

## Women in Confinement

by María Morrett

Women in Confinement (Mujeres en el encierro) by María Morett, explores the notion of female confinement as a labyrinth formed by social, cultural, and archetypal structures of repression. The play focuses on the particular social contract that exists in the microcosm set off from the society-at-large by prison walls, comprised solely of women living “on the edge.” Inspired by Morett’s work as an acting teacher in the women’s prisons of Mexico City, Women in Confinement reflects its author’s six years of research inside and outside the penal systems of Mexico and Colombia. While speaking to and for all “women in confinement,” Morett’s play directly addresses the ongoing struggle of women living in societies with a strong sexist ethos—societies which, although beginning to grant “space” to women, continue to keep them confined—and illuminates the condition of the Latin American woman who, in the family and workplace, confronts a complex web of social archetypes which shape her personal and professional relationships.

**María Morret** is a playwright and theater director, fFounder and Artistic Director from Me xihc co teatro and Proyecto Ariadna. She studied with Julio Castillo, Juan José Gurrola, Luis de Tavira, Alejandro Luna, Ludwik Margules, Oswaldo Dragún, Hugo Arguelles and Maria Irene Fornés. She has the Bachelor of Communications by the UNUM and a Certificate in Theater Direction and production by the National School of Theater in México . She has been a member of the Lincoln Center Directors’ Lab from New York since 2000. She has written and produced more than twelve theater pieces including La Llorona, Mozart y los Duendes, Muerte, la Caja Mágica, Alarconeando, Quijotes: Visiones Itinerantes, Cruces , Mujeres en el Encierro and Ninfa. She also did the translation and adaptation of Frank Wedekind’s “Spring Awakenings” in co production with la MAMA E.T.C., and Me Xihc Co teatro, also she adapted the play “Primero Sueño” and “Amor es más laberinto”from the Mexican poet Sor Juana Inés de

la Cruz, and created the outdoor production of “Mas Laberintos” that was opened in the Festival Internacional Cervantino in 2003 in Guanajuato. She did the translation from the Jules Laforgue text “Moralidades legendarias” and from the Italian text of the contemporary opera “Lohengrin” composed and written by Salvatore Sciarrino. She has been recognized and honored with grants and awards from the National Fund for Culture and National Council for the Arts from México, Arts International from New York, Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia, and Contacto Cultural/Fideicomiso para la Cultura México/EUA and the Rockefeller foundation; She is a resident artist from Voice & Vision’s Envision 2000 retreat, La MAMA Experimental Theater Club and the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. She has conducted research for the National Institute of Fine Arts in México and for EITALC on the work of the theater artists: Jean Marie Binoche from France; Santiago Garcia from Colombia; and Yoshi Oida from Japan. Her play Cruces was awarded with the Excellence Award for Innovation & Originality in the New York Fringe Festival in 2000. Her play “Mujeres en el Encierro” is translated to English, by Deborah Saivetz and German by Cordelier Dvorak. In 2003 she wrote “Ninfa” for the divan project directed by French artist Michel Didym and opened in the XXXI FIC/INBA. Her most recent work as a director is the Mexican opening of the contemporary opera “Lohengrin” written and composed by Salvatore Sciarrino, presented with success in the VI Festival Música y Escena at the National University of Mexico. In November 2004 she presented her play “Mujeres en el Encierro” at CINARS PLATFORM 2004, in Montreal, Canada and in December she was in an artistic residency in Berlin invited by the Goethe Institute from Germany. In July 2005 she will be in a four months artistic residency in Montreal invited by “Le Centre des Auteurs Dramatiques” FONCA and Canadian government. Her play “Mujeres en el encierro “ is now a part of the season from February to April 2005 at the “Teatro Helénico” at the “Centro Cultural Helénico”.

## **Asphalt Kiss**

by Nelson Rodrigues

As a pedestrian hit by a bus lies dying on a Rio street, a passerby stops to cradle him in his arms and kisses him on the lips as a parting gesture of human solidarity. But the scene is witnessed by an unscrupulous reporter, who proves so successful in convincing a public hungry for scandal that the men were lovers that even the wife of the Good Samaritan comes to doubt his masculinity.

**Nelson Rodrigues** was born in Recife, Brazil in 1912, the fifth child in a family of 14 siblings. His father struggled as a newspaper reporter for years, and when Nelson was four his family moved to Rio de Janeiro hoping for better times. There the family's fortunes changed as Mario Rodrigues worked his way up Rio's cutthroat newspaper industry until he was able to found his own newspaper. At 13, Nelson began working at his father's newspaper, and by 14 he was writing his own column.

After experiencing a brief period of wealth and stability, the Rodrigues family suffered a series of crushing setbacks. First, older brother Roberto, a brilliant graphic artist, was murdered by a socialite angry over the newspapers coverage of her affair with a well-known Rio doctor. Then, a few months later, Rodrigues' father, despondent over his son's death, dies of a massive stroke. And, shortly after that, the family newspaper is closed by the government after a coup d'etat. These tragedies, plus several others, are to be reflected in Rodrigues' writings and plays.

From his very first play, **Woman Without Sin** in 1941 (about a society lady who runs away with her black chauffeur), Rodrigues shocked and divided Brazilian audiences. He steadfastly refused to veer from his focus on the personal even when it became fashionable to write Brechtian social theater in Brazil, "You have to go down into the depths of man. He has two faces, one beautiful and the other heinous. He will only find salvation if he passes his hand over his face and acknowledges his own heinousness."<sup>1</sup> His second play, **The Wedding Gown**, is considered a watershed in Brazilian theater as Rodrigues revealed his mastery of his craft by overlapping moments in time and place in order to create a more dynamic vision of reality. The play has been described

as a jigsaw puzzle — we are left to interpret the truth from the disjointed hallucinations of a woman lying on an operating table after suffering a serious accident.

From 1941 until 1965 Rodrigues wrote 15 full-length plays (he would write two more later in life). His plays are frequently divided in 3 groups: Psychological plays, Mythical plays and Carioca tragedies. In his Carioca tragedies Rodrigues explored the lives of Rio's lower-middleclass, a population never deemed worthy of the stage before Rodrigues. The supreme example of this genre is **The Asphalt Kiss**, a play in which we see a man's life unravel because of one noble act. "[The play] confronts current-day questions of homophobia and tabloid sensationalism in prophetic fashion," according to The New York Times.

Nelson Rodrigues also wrote nine novels and thousands of newspaper columns. A collection of his newspaper columns based on his crime reporting recently became a bestseller. He is also considered one of Brazil's finest sports writers. Rodrigues died in Rio de Janeiro on December 21, 1980.

## **MacGregor's Hard Ice Cream and Gas**

by Daniel MacDonald

A dying prairie town. A frigid winter night. In a land where the ground's too frozen to bury a body, Jack hijacks his dead father up to the attic and stuffs his coffin with ice cream to chill. His brother Fred tries to host a wake without a body and fix a sign advertising gas they have never sold, while their mother paces in the basement counting every step, and their estranged sister shows up 10 and a half months pregnant. MacGregor's Hard Ice Cream and Gas is a play of whimsy, humour, and remarkable humanity about a family figuring out how to melt the ice and move on.

**Daniel MacDonald** is a teacher, playwright, and actor. MacDonald teaches both university and high school where he has collaborated with students on several plays. MacDonald has taught, coached and performed improvization throughout his career and one of his high school teams won the Canadian National Improv Championship in

Ottawa. MacDonald's play, Pageant premiered at Alberta Theatre Projects' National PlayRites Festival and recently had its American premiere in Austin, Texas. Another play, MacGregor's Hard Ice Cream and Gas recently premiered at Persephone Theatre in Saskatoon. His new play, Velocity recently won the New Works of Merit playwriting contest in New York and received a reading there in April. MacDonald is currently collaborating on two projects: an original Saskatchewan film entitled, Redemption which will air in January, 2006 and a musical entitled Johnny Zed about the legendary Rock and Roll star who got his power from the uranium mines of Northern Saskatchewan. Daniel has acted in several films and TV series and is current president of the Saskatchewan Playwrights Centre.

## **The Guide to the Good Life**

by Yael Ronen

## **Oil Town**

by Hillel Mittelpunkt

In an outpost of sorts in the Sinai Desert, a survivor of Hitler's death camps runs a pension together with her married and but un-benounced widowed daughter. She is indebted to every bank, and so takes on a wanna-be Madam and two whores. Her lover, a retiree still hanging on to work in the army, steals food for her kitchen. One day a young man arrives and reveals he is looking for a new life to escape his former life as a card shark. The old woman realizes she can make money of him, and convinces her daughter to use him. He falls in love with the daughter, wins enough money to buy them out of debt when the daughter's marital status is revealed to him. Whereupon he loses all the money and leaves. The bank takes possession of the pension, and the doctor hangs himself upstairs while the old woman rejects marriage to the retiree. Golda Maier is about to visit the outpost, when the daughter together with the retiree buys back the pension, challenging the mother. The mother leaves, the retiree leaves, and the daughter ends the play as a whore.

## **The Suffering of Job**

by Hanoch Levin

### **Requiem**

By Hanoch Levin

The Old Man, a coffin-maker in the small town of Poopkah, has been married to his wife, the Old Woman for fifty-two years, but it is not until she falls deathly ill that he begins to contemplate what their life together could have been. They travel to the nearby town of Kloopkah to seek help from the Medic, hitching a ride with the Wagoner, but the Medic, lazy and overwhelmed with requests, can only offer powders and compresses to fight off the flu, typhoid and malaria. The Old Man and Old Woman return home with nothing and the Old Woman soon dies and is taken away by three cherubs. For the rest of the play, this scenario of death continues. The Old Man soon meets a Mother of seventeen with a sick baby. They travel back to Kloopkah, again thanks to the Wagoner, whose wagon is alternatively filled with whores or drunks. The Medic can't help the baby, it dies and is taken away by the cherubs. The Old Man again contemplates death, life and the higher purposes of the universe. Then he is taken ill himself, he visits the Medic and the Medic denies him adequate treatment. As the play ends, the Old Man dies and is taken away by the cherubs.

### **Guest of a Few Days**

by Moshen Yalfani

Among the dire symptoms and consequences of the Islamic Republic of Iran, one was the coup de grâce on the concept of revolution itself. The last generation of fighters and strugglers — that over a span of century and a half had lived with the dream of achieving a social order based on reason and justice and had idealized revolution as the ultimate instrument for the realization of such an order— this selfless generation,

on the day after the revolution, was driven from the threshold of humanity as guest of a few days.

**Mohsen Yalfani** was born in 1943 in Hamadan, Iran. He wrote and staged his first plays in his last year of high school, and submitted one to the Center for Dramatic Arts in Tehran, for which he won a prize. At the age of 18 he moved to Tehran and joined the independent Anahita School of Drama. In 1970 he wrote his famous play *The Teachers*, which was staged in Tehran. After ten nights the performances were stopped by the Shah's "SAVAK" and Yalfani was arrested and spent three months in prison. All of Yalfani's plays were then prohibited from being staged, and he was unsuccessful, for many years, in publishing or staging any of his work. In 1974, while rehearsing Maxim Gorky's *Les Petites Bourgeois* with the Iran Theatre Society, Yalfani and the entire cast and crew were arrested, and he was imprisoned for four years. While in prison he translated the book *The Voice Of Actor*, by Cecily Bery and wrote his one-act play *On the Beach*. In 1978, Yalfani and a thousand other political prisoners were released. From that moment forth Yalfani spent most of his time as an active member of Iranian Writers Association and twice (in 1979 and 1981) was elected as member of the board of directors. In 1981, the Iranian Writers Association was attacked by the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the association was closed down. In 1982, Yalfani crossed the border and left Iran, in disguise, and sought political asylum in France. He now lives in Paris. During his long exile in France he has penned several one-act plays, two long plays, a film script, and a number of articles, and he has collaborated with a friend in publishing the periodical *Landscape*. The English translation of one of these plays, *Guest of a Few Days*, was well received in Chicago, in December of 2004, in a staged reading by Silk Road Theatre Project (Jamil Khoury, Artistic Director).

## **Artigoshe**

by Mohammad Miraliakbari

Artigoshe is written based on the eternal work of Sophocles; however, with distinctive differences in form and structure. Its structure is rather close to picaresque, but completely free of its special literary rules. But why "Artigoshe"? The letters "r", "t", "g" and "sh" were of most important letters, used a lot in ancient Persian.

**Mohammad Miraliakbari** was born in 1975 in Tehran. Miraliakbari received an M.A. in Dramatic Literature from Azad University of Tehran and started his professional career by directing short films; however, after sometime quit it for good and turned to theatre. Miraliakbari's passion is for play writing where he is looking for a new structure in the art. Artigoshe, his last work, attracted much attention in Mah Festival when it was premiered. He has directed about 15 short films and 5 theatre productions, and has written about 10 plays.

## Sound and Fury

by Mehrdad Rayani Makhsous

The following refrain is repeated throughout the performance:

"Sentence: Execution (death penalty), Say Your Last Words."

The play is the life-story of three prisoners in three episodes. Each of them narrates his life in one of the episodes with the help of the others.

The First Episode is about a young middle-class boy who is punished in school falsely accused of eating beetroots in class. As a consequence, his father throws him out of the house. Years later, he gets a bus and ... is executed!

The Second Episode is about a young poor boy who falls in love with a girl. When he goes to her house as a suitor, he finds her alone. She serves him some tea, and ... executed!

The Third Episode is about a rich boy whose parents attempt to keep him away from social turbulences. Therefore, they imprison him at home, but he is so eager to be with others and find answers to his questions. He leaves home and becomes familiar with two guys who make him stick political posters on city walls, and ... executed!

**Mehrdad Rayani Makhsous** was born in Tehran in 1971. Makhsous is a director and playwright and received an MA in Artistic Directing and a B.A. in Dramatic Literature. Makhsous is a member of the academic staff of Azad University (Tehran), and a board member of the National Iranian Theatre Critics Association of Iran. Rayani's career in the field of drama initiated when he was a teenager; and up to now, he has written about 20 plays – 6 of which already published. Makhsous is also the Director of the 2nd MAH National Theatre Festival – the second greatest theatre festival in Iran and has written and/or directed some documentary series for television such as "The Quest", "The White Hut", "Human Being, Theatre, and Time" for television.

## **Peace of Women**

by Lenin El-Ramly

**Lenin El-Ramly** was born in Egypt in 1945. El-Ramly is a comic dramatist who audaciously questions the social conventions, hypocrisies and bigotries of both Egyptian society and the Arab world. His work encompasses popular television dramas, experimental theatre, and an oeuvre of approximately 40 plays and 12 films. His dramatic techniques vary from farce and parody to satire and the absurd. El-Ramly has been granted the Prince Claus Award for his emphasis on political satire and comedy, and for maintaining a balance between popular entertainment and serious social, political and ideological satire.

## **The Nightmare**

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## **Last Performance**

by Nabil Baghat

The LAST PERFORMANCE is a play within a play. This structure directly reflects the system by which Egypt, like most governments in the region, preoccupies its citizens with a higher and more distant cause (such as Palestine, Iraq, etc.), in order to divert the people from the governments' transgressions. The play exposes the inner workings of this game, the negotiations between the government and the cultural/intellectual elite, journalists, etc.

Last Performance is about a theatre group that is in the midst of a production about Palestine—time: Judgement Day. Everyone is dead. Mohammed Al Durra (the Mohamed of Mahmud Darwish's poem, a young Palestinian boy, one of the first casualties of the Intifada redux) is ruling over the people who killed him. The Producer, Sayed Al-Dollar (Mr. Dollar) stops the performance in the middle of Mohamed al Durra taking leadership. The Producer insists on a performance with music, dance—in other words, a safe middle eastern strip tease. The theatre group resists and decide not to finish the Palestine show—and, instead, decide to tell their stories. The actors lock everyone, the Producer and the audience inside the theatre. The Producer plays the role of the King, the Assistant Producer is the Prime Minister, and the chorus of actors "play" the citizens, as they re create, in a sort of fictionalized reality show, present day Egypt and the Arab world. Ultimately, the play examines the role of hate and the inability for the Arab citizen to fight for freedom.

**Nabil Mohammad Bahgat Al Hidaya Abdel Fattah** was born in Egypt in 1975. Bahgat received a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Arabic Languages and Literature from Zagazig University and a PhD in Egyptian Theater from ZaqZiq University. Bahgat is an assistant professor of theatre criticism at Helwan University as well as the producing

artistic director of the WAMDA Group. Publications include *The Theatre of Egyptian Playwright Abadie Khairy: An Analytical Study*, *The Theatre of Egyptian Playwright Abu Al-Seoud Al-Ebiary: An Analytical Study* and *The Last Performance*. Awards include the National Collegiate Award for Best Theatre Criticism, 2000, the National Collegiate Award for Best New Play, 2001 and the National Collegiate Award for Best Theatre Criticism, 2001.

## **Rendez-vous in the Sea of Rain**

by Alexander Galin

Two former Soviet astronauts meet to celebrate the anniversary of the date when they were supposed to land on the moon. Because the American's got there first, the lunar program was disbanded and the men never flew. One now serves as a pilot to a super-wealthy oligarch, the other has continued in the space program as an impoverished professor, both have lost their dream. The pilot has organized a party on their old lunar training module – built to simulate the sea of rain where they were to have landed many years ago. He called upon an escort service to provide five young ladies to make the evening more fun. The scientist is at a loss; among the girls he recognizes a student who attended his lectures at the university many years ago. She is thrilled to see him again and will not abandon her ideal memory of how inspired her with a sense of meaning beyond her own difficult life. He decides to save her from her fate of becoming a prostitute to the super-wealthy bandit that the pilot flies around. The girls all know that this work is her only hope for a life removed from poverty. As the evening wears on neither can fulfill their present ambition, nor fully abandon the memory of a dream.

**Alexander Galin** is one of Russia's best-known playwrights, and also an accomplished screenwriter, and theatre and film director. A. Galin is a permanent leader of the Russian playwrights' rating list, his plays have been staged in more than two hundred theatres across the country, and also in the most popular theatres in Europe, and Asia including productions at the Moscow Art Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in

London, Odeon Theater in Paris, Schiller Theater in Berlin, Mingiey Theatre in Tokyo. Seven of his plays are on Russian and world stages in 2005. His films "The Delegation" (1993) and "The Photo" (2003) received a number of national and international prizes. The movie "The Marriage" based on his screenplay received a prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2000. Galin and the productions of his plays are recipients of prestigious prizes and awards such as Sir Lawrence Olivier Prize (United Kingdom), Ambassador of the Arts (USA). His play Stars in the Morning Sky (1982) had its world premiere at the Leningrad Maly Dramatic Theatre under the direction of Lev Dodin (1987). This production was performed during the New York tour of the Maly Dramatic Theatre and received excellent reviews in The New York Times and other major newspapers. The English-language premiere was at Los Angeles Theatre Center (USA), and many of his other plays have been performed through out United States. Galin is hailed as one of the leaders of a "new wave" of Russian playwrights who focus on the individual after decades of State political theater.

## **The Feeling of a Beard**

by Ksenia Dragunskaya

Marina Derbarendicker, a young literary scholar from Moscow, travels to the provincial town of V. Dvorki, to meet her friend Nikita U., a Moscow artist. While there, she meets the Cowboy, a shepherd with literary aspirations. After being encouraged by Marina to leave the country and travel to Moscow, the Cowboy's request is denied by the head of the village Agricultural Council. Enraged, the Cowboy stabs the man twenty-six times and departs for Moscow. Called in by the government to quell the riots that began with the murder, Special Forces arrive in the village, only to be destroyed by a mythical creature that lives in the river.

**Ksenia Dragunskaya** is a playwright, prose writer. She graduated from the USSR State Cinematography Institute (Script Department). She has worked as an author and the host of various radio programs for children, as editor-in-chief of the fairy-tale newspaper "Once upon a time". She has written three radio plays for children, a script for the film "I

don't believe you any more" and three books of stories for children. Her stories have been included into the schoolchildren reading-book on literature. She has written more than 10 plays for adults, six children's plays and two stage versions, all published by the most distinguished magazines and staged in many theatres in Moscow, Russia and all over the former Soviet Union. Her plays "Forever and Ever" and "The Red-Haired Play" were both short listed for the Anti-Booker prize, the latter forming the basis for a TV film. The plays were translated into English, French, German, Serbian and Japanese.

Her latest premieres are "Edith Piaff. My legionary"(staged by Roman Viktyuk), "The Feeling of the Beard" (Centre of Playwrighting and Directing, director Olga Subbotina). "My Fair Lady" after the famous musical with events transferred into the Russian reality (director Dmitry Bertman, "Et Cetera" theatre company). "The Apple Thief" (Saint-Petersburg Academical Comedy Theatre, director Tatyana Kozakova and Moscow Academical Satire Theatre, director Olga Subbotina). "The Red-Haired Play" was named the best play for teenagers at the All-Russia competition and was short listed for the Anti-Booker prize, the latter forming the basis for a TV film. The plays "All the boys are fools", "Big Fur Papa", "Upside Down", "The Secret of the Disappearing Snow" are running in many cities of Russia and former USSR. She is a member of the Russian Writers Association and of the Russian Theatre Association.

## **The Word PROGRESS on My Mother's Lips Doesn't Ring True**

by Matei Visniec

A surrealistic and deeply ironic look at a family of refugees, that returns to a place reminiscent of the former Yugoslavia. Two young brothers-in-law insult each other across a road as they exchange news a new baby born to one man's sister. Refugees return to the land they were chased off of by a super patriotic Soldier. A Father and Mother return to their old burnt-out home and begin to look for the body of their missing Son, so that they can bury him, mourn and carry on. One Son seeks recognition by the

Mother, who seems obsessed with locating the other Son. Their old neighbors have secrets, and a new young neighborhood is selling bones. The Father has no recourse but to begin to dig up the old stinking well, the backyard, the forest, and finally the actual burial site. But, as the bones are dug up and placed on the kitchen table, the one and only Son brings home ghost guests to reclaim those bones. We realize that the land is populated by both the living and the dead. And, so, we travel the same absurd and sad journey with the parents, who finally find their lost Son's bones. In a seemingly obscure sub-plot we follow the plight of a young woman, who in the final scene we understand is the sister (young mother) from the very first scene.

**Matei Visniec** was born in Romania in 1956. From an early age, he discovered literature as a space dedicated to freedom. He draws his strengths from Kafka, Dostoevsky, Poe, Lautréamont. He loves the Surrealists, the Dadaists, absurd and grotesque theatre, surrealist poetry, fantastic literature, magical realism, even the realist Anglo-Saxon theatre. He loves everything except Socialist Realism.

Visniec studied philosophy at Bucharest University and became an active member of the so-called Eighties Generation, who left a clear stamp on the Romanian literature. He believes in cultural resistance, and in literature's capacity to demolish totalitarianism. Above all, Matéi Visniec believes that theatre and poetry can denounce manipulation through "great ideas", as well as brainwashing through ideology.

Before 1987 Matéi Visniec had made a name for himself in Romania by his clear, lucid, bitter poetry. Starting with 1977, he wrote drama; the plays were much circulated in the literary milieus but were barred from staging. In September 1987, Visniec left Romania for France, where he was granted political asylum. He started writing in French and began working for Radio France Internationale. At the present time, Visniec has had many of his works staged in France, and some fifteen of his plays written in French are published (Actes Sud-Papier, L'Harmattan, Lansman). His plays have been staged in more than 20 countries. In Romania, after the fall of Communism, Matéi Visniec has become one of the most frequently performed authors.

The work of Matéi Visniec has been represented in London by the performance "The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield", staged at the Young Vic Theatre, in November 2000. The play received rave reviews in the British newspapers and magazines, including The Guardian. "The Story of the Panda Bears told by a Saxophonist who has a Girlfriend in Frankfurt" will be performed at the Edinburgh Festival (August 2005). The production is by Rouge28 Theatre, London. In Unites States, the work of Matéi Visniec has been represented in New York, Chicago, New Jersey and Hollywood.

## **How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients**

by Matei Visniec

The action takes place at the Central Hospital for Mental Disorders in Moscow in 1953, several weeks before the death of Josef Stalin. A writer is sent into the hospital to use "art & literature" to redeem the mentally ill by telling them the history of Communism in a way that they can understand it (and be saved by the utopian vision of the future). The writer begins his story (very funny the more one knows about how Communism was practiced within the Soviet bloc) as a subversive storyteller, using childlike language to recount the events, with all their absurdities articulated. The deeper the writer progresses into his storytelling, the deeper he gets caught in the bizarre characters and events taking place within the "hospital". There are partisans lurking in every corner, including a secret cabal of "authentic revolutionaries" masquerading as mad (typical Soviet political prisoners) and meeting within hospital grounds unbeknownst to the hysterical doctors and nurses, fully invested in the cult of Stalin worship that the others reject. When Stalin's death is announced, he is given a choice to either join the group of "patients" or the group of "doctors" and for fear of everyone, he chooses the doctors, but general havoc ensues as all the lives propped up by the "story of Communism" collapse. In the final scene, Stalin himself wanders by outside the building windows – as ghost or a mental patient?

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## **Horses at the Window**

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An absurdist journey through three centuries of war and destruction: It's 1699. A Son leaves his anxious Mother to go off to war. His Mother is informed of his mysterious

death by a mysterious Messenger bearing red carnations. It's 1745. A Father, in a wheel-chair, and his Daughter banter bitterly, in the same kitchen. The Father goes off to his bedroom and the mysterious Messenger appears, again with red carnations, to inform her that her Father has gone mad fighting in battle. It's 1815. In the same kitchen, a Husband/Soldier is dressing for battle as the Wife prepares the table for a sumptuous meal as he recreates the battle on the dining room table and rushes off to the war. The same Messenger arrives, carnations in hand, to report his death by trampling. As he recounts the waste of the Husband leading his soldiers to battle & then trampled to death by them in their fervor, a rain of boots fall on the Wife and ever-returning Messenger, who reveals he is the ever-dying soldier.

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The work of Matéi Visniec has been represented in London by the performance "The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield", staged at the Young Vic Theatre, in November 2000. The play received rave reviews in the British newspapers and magazines, including The Guardian. "The Story of the Panda Bears told by a Saxophonist who has a Girlfriend in Frankfurt" will be performed at the Edinburgh Festival (August 2005). The production is by Rouge28 Theatre, London. In Unites States, the work of Matéi Visniec has been represented in New York, Chicago, New Jersey and Hollywood.

## The Chekhov Machine

by Matei Visniec

During playwright Anton Chekhov's last days, as he is dying of TB, he is haunted by all the characters from his plays. He interacts with them in imaginative scenes that extrapolate the characters moving beyond and outside the plays themselves and takes Chekhov through his own dying – death – dying, into his final state as a figure in a grey and empty Soviet-style wax museum (along with the rest of his characters). The play is a philosophical contemplation (Visniec writes) of writing, death, and certainly other things – a writer who can no longer write, who is trapped and wandering lost within his past & his imagination, with no way to move forward in art or life. In the ultimate scene, Chekhov visits with the character of infant Bobik, now grown into a man guarding the dusty Chekhov Museum – a vision of old culture lost, devalued and replaced by the demoralizing grey world of contemporary Russian/Eastern European life.

**Matei Visniec** was born in Romania in 1956. From an early age, he discovered literature as a space dedicated to freedom. He draws his strengths from Kafka, Dostoevsky, Poe, Lautréamont. He loves the Surrealists, the Dadaists, absurd and grotesque theatre, surrealist poetry, fantastic literature, magical realism, even the realist Anglo-Saxon theatre. He loves everything except Socialist Realism.

Visniec studied philosophy at Bucharest University and became an active member of the so-called Eighties Generation, who left a clear stamp on the Romanian literature. He believes in cultural resistance, and in literature's capacity to demolish totalitarianism.

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## **The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield in the Bosnian War**

by Matei Visniec

In a series of both real and surreal vignettes, we follow the relationship that develops between two women: Kate is an American Harvard-trained psychologist working in Bosnia with those digging up the mass graves and recording atrocities after the Bosnian war; Dorra is a mute victim of a politically motivated gang rape (pregnant). At first we believe that Kate is attempting to heal Dorra and she reports on her encounters with her in her diary, speaking with cool scientific detachment. Dorra resists all communication from Kate and is only known to us when she is alone with her hate, anger at God, and determination to end her own life rather than life with the agony of her imminent birthing

of a child. Soon we realize that both women are institutionalized in this German hospital, Kate because of her own breakdown after looking at so many mass graves and trying to retrieve corpses and Dorra because of her unwillingness to return to any normal life. In a series of scenes and monologues, the women's scarred lives become intertwined in both expected and unexpected ways. Ultimately, there is a surprising mutual redemption, leaving the audience with an oddly hopeful ending. The ending is quite powerful despite the weight of the subject matter and the almost predictability of the character evolutions. This is a credit to the playwrights' ability to seek and find essential truth beyond the specific circumstances, giving the play a philosophical resonance and a true contemplation of the female experience of this brutal male practice.

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## Romania 21

by Peca Stefan

The story of a Romanian family – before, during and especially after the 1989 Revolution. The dream of a father – Ion – to build the perfect Romanian family. The saga of a country on its way to European integration. All the cultural stereotypes regarding Romania and more – mixed with current social issues in a musical cocktail revolving around a “snapshot scene” structure.

Ion meets Mio. He’s a jazz musician and works for the Political Police. She is a prostitute. They wed. Ion turns in his father in order to get a house. Ion wants a daughter. Mio gives birth to two sons – Theo and Vic. To the sound of a gunshot, communism falls. Ion becomes a senator. Mio becomes a nauseous TV star. Theo sells babies. Vic is gay and expelled from the family all the way to Iraq, in the army. Mio gives birth to Fifi, a daughter. Fifi becomes a pop star and porn actress. She gets killed doing a snuff picture for Frenchmen. Mio loses her mind and gets committed. Ion loses everything. Talking to God, he finds out he has to integrate Romania into the EU in order to overcome the pain. With the help of Vic, his outcast son, he finally does that... the Romanian way. Happy end with all Romanians flying off to Heaven.

**Peca Stefan** is one of the youngest Romanian playwrights. At only 23, Stefan has already won the *dramAcum* prize (the Romanian award for best new playwright) in 2002

and has been produced at the Bulandra Theatre in Bucharest (the second largest theatre in Romania). Stefan's education includes New York University and Stefan was one of the Royal Court International Playwriting Residents in 2005. Other Romanian productions of Stefan's plays include :*Showdown, New York [Fuckin' City]* and *The Sunshine Play* (MONDAY Theatre @ Green Hours, Bucharest) *I H♥TE HELEN* (ArCub Bucharest), 2 scenes in Ana Margineanu's production of *89, 89... fierbinte dupa 89* (Small Theatre Bucharest), *Romania 21* (Arad State Theatre, Arad – in production), *Station* (Comedy Theatre, Bucharest – in production), *Punami, Nils' Fucked Up Day* (Bulandra Theatre, Bucharest – in production). *The Sunshine Play* had its world premiere at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2005 and earned 5 star reviews in Ireland. The play is also performed at the National Theatre, Bucharest, starting December 2005 and will be performed in Stockholm, New York, London, Marseilles and Belgrade in 2006. Peca Stefan's play *U.F.* was translated and published in French and had two public readings in Paris and Lyon (2004, 2005). Stefan's play *Romania 21* was in a roundtable at the Lark Theatre, New York, in November 2005. Stefan is the founding member of the *BLA Theatre Company* and has started the *Scrie o piesa* program for high school playwriting. Stefan is currently the head writer of the one hour drama TV series *California*(Media PRO Studios, Romania).

## **Waxing West**

by Saviana Stanescu

WAXING WEST (A hairy-tale in four seasons) is a comic drama that traverses back and forth between Romania and New York, between past and present, between "the American Dream" and the American nightmare. A Romanian cosmetologist, Daniela, arrives in the USA as a soon-to-be bride in an arranged marriage planned by two over-protective mothers. As Daniela seeks to adjust to the new life with Charlie, a sexually repressed computer engineer, she is haunted by the ghosts of Romania's former totalitarian leaders – Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu – who appear to her as vaudevillean vampires whose goal is to make her life miserable.

**Saviana Stanescu** was born in Bucharest, Romania. She has published four books of poetry *Making Love on The Barbed Wire*, *Advice for Housewives and Muses*, and *Outcast* (all in Romanian), and *Diary of a Clone* (English). Stanescu's published dramatic writing includes *The Inflatable Apocalypse* (best Romanian Play of the year 1999); *Black Milk* (four plays in Romanian and English) and *Final Countdown /Compte a Rebours* (winner of an Antoine Vitez Center Award, Paris).

Her plays have been presented in the U.S., the U.K., France, Austria, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, and, of course, Romania. Recent New York productions include *Yokastas* (co-author Richard Schechner) at La MaMa Theater, *Balkan Blues* at the Fringe Festival and *Waxing West* at The Lark Theatre. In Europe, she was writer in residence at Kultur Kontakt (2001), a co-curator for the annual British and Romanian Contemporary Writing Seminar (1997-2002) and for Theater des Augenblicks' (Vienna, Austria) Performing Arts Festival focused on the Balkans (2002). She has worked as the Interdisciplinary Projects Director for the Museum of Literature, Bucharest, and a theatre/arts critic for a few journals, TVRi and Radio Free Europe.

Stanescu holds an MA in Performance Studies (2001-2002 Fulbright fellow) and an MFA in Dramatic Writing (John Golden Award in Playwriting), both from Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. Stanescu is currently an associate artist with The Lark Theatre Company, playwright-in-residence of East Coast Artists (director Richard Schechner) and adjunct faculty at NYU, Drama Department.

## **Final Countdown**

by Saviana Stanescu

FINAL COUNTDOWN (a *Balkan Blues*) is a dark absurdist comedy about love, death and balloons. Zozo, a homeless woman, confronts her weird past as the daughter of a professional mourner and an artist gravedigger as she copes with rape and murder in the present.

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## **Stop the Tempo**

by Gianina Carbuari

The play is about three young people who met accidentally in a disco-club: "Space". Maria is a 27 years girl who has three jobs, no stable relationship, nor sexual life and who decides to go out with her gynecologist. Paula used to be a copywriter, but she resigned because she had enough of selling "mothers" in stupid commercials. She is lesbian and her lover just left her for a guy and went with him to UK. Rolando is a DJ, but not cool enough for the standards, so he must push his tempo a little bit more. After

they meet in “Space”, they decide to leave together with Maria’s car for a sex-match. Even if the ridiculous side of this sex-match appears very clear in their mind when they start doing it, the three guys desperately try to feel something “real”.

The car-crash is the only real thing that happens. They don’t know why, but they need to see each other after this. So they go to the same club they met for the first time. The only bad thing that happened that night was that Rolando lost his hearing. He can still hear his breathing, but the rhythm of his breath is different from the rhythm of the others. Suddenly it seems to him that all these cool guys, all these connected people look very strange. The two girls share his attitude, trying to imagine how this “cool” world would disappear if someone would just stop the sound and the lights. That’s what Paula does: she is the first one who experiments this. She goes and turns off the electricity in the whole disco-club. Her action provokes general panic, but it also brings the darkness and the silence in this crazy “Space”.

From this moment, disconnecting will become the most important activity for the three. The targets are: clubs, supermarkets, theatres, McDonald restaurants, malls etc. They even make plans to disconnect the televisions and their dream is to disconnect Romania.

**Gianina Carbuariu** is one of the most remarkable figures of the young artists of the Romanian theatre. She was remarked by the theatre critics since her debut with the play “ Unrealities from the Immediate Wilde East” ( 1999 ). Now, she is now studying stage directing, 5<sup>th</sup> year, at the University of Theatrical and Cinematographical Arts in Bucharest. When she made her debut as a stage director, Gianina Carbuariu achieved three remarkable performances : “ Isbjorg” by Havar Sigurjonsson, “ Luck helps the brave” by F. X. Kreutz and “ Stop the Tempo”.

## **Insomniacs**

by Mimi Branescu

The Man and The Other Man meet in the middle of the night and go on a philosophical journey together to explore the nature of living. Towards the end they meet The Wreck and realize the repetitive nature of things.

**Mimi Branescu** was born in 1974 in Lehliu, in the Calarasi region of Romania. He studied acting at the Bucharest Theatre and Film Academy. As an actor, his most important creations include Lucentio in *Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare (Bulandra Theatre); Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare (Resita Theatre); Jerry in *Zoo Story* by Edward Albee (Targoviste Theatre); Valerio in *Leonce and Lena* by Georg Büchner (Targoviste Theatre). His first play, *The Garbage Man*, was produced in 2003 by the Act Theatre in Bucharest and by the Fanny Tardini Theatre in Galati. Other plays he has written include *Hair Curlers* (produced by the Nottara Theatre in Bucharest), *The Dragons* and *The Panel at the End of the Bed* (produced by the Maria Filotti Theatre in Braila). He also worked as a film actor in *Coffee and cigarettes*, directed by Cristi Puiu (Golden Bear in Berlin, 2004), in *Filantropica*, directed by Nae Caranfil and in "The Death of Mr. Lazarescu" (2005, winner – Un Certain Regard Section – at the Cannes Film Festival).

## **Night Sings Its Songs**

by Jon Fosse

A modern day tragedy about two people who love each other desperately, but in an attempt to find each other again they push each other to the extreme and spin into a downward spiral of miscommunication.

**Jon Fosse**, the Norwegian dramatist, novelist and poet has written numerous plays, and also novels and poetry. He is one of the most performed playwrights in contemporary theatre – in 2002, there were 130 productions of his plays in Europe only. Fosse's work is translated to more than 20 languages. He is the recipient of a number of awards and honours. He is often compared to Henrik Ibsen, and has become famous particularly for having created his own, unique theatrical language, through which he

reflects his contemporary society. He creates an intense and poetic universe that irresistibly draws the audiences in.

## Death Variations

by Jon Fosse

Shocked by the suicide of their Daughter two ordinary people, a Man and a Woman, search for the meaning of the finality of and the reasons for her death. Unable either to comprehend or accept the reality of the event, they enter a Time Tunnel, where they hope to find answers to their quest. In an attempt to understand something their minds refuse to understand, they confront, and are confronted by, themselves from the past. They trace their Daughter's life from the time before her birth until after her death. Feeling ignored by her parents after they split up and afraid of experiencing more pain, she believes she finds salvation in solitude and her relationship with an imaginary Friend, who is always there for her. She devises an image that would secure an idyllic life for her, protect her, make her feel happy, help her find peace. She knows that person exists, she knows he has always been there. And when he is not, she is waiting for him, looking for him. She knows he wants to be with her all the time. She needs to be with him for ever. She follows him and won't let him disappear even if it means jumping off the cliff in pursuit of his presence. She jumps. She is still alone. She realises she shouldn't have done it, she wants to come back. She can't.

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## The Robin-Anthems

by Nikoline Werdelin

This is a tragicomic play about dying and different ways of dying: In each of the five brown hospital beds on stage, five dying men are sleeping. One after the other, they wake up and discuss women, victories, losses and the sorrow from having to leave early. However, by the time the sun sheds its first rays, most of them have given up their struggles.

**Nikoline Werdelin** is a cartoonist and director and was born in Copenhagen 1960. From 1981-84, she studied at the design school, with drawing and graphics as her main subjects. In 1984 she won a comic competition in the Danish newspaper Politiken, in which her comics have succeeded ever since. It all started with the award winning series Café during the same year when with a loving although cynical insight she hit the thriving café culture of the nineteen eighties on the nail. Other comics, of which many have been published in book form, include Homo Metropolis, Laura and Nugga and Her på bjerget (Here, on the mountain), in which the types and syndromes of our time have been awfully originally displayed. Werdelin is not a misanthrope, but rather “the stubborn seismograph of lifestyles”. In 1997, she was awarded the Danish publicist award for her writing, which primarily revolves around comics, but which has evolved throughout the years, particularly to include the writing of plays. Werdelin made her debut as a dramatist with the manuscript and set design for the pop vaudeville UNDER DE GULE MÅNER (Under the yellow moons), 1987. Her breakthrough came ten years later with the lifestyle comedy LIEBHVERNE (1997), in which the consumption-oriented generation keeps an open house for the big, egoistic staging of oneself. With DEN BLINDE MALER (the blind painter), 1999, Werdelin made her debut as a director in her tragic sex comedy about the narcissistic, women-consuming man. Once again, Werdelin shows off her personal talent for the witty, revealing dialogue, which has been the strength of her work since the comic strips. Furthermore, Werdelin has been very successful with the plays MINE TO SØSTRE (My two sisters), 2001 and BOBLERNE I

BÆKKEN, (The Robin-Anthems) 2003. As a result of these two plays, she was awarded the price for best Danish playwright. MARTHAS TEMA (Martha's theme) 2005, takes place, partly in the 1870's Copenhagen – partly in the present day, whilst AKVARIEFUGLEN 2005, tells the story of a middle-aged woman with a strong father fixation, and virtually no sexual experience.

## **Pinocchio's Ashes**

by Jokum Rohde

In the city of Königsberg, where the river runs through, a ban of art was made 12 years ago in order to strengthen the intellectual level of its inhabitants. In the streets the bonfires are still smouldering from burning books and artwork. In the outskirts of the city lies the old and now former amusement park, where the oracle used to predict the future of the people. In order to keep up the ban informers are sent out to locate any practices of illegal art. Marc Dutroux is such an informer and he discovers an old Pinocchio doll in the workshop of the cabinet-maker, Werner Bruun. The district attorney, Alexander Trocchi, puts Werner Bruun at trial accusing him of practising art. The judge Wolff, who has a motto saying "I don't know the laws that well, but I know people," sentences Werner to have his right hand cut off.

Werner's business is ruined, and he goes to see judge Wolff to ask for some money for him and his mother to live of, his mother being the former oracle, Miranda. Wolff is in a strange way seduced by Werner to reveal his own urge to practice art and he declames some of his own and very banal poems. But Wolff also discovers that he has a certain power over Werner. A power he begins to use challenging the society and the laws he as a judge are working to enforce. Suddenly crimes begin to take place in the city, the first being a fire, that causes the death of some poor people sleeping underneath the old magenta bridges. Werner is accused of the crime and taken to trial. But this time Wolff let Werner go which makes him very popular with the people but not with Alexander Trocchi. Wolff begins to loose control of the situation and the next murder, a child

murder, brings the whole city to a state of revolt. The chase for the murderer begins. But who is the real villain?

**Jokum Rohde** was born 1970 in Copenhagen, Denmark and theatre history, philosophy and theology at the University of Copenhagen. Rohde debuted as a novelist in 1994 with *Jonas' Book*. In the following years he has had his breakthrough as a playwright with a number of plays, among these the play *Nero* which opened at the Royal Theatre and has since been played widely in Germany.

In May 2004 Rohde was asked to write a play celebrating the marriage of the Crownprince of Denmark to the Tasmanian born Mary Donaldson. This resulted in the play *Tasmanian Night* which played at the Royal Theatre while being transmitted on television.

Jokum Rohde has also done a number of dramatizations and reconstructions of classics, among these a reconstruction of the unknown drama *The Church* by the very well known and notorious french novelist Louis- Ferdinand Céline.

In 2003 he had a huge popular breakthrough with his dramatization of the Walter Scott novel *Ivanhoe* which the Royal Theatre produced in the woods outside of Copenhagen. In June 2006 Rohde will follow up on this outdoor theatre format with a dramatization of the Thor/Ragnarok- mythology also in a Royal Theatre production.

In 2003 he wrote what is claimed as a modern European masterpiece *Pinocchio's Ashes*. It opened in the spring of 2005 to rave reviews at the central stage of The Royal Theatre and has since sold to other large theatres in Denmark and to the national theatre of Sweden, Dramaten in Stockholm Sweden.

## **Time Out**

by Zlatko Topčić

On a playground in Sarajevo, Bosnia, two basketball players are practicing for Olympiad, they consider themselves great talents and call themselves Pippin and MJ. But our characters are very different from the great American basketball players from whom they borrowed the names – they lost their legs in the war and the Olympiad

they are preparing for is for the disabled. During reversals they talk about life, how to handle it now – one believes that it would be better to be dead and another that there is a value even in this life as it is, and they are haunted by memories. The second part is in a bar in Germany, after they missed the most important shot at the Olympiad for handicapped. They meet a girl for entertainment there that is also from Bosnia and they finish together in the room – in a dream or in death?

**Zlatko Topčić** was born in Sarajevo on April 30, 1955. He graduated from Law School of the University of Sarajevo. Member PEN Center BiH | Association of writers of BiH. Director and art director Chamber theater 55 Sarajevo. He has published the following collections of short stories: *Životno pitanje* (The Vital Question) (1981), *Ptica iz drugog jata* ( Bird From Another Flock, 1995), *Bogumilske legende* (Bogomil Legends) (1997) and *Izabrane priče* (Selected stories, 2000); novels *Čovjek niotkud* (A Man From Nowhere, 1986), *Kulin* (1984), *Košmar* (Nightmare. 1997, 1998, 2000, 2003.) and *Gola koža* (Bare skin, 2004). The following collections of his plays have been published: *Kolaps* (Collapse) (1988), *Izbjeglice* (Refugees, 1998) *Drame* (Plays, 1995) and *Timeout* (2001). The following plays have been produced for the stage: *Kolaps* (Collapse, 1986), *Kako Musa dere jarca* (Musa and the Goat, 1993), *Kulin ban* (1995), *Refugees* (1999.) *Plaza hotel* (2000.) *Time out* (Bretton Holl, UK: Leeds, London-2002.) and *Glavom kroz zid* (MTM, 2004.)

His stories and dramas have been translated to English, Polish, French, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Italian, Czech, Turkish and German, and they were included in several anthologies. He was also the scriptwriter for several documentary films: *Odazivam Ti se*, *Bože* (I Respond to You, God), *Krv i mošus* (Blood and Musk), *Čudo u Bosni* (Miracle in Bosnia), and *U najboljim godinama* (The Best Years Ever). Radio Sarajevo has produced seven of his radio plays.

He is the laureate of the most prestigious B&H literary award: THE B&H WRITERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL AWARD FOR BEST BOOK PUBLISHED IN 1997, for his novel *Košmar* (Nightmare), first award at the anonymous concourse for film scenario awarded by Association of Film Makers of BH (Remake, 1999.-World Premiere

Rotterdam Film Festival 2003, directed Dino Mustafić), first award at the anonymous  
concourse for theatre plays (Time out, 2000. and Glavom kroz zid, 2004).

## **The Scent of Wheat**

by Zdenka Becker

A world class poet from Bosnia sits in a posh bar while wrestling his war demons.  
Searching for the life inside the poignant memory of death, he brings his listeners deep  
inside the terminal pain of war with the graceful humor of a poet.

**Zdenka Becker** was born in Eger in the Czech Republic, was raised in Bratislava in  
Slovakia and has been living and working in Austria since 1975. She holds degrees  
from the University of Economics in Bratislava and the University of Vienna. She has, in  
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teacher and translator. She is the author of numerous plays and novels. Her work has  
received many awards, including the Theodor Körner prize in 1995 and the 2000 prize  
of the Conference of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association.

## **Goodbye Galina**

by Zdenka Becker

A "monologue for five voices" which presents the lives of five mail order brides from  
various Eastern European countries. The women share stories as they sit on a train  
platform, waiting for various connections

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of the Conference of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association.

## Boogie & Blues

by Zdenka Becker

The story of four friends in their late thirties and early forties, *Boogie & Blues* examines the effect of permanent disability on friendships and relationships. Jutta, a photographer, is forced to decide between sacrificing her personal and professional aspirations or her marriage when her successful jazz musician husband, Conny, suffers a severe stroke. Despite professions of life-long friendship, Jutta and Conny's best friends and colleagues, Larissa and Frankie, quickly turn their backs on Conny's condition and leave Jutta alone to pick up the pieces. Under pressure from her mother, nurses and Frankie, who wants her to travel to the United States for a photo shoot, Jutta nevertheless stands by Conny, whose condition, over the course of the play, slowly improves, ending with him regaining the ability to walk by the end.

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## Harbour

by Katherine Thomson

On the Wednesday before Easter, 1998, a few hundred metres away from the site of the new Sydney Theatre, one of the most dramatic events in recent Australian history took place. It was the culmination of a tightly planned scheme between the Federal Government and a stevedoring company. An attempt to smash the Maritime Union of Australia — the wharfies.

This play is set against the backdrop of this explosive industrial dispute. Sandy – a retired wharfie – comes home after a six year absence to find his family divided. His kids have moved on — and up. They're on opposite sides of the political divide. His wife doesn't want to be in the same room as him.

The world has changed, and it seems he no longer has a place in it. But he's a battler, with a burning desire to unite his family and set the past to rights. A past full of explosive secrets that threaten to blow them apart forever.

**Katherine Thomson** began her career in the theatre as an actor working with Sidetrack, Sydney Theatre Company and Theatre South. Her first play, *A Change in the Weather*, was presented at the 1982 Women and Arts Festival. Later, under commission from Des Davis at Theatre South she wrote *Tonight We Anchor in Twofold Bay*, which premiered in Eden played a season at STC's Wharf Studio and toured the South Coast. From there, Katherine's writing career never looked back.

In 1987 she wrote *A Sporting Chance* for State Theatre Company of South Australia and then *Darlinghurst Nights* – a musical play based on the light verse of Kenneth Slessor and written with composer Max Lambert which opened Sydney Theatre Company's season in 1988 and was broadcast on ABC's Radio National.

Katherine's other theatre credits include : *Diving for Pearls* (premiered at Melbourne Theatre Company 1991), *Barmaids* (premiered at Deckchair Theatre 1991), *Fragments of Hong Kong* (1995), *Navigating* (premiered at Queensland Theatre Company and MTC 1997 and played at STC 1998), *This Hospital is My Country* and *Mavis Goes to Timor* (for Deckchair Theatre in 1999 and 2002 respectively – the latter toured through regional Australia in 2003).

In 2001, as part of their *Borderline* project, Griffin Theatre Company commissioned Katherine to write *Kayak*. More recently her commissions have included *Wonderlands* for Hot House Theatre and Griffin Theatre and *Harbour* for Sydney Theatre Company to open the new Sydney Theatre in January 2004.

Katherine's extensive television screenwriting credits include *Blackjack*, *Young Lions*, *All Saints*, *McLeods Daughters*, *Wildside*, *Grass Roots*, *Halifax fp*, *Fallen Angels*, *Snowy* and *GP*. She is the Australian co-writer of *Answered By Fire* a two part series in production for *Beyond Simpson Le Mesurier*, the ABC and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She is the writer of the Becker Entertainment/Film Australia feature documentary *A Colourful Life* based on the life of Florence Broadhurst, directed by Gillian Armstrong.

Katherine's many industry awards include the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for *Diving for Pearls*; five nominations for the NSW Literary Awards for *Wonderlands*, *Diving for Pearls*, *Barmaids*, *This Hospital is My Country* and *GP (Close to Her Chest)*; a nomination for the 2002 WA Premier's Book Award for Best Script for *Mavis Goes to Timor*; Australian Writers' Guild Awards (AWGIE) for *Barmaids* and *Mavis Goes to Timor*; an AWGIE for Best Single Script in a Series for *GP (Shaking Hands with Time)*; and a 2002 AFI nomination for *Halifax fp (Cradle and All)*.

Katherine received the 2003 Rodney Seaborn Playwrights' Award for *Wonderlands*. For her play *Harbour*, she received the 2005 NSW Premier's Literary Award and was named a finalist for the internationally prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

## **Windmill Baby**

by David Milroy

Maymay, an elderly Aboriginal woman, revisits an abandoned Kimberly cattle station in the far north of Western Australia. She explains to her daughter, who interrupts her on her cell phone, that she has unfinished business on the station which she has no intention of sharing with her daughter. Maymay discovers her old clothes line and wash tub and sets about hanging up the now rotted sheets that she never got to hang out forty years prior. Maymay explains that "If you start something you must finish it even if it doesn't matter anymore". She traces the journey of her life on the station and the interaction between the white station owner, his wife and the Aboriginal workers. We

learn of the hardships for both black and white in establishing the cattle industry as well as the cultural and social stigma attached to mixed relationships and babies born of mixed blood.

**David Milroy** has been involved in theatre for a number of years as a musician, director and writer. He has written and directed a number of plays including King Hit which won the 1998 Premier's Book Award, Runumuk and Windmill Baby. David was Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre for seven years and received a Myer Award in 2002 for his contribution to the development of indigenous theatre. In 2000 David was a guest Director of the American Playwrights Conference in Connecticut and has attended the Australian National Playwrights Conference on a number of occasions as a writer and Director.

David has also directed No Shame for Mainstreet Theatre in Mt Gambier and worked with Polyglot Theatre in Melbourne. David has previously provided musical direction for Sistergirl and Dead Heart for Black Swan Theatre Company and Perth Theatre Company's production of Wild Cat Falling. David co-wrote and directed Sally Morgan's hit play Cruel Wild Woman and Barking Gecko's production of Own Worst Enemy for the Festival of Perth.

David is currently living in Sydney and recently won the 2004 Patrick White Award for his play Windmill Baby and received a Fellowship from the Theatre Fund of the Australia Council.

## **Yanagai! Yanagai!**

by Andrea James

YANAGAI! YANAGAI! is set in a mythical landscape on the banks of a mighty river. We call him Dhungula (the Murray River). The landscape is expansive, like a plain dotted with ancient trees. Timezoned in the dreaming, present and future. A clan of storytellers have banded together to remember a beautiful place they once knew. Together they tell stories that happened thousands of years ago. Some stories

are told so that they may be remembered; others are told so that they may never happen again.

From the sky is dropped a thunderous black woman, we call her Munarra, and she is as mad as hell! Cast out by her husband and our creator, Biami, she is our reluctant hero. Sent – unbeknownst to her – to save the very stinking earth she now stands upon. She cries for the land and people she once knew. She cries a river. Two dingoes and a sturdy nulla nulla are her only companions.

On a silent canoe she encounters an old foe – Edward Curr – the first invader to her lands. His ghost haunts the land and refuses to leave. Revenge boils behind her eyes and she realises her fate. She must confront this ghost and in turn heal her land, her people. Many times she returns to his ghostly homestead. She's come for more than a cup of tea.

Meanwhile another struggle is taking place. In realtime, a landclaim war is being fought. Eighteen Yorta Yorta claims to land and resources have been made since the arrival of Sir Edward Curr. One man holds the key to land justice and freedom. One man has the knowledge of a thousand years and more. One man can stand in court and win his people's land for once and for all. But this one man, our Uncle, wants nothing more but peace and quiet. He has come back to his land to fish! He has come back to his land to die! And it is poor Lyall a young Yorta Yorta man who must convince this stubborn Elder to take to the gubbar law courts once more. Bouyed by the success of Mabo and the determination and fire of his people, Lyall takes the hopes and dreams of an entire nation to the confines of the colonial courtrooms. We cry and we laugh as one by one we see proud Yorta Yorta Elders confronted on the courtroom stand.

Memories are being stirred – the good ones and the bad. Memories that are better off forgotten. Memories that eat at your very soul. The entire universe is being shaken and Munarra her dingo companions and her nulla nulla feel a stirring. Edward Curr can feel something too, but he will never admit it. He refuses to leave. He refuses to see.

But deep into the beautiful dark forest one glorious victory is taking place. One old man, our stubborn Elder, we call him Uncle, is dying. As he planned. Guided by the min min lights. At his rightful place. His tree. His land.

And as always, another victory is being planned. The right to land justice and freedom. We are, after all, the Yorta Yorta – the “No!” People – and we will never give up.

We are here.

**Andrea James** graduated from LaTrobe University as a Bachelor of Art in Drama in 1991 and then went on to complete a Bachelor of Performing Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1996 as an Animator. In 1997 she collaborated with John Bolton, Tammy Anderson, Hank Kerr and Pauline Whyman to create the all-Indigenous clown troupe, The Oogadee Boogadees who went on to tour the Sydney Festival of the Dreaming and MIFA. She has taught and directed at Swinburne University’s Indigenous Performing Arts course and is Melbourne Workers Theatre’s Artistic Director where she directed “Magpie” written by Richard Frankland and Melissa Reeves. She was Associate Director to the MWT production of “Fever” directed by Julian Meyrick. Andrea wrote and directed her first full length play, “Yanagai! Yanagai!” (inspired by the dreaming, stories, people and land claim of the Yorta Yorta Aboriginal Nation) which completed its world premiere season in September 2003 in co-production with Playbox at the Malthouse Theatre. The play will tour in 2006 to regional Victoria and the UK. She has just enjoyed directing the controversial and successful production of Non Parlo di Salo by Christos Tsiolkos and Spiro Economopolous for the Melbourne Workers Theatre.

## **Stolen**

by Jane Harrison

Five Aboriginal people; all stolen from their families, communities, land. Within their stories many other stories unfold – of discrimination, sexual abuse, self-hatred, suicide, mental illness – and of family, belonging and hope. The stories weave backwards and forwards in time, from the children's home where each child 'does time', to a point in each life where they reach a kind of resolution.

In 1992, when the play was first commissioned, few outside the Aboriginal community were aware of this chapter in Australian history, or knew the extent of the issue. The play is not about blame, politics or policies – rather it maps the emotional effect of that pivotal act of violence – that of being taken away. For our community to heal we need to acknowledge the deeds of the past, and how they resonate in every single Aboriginal life.

**Jane Harrison** began writing for the theatre with the commission by Ilbijerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-operative of *Stolen*, a play about those generations of Australian Aborigines forcibly removed from their families and land over the last century. Writing *Stolen* over a six-year period also coincided with a personal journey to connect more with her Aboriginal heritage. She is a descendant of the Muruwari people of NSW. *Stolen* premiered at Playbox Theatre, Melbourne, in 1998, and has productions annually – eight seasons in Melbourne, plus tours to regional Victoria, Sydney, Adelaide, and Tasmania, the UK (twice), Hong Kong and Tokyo, as well as readings in Canada and New York (in 2004). Jane was the co-winner, (with Dallas Winmar), of the Kate Challis RAKA Award 2002, for *Stolen*.

Her most recent play, *Rainbow's End*, produced by Ilbijerri, premiered in Melbourne in February, 2005. She contributed one chapter to *Many Voices, Reflections on experiences of Indigenous child separation*, a book that evolved out of the *Bringing Them Home* report into the Stolen Generations, and published by the National Library, Canberra in 2002. As well as writing, she teaches Indigenous Performing Arts students at Swinburne University, Melbourne.

## The Starry Messenger

by Justin Fleming

The play is set in modern day Florence, where Rachel, a festival playwright, is writing about the year 1600 in Italy when Vincenzo Galilei is working with a team towards the world's first opera, while his son, Galileo Galilei, discovers that the earth moves round the sun. Together, they cause mayhem. But in unexpected and gradually chilling ways, the past invades Rachel's life, placing her and her ardent lover, James, at the centre of a dangerous web of intrigue.

**Justin Fleming** has been a Vice-President of The Australian Writers' Guild and a board member of The Australian National Playwrights' Centre. His plays include Hammer (Ensemble), The Cobra (starring Sir Robert Helpmann), Harold In Italy (STC), Burnt Piano (Belvoir/MTC/Herbert Berghof Theater New York, Mainstage Hobart/Dallas Theater Centre/France Australia Theatre, Paris/Centaur Theatre, Montréal), Coup d'Etat (MTC/Western Canada Theatre), Kangaroo (Square Brackets Theatre) and Junction (NIDA). Burnt Piano won the New York New Dramatists' Exchange Award in 2000. Coup D'Etat won the Banff PlayRites Residency, Canada 2002, made the final short-list for the Patrick White Award 2003 and was nominated for an AWGIE award for Best Play 2004. Burnt Piano was selected as the inaugural play for the Australia/Canada exchange between Melbourne Theatre Company and the Centaur Theatre, Montréal. The Department Store was first presented by Parnassus Den, and won the inaugural Mitch Matews Award. The Myth of the Passive Citizen premiered in the Short & Sweet Festival in Sydney, 2005.

As librettist, Justin collaborated with Thos Hodgson on Ripper for Ensemble Productions, and with Stephen Edwards on Accidental Miracles (WAAPA/Sydney Theatre Company), The Ninth Wonder (Sydney Theatre Company) the English Tour and London season of Crystal Balls (Compact Opera/Sadler's Wells) and TESS of the D'Urbervilles, which toured Britain before its run at The Savoy Theatre in London's West End. Justin was recently librettist on the Griffin Theatre/Riverside Theatres hit, Satango with Stewart D'Arrietta. Current work includes the

musical, J.C. Williamson with Gale Edwards, John Senczuk and Craig Christie, and Babel in New York with Thos Hodgson and Martin Charnin. Justin has degrees in law from Sydney and Dublin, and a Master of Laws from University College London.

## **The Governor's Family**

by Beatrix Christian

Set in New South Wales' Government House at the turn of the 20th Century, the Governor's family functions as a metaphor for, or microcosm of, the incipient nation. The emerging federation of Australia is in danger of sabotage by the secrets buried within its political system, as well as the pressure of political contradiction tearing at it from the outside. The play revolves around the enigmatic members of the Governor's family: the Governor, his Aboriginal maid and his repressed Hapsburg wife. The Governor's Family tackles large political issues through individual conflicts in works which are on the edge of theatrical conventions, exploring worlds whose structures are becoming fractured and chaotic. The play is based on a case from 1887 when six men were hanged for the rape of an Aboriginal girl, on the word of the Governor of NSW who refused to exercise the Queen's prerogative of mercy.

**Beatrix Christian** graduated from the NIDA playwright's studio in 1991. Her first play *Spumante Romantica* had its premier production at Griffin Theatre Company in 1992. From there she became an Affiliate Writer and then Writer-in-Residence with the Sydney Theatre Company's New Stages. Her second play *Blue Murder* was produced at Belvoir Street Theatre in 1994 and Eureka Theatre Company in 1996, and was winner of Best New Play (Sydney Theatre Critics Circle) and shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. *The Governor's Family* premiered at Belvoir Street Theatre in 1997, and was selected as the one Australian play to be read at Teesri Duniya (Montreal) and nominated for an AWGIE and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. In 1998 Beatrix was awarded The ANPC/New Dramatists Award to travel to New York. Her comedy, *Fred* .was produced by STC, MTC, QTC and shortlisted for both the NSW and Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. Her play *Old Masters* was produced by STC

and won the 2002 Queensland Premier's Literary Award for drama. Other playwriting credits include *Faust's House, then the mountain comes, The Promised Land* (Australian Museum); *Mad, Bad & Spooky* (Theatre of Image) and *Ten Things Not To Do On A First Date* (QTC). For the STC, Beatrix has adapted *A Doll's House* (Ibsen) and *Life Is A Dream* (Calderon), and co-adapted (with Benedict Andrews) Chekhov's *Three Sisters*.

## Seven

by Yat Yao

In an apartment, real estate agent Mr. Wong found a video tape left behind by the previous tenant. He was curious about the content of it. Later that day, he realized that in the tape, the tenant was having sex with her boyfriend. Mr. Wong, driven by sexual desire, wants to keep the tape. However, he did not realize that the tape was not actually a simple one. It was connected with some illegal affairs. During the course of investigating what had happened, Mr. Wong suddenly received a huge sum of money. He did not know where the money came from. However, he realized that no one would ever know it was him, if he just took all the money himself. However, things turned out unexpectedly, as the story behind the tape and that money was not that simple...

In the second part of the play, the point of view turns completely to the "previous tenant", the girl inside "the tape". Cindy was trying to get away from her corrupted policeman boyfriend. After meeting someone on the internet, she determined it should be the right timing to make use of the "new boy", in order to carry on her plan of the "separation with the policeman boyfriend". However, she realized that her plan was interrupted. Moreover, she had to cope with a stranger, the estate agent Mr. Wong, in order to keep her plan working...

However, things are far more complicated than Mr. Wong and Cindy thought. In the third part of the play, the audience will follow the point of view of Cindy's new boyfriend, Jason, who actually had interrupted Cindy's plan, without letting her know...

**Yat Yau** (Panda, Leung Shing-Him) received a Master of Arts in East/West Theatre Studies from the Middlesex University in London and a Bachelor of Science Degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has also studied at the School of Drama in the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, receiving a Professional Diploma majoring in Playwriting, with Distinction. He is currently the Artistic Director of Class 7A Drama Group, as well as the Lecturer (Scriptwriting) at the School of Film and Television of the Academy. As an active theatre practitioner, Yat Yau has written over 40 plays and has directed more than 20 theatrical productions. Apart from Class 7A Drama Group, He has worked for most of the major theatre companies in Hong Kong, including The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Chung Ying Theatre Company, and The Actor's Family, etc. His recent works include *Where's My Family*, *The Beautiful Hearts* (2005 Hong Kong International Arts Carnival Programme), *i-City* (2005 Hong Kong Arts Festival Programme), *SEVEN*, *I love therefore I am*, *Death*, and *Cross-mopolitan*. Yat Yau received the Outstanding Young Playwright Award at the 9th Hong Kong Drama Awards in 2000, and in 2003, he was awarded the Rising Artist Award by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. He has won three best script awards successively in the 1997, 1998 and 1999 Hong Kong Drama Festival. Yat Yau currently teaches drama at various schools, and has been actively promoting Arts-in-Education schemes, aiming to integrate arts with other disciplines under the formal school curriculum. He has recently been invited by the School Improvement Action of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to be the Honorary School Developing Officer, to develop the Arts-in-Education curricula.

## **The Raped A.N.T.I.**

by Zhang Xian

After the king raped A-N-T-I, the daughter of the former king, something unexpected takes place. The woman, whose clothes were taken off by force, refuses to put on her clothes again. She remains naked one hour, two hours, one day, two days, one week, two weeks. By self-violation and long-lasting silence, the woman revolts against the

king, intentionally spreads the news of this scandal around the whole country and finally causes a political crisis. The king tried every means to persuade her to put on her clothes and compromise with him. After fruitless persuasion, imploration, threatening, luring, and fooling, the king breaks down at last. He comes to know that when the raped deliberately allows herself become filthier than the rapist, the rapist himself feels raped instead.

**Zhang Xian** was born in Shanghai in 1955. Zhang began his pursuit of literature during the Culture Revolution, when he was sent to China southwestern border province of Yunnan to be a child worker at the age of 15. After a decade of living in Yunnan Province, Zhang returned to live in Shanghai. From the beginning of China modern reform period in the late 1970s Zhang has been at the forefront of China art scene writing scripts and directing. His main stage works include *OWL IN THE HOUSE* and *MOTHER LANGUAGE*. Zhang also wrote the script for the film, *THE LADY WHO STAYED*, nominated for Best Film on the 16th Cairo International Film Festival. Zhang is currently collaborating with Director Wang Guangli on two film projects, co-writing the scripts for co-production *GO FOR BROKE* with the Shanghai Film Studio and the second film of the Wang's Work Trilogy, *MODEL WORK*.

## **Alive in the Mortuary**

by Candace Chong Mui Ngam

It is inspired by stories from volunteers of Medecins sans Frontieres, *Alive in the Mortuary* probes the struggle of a Hong Kong surgeon in Angola who is strapped in the mortuary of a temporary hospital due to local warring parties attack. In this desperate situation that any action outside fills him with dread, he came into a strange mental aberration, and he meets an engineer. They first start a row on various medical issues and meaning of life, but then they recognize each other, and share the same dream, same mission and facing the same trouble.

**Chong Mui Ngam** graduated from the Faculty of Social Science of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, majoring in Psychology and the School of Drama of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, majoring in playwriting.

She joined Chung Ying Theatre Company as a member of Playwright Theatre Creative Team, where she wrote *Alive in the Mortuary* and *Angel Aurora*. She also wrote *Love in the Red Chamber*, *Venezia Cafe of the Portland Street*, *Changing Cast*, *Shall We Go to Mars* and translated *The Village of Widows*. Besides, she has been the assistant to director in including *The Rivals*, *The Dark Tales* and *Ruan Lingyu* and the script writer of TV documentary *Hong Kong Today* and *Stories From Afar*.

Chong was awarded the first runner-up in Script-writing competition of 26th Hong Kong Youth Literature Award and was awarded the Outstanding Playwright from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. In 2003, she received the Best Script Award at the 12th & 14th Hong Kong Drama Awards.

She has been awarded in 2004 the Lee Hysan Foundation Fellowship by Asian Cultural Council to spend 12 months in the United States.

## **The French Kiss**

by Candace Chong Mui Ngam

After a romantic evening, Michelle, Macro's secretary, lodges a complaint and Macro is arrested by the police and charged with sexual harassment. This incident ends Marco's career as a pastor and ultimately costs him his faith.

Five years later they meet at a party...  
Can they really forgive and forget?

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## **Shall We Go to Mars?**

by Candace Chong Mui Ngam

In Mong Kok, there is a quiet “dog-walking” street in where dog-lovers walk their pets every evening. One day, Jimmy, an old man suffering from terminal cancer, comes to the street. He brings along with him a worn-out suitcase and an astronomical telescope, wondering if he can find a proper place to gaze Mars. He meets five dog-lovers there, and hopes to make friends with them. However, each of these people with whom he comes across is perplexed by his/her own problem. Having difficulty in communicating with others, Jimmy does not make himself a popular person among his new acquaintances.

What will be his way out – Continuing with his lonely journey or succeeding in convincing someone to join his adventure to Mars?

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## **Le Fils d'un Survivant**

by Jean-Marie V. Rurangwa

This play was written in Bruxelles in November 1999, five short years after the Rwandan genocide and it is infused with the passionate need to recount those horrific events within the public forum of a staged story. In Act I, Bugabo and his fiancée Jeanne are planning their honeymoon following their upcoming marriage. It is the night when President Habyarimana's plane is shot down and the terrifying genocidal atrocities begin, brutally interrupting the benign pleasures of this young academic couple. A former academic colleague arrives with the Hutu Power soldiers and explains all the motives of the genocide to Bugabo and Jeanne as he forces them to submit to his sadistic enactments. Bugabo is stabbed with a machete and Jeanne is taken off to be raped and burned alive. In Act II, Bugabo has been saved by a moderate Hutu named Habiyaakare who saved many Tutsi's and he is being nursed back to health. After 4 months (the genocide lasted 100 days) Bugabo awakens from amnesia and asks to be told what happened. Habiyaakare explains to Bugabo in excruciating details everything that took place that night and to Bugabo's family members over the following days. A former Belgian colleague invite's Bugabo to come to Namur, Belgium to recuperate,

renew his life and to find a way to dedicate his life to the memory of his lost loved ones. In Act III, Bugabo is in Belgium with other survivors, some who defend choosing a “non-life” of drink and drugs to forget the trauma they have experienced. Bugabo and his friends debate the need to carry on and tell the story. Bugabo confides that since his recovery he has been impotent with his Belgian wife Brigitte, because he still sees the flames around Jeanne but that Jeanne came to him in a dream and released him to love Brigitte and remake his life. That night they were able to consummate their marriage and even beget a child, Butera Bwa Bugabo. In Act IV, the community of Rwandans and Belgians celebrate the new boy as Bugabo narrates how his son will be a bridge between nations and races and a warrior for peace in the world.

## **Les Caprices du Destine**

by Jean-Marie V. Rurangwa

Written to be performed by college students and presented to young audiences, *The Whims of Destiny* delivers a lot of graphic and authentic information about the Rwanda genocide in a concise short play that turns around a particular group of Hutus and Tutsis both during and shortly following the events of 1994. Sakabaka is a militant Hutu Interahamwe warrior whose first appearance onstage is with his machete soaked in blood. In Act I, he tries to convince his brother-in-law Minega, also Hutu, to take up the machete and murder his own Tutsi (1/4 blood) wife and children. Minega’s sister arrives bloodied, having already done the deed. The arguments put forward are a clear and chilling portrait of the claimed Hutu “logic” for the killing. In Act II, we are with a group of Tutsis, one a survivor of horrific atrocities (described), talking about whether they can or should stay in Rwanda to rebuild their nation after the total decimation of their families. Suddenly, Sakabaka appears with a surprising story – on his father’s deathbed, Sakabaka learned that he was a Tutsi orphan taken and raised as a Hutu. He is now in search of his Tutsi family and in this house he discovers them – in fact he discovers his cousin, who accuses him of being the assassin who raped and murdered her family. The play ends with Sakabaka calling out in tears and anguish.

## The Woman in Me

by Charles Mulekwa

Adam and Eve, a young ideal couple, have found true love. But the sins of their parents visit them, and hover over the affair: the parents do not see eye to eye, owing to some emotional events in the past. This happening, however, compels the parents to come face to face, igniting a ceaseless feud. As the parents engage in a win or ruin clash, the children they bore experience the hurtfulness that love bears.

**Charles Mulekwa** was born in Mbale Uganda in 1966. He has been involved in theatre since 1983 in Uganda, as an actor, director and writer. Between 1990 and 1992, he taught at King's College Buddo. In 1994 he attended the Royal Court International Residency, and in 1998 went as an actor to the John F Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, USA. He has also given talks on Uganda theatre on BBC radio, at the Universities of Bayreuth and Hamburg, in Germany, and Cambridge University, in the UK. As well as stage and radio plays, he has also written poetry and short stories. In 1999, funded by the British Council and the Peggy Ramsay Foundation, he graduated from the M.A. in Playwriting run by David Edgar at the University of Birmingham, in the UK and was attached to the Royal National Theatre Studio as a writer in residency. The same year, he was the Chief Judge for the BBC African performance season for radio drama. The Royal Court Theatre, London, commissioned him to write a play, *'Black Diamond'*. He Produced August Wilson's *JITNEY* in Uganda, and worked as the film consultant for *THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND*.

## Lagoma is Searching

by Deborah Asiimwe

**Lagoma Is Searching** is a two-character play based on a true story of a Ugandan young man in his early twenties. Dive Lagoma the protagonist, has grown up with his mother and an abusive stepfather. As he grows up he realizes that the one he calls his father treats him differently from the rest of his siblings, he wants to know "Why?" and his search starts. In his search for a "PASSWORD" to life, to joy, to acceptance....to

what you would call noble and good, Lagoma finds himself entangled in alcohol, drug addiction and prostitution. At the verge of committing suicide he meets Aside Kashi, a theatre practitioner who performs with former street children, it is then that he decides to share his life's story, his search. Does he find or the search continues? Lagoma Is Searching.

**Deborah Asiimwe Kashugi** is an actress, director and playwright. She has done theatre with both local and international theatre artists. One of the participants in last summer's conference of African playwrights at the University of Iowa in 2004. In 2003 she was invited in Philippines to attend a Women Playwrights International Conference (WPI), where she was appointed a member of WPI advisory committee. In the same year she attended 2003 Sundance Theatre Lab (Utah-USA). In 2002, she participated in the Sourcework workshop with other theatre artists from East Africa, Poland and USA, held at Towson University (USA) and Warsaw Theatre Academy (Poland). Deborah was also one of the writers for DISH(11) project radio episodes program, a project of the John Hopkins University. She has written plays for Non Governmental Organisations like Forum for Women in Democracy (Uganda), Kampala Pentecostal Church (KPC-Uganda). Deborah is an artistic director of KPC Drama Team, a team that is comprised of young people. She has a diploma in Music, Dance and Drama from Makerere University and she is currently pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Drama at Makerere University. Her recent play Lagoma Is Searching (a play that deals with drug addiction among young people) was performed at Uganda National Cultural Centre-National Theatre in October 2004.

## **Baggage**

**by Fateh Azzam**

A small, haunted memory play examining the relation between political and social fear. The TRAVELER is in the airport, where a voice gives the usual security announcements (if your bags are unattended, they will be destroyed) and some that are less conventional (Washington Dulles is at gate 12B, the future is at whatever gate you

travel to, and love and liberty, well you have to find those gates before they close). When he is stopped and his bags are searched, he enters a reverie, sparked by the memory of how he got the bag. It was given to him by “the tall people in the white trucks who came to help us”—help them, for they were in the orchards being shot at. The traveler’s memory continues to expand, as he remembers moving from one cement building to another, his punishment for things he didn’t do, and his questions as to whether God will help his plight. He takes a gun from his bag and reminisces about his mother—remembering as a soldier writing home, how hard it is to carry a gun, but how he has no other options: without papers he cannot get a desk job. He seems overcome by an ideal of violence (his cousin loves to fight) but is finally torn. Snap back to the airport, where he cannot board the plane without giving up the bag—representing his memories, culture, childhood. He goes back and forth, but as the lights come down, he is still torn, unable to let go of the past in order to move to a more conventional future.

**Fateh Azzam** was born in 1950 in Lebanon of Palestinian refugee parents. Azzam grew up in Syria and Lebanon and immigrated to the United States in 1966. Professional theater performer, choreographer, director and teacher from 1971-1987. Full time work has been in human rights and legal activism since then (a human rights curriculum vitae is available upon request). Have maintained some involvement in theater on an ongoing basis. Traveled extensively and lived in Syria, Lebanon, USA, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, and in Egypt since 1998. . Fluent spoken and written English and Arabic, French stands at about 60 percent. US citizen. Married to Mary McKone, teacher and ceramic artist. Two children, Rami (20) and Haneen (16). Writing includes: · *Baggage*; a play in one act, in Dr. Salma Jayyusi, Editor, *Short Arabic Plays: An Anthology* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Books, 2003)· *Ansar: The Play*; written in workshop with Nidal Khatib, Ismail Dabbagh and Abed Ju’beh. In Dr. Salma Jayyusi, Editor, *Short Arabic Plays: An Anthology* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Books, 2003) · "Zoo Story: A New Reading into an Old Play" theater review, in *Al-Quds*, E. Jerusalem (Oct. 1995) (Arabic). · "Kafka on the West Bank: A Tourist's Guide to Curfews on the West Bank" (with George Giacaman) in *Harper's Magazine* (February

1995). · "Theater in Occupied Palestine" in al-Fajr English Weekly, E. Jerusalem (3-part series; July 1991).

## **P'tite Souillure**

by **Koffi Kwahulé**

A seemingly happy bourgeois family of three gathers in the living room to celebrate the anniversary of the parents' first meeting in a movie theater. When the door rings the daughter opens to a young man who introduces himself as "the thunder's son coming to burn down the house". Nobody seems to have met the man before yet the daughter recognizes him as Ikedia. The play unfolds like a film in a sequence of tableaux set in closed spaces – a pervasive cinematic metaphor underscores the whole drama through intertextual references to *Gone with the Wind* – to reveal the hidden contradictions of a psychologically disturbed family. Ikedia, a rather taciturn character, appears as a magnet and a mirror, seducing each of the three characters in turn, and forcing one after the other to undergo introspection and expose his/her true self. Thus, the mother comes out as mentally unstable, a condition she developed since gunning down the bearer of the mask, Ikedia's father. Throughout the play she undergoes a progressive verbal degeneracy that culminates in infantile language. The father and his daughter, whom he calls "Ptite Souillure"(the title of the play), maintain an incestuous relationship that triggers animosity between mother and daughter and which justifies the adolescent's wish to leave the family at any cost, even if it entails killing her parents. Ikedia eventually renounces his initial resolve to burn down the house – an act the daughter sees and encourages as necessary vengeance for his father's murder – when it became obvious that the family is embarked on an irreversible self destructive process.

**Koffi Kwahulé** was born in Abengourou (Ivory Coast). He studied at the Institut National des Arts in Abidjan, then at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre in Paris (Rue Blanche) as well as at the Sorbonne Nouvelle where he earned a doctorate in theatre studies.

His plays include *Cette vieille magie noire* (RFI 1st Prize in International Playwriting), *Fama* (dir. by the playwright, Festival de Limoges, 1998), *Jaz* (dir. by D. Giordano, Teatro del Fontanone in Rome, 2000), *Le Masque boiteux* (dir. by S. Koly and A. Dine, Glob Théâtre in Bordeaux, 2002), *Bintou* (dir. by R. Gasquet, Théâtre Océan Nord in Brussels, 2003), *P'tite-Souillure* (dir. by E. Salzmannová, DISK in Prague, 2003; Award winner at the Journées d'Auteurs in Lyon), *Scat* (dir. by Y. Bombay, Comédie de Saint-Etienne, 2003), *La Dame du café d'en face* (dir. by J. Heldenberg, Zuidpool Theater in Antwerp, 2004; SACD-RFI Prize 1994), *Big Shoot* (dir. by K/ Frédéric, Théâtre Denise-Pelletier in Montréal, 2005).

His plays have been published by Editions Lansman, Actes Sud-Papiers, Acoria and Theatrales, and have been translated into several languages.