

PARALLEL LIVES PARALELNÉ ŽIVOTY

Divadelná Nitra Association, Slovakia

Parallel Lives – 20th Century through the Eyes of Secret Police

Inter-disciplinary international project
(2010 – 2015)



Czech Republic / Germany / Hungary / Poland / Romania / Slovakia

● Project Description

Parallel Lives – 20th Century through the Eyes of Secret Police is a several years (2010 – 2015) international project whose aim is to create theatre productions based on the research of materials contained in the archives of secret police operating in the territories of former Soviet bloc countries during the era of communist regime.

The project intends to support the work of artists focused on dealing with themes of the recent past of former socialist countries. By working with documentary material the project aims to draw attention to various aspects of past and present social and political life:

- ➡ to public and individual confrontation with the past;
- ➡ to the practices of secret police, socialist governments and how they were reflected in people's private lives;
- ➡ to ways in which the societies in individual countries approached the understanding of recent history and political practices in the era of totalitarian regime;
- ➡ to ways in which individual states after the fall of communist regime declassified their archives and what kind of new political strategies can be revealed based on the manner of opening / not opening archives and treating memory as such;
- ➡ to the differences between the way of perceiving and recording a very same piece of reality, i. e. between how the past is reflected by someone who has experienced certain event and how that very same event is recorded in the archives;

- ➡ to the differences between various memories related to a single event;
- ➡ to various ways of remembering things and different strategies how to interpret events;
- ➡ to the different interpretations of events in various discourses (historical, sociological, political, personal etc.);
- ➡ to deliberate and non-deliberate manipulation with personal and social memory;
- ➡ to how political power in the past influenced people's private lives and what parallels can be drawn in this sense with the present;
- ➡ to how the manner of treating memory material (both personal and social) determines and influences the creation of personal and social identity, in other words, identity of an individual and identity of a country / nation.

The project aims at creating a platform to serve as a meeting point for several artists from various countries and arouse confrontation of the different creative methods and methods of working with documentary material within various national cultures or personal artistic approaches.

● The project's nature is

inter-disciplinary

- ➡ it intertwines artistic methods with methods of historical, political-science and sociological research;
- ➡ it connects different theatre companies and theatres with memory institutions, as well as theatre makers and art theoreticians;

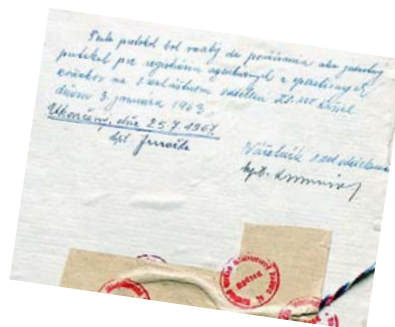
international

- ➡ cooperation of theatre institutions from the participating countries leads to the creation of new networks which can help ensure future cooperation;
- ➡ the project engages memory institutions from various countries encouraging exchange of information and experience between them;
- ➡ the project creates an international platform, where artistic teams present their methods and the results of their work, which will enable discussion between participating artists and offer a more complex view and reflection of the methods of working with documentary material in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

● Project Outcomes

- ➡ **6 documentary theatre productions** created in 6 European countries based on a research of documents in secret police archives in Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia;
- ➡ **Parallel Lives – mini festival** where all the productions of the project will be presented, accompanied by discussions, lectures, exhibitions, meetings with experts; the mini festival will introduce the project in all participating countries;
- ➡ **Reader of Stories** collected by artists in the secret police archives in 6 countries – 5 stories from each country;
- ➡ **PLL Plus** – accompanying programme featuring documentary theatre productions from various countries dealing with the topic, documentary films, books, exhibitions and installations;

- ➔ **PLL Forum** – platform for exchange between artists, producers and managers of theatre houses alongside with historians and archivists from memory institutions: series of lectures, roundtable discussions, informal networking opportunities;
- ➔ **PLL publication**, published in cooperation with significant German publishing house Theater der Zeit, will map the process and the outcomes of the first phase of the project (research in archives, selection of stories) and will include theoretical contributions to the projects theme from socio-political, historical and teatrological viewpoints. Publication will also feature theoretical commentary of the project and a description of creative methods of documentary theatre in various ex-eastern block countries;
- ➔ **Parallel Lives website** (www.parallel-lives.eu) – will map the projects development and document both the research and creation phase. It will offer rich photo and text materials and serve as a resource of stories identified by participating artists in the archives and a resource of documentary theatre methods;
- ➔ **PLL for Schools** – an international format: the productions showcase will be accompanied by discussion with an experts from memory institutions, excerpts from the PLL publication and reader will provide sufficient material for pupils, students and teachers;
- ➔ **Documentation of the project**: in cooperation with RTVS Slovakia and selected national public TV stations we aim to create a **documentary film** mapping the project and its development.



The following groups of co-operators are engaged in the project

- ➔ **Artists.** In each country participating in the project, one director is selected who sets up a creative team and together they carry out their part of the project in the particular country. The creative teams will work with materials that will result from research in secret police archives in their respective countries; also, the archival research may be complemented by oral accounts and stories of the persons concerned. From the collected materials, they will choose 5 stories that will be published in a Reader of Stories, meanwhile, at a work-in-progress presentation, they will present one selected story and the director's intention of the documentary theatre production that will premiere internationally in September 2013 at the Divadelná Nitra Festival. All the productions will be subsequently presented on the stages of the project co-producers.

Czech Republic – **Aleš Březina** and **Petr Zelenka**

Germany – **Clemens Bechtel**

Hungary – **Dániel D. Kovács** and **Péter Závada**

Poland – **Radek Rychcik**

Romania – **Gianina Cărbunariu**

Slovakia – **Ľubomír Burgr** and **Dušan Vicen**

- ➔ **Co-producers.** In each country there is one co-producer engaged in the project (theatre) taking responsibility for the progress of the project and providing the artistic team with the needed space for its realisation. The co-producer will make sure the created production is presented to the public in the respective country and organises the local PLL mini festival.

Czech Republic – **Opera národního divadla, Praha** / National Theatre Opera, Prague

Germany – **Staatsschauspiel Dresden** / Dresden State Theatre

Hungary – **Szputnyik Hajózási Társaság, Budapest** / Sputnik Shipping Company, Budapest

Poland – **Teatr Nowy, Krakow** / New Theatre, Krakow

Romania – **dramAcum, București** / dramAcum, Bucharest

Slovakia – **Divadlo SKRAT, Bratislava** / SKRAT Theatre, Bratislava

- ➔ **Cooperating institutions.** Professional guarantors of the project shall be at the disposal of the artistic team ready to provide professional content consultation as well as mediate access to the archives or help with the interpretation of archival materials. They will be engaged in creation of accompanying programme Parallel Lives Plus.

Ústav pamäti národa / Nation's Memory Institute – Slovakia

Instytut Pamięci Narodowej / The Institute of National Remembrance – Poland

Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů / Archiv bezpečnostních složek – The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes / Security Services Archive – Czech Republic

Post Bellum – Czech Republic

Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára / Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security – Hungary

Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik – Germany

Consiliul Național Pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității / National Institute for Study of Securitate Archives – Romania

- ➔ **Partners.** The project will engage other individual partners and institutions working as consultants or cooperating on a specific project's output or on its documentation.

Theater der Zeit, Berlin

DogDocs, Bratislava



● Project Timeframe

➔ Autumn 2010 – Autumn 2011

The creation of the idea and project preparation, first project presentation at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2011

➔ Spring 2012

Selection and notification of artists and cooperating institutions, negotiations concerning the conditions and forms of cooperation; fundraising

➔ **18 – 20 May 2012**

First working meeting of all participating artists and co-producers; presentation of artists and their ideas for the PLL project; discussion about topic of the project and detailed specification of the cooperation between the co-producers.

➔ **May – December 2012**

First phase of research in secret police archives, cooperation between artistic teams and memory institutions; selection of last artists and partners, website creation, continuous fundraising efforts.

➔ **22 – 24 September 2012 at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2012**

Presentation of artistic teams and concepts for productions in the framework of the Parallel Lives Forum; Not only project co-producers participated in the forum, but also other partners from festivals and theatres; Parallel Lives Plus presented theatre productions with the topic similar to the Parallel Lives Project, feature and documentary films were screened.

➔ **January – September 2013**

final stage of the research in the secret police archives; rehearsal process of respective productions, open rehearsals and pre-premieres in respective countries; texts collection, translations, preparation and printing of Reader of Stories; launching and updating of the project website; premiere of the first PLL production – *My Files and I* – in Dresden (28 April, 2013); final stage of fundraising; documentation of the project.

➔ **May 2013, Dresden State Theatre**

Coproduction and interim dramaturgic meeting of all participating artists and co-producers; performance of *My Files and I* directed by Clemens Bechtel; organizational and administrative meeting regarding the European Commission funding of the project.

➔ **27 September – 2 October 2013 at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2013**

Premiere of 6 documentary theatre productions in the format of PLL mini festival, launch of the Reader of Stories; PLL PLUS – accompanying events – lectures, discussions, exhibitions, documentary films; meeting of representatives of memory institutions, artists and co producers.

➔ **September – November 2013**

Premieres of 6 documentary theatre productions in their respective countries.

➔ **November 2013 – April 2015**

Performances of the productions in the venues of co-producers in their respective countries; Touring of all 6 productions (or selected productions) to all participating countries – Parallel Lives mini festivals; preparation and printing of the PLL Publication in cooperation with Theater der Zeit; meeting – workshop of the project participants (artists, co-producers and memory institutions) at the International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra 2014; development of PLL for Schools – educational programme available to primary and high-school students in 6 countries; production, postproduction and presentation of documentary film about the project; evaluation of the project; preparation of final report.

● **Project Leaders**

Ján Šimko – Curator

Martina Vannayová – Dramaturge

Katarína Dudáková – Project Manager

Darina Kárová – Guarantor, Director of Divadelná Nitra Association and International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra



● Main Organizer Contacts

Association Divadelná Nitra

Svätoplukovo nám. 4
949 01 Nitra, Slovakia
Tel /Fax: +421 37 6524 870
www.nitrafest.sk

Contact person:

Katarína Dudáková
Project manager
dudakova@nitrafest.sk
mobil: +421 903 181 991

● Supported by



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



In cooperation with
Allianz Cultural Foundation

