NEW PATRONS MEETING - TRANSCRIPTION

Held on February 23, 2019., at the meeting in the National Theater in Belgrade

IVANA VUJIĆ: First of all, I would like to welcome all the dear people, and Heartefact Foundation, my dear ex-student and now person thyself and the human thyself, which I think is the most important thing, better than being a student - you are a student and then you become a human being, I hope so. (*laughter*) This is the question of learning and, well, I think he will continue to learn. And also, I'm very happy that Biljana Srbljanović who I know as a... She is a flower. She was a flower and she's a flower. And for me she will always be a flower. No, I... No, no, no... There are always some flowers that are forever flowers. Well, I'm deeply touched by this fantastic group of experts and I would like to thank you because this is very important for the National Theatre of Belgrade, to have such wonderful people inside its sacred building. This building is 150 years old. We have the spirits of our best dancers, best opera singers, best directors, best actors and also very bad actors, but their spirits are also very important. (*laughter*) Our great director Raša Plaović, he wrote a book and he said: "When I die, it has to pass 50 years... That means we will all be up... Then you can publish it." And we published the book, and the title of this book is "Our House". And in that book, he wrote what are the real connections in the Babylon Theatre, which is very beautiful... He was totally honest, he said: "This is very honest person." On the contrary, he said: "He's stealing every day. I cannot believe he can steal throughout all of his working hours here. There is nobody to stop him." Or: "This is an awful person. I want him to be dead." But he was very brave and nice, and he is in good, I think, very good relationships with all his compatriots from the book, up on the Champs-Elysées, and I'm very proud of this book because this is honesty in theater games. And I'm happy because this is a very special group of people who give their own lives to the theater, drama, and this is very, very sacred thing. You're servants, you are not just artists. To really be in the field of theater, you have to serve. When I came to my position, the only thing that I said was: "Yes it's important to love this, but the most important thing is that I'm here as a servant. I serve here." And I think that I will do this by the end of my life and I'm extremely exciting… (*phone rings*) Not now, Rašo, this is their... Now they have some ideas about the… Yes, complaints - why we're not saying this or that - it's late, it's late. Yes... And I'm really... When I look at the festivals, I always look at this wonderful book about the Bonn Festival and also think about the Festival in

Wiesbaden. And I've always wanted to go but I've never come. But I'm so happy because the people who have created it, they're here. And I think this is much more than just me going there because I'm not a writer. And I'm deeply honored and I'm deeply thankful to Mr. Manfred Beilharz, my dear colleague, director, opera director, director of the theatre and the founder of such a great and interesting festival, which really gives wind and gives a possibility to young writers and all different artists to change themselves. Our great writer Miloš Crnjanski said: "This house, the National Theater, is a house of winds, but these winds are good. The winds, they're changing the performers, as well as the audience." So thank you very much, Mr. Manfred Beilharz, for all the winds that you make. And I, I know that you have caught a minor cold - maybe this is some sign of starting a new wind which will change us all. I hope. Also, thank you very much, dear Beate Kronsbein, You are a heart because people like Manfred have two hearts, you know… People like Schiller or Goethe, they are people who've had more organs. Maybe that's true. I believe it's true. I personally believe it's true. Because when they opened Mr. Schiller, when they opened Mr. Schiller, they say they saw the situation which is very interesting. All of his organs were nearly dead but the brain took the work of the entire body for seven years longer than it was the reality of the other organs. I really researched that. I was doing "Kabale und Liebe", and I researched all of this. And for me, this was fantastic. They opened him to see – okay, he has two hearts, fantastic, two brains and five livers, but they said they found that the brain took the work of all the other organs and succeeded. Also, I'm deeply touched and I'm wonderfully thankful to Mikhail Durnenkov for his presence. Dobrodošli. Małgorzata Semil. Akos Nemeth, Gina Moxley, Almut Wagner, Marius Ivaškevičius, Simona Semenič - our dear friend from Slovenia, Gianina Carbunariu, okay, Mart Kivastik, Nadia Miroshnichenko. (*somebody correcting pronunciation*) Okay Nadia, I shall write you down… Okay. here's my dear friend, an actor I like very much and who was playing at the Bitef Theatre many times, on my great pleasure - Alban Ukaj, my dear flower - Biljana Srbljanović, yes, and my dear student who is a human being and who is growing as a human being more and more, and, of course, Tanja Šljivar, my dear director of drama, and Tanja is, Tanja is coming... I think she's coming, for sure. So, we are touched by your group, we are touched by your idea, dear Andrej and Biljana, and we are honestly here to serve you. Thank you very much and welcome. (*applause*)

ANDREJ NOSOV: As you all know, good morning everybody, it's so hard to speak after your professor, and I will not speak for very long, I just wish to welcome you in the name of Heartefact Fund, which is the organizer of this event, if we can call it an event. And, as we were in Wiesbaden for three times, with different plays, we were very lucky at the beginning of our work to be a small company whose work was chosen by the Wiesbaden Festival. We know what showing your play and being in touch with this type of, I would say, very important and very dedicated people, actually means to every company. Now we are celebrating 10 years of our existence... That's Tanja Šljivar… So, to make things short. Welcome, and we hope that during this day we will discuss the potentials for the future corporations and collaborations. There are some changes in Serbia and we, within Heartefact, do support those changes. What are the changes? Actually, there is a huge space that we can follow-up and collaborate on this platform, which you can see around your notebooks and in your papers, and it's called the New European Ways. New European Ways is platform dedicated to the collaboration of especially young and new generation of artists. Not just writers but also directors and different people from theatre. And, on the other hand, we see this as great opportunity, not just for the collaboration and all these meetings and festivals, but also as a chance to improve the production and work on very specific pieces of new and upcoming art. So, all of your ideas and things and thoughts and everything you want to say - I believe and hope we will follow up today. And I would kindly ask Biljana to follow up. Thank you for coming.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: I just want to say thank you. And let's take a moment to think about Goran Stefanovski who is not with us anymore, who passed away only, I think, two months ago, suddenly, and then... I think his spirit also brought us together because I was trying to contact all of you for months and I didn't have the good email addresses, and the emails were bouncing back, and I found some of you on Facebook... And then Małgorzata sent a collective email with a photo from Amsterdam, I think, or…

MALGORZATA SEMIL: You were getting a prize, and there was a big ceremony, and the Royal reception and so on... And Manfred and Beate and I were there to be with you. Sitting at the breakfast table, I said: "Well I've been putting it off for such a long time, I should get us together again, at least by email. And you did it, you brought us together, and then we learned about the unfortunate news about Goran. So, that's how it happened."

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Yes, it was really something, to see Goran's name and the address, and then suddenly starting communicating, so I'm very grateful that that you're all here, but I think we all somewhere in our minds have Goran from... What did you say - Champs-Elysées? From upstairs, watching over us. There are some colleagues of ours, who will also join us, who couldn't be here today. And they are all on the email all the time, and they really want to join us for the work, for the follow-up and for the next meeting. So, Jose Manuel Mora, he was supposed to come, he was the first one to respond, and then he got fever the night before the trip. So he's with us also. Bernhard Studlar also, but I think he has a premiere or something at this moment. Jokum Rohde, Jeton Neziraj from Kosovo, Laura Ruohonen, I never knew how to pronounce her name, so, Laura. Laura was really, really trying, and then we were, you know, bouncing all the flights and everything, she had to go to a very important meeting for an opera that she's working on. Selma Spahić also, who may be met with her play Hypermnesia, in Wiesbaden, and Slobodan Unkovski, and I was free to ask him to join us, not to replace Goran, but somehow to remind us of Goran. Also, they were very close collaborators, Slobodan directed his plays four times, I think?

MANFRED BEILHARZ: Four times, in my theater also. Not only in the festival-

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Yes, not only in the festival, maybe he came two times or something, but in addition to that…

MANFRED BEILHARZ: It was "Druga strana" and the other…

(audience): Bure baruta.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Bure baruta. Yes, yes, yes, that's right. So, he was really trying and he wanted to meet you now, but his excuse is - he promised his wife that he will take her to Vienna this weekend, and then they got tickets and everything, and she's been waiting for this since the last summer and he said: "Okay, I will change the tickets." And then a colleague said: "I cannot change the tickets." Because she was really mad. So he's with us as well. This is one thing, and the other thing is, we will try to make it really like working meeting, an informal one, but we, you know, we can brainstorm the ideas on how we can do something similar or, you know, continue the work that we did. So it will not be really... We need this for the recording, for our archive and everything, so it will not be stiff. And I have some teases here that I will just, you know, deliver, and then we can all discuss in whichever way we can. And before we go to this official, working part, I would like to ask all of you to

just say a few words, where have you been for the last… several years, what did you do and everything. And, but before that, I would kindly ask you to tell us what do you think about this idea, and how the idea of a New Plays from Europe Festival came into your mind, how it was born, is it still that important. Tell us, you know, about the legend.

MANFRED BEILHARZ: In some sense, it is a long story, but I will not tell you the whole story. But yesterday I learned that Marius is staying in Bamberg and is invited as an author in residence, and so it came to my mind why... What was the first idea about the festival we afterwards did in Bonn. Because Tankred, I knew him since the time we were students. Together with Peter Stein and others, we founded a student theatre in Munich, and Tankred was was the head of a puppet theater and the student puppet theater... And so we worked together. But in Bamberg, there was this very special place with wonderful old houses and we said - let us make a German-based Avignon show in the in the spirit of the E.T.A. Hoffmann, because he lived there for a long time. Finally, the money was not there, because the Agency of Culture of Bavaria said - we need it for Munich, we have nothing, we are very very poor, and we cannot give it to the province, to Bamberg. So... We have almost had the entire idea of what to do there. It was like this - I got the job in Bonn, at the beginning of 1992 or 1991. And they wanted to have me as an intendant for the entire theatre, including opera, drama, dance, youth theater, and so on and so on. And I wasn't working like that before in all that together, I worked in theatre only, and they said: "What can we do to make you come?" And I said: "I have an idea about a festival, New Plays from Europe, because now it is the year of Europe and we don't know anything about each others." And I was always very eager to know what is in the world of theater, how are the people who work there. And I said to Tankred, he was the co-founder, that he has to be mentioned here, too. He died one, one and a half year ago... I sent around... Some of you responded to the news about him passing away. And he said: "I will be the head of the Bonn Biennale, of Bonn Theater... And, please, would you mind if we made another festival there? So, it was a cultural, political statement for the Europe. Not for nationalism, not for the borders. It was open-minded, and we said it is not an EU festival, it is a festival beginning from Istanbul to to Lisbon, and from Athens to Saint Petersburg and Iceland. And everybody who is in this continent shall be regarded and invited, and all the things... Now we are speaking English, unfortunately, I know only a few words of your language, such as "dobro došli" and so on and so on. (laughter) And "hvala". But this is it. But it should not be, excuse me, it should not be the world only of English-speaking countries, it should offer a chance to everybody. And nobody knew what happened behind the so-called Iron Curtain even after the wall fell. So we went on trips and looked, and our selection was intended for everybody... I am telling this to you, who know the story quite well... I decided, and I've proposed to Tankred "Let us not make a jury of critics, like it is common at the Berliner theatres, and so on and so on... It should be the profession itself

which decides." And in every country, we have a man, a woman, who was or who is a playwright themself. And so it is a decision coming from a very personal taste, so to say - in my opinion, in my country, those plays that are claimed to be the most impressive, it's a result of very personal views, because there is no objectivity. The possibility to say that something is a good play, and something is a bad play. We always had this discussion during the festival. And it was a way to get to know each other, to finally make peace in this continent. And that peace, especially in your country, was not lasting for the entire time, but we in Germany for the past 70 years haven't been involved as a military oppressor and a fighter. We had peace, we had peace, we could... And I was a small, little, tiny boy of three years when I was also traumati…

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Traumatized.

MANFRED BEILHARZ: Traumatized, thank you, by the war. And when I came back to... That has nothing to do with my festival - When I did the first performance in Israel in 2005 and 2012, the reprise, the rockets fell on the... And I had to stop three times in 2012 to go to the shelter and I was not... The Rockets on Tel Aviv... And I was not capable to do my job anymore because I had a heart attack, and when I heard the sirens and I went, just like when I was child, to the shelter, when I was 3 years old, I was always the first one to be there... And a man said to me (*speaks in German*). That means: "You would have 20 more minutes because the English come only in 20 minutes." It's for… What can you do? To relax or to do what? I was there, my family followed later on, and so, for me, it is great... And to whom I tell it... You had, just after the first festival, you had your civil war in Yugoslavia which was a big shock to me because for me, Yugoslavia was the only country of the communist block who had a human life and joy and relaxation... And so... But apart from this, and I think you managed it quite well… As we were always trying to go with our horrible political past to a new present and future. So, that was the idea. And I thought about you, about the people you proposed to invite, for you, theatre is always very political, even if you say - I make no political performances, because you show the people they are living in certain political circumstances. And without having the intention to show it, you feel, you see what is there. And it was, let's say, by curiosity, to know via theater, via playwrights, the world surrounding our old-fashioned Germany, to get inside the world of our first Russian godfather. He died unfortunately three years ago - Viktor Slavkin. When I saw him in 80, no... in '89, and I saw him before in '86 already, when I made a festival in my former theater after Perestroika and Glasnost, I saw him, I met him, I saw Cerceau, his wonderful, wonderful play with Vasiliev... And I asked Victor: "How could it happen that in your country at the moment the wall fell

there was a very poor situation, the food was not available and so on - but there were hundreds of theaters, freelancers and...” I said to him: “I'm very curious are there no other problems for your country so you keep founding new theaters?” And he said to me: “Do you know another way to re-get the dignity we lost in the past times with the politic we have had?” And that was something which hurt me a lot, and it is the basis of all my work which added up in terms of the international context. Thank you. It was long, too long.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: No! And don’t think you are off the hook, because you have to speak more. (*laughter*) So, can we just make a round in few words, just to tell a bit about ourselves, what do we do now. I mean, the last time we met, I was living in France, and then, I think, in Azerbaijan, and five years ago, I moved back to Belgrade, I teach at the University, I'm a full professor now, just like professor Ivana. I teach dramaturgy, which is like playwriting and theory of drama. Some of the most brilliant new authors were my students, like Tanja, and I'm very very proud of that. And when she graduated with one of her plays that were immediately staged afterwards, they remember that we had like this jury of professors and I said - I just want to say that I'm so jealous that I didn't write this, you know. And it was really one of really the best moments in the 20 years during which I've been teaching. So, I teach, and I still write plays, and I have this new play which is in Jugoslovensko dramsko, some of you who stay tomorrow can see it. And I work full-time at the university, but also full-time with this young man here at the Heartefact fund, which is our host actually for the NEW Conference, NEW meetings of patrons and everything... And at Hearteafact, we focus on the new ways to make theatre, or art in general. So, we are interested in making teams and finding people, especially young people, so playwrights, directors, as well as photographers, you know... Visual artists and so on. So, we focus on publishing and producing new plays written by very young, unknown, almost always unknown playwrights. We are very engaged in organizing LGBT Pride Belgrade, for years now. And the Pride Week with all the programs, you know, which are not only... They are always political, but it's also art, culture and everything else. We do a lot of, you know, we did a lot of exhibitions, right. We were focusing on lives and moments of crisis of migrants, for example. That was very, you know, visible here a few summers ago. We do conferences. Like this. Right. So, we do many things. We share an office, and I hate him right now because, you know, 24/7 to organize this meeting, you know, with this guy in the office...

I will shut up. So, this is my last ten years of living - it's not much, but three dogs, one child, two husbands, always in the same small apartment, I mean... It's enough for me. Three dogs, so...

(*pause in the recording*)

IVANA VUJIĆ: Few, few words. Who am I? Who am I? That's the same question asked by many people in my country, and the city as well, and in the government as well, in the Ministry of Culture as well. Well I am... I'm really, I have to say, a theatre creature, and as a theatre creature, I've done 120 performances, as a director. As a director, still, I've done two small alternative operas. I was the artistic director of Bitef theater for nine years. Throughout all this time, I've been teaching theater directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, and I was always working too much. Maybe too much to myself, but this is my cross. Maybe this is right, maybe this is not, but this was my way. Also, I was a director of different festivals. I established one festival, an alternative festival in the 90s, during the war, which was called the Airplane Without an Engine. The Airplane Without an Engine was our situation, but we could fly. And we really flew, because we jumped from the towers, which were, like, 60 meters high. Yes. And on a string. And nobody was hurt, and we didn't have any insurance, as well. Personally, I also direct in Italy and Germany. I did (*speaking German*) in front of the Volksbühne after the bombing, when they have a program Serbian (*unclear*). Also, I had my performance "The Room of My Mother" there. And I worked at a festival in Montenegro, FIAT, Festival of International Alternative Theater. And I'm homo duplex all the time. I established four stages in Belgrade, four new stages. I had my personal theater, I called it my personal *barocco*, and I paid for everything around that. I didn't buy shoes for my child. I gave birth to my child as very old, so this was a small child with the old mother, but I've given all that money for the theater. And I continue working like that. And yeah, yeah, shoes, shoes, shoes, shoes. Well, I said - shall I buy her shoes? No, I will, I will pay the rent for this theater. But all the time I was working at the big theaters, I took all the money for that. Also, I was the artistic director of the Belgrade International Summer Festival and different other festivals and I always took everything to do more, more and more things. My arrival at the National Theatre came, I think, as a surprise to all, because I don't belong to any kind of groups or parties, which is nearly impossible. But I hope that somebody is helping… I belong to this Champs-Élysées party and I think this is very good party, and a very secure party, and

that there is fantastic. So nobody wants to tell us that so it's so beautiful. And coming here I really try… First of all, I'm very happy that I came with Tanja Šljivar, who is a wonderful person, wonderful author and my pride, I'm really proud of her, her existence, and because she is such a good person... And we shall try to make this big house, with 150 years of ghosts and life, somehow even more open and different than it was maybe 10 months ago. And I shall serve. And that's enough, I think, for one life - to be a servant is very difficult. But this is the essence of love. And I am a servant. Thank you very much.

ALMUT VAGNER: Hello, I'm not a writer, I have no dogs, no kids, no husband, Almut Vagner. (*laughter*) So, I grew up with Biennale, so, theatrically, with Biennale from '92, afterwards I went to Vienna Festival together with... I worked with Luc Bondy as a dramaturg. I worked for festivals and for theaters. I worked for Hamburg... (*speaks German*), and now I'm based in Basel. In Basel, we have a special type of dramaturgy, which we call the Basel dramaturgy because we invite a lot of playwrights to revisit old, old plays, old myths, and write new plays about it. So, I think more than half of our program consists of new plays, and together... Yes, my director's Andreas Beck, he used to direct at the Schauspielhaus Wien, while the program was only new, new writing. And from the next summer on, we will move with our program to the Munich Residenz Theatre and we will see if also a huge theater like Residenz Theater can support new writers, new playwrights in a big amount of the productions.

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: I am Marius Ivaškevičius, a former patron of Biennale. After the last Biennale, in 2014, the same summer I was preparing to do a feature movie, my second feature movie. This was a love story about 47 years old actress and a very young boy on the Baltic coast. And it was the last day of the summer, and I had actors there so they left, and I just stayed in the flat. And there was some, there was some really bloody situation in Ukraine that that night, that night, and I was drinking whiskey, I was watching the TV about events in Donbass and suddenly I started thinking about what am I doing here... Like in some love story, when the war is now coming closer and closer, the people, people are... I mean, I just asked myself - Will I be a good soldier, am I ready to kill people? And so then, that night I decided that maybe I must do now everything with my gun, with my instrument that I can use, in the field where I am a professional. I mean with writing that now, that this war never would come to, to my home to, to my family and, yeah, and I decided four years to be the

kind of literature soldier - to write only very political plays, things. And I thought maybe I'm drunk and, in the morning, you know, I'll change my mind, but no, I woke up and I had the same idea. And yeah... For years I was doing that. The first thing I wrote was a play for Arpad Schilling, he did it in our National Theatre in Vilnius. Very political play based also on the situation in post-Soviet Union, Russian-Crimean War and etc. It was a big scandal, later it was staged in Krakov Star Theatre. After that, I wrote this political dystopia for Kirill Serebrennikov, but he was immediately taken to the home arrest and is staying there till now. Not because of my play, but (*laughter*) yeah... And yeah, the last thing I did, it was a play for Alexander Sokurov, the Russian cinema director, but it's a theatre play based on on Svetlana Alexievich's book about the war in Afghanistan, who is also now becoming very active in today's Russia and post-soviet world. So that's it... But yeah, four years finished, and now probably it's time to come back to the love stories. (*laughter*) (*question from the audience, unclear*) Somehow, I, I went to our district director of our National Theater, I was talking to him and so we decided to, or he decided to invite Manfred to Vilnius just for a talk. So I didn't participate in your talk, you maybe know a bit more. Okay, yeah, but... Yes, you see, nothing happened. When it came to the money questions – and I think Vilnius would be really a perfect place for such a Biennale – but we are probably still maybe too weak financially.

SIMONA SEMENIČ: So yeah, I'm Simona from Slovenia, and the last four years, I don't know... I wrote a few plays, most of them were staged, and well that's it. (*laughter*) And two children, one dog, no husband.

MART KIVASTIK: I'm Mart from Estonia. I used to be a young playwright in Bonn many years ago. The same year, like, when Biljana was a young playwright. And then I became a young patron and then all the younger patrons came in and I keep writing, I'm between film and literature, and playwriting. The last time I started to like literature more was when I realized it's the only independent thing, because in theater you depend on commissions, in film you are dependent on... You either get money or you don't. But literature is kind of free. So I'm very happy to be here, yeah, but I didn't hope to see anybody. (*laughter*)

(*pause in the recording*)

NEDA NEZHDANA: I'm Neda Nezhdana. For the past five years I continued doing what I did before, as a playwright, as a translator from French, and also I have done projects at the

National Center of Theater Arts high school, drama projects, its competitions, state, regionals, presentations and so on. And also I teach, I did my PhD in making the structure of modern Ukrainian drama at National University, and I teach drama, theory of drama and new tendencies of European drama for students playwrights, because we have no playwrights, writers and directors. And also I have a little independent company with two more people, which mostly perform modern drama, and, I mean, the moment to support independent theatre in Ukraine, when you have no support... But the most important thing is that these five years, today we mark five years of the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine. And I saw this interview by Marius about the 'literaturni soldat' and I understand that my feelings are the same, that I'm a 'literaturni soldat' because of my five plays about the revolution and the war, about fugitives, about life in the occupation and so on... For children also, about terrorist attacks, to children. Yes. But in the end, all my children plays are good, so... And of course, we have a war, a crisis and so on, and it's very depressive, but I understand that a lot of people, in the sense that it's impossible to live in this depression and do something, then it's... For example, some of you have seen it, something which is not for themselves but for others, it's the moment of initiating the revolution, asking yourself what I could do for society. And I do books, books and presentations. For example, here you have 5 anthologies of Ukrainian plays, actually women, and so on, in Ukraine, and also five books of Ukrainian plays in other countries. Friends - Turkish, French, Polish, Macedonian and also Serbian. What's interesting is that around 10 years ago, after the war in Serbia, we did this book, but then (*unclear*) from Serbia, Serbian plays and also with (*unclear*) here, and three months ago we presented an anthology of Ukrainian plays in Serbian, and now we also have the plays about the war in Serbia, too. And I hope that this collaboration will be in the theaters as well. And, lastly, I have one husband, two sons, one dog and one cat. (*laughter*) Thank you.

ALBAN UKAJ: Hi, my name is Alban Ukaj, I'm pretty new here. We were in Wiesbaden with Hypermnesia. I'm an actor and the member of the Sarajevo War Theater which was founded during the war in Sarajevo, and also one of the co-founders of an association, an independent company called Contact. Originally, I'm from Kosovo, from Priština, but I moved to Sarajevo in 2001. It's like moving from Iraq to Afghanistan and... (*laughter)* In a way... I'll try to talk very briefly about Contact, about our association. We started it as a group of actors, director Selma Spahić, who was also supposed to be with us, but she's

preparing her performance in Zagreb... And we had a set designer also, with the goal of meeting the need of having a political theater in Sarajevo. Sarajevo was not the best place to do theater, but it's inspirational because, according to what Manfred said before, it's... During the war, Sarajevo had around 123 premiers, I think, and there is a book written about that, that's for me, it was inspirational. I thought that I'm going to stay just for a short time to finish my studies and then move on, but I'm there for 20 years now. We started as Contact, also with the support of Heartefact, and in a way, in the beginning, and then we had this "clinical death" for three or four years, when we haven't done anything. And then I was the one that took initiative to start again, so the last thing we did was a performance at the Olympic swimming pool, about the Syrian refugees, and it's called Welcome. For us, it was one of the most expensive performances we did because it was ambient theatre and in the pool, yeah. And then, we understood that it is very hard to go on without co-production with one of the theatrical institutions to keep our performances alive. The second thing we did lately was Selma Spahić's direction of Gorky's "Children of Sun". And the last thing we did, it was directed by me, "Have I None" from Edward Bond. And we performed it in... It's a co-production between Contact and Sarajevo War Theater, the theater where I'm employed. We were more focused in merging all these groups, we talked a lot and we had a lot of panels about LGBT rights, lately about the Syrian refugees, and we were very happy that in...We weren't performing it a lot, it was maybe six times all together, but in the last performance we, we performed during the MESS festival, we won four prizes I think, something like that. And we had half of the audience who are Syrian refugees that were stuck at that time in Bosnia because they couldn't cross the border between Bosnia and Croatia, and, for plenty of them it was the first time that they were watching a theater play, and it was about them. So I think that lately that was one of the biggest successes for Contact. (*comment from audience*) We're talking about theater.

TANJA ŠLJIVAR: Hello, everybody, it's Tanja, and Biljana already said these nice things about me as I was her student at Faculty of Dramatic Arts here, and then I moved to Germany. I lived in Giessen, near Wiesbaden, to study theatre theory, let's say, or (*speaks in German*) and then I also participated in this workshop for new plays, for new European young playwrights, in last year, 2014, when the Tena Štivičić was leading it. I also saw Lippy, it was this year, I think, yeah, I mean... And last year we met in, where was this, in

northern Germany, at some conference of… I forgot the name, but it was very interesting for me and very exotic, like the Baltic Sea is crazy for Mediterranean children, really. (*comment from audience*) Yeah, super beautiful. And then I came back to Belgrade and recently I became the artistic director of drama department here in the National Theatre. I was invited by Ivana to do this, and right now, I'm kind of trying to understand if this is possible. I mean, to work two things - I am actually a playwright and also now I have to, like, be a manager in a way, and it's like seeing what is actually the field of my combat, so to say. Is it a text or how can it be that I'm now working for 15 hours, but… (*laughter*) No, this is just, sorry, just the state of my mind right now, no, no, no it's not... It's just like the understanding the position of the playwright really, it's like the question if we can really manage to live or earn enough money to just work in this field, or is it really necessary to still be employed or is it also good to do this because then you can open up the scene, as you said, for new plays, especially in such big structures. So these are very interesting questions and as for... I have plants and I have friends and I have parents, so I don't have dogs or husbands or children, but this is already a lot because I travel a lot, it's difficult with plants, so… (*laughter*) Yeah... And tonight you will see this performance, it's actually about love, but I think it's a very political subject actually. I mean, the way we live in these small communities is actually reflected in how we live in the society. So yeah… And especially from the feminist point of view, because many male critics say that I am wasting my talent, like why did I write this after dealing with Bosnian war and so on. But I think it's actually very important. (*laughter*)

IVANA VUJIĆ: I will just say that in 150 years of the National Theater I'm the second woman intendant and Tanja is the second woman artistic director and... No, no, no, I know. (*comment from audience*) Yes, but they were here for a short time, no, but really employed... They were just like… So, I really want... And also, she's the youngest. And I'm so proud of that.

ANDREJ NOSOV: Okay, I'm the last one. I'm Andrej, so I will just say, Biljana said everything what we do every day 24/7. I'm Andrej, a theatre director, that's what I do, besides everything what we did in Heartefact, I've been directing in several theaters all around. And no husband, no dogs, just Me, Myself and my working wife. Thank you.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: The last thing he did was directing a play written by a very, very young playwright, also a student of mine, and she wrote this play when she was attending the

second year of the Academy, which is kind of rare, to produce a play by someone that young. A brilliant author, really, totally crazy girl, right? Dunja Matić. And the play premiered right before the New Year's Eve, I think, very successfully, with with the two huge stars, right? Probably the most important theatre actresses in Serbia, maybe you even know them, Mirjana Karanović and Jaca. And so he, he does a lot besides being my work husband.

(*pause in the recording*)

MANFRED BEILHARZ: I spoke already, so I passed the mic to the two people sitting on the right side of me, but if you don't mind I would go back to add something afterwards.

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: Hello, I'm happy to see you all again. In the last five years, a lot of things changed in Russia, you know, I think. But we still exist and still are trying to continue what we did before. And keep writing for theatre, I'm a writer from Moscow, and I continue being the head of the festival of young playwrights, Lubimovka. It's the oldest and biggest festival in Russia, it has around six hundred plays every year, and this year, it celebrates its 30 years jubilee. We will, we will celebrate. And we exist as an alternative Ministry of Culture because our Minister of Culture support pathological programs, actually, mostly. And we, the Lubimovka workers, are all playwrights from the former Soviet territory or from all over the world. All of us write in the Russian language, and we work with Ukraine, and Belarus and so on and so on. And, and we have to be independent and separate from the government, because, you know... And we do a lot of exchange programs, always different countries, and I invite all of you to participate in it. We've been doing the exchange programs for a few years now, we translate and adapt plays from America to Russia and across the world. We work with The Lark, it's a play development center in New York. We started to work with Poland, with a festival called Contacts. We work with Finland, with Sweden, with Norway. We started to work together but how do we do it? We translate plays, do literary translations, and invite the playwright to Moscow or abroad for one week, where the play is adapted with a local playwright and director and actors during the rehearsals. And after that, we present the plays to the society, share it and enjoy being happy when it's staged in Russia or abroad. And, it's very good for the translations. And now I'm starting a program for playwrights in Moscow called Practice of Post-playwright, because I thought about the role of playwright in postdramatic space. And we are trying to change the playwright as a person who write plays to person who makes theatre. So it's a series of labs for playwrights

and contemporary composers, playwrights and contemporary artists, playwrights and contemporary choreographers, playwrights and a set of critics. Within the cross-professional space, we create new forms of theaters. And I continued teaching young playwrights.

(*pause in the recording*)

BEATE KRONSBEIN: Oh yes, so, I'm Beate, and I come from Germany. Referring how Ivana described her work, I can also say I'm not writing, I'm a servant. Servant for theatre and festivals. And I'm a very happy servant because I've been doing it for more than 30 years in theater in Germany and festivals. And from this long period of time, I've been working for 25 years in Bonn and Wiesbaden, with Manfred Beilharz, as the assistant of the artistic director, and of the festivals. And after we finished in Wiesbaden I went for two years for Schauspielhaus, working there also as the assistant of the artistic director, and I could also assist a small festival theatre which made me happy, of course. And looking back to these many years of theater, I'm very proud that I could live to see this development of German theater, where international contacts and this exchange between different countries and playwrights became more and more natural. It hasn't been that normal to have these exchange programs in the 1980s, to invite playwrights from somewhere, and being part of this festival, the experience that, for example, language is not really a border, was a very important experience for me. And I think, in this sense, there has also been a big development move, as you also mentioned before, Mikhail, it's a question of translation and one shouldn't hesitate because it's a play from somewhere on the edges of Europe or of the world that you should not see, experience it and invite it, and you will find ways to somehow make it open, to open it for an audience and bring it as an experience for people working in your own country. And so, I'm very proud that I could be a small part of this for all these years. And now, after working in Düsseldorf, I moved with Manfred to Wiesbaden, we are living in Wiesbaden. I'm working now as a freelancer with small projects for small theatres, assisting them, and I work for a project for the young women who are homeless. And of course, I'm supporting Manfred with his international contacts, as he is still traveling around the world as the former ITI president and so on. And this is a very rich life. Thank you.

(*pause in the recording*)

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Yes, I'm Malgorzata Semil, I'm from Poland. And I was privileged not to be godmother, but a foster godmother, because I'm not a playwright. And I would like to compliment what Manfred said about the festival, because there was one also unique

characteristic of the festival, that is that the playwrights came together. And the fact that we are together today is because the structure of the festival and the idea of the festival was to bring those recommending the plays plus those who wrote the plays together. And therefore a whole generation, or a few generations of playwrights know each other, since the years when they came to Wiesbaden. Or to bond before. And since I was this foster godmother and I was the ringleader of our discussions, thank you all. I managed to be in touch with some of you over the years, and as you know, in my regular work, which is a literary work, in a literary journal in Poland, I could have some of your plays published in another language. I tried to be in touch with some people, with some people I lost touch. For instance (*name, unclear*), I've been writing to him - no answer. I got caught up with Mark Ravenhill recently, with great delight. And, and some other people. Yes, but just to go back on the years during which we did not see each other. I'm doing more or less the same as I did before, that is I still work for Dialogue, but as the theater has changed, as we all know, this kind of work has become more difficult. Not only because the works which exist are different, and they do not fit the page very well, but also, I must say the theater in Poland has changed so much, that it is much less interested in written work. That is, so much more happens on the stage directly in collaboration between someone who writes... I don't want to call him a writer... someone who writes and someone who works on the stage. This does not translate to the page and the theaters do not want plays which were written by authors. I've got involved... this also brings another aspect to mind, which I think everybody who writes needs to remember about and be concerned with. I become over these years very much involved in authors rights and I am a member of a Polish authors organization, which is called Collective Management Organization, where I am the head of the playwriting section. And this involvement brought me into some international communities. And these, these organizations happen to have some money. They happen to have some money which comes from the authors themselves. So in ZAiKS, at home, in our Polish organization, what I try to do is to nourish playwriting. So we've organized a number of competitions for playwrights, because playwrights feel blocked out of the theater if they are not connected with the director. People do not come into the theater unless they have some kind of access. And if they do not have playwriting faculties or playwriting schools, they're just left out of the, left out of the sphere altogether. So we managed, over these few years, to organize a few competitions for a radio play and this is a

wonderful training ground for playwrights. We've had a series of something which we call Teatroteka, Polish TV still... well Polish National TV doesn't do that, but we got in touch with filmmaking company and we have TV plays. So others are asked to write a play, and we choose young directors. You can do this only once. We choose young directors, new directors to direct a play which came out of the competition. And this has been happening for something like five years now, we're just going to have a festival of Teatroteka this year. Well we managed, that means the film company got some money, and we get money for the playwrights, and this is a way of bringing the two together and bringing new playwrights into the profession. We've just finished our ballet competition for children. That means to write to write a libretto, a ballet. And we're working on an opera competition, that is what we want to do, we have a competition for an opera libretto and the writer has to get in touch with the composer. They have a first sort of set of work, they present the results and then the chosen five will get a little scholarship to develop it further. So as a member of the organization I'm trying to nourish playwriting. As it's my profession and my fun, I consider translating important, but there is less and less material to translate, and less and less theaters are interested in translated material, so to speak. Just to give you an example. For instance, I translated this wonderful piece by Simon Stevens, the events about the murders at Ireland. It's, it's a post-dramatic play, I would call it. And no theater staged it. They're more interested in doing their own work than getting a play which is an exciting material for work. That this also means that the playwright has much less, I would say, rights and much less money, because what is being put on stage are clippings and cuttings and, you know, all kinds of collages, and who's the author? So in the international field, in the international organizations I'm fighting for a fair remuneration for the author. And this includes both audio-visual and theater. Theater being only a small margin of it. But we must fight for the author to be recognized, that his moral rights are respected. That means that he is given credit. We just spoke about how… you did... was being wiped out of some of her authorship. And also this translates into, well, money. So that's where I am today.

MANFRED BEILHARZ: Well what is the possibility? Of course, the festival stopped four years ago, four and a half years ago, when I was not there anymore. I've refused to continue my contract with the theater, but I'm not sure whether... When I had said I want to continue, those people could've said - how old you? And I would have said 76. And they would have

perhaps said what they said in Berlin to Klaus Pieman - Old lad, why don't you understand that your time is over? It was not like this, I'm very happy because of it, but it stopped. The festival stopped. My successor wasn't interested to continue it but the money was there, so he did something else. It was a performance festival. But what is the merit of this festival? One, we can see here that we are together. The network of the providers is something very precious to me. And to be in touch when (*name, unclear*) was in in problems, and he was in 2002 at my last festival in Bonn, with Plasticine. And it was the first stay outside his own country, and so I think I should be able to support those who are in danger. And unfortunately, we see around the world that the things are not going, turning in a better way. But we have to struggle, as always in life. And I think, if there is a possibility, as we spoke in Lithuania, to gather, to keep the spirit of this festival, the patterns are something very, very important for that. Without your work and the work of the colleagues who are not here, it could never happen because... I always quoted Viktor Slavkin. He was always making 15 different propositions between several countries, places in in Russia, and I said - Viktor, please make a selection. He said - No, all of is very important, you have to see it all. So Tankred, being the same age as I am today - and I'm a little bit longer going in this age... And so we went from Yaroslavlo to St. Petersburg and I had very important personal trips, and I was also before Gorbachev's time or in Gorbachev time, I went from... That has nothing to do with a Biennale... I was, like Lenin, the only man sitting in a train, because I said I have another idea - I make a festival, Perestroika and Glasnost, a theater in your... In the former Soviet Union. Yes, let's say so. And my friend, Oleg Tabakov said - Manfred, you are crazy, there is no possibility to go to this place. Because it is... And I said that I have to go there. Then he called Gorbachev and Gorbachev said – No, no, no, nyet, nyet. But finally, he said yes. So I was brought to a train by three men of KGB and there were six different coaches, and in every coach, there was a lady with a cup of tea, but I was… (*laughter*) I was the only passenger, and... The train was closed, yes, yes. And so... But I was treated very gently. I was watching an opera in Sverdlovsk. It was for the war industry, and nobody could go there, but I got there with a special permission. I still have it in my toilet on the wall, the passport signed by Gorbachev. (*laughter*) No, no, seeing it in my intimate moments, and saying - Well, that's my, that's my past. (*laughter*) But I could say anything I wanted in theatre, but afterwards…

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Yes, you could, but you don't know if the other people could.
MANFRED BEILHARZ: It was a very good, it was a very good conversation. I could get the invitation of this opera, "Prokop", in Germany, in another festival. So but excuse me, no little stories from the past. I think the work of the patterns is very very very important. They bring the spirit of the different spirits, because you don't have only one spirit and one country, obviously. And I'm proud that I could bring a lot of people out on their way, and sometimes also help them with their international careers. Almut knows it very well, she worked for the festival for a long time, and she was in the Board of Selectors in 2000. And Biljana began as a pupil at the Forum for Young European Playwrights, and later she became a patron. And we had writers from your country especially, we had Biljana, we had Milena Marković, we had… Other wonderful… (*comments from audience*) Don't make a mistake! (*laughter*) It was a joke, it was a joke. I was in Novi Sad at the festival of Medenica, it was already after the wars, the first festival where we have been invited, also... I think if ever there should be... Of course it is the first very important step, I thank you, to bring the people together, because the exchange is already something very important. But, if there might be... I'm very sorry because of the festival, I would have given it to my successor as a gift, because the money was there, but he wasn't interested and he had the right to do so… But being in contact, knowing what happens and going to the places where it is difficult. As I was in the... I'm always in the jury of Premio Europa and I was in St. Petersburg some weeks ago, and it is so difficult to make it clear in my own country that there is a difference between the Russians and the government. It is the same thing with many others, nothing against the situation that... We are in a situation when the re-nationalism is growing instead of diminishing, which is a sad thing. But we can overcome it. And we have to struggle. It is not a gift by the God, he does not like us so much, he would like us to do something, and that is a possibility to do. And so I think... I felt very attacked when I was the head of the ITI by my own structure worldwide, when we went with the theater to the ITI to China. You don't know what happened over there and they don't respect human rights, and I said - We have to go there especially, because we have to show and to strengthen those who don't have the same spirit. Thank you.
BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: So, let's take a break and breathe and smoke, also, upstairs. Before we start the second part, ok?

ANDREJ NOSOV: Can I just ask you before we go up to make one photo, because I remember this tradition from Wiesbaden, so let's make it here again. Like, there. Thank you. Half an hour break.

(*pause in the recording*)

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Now, maybe we could concentrate on this working part of our meeting. And we have a few theses here, a few questions, that I want just to give to you and maybe we can all together brainstorm around it. So, we talked a lot about what we did and now, actually, the most important thing is to figure out what we can do. Can we continue any kind of work? Do we have to make a new festival, which is like a festival in a form we already know, I don't know, ten performances, is it every second year or not? Do we have to have guest performances in one city or can we make a platform that works in some different way? Then, what are the tendencies right now? I mean, in the 90s and early 2000s, the tendencies in theaters all over Europe were new plays, texts, new emerging authors and everything. And then it changed, but did it change for good or do we have to change with that or do we have to stick with the idea of plays, text-based performances? What are our plays today, actually? And then to talk a little bit about what are, you know, the themes and the subjects that the authors in our respective countries write about. And then how do we address the new audience, and especially millennials. Do they go to theater, what do they want to see in a theater? Do we have to form this new audience or change ourselves to, you know, be more pleasing to the new audience? Then, this connection with the new technology, you know. When we all started in this festival, the technology was… The difference between the technology in theatre and in general, comparing the 90s and today, is much bigger than between the beginning of the 20th century and, you know, 90s or 80s, right? So, you know, what do you do in in the age of the web 2.0 and all the ways that networkings function today, you know, the age of YouTube or, you know, websites with the with filmed performances or performances that are actually not that anymore, you know, with only actors on the stage telling you some intelligent words, more or less. And then what are the concrete steps that we can take? Do we start by exchanging plays, talking about the network of translators, presenting for each country or each cultural space the most important authors, and then, you know, with synopsis of the plays and then exchange that, and how do we build... Also, funding, you know, the money. Where we can try to find, you know, the capital together?

And then, can we maybe do some kind of co-productions, can we commission performances? Do we have to look for ready-made performances or we can say – ok, let's do something with Serbia, Russia and Ireland, because we find mm-hmm... And besides having a festival and then presenting it to this audience in particular city, what can we do during these two years in between to make it more approachable, I don't know. Do we use, you know, a platform, like an internet platform, where we publish work and so on. And also, you know, we are all playwrights more or less, and then we are focused on word-based theatre, but also the new practices of directing. Is it important to follow that as well or to stay somehow... I mean, you know, I would like to say that the play is more important than the director, I know it's not, but you know, at least we could pretend. So do we still go on with looking for a good plays and it doesn't matter who is the director or do we have to change that, too? So, you know, these are just, you know, some points, some questions to start brainstorming the ideas, I mean. Find some conclusions and start from there.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: We are starting, as I told you now, or in Munich, and we talked about what would help playwrights the most because maybe this is common... You brought up a lot of questions about theater today but maybe we have to focus on one, on one issue and, as part of our dramaturgy, also (*speaks German*), who is quite an important writer, I think, and maybe one of most important at the moment who works in the German language. We spoke a lot about what would help the most, and for the writers - is that the need for people or is it that you got commissions, the option for other theatres to find your plays and stage it for several times in a different way. I think the question of finding good directors, it's very important for you as playwrights because you have under, on one side now this type of, I say, Simon Stone, who is writing his own text and then stages them himself, and he would never allow someone else to stage his plays because he's writing them for actresses and actors and for an ensemble. Or yeah, I found also a kind of a new generation of directors, which uses... I think this is a bit of an issue in Poland at the moment, especially in Poland, that they used the text, your text as material for their shows. So there, I think you have to answer yourself what would help you the most. I mean, you're almost very successful, but you can also ask yourself what would help the next generation the most. Yeah, this is my question.

TANJA ŠLJIVAR: Well, I mean, I was asking myself a lot, of course, these questions, especially since I studied in a very specific school where actually no one was dealing with

any type of dramatic text in this sense, but this was my also, like... I was very aware of this decision before I went there. I wanted to leave my comfort zone, so to say. And at the moment when I came to Wiesbaden I was so... I mean I lived in Germany then maybe for a year, and it was probably the most intensive year of my stay there because it was the first really intense meeting with this kind of thinking, because they were really saying – Okay, you really are a playwright, come on... Like, you are only 23, what is wrong with you. (*laughter*) And there were many very intelligent and very well-educated people who really worked in theater in a very serious way and, like, their aesthetics and politics and everything was on a very high level, and I was like - Oh wow, okay, now I really need to understand why do I want still to, like, work with the text. And then I went to Wiesbaden, I was hoping back then maybe, there was one panel maybe that was dealing with this question in a way, because I had an idea, I had an impression that it was such a big question in, mostly in the German speaking area. I think that theaters around Europe, especially Great Britain and it's now in Eastern Bloc as well, is not yet in this phase in which we could say that the text is in a danger or something. But then it's really a question what kind of texts are actually produced and how do they correspond, yes, with the contemporary theatre. What could help is a structure. I mean, for me, I always have this answer from theater directors or from, like, people who are intendants and so on. It's always like - Okay, this is not a play, and how many times I've heard this. Maybe not for my first plays which I have written at the university, but then later it's always like - Why, what is this, like, you should go to a conference, like, this is like discursive text or something. Maybe I would really be rich if I got around some 100 euros each time I heard this. And from actors there is always this. But still, I somehow insist, and still I'm asking myself; after all this response, I still want to affirm something, what I understand as the notion of the play. Whatever this might be, I still want to enable the space for the people who want to write before the process, who want to take really a lot of time before the very staging. So, not devise theater in this sense, but that does not mean that this has to be, like, I don't know, three acts or whatever. But this is more on form, it's not really again about helping or enabling any kind of distance. What I think, what could help is what you are already doing, of course, like open calls. Like, this is one thing but there is no continuity. Like here, in the Balkans, we always start something and then there is always, like, some kind of rupture. And then again you start something, and then again there is a

rupture. So it's very difficult to understand what is our scene. So, for example, I feel that this is more like, not the national scene, it's more of a language for me. Like, I really feel that we speak the same language, not feel like, linguistically - it's true. So I would say that Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Serbia are one space in this sense and I have many friends and collaborators from all of these countries, but there is no such... Except that you are open, we were open for one time, and then again it is Serbian text or I don't know... So, for example, this kind of, or Sterijino pozorje was actually the Yugoslav festival, and then later it just geographically became Serbian. Like Pula film festival, also. These are insanities, atomization of these markets brought, like, some really mediocre people to high positions - not necessarily, there are good people, too, but mostly, this for me would be first... Now I'm speaking again about this area, that network for me would primarily be inside of this language. I think that we could kind of maybe establish more, like, one magazine or one festival or anything that could really be dealing with like Serbo-Croatian or whatever we would call it, I don't know, our language. And actually we could do it annually. But, as we see it, everything somehow has some kind of ends, I don't know. For me... Also, commissioning is, of course, but there is no, like... I don't know... How can we fund all these things - I don't have any answer to this. Because, like, in Germany, everything is obviously much more structured. So you would have a continuity of free scene, you would have a continuity of Staatstheater, you would have every year so many open calls that you could apply to, you have all these festivals that last for 70 years or so on. And here, everything is changing. As I said, Sterijino pozorje was one thing, now it's another thing. It's, it's also, like, whoever comes, like new intendant always changes something, which is like going into the direction that does not make really sense to what it was previously happening. So I don't know, acknowledging cultural space as one, in a way would be important for me. And then, like, really good, good translations, good lectures, good networking, of course, in a sense. Because I think it's also better to have no translation than having a bad translation. And this is also... How can we prove this in the languages that we don't speak, these are... I don't know, like these... Maybe this could be, like, that we from different countries would then be the first ones if we decide to read translations, before we send them anywhere, so just to see – Okay, what is the real quality of the language here. So maybe such initiative is, like - Krečković was doing it once in Jugoslovensko dramsko, with like teams that translate plays, but these would

be people from theater, also. Like, most of the translators are at the same time theater directors or playwrights, so they understand what is the rhythm, what is the structure and so on. And maybe having this internal base first could help, to see and then maybe to then start distributing them further. So maybe each one of us could be responsible for one language or one space, and then, after we say – okay, this is good play, this is a good translation, then we can send it to many different addresses. Because, I mean, I am a member of for example Eurodram or such initiatives, but they always… (*comment from the audience*) ...But they already lack, again, structures. They lack money, they lack communication, internal communication is again somehow... Eurodram, yes, also Fabula Mundi. So, I don't know what would be, like... I don't know what could be a novelty in this sense. But maybe then, again, a festival, yes. Because, exactly... With the change of... Because, I mean, if Wiesbaden Festival was still on, it would probably changed completely to and turned to performance or something. I mean, maybe then again focusing really on new writing would be actually, again, important. Because, actually, you're right, these platforms online or the open calls... But then, this circulation of texts, yes, it happens. Like, you hear all these names, or you read something, but then again it's not... I think this also... The agents there or translators who are not the agents at the same time, it's not happening a lot. Or somehow once you get the translation, very often it ends up just in someone's drawer or something. So, for me, Nikolina Židek is a good example, she is translating from Croatian mostly into Spanish language. And she really opened the whole space for the young Croatian playwrights. For example, Ivan Martinić now had, like, I don't know, staging of his play in six countries in South America. But really, only through her devoted work. She might as well just have translated it and then left it out like this. And then she was really, like, sending these plays to so many theaters. But does this have to be the same person? Moreover, most likely they are not. First of all, writers are not this person, then translators are not these people, then agents are the third party, but somehow here it doesn't work either. We don't have them in the Balkans. So, maybe we could become each other's agents in a way, or something, or like promoters. But not only us, I mean, we have this figure of patron and then, okay, also the people we think are valuable and interesting enough. And then really insist - Okay, please read this because this should be done here and there. Or, I don't know... Or what I found interesting in this sense and this is... Okay, this is an interesting tendency that I found recently in Germany with this Schaefer Philip

and... Like that they are doing, or also very new one that's (*unclear*) Westermeier from (*unclear*) previously, now Grounded, is like that they are actually offering already some kind of package. They say they found the director, and they found the playwright, and then they are kind of really turning tables. And then they offer this team to a theater. Not only a play or not only a director, but they say - okay this is what we now choose as a... already a product, we just need space and money, like, from the state theater. So, maybe these kinds of initiatives could also then, then help. And maybe then even in sense of this transnational collaboration... If you find a Romanian playwright and y Serbian director or something, so we could see that they are fitting. Or this is maybe, yeah... For now, I'm…

GINA MOXLEY: I think what we're missing from Wiesbaden is that model, because playwrights are in danger. Text-based theatre is in danger. Our community is in danger. But we can't be complete dinosaurs and ignore the direction that future is taken. And similarly, in Ireland things get, you know, a little start happens, it fizzles out, it happens, it fizzles out. And what's been happening for us is a complete deprofessionalization of writing, essentially. And emerging people are dealt with while they emerge, but then they're forgotten about quite quickly. So the bar, the standard - there is no standard now. Actually, there is none. And I have also moved away from just text-based theater, so I collaborate with a dancer and a filmmaker and a musician. And so, I think we have to acknowledge those changes. We don't have to do this ourselves, (*unclear*) exists. And also, that... part of this leads to a very inward type of writing, I've found, that there's a lots of autobiographical work… That, mea culpa also. And, but the larger ethical questions aren't being dealt with in our theaters, certainly not. So I think, you know, that as walls go up we have to find some way of penetrating all of that. And I think the community of writers, playwrights, is the thing that needs to be safeguarded most.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: What do you call this, is it a term, literarni soldaja (*літературні солдайя*), Marius? Did I understand well? How do you call this way of writing that you do? Literarni sol...

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: Literature soldier.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: But how do they say it in Russian or in which language was that? Okay, and you said it in which language?

NEDA NEZHDANA: In Ukranian.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Literarni how?

NEDA NEZHDANA: Literaturni soldat (*літературні солдат*).

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Okay, literaturni soldat. I like that. And, and what is the difference between a regular, soldat, no, the regular writer and…

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: So, between a soldier and literature or between…

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: No, no, no, between a normal writer... Is there, is this a movement or…

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: No, it's not a movement, it's a personal decision. I mean... A decision that you cannot really live and create in some bubble without seeing what is happening around you. Because the world suddenly became too active, too aggressive and not noticing it is a bit deceitful... SO, that was a decision that you must react to the reality.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: And, are you the only one? Or is it a movement?

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: No, I hope not. I don't know if it's a movement but I think there are really many people in the, I would say, post-soviet area who probably felt the same and probably did the same.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: But do they say - okay, I'm doing, I mean… Is there, like manifesto or something?

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: No, there was no manifesto. Not yet. (*laughter*)

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Are there other authors who would say - Okay, I kind of follow this idea of 'literarni soldat' or would we find this term, you know, if we type it on Google?

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: I'm not sure, I haven't tried it. But maybe it was set in different words. But, yeah, I heard of some other people who had the same feeling, the urge to do something. I mean, we all understand the world and know that literature cannot change the world. But, not trying to do that, it's a bit, I know... It's... At least you must try something, to feel to knowing that I did what I could, and then… Responsibility, you know.

NEDA NEZHDANA: I could add something about it. Because after Maidan, after revolution, we tried to do the project… In Maidan then were no leaders, but you could take the initiative and propose to different theaters – If you have two playwrights and then two theaters, if you want to take part in our project... The first project was Maidan - Before and After, because we saw that the reality has changed very much. And somebody did stage reading or a presentation, or somebody wrote a play and then we travelled all the time in Ukraine, to

different parts of Ukraine. But each theatre did what they wanted to do... Somebody wants to do a stage reading, or a performance for example, or... And what I want to propose here is… So, I saw it five years ago that the war is beginning, not in Ukraine, but in all of the world. There's this hybrid wall, not for territories, but for minds. Then, they wanted to separate all of us, and to make black become white… So, these aggressive fake illusions separate people. And I think about one project by different countries, the play about this hybrid wall. And, for example, it could be two-three plays from several countries and translated in these languages of the participants and presented in each country, for example. I have experience in the Ukrainian context, and I can't do it myself, but if it could be collaboration, it could perhaps be interesting for others. And also, we present in different cities, and we saw that it works, after these performances, after this presentation. And also, we have created an open space, the dramas were online, on a website... It was in the past year... Because everybody said – Oh, we need an open space and website and one person said - I could do it. And it's not only for the Ukrainian plays, but for other plays in Ukrainian translations, and for information, competitions and so on. So, this open space also for you, I... And also this book is... also the summaries of different plays related to Eurodram, a part of four translations. But I agree that... I am a part of Eurodram and other platforms... But, we meet another fence... It works, but sometimes this network... We have no concrete projects, it's very abstract. So we need, I think, more concrete ones.

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: Can I add one more thing? I think now, like, after I worked with Arpad Schilling, he really was attacked in Hungary. He was mentioned, Akos will maybe help me, by one of the speakers of Parliament, by somebody like... He was mentioned as one of three enemies of the country. (*comments from the audience, unclear*) He was, I think it's now, I think he was just too liberal, it's the same, like, in Kirill Serebrennikov case. Like, too, too brave, too liberal for such a country as... Orbán's.

NEDA NEZHDANA: Because he did your play or?

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: No, no, no, no, because... Yeah, yeah, yeah… And, in fact, he left Hungary, he is not living there, he is living in France, yeah. And, for example, now the same is happening with Min (*name, unclear*), because during these four years, I also, I did many things on the Holocaust in Lithuania, which was mainly done by Lithuanians, like, Jewish guilt, and now after a few years I just got a revenge by our nationalists. Like, they

made me the enemy of the country as well, so I also don't know about my future, I don't know where I'm going to live. So, in fact, I mean, this, this war we have, I think, now in every country, because this evil just comes after us, you know, and now... I didn't know, for example, how to support our part in that situation, because now… I mean, what to say, what to write, where to write, there is no platform, so how to support him. Now nobody knows, my friends from abroad don't know how to support me because it looks like it's very inside our country, you know, things and fight. Yeah, a domestic conflict. But, I mean, the platform of intellectuals, of writers, of playwrights could be, I think, powerful sometimes.

SIMONA SEMENIČ: Yeah, in this case, because last year I had the same thing… I got this national award and I also got attacked by some nationalists. It doesn't matter, but I think, yes, this kind of platform would be, would be good to use it in these cases, as some kind of protection program.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: It is, it is. Because the most important thing is to make it like, publicly known and to be vocal about that thing. And, it's a paradox because today you have all of these networks and social networks and everything, and you think you have more channels of communications, but actually if you want to be loud it's, it's...

TANJA ŠLJIVAR: Radical.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Yes, yes because it's like it's in the middle of cacophony of other loud voices. So, but are you, are you in danger, I mean, I know, we all know that psychological pressure, and feeling unwanted and blocked from working, and even fear, and even, you know, getting hate mail and threats... And last week I showed them, I received this big envelope at my university. And, you know, you don't get mail anymore, like snail mail, yeah. So, it was on my desk in my office, and I opened it and it's a picture of me done by ink by someone, it looks really exactly like me, except that I have two black holes, one here and one here. And then, on the back, it wasn't signed, but it had written something like - If you don't like it - just throw it away and a smiley. Which is funny to see a hand-drawn smiley, you know. It's like... Without any kind... And then I saw the stamp, it's this small city near Belgrade, where there is a crazy house also. So I'm like... You know, all this... And then, there is a moment when you look at this and you say – No, no, no, I'm exaggerating. And then I showed it to my students because it was there, and they were like - No, you're not exaggerating, you know. And then, so, this kind of... It's nothing, you know, it's... But still,

see, I'm talking about it a week after... And, also, I kept it in case of if something happens to me, you can find fingerprints on it, you know. So, this kind of pressure we all have to deal with and live with that, it's horrible and it can block you from working and everything. But also, there is another level, if you feel threatened, I don't know how it functions in the other countries…

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: No, I hope not. When I was coming back to Lithuania, people were saying - So, let's meet if you don't get shot. Like, it was kind of a joke. But I mean, I think... We are not so far, still, but you know, you never know what will be after 5-10 years, yeah. I mean, maybe…

ALMUT WAGNER: In this case, would it help to say - Okay, I'm an artist, I'm recognized internationally, I'm... You know?

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: No, oh, it doesn't, it's the opposite, yeah. Don't mention the international community if you are attacked by these people. They accuse you of being an international spy, and working for Soros... I mean, Soros is a big deal here. I have to meet the guy. No, I'm like, where is this cash register where Soros gives money, I wanna go and pick up my check, you know. (*laughter*)

GINA MOXLEY: We could have a platform for people to express things anonymously, perhaps. Right, so, an anonymous place.

SIMONA SEMENIČ: Yeah, anonymously, they don't have the courage, except the politicians. Politicians attack, you know, but it's not... But I think, at least in Slovenia, if this happens because of the theater managers... This is not good… The theater directors and... I mean managers... If this happens, they also get kind of scared because they want to remain somewhere in the between, they don't want to, you know, they don't hire you because maybe it's better not to hire you in this situation. But I think maybe for those people, the international support would be okay. Not for the people who are threatening you, but the people who are not hiring you because they want to remain somewhere in the between to get the funds when necessary. So, maybe for that I think it would be okay.

IVANA VUJIĆ: I can continue this questioning about being somewhere in the between. I think this is a specialty of this region. We are all somewhere in the between, and unfortunately, we rarely have a situation when we... You know, when you don't need anything really. That's the problem that I can see. And this problem can be somehow

connected to the problem of our audience. If we speak honestly, our theater audience is usually older than 45. And we don't have very young audience. And we have to fight for them and give them a possibility to recognize... And they always recognize if it's something true through texts. Honestly, in any kind of honesty, openness... In any kind of openness. So, I think that that we, as theater, let's say, soldats, let's say something like that, or slaves, or something like that... We have to... unite. But really unite, not… We're always united with some ideas. I'm there because of that. No, you have to be there because of the better, and the better for all. And try not to see everything through yourself. This is very difficult in theater.. And it has to be, but really, you can try. And also, at the same time, the situation is vice versa, that's means that art is opening, and it is political, and it is a question... But you will say - The theatre, it's a state, the state is theatre, as we can see. So, in that context... First, our government of art, and then we can have other positions, different than positions in the state. Very often, our theater positions are the same as in the parliament. The connections, the money, the lobbying, and everything. So, I am against that way of theater-state. Theater is state by itself and sometimes the real state can learn from the point of view of theater-state. So, these are the two states.

(*pause in the recording*)

IVANA VUJIĆ: You will be, you believe, and you will be.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: No, well so many issues have been touched right here, and I would like to perhaps touch a few of them very very profoundly. First of all, you asked is this... Does the playwright need any support? And I think very much so. The playwright is an endangered species right now. The young playwright confronted with, let's say, the whole machinery of theater. And I don't... I mean, the whole structure of theater is not assertive enough. And even if the play that has been written on the page is staged, the playwright is so happy that it happened at all, they are not assertive enough to say - Look, you've messed up my play, you've added a piece of Antigone and you have put in a piece of newspaper, and I don't like it because I had a completely different idea about it. So, the playwright must have some, let's say, potential of influencing what's happening in the theater. For many years the British playwrights fought for the right of the playwright to be present during rehearsals. This does not happen, at least in Poland at the moment. Unless the playwright is part of the tandem, of the pair which puts the play on. The Polish theatre has now become very very

interesting and very political as a... as a matter of fact. But it is the most interesting pieces, or let's say the most politically important pieces are put together by... well I can say couples, usually male and female, one is the playwright, the other is the director. Which means that the, from the point of the playwright, these are half-baked things. So, it's a half-baked product which becomes a total product the minute it reaches the stage. Also, with some input from the actors. So, who is the author? God knows, really. But, the playwright as such is not taught and has not prepared to defend his own position as someone who works with on the page. I feel very bad about it. But well, that's the way the theater is going. Now, the next step, you say, of fighting in the theatre. In Poland right now, the theater has become very provocative, and you've probably all heard about the whole story with Frljić and the political content of it. Personally, I think that was a good production, but it's my personal opinion. I think that that Frljić is a coward because he didn't even stay for the opening night. So, yes, he raised…

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: So, maybe you can tell them a little bit about…

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Okay, I'll tell the story just very very very briefly. There is a Polish play originating from the 1920s. And it's a play about the situation in the village where there's a drought. And everything is sort of okay until they discover that a woman in the village has become impregnated by the priest, I think, or by somebody else. Perhaps it's the priest. Anyhow, that creates a very negative attitude towards the woman and she is banished out of the village. And it's called Klątwa, which means... I haven't got... If the priest says you're bad, you're…

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Excomunication.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: That's going too far, but we're close to it, never mind. But that's the... yes yeah (*comment from the audience, unclear*) Yeah that's right, that would be the word. So anyhow, Frljić came and he staged, let's say, his version of it, with a lot of contribution from the actors themselves, and moving it totally into the present situation. And there were some very good pieces, theatrically speaking, very, very good pieces. Well, anyhow, the influence of the church on the local society was the, let's say, key or the mechanism of the whole performance. And there is a scene in which there is a statue of the Pope, the Polish Pope, on which one of the actresses performs fellatio. But it's a statute. The statue is being brought on stage and there's fellatio there. There's a cross which turn... which is changed into a machine gun. And on the backstage, there are... there's a shape of the Polish

eagle in in lamp, in bulbs, bulbs. And at the end, actors dressed in as priests go on ladders and they start twisting... yes... So the eagle goes black because of the priests. But also, they included in the piece the stories of - I was raped or molested by the church, and these are the stories told by the actors, apparently real stories. So, it was raising a bit of a hell. It was… (*laughter*) it was banned here, it was banned there and at…

GINA MOXLEY: On what basis?

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Oh, come on, you're coming from Ireland, you don't know what basis. (*laughter*)

GINA MOXLEY: We can do it.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Well, we did... We did it... Well you can already, we can't yet, okay. We're going that way hopefully, hopefully. Perhaps, you know, we're moving there, but until now it's been very very difficult. The power of the church is just unbelievable. So, anyhow, when the (*name, unclear*) Festival, the past year, they wanted to show it. The Festival was not allowed to invite the production, and the people paid in money just to have the production performed. So, there's a little bit of, I say, civil disobedience, yes. So, they showed it there. But there were also, you know, protests outside the theater, there were bombs dropped onto the theaters. So, yeah, there was a real battle over that performance. Well, I said Frljić is a total coward for me because he didn't stay for the opening night.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: But why he didn't?

MALGORZATA SEMIL: I don't know, that's his idea, you know. He wants to provoke and go. If you want... To want to survive, yes. But what happened (*comment from the audience, unclear*) Yes, yes, yes... Why doesn't he do it at home. Well anyhow, he was to be the curator of a festival in Poznań and they didn't allow him to be the curator. And the Poznań Festival did not get the money which they were promised. So, of course there's also always, always, always the financial censorship. And this this is partially working now, but not completely. Because when they want to introduce, as I say, commercial, financial censorship, people chip in. But, you know, how long can you support the cultural institutions that you... that are being paid for by your taxes. And always, the argument is - Well, this is paid by taxes so, you know, it can't offend anybody. It has to be nice and clear. But the theater is very, very, I say, revolutionary right now. But that's just to give you a background. Oh, and I just read on the internet, yesterday or the day before yesterday, that there was to be a production which, in a

small, in provincial town, in the south of Poland. It didn't open yet but it was against the church, also or about molesting by the church, and the local government, which gives the money, says that that production cannot happen. Well, we'll see how this develops. But, this game is being played all over Poland right now. But still, those productions are going back to playwrights, and what playwrights need and what playwrights have are the effects of a very close collaboration between, let's say, the acting company, a playwright and a director. And this is, this has a very negative effect on introducing foreign work. That's one thing. And also, it has a very very negative effects regarding the possibility of exporting any published work. Because what is being written is not anything which can be perceived in any way outside of the country. Sometimes some of the pieces are very exciting theatrically, but they can only be exported in the form of a theater performance. They do not exist any other way. So, when you ask what is very necessary for the playwright, well, first of all, the playwright needs to be respected. Secondly, playwrights need to meet, they need to exchange ideas. All these social media, all these social platforms are very nice and fun, but had we not met in person and had we not sat over some beer, had we not talked about this and that, we wouldn't know what is really happening. And we wouldn't know whom to ask for a new good play, for the situation in the country, because we would have no information about, let's say, the whole set up. The cultual climate, the theatrical climate. So platforms are fine, writing is fine, but unless you have the eye contact, it's fun but you can read it on a page. And, you know, I'm in Eurodram and I don't know what the criteria are, I don't know the people in other countries who choose the plays, I don't know if I could rely on their opinions… And another step, one one step further - I'm always on the lookout for foreign plays, because this is what I've been doing for ages - looking for plays to be published in Poland. And the kind of synopsis I read are things which I can... which don't give me any information about the work. I prefer to read a bad translation even, to know something about the play, than to read a synopsis in which I can't visualize neither the style nor the reason why I should be interested in this play. And one final remark. Now, when we talk here about plays and their… Let's say, mobility across the borders, the situation is completely different when we speak about a play or a work which comes from what was called ‘a big language’ and when we speak of a play coming from ‘a small language’. That's why I think Tanja’s idea of the linguistic unity of a region, where you can show what is being written in one language to other languages is a very fine idea.

Because it was, you know, all these authors, although these are different countries, but they can still support each other. And that's about it, what I wanted to say in reaction to what was here on the table. But I have no solutions, I just know what the problems are.

MART KIVASTIK: I just say that we can't protect something that can't protect itself, so... You can't help keeping the playwrights alive artificially. So, as long as I've commissioned to try something, I exist, and the day I am not needed - I'm not needed. Because, you know, life changes so quickly that everything changes. And theater is between people, between living people. The audience and somebody on the stage. But nowadays you have some classes, you don't take anything but these classes and everything is there. It's totally different world. But I hope that the theater still lives, because after the film came, theater still didn't disappear. So, in the end, maybe you still need somebody who writes or creates something or... but I'm not sure is it this old-fashioned theater or something else. But I'm not sure you can protect just... It's like museum. To protect something that doesn't survive itself.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: When I started working on this journal which was ages before anything, anybody remembers, the first thing which I was to translate was "Is the Theater Still Alive?" That was the title of of the piece which I had to translate. And I say that was that was ages ago. But also, right now, we allow the postdramatic theater, let's say, to take over. But I also see that there is a certain kind of going back to, let's say, a kind of storytelling. And in the British theater, for instance, you say, people want a story to be told. And of course, it is being told it in a different way than it was before. It's not the same old-fashioned theatre, as you say. It's it… (*comment from the audience*) Yes, so the old let's say, this the old fashioned, in quotation marks, is a different theater today than it was when it was the new theater. And also, we must remember this, I think was was raised at the table, that there is a growing difference between the kinds of audience. I don't know how it is here, but in Poland, the theater audience is very young. And of course they go for all… (*comment from the audience*) Yes, but... in Poland the theater audiences is very young. But this is not necessarily such a good sign, I would say. That means... it makes me happy to see young people and appreciating it, but the older generation is so put off by this kind of theater that they end up at the other end. That means they end up at a good old stodgy comedy. So they don't, they don't... there's no middle theatre for them. So, I see that as a bit of a problem, of course…

IVANA VUJIĆ: National Theatre, a part of the National Theatre is for older audience, too.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: That depends... that means that the National Theatre in Warsaw isn't that bad, that means that it's a mixed bag...

IVANA VUJIĆ: No, I'm not saying bad…

MALGORZATA SEMIL: No, no, no, I say it's a mixed bag, it's a mixed bag, it's this and that and this and that. (*comment from audience*) Yes, but they… Another interesting aspect now is, which I'm not very much in favor of as, as you may guess from what I will say, is rewriting old plays. That means rewriting classics. And then I, you know, I'm asking - When are you going to write Hamlet? Because they really go to the, let's say, to the... they write on top of something else. It's a… (*comments from audience, unclear*)

SIMONA SEMENIČ: I don't know, these ones… (*noise from audience*) Rewriting is, you know, some kind of… developing…

TANJA ŠLJIVAR: But sorry, can it just shortly… sorry… Because what I think, as you said, we are really endangered these days. I wouldn't say we are in danger by new art theatrical form, but we are actually endangered by the theater structure as it is, because directors are paid at least twice as much as we are. Actors are all on salaries, like, it's insane. Like, just to see… We should, just this should be… I mean, I am a socialist, but I mean it should be a syndical fight, if there is no other way. And what is interesting here is that it's individualist practice, we mostly work on our own, and then we should actually really create this community. But I don't know how. Then we should go on a strike. Okay, this should be the lowest payment or no, I don't know what to do. But this is like, capitalism, we always have a reserve working force who would give their plays for 100 euros or I don't know. And then, all these systems of agents taking percentages, of translators taking… Which is normal, everyone should be paid, of course, but I think this question is more, for me, endangering personally, and then if we have contemporary theater, which is naturally developing in contemporary moments. So it's just more about how things work in the tax-based theater in terms of how are we getting paid and how we can change this. But… (*comments from the audience, unclear*) Okay, no… I want to…

MANFRED BEILHARZ: I'll be very short… I think I'm not so pessimistic or smart… You are an optimist, I know, but I think there are good possibilities. If I look back in the time when we founded the Biennale, there was a movement, and I was involved with this movement, that theater must not be text-based only… That means that we've said there is a

movement, there is sound, there is all and so on and so on. And there have been wonderful performances out of this, but suddenly, at once, we remarked that it is not enough to come together and to say - What shall we do today, because now we have a rehearsal and what is our topic? It is, it is crazy not to count on those people who were thinking a year or two years about a theme, about how the conflict can go and what else, all the other things the playwrights have been doing for the past two thousand years. Or even more. And so, sometimes I was thinking, and sometimes there were very poor performances because they were, let's say, very personal, and so on and so on. And now, we have some wonderful examples of performance theatre, which I don't want... I'm, I'm proud I've seen it, but the things come in waves, as I can say from my short experience being now 80 years old. And the time of your profession is... comes very soon. Because, becomes very soon, because people get fed up with some... well what else... (*comment from audience, unclear*) No, no, no, no, and it is something very fruitful, to have somebody, some people who had reflected on 'what shall we do before beginning of the work'. And the second thing which I wanted to say. To have the situation, someone who hears us, how can we get together? Two countries who were speaking now, that is your country, Serbia, and also Poland, there is the International Theatre Institute which... They have a platform for human rights, for the artistic... and you are unfortunately not active in this, in this sense. And Poland was not very active over the past years, Poland and others. And as for the German ITI Center, Thomas Engel, which is our general secretary, is the leader of the Human Rights Watch, together with Swedish and other Norwegian people. And they have... They react immediately if there are things like this, and it is not a regional thing. It is open and discussed wherever. And there is help. And the British have also... (*comment from the audience, unclear*) What? No. But there is a group which helps them and feed them information. So, think of this. And of course, the exchange is something very important. But to see also what happens on stage is the most important thing. You cannot speak and just read, but you have... it must be staged. And to say something which might be very far in the future. When you think about having a festival, it must be based in a certain theatre. My festivals, any of them - I had made some others before the New Plays of Europe - it was on always the artistic and management director who decided - I want to have this festival. And because you need the means of a stable subsidized theatre, if you make a festival with ten plays, or with four plays, or with 50 plays in every festival, and you

will do it as a freelance institution. And you have no backing by one theatre saying - That is the equipment, these are the technicians, that is the lighting, these are the places you can use. It gets enormously expensive, it gets enormously expensive. The festival, the last festival for which I had 800 thousand euros, included 30 different performances being translated. We talk, (*name*) and me, and all the others who work with it, we read 200 plays and we saw 120 overall, before deciding about the translation. It was 800 thousand euros... If you make this, only not with thirty but ten, and if you don't make a thing which, in my opinion, is very important - the forum for the young progress, and the forum for theatre students because they are... Sometimes they should learn that theater is... And young critics, yes... That it is something you can see, you can smell... And it will be much less, and it depends from the country. In Germany of course the things are much more expensive than it might be in other countries, so... But if you don't find a basis for this, it is not profitable for anyone, because the politicians don't reflect themselves, seeing new plays from people they don't know at all. There is no Hollywood performance afterwards and so on and so on. And that you... you have to know. And that is not, it is an optimistic thing. I think it will happen. I don't know what... Here or somewhere else. And it can begin with a small choice, with a small choice. Thank you.

MALGORZATA SEMIL: Just one thing to add. The Dialogue Festival, which was linked to (*name, unclear*), the minute the director was not the director of the theatre any longer, it started limping. The infrastructure of a theatre is an absolute must for a theater to function. For a festival – it is important for meetings and to come together. So you probably know that.

ALMUT WAGNER: I wanted to speak about something else. Because we are dramaturgs, we observed that the directors, the young directors do not read anymore. Yes, they're in their cosmos, but there is no seduction to read, they are not, they are not reading each day a piece, a play. And we give it to them because we commission so many plays and we have so many interesting playwrights. And we are really, we are walking from director to director with these plays, but they don't read on their own. They are not interested. Because they always think they are genius themselves. That they don't need this text. And this is something we have really to start, I think already in education, in the schools, to get them really interested in plays.

IVANA VUJIĆ: I think that's right. And looking at our students, I'm really surprised how there is a small reading capital coming to our Academy. We read Alas and we didn't have computers, and this was the beginning, but we read everything by all writers, all their works. And then, if you say Gorky, they think we are talking about Gorky List. It is very dangerous and we have to fight for that. And also, I will support Manfred because I want to say that our very important, and one of our most important festivals, Bitef, Mira established it in Atelje 212, not in Bitef Theatre unfortunately, because Atelje 212 was one of the most powerful theaters in that moment in the whole Yugoslavia, with the whole staff, with the good stage, with a small stage, with Alas. And Bitef Theater then, she established it, then she moved the festival because they moved her, in our typical Serbian way. When something is good, you have to be replaced by someone worse than you, of course, for good accommodation, good air, for good smell and everything. Well... But then she built a theater to help the festival to exist. And then she died, of course, because this is really too much for a human life, human life here. But anyway, this support of the whole structure really gives a possibility to then blossoming differences. Also, coming with these differences, you are changing the structure. The way in which I work here, as the intendant - I am here to work inside this big structure, change this structure in this new way. And I can work in the structure, not outside of it. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Our situation is very similar in Poland. The cultural climate is very bad, I can say. And and briefly, as a new conservativism was growing in the last 10 years. And we have two kinds of audience. The majority says - Change it to conservative. I don't know why, I don't know really why.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: Old age. I mean, there are conservatives here. We talk about - Oh, we have the internet, you know.

IVANA VUJIC: Well, they are conservative because they have fear. The fear, the questioning.

AKOS NEMETH: I don't know the reason really. For example. There's, Viktor Orban, you know his name. He was a very liberal young man, very liberal. He founded a party, Fidesza, called Fidesza, and he was a member of the liberal Union in the European Parliament 20 years ago. And just now, he wants to change from conservative Union to radicals.

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: Our main, like now, neo-Nazi philosopher, leader, 30 years ago created liberal party. So it's kind of totally the same what happens to…

MALGOZATA SEMIL: Orban is the model for Poland, you know.

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: We have example for whole Europe, I think really. For Poland, and for Italy just now… (*comments from participants*) Maybe. I think it's two different problem we're talking about. We talk about the how it has changed theater and why the play is not needed for theater now, and the political situations. Little bit different, I think. And of course, we have the same situation. And I know only one way... Don't take government's money. And you are free. And our responsibility, is to create the umbrella for the new generation, create the space for free speech. And in our festival, everybody can read everything, about LGBT, or politicians…

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: But if you don't take the government money, how do you…

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: The private money, yeah, foundations. We we write for grants and for people.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: But they are foreign?

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: No no no... We are supported by one of the liberal oligarchs, yeah, oligarchs. (*noise from the participants*) Yeah that's... Yeah, I'd say it's an opposition, political opposition. Yeah, like yeah, kind of, yeah. I don't know what we will do if we lose this money. I think we will work as volunteers. And actually we do work as a volunteers, I don't earn money from this festival. And this situation, it's very interesting about it, what was performed today. And because what I watch, I see how to change the spectators, not the theater but the spectators. Because the spectator, the audience wants to have an experience in theater. They want to be creators, authors, directors, actors and... In one line. And they don't want to see the final products, with final messages. Because nobody trusts facts, a fact of art or fact, you know, because we live in the post-truth space. And I don't believe people who'll tell me the truth from the stage, you know. But I believe when I, one of the creators, when I work on a performance, during the performance, when... So, I think this is the answer where these changes are coming from. And, of course, playwrights should change, too. And we need to make plays, not messages. It's a condition, plays should look like conditions for those plays, for the performance, for spectators. It's an open system, it's not closed, you know. It has a beginning, and the end and what it's about. The spectator should see what the play is

about. So, we need to find the new mechanisms and see how to do it. For example, this is a competitor of (*unclear*) and, for example, I write the play for a mobile app, now, and you can walk on the street with the headphones and listen to the voice and look at the buildings and it's a performance. I don't need theater, I don't need the stage, I don't need to sit…

MART KIVASTIK: May I say something just for one minute. I talked earlier, it was 10 years ago, and all the critics played this old-fashioned theatre saying it's gone, it's buried. Now we have these mobiles and things… There was an article in Estonia about some performances, seven or eight of them. And all the winners were packed, and it was so good. So, I think this old-fashioned theater, it stays anyway. And you can sometimes have your mobile or something else, but you know, those real things stay, they are here anyway. The same is like modern art. There are lots of ways to do art. And at the same time, you need this painting on the wall. This is the best thing you have. And it depends on…

SIMONA SEMENIČ: Yes, but also there can be different paintings in the world, different styles of paintings. Yeah, but I think that's about the styles of writing. I think it's not about whether to write or not, but how to write. And this is the decision of, I think, individual playwright, which way you want to go. And because... For example, in Slovenia, I think we have another problem. The theatre directors are conventional, and they want to have these old-fashioned plays... But the majority of them doesn't want old-fashioned plays, they want like more... I hate this term postdramatic, I think it doesn't say anything… But yeah, more postdramatic plays or whatever. The theater directors want more postdramatic plays. So I think this is not the question... I think, as Mart said, the material will defend itself. I just think that, no matter how we write, and no matter what what drives us, I think we should stand together and work together as playwrights. And it doesn't matter what kind of plays we're writing. And also, it depends on the country, it depends on theater direct... I mean the managers, not the... I don't know the term, ono "Jedno je reditelj, drugo je direktor", kako se to kaže na engleskom? General manager or art director in the theater. So yeah, it's just, what I wanted to say is that it's not the issue whether to write or... But you know, just to... We have to work together no matter what our preference is for the theater or you know. And I think we have to defend writing. Whether it is some kind of postdramatic writing or just dramatic. And also, I see lots of... I like, for example, the contemporary dance theater more than regular theatre, but also, the contemporary dance theater uses lots of words. They use some kind of texts.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: And they use some story, storytelling.

SIMONA SEMENIČ: Yeah and... yeah. But usually they don't have money to hire writers and these texts are bad. Not always, but lots of time they use really bad, bad dramaturgy, bad structure, or even engage in a bad use of, like, you know, clumsy use of words. So, for me, even if it's a dance performance, there's still a play in it. And we have to, you know, like Małgorzata, no actually, like Gina said, defend the professional writing, actually. Whatever it is. Whether it's a classical drama, national theater or dance, contemporary dance show. So this professional writing, I think, is something that we all have to fight for.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: I wanted to say something. You know, in the contemporary theater, you can decide to kill the text, to kill the director, even the audience, even the house... But you cannot kill actors, unfortunately. (*laughter*) I know, but I would, yeah… Okay, yes.

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: Like, in the contemporary dance you need to be the professional dancer, you should have a body.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: It's a performance, you know, still, he acts.

MIKHAIL DURNENKOV: Yeah, yeah. I was a dance playwright and I worked with a dance company. I don't write any words, of course but, I work.

MARIUS IVAŠKEVIČIUS: Can I just say a few words... I just think, you know, why for example 1991 or 1992 was such a good time to start this festival, New Plays from Europe. Yeah, because half of Europe was just liberated and, I mean, there was a kind of boom of European ideas, especially in our part, but also in the western part. And now we have kind of situation in which Europe is in real danger. Like, I think we are on the limit where Europe, with this idea and always with all this, how its functioning, can disappear very soon. And why the politics are also also important in this discussion and our questions? Because I think that we, the writers, playwrights... I mean, all those conservative movements in our countries, what they really are missing, they are missing talented people. They don't have this army of of good playwrights, good theatre makers and… But we don't really use this power of ours, we are somehow letting them, you know, to tell their shit and to be loud, louder than us. So I'm... Why I think that now, again, having some platform, a European festival, would be really very important, not only for just as playwrights, but also for the continent.

ALBAN UKAJ: I know that all of us will try to, like, protect ourselves, like, we... All the people are, we are equal, but some are more equal. Like, what what about dramaturgy - do

we as a writers have more rights or less rights than actors or directors? The thing is... I would like to give just a short example, briefly. A couple of years ago I was a guest at the Symposium 8 about Ibsen in his birth town Skien, and two of the people who participated in that debate were Thomas Ostermeier and Lars Vilks. And one of Ostermeier's reasons to accept to be at that festival, the symposium, was that Lars Vilks was there. And one thing that I remembered when... I think we'll talk a lot today about the new wave of theater, our performance, call it as you wish, but Lars Vilks said... The topic was the "Enemy of the People" by Ibsen, and Lars Vilks... Thomas Ostermeier said: "This is the question for Lars Vilks and for the organizers of this festival. What kind of link is there between the enemy of the people and dr. Stockmann, the main character in the play, and Lars Vilks?" Lars Vilks said: "I'm trying to save the world, as dr. Stockmann did." And Ostermeier said: "Save the world from what?" He said: "From Islam." And he answered him, and there were many students there in the audience who liked Lars Vilks but I think he's definitely a fascist, and Ostermeier said one thing: "The difference between me and you..." and you mentioned Frljić in that point also... "Is that I am the artist of the arguments, and you are the artists of provocation. Because there was a gap between your work, the last works you did, and now, about eight years now." And I found it very interesting, and it's true, you know. What we are trying to do now with theater is to shock the audience. And to provoke them, in a way, without giving, as we said, any answer or the beginning and the end. And as long as we try to make this postdramatic theatre, and documentary theatre, my opinion and my feeling is that we are always going back to the classics. This is like, I don't know... It's like turbo folk hits, like this. Yes, something that last for seven days and it disappears. And, what we said, even dance theatre needs dramaturgy, we need somebody to put all the things together. And what would be maybe interesting about it is if we talk about it now, and I hope that all of you did it at one point, to see... Maybe if we meet again in two years or three years or maybe less… To see if can we do something together as we did before. Like, to make a process with three or four actors and the director and three or four dramaturges, then make the play together, would it be built up or written during the process of making the performance. I wouldn't go so far to say if the theatre is changing in the direction of mixing mobile phones and theater. I think that I know that it should be multimedia, and we have to follow that wave, but in the end, mobile phone is mobile phone, and theater is theater.

And theater will always find its way and it will always find its audience without my mobile phone, I think.

NEDA NEZHDANA : I also want to say... I saw that we need communication and after Wiesbaden I missed it a lot. And not only regarding the topics, but also regarding the forms. Five years ago, I saw that in our country the time became more pressed, three months seemed like ten years. And then I saw that the forms that provoked this kind of plays also another, perhaps more pressed, more short in other plays, not in the theatres, and more virtually, with Facebook, with virtual forms. And then I saw that conservative tendencies are more conservative, that we have a bigger struggle between this conservative form, and new form. But what new form, after postdramatic, after the commentary. And we need this conversation and the understanding of what happened now after this postdramatic theatre. And also, I've noticed that 10 years ago perhaps people were saying it was the time without heroes. But now, I saw that heroes returned to drama, but not the traditional heroes but...

ALBAN UKAJ: Antiheroes.

NEDA NEZHDANA: And also, the forms vary, for example, there's a documentary, but in the form of symphony. Or something absolutely... Oh, for example, a play that has, like, a bomb, or something... And it's provoked also in other forms in theatre, and I think that this conversation, this collaboration is... We need this collaboration and conversation about the forms. What, what's happened now not only with drama but with different forms as well. Thank you.

IVANA VUJIĆ: Well, I think that we need something like an atlas for all of us. In this atlas, we can see all the territories that we can, maybe filled, maybe empty. But we need some kind of joint work, because this is the only way of changing things. To be together, to learn from other people. I can mostly learn from other people. More than from any books, I learned from other people. Mostly from others, everything. And they are really my best professors. Adonis is my best professor. And, that's the way to make it - the Atlas of Adonis.

BILJANA SRBLJANOVIĆ: It's very cold. So what... Yeah, what I proposed is that we continue during the lunch. We have some points that we just have to fix, if you'll agree. What is the follow-up, can we be together again June for example, or is it too soon? Can we plan for a year and a half from now to have the first festival and things like that. So, what I propose is to de-freeze. You can go to your hotel if you like, for half an hour or so, and then

the restaurant is very near here, so… Or can you go to the restaurant, but then they will wait for the others, so you know... Anyways, we… (*comment from the participant, unclear*) No, because if you, if someone wants to go to the hotel, actually we have a lunch in half an hour from now, and the restaurant is like... You don't have to, if you want to go to the hotel, no? Okay, so we go to the restaurant, alright.

(*end of the recording*)