled in 2019 will be studying both at the Budapest and the Vienna campus, while from 2020 onwards all US degree programs will definitively move to Austria. Although CEU is still planning to keep its Budapest campus together, with all European degree programs and a research center, it is yet unclear how the well-known institution will survive without its most attractive, core study programs. The university leadership is already keeping an eye on the next deadline, 2022, when the accreditation of European degree programs is due to be renewed.

**“The hostile environment threatening academic freedom has a growing impact on the operation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences...”**

The hostile environment threatening academic freedom has a growing impact on the operation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, MTA), the center of scientific and academic research in Hungary. As earlier reported by this newsletter, the government announced its intention to operate all research institutes previously belonging to MTA outside the academy network, under its budgetary and institutional control. Despite lengthy negotiations and international pressure, in August 2019, the government rearranged all institutes in a new structure that allows it to control virtually all scientific research in Hungary – it is yet to be seen what this means in practical terms.

The 13 October Hungarian municipal elections had an outcome that, according to analysts, may have a decisive impact on the political landscape of Hungary. The allied opposition parties, somewhat unexpectedly, won the mayordom of about a dozen major cities, including the capital, Budapest (while the rural areas remained strongly pro-government). The reasons for this dramatic change vary; factors often mentioned include a growing disappointment with the ruling party; a stronger than ever alliance of the opposition parties; and the FIDESZ mayor of Győr's recent sex scandal. In cities newly led by the allied opposition, among them in Budapest, changes are expected in the financing of theatres and cultural institutions. Stay tuned.

## We wanted real changes – An interview with Árpád Schilling by Andrea Tompa

Árpád Schilling is the internationally best-known Hungarian director, founder of the independent Krétakör (Chalk Circle) Theater. He is known for such shows as *W – Workers' Circus* (Woyzeck), *Blackland*, *Seagull*, which toured widely. In 2008 Schilling decided to close his company and continued to operate as an independent director and created other projects. After the political changes in 2010, he became a political activist, critiquing the Orbán government's policy. In 2017 with two other activists, he was declared by the national security committee of the parliament a "national security risk." Schilling's wife, actress Lilla Szárosdi launched the #metoo movement in Hungary, and had to endure many attacks. After the elections in April 2018, when the Orbán government won its 3rd election, Schilling left the country. He lives with his family in a small town in France.

**Andrea Tompa** How you formulate now for your new environment the "political reasons" you left for?

**Árpád Schilling** I always state that I was not physically persecuted. We left the country because we could not stand anymore the moral and intellectual breakdown. In fact, we are frightened of not being able to protect anything in our culture we consider important and good. I was often told to

"At home we learn how to die, here people learn how to live. And by this I don't only mean France but the real "West" with all its faults and advantages."

behave "normal," which I couldn't – there are no normal circumstances! I reacted badly because of hopelessness. I went into exaggerations, made accusations, I made comments on issues that I'm not even knowledgeable about. It was so frustrating that I couldn't do anything. Finally, I gave up and emigrated. That is my personal story and I try to tell it in detail, my reasons for willing to live in a different country and morality. What I really experienced, I call the attitude of the republic. This means that people in France dare to bravely stand up for themselves and also for each other. And they let each other live. We are far more paranoid, we are searching for enemies because this is what we have learned, what we've been taught. I like to put it like this: at home we learn how to die, here

people learn how to live. And by this I don't only mean France but the real "West" with all its faults and advantages. I am not in a dream but I need some distance from my country.

**AT** When you were declared a national security risk what did you have to experience?

**ÁS** I had to realize the painful moral condition of my country which made me angry: on one hand people thought that this accusation is not a big deal, and I also experienced almost zero solidarity from my own theatrical environment. It became evident to me that anything can be done in my country because we do not stand up for each other. By not taking seriously the problems that we face, and making jokes about the apparent roguery, we infantilize ourselves and we slowly renounce democracy. Our theatre professionals defend only their own institutions, their companies, their particular interests; there are no “issues” we fight together for. Directors of theatres specifically request members of the ensemble to refrain from political manifestations in order to prevent their institutions from being blacklisted. Theaters do not want to deal with any specific, current issue or problem. Xenophobia, homophobia, chauvinism, corruption, oppression, many forms of abuse of power can flourish; theatres avoid these topics at far distance. I experienced such a moral nihilism that I couldn’t continue there. I also saw that all those who fight for a cause are left alone. There are lots of people who had fought much harder than I did and at the end they were completely betrayed, they lost their jobs, they lost the support of their own community. This all had a very bad impact on me. And I also have kids. I do not want my children to grow up in this environment, in a closed-off, ignorant society. More and more people leave the country for exactly the same reason that we did.

“... I have kids. I do not want my children to grow up in this environment, in a closed-off, ignorant society. More people leave the country for exactly the same reason we did so.”

**AT** You became an attacked person and not an issue – an attack toward an artist. The same happened to the #metoo movement, it was more about a person, your wife and the harasser, and not a cause. That things settle down also means that we got used to these moral, political conditions.

**ÁS** I worked recently in Poland, and there are very different conditions, there is real solidarity in the theater environment. Concrete examples demonstrate how powerful and effective this solidarity is. This is why corruption and cynical resignation cannot infiltrate everywhere. It is a huge problem that we Hungarian theater professionals try to play the good pupil, and not to interfere or conflict

“It is a huge problem that we Hungarian theatre professionals try to play the good pupil...”

with anything. You can’t really think about a good role for your favorite actress when in the transit zone migrants starve. You can’t avoid these questions anymore.

**AT** You also wanted to become a leader of a public institution. Also you were considered to be the best one to continue the Katona József Theater’s work, the most well-known public theater in Budapest. Why did you not succeed?



**ÁT** This is a story from the early 2000s. The generation that has grown up since the regime change did not think anymore in the same institutions as happened in the 80s. The older leaders thought to hand over the inheritance, as if a theater would be a personal little garden you get and pass. We wanted to make changes in the system of institutional operation, whether relating to the repertoire,

**“The older leaders thought to hand over the inheritance, as if theatre would be a personal little garden you get and pass.”**

to the work within the company, or to the public relations. We thought there should be a mobility in the whole theater system. But the ruling leaders handled public theaters as their private and self-established property and not as a good of public benefit which is a subject of application every N year. We naively wanted competition and not inheritance. If you think the way that you can find your own successors, that is quite a paternalistic way of thinking. It was the time when we had to fight our own liberal and social democratic environment. When we wanted to

become leaders and create completely new situations, which would have been more consistent with the new political and social environment, the decision makers and theater people became terrified. Again, it was not just politics, but our theater professionals who resisted new forms of existence. In the period when the reforms could have been carried out, between the years 2000 and 2010, very little was done. When thinking about the Hungarian theater field which needed innovation and oversight, I was always talking about the ‘system’. But this word was rejected by the old generation when I was using it – a ‘system’ being understood as oppressive. But they were oppressive! I remember reading a paper in 2004 in the academy on reforms which wasn’t even debated, just simply rejected in a tough tone. I was 30 and considered just a kid who was not to be taken seriously. I was abused morally, spiritually. The older generation was socialized in a repressive system, where everything was about how far an individual can get by himself, how much pressure he can take, and how much compromise he can make for his goals. For a while after the change of regime, it was believed that conditions would change, and not only those can survive who were able to bear anything. What about those who are talented but are not fighters? Does everyone have to be violent? Our generation could not suppress the attitude of the great old ones. Had we been able to do that, we should have become the same as they were. We failed because we wanted to become more humane.

**“What about those who are talented but not fighters? Does everyone have to be violent?”**

**AT** In my understanding you describe people who are not really democrats.

**ÁS** The theater community with such a history and past will not be able to resist political pressure and morally stand for democratic values.

**AT** Mostly the whole theater system survived from the past without reforms.

ÁS But today is worse, all competitions for public institutions are politically corrupt. The people are gripped by fear, regardless of age or gender.

AT Tell me about your current projects.

ÁS Next season I will lead two theatre workshops for French actors. The topic is the social commitment of the theatre, including the question about which issues and in which forms we can work on the stage. I will lead a masterclass in Thessaloniki focusing on the relationship between Greek ancient drama and politics. In March 2020, I'll have a premiere in Warsaw, where I'll stage my own play; its central topic is currently in development. In parallel, we will start a project in California [with the The Imaginists in Santa Rosa], about carrying weapons as a central subject, involving Mexican immigrants.

## FROM OUR SIDE

### AMERICANS AT DUNAPART 5



This week, 17 of our American colleagues are off to Budapest for dunaPart5 and a real expat Thanksgiving.

Our partners in Budapest have put together a very strong program of both theatre and dance that is drawing over 130 international visitors.

Here is the most recent dunaPart Newsletter, published last week.

<https://www.dunapart.net/en/home.html>

We will publish an issue of DISPATCHES on the event, with Natka Bianchini reporting early in 2020.

Here is the gang:

- Blaze Ferrer, NYC, Assistant Curator at Chocolate Factory Theater
- Rose Oser, San Francisco, Associate Artistic Director at Z Space
- Zach Blackwood, Philadelphia, Artistic Producer at FringeArts
- Laurie Uprichard, New Orleans, Director & Curator of Performing Arts at Contemporary Arts Center
- J de Leon, NYC, Assistant Director of Engagement at NYU Skirball
- Amanda Loulaki, NYC, Programmer at Movement Research
- Sarah Greenbaum, Washington DC, Associate Curator at Dance Place
- Margaret Lawrence, Blacksburg VA, Director of Programming at Moss Arts Center

- Lola Pierson, Baltimore, Artistic Director at The Acme Corporation
- Kristin Marting, NYC, Founding Artistic Director at HERE
- Jacqueline-Jane Denny, NYC, Programmer at Abrons Arts Center
- Mohammad Rohaizad Suaidi, Baltimore, Ensemble Member, Single Carrot Theatre
- Ben Kleymeyer, Baltimore, Director of Artistic and Community Programs, Single Carrot Theatre
- Natka Bianchini, Baltimore, Artistic Associate at Iron Crow Theatre
- Zoltán Márkus, Poughkeepsie NY, Associate Professor of English at Vassar
- Cole Stern, NYC, Program Director at Wasatch Playwright's Residency
- Benjamin Yager, Baltimore, Artistic Associate at The Acme Corporation

## BELA PINTER'S *THE CHAMPION* & THE PEABODY OPERA COMPANY



Plans are moving ahead for Béla Pintér to begin rehearsals for the English language premiere of his *THE CHAMPION*, in Baltimore at the Peabody Opera.

The production has been cast—Béla was in Baltimore in late August. Rehearsal in January with an opening run in the Meyerhoff Hall at the Baltimore Museum of Art, 13 – 16 February.

The production will be seen in Vienna and Budapest in the late Spring of 2021.



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