

Would you like to read Evald Flisar's plays?

Theatres and performing groups wishing to consider any of Evald Flisar's plays for production will be sent a free copy of his Collected Plays on request.

English versions of most plays are also available in electronic form.

Please write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com) or to Texture Press, New York (texturepress@beyondutopia.com).

P E R F O R M A N C E R I G H T S

For performance rights please write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com).

Translation grants

The Slovenian Book Agency offers grants to translators of Slovenian plays, fiction and poetry into other languages.

For details write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com).

Trubar Foundation

The Trubar Foundation offers grants that cover up to 50% of printing costs to foreign publishers of Slovenian plays, novels and poetry. For details write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com).

Festival of Slovenian Drama

The two-week Festival of Slovenian Drama is organised in March every year by

Prešernovo Theatre Kranj, Slovenia. Depending on the quality of production, companies performing

Slovene plays in foreign languages (including English) are invited to the Festival on a regular basis.

For details write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com).

C O N T A C T S

For any assistance and further contacts please write to Sandra B Naylor, European Literary Agency (euroliteraryagency@gmail.com).

E V A L D F L I S A R

(1945, Slovenia). Novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, editor. Studied comparative literature in Ljubljana, English literature in London, psychology in Australia. Globe-trotter (travelled in more than 80 countries), underground train driver in Sydney, editor of (among other things) an encyclopaedia of science and invention in London, author of short stories and radio plays for the BBC, president of the Slovene Writers' Association (1995 – 2002), since 1998 editor of the oldest Slovenian literary journal Sodobnost (Contemporary Review). Author of ten novels (five short-listed for kresnik, the Slovenian »Booker«), two collections of short stories, three travelogues (regarded as the best of Slovenian travel writing), two books for children and teenagers (shortlisted for Best Children's Book Award) and fourteen stage plays (six nominated for Best Play of the Year Award, twice won the award). Winner of the highest state award for prose and drama. Various works, especially short stories and plays, translated into 31 languages, among them Hindi, Bengali, Malay, Nepali, Indonesian, Turkish, Greek, Japanese etc. Stage plays regularly performed abroad; in the coming season in Austria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan. Attended literary readings and festivals on all continents. Lived abroad for 20 years (three years in Australia, 17 years in London), since 1990 resident in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Happy father of a four-year-old boy.



AWARD -WINNING

plays by

Evald FLISAR,

Slovenia's internationally performed playwright

What about Leonardo?
TOMORROW

Nora Nora

The Chestnut Crown

Tristan & Iseult:

a Play about Love and Death

Uncle from America

Sunspots

The Eleventh Planet

A Q U A R I U M

FINAL INNOCENCE





COLLECTED PLAYS



Collected Plays, Vol. 1

Evald Flisar, the versatile Slovenian writer, editor, and traveler, reveals in these seven of his fourteen plays his ability to adapt to—and from—a variety of sources and cultures. He has written radio plays for the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the BBC; he draws upon themes and characters from the Western canon from Dostoevsky to Ibsen to Wagner and especially Shakespeare; the plays have been produced on at least three continents and have an appeal not limited to any country or culture.

As Flisar notes in his introduction, “Most, if not all, of my central characters are deeply marked by the feeling of emptiness that permeates their efforts and the world around them.” Nevertheless, by seizing that emptiness, the characters have a chance of “breaking out of the ring of futile wasting of energy and coming to terms with what cannot be avoided.”

Most of the plays use a single set in order that the characters be forced within these limits to create “imaginary, alternative worlds,” to demolish those created by others, and either to retreat into fantasy or to recognize the impenetrability of the walls, mostly self-created, that prevent them from escaping. In contrast to Sartre’s “No Exit,” hell is not other people; it is oneself and one’s illusions.

Theaters and performing groups should find these plays, especially the ones with smaller casts, easy to produce, and their audiences would find the plays by a very significant playwright very rewarding.

Robert Murray Davis, PhD, University of Oklahoma
(excerpts from a review in *World Literature Today*)

For the audience, Flisar’s characters and the rawness of human nature stripped bare are deeply unsettling. They precipitate a re-examination of everything that one had used to maintain his or her social self, which now reveals itself to consist of an attractive façade, like the painted cardboard shank of lamb in *The Eleventh Planet*. In fact, the plays make one vulnerable by unmasking or stripping away the façade. Alternatively, they ask the audience to bite into the cardboard representation of meat they’ve been substituting for the real thing for a long time.

The “extended exotic” is not just about the defamiliarization of the familiar. It is also about how the unmasking process strips some of the truly “exotic” of its otherness. What was previously compartmentalized as an “Other” is made disconcertingly recognizable, and the audience begins to recognize aspects of herself or himself in the personae on stage. This is not a comfortable revelation. After all, in Flisar’s plays, the characters can be quite a disreputable or disturbing crew.

Because Flisar’s plays push the characters to extreme behaviors, they have often been characterized as postmodern, with clear provenance in the theatre of the absurd. However, Flisar’s plays are much too relentlessly psychological to be so easily reduced. The elements of the grotesque in his plays may remind one more of Rabelais than Ionesco. Where postmodern or absurdist theatre often gravitates toward allegory, Flisar’s characters are painfully realistic. Their actions may be extreme, potentially symbolic rather than purely representation, but they never detach themselves from a very real grounding in the psychological realities of interpersonal relations. Flisar’s art displays hyperrealism that paints objects with a level of detail, precision, and focus that makes Vermeer seem like Seurat or Monet. The edges are razor sharp and, in profile, the characters are revealed to have aspects that one cannot forget.

Susan Smith Nash, PhD
(excerpts from the Introduction)

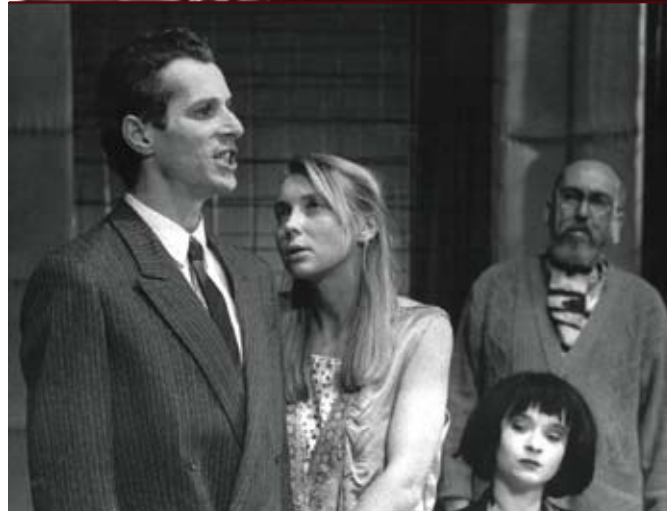
WHAT about LEONARDO?



What about Leonardo?
(first produced 1992 by Ljubljana City Theatre)
(Best Play of the Year Award, Prešeren Fund Award,
1993)

Characters

Dr. Hoffman
Dr. DaSilva
Nurse
Martin
Rebecca
Leaning Man
Professor Caruso
Mrs. Twitch
Mr. Sniff
Mrs. Martin
Dr. Roberts
Reporter
Cameraman



Lilian Baylis Theatre/Sadlers Wells,
London

Ljubljana City Theatre,
Slovenia

A group of patients at a neurological institute exhibit a variety of bizarre behaviours, although behind their compulsive mannerisms seem to lie identifiable and universal human needs: the need for love, the need for approval, the need for security. Their problems are diagnosed as organic, not psychological in origin, and so, according to Dr. Hoffman, the head of the institute, incurable. But the psychologist Dr. DaSilva, coming to the institute to find a subject for her PhD, thinks otherwise.

Dr. DaSilva believes she can teach Mr. Martin – who has retreated into the comfort of total amnesia and then developed an extraordinary ability to learn and remember everything – to be another “Leonardo”, a renaissance man of the 21st century. But does this represent “progress for the human race” or is it a cruel delusion? When the other patients mischievously start teaching Martin other things – rude jokes and Shakespeare – poetry seems to touch something elemental, an inner core of feeling in him that has not been lost. Is this his “real” identity, something more than a parrot-like imitation?

But Dr. DaSilva’s teaching has great power, as she finds to her cost. Sinister forces become interested in Martin’s potential usefulness, and he learns the lessons of violence as easily as the lessons of “culture” – without understanding the meaning of either. The final attempt to save Martin by giving him back “the freedom of choice” comes too late; by acting out the literal meaning of Shakespeare’s poetry he commits mayhem without realizing what he has done.

The play, for which the author consulted his nephew, a neurologist, and a number of books, among them *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks and *The Man with a Shattered World* by A. R. Luria, probes the nature of identity and individual freedom in the context of a society riddled with greed, ambition and heartlessness.





The Bellairs Playhouse,
Guildford, UK

“This excellently constructed play (smoothly flowing, superbly witty, accomplished in dialogue, with bitter undertones) was directed by Dušan Mlakar with great subtlety and a feeling for nuances... To audiences, *What about Leonardo?* offers enjoyment on many levels – a well-crafted, funny and thought-provoking text has been brought to life by a team of actors who almost surpass one another...”

Lojze Smasek, *Večer*, 1992

“Flisar’s play excels not only because of imaginatively (and accurately) employed results of psychiatric research, but also because of his brilliant dialogue, excellent characterisation and lightness, almost elusiveness of his message. This is no doubt the best Slovenian play of recent years...”

Matej Bogataj, *Republika*, 1992

“*What about Leonardo?* – which puts Evald Flisar right at the top of contemporary Slovenian drama – isn’t trying to be a philosophical treatise – it’s a very dramatic, theatrical work, a spectrum of human destinies and a battleground of opposing ideas and ideologies. On this basis, Dušan Mlakar builds *teatro mundi* of our times by unobtrusively underscoring the playwright’s main dramatic intentions...”

Vladimir Kocjančič, *Radio Slovenia*, 1992

“Evald Flisar has written one of the best Slovenian plays in many years... This almost exemplary drama was subtly directed by Dušan Mlakar. You won’t believe it, but the conflict in the play really is between two different views of right and wrong... In other words, a real dramatic conflict, fought out to the bitter end... the sort of conflict we used to call the art of drama...”

Rapa Šuklje, *Dnevnik*, TV Slovenia, 1992

“In a dramatic ending, the playwright reveals all his scepticism of the complacency of science, manipulative politics and impotent arts, and leaves us a single ray of hope: trust in the primary emotion of love and total respect for the individual’s right to be special and different...”

Slavko Pezdir, *Delo*, 1992



Reykjavik City Theatre,
Iceland



Theatre of Zoran Radmilović,
Serbia



“The play is written concisely and clearly, each character has a function, nothing is left to chance... Humorous sequences introduced by the inmates are imaginative and funny... The complexity of the play and the manner of its staging confirm the undiminished power of literary drama and literary theater as a whole...”

France Vurnik, *Sodobnost*, 1993

“A remarkable study of a man out of touch with himself, who presents the journey from amnesiac to automaton with the sad, lost look of a man obeying instructions from he knows not where...”

Jeremy Kingston, *The Times*, London, 1995

“*Kenapa Leonardo?* is played at a rapid pace, keeping the audience engaged throughout... The play is full of unexpected images that stay with the audience long after it ends.”

Esther Samboh, *Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, 2008



“Following Pinter and Peter Brook, Evald Flisar’s *What about Leonardo?* is the latest piece inspired by the clinical writings of Oliver Sacks... In the theatrical context, as material for psychodrama and robotic performance, the play’s ideas become charged with sinister comedy...”

Irwing Wardle, *Independent on Sunday*, London, 1995

“What distinguishes Flisar’s clinically surreal comedy is its curious lack of center. The playwright takes no sides, but sidles up to the increasingly absurd juxtapositions of lunatic scientists, sane patients and American superpowers with an airy quirkiness...”

Kate Stratton, *Time Out*, London, 1995

“The finest of dividing lines between normality and madness is expanded into an almost unbreachable chasm in this profound comedy by leading Slovenian writer Evald Flisar... This is certainly a funny, unnerving and highly theatrical experience, dealing with the fragile nature of human identity...”

Roger Foss, *What’s On*, London, 1995

“What about Leonardo? stands out as a clearly and dramatically structured play with a rich palette of meanings and characters. It won me over at the first reading... My knowledge of the novel (and later movie and a play) *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* did not diminish my interest in Flisar’s play, and neither did Peter Weiss’ marvellous work *The Pursuit and Execution of Jean Paul Marat*. In spite of superficial similarities all three plays are completely original; three great artistic achievements ...”

Hallmar Sigurðsson, director of the Icelandic production, in *Sodobnost*, 2002



*Serbian National Theatre,
Niš*

Tomorrow
(first produced 1992 by Slovenian Chamber Theatre)
(Prešeren Fund Award, 1993)

Characters

Mishkin
Rembrandt
Nijinski
Yessenin

In the early years of the twentieth century, Aleksei Ivanovich Mishkin arrives at a remote Siberian court inside the Arctic Circle. Determined to “fulfil himself by carrying out his professional duties”, he is shocked to discover that there is no work. The court, together with the resident judges Rembrandt, Nijinski and Yessenin, has been cut off from the world by snow. The three older judges are trying to escape the horror of idleness by cultivating various hobbies: one paints, the other dances, the third writes poetry and “philosophizes about the meaning of life”. They expect the new judge to adapt to the circumstances in a similar way.

*Theater im Keller, Graz,
Austria*

He does not. For Mishkin, “the most important day isn’t now, but tomorrow.” He cannot accept things “simply gliding past”, so he tries to force his leisurely colleagues to fake the circumstances in which their lives could have meaning. They, having gone through similar traumas of adaptation, resist his relentless campaign for “order” with a high degree of invention and humour. They know that life can be fun even if “things are allowed to be”, and even if “our only direction is that of the wind”.

The play (which is widely agreed to show the birth of the postmodern society) can be seen as a metaphor for the unbearable void of existence in which there are no absolutes one can count on with certainty, and in which the parameters for meaningful action still have to be set. Each of the four judges grapples with the problem in his own way: Rembrandt by transcending the agony of eternal winter through painting a monotonous vision of spring, Yessenin by rationalizing the situation with reflection and poetry, and Nijinski by neurotic “running away on the spot”, which is what his “dancing” amounts to.

Mishkin, the new judge, reacts “politically”: he decides to attack the unbearable state of notdoing (justbeing) head on. His attempt to “transform the present into a better tomorrow”, is the driving force of the play. Its resolution, the softening of the conflict between two opposing views of reality into practicalities of coexistence, is the play’s message.



TOMORROW

Prešernovo Theatre Kranj,
Slovenia



“Flisar’s play *Tomorrow* is, quite simply, a brilliant comedy. By orchestrating the polyphony of four voices, which are simultaneously the labyrinth and the salvation of the world, he has succeeded in creating a strikingly funny drama about our modern fate...”

Milan Dekleva, *Dnevnik*, 1992

“In sparkling and witty dialogue the author paints a world without God in which two opposing views of how life should be lived clash with great vigour and not a little humour, on a fine edge between realism and phantasy, dream and reality, touching not only on the basic issues of European civilisation but also on the meaning of art and its acceptance...”

Slavko Pezdir, *Delo*, 1992

“It isn’t the message of this metaphorical play, of this relentless settling of accounts with the world, that gives rise to the refined, playful, oddball, ironic dialogue; it is the characters and their relationships, their patterns of speech and the surprising twists of the plot that create the metaphor; they are so convincing and genuine that we are quite simply disarmed...”

Lojze Smasek, *Večer*, 1992

“First broadcast on BBC Radio 3, *Tomorrow* is given its British stage premiere by Mania Productions at Barons Court, and a striking piece of metaphorical theater it turns out to be... Leading Slovenian playwright Evald Flisar creates an hilarious stage world inhabited by a collection of oddball characters... allowed to teeter on a fine edge between order that is underpinned by violence and the potential madness of liberation...”

Roger Foss, *What’s On*, London, 1993

“The German production of Evald Flisar’s *Tomorrow* brilliantly and poetically reveals the artic depths of human relationships in our famously vulgar and fast-living society... A theatrical wonder!”

Gisela Bartens, *Kleine Zeitung*, 1999

“A masterpiece of detective subtlety closely followed by the director Reinhold Ulrych ... Long applause...”

Eveline Kolberg, *Neue Zeit*, 1999

Barons Court Theatre,
London



“A fiery staging of this splendidly profound play by Evald Flisar, which follows the tradition of Slovene literature as well as that of the English comedy of manners, which is the main attraction of this work...”

Bernd Schmid, *Kronen Zeitung*, 1999

Slovenian Chamber Theatre,
Ljubljana

“I decided to direct the stage version of *Tomorrow* in London because it bowled me over at the first reading. I liked the humour, I liked the plot, I liked the characters. What I also liked is the fact that the play does not offer simple solutions but poses questions and encourages the audience to find their own answers. In many ways *Tomorrow* is a play that every director dreams of – in spite of the clearly defined plot it offers plenty of scope for exploring a range of meanings...”

Sladjana Vujovic, director of the British production, in *Sodobnost*, 2002

NORA

nora



Nora Nora
(first produced 2004 by Prešernovo Theatre Kranj)
(Best Play of the Year Award, 2004)
(Published in Collected Plays as *The Nymph Dies*)

Characters

Nora 1
Nora 2
Helmer 1
Helmer 2

Ibsen's Nora serves the author merely as a starting point for the continued exploration of the state of affairs in the ongoing (and increasingly destructive) battle of the sexes. Today this is a battlefield on which skirmishes are fought between experienced warriors who, instead of swords, use sharpened words. Interwoven throughout this inexorable play of words and people, dictionaries and genders, references and declarations are entire literary and personal worlds that define the context of closenes and alienation among the four characters as an apparently inevitable succession of three dictionaries (peddled by one of them): *Dictionary of New Words* (infatuation), *Dictionary of Cliches* (boredom), and *Dictionary of Silence* (opting ut).

Both couples choose the names (Nora and Helmer) themselves – with self-confidence, knowledge and (self)irony, hoping (but not really believing) that “life will not imitate art.” It does, and does so repeatedly. Slowly but surely, like a giraffe that has lost its head being transported from one zoo to another (because it couldn't adapt to the height of the etrance), both Noras and Torvalds (in whatever combination) wind up without committed love that would be safe from corrosive elements. Real relationships are born elsewhere, it seems: on the border of faith, hope and love, on the border that is the most difficult to cross.

Despite it all, a ray of hope emerges at the end of the play with a growing closeness between Nora 1 and Nora 2, and Helmer 1 and Helmer 2, revealed in the understanding and acceptance of similarity and difference (almost compassion), and in the willingness to see others of the same sex not merely as competitors, but also as fellow victims of the opposite sex. *Nora Nora* may be seen as an elaboration of the theme explored by the author in his play *Tristan & Iseult: a Play about Love and Death*, in which one of the characters, Tristan, says: “There are four people in every marriage: husband and wife, and woman and man that husband and wife would like to be married to.”

This is a challenging play for any director – not only because it requires a physical presentation of two couples living in the same apartment without ever becoming aware of the fact, but also, and perhaps even more so, because of the emotional cruelty the partners display in their attempts to emerge unscathed from repeatedly crumbling relationships.



Prešernovo Theatre Kranj,
Slovenia

“The exciting and multifaceted *Nora Nora*, for which Flisar won last year’s Grum Award for the best Slovenian play, is far from being a mere paraphrase of Ibsen’s renowned masterpiece... The main reason for *Nora Nora*’s excellence lies mostly in Flisar’s sensitivity to the complex speech of the plot, his lucid analysis of its key moments, his ability to expose its playfulness, while not avoiding its gnawing pain, its noisy sarcasm and its acrid self-irony ...”

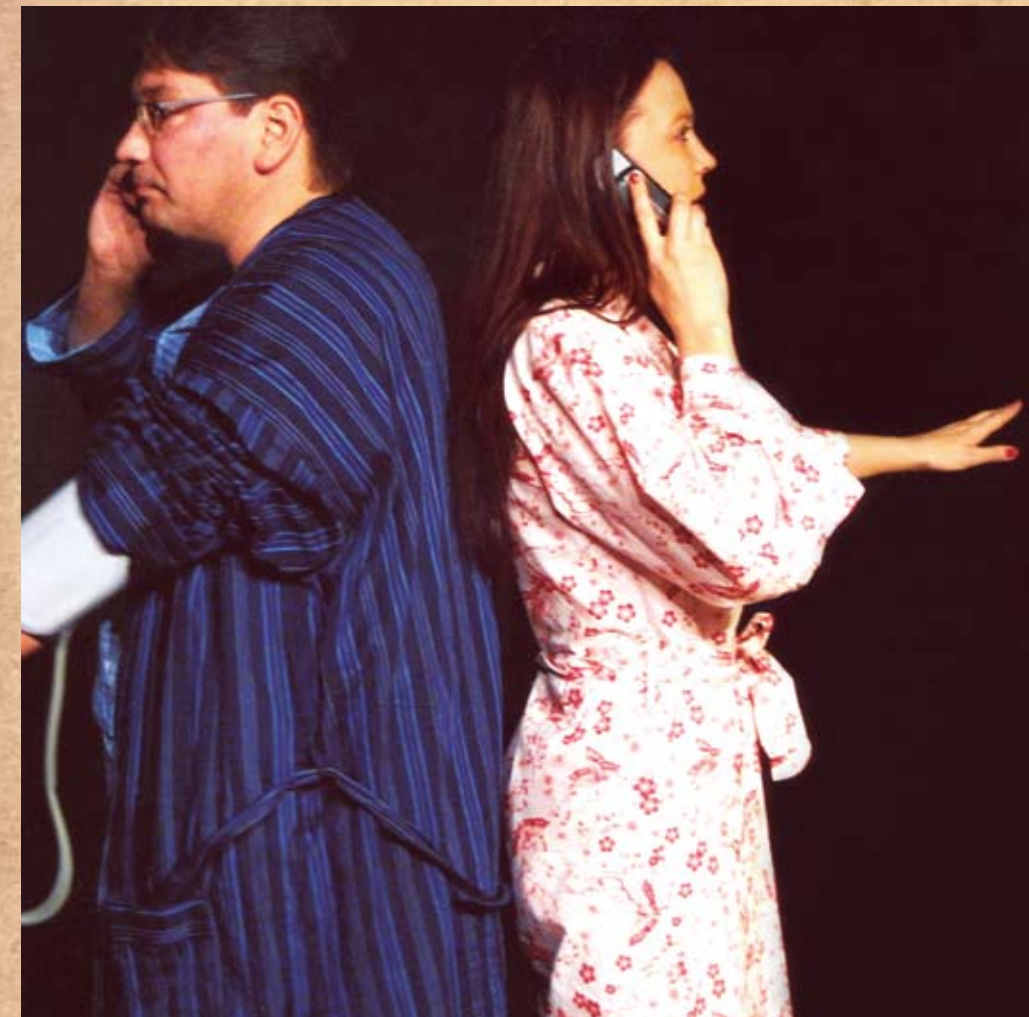
Petra Pogorevc, *Sodobnost*, 2004

“Flisar poses the question why we always love what we don’t have, and why love bliss always turns into boredom and/or torture and domination. He poses the question radically, skilfully, sharply and entertainingly... This reveals him as a shrewd and penetrating playwright ... His dialogue is fascinating, words fly about like axes and boomerangs; both couples exploit them in the style of: it hurts because it’s only a game...”

Matej Bogataj, *Delo*, 2004

“Evald Flisar, speaking of the Egyptian production of *Nora Nora*, said: I believe my plays are funny because they are so tragic...”

Al-Rai Al-Ram, *Kuwait*, 2004



Theater im Keller, Graz,
Austria



“If Ibsen’s Nora withdrew from her century’s game because Torvald became too captivated by his role of directing her life, we are now, more than a hundred years later, watching a play in which their roles (at least in terms of power) have become equal. In other words, the dynamics of the game have shifted to Nora’s side. But this new division of roles between the sexes has not brought salvation. If anything, it has created hell from which withdrawal is no longer possible...”

Marinka Poštrak, *Sodobnost*, 2004

“Theater im Keller has staged the latest play by Evald Flisar, *Nora Nora*, and marked a stunning victory on all fronts... This ironic, intelligent and hugely topical variation on Ibsen’s Nora is destined to become a box-office success...”

HSG, *Kleine Zeitung*, 2005



The Chestnut CROWN

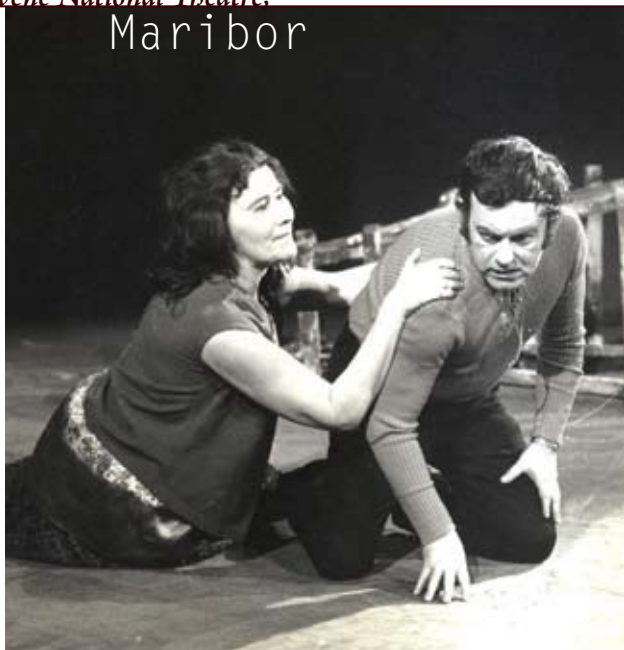
“The diction of Evald Flisar’s first play is wholly authentic, suffused with hidden and revealed passions, with almost naturalistic yet hardly every-day speech patterns, with language brought into the world by life itself, with ideas that successfully rise above ideologies, since they constitute part of the sensual and emotional fabric of life from which they emerge...”

Vasja Predan, *Delo*, 1971

“The new staging of *The Chestnut Crown* confirms the undiminished vitality of this early play by Evald Flisar... of the play which is marked by primeval traumas of individuals in the grip of tradition and culture of their ancestors, who, at the same time, as people living in the modern world without God, look for temporary solutions in eroticism, fatherhood, regression... It is in this context that Flisar’s interesting characters offer exceptional opportunities to the actors...”

Tone Peršak, *Delo*, 1989

Slovene National Theatre,
Maribor



“This play, thematically exceptional in the history of Slovenian drama, has lost none of its force in the 17 years since it was written and first produced at the Slovene National Theater Maribor... and then, in spite of many polemics against the decision, officially removed from the repertoire... The reasons for this “liquidation” can be found in two ideologies, one of the Party, the other of the traditional, moralistic Church, neither of which could accept a play about incest that does not conform to the only model allowed on stage, that of Oedipus Rex.”

Peter Božič, *Delo*, 1989



The Chestnut Crown
(first produced 1970 by
Slovene National Theatre Maribor)

Characters

Inspector
Janek
Aranka
Weiner
Sena
Priest

The Chestnut Crown dramatizes the basic conflict between primeval eroticism without any boundaries and the norms of Judeo-Christian morality.

Tristan & Iseult
(first produced 1994 by Slovenian Chamber Theatre)
(Published in Collected Plays, 1 as The Nymph Dies)

Characters

Tristan
Iseult
Mark

The author uses the myth of Tristan and Iseult merely as a starting point and develops a highly original look at the games of contemporary lovers, exploiting mostly the darker tones of a declining passion.

“Grab hold of air and climb up it to heaven, Tristan throws at Iseult in one of their confrontations, which multiply day by day like epileptic seizures. With this double metaphor Flisar strikes at the heart of his “play about love and death”: it is a play about expanding emptiness, the big Nothing, the great disillusion. This is quite simply a play about the death of love, not just any love, but the Great Romantic Love – the one that tries to recreate the ideal indelibly scorched into our consciousness by travelling minstrels of the Middle Ages... It must be said that Evald Flisar has written another excellent play, this time rapidly descending from the pure laughter of comedy into farce, grotesque, theater of the absurd and cruelty...”

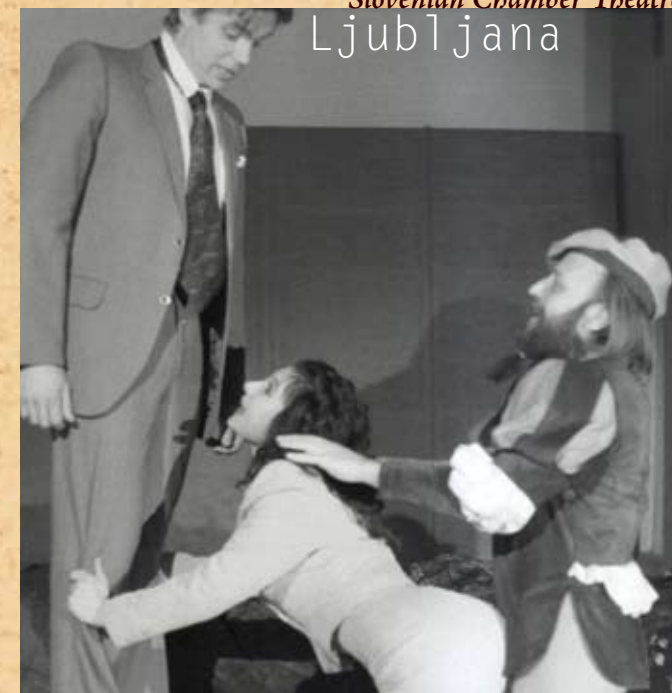
Milan Dekleva, *Dnevnik*, 1994



“Flisar’s play is full of wit, irony and sarcasm, but also bitterness at the realization that all attempts by Tristan and Iseult to lift off and stay in the air are doomed to fail. The dialogue is brilliant, resounding, suggestive, fresh, oblique, the conversation is realistic, tangible and yet full of deeper meanings (not merely a means to discuss problems, but a normal, natural, smoothly flowing speech which, however, consistently alludes to deeper layers of the text)...”

Lojze Smasek, *Večer*, 1994

Slovenian Chamber Theatre,
Ljubljana



“Evald Flisar, I deliberately exaggerate, is a Slovenian Howard Barker... What both playwrights have in common are a high degree of metaphorical content, masterly dialogue, comical effects and spatial-temporal leaps... Both are very successful (by this I mean mainly the number of awards they receive), and both are highly productive, although Flisar has reached Barker’s norm of two plays a year only recently...”

Simon Kardum, *Slovenske novice*, 1994

Tristan & ISEULT

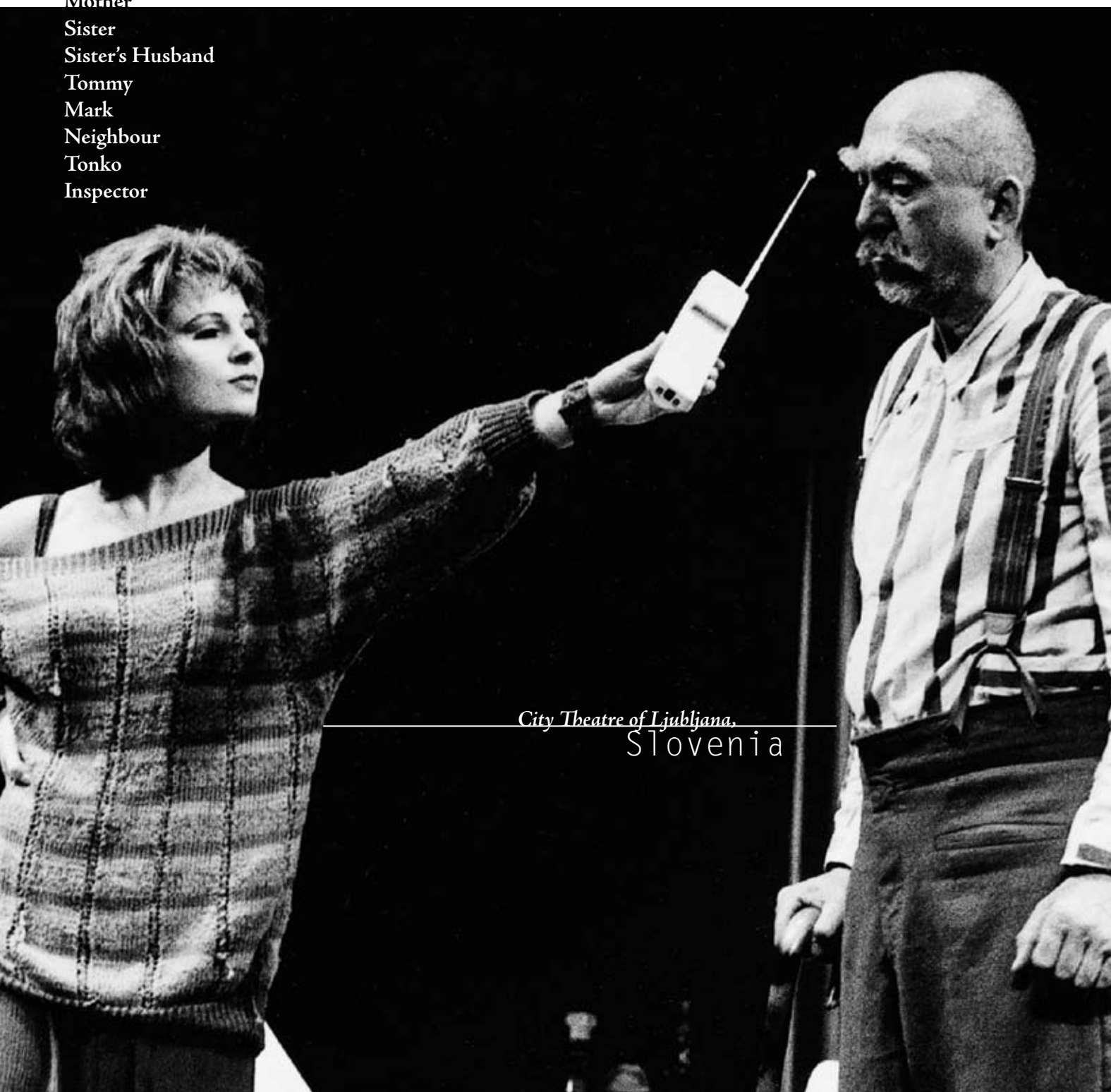
Uncle from America

Uncle from America
(first produced 1994 by Ljubljana City Theatre)

Characters

Johnny
Alenka
Father
Mother
Sister
Sister's Husband
Tommy
Mark
Neighbour
Tonko
Inspector

Family drama boasting a gallery of meticulously carved characters caught up in a web of complex relationships, confronting us with the eternally tragi-comic essence of family life.



City Theatre of Ljubljana,
Slovenia

“Dramatic works of Evald Flisar stand out for the same reason as the plays of the great Irishman G.B. Shaw – they are just as delightful to read as they are to watch on stage... The unpleasant collection of selfish, dissatisfied individuals who call themselves family, but are connected by nothing more than a relentless pursuit of personal gains and a complete disregard for the feelings of others, has presented the director with a challenge – how to bring to life the rich fabric of the play without sacrificing the plasticity of the characters, the sparkle of the dialogue and the immediacy of the author’s message...”

Rapa Šuklje, *Dnevnik*, 1994

“Flisar’s play *Uncle from America* follows the rules of the Anglo-Saxon type of family drama (especially as exemplified in the plays of Sam Shepard)... Nevertheless, Flisar’s approach remains wholly original... laughter, which in the first act amuses, in the second act conspicuously fades, until – in line with the central message of the futility of egotistic way of life, a message unobtrusively buried in the firm dramatic structure – it turns into anguish, despair, even tragedy...”

Ignacija Fridl, *Slovenec*, 1994

“All these archetypal characteristics of the play find their expression in exceptionally witty, skilful and smoothly proceeding dialogue. There is no doubt that Evald Flisar is one of our most intelligently writing dramatists ... In *Uncle from America* he employs the method of building suspense whereby the action is set in motion by dialogue, and also resolved by it along the way, rather than piling it up for the final denouement. The play could be either longer or shorter – it would remain equally powerful...”

Veno Taufer, *Delo*, 1994

“A tight and unclouded plot, full of dramatic suspense, a skilful blend of comedy and tragedy, witty and in parts aphoristic dialogue – these are the elements on which firmly rests Flisar’s contemporary comical-sad grotesque about self-destructive dreamers and losers of all kinds. A firmly structured text and a self-assured direction have given the actors a range of creative opportunities...”

Slavko Pezdir, *Delo*, 1994



SUNSPOTS

Sunspots
(first produced 1999 by Ljubljana City Theatre)
(Alternative title: We are Christians, after all)

Characters

Matthew
Vera
Joseph
Gregor
Tadey
Judith
Santa Claus

A bitter-funny play about an attempt at “family cleansing” which is not confined to psycho-dramatic and therapeutic limits but is placed into a wider social context.

City Theatre of Ljubljana,
Slovenia

“To be honest, Sunspots is a bitter, unpleasant play – a play that makes one shiver and cringe. But it has to be said that there is no other way it could achieve its aim. Sunspots is not a melodrama, the author calls it tragicomedy, in other words a mixed genre that enables him to achieve dramatic effect by simulating the rules of comedy. That is Flisar’s original variant of tragicomedy, different from the historical (tragedy with a happy ending) and much closer to the contemporary grotesque...”

Blaž Lukan, *Gledališki list*, 1999

“The comic elements in Sunspots are exceedingly funny, the author writes wittily, smoothly, economically, the play is excellently structured, it is obvious that the playwright is a master of his craft. But comedy merely lightens, smoothes out what is the essence of this play: an analysis of criminality, of the criminal essence of a society and its members.”

Dr. Taras Kermauner, *Gledališki list*, 1999



The Eleventh Planet
(first produced 2000 by Slovenian Chamber Theatre)

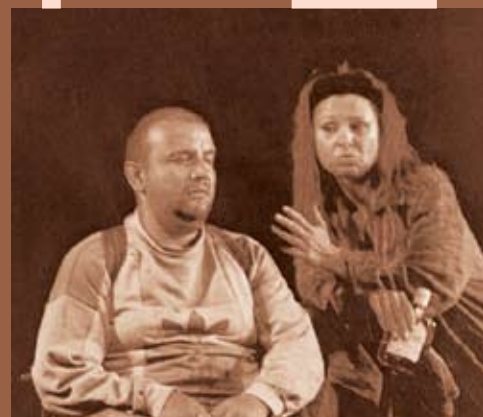
Characters

Peter
Paul
Magdalene

A theatrical metaphor exploring various models of existence inside one and essentially unchanging human destiny and dealing with the eternal human wish to escape the restrictive variants of social life.

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The ELEVENTH PLANET



*Slovenian Chamber Theatre,
Ljubljana*



“This play, perhaps crucial for the understanding of Flisar’s dramatic work as a whole, poses a great many questions – and perhaps in this context we could conclude that it pushes all (or most) of his plays into the framework of a common reality. This reality presents human values in a crisis, blind alleys of our modern world which Flisar – perhaps more so than any of his contemporaries – draws with the help of past cultural models: myths and literary symbols. To be more precise: he describes them with quotes from the world literature... I offer this as a reminder that life in Flisar’s plays is formed not only from the substance of our times, but also from the stuff of our common culture, which lives within us as a legitimate part of what we are...”

Jože Horvat, Sodobnost, 2003

“*The Eleventh Planet* is a monument to vagrancy. Of course it’s a tragedy to realize that there is no vagrants’ nirvana, that the great principled rejection of the world can collapse because of an insignificant unprincipled wish. It’s also a tragedy to realize that the vagrants’ commitment has the same basis as the commitment which they rejected (or which rejected them, whereupon they elevated the rejection into a manifesto): unwritten laws, promises, and the breaking of both. However, it is precisely because of the simultaneous revelation of illusion and disillusion that the thematization of the vagrants’ commitment in *The Eleventh Planet* is probably the most convincing presentation of the subject we have ever seen, heard or read...”

Petra Vidali, Večer, 2005

*Slovene National Theatre,
Maribor*



Aquarium

Aquarium
(first produced 2007
by Prešernovo Theatre Kranj)

Characters

Conrad
Damjan
Miklavž
Katarina
Matilda
Radivoj
Lucija

A retired journalist, in an attempt to “self-decontaminate”, shuts himself away in his house to watch his favourite movie, *Casablanca*. But the world keeps interrupting him with a string of demands. A witty and bitter play that ends with a promise of salvation through love for an innocent child.

“An equally subtle feeling has been shown by the director for the need to retain a balance between our everyday reality, in which *Aquarium* has been set, and some characteristic ‘signatures’ of the author which demolish the realistic atmosphere and lead us, through mild caricature, to other emphases... He has succeeded in creating a smoothly-flowing, rhythmically measured yet lively performance that will leave very few people dissatisfied.”

Gregor Butala, *Dnevnik*, 2007

“It is astonishing how many words flood the stage in intensive, verbally and thematically complex dialogues and monologues in Flisar’s *Aquarium*. In the space of two hours Vlado Novak succeeds in creating a three-dimensional character in whom we ultimately believe and with whom we unreservedly empathise. *Aquarium* is – on stage no less than on paper – a demanding play that is full of vibrant humour, although its basic tendency is to compel us to think...”

Staša Grahek, *Radio Slovenija*, 2007

“All the pleasures and secrets contained in the words and dialogues of this Flisar’s masterpiece are turned – in the hands of Dušan Mlakar and his well-tuned team of actors – into a shamelessly excellent ending to what for most of the audience would have been just another working day.”

Igor Kavčič, *Gorenjski glas*, 2007

Prešernovo Theatre Kranj,
Slovenia



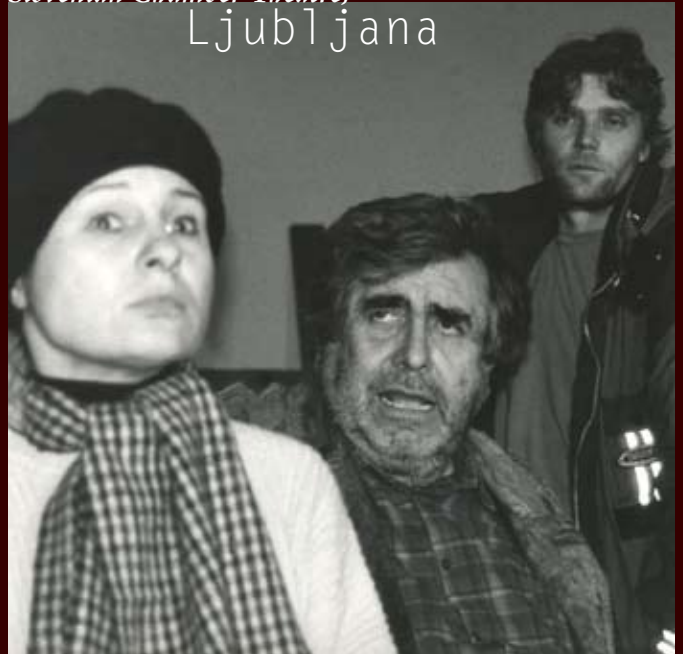
"*Final Innocence* is a very serious play; it arises from the playwright's deep emotional wounds. All his plays, even funny ones, deal with very serious problems, with the relationship between reality and illusion, love and passion, despair and hope ... Flisar tries to see far, and of this I approve. *Final Innocence* advocates a basic consideration for the Other. It shows that the Other cannot, must not be the means to my ends, to solving my problems..."

Dr. Taras Kermauner, *Gledališki list*, 1997

"The overriding need of Flisar's protagonists who meet in 'hell', in a hut in the middle of Bosnia during the war, is to set right something they have done wrong in the past. They all take on the role of Saviour who wants to turn the executioner into a victim. But they forget that these two roles can all too easily be exchanged... Saviour, executioner and victim become one. Religion is dead. God lives... A play worth seeing, a play worth reading."

Roman Repnik, *Dnevnik*, 1997

Slovenian Chamber Theatre,
Ljubljana



Final Innocence

(first produced 1997 by Slovenian Chamber Theatre)

Characters

Mary

John

Gypsy

Two Westerners and a local Gypsy get caught up in a blizzard in war-torn Bosnia. Nobody in this stark drama possesses innocence; the Gypsy, too, will be torn apart by the beast – his own masked image.

FINAL innocence