

CATCHING THE MOMENT- EVALUATING COMMUNITY THEATRE

A handbook



Theatre and Pedagogy 13.

A Handbook

Theatre and Pedagogy

TOWARDS THE EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

Theater and pedagogics 13.
Theoretical and methodological booklets

Series editor: Gábor Takács
Translator: Zsuzsanna Brázdilík, Vibeke Flesland Havre
Proofreader: Fruzsina Sugár
Design: Miklós Szegő

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a résztvevő színháza

Table of contents

Introduction	7
Gábor Takács	
Community Theatre as a Tool for Citizenship Education - Terms and Concepts	14
Marton Oblath, Parforum	
Community Theatre and Pilot project	28
Bürger Bühne Dresden	28
Katja Heiser	
Bergen Borgerscene	42
Vibeke Flesland Havre, Hjordis M. Steinsvik	
Káva Cultural Workshop	61
Gábor Takács	
Artistic Citizenship Education Through Community Theatre Practice	88
Marton Oblath, Parforum	
LUCKY NUMBER NINE	110
B: Club Zahlendreher	
ALL THE TREES ARE UPSIDE DOWN	123
Quarantine reflections a performance about wood, water and air	
RING THE BELL!	143
Community Theatre performance of Káva with teachers	



Introduction

Gábor Takács

The international project consortium headed by the Budapest-based Káva Cultural Workshop Association, officially commenced in the autumn of 2019. Specialized artists from three European theaters and members of a sociological research team came together to share their knowledge and experience in adult community theater and explore how participants of these programs can indirectly learn about the concept of active citizenship in an artistic context during a creative process of a community theater.¹

The organization, which joins together the international artistic-professional consortium (Káva), is an independent theater whose main task and goal are to create and regularly present performances, theatrical actions, and complex drama programs that primarily target young participants. Our work has a lot to do with drama pedagogy, theatrical traditions using interactive elements, devised theater, and community theater-making. In addition to aesthetic education, our tasks include education on democracy, examining micro and macro social, ethical-moral problems through theatrical forms. In our work with children, the theater is also a tool for finding ways to a deeper understanding of significant human problems. We are familiar with and can prove the social utility of theater education with several traditional research and ABR² results - we usually view our work as a series of performative social interventions.³

We place great emphasis on innovation. Experimentation, encounters with other fields of art, and the constant rethinking of forms and contents of theater education are of great importance to us. Our dissemination work has almost the same weight, i.e., the intention to interpret what we do – often with external help – and to make the research processes and results available for others. When working with children and youth, we use a performance technique based on audience engagement that often – fully consciously – blurs the line between actors and viewers, ensuring that participants can shape events as much as possible and define their relation-

1 Official title of the tender: Artistic Citizenship Education through Community Theatre Practice – Developing Protocols of Teaching and Tools for Collaborative Evaluation –; Erasmus+ 2019-1-HU01-KA204-061186

2 Art Based Research

3 International DICE research (www.dramanetwork.eu); volumes of our theoretical and methodological publication series Theater and Pedagogy, Káva + online booklets.

ship to the problem placed in the focus. We believe that if a person can make choices and decisions in their imagination or in a fictitious world, they can likewise do so in real life. An integral part of this work is the pedagogical approach, but we avoid raising didactic questions from a distance and always question schematic, commonplace answers.

In addition to artistic and pedagogical creative work with young people, our projects for adults have been gaining ground in the last years. These take shape in so-called participatory theater or as community theater performances. Their common root is a model program created in 2010, titled the New Spectator (Új Néző).⁴ As part of this, two independent Hungarian theaters, Káva and Krétakör, and a young research team of sociologists and cultural anthropologists, Anblokk, worked together on a theatrical experiment aimed at creating local public spheres in two Hungarian villages. Each of these theatrical performances "sought to reflect creatively on the problems of local society and offered the audience this new "role" of reflecting on the stories, phenomena and symbols presented by the theater. The most common goal of the applied/participatory/social theater experiment in Hungary, which is new and unconventional in many respects, was to create public spaces and events where local social conditions and topics could be made visible, discussible and debatable."⁵

In 2018, we were seeking and winning partners for international cooperation whose work we admired, from whom we could learn, and who showed us that our experiences so far could be exciting and valuable at a European level as well. Our partners were curious and open to a collaboration that we collectively hoped would make the field of community theater more accessible, visible, and acknowledged from a civic education perspective.

The Staatsschauspiel in Dresden is the largest prose theater in Saxony. An integral part of the institution is the Bürgerbühne, whose program is characterized by a wide range of intergenerational productions based on content, aesthetic, social, and/or pedagogical aspects. What they have in common is that they all have citizens on stage. They plan, organize and fund five productions per year in the same way as they create any other production in the house, i.e., professional directors, playwrights, visual and costume designers, musicians assume the artistic direction and contribution, and all departments of the house support the planning and implementation. The productions are part of the theater's repertoire and are an integral part of the program. Apart from the big productions, the so-called "Clubs" have big relevance. Ten Clubs are realized in a season. Civilians taking part in these

4 In the same year, the Bürgerbühne in Dresden became a permanent part of the city theater.

5 In: Új Néző (New Spectator); Színház és Pedagógia (Theater and Pedagogy) vol. 7. (ed.: Horváth Kata); p. 7.

as well and “smaller” community actions, theatre projects are realized by them. In response to the “refugee crisis” at the beginning of the 2015 season, the Bürgerbühne opened the “Monday Café”, a weekly meeting point for refugees and Dresden citizens. In the 2016/2017 season, about 7,400 citizens visited the “Monday Café”.

The essence of Bergen Borgerscene's philosophy is to create performing arts productions based on real stories and to expand the audience's ideas of theatre. The project was initiated by Bergen International Festival in 2014, and Vibeke Flesland Havre has been the artistic director from the start. It is inspired by German and Danish community based theatre models, where the storytellers take part in the creative process of making a performance, and some of them are present on stage as themselves. The storytellers are “everyday experts”. They are not actors, but authentic people on stage. The purpose of the project is to create relevant and engaging theatre, cultivating a raw and unpolished expression and a natural way of speech. The framework around the performance is professional on all levels. The artistic team, consisting of a set designer, lighting designer, sound designer, video-designer and dramaturge, are professionals with long experience. This is to ensure high artistic value, and to create a safe environment for the storytellers. In recent years, Vibeke has held workshops in community-based theatres for professionals in Denmark, Sweden, UK, Hungary and The United States.

PARFORUM (Participatory Action Research Forum) was established in 2011 as a non-profit social organization to provide participatory evaluation services to other non-profit organizations in Hungary, especially those carrying out art-based projects. They mainly support marginalized social groups and communities. Since its inception, Parforum has developed a threefold profile:

1. Providing consulting and evaluation services for art-based social intervention projects.
2. Participation in developing pilot projects in the social and community arts.
3. Writing and teaching the methodology of art-based participatory action research, as well as offering fieldwork to university students in the areas of community organization, social research, and performing arts.
4. In addition, Parforum has gained significant experience in developing and coordinating the adaptation of self-assessment tools that community theater professionals can use in their work.

The four partner organizations haven't participated in similar strategic cooperation before. In recent years, they have managed to set up numerous community theater projects, but they haven't been involved in a collaboration specifically aimed at developing evaluation methodologies. This project combines the need for an evaluation system with the roots of the German and Anglo-Saxon community theater traditions.

Theaters working with different financial systems, organizational backgrounds, and scopes now compare their community theater projects analyzed in terms of adult education along similar dimensions and criteria. As far as we know, this is the first methodological handbook designed specifically for community theater professionals that also considers the social issues chosen by the collaborating partners.

It was a challenge for all participants to interpret the concept of civic education and, most importantly, to interpret it together. We didn't create a definition (we don't think it is even possible). We did try to interpret, reinterpret, rethink our concepts closely related to the idea of civic education, and articulate what all of this means to us as theater creators. We were able to accept that civic education is a viable way to teach people to become active members of society and understand their rights and responsibilities. In a situation like this, we work together as a team, as equal parties (even if theater creators are going to have a better understanding of the theater, participants may easily be experts in the issue placed in focus). We have identified with the idea that through civic education, participants are free to think in a co-created safe environment. It is an opportunity for them to respond to social injustices as they wish to. We have adopted the goal that, during the process, participants should be able to define their relationship to the micro and macro society they inhabit. This way individuals may start thinking collectively at a societal level, beyond their personal problems.

According to our shared view, civic upbringing is the involvement of members of society in activities aimed at learning about the concept of citizenship, which generate political activity. This process aims to develop a mutual understanding of equality, rights, and participation and their relevance in the community life of the civil actors involved.

Our project is related to current world trends in several ways. We can see the role of the state changing: for some time now, instead of supporting the overall operation, it has been providing project-based subsidies. In this situation, the role of analysis and evaluation increases, since it becomes an essential factor in decision-making that the processes and programs audited in some way may come to the fore. Related methodologies and guidelines have been developed in the UK and US. The evaluation of community theater projects focusing on social issues links to guidelines issued by English and American art organizations. For example, the unemployed are often not retrained for another profession, but their skills are enhanced with flexibility by artistic means, allowing them to get a chance at another

job.⁶ Community theater projects as adult training tools also build on these characteristics. There are community theater publications that prioritize Anglo-Saxon community theater traditions that have become almost entirely “extinct,” dissolved in healthcare/social care, or institutionalized settings.

There has already been much work done on the situation of international community theaters, but there has been no comparative analysis or “common core” formulated so far. Evaluation tools generally do not take into account the characteristics of community theaters/projects or the specificities of focusing on social issues. We considered these as a starting point in our project during the development process.

The goals, assessment processes, and concepts are detailed in many evaluation guidelines. However, they usually lack a description of specific know-how, so they are not directly applicable to a beginner community theater professional. They do not show us the existence of various monitoring options, tools, and methods, possible evaluation methods in certain situations, resources needed for implementation, and ways of making decisions on the method to use in a particular case.

We, therefore, aim to develop an evaluation system that we hope will be applicable to adult community theater projects of theater professionals and/or researching sociologists. Although community theater projects tend to focus on certain social and/or moral issues and are designed to have a short- or long-term impact on a particular community through collaboration, due to the lack of a general quality evaluation system and the duality of aesthetic expectations and social effectiveness, we are faced with the problems of evaluating similar projects.

In her book *Artificial Hells*, Claire Bishop writes that sometimes the perspectives of community or social art projects are stuck between two worlds. They resist artistic and aesthetic evaluation because of their community/social focus, but they likewise defy social-sociological impact assessment due to their artistic approach. All community theater projects dealing with social issues meet this framework. Our goal is to enrich community theater professionals by bringing these two worlds closer together. We want to give them a tool that not only expands their knowledge and makes their work more efficient, but also helps them to confidently communicate the well-grounded results and impacts of their work on the outside world.

The social significance of community theater lies in the fact that this method is based on the involvement of civilians, blurring the line between performers and non-performers. This theatrical form ensures that participants can actively shape the events as well as examine their own relationship to the question/problem in

6 A Hungarian example of this is the Art-Ravaló (About us- ART-RAVALÓ (artravallo.com) project based on the German JobAct program.

focus. These theater projects focusing on specific social phenomena allow participants to get to know themselves and their environment better than before through conversation, personal sharing of stories and experiences, and actions based on thinking together. They also help them see the world not as a static stillness but rather as a changing process. Community theater projects allow participants to make a real impact on events, to reflect on the events of the whole process and the specific performance, to contemplate on the moral/social issues raised, and, when necessary, to develop responses to them.

“A process quite similar to that in the UK took place in the Netherlands, where community theater grew out specifically from TiE, Theater in Education. The root of today’s community theaters is the Dutch TiE movement, which flourished in the ‘70s and ‘80s, primarily in the working-class neighborhoods of industrial cities. From ‘70 to ‘85, 28 TiE companies produced more than 300 performances. The decline of the movement can be attributed to several factors, but primarily (as in the UK) to right-wing politics gaining more ground, with associated arts policy that obstructed these companies from representing left-wing values in their work. At the same time, while these companies were still operating, there were attempts to co-create theater pieces with the “target group” instead of involving them in a readymade structure. They no longer called themselves TiE but community theater, and when the TiE groups disbanded, programs like this took their place.”⁷

Although community theater projects often focus on social issues, creators do not necessarily encounter the increasingly popular differentiated methods of sociological evaluation. This is true partly because these are, by definition, conducted by professional sociologists, and partly because most collaborations fundamentally lack a sociological approach. It is also true that few sociologists research art projects. Therefore, the main goal of our project is to create and share an evaluation methodology in a democratic system (on an equal footing between theater and sociology professionals) that is sociologically acceptable and effective, but also applicable by theater professionals in practice, even without the involvement of sociologists.

This manual focuses mainly on the so-called “pilot programs” and “process analysis”. It also provides a practical example of using the developed evaluation method. We want to ensure that the methodology is understandable, transparent, adaptable, and usable, not only for project partners but also for European community theater professionals in general, who address, among other things, social issues in their creative work.

7 In: Új Néző (New Spectator); Színház és Pedagógia (Theater and Pedagogy) vol. 7. (ed.: Horváth Kata); p. 29-30.

Our book archives development processes, but its function is more complex than that. It presents the realization of the project, its difficulties and lessons learned, community theater practices, and the work of the partners. We want to provide a background for understanding the project. We hope that describing community theater examples based on the same criteria will help professionals use the assessment methods in practical terms. Our volume is closely related to the evaluation exercise book (title), which aims to link evaluation-helping practices to each phase of the community theater process.



Community Theatre as a Tool for Citizenship Education - Terms and Concepts

Marton Oblath, Parforum

This chapter tries to sort out the various formats under the label of social and applied theatre among which Theatre in Education, community-based theatre, and Citizens' Theatre – traditions which consortia partners identify with – can be characterized and discussed in relation to citizenship education. First, I try to reconstruct how drama and theatre emerged as a tool for social transformation and highlight the educational elements of the presumed resultant social change. I will also emphasize that if social and applied theatre intends to accomplish its political assignment, workshop structures are to be reflected in the light of meanings of participation in the context of the contemporary configuration of subjectivities, theatricality, and the public spheres. Taking all this as a background, we may go through what distinguishes - and may tie together - the three branches of applied theatre in relation to their potential of citizenship education.

Theatre as a Tool for Social Change

Today, we see a burgeoning field of “social”, “community”, “participatory”, “educational”, and “popular” theatre, which is referred by the umbrella term of “applied theatre” or “applied drama and theatre” (Ackroyd, 2000; Nicholson, 2014). This formulation has been criticized, even by its introducers (Ackroyd, 2007; Neelands, 2007) for its tendency in erasing the social critique aspect of the referred theatrical traditions, and also because the term mobilizes an immense set of diverging meanings (Gjaerum, 2014). While “applied theatre” has obviously generated a new transdisciplinary discourse during the last decade about a complexity of tools with the promise of generating impact on various social relations, we may also recognize that specific genres and traditions of social and applied theatre identify their everyday practice mostly in opposition to the 20th century avant-garde and the so called “bourgeois theatre”. If we try to develop a sociological understanding of the toolbox and the opportunities which these theatres represent, we also need to take into account that both major authors in the sociology of arts (Arnold Hauser, Pierre Bourdieu, Howard Becker), as well as the classic sociologies of theatre (George Lukács, Serge Moscovici, Jean Duvinaud, Erving Goffman, Maria Shevtsova) domi-

nantly understand “theatre” as identical to the bourgeois theatre. In order to avoid any confusion that may result from the application of these concepts to applied theatre and to better understand the way how companies understand their own practice, first we have a look at this distinction.

As described by Raymond Williams (1981), “bourgeois theatre” is a historically specific communication system serving the structure of feelings of the bourgeois class of the industrial society. Naturalism, a characteristic to this type of theatre, from the 1860s developed as a laboratory on the stage where the enforcement of laws of nature and society can be performed, behind the fourth wall, without any intervention from the side of the audience. As gas lights are turned down, the feelings of the individual sitting in darkness and silence could be provoked. If the play is performed well, it puts representations on the stage in the immediate presence of the educated audience and so influences their senses (which could generate feelings that may lead to a catharsis that is the change in itself). Williams emphasizes that - whatever happened to the new theatrical buildings after the 1920s - the specific drama meeting the historical needs of the middle classes certainly left the theatre complex, and later reappeared on the television set (Williams, 1983).

From a historical point of view, it was the avant-garde that first challenged this model. It changed the setting of the event to smaller rooms (eg. Beckett), pushed back the audience from an emotional identification with the characters (Brecht), and turned the body of the actor into a surface of inquiry (Grotowski) (cf. Williams, 1989; Alexander, 2014). Today, what we refer to as social theatre emerges from this tradition. It shifted the focus to the audience as a social agent, bringing them on stage (Moreno, 1947), and even further into the production process (Brecht, 1929), while reconceptualizing theatre as a pedagogic space that is powerful in compensating - or even competing - the structural inequality of the bourgeois education system (Benjamin, 1929).

It is worthwhile to understand that all popular and community theatres of the 1960s and 1970s emerged from this tradition. Sharing these early aims they tried to bring drama back to the theatre by inviting the citizen and their stories into the production process.

They started by reconceptualizing the relationship between the actor and the audience. Augusto Boal put this issue forward by revoking his memories of a workshop he led in the 1970s with the well-known actors of the Comédie-Française in Paris (Boal, 2005). When he asked actors to step into the existing social roles in their theatre, they were fast in embodying directors, dramaturges, lightning specialists, ticket controllers, and audience members of many types. When he asked these figures to step into contact with each other, professional actors in audience roles found it impossible to get into any contact with any other of the evoked the-

atrical roles. This story is employed by Boal to exemplify the habitual inability of stage workers and non-stage workers to interconnect within the framework of the bourgeois theatre. Or, as Jacques Rancière has eloquently described, how theatre makes its audience inherently passive, where the relationship between actors and the audience develops similarly to that of the master and the pupil in the modern education system (Rancière 2007, cf. Rancière 1991). Theatres trying to have an impact on contemporary society share the commitment to leave the “bourgeois theatre of representations” behind, and primarily challenge the passivity of the audience. By doing so, the question of affects has been eliminated, while learning and action have become the focus of theatre-making.

The Educational Potential in Theatre and Drama

Different traditions of participatory theatre, though intermingling in practice, has tended to define their operation for change in different ideological pathways. Socio-critical initiatives rather conceptualize the aesthetic space of drama and theatre where models of social life can be seen, and new types of actions are probed. The founder of psycho- and sociodrama, J. L. Moreno (and in its theatrical branch called Play Back theatre developed by John Fox) conceptualizes his activities as an “action method” which liberates spontaneity in a way that repertoires of action can be renewed with no external control. Image theatre developed by Augusto Boal (2000, 2005) concentrates more on making all types of oppression visible for the participants. Recognizing personal oppressions as experiences shared with others, solutions can be discovered through “consientization” (as Paulo Freire would put it). This approach is tailored to make experiences of all types of oppression public and alterable at the same time. More contemporary, policy relevant projects subsumed under the term applied theatre often prioritize change on the individual level, emphasizing the gaining of specific competences and developing individual capacities. This is typical in drama-based processes with educational purpose delivered within the education system (like crime prevention, occupational, or life course orientation etc) (Nicholson, 1998; Jackson, 2010).

Beyond the above-mentioned differences, practitioners of applied drama and social theatre do share a set of presumptions about how social change is taking place in drama (or resulting from participation in theatre) as distinct from other types of art activities. Paulo Freire and Boal preferred visual and dramatic methods over writing, poetics, or academic forms of self-articulation by arguing that these mediums help avoid the exclusion of participants based on their educational background. Drama, as it makes use of the body, shows unparalleled potential in helping participants to articulate corporeal experiences – in contrast not only to poetic, but

also to visual methods. This helps link desired futures and lived experiences on the level of action. If no verbalization is required, drama may lead to a deeper level of self-consciousness, even an autonomous form of social inquiry (Leavy 2015, Peléias 2018). A more practical consideration in applied art activities for choosing drama over music and film is also related to its collaborative character though with the limited need of expensive instruments.

Participatory plays and the public sphere

Clair Bishop, who diagnosed the third wave of avant-garde (starting after the cold war, around 1990) as a period of participatory turn in the arts is rather skeptic about the massive impact of participatory projects (Bishop 2006, 2012). With respect to methods, she traces the roots of this wave of participation back in the community theatre movement of 1960s and 70s in the UK. According to her account, it revitalized and regenerated a wide repertoire of audience involvement, making participatory arts a laboratory of revolutionary activities. However, today she identifies a couple of structural constraints within the so-called “socially engaged artistic projects” that hinder them from achieving their promises today. The first ambivalence is related to the evaluative framework. Participatory art realized in a project framework tends to identify with art worlds and emphasize artistic claims when evaluated according to social impact expectations, but pretends to belong to mere social, or pedagogic experiments when confronted with aesthetic measures. Another constraint results from the conflict between the devising process and the piece of art produced in the process. While the first tend to concentrate on community level amateur knowledge and lived experiences (often resulting in no public product at all). Meanwhile the product, which may become evaluated in the arts field, is often cut off the process and becomes a projection of the professional artist, who uses amateurs as puppets, turning participatory art into delegated art (Bishop 2012).

The potential for change in theatrical presentations without drama workshops can be rather conceptualized through the relationship between theatre and the public sphere. Traditionally the theatricality of the public sphere is grabbed through the idea of traditional public sphere as developed by Habermas (1991 cf, Douglas Kellner 2010, P. Müller 2006.) This approach has been carefully relativized recently by Cristopher Balme (2014), emphasizing the agonistic character of the theatrical public sphere. (The concept of agonism is borrowed from Chantal Mouffe, who applied the concept to contemporary arts herself; Mouffe 2008) Pluralizing publics is a core element of participatory theatre presentations – the key which turns theatre into a viable tool for democratic political change. A participatory theatrical event always presumes in one form or another the potential

in making the unheard and unseen truth of marginal social actors accessible to the majority. By doing so, it also presumes a promise of not only pluralizing the public and making politics based on new truth (cf Rancière, 1999), but also helping amateurs (both as actors on stage and citizens in politics) to articulate themselves, and so become agencies in the realm of politics.

A more recent reconceptualization of the social change what theatre may generate is based on the idea what we may call theatrical adequacy. Though not founded by quantitative evidence, it is spotted by many authors that the number of socially engaged art projects is augmenting since the credit and fiscal crisis of 2009/10. Though some explain this phenomenon to the constraints of the art field which forces middle-class artists to search for a political coalition with the lower classes, Shanon Jackson (2012) recognized that this may be because drama is an adequate language in relation to the late modern reconstitution of the self (and the emerging liquidity of life, in more general terms, see Baumann, 2005). The capacity of performing (in general, see Mackenzie, 2001) and more specifically, the performing of identities in relation to structured situations has become a type of capital. The fragmented life course thus does not only need a dramatic framework as a mode of therapy (which relates the self to social networks), but the emerging culture of performing makes drama the adequate medium for both understanding and executing change in society.

Dramatizing Citizenship in the Education System

Emerging from the early community theatre movement in the UK, in 1965, Belgrade Theatre was the first Theatre in Education company started and financed by the local government of Coventry. It offered interactive theatrical sessions outside of the school building but with a clear pedagogic purpose. Focusing on a well-researched social issue and presented through fictional frames with respect to the age specificities of students, TiE sessions could enhance the dialogue among students (and teachers) with different social backgrounds about freedom, power, class, and identity. Until the early 1980s, the TiE movement played a significant role in enforcing the cultural inclusion of working-class students in the education system in the UK. By always giving voice and ascribing legitimate perspectives to socially marginal positions, the TiE movement did not intend to revolve, point the way, or solve social conflicts, but rather awaken students to unforeseen aspects of extreme situations and ethical dilemmas in more general terms. Through the interactive “openings” of TiE plays, students are able to embody other people’s experiences and try out multiple perspectives on complex issues in a safe environment. Its reflexive

conventions do not define what is right or wrong but try to enable a moral dialogue about controversial issues and enhance imagining active interventions.

TiE is strongly related to Drama in Education (DiE), a well-developed set of dramatic conventions building on dramatic exercises but involving students in collective thinking without presenting a staged play. During the 1970s, and 1980s, DiE was introduced in the National Curriculum in the UK making this experience-based moral education available in the English education system. Anthony Jackson reminds us that in the 1980 DiE practitioners struggled when they tried to go beyond the dominant transmission model of teaching, and get permission to enrich, rather than deliver, the curricula with new perspectives on citizenship in a child-centered way (Jackson, 2007:44). Helen Nicholson notes that this rivalry will probably not cease as the dramatic format will always shed light on the contested character of any normative notion of citizenship. She also emphasizes that this openness is resulting from participating in relevant situations, and the visible political activity of young people during the 2000s, can be explained as a consequence of the recognition of drama as a tool of citizenship education in the national curricula (Nicholson, 2014:20-22).

Both TiE and DiE concentrate on setting up the framework in which social issues can be raised as moral dilemmas and citizenship can be thought through the reasoned opinions of the students. Issues are certainly defined by the drama teachers (and by the curricula), but they need to meet the interest of the kids. If TiE and DiE intend to remain democratic in their practice and keep normative preferences about the content of citizenship open, they can still teach young people the feelings of “I care” and “I can do something about it” (Chan, 2013).

As we are going to see, Community-based theatre and Citizen’s Theatre interpret “participation” in a different way: they involve adults instead of youngsters and achieve this not through interactive apertures but by making them the cocreators of the play. By doing so the dialogic space of drama is transformed into an aesthetic space of collaborative stage work, which enhances citizenship education in a different way.

Community-Based Theatre - The Participation of Adult People in Theatre-Making

This is the point where one could return to the contemporary purpose and methodologies used by social and applied theatres in attempting to involve adult participants in the theatrical process. Eugen van Erven, who set the pathway for the scholarly reflection of community theatre practice (van Erven, 2002) recognized the emergence in the 1990s of an “increasingly popular cultural practice

that operates on the cutting edge between performing arts and sociocultural intervention". He coined the term "community-based theatre" to distinguish this set of artistic initiatives from both the amateur theatre movement in the US as well as from the "classic" community theatre in the UK.

Community theatre movement in the US emerged during the early 1930s and still maintains a well-organized nationwide network of local amateur and semi-professional groups. Its surviving format is an amateur theatre group presenting classical plays in local communities, usually applying professional directing and costumes. Community art initiatives in the UK in the late 1960s tried to revitalize a strong socially committed political agenda for community arts, including theatre. During the next decade, however, leading figures of the movement became professional drama-based service providers within different welfare sectors (such as the education system in the case of TiE). Another sector in which community theatre got transformed into professional applied theatre was international development. The so-called "Theatre for Development" (TfD) spread globally in the 1970s and '80s, and institutionalized theatre groups along with the development agenda put forward by Western democracies. (Prentki, 1998). When the idea of "modernization" was questioned in the 1990s, and corporate interests behind international development came under strong criticism (Escobar, 2002), TfD practitioners shifted to a new type of community theatre focusing on intercultural communication, delivered not only in "developing countries" but also in urban neighbourhoods of "developed" countries.

Van Erven diagnoses in the early 1990s a broad range of performance styles and dramaturgies but all comprises of a group of people who are socially "peripheral" and whose voice is culturally marginal. In Europe, he meets practitioners self-trained in the politically engaged community arts of 1960s who turned their attention to diversity issues and intercultural education in localities. These community theatres put on stage personal narratives developed in a reassuring atmosphere. They are concerned about the artistic process rather than making political claims public. But the process focus does have a socially relevant empowering effect on individuals taking part. In the US, he reports about self-help communities of traumatized people also presenting personal narratives in a collective ensemble. These presentations appear to be more concerned about helping the "subaltern" to speak for themselves in front of an open democratic audience.

The cases he collected circumscribe distinct practices for developing cohesive groups that offer a safe aesthetic space for presenting personal narratives. Beyond "storytelling", the community of storytellers can also appear on the stage but attach a deliberate ambiguity to the term "community", which is in accordance with the changing meaning of community in social sciences. About "Community", once referred to in sociology as something more authentic than society (cf. Tön-

nies), already Williams already emphasized in his Keywords that it has a positive connotation, but it lacks clear meaning. In the 1990s – at the time when community theatres were relaunched - Gerd Baumann suggested that the category of “community” always needs an anthropological elaboration with respect to specific local connotations and, more importantly, with a careful look into how communities make use of official (even social scientific) interpretations in a politically instrumental way (Bauman, 1996). In one of his influential essays, Arjun Appadurai also emphasized that communities never pre-exist but are rather constructed through politics and daily routines among the many social practices which produce localities (Appadurai, 1995).

Thus, the term “community-based theatre” aptly summarizes both the practice and the intention of these projects as well as offers a social scientific contextualization for how adults are involved in the process of theatre-making.

Citizens’ Theatre – An Experiment in Macro-Dramaturgy

A recently published volume about the contemporary interconnections between drama and citizenship education encounters the heterogeneous understandings of citizenship in citizenship education. As McGuinn et al. (2022) point out, citizenship education programs are usually designed from one of three perspectives: liberal approaches tend to focus on the rights of the individual, while the republican perspective emphasizes the duties of the individual in a public context; while the communitarian view gives priority to the pre-existing nature of communities that define individuals in relation to each other. McGuinn et al. conclude that due to the open structure of dramatic activities they should avoid implementing any pre-given societally framed set of objectives, and push forward one specific understanding of citizenship. Drama-based citizenship education may not need to take sides among these approaches, but recognize citizenship as an inherently contested concept. (p.12)

Different branches of social and applied theatre have in fact pursued distinct presumptions in their practice about the relationship between society, community, politics, and the performing self. Community-based theatre, as we have seen, is the closest in their presumptions to the communitarian approach, though they recognize that “the community”, which constitutes citizenship, is constantly becoming during the community theatre process. Community-based theatre helps individuals in forming a group that becomes capable of developing a representation of a particular community which, in turn, may offer a meaningful local notion of citizenship.

Citizens Theatre, at least in the beginning, aimed at overcoming the tradition of arts-mediation and aesthetic education, an ideal going back to Friedrich Schiller,

and still dominant in the German Theatrical field (Kricsfalusi, 2019). “Art mediation” consists of a set of dramatic and non-dramatic activities attached to “official” plays by “professional” theatres aiming to introduce a system of Theatre. It is also strongly related to Theatrepedagogik which is to make the esoteric language of dramatic text, stage performance and the backstage works, as components of the classic theatre accessible to students who are to become more theatrically literate. This approach may not only ensure the next generation of theatrically literate theatre goers, a trained audience for classic plays, but the resulting intimacy of high culture is also supposed to nurture educated and good citizens in general (Neudold, 2019). In contrast to this tradition, Citizens’ Theatre follows a less high culture-oriented and a more constructivist approach to citizenship. It tries to transcend the division of political worldviews mentioned above by giving priority to the activity and the visibility of the citizen. Citizenship is conceptualized here as a constantly rehearsed practice, an ideal that can be learned and realized through everyday enactments. When it proclaims itself a “participatory theatre”, it does not refer to interactivity, but to the involvement of non-professionals in stage work. Individuals are provided with an aesthetic space for rehearsing their civil experiences. Citizens are also to be seen and listened to by other citizens, though these two aspects are necessarily performed at the same time (Basteri and Tscholl, 2016). To explain this, we need more detailed insights into how the building blocks of Citizens’ Theatre have been put together.

Bürgerbühne (Citizens’ Stage) was launched in 2009 by Wilfried Schulz as a branch of the state maintained Staatsschauspiel Dresden and managed by Miriam Tscholl during its first decade. Parallel initiatives were also launched by several municipal theatres in Germany, the model quickly spread to Denmark (later also in Bergen, and Budapest) – though none of these have yet developed into the full complexity of the Bürgerbühne model.

The initiative in 2009 aimed at opening up the common model of state-run theatres by mobilizing a much wider audience. Addressing the whole of the urban society also needed a reflection of its heterogeneity, and a convincing framework that can invite “local citizens” into the space of the theatre building and help them to reappropriate it in a sustainable and meaningful way.

Therefore, Bürgerbühne runs a series of low threshold programs that turn the space of the theatre building into a community place. Montagscaffe, for example, offers free participatory activities, regularly inviting socially engaged participatory (interactive) theatre plays. Bürgerdinner invites different segments of the local society who may otherwise not encounter each other. These community programs offer a first glance at how inhabitants are imagined and would be involved in a public space as citizens.

The core of the model is the three months long theatre, clubs run by the theatre, facilitated by professional drama teachers but not intended as an actor training program. The rehearsal process taking place in the clubs may even not end up in a stage presentation. They simply offer room for performative self-expression, an opportunity to build new social ties, and may also strengthen community belonging among the local inhabitants. Some sort of solidarity training is also a part of the process: learning how to support others within a safe environment is a consequence that participants tend to report in their feedback.

Citizens' Theatre Clubs are promoted by a public institution with reference to a topic and a target group of participants, which are seen as underrepresented in the urban public sphere. Some of the clubs are dedicated to a specific age or to social experiences (e.g. first-generation immigrant women, homeless people, or people with disabilities). To avoid the reinforcement of stigmatizing labels, organizers try to introduce new categories of people who may newly recognize themselves as being called upon (e.g. "midwives", "fans of Dinamo Soccer Club", or "citizens who have too much free time").

The way how clubs are managed and become stable, cohesive groups resembles the operation of community-based theatres. Club performances, if are to be presented at all, can be showcased a maximum of three times per season and participants cannot return for the next season. In this way, approx. 400 citizens step on stage per season. The theatre presumes that each citizen on stage mobilizes 25 more citizens as audience members. Thus, during the last decade, at least 10% of the total population had the opportunity to take a part as "citizens" of the town.

In addition to weekly low threshold meetings and clubs, the theatre also developed five new repertory-play per season. In these cases, a team of dramaturges defines topics of relevance, well-known theatre directors with soft skills in managing amateurs are invited and citizens are selected. The choice of topic and the involvement of local citizens on stage must be well argued, otherwise the audience may think that professional actors might have acted the play better. This framework is to present a model for dialogue, diversity, and reconciliation among the citizens. An example of these pieces is *Meine Akte und Ich* (2013) which have had former Stasi (DDR Secret Service) employees and victims side by side on the stage. This is happening in a city which has become known as the hottest nest of extremist political movements. (Basteri and Tscholl, 2016).

Besides the Bürgerbühne model, similar initiatives took place in Glasgow National Theatre, which has added site-specific performances and organized touring in rural areas into this pool of procedures; in Paris 12th District Cultural center where philosophy seminars run by Alain Badiou accomplished the promise of citizenship education, in Grenoble, or in Aarhus local universities and theatres launched coop-

eration to frame drama based citizenship education programs. It seems that Citizens' Theatre initiatives can be interpreted as an experiment in macro-dramaturgy. Their institutionally commenced projects, in comparison to grass-root initiatives, focus on making use of what they already have. For this purpose, they try to re-imagine public spaces through a dramaturgic thinking about the heterogeneity of contemporary societies, in which the aesthetic space invented by social and community theatre programs is also accommodated in order to involve all sorts of social marginality in a collaborative education process about citizenship.

Recalling the warning put forward by Clair Bishop in the 2000s, we may rightfully ask what happens to the methodology designed in grassroots initiatives and socially engaged art projects when they are used and reframed in this institutional context. The theatre companies and the drama teachers involved in the present project have robust experience in Theatre in Education and Community-based theatre which now they try to implement through this macro-dramaturgic framework. What happens to lay participants as participating citizens in this learning process is the subject of the series of process evaluations worked out by the three companies.

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Community Theatre and Pilot project

Bürger Bühne Dresden

Katja Heiser

The Bürger:Bühne (“Citizen’s Stage”) at Staatsschauspiel Dresden was founded in 2009 by Miriam Tscholl and the then Creative Director of Staatsschauspiel Dresden, Wilfried Schulz.

The fundamental idea behind it is to give the citizens of Dresden and Saxony specific sections of the population, communities, and other groups a stage on which they can present their stories, experiences, and expertise under professional direction and in a performative and/or theatrical way.

Each season sees five productions brought to the stage by professional directorial teams and performed as part of the main Staatsschauspiel Dresden programme, with some productions running for multiple seasons. Festivals and special formats such as the Bürgerinnendinner – a “citizen’s dinner” that brings together people from apparently opposite ends of society – are also a feature of the Bürger:Bühne calendar. The most regular event is the weekly Montagscafé, a forum for intercultural encounters and events which was established in 2015 and is open to all citizens of Dresden – from those who have never left the city to those who have only just arrived.

The range of participative options on offer also includes around 10-12 theatre clubs per season. Known as “B:Clubs”, they are not preceded by a selection workshop and give participants the opportunity to engage in a variety of performative activities on a weekly basis. They are attended by a total of around 200 participants per season and end with a presentation of the results of their respective exploration of a specific topic or creative form. The joint development of a script and individual scenes is generally the main area of focus, with set texts tending to be used as a source of material rather than as a narrative framework.

Bürger:Bühne productions and B:Clubs alike offer citizens an opportunity to engage in cultural and political participation. Although education and social learning always have a part to play, the main emphasis is the creative exploration of a particular topic, question or piece of subject matter followed by the public presentation of the results thereof.

Citizenship education is therefore inherent in the Bürger:Bühne, not least because it sees itself as a platform for democratic and artistic processes and makes the basic assumption that creative exploration is always associated with a process of political or social learning – even in cases in which that process is not mentioned explicitly or formulated as a didactic objective.

I have been working at the Bürger:Bühne as a freelance theatre producer since 2010. The ten clubs I have led to date have included youth groups as well as clubs focusing on topics such as gender (Club der hellblau-rosa Bürger*innen / Club for Light-Blue-And-Pink Citizens), Big Data (Club der informierten Bürger*innen / Club for Well-Informed Citizens) and Fathers (Wir. Telemach / We. Telemachus – a play inspired by Homer's Odyssey). Since 2015, I have increasingly worked with intercultural groups and attempted to identify and explore topics that allow all participants to act as "everyday experts" who bring their own knowledge and experience to the table, for example, the Club der vielsprachigen Bürger / Club for Multilingual Citizens, Club der tragisch liebenden Bürger / Club for Tragically Romantic Citizens – from Hollywood to Bollywood and B: Club Familienbande / Family Ties.

This approach results in a type of exchange and learning among equals which highlights not only how enriching a diverse society can be for all citizens, but also that integration is not a one-way street. I believe that participative theatre should foster these ideas in the minds of participants and audience members alike. What is more, if suitable formats and theatrical means are identified, it is possible to arrange and intertwine what were originally personal stories in a way that reveals their broader social meaning. I see aspects of citizenship education in both cases.

The Pilot Project

Topic Selection

B:Club Zahlendreher was originally scheduled to take place as a pilot project in the 2020/21 season but had to be postponed by a year due to restrictions placed on cultural institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The premiere then also had to be postponed from March to May 2022. At the time of writing, it is March 2022 and we are still in the middle of the rehearsal process.

It was clear to me from the outset that I wanted to work with a club that was as diverse as possible in terms of the age and origin of its participants. In choosing the title "Zahlendreher" ("Transposed Figures"), I decided against a content-oriented topic in favour of a more formal research approach: what are the stories behind important numbers in our lives? Which numbers are significant to us as individuals, as a group, or as a society? This approach gives the B:Club plenty of room to manoeuvre in terms of content, regardless of whether the group's interests lie in personal stories or political issues. At the same time, it offers me a wealth of material for exercises based on games, research, and improvisation.

Furthermore, and bearing in mind that the objective of the Erasmus project is to research means of evaluation and measurement, even before I settled on an evaluation method, I had already hoped to be able to use numbers and statistics as measurement categories during both the creative process and the evaluation thereof.

The Group/Participant Selection

Ever since its inception, the Bürger: Bühne has made every effort to provide highly diverse sections of the population with opportunities for participation in a variety of forms. Since the establishment of the Montagscafé in 2015 at the latest, citizens who have migrated or fled to Dresden have become an area of particular focus. The Bürger: Bühne is nevertheless not diverse by default. Years of experience have shown me that the channels normally used to advertise clubs (e.g. the Staatsschauspiel website, newsletters, open evenings presenting forthcoming B:-Clubs, etc.) are not sufficient for the assembly of a truly diverse group, even in cases in which a group is explicitly sought. Additional channels are therefore required.

The number of prospective participants usually far outstrips the number of spaces available. As a general rule, I initially keep at least a third or, preferably, half the spaces in my clubs free and attempt to find the remaining participants by talking to them in person at the Montagscafé or in other contexts. My approach to the project at hand was no different, yet in this case, I was hampered by the extremely limited window available for the acquisition of participants outside the normal channels.

COVID-related regulations put a cap on the maximum number of participants in the B:Club. We started out with ten performers who were between 22 and 55 years old, originally from Syria, Afghanistan, Finland, and Germany, and had all lived in Germany for at least five years. Two participants left the B:Club for personal and/or professional reasons within the first few weeks. One of the spaces freed up was taken by a lady who was originally from Iran and had only arrived in Germany two years earlier.

Our participants came to us with a broad range of expectations. A number of them already had the experience of performing in a Bürger:Bühne context, but the majority were getting their first taste and had a particular interest in performing or, in some cases, making new acquaintances or speaking German.

The majority of participants still with us at the time of writing are between 25 and 35 years old and have almost all attended or graduated from a higher education institution. Three participants realized during the first few weeks that they all work at Dresden's University Clinic in a variety of capacities. The group's diversity, therefore, does not extend across all levels.

These characteristics and the relatively small size of the group have had a significant impact on rehearsals to date. Significant changes to normal logistics and communication processes as a result of COVID-related restrictions have also been a factor.

COVID-19

The measures put in place by the authorities and Staatsschauspiel Dresden in connection with COVID-19 have had and continue to have a substantial impact on the rehearsal process. The size of the group had to be cut from the normal 20 participants down to ten; our premiere had to be postponed from March 2022 to May 2022; rehearsals coincided with eight weeks of partial lockdown during which the club could only meet online; and, last but not least, current restrictions on analogue rehearsals dictate that sessions involving the whole group can only take place if participants are seated, distanced and stationary. These factors have influenced the entire process. A full weekend of rehearsals had to be cancelled, while a second weekend block took place with five participants rather than the full nine. One participant was unable to participate in anything but online meetings for three months because she was unvaccinated.

I have also had to adapt my working methods. Although my productions have always seen participants play a key role in content generation – whether by means of improvisation, associative exercises, scriptwriting work or questionnaires – in the case of Zahlendreher, the large number of rehearsals spent on Zoom or sitting in a distanced circle has caused us to spend far more time speaking and discussing the concept, potential topics and scenes than would normally be the case.

Interestingly, COVID-related restrictions only seem to have knitted the group closer together. It was participants themselves who came up with ideas such as replacing a planned day of in-person rehearsals (which would otherwise have been cancelled completely) with a themed, small-group treasure hunt through the city or meeting up for a private bonfire instead of a rehearsal. A joint Padlet was set up as a means of gathering ideas on specific topics, and each door of the online advent calendar suggested and managed by my assistant led to a daily question or task on the topic of “numbers”.

The difficulties and challenges associated with organising something approaching “normal” rehearsals seem to have encouraged participants to take more responsibility. They were very quick to achieve a good level of familiarity with one another, and throughout our time together, they have displayed reliability, mutual respect, and solidarity, for example, with the unvaccinated participant.

The extent to which this is attributable to COVID-related difficulties, the relatively small size of the group, the mix of participants within the group or a combination of those factors, is difficult to say.

The Process

Key Parameters

Rehearsals take place on a weekly basis and each last 2½ hours. They began in early October and are due to end in early May. From late November to mid-January, we had six online meetings, some of which were designed for the whole group and some for smaller groups. In-person rehearsals have been possible since mid-January, but are hampered by severe restrictions on the permitted number of active performers in the room as well as a high rate of illness-related absence.

The team consists of my assistant and me. Since February, my assistant has taken charge of warming up the group at the start of each session, after which he sometimes has to stand in for an absent performer. Conceptualization, rehearsal prep, the script, and direction are my responsibility. The assistant set designer allocated to our club is only available to join us from early April onwards.

Structure of Rehearsals / The Rehearsal Process

Each rehearsal essentially consists of four blocks, the weighting of which shifts as the production process progresses:

1. Warm-up: Use of a variety of games and movement-based exercises to ease the switch from everyday life to “rehearsal mode”, learn names, get to know participants, and warm up their bodies and voices.
2. Improvisation: Use of a variety of methods of improvisation and choreography as a means of learning and training theatrical skills such as presence, focus, movement, rhythm, observation, and receiving external feedback, some improvisations are later incorporated into scenes.
3. Research: Use of a variety of methods to generate material on specific questions: group brainstorming, development of short scenes in small groups, questionnaires, etc.
4. Production: Adaptation of the material generated for the stage, definitive casting, development, and staging of the script and running order, the definition of repeatable processes.

Blocks 1 to 3 – warm-up, improvisation and research – have been an integral part of rehearsals right from the outset. Slightly more time was allocated to the warm-up and improvisation blocks during the first few weeks as the participants were still getting to know each other and learning how they interact with one another. After that, the emphasis shifted towards research. We were restricted to online meetings during the early stages of *Zahlendreher*, and that meant that research was less playful and involved more discussion than normal.

The production phase began in early February once we had received the go-ahead to meet up in person once again.

The Concept

Numbers play a big role in our lives. Postcodes, shoe sizes, tax numbers. They might seem a bit dry and boring at first, but many numbers are the common element in a huge variety of stories. And sometimes a pie chart can explain fundamental issues, injustices, or absurd circumstances far better than a long lecture on the subject!

Are you an only child, or do you have eight siblings? How often have you been in love, and how long do you generally stay in love for? Do you live in the city where you were born, or thousands of kilometres away? How much money do you have on your account, and is there a correlation between your bank balance and your happiness? How many seconds old are you, how many do you think you've still got to come, and what is the probability that your prediction is right? What does Count von Count have to say on the matter? And what's the deal with the number 42 – the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything?

Our intercultural club aims to draw inspiration from numbers and explore the stories behind them.

All languages welcome. No previous mathematical knowledge required.

This is an English translation of the text used to announce the B:Club Zahlendreher. My basic assumption was that even such an abstract topic – which was essentially more of a form than a topic – would automatically result in the exploration of personal and social topics if the right questions were asked at the right moment and with the necessary attention to the responses that followed.

Each creative block begins with a set of questions and tasks for participants to tackle. Their responses result in the definition of new areas of focus, some of which are tried out and then rejected, while others snowball and eventually become repeatable, performable scenes.

Here are a few examples to illustrate:

Numbers with Personal Significance

This game starts like a number-based version of Fictionary/The Dictionary Game: the first player selects a number of particular significance to them, notes it down on a piece of paper without any context, units of measurement, or similar, and shows it to the other players. Each player – including the first player – then takes a blank sheet of paper and writes down a question to which the number could be the an-

swer. Once the sheets have all been passed to the first player, they read out all the questions and answer them using their number, including a unit of measurement where applicable. It is important that they treat all the questions equally seriously. The other players now have to guess which the first player's question was.

We played this game twice, once in person and once online. The first time we used it as an ice-breaker during our first rehearsal. By the time we played the game for a second time a few weeks later, the participants had got to know each other well, and this was reflected in the far more personal nature of both the stories told and, in particular, the questions posed.

Initially introduced as a game, this exercise exhibited so much potential that we continued to develop it for use on stage. On the one hand, it yielded personal stories about the players and got them thinking about the huge range of other stories that were also possible or conceivable in connection with the respective number. On the other, it sensitized them to the fact that their questions were based on characteristics they themselves had attributed to the person opposite them. The line between empathy and prejudice is sometimes very thin, and the audience is likely to realize this when they see the scene in question.

Overlapping Timelines

Each participant thinks of three important events in their respective dates. The participants then walk along the timeline together, pausing briefly to talk about their respective events. As time progresses the events overlap. To give an example, one participant's first day at school might coincide with another experiencing war and a third going on a long trip.

Group Statistics

Statistics have been an important part of our work right from the outset. Working in small groups, we assembled a set of questions and answered them anonymously. The resultant statistics on B:Club Zahlendreher included responses to typical questions about children, place of residence, language skills, and other more personal issues and judgements ("As a percentage, how female do you feel?") as well as questions of a more absurd nature.

The results have been incorporated into a scene that also examines the issue of voyeurism among audience members, who automatically ask themselves who gave which answer and make presumptions about the performers based on superficial attributions.

Counting with Fingers

Here again, this initially began as a game we played via Zoom during the online phase of the B:Club. On command, all players use their fingers to give a number between 0 and 10. If two or more players choose the same number, they have to do an improvisation together based on that number.

One thing we noticed was that we all gave numbers intuitively, but some of us used different combinations of fingers. We continued to research this topic by consulting family, friends, and the internet, which resulted in the development of a hand choreography featuring nine different ways of counting from 0 to 10.

Statistics III – B:Club Zahlendreher and COVID-19

The topic of group size and the number of active performers per cubic metre of rehearsal space is one we continue to be confronted with as a consequence of COVID-related rules governing the number of people who can take part in rehearsals and perform on stage. The catalogue of rules in place inspired us to create a choreography.

In contrast with the performative methods described above, research into other areas of thematic focus has generally occurred in small groups during phases when rehearsals can only take place online, for example:

- Can you measure emotions in numbers?
- The history of Indian/Roman/Arabian numbers
- Comparing and measuring bodies and life circumstances
- Numbers in music
- Numeric codes

Citizenship Education

Changes in Perspective and Empathy

The exploration of social issues is sometimes a planned element of rehearsals, but often entirely spontaneous. My main objective in the case of Zahlendreher is to use the diverse pool of experience and knowledge within the group to initiate exchange and changes of perspective that enhance mutual understanding and empathy among both the group and, later on, the audience.

This works best in situations in which personal experience is shared, for example during an exercise in which participants were asked to select a number and explain its significance to them. This yielded stories about the Persian calendar and the problem of always having to convert important dates into the German date system, a Russian swimming pool in a Syrian participant's hometown where lockers are

only numbered in Russian, medical values that dictate a participant's daily routine and a series of unsuccessful attempts to complete year 12 and gain a university entrance qualification while fleeing Syria.

Participants listened to each story with a high degree of interest and asked the storyteller empathetic questions. The same was also the case during a number of improvisation sessions as well as conversations that sometimes extended into breaks in rehearsals.

During the "group barometer" – an exercise during which participants indicated their response to a variety of statements by positioning themselves on an imaginary scale – the question of a correlation between responses to the statement "I am scared of the future" and the age of the respondent was raised. The statement "I feel privileged" led to a discussion about privileges in general, while the statement "Given the chance, I would change my past" sparked a debate on the difference between difficulties faced in an essentially self-determined life and those encountered under heteronomous circumstances.

Conversations about the term "heimat", the feeling of falling between two stools and neither belonging to one place nor the other, acculturation and experiences with racism arose with no prompting at all.

Some topics are picked up and developed into scenes, while others do not go any further than a short group discussion. The common foundation for all these interactions within the B:Club is a significant level of trust among the participants as well as between them, my assistant and me. I aim to ensure that communication and work processes are highly transparent, thus giving each participant constant and total control over which personal information they wish to remain anonymous and which can be shared with the group or disclosed to an audience.

One example of the great deal of mutual respect within the group came when a participant stopped on the timeline and said she had nearly died at the age of 13. A fellow participant asked her the following question: "Would it be OK to ask you what happened?" Her response was clear and self-assured: "No, I don't want to go into any details." So we simply left it at that.

Empowerment, Staging, Audience

Every story and every experience is worthy of being recounted. This became clear as early as the first round of personal stories told by the group, even though they were told as part of a game with no intention of telling the stories in public. By the time the next round of stories was told a few weeks later, it was already clear that we wanted to use them as material for a scene. It was up to each participant to decide whether or not they wanted to tell their own story on stage, in the end, they all decided they did.

Once stories have been selected for presentation on stage, it is a question of making them repeatable without losing the immediacy of the first, spontaneous time they were told.

Everyone and everything can be part of a performative situation, from the performer and the audience to sheer coincidence. The participants experience this time and time again during rehearsals. Many exercises and improvisation sessions see them grouped into performers and members of the audience, with each group encouraged to give feedback from their perspective.

It quickly becomes clear how much perception and interpretation occurs in the minds of the audience alone. There have also been instances in which somebody with no active, performative role in the scene – for example, the person responsible for calling out where the group is on the timeline – is perceived as part of the performance.

It is against this backdrop that interest in including some form of audience participation was voiced at a relatively early stage, as was the idea of grouping audience members according to their responses to a variety of questions and creating a set of audience statistics similar to those compiled for the members of the B:Club.

The statistics scene also sees the performers initiate a subtle yet clear form of indirect audience participation. Standing in a row facing the audience, they make statements such as “Three of us have cheated on a partner” or “One of us would spend €1,000 on cosmetic surgery.” This plays with the topic of voyeurism and the attribution of superficial characteristics by the audience, which was discussed with the performers during rehearsals in order to ensure that they are fully aware of the nature of their role in the scene.

Other examples of citizenship education that can be explored in a participative project of this type include knowledge of theatrical effects, tools and methods as well as the confidence to stand in front of an audience displaying one’s own body and telling one’s own story.

The Role of the Director

The basic premise that a performative club, such as our B:Club, focuses on a particular topic, piece of source material or form and is guided by a set of carefully selected questions that each leads to a process of research and learning is dependent on an environment in which we all – participants and team alike – contribute on equal terms. In my role as a director, I am always delighted to take on board suggestions and content offered by performers and integrate it into the rehearsal process.

The extent to which this works varies from group to group. In the case of B:Club Zahlendreher, I have received and continue to receive a comparatively large amount of input and ideas from our participants. One particularly special moment for me as a director came during a period when we could only meet online. The group suggested that an intensive day of rehearsals we had planned well in advance should not be cancelled or held on Zoom, but instead replaced with a themed treasure hunt through the city. Planning and implementation were the joint responsibility of the whole group, and the hunt ended with everyone meeting for a bonfire in my garden. This shows just how fluid the dividing line between professional and private contact between me and the participants is.

On the other hand, it is me who sets the main topic for the club and holds responsibility for the planning and delivery of rehearsals. The fact that I select our exercises and questions also gives me a certain level of control over the direction the process takes.

The emphasis shifts once production is under way. During this phase, I see it as my responsibility in my capacity as a director and theatre professional to ensure that the selection and use of artistic means to shape, condense and lend focus to the content generated is conscious and transparent. Among other benefits, this approach gives performers insights into not only the staging of performative and/or theatrical content, but also the effects that can be achieved. As such, I essentially see myself as a guide who provides the instructions that steer the production process. The same also applies in the case of scene selection and the definition of a narrative thread.

Evaluation

There is no doubt that aspects of citizenship education such as participation, taking new perspectives, empowerment and the enhancement of empathy are a features of performative projects such as Zahlendreher. Yet is it possible to measure the changes that occur? Participants already bring a wealth of experience and expertise with them due to the diversity of the life circumstances that shape and influence them. As such, it is very difficult to measure fundamental changes that are definitively attributable to their work within the context of the club. It would probably require the regular monitoring and assessment of participants both well in advance and after the end of the project, ideally by external assessors who are not involved in the rehearsal process. This was unfeasible for us.

Over the course of the B:Club we have tried out a number of playful, unscientific methods of evaluation and measurement.

When participants check in and out of each rehearsal, they are asked to use a pipette to contribute to a “mood barometer” consisting of a large water glass into

which each participant drips three drops of ink (blue for negative, red for positive and a mix of both colours for somewhere in between). To varying degrees, the check-in and check-out glasses for each rehearsal have all indicated a shift towards the red end of the spectrum between the start and the end of the session.

A number of the exercises and games we have used to date are based on participants responding to specific statements on a scale of 0 to 10. We nevertheless tend to employ them as a way of initiating the discussion of a particular topic or question rather than as a method of quantitative or qualitative measurement. One such exercise has been adapted to create a scene in which audience members are asked to respond to questions such as "Are feelings and states of mind measurable?"

Process Analysis as an Instrument of Evaluation for Community-Based Theatre

Our research within the context of the Erasmus project focuses on process analysis, which is an evaluation method based on the observation and description of work processes. This includes the keeping of a detailed rehearsal diary.

Above all, I am keen to work in the same way as always and not allow group-specific questions and issues to change my *modus operandi*. My previous productions have always adopted a process that emphasises the observation and development of ideas and stimuli that come from participants themselves, but in the case of B:Club Zahlendreher, the keeping of a diary has lent my observations greater detail and structure. Above all, it raises my awareness of all the little incidents and conversations that are not directly linked to the production process and enhances my ability to not only memorise specific situations, but also retrieve them weeks or even months later.

Conclusion

The results of the aforementioned process analysis showed pilot project B:Club Zahlendreher to exhibit various aspects of citizenship education. The measurement of those aspects, in a way that facilitates quantitative comparisons between these various aspects, nevertheless proved to be extremely difficult.

B:Club Zahlendreher is still in production at the time of writing, yet it is already clear to see that the work we engaged in with the group has been and continues to be special. The participants are extremely thoughtful, responsible and exhibit a high degree of trust and reliability in not only their interaction with one another, but also their perception of and participation in the production process and the final result thereof. Although this is not unusual in the case of productions of this type, this group is particularly striking in this regard.

There are several potential reasons for this behaviour of the participants. The relatively small size of the group has undoubtedly had a positive effect, while, on the

other hand, COVID-related circumstances have hampered out work, but may have hampered our work on the one hand, but may have fostered a greater sense of unity and responsibility on the other. The third possibility is that my increased level of attention to the group and its individual members as a result of enhanced observation and reflection in connection with process analysis has had a tangible effect.

There is still another month of rehearsals, dress rehearsals and performances to go, and during that time the group and I will continue to gain a wealth of experience in terms of both theatre and citizenship education.





Bergen Borgerscene

Vibeke Flesland Havre, Hjordis M. Steinsvik

The first time I involved unprofessionals on stage was in 2011, when I created a performance called "The End - a Gentle Reminder". We produced this performance in Os, a small town outside Bergen. I decided to invite the local male choir to take part in the performance. This was both to root the performance in the local society, but also as an artistic choice. The normality of the members of the choir and their voices created a special nerve.

The result was that we eliminated the gap between the audience and the performers. By balancing on the borderline between fiction and reality, we created a disturbingly real scenic expression. We saw a great impact on the audience. As family and friends of the performers came to see the play, we also attracted a new audience that had never been to the theatre before. This was the start of my work with community-based theatre.

Vibeke Flesland Havre

The Beginning

In 2014, the director of Bergen International Festival (Festspillene i Bergen), Anders Beyer, invited artist and theatre director Vibeke Flesland Havre to create a "Burgerbuhne" in Bergen. Beyer was inspired by the Burgerbuhne in Dresden and the Danish "Borger Theater" or "Citizen Theatre".

Havre went to the Burgerbuhne festival in Dresden in May 2014 to do research. She also talked with a lot of different theatre professionals, dramaturgs and performers from Germany and Denmark, and saw a variety of Burgerbuhne performances from various cities. The Bergen model is highly inspired by the work of Miriam Tscholl, the founder of the Burgerbuhne in Dresden.

In the end of May 2014, Havre installed herself in a small caravan in the central square in Bergen and invited people to tell their story. They got a free cup of coffee if they shared a story from their own life. The slogan for this performance was: "Everybody has a story to tell!" Outside the wagon, the chat was more casual. Inside the wagon, Havre filmed and recorded their stories. This was the beginning of Folkets Festspillscene (later renamed Bergen Borgerscene). During the next year, we continued working with some of the storytellers who had visited the wagon, and in 2015 Havre presented a performance based on their stories: "Once Upon a Human Being" (DNS/FiB 2015).

During the autumn 2014 and spring 2015, Havre also visited Århus, Ålborg and Copenhagen to learn about different practices of "Citizen Theatre". Based on this and her own work in Bergen, she created a manifesto for the work of Bergen Borgerscene.

Manifesto for Bergen Borgerscene

1. The purpose of the project is to create **relevant** and **engaging** theatre based on people's stories, thoughts, fears, hopes, dreams and ideas. In this way we hope to capture the zeitgeist, and create theatre in a new and inspiring way,
2. The **storytellers take part in the creative process** of making a performance. Some of them are also present on stage as themselves.
3. The storytellers are "**everyday experts**". They are not actors, but authentic people on stage.
4. By putting real people on stage, we are **cultivating a new, artistic expression**. We are **looking for truth**, and therefore cultivating a raw and unpolished expression and a natural way of speech.
5. By putting real people on stage, we are also **eliminating the gap between the audience and the performers**. This changes the way the audience interacts and responds to the performance. We want to challenge the relationship between the stage and the audience, and in this way, create new scenic expressions.
6. We encourage the storytellers to "**talk without fear, and listen without judgement**". During the process of creating a performance, we build the confidence and skills of each and everyone so that they can talk to a big group of people in their own, unique way. By doing this, we hope to inspire the audience to voice their opinions as well, and listen without prejudice. This is part of what we call "**the democratic responsibility of the theatre**".
7. By encouraging people to use their voice, we hope to encounter an active **democracy**.
8. The storytellers need no former theatre experience. The important thing is that they are **fit to work as part of a team**, and go through a challenging, personal process. To ensure this, we start by arranging a **series of storytelling workshops**. These are free and open to all people. After a series of workshops, we recruit a group of people for the performance.
9. The framework around the performance is **professional** on all levels. This is to ensure **high artistic value**, and to create a **safe environment for the storytellers**.
10. To ensure the artistic value of the project, the **creative team**, consisting of a set designer, lighting designer, sound designer, video-designer and dramaturg, are **professionals with long experience**. We also cooperate with the other departments at the theatre, with a stage manager and a producer.

11. The storytellers work closely together with the artistic team during the process of creating the performance. In this way, all the levels of the performance are **inspired by the storytellers and their realities**: the visuals, the costumes, the movements, the soundscape and even the theme of the performance is coming from the storytellers.
12. **The process is for the participants. The performance is for the audience.**
13. The director is leading this process in a careful way, taking all the **ethical concerns** needed to protect the storytellers and other people involved in their stories.
14. The storytellers have **ownership** of their own stories. The stories cannot be used without the storyteller's agreement.
15. By allowing people with different backgrounds and experiences to talk about their reality, we hope to give the audience **insight and new perspectives**. This is part of what we call "**the social responsibilities of the theatre**"
16. We want to reach a **new and diverse audience**. By involving people from different backgrounds to take part in the performances, invite their friends and families to see the play. Very often, these groups have never been to the theatre before.
17. Balancing at the borderline between fiction and reality, we challenge the existing understanding of **what theatre is, and what theatre can be**. The aim is to create **new scenic expressions**.
18. By weaving the stories together in an artistic way, we create a **new and different story**. This is the story we present to the audience. The professional artists involved in the process make it even more interesting.
19. By presenting performances based on real life stories with real people on stage, we hope to **expand the common understanding of what theatre is**.
20. We want to **challenge the audience** by creating new contracts between the audience and the performers, and by presenting theatre that is way more **honest** than the way we present ourselves in real life. In this way, we hope to contribute to a more open society with an **increased sense of freedom of speech**.

The Performances

In 2015, Bergen Borgerscene's first performance "Once Upon a Human Being" premiered at the National Stage in Bergen (DNS) during the Bergen International Festival, and in the spring of 2016 "A place in the Sun" followed. In its first years, the project (initially called Folkets Festspillscene) was a collaboration between Bergen International Festival (FiB) and The National Stage (DNS). Vibeke Flesland Havre has been the artistic leader of the project from the start in 2014,

and from the autumn of 2016 her enterprise VFH-productions took over both the financial, practical and artistic responsibility. The project has since been named Bergen Borgerscene and created the performances "HappyLife" (2017/2018) in collaboration with DNS, "On the Dole" (2019) in collaboration with DNS and FiB, "A Counter-Performance" and "Family" (2021) in collaboration with DNS, and the recent performance "Quarantine-Thoughts" (2022) in collaboration with DNS. All the performances have been very well received by the audience.

The Storytelling Workshops

People have always told stories. Storytelling is an important part of our cultural heritage, and a tool for understanding the society we live in. In a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, it is important that we listen to each other's stories. This promotes understanding and expands our horizons. Storytelling is the very basis of our work. Bergen Borgerscene has divided the process into two parts, with storytelling workshops during the autumn, and the production of a performance during the spring.

The storytelling workshops have a purpose of their own. They are free and open to everyone. It is a forum where people can discuss topics they think are important, share stories and listen to each other. The workshops are led by professional theatre workers and highly inspiring for the participants. The aim is to give the attendees insight and new perspectives, simultaneously as they learn to voice their opinions and listen with respect. We encourage the storytellers to "talk without fear and listen without judgement". We believe this is the very basis for an active democracy.

We aim to reach a variety of local communities and invite different people to take part in our storytelling workshops. We want to create a meeting place for people with different backgrounds. By putting people together, who would normally never talk to each other, we hope to create respect and understanding between people.

Each series of storytelling workshops last for 8 weeks. We meet once a week, and the workshop lasts for 3 hours. The participants can attend as many workshops as they like. Sometimes we invite different facilitators and work on different themes (slam-poetry, improvisation, podcasts, street-art, writing etc.) In this way we hope to attract a variety of people and challenge the participants in different way. We try to build a safe and good environment at the same time as we work on different techniques to enable the participants to voice their opinions. In this way, the storytelling workshops contribute to citizenship education and freedom of expression.

The Process of Making a Performance

Even though the storytelling workshops have a purpose of their own, they are also the starting point for creating a performance. The artistic team takes part in the workshops and gets ideas for themes, angles, and artistic concepts for the next performance. By getting to know the storytellers, they also get a better understanding of their true potential. We get into the depth of the stories, and this is where we all can relate to each other. In this way, the storytelling workshops contribute to creating relevant and engaging theatre, at the same time as the participants learn a lot about themselves and each other.

Throughout the storytelling workshops, the artistic team also recruits storytellers for the next performance. The workshops give us an opportunity to get to know the storytellers before we involve them in the process of making a performance, to make sure they are fit for the task. After ending a series of workshops, we contact a number of participants, inviting them to be part of the performance. (About 7-15 participants).

We start to work with this smaller group in a new series of workshops, meeting once a week for the first couple of months, and then 2-3 times a week as we get closer to the performance. We build a safe group, and urge the participants to share their stories, thoughts, dreams, and reflections. To help the storytellers talk about various themes, we use different methods. We may ask them to bring different things to the workshops (like their favourite book or a personal photo) or provide different items to inspire their memories and thoughts (photos, maps, materials, different smells, music etc). We also practise reading each other's stories, and breaking them up in various ways.

We make audio-recordings from the workshops, transcribe the recordings, edit them and start to put them together to create a bigger story. In the editing process, we work closely with the storytellers to make sure we don't change the story, or put it into the wrong context. We also have a lot of ethical questions in mind when we prepare the stories for the stage. Usually, we don't talk about a third person who is not present, but focus on the storyteller's experiences, reflections and thoughts.

We rehearse and play with the scenes in various ways before we put them together in a script. We have tried out various strategies, but ended up with a written script. In this way, we maintain rhythm and timing throughout the play. It also makes people feel more comfortable knowing exactly what they are going to say, and we can avoid people telling more than they are comfortable with in front of an audience.

The artistic team gets inspiration by listening to the stories told at the workshops. The visual landscape is also defined by the participants and their stories. Together with the director, the artistic team tries to find an artistic concept based on the stories, and add layers to the performance. Apart from planning and leading the

workshops, the artistic director's work consists of transcribing the recordings and putting together the script. This is a time-consuming process where the director works closely together with both the dramaturg and the creative team as a whole.

Bergen Borgerscene has this far made seven performances:

“Det var en gang et menneske” / “Once Upon a Human Being” (FiB/DNS 2015)

- About what made us who we are today, and who we were before.

“En plass i solen” / “A place in the Sun” (FiB/DNS 2016)

- About social inclusion/exclusion.

“Lykkeliv” / “Happylife” (DNS 2017/2018)

- About the lives and dreams of 15 young people between the ages of 16-21.

“NAV betaler” “On the Dole” (DNS 2019)

About unemployment, and how it affects people.

“En motforestilling” / “A Counter-Performance” (DNS 2021)

- A new story about the future, with young people between the ages of 16 - 21.

“Familien” / “The Family” (DNS/METEOR 2021)

- A co-production with Theatre Zebu (Denmark) and Anemarie Ottosen (Greenland)

- About the family as a concept. With young people between the ages of 18 - 25.

“Karantenetanker” / “Quarantene Thoughts” (DNS 2022)

- About different shades of reality during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Topics

In the first two performances, we invited people of all ages to join the storytelling workshops, and came up with the topics after listening closely to their stories. In “Happylife” and “A Counter-Performance”, we specifically recruited young people between the ages of 16-21, and allowed them to define the topic for the performance. In “On the Dole”, the topic of unemployment was set from the beginning but inspired by former storytelling workshops where the topic came up frequently. The topic of “Quarantine-thoughts” emerged as a result of a special situation in society that had an impact on most people's lives.

The Visual and Auditory Landscape

All the performances are a result of a devised process where the director, scenographer, lighting-designer, sound-designer and video-designer follow the process closely to find inspiration for the visual and auditory landscape. In “Once Upon a Human”, the stage was set as a bar. This bar was very important to one of the story-

tellers, and it became the setting for the other stories as well. In "A place in the sun", the stage became a beach in reference to the global refugee situation. In "Quarantine Thoughts", the elements of wood, water and air were frequent in many of the stories, and these also became the elements we referred to visually on stage.

In "HappyLife", the story of the teenagers was set in a limbo between a classroom and a waiting room. The group turned out to be into dancing, so we hired a choreographer and worked a lot on the physicality of the group, as well as the musicality of the performance as a whole. Some of the kids were into writing poems, and some were really good at making music and playing guitar. We put all of this together, and created scores for some of the lyrics they came up with, as well as choreography.

One storyteller from "On the Dole" had lived parts of his life in a carriage in the woods, and this carriage formed the basis of the set. The performance started outside the theatre, where some of the performers handed out forms to fill in, and where everybody got a queue number. The performance ended around a fireplace outside the theatre, where the audience was offered coffee by the performers, and continued the discussion that was started during the performance.

Citizenship Education

People have an urge to tell their stories. Creating a safe, professional place where people can do that, is urgent in today's society, and a way of maintaining the democratic responsibility of the theatre. By giving people a voice and listening to what they have to say, we seem to empower people. We also find that the participants tend to get more empathetic towards other people and become more engaged in other political, local or environmental issues after being part of the workshops.

We talk with the participants about how we shape our identity by the stories we tell about ourselves. What stories do we need, and which ones can we leave behind? Are you the hero in your story, or the victim? Maybe you can change this? By helping the participants to re-shape their identity through the way they talk about themselves, we have managed to empower them to change their lives in a positive direction.

One person, who had a long history of depression, managed to change his life completely. After being part of the "A place in the Sun" he became a true resource, and he is now working full time to help other people with mental problems. He is also a resource person on information meetings, workshops and other arrangements by Bergen Borgerscene.

All the young people involved in "HappyLife" also had positive personal experiences. They all got empowered by the process, they got higher self-esteem and they reported better results at school after the performance. They also got to know young people they would normally never meet, and developed a deeper understanding and empathy for other people.

It seems that Bergen Borgerscene makes both the storytellers and the audience believe that they matter, and that they can make a difference. This is one of the main reasons we think our work is important.

Ethics

We have a continuous and open talk about ethics throughout the process. We always start by having everybody sign an agreement of confidentiality, and we discuss the difference between private and personal with the storytellers and the artistic team. The storytellers have full ownership of their own stories, and the stories cannot be used without their agreement. We are very careful to protect both the storytellers and the people they talk about. We also make it very clear that we are theatre professionals, and not therapists. Still, telling stories from your own life may evoke strong emotions, so we encourage the storytellers to have somebody they trust outside the theatre to talk to about their own process, a friend, family member or a therapist. The aim is always to protect the storytellers and the people involved in their stories, and to make sure the facilitators don't get too involved in the storyteller's private life.

The process is for the people involved, and the performance is for the audience. The process is all about the storytellers, their stories, reflections, and emotions. The performance is all about the audience's stories and emotions. The stories told on stage are merely hooks that the audience can put their own experiences on.

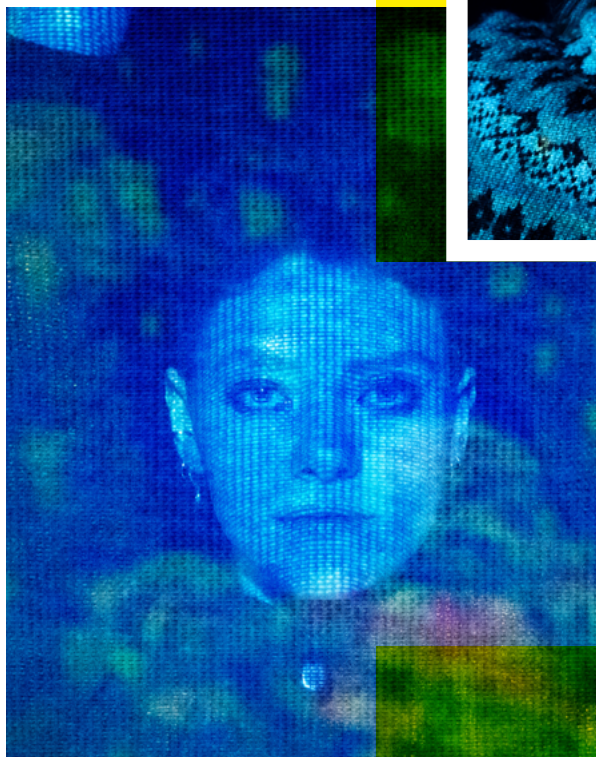
The Audience

Putting "ordinary people" on stage attracts a new audience. The storytellers invite their friends and families, and we also invite all the people who have attended the storytelling workshops and former performances. As a result, we attracted a new and varied audience to the theatre. We have also received positive feedback for putting on plays that are highly relevant, different, honest, and raw. In this way, we also attract a new audience.

We arrange aftertalks(post-performance interactions) after most of the performances, where the audience can ask questions and bring their personal reflections. Sometimes we invite relevant organisations to take part in the aftertalks. After "Quarantine Thoughts" we invited representatives from both "Mental Health Norway" and "Nature and Youth" to be part of the aftertalks. After "On the Dole" we invited the audience into a big lavvo (tent) with a bonfire after every performance, to share their stories and reflections upon the performance. In this way, we gave the audience a voice, and the gap between the audience and the storytellers was eliminated.

By balancing on the borderline between fiction and reality, we have managed to change the contract between the audience and the performers, and by doing this, we asked some profound questions: What is reality? What is theatre? What are we allowed to do on a stage?





The Pilot Project: ERASMUS +

In 2019, Bergen Borgerscene got involved in an Erasmus + project together with Kava Kulturális in Budapest and Dresden Burgerbühne. Together, we tried to define ways of evaluating citizenship education in community theatre. To try out the different evaluation tools, we all did an individual pilot project.

The Topic: COVID

As the whole project was very much affected by the regulations set by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bergen Borgerscene decided to make covid the theme of the pilot project. In 2020, we invited people to send us stories, thoughts, and reflections about COVID-19, and tell us how the pandemic affected their lives. We encouraged people to keep sending us both written text, videos, and audio-recordings from their lives during the pandemic. In this way, we tried to get an understanding of how different groups were affected differently by the pandemic, and we decided to make a performance portraying a variety of realities.

Recruitment:

We invited people by using social media, but also by inviting groups, organizations and individuals to take part in the project. In December 2021, all the people who had sent us material were invited to attend storytelling workshops at the Litterature house in Bergen. We also invited all the people who had attended storytelling workshops before, or participated in former productions.

Storytelling Workshops in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of COVID-19, it was difficult to make people attend the workshops. We arranged three open workshops, and 20 people attended in total. Each workshop lasted for three hours. We had to wear masks and keep two metres distance between the participants at all times. Due to this, we could not move around as a group or work with physical exercises the way we usually do.

Still we had some really good storytelling workshops, where the participants shared stories and reflections about the two years since the pandemic started. We asked the participants to make a timeline over the pandemic, and divide the timeline into chapters with headlines and subtitles. In this way, they organised their memories, and came up with new stories and reflections about this period. We made audio recordings to document the workshops, and we transcribed the parts we found especially interesting and used these as a starting point for the performance.

Indicating Engagement, Empowerment and Empathy

For every storytelling workshop and every rehearsal, we made people write a number describing how engaged they were at the beginning of the workshop, and how engaged they were by the end of the workshop. (In Norway, we use engaged as an adjective. We can talk about a person who is engaged in general, meaning interested, awake and positive.) The number was always higher at the end of the workshop, indicating that the participants were more engaged after attending a workshop.

We also tried to measure how empowered the participants felt, by having them cut a piece of rope to a certain length describing their self-esteem when they arrived, and their self-esteem when they left the workshop. The result was that the rope was longer when they left, indicating that their self-esteem had increased during the workshop.

We also tried to measure people's empathy towards others. We had them put drops of red paint in a jar as they arrived, indicating how empathetic they felt towards others. We repeated the experiment in a different jar at the end of the workshop, and the colour of the jar was a lot darker by the end of the workshop than in the beginning, indicating that people gained empathy during the workshop.

We repeated these experiments for every storytelling workshop, both with the big group in the beginning and with a smaller group working towards the performance. (We always divided the sum of the number indicating engagement and the length of the rope indicating self-esteem by the numbers of participants to get a correct indication.) The result was always the same. The storytelling workshops seemed to increase the participant's self-esteem, make them more empathetic towards others, and in general more engaged in life. Even though our experiment is not scientifically valid as such, we see a positive tendency towards empowerment among the participants. We believe that this way of empowering people is a kind of citizenship education and that the people who participate in these kinds of activities hopefully will become more active citizens in the future.

The Group:

After arranging three open storytelling workshops in December 2021, we continued to work with a smaller group of only 8 people in January. We tried to make the group as diverse as possible, inviting people of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds. We also tried to choose people who seemed to be psychologically fit for the task, and who had the ability to cooperate with others in a positive way. We ended up with this group of storytellers:

Jan-Kåre Breivik - age 59, anthropologist working at the university of Bodø

Sunniva Liserud - age 18, high school student

Vegard Sandnes Larsen - age 43, disabled due to multiple sclerosis

Siri Ansok - age 43, unemployed

Luca Fossen - age 20, student

Inger Christine Årstad - age 53, leader of a national culture-organisation

Klaus Jørgensen - age 46, classical pianist

Johanne Magnus - Age 37, writer

This turned out to be a very good, supportive group who had experienced the pandemic in very different ways. We tried hard to find some storytellers with a minority background, but this time, we did not manage to find anybody who had time to be part of the project.

The Process:

The group met weekly during January 2022, and twice a week in February and March. We also had some weekend rehearsals. We had 24 physical storytelling workshops/rehearsals all together. In addition to this, we had several zoom meetings, and the director had individual zoom meetings interviewing the storytellers one by one. All workshops and meetings were recorded, and the highlights were transcribed to make the outline of a script.

The artistic team visited all the storytellers via zoom, to get an idea of the different homes and to get to know the storytellers better. They also took part in the physical rehearsals and met frequently to discuss the artistic concept, possibilities, and challenges. The director and producer had weekly meetings as well. They planned the workshops in detail, communicated with the storytellers, and made sure we had rehearsal space, materials, coffee/tea, etc.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the rehearsals were cancelled, and the premiere of the performance was postponed by two working days. As a result of COVID-19, we hardly ever managed to gather the whole group, as one or two people usually were ill during the rehearsal period. Luckily, everybody recovered in the end, and we managed to perform 6 evenings as planned.

Bergen Borgerscene does not have a venue of its own, and especially during to the COVID-19 pandemic, this became a challenge. The National Stage lost their rehearsal rooms due to renovation, and we had to rent a variety of locations in Bergen for rehearsal purposes. We realised that the need for proper rehearsal rooms is important to create a safe environment for storytelling workshops.

Different Levels of Work

1. **EMPOWERING:** Building up each storyteller so they have sufficient self-confidence to relax on stage.
2. **TEAM BUILDING:** Building a good group/ensemble where everybody trusts each other.
3. **TECHNIQUES:** Speech, diction, physical awareness, presence, relaxation techniques, etc.
4. **STORYTELLING:** Gathering stories, dreams, and thoughts during workshops.
5. **INTERVIEWS:** One-to-one interviews with all the storytellers. Approx. 1,5h pp.
6. **TRANSCRIBING:** We record and transcribe all the stories and discussions we have during the workshops. This is a time-consuming process. Everything we discuss during the workshops is recorded, and if interesting, transcribed.
7. **SELECTION:** Together with the artistic team, we select what parts of the stories/dialogues/reflections/interviews we find most interesting. We start to build a bank of stories and reflections that we can use in the script.
8. **EDITING:** The director and the dramaturg edit the parts we include in the final script. We leave the language oral and raw, but cut excess words etc.
9. **ARTISTIC WORK:** Putting the stories together in an artistic way to create a bigger story involving visuals, lighting design, sound design etc. Finding an artistic concept together with the artistic team, creating an inspiring artistic process where the different artists get a feeling of ownership and creative freedom.
10. **REHEARSAL:** Giving the storytellers a script consisting of their own words, and rehearsing this in various ways to make it sound real and authentic.
11. **STAGING:** Staging the performance in a good way to create dynamic and movement but avoid acting. The director works closely with the performers to make them communicate directly with the audience and interact with each other.

Example of a Storytelling Workshop/Rehearsal

Workshop Quarantine Thoughts 17.01.22:

1. Registration of empathy, self-esteem and engagement.
 - Everybody puts drops of paint in a jar to indicate empathy, cuts a piece of thread to indicate self-esteem and writes a number to indicate level of engagement.
2. Check in:
 - Everybody says something about how they feel or what they have experienced today.
3. Warm up: (Technical work)
 - Physical warm up
 - Vocal warm up and tongue exercises
 - Games (Zip-zap-boing etc.)
4. Anne Bogart's Viewpoints: (Ensemble work)
 - The grid
 - Tempo
 - Repetition
 - Level
 - Architecture
5. Move as a group, stop as a group, count as a group.
6. Association games related to COVID-19.
 - One person calls out a word while walking on "the grid", everybody stops and calls out associations until two people talk at the same time, then they start to walk the grid again.

Coffee Break

7. Storytelling:
 - In circle:
 - When during the pandemic did your reality differ most from before COVID?
 - Did your perception of time change during the pandemic?
 - One by one:
 - List up your day during the most extreme period during the pandemic.
 - (When your life differed the most in a positive or negative way from before the pandemic.)
 - In couples:
 - Can you think of any specific stories related to this period, or the timeline you made last time? Divide the group into couples, and make them tell the other person their story.
 - In circle:
 - They tell each other's stories to the whole group.
8. Check out:

9. Everybody says something about how they feel or what they have experienced today.
 - Registration of empathy, self-esteem and engagement.
 - Everybody puts drops of paint in a jar to indicate empathy, cut a thread to indicate self-esteem and writes a number to indicate level of engagement.

After the workshop, the facilitators measured the length of the threads and divided it by the number of participants, to get the length of today's self-esteem before and after the workshop. They added all the numbers indicating engagement and divided the result by the number of participants to get today's engagement number before and after the workshop, and they took photos of the jars with red paint, to see the difference in colour. We also wrote down the most important moments, and discussed if anything special happened during the workshop.

Citizenship Education During the Pilot Project

After repeating the same tests before and after every storytelling-workshop, the result was always the same: the participants experienced an increased level of self-esteem, empathy towards others and engagement after the workshops.

After taking part in a series of workshops, the participants have learned to speak in front of a large audience, and to use their voice in a positive way. We spend a lot of time on technical voice work, helping the participants to place their voice in the right place in their bodies, to use the stomach muscles instead of the chest, and in this way, get a full and functional voice that they can control and use without getting tired or horse.

We also spend time on the quality of listening without judging, and giving people time and space to express themselves fully. The fact that we listen without commenting or trying to give advice, gives each participant the opportunity to speak freely. Being listened to and taken seriously also increases the participants feeling of self-esteem, and the ability to listen to others in a constructive way.

We experience that the storytellers feel empowered after taking part in a performance with Bergen Borgerscene. After four months of hard work, they are comfortable being on stage in front of 70 people every night for several weeks. They have learned to speak in front of a big audience. They have managed to learn their lines, remember where to move, what to do and what to say. They have managed to control their nerves and support each other. They have become part of a group, and by creating a performance, they are part of something bigger than themselves. They realise that they are resources, and that they inspire other people by telling their stories. At the same time, there is a lot of healing in telling your story to people, and being listened to. Some of the participants have finally managed to move

on with their lives after being part of the performance.

We believe that the very bottom line in an active democracy is teaching people to voice their opinion, and make them feel that their opinion matters. This makes people of all ages grow both physically and emotionally. After following a series of storytelling workshops, people of all ages are empowered, and more likely to take active part in their local community. Giving people a voice and teaching them how to use it in public is what Bergen Borgerscene considers as their contribution to citizenship education in Bergen.

The End Result

“Quarantine Thoughts” was performed 6 times for a total audience of 408 people. We also did two test runs with people from the storytelling workshops. 4 of the 6 performances were sold out. The performance was very well received, and we got very good feedback from the audience. We handed out questionnaires to the audience. The questionnaire can be found as an attachment. We have not had time to analyse the results properly yet, but the overall results show that we attract new groups of audiences, the audience found the performance relevant and they felt inspired and empowered after watching the performance.

We had a 30 minutes aftertalk after each performance. The 8 storytellers on stage enjoyed the performances, and they all took part in the aftertalks. They managed to voice their opinions freely and listen carefully to each other and the people posing questions.

The performance consisted of a 40 pages long script, entirely made up of stories collected at the storytelling workshops during discussions and Zoom interviews. The stories were gently woven together by the director and the artistic team. We divided the stories into 16 scenes, defined by different scenic rooms and video-projections. The performance lasted for one hour.

The recordings from the workshops and interviews were carefully edited in co-operation with the storytellers. In this way, the stories were sharpened, without losing each individual's personal way of expression. Editing the stories and putting together the script enabled us to create a performance with a proper dramaturgy. (Rhythm, pace, pauses, propulsion etc.) It also protected the storytellers from telling too much in front of an audience.

The set was made out of 5 frames covered by haitann, and the backdrop was also covered with haitann. (Haitann is a black bobbinet-material that also serves as a canvas for projections.) Depending on how we light the haitann, you can either see through it, or project onto it. The frames were 1,2 x 2,8 metres, hanging on charts in the ceiling so that we could move them sideways to create different

rooms on stage. By moving the frames and standing in front of or behind them, we could create the illusion of people being alone, together or behind closed doors/windows. Even though the frames created a beautiful and useful set, it took some time for the storytellers to get used to them. In hindsight, we see that we should have had more time on stage before the opening to make the storytellers familiar with the frames.

We had a video designer as part of the artistic team. He followed the process from the very start, and got to know the storytellers well. He created beautiful videos to substantiate the stories. In the beginning, we planned to film the different storytellers in their homes, but as the process of creating a performance developed, we realised that all the stories had certain elements in common: wood, water and air. These words also defined the visual landscape. We filmed underwater at the public swimming pool, up in the air using a drone, in the deep forest, between the trees and through a window as the clouds sailed by. By projecting the video on the frames, we could give the audience a claustrophobic feeling, or a feeling of open landscape and endless possibilities. By combining the stories with videos, light design, sound design and a very efficient scenography, we managed to create a bigger story about fear and hope, loneliness and freedom. The storytellers were very excited seeing their stories as a part of an artistic whole, and a part of a bigger story.

Process Analysis as an Evaluation Tool for Community Theatre

We decided to use "Process Analysis" to evaluate the pilot project. As we worked in a devised manner where the process was in focus, this method seemed to be a more appropriate method than the "Theory of Change" method. After every workshop, we filled in a form with specific information about what happened during the rehearsal, and how the participants responded to various stimuli. We spent special attention on analysing the participants' self-esteem, feeling of engagement in life, and empathy towards other people.

We find that being part of a community based theatre-process enhances the participants' feeling of belonging to a group. Being seen and heard gives them a feeling of being valuable as a human. This again enhances their self-esteem and engagement in life. They believe they can make a difference, and they do. During the performances they realise that the audience recognize themselves in their stories. As the audience laugh, cry and comment on the performance, they realise that what they say matters to other people. This again leads to a feeling of empowerment both for the storyteller and the audience.

Conclusion

We believe that community theatre is an important tool in citizenship education. Teaching people to speak without fear and listen without judgement is the very basis for an active democracy. Giving people the opportunity to tell their stories creates understanding and empathy as well as identity. We hope that community based theatre can emphasise important topics, create relevant and engaging theatre and lead to a more inclusive and open society. By having real people on stage, we hope to cultivate a more honest language. Hopefully we inspire the audience to tell their stories, and use a more honest language as well. In this way, we want to support freedom of expression of all sorts, and create a more open and inclusive society for all.



Káva Cultural Workshop

Gábor Takács¹

"To scan what our most important and yet most silenced, denied community problem is, what we do not dare or cannot say, what we need theater as a safe space for, so that personal experience elevated to a societal level may be heard coming from a community voice."²

For the company of Káva, the "New Spectator" program mentioned in the introduction was the starting point of that "trend" in which the company occasionally creates community theater performances for adults and/or children.

After the 2010 series titled Shovel, Hoe, Church Bell (Ásó, kapa, nagyaharang) followed community theater performances with and for children or families. The performances titled Mush (Kása), House of Cards (Kártyavár) and Well (Kút) were completed in 2016 as part of a project called Windmills (Szélmalmok). All three performances took place in a small rural settlement or town with the participation of children aged 10-14. In 2018, the performance titled 7305 Days Later (7305 nappal később) was created in the village of Siklósbadony, Somogy County. The special feature and force of this project was that the young people of this group were all multiply disadvantaged and mainly of Roma origin in a village where even dreaming seemed very difficult: the project and the performance born out of it were about the children's vision of the future. Also in line with these projects was the creation of the play titled Starting at Least at Zero (Legalább nulláról kezdeni) in 2019 and Debt Trap (Adósságcsapda) in 2020, which combined forum theater and social theater elements and also incorporated drama-based pedagogy.

With all this experience, we came to a point where we were able to go on study trips to European cities as part of an international tender, specifically to learn about community theater-making. This is how we got to Dresden (2018), Rotterdam (2019), and also to Hildesheim and Berlin (2019). The creative work we saw in Dresden had such a strong impact on us that we decided to follow in the footsteps of the Bürgerbühne and create a project in our own theater in Budapest, which we eventually named the Civic Theater. As a part of this, we first created a performance with adult civilians dealing with the housing-home problem (My House - My Homeland, 2019; Orig.: Házam-hazám), and in the second year - with a different group of adults - we explored the social issues of climate change (Climate Inertia, 2020; Orig.: Klímatehetetlenség). The latter was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so the joint work eventually resulted in a movie.

1 The thoughts of my colleagues have been an invaluable addition in completing this study. Thank you for the notes of Gabriella Kiss, Júlia Róbert, András Seregley and Márton Somorjai.

2 Láthatóvá tett láthatatlan munka « MÉRCE (merce.hu), English title: Invisible Work Made Visible

These were the immediate antecedents, but at the same time, everything we did was not independent of international theatrical trends, as theater historian Gabriella Kiss also suggests.

"It is important to note that this critique of the long-known frame of presuppositions of theater creation and reception that defined the last ten to fifteen years of German theater science is not a reaction to the emergence of a pathogen called SARS-CoV-2. Rather, it explains concepts inherent in the theatricality of practices and genres such as immersive theatre, applied theatre, applied theater; audio, video, and documentary walks, lecture performances, posthuman installations and digital net performances, the Bürgerbühne phenomenon, and contemporary forms of one-man theater and reenactment. Namely, it examines the organizing aspects of the viewing situation in connection with oftentimes radically different cultural conventions and habitualizations, again and again confirming Milo Rau's thesis formulated in 2013 (!) according to which 'theater is nothing more than a completely concrete turning back to a simple Aristotelian principle: everything we consider to be real is a matter of social agreement'."³

In 2021, when we were thinking about the participants and the topic of our next adult community theater performance, we decided to target the social group most directly associated with us,⁴ so we searched for teachers who were willing to join us in this creative work.

In Hungary in 2021 and 2022, working with this specific target group in a community theater project is in some sense also a political step.⁵ On the other hand, even during the preparation of the project, we had to strive for a higher level of performance and a different type of conscious work. We also had to rethink the meanings of our concept of community theater.

Perhaps the description given by Parforum⁶ was closest to our view:

"The designation of community theater does not refer to an autonomous field, an independent genre of participatory theater, a coherent method, but is used as a common term including a wide variety of theater experiments. Their creators call, for example, a documentary theater performance preserving the collective memory of a liquidated industrial center a community theater performance. The same goes for a street performance recognizing a youth subculture based on the experiences of marginalized (sub)urban young people, or a drama project implemented

3 A színház jövője – ma? Körkérdés 4. (jatekter.ro), English title: The Future of the Theater – Today?

4 The main activity of Káva is the implementation of so-called complex theatrical educational performances (TiE) and complex dramas (DiE) for primary and secondary school class communities. We have performances on weekday mornings, during the organization, implementation and evaluation of which we must cooperate as closely as possible with the applicant schools and the teachers accompanying the classes.

5 Teachers are one of the most attacked social groups of Hungarian society in the last decade by the political power currently in power; the period of the premier coincided with the most powerful teacher strike in Hungary in recent years.

6 Parforum Participatory and Research Workshop

inside a prison. A characteristic feature of the programs that use this label is that they seek to give participants a community experience that results in members of the marginalized group returning to everyday life strengthened in their community identity and self-image. Residents of the former manufacturing town can create their common story, the history and collective memory of their place of residence. Marginalized youth can show their creativity and experience their uniqueness; they can also reframe their social disadvantages as a resource. Prisoners may experience that the stigma of an offender can be removed and broken down, as not only can they be a community for being convicted, but also for being the members of a theater company; and by becoming actors, they can acquire new social roles. More recent community theater endeavors embrace a critical approach to the concept of community. Instead of dealing with closed, local groups, they think of them as a neighborly group or a community of participants with similar social experiences.⁷ The literature on the subject distinguishes community theater from social theater. While the former brings about change primarily through the recognition and valorization of community values and resources, the latter sees the visualization of power, hierarchical, and structural relationships as the engine of change."⁸

One of the greatest and most exciting questions of our project, inherent in the concept of civic education placed in focus, was how much we wanted to, and were able to, move towards the goals, tools, and results of social theater after our previous work aimed primarily at community values.

So as a first step, we had to ask ourselves: why do we really care about community theater? Why do we consider it necessary to, again and again, embark on new experiments in this field?

It is a fact that, fully in line with world theater trends, the participatory theater genres mentioned in the quote have been on a serious upswing in Hungary in the last ten years. For those of us who are among the initiators of Hungarian theater education, it is our conviction that the operation of the two most renowned Hungarian TiE companies⁹ and their most frequently used genres of performative participation, i.e. complex drama (Drama in Education, DiE) and complex theater education performances (Theater in Education, TiE) were powerful catalysts in this process.

What TiE performances mean to young people (a forum for approaching and examining age-related, moral, and social phenomena, problems, or questions affecting the community through theatrical means), perhaps community theater per-

7 Miwon Kwon writes about a similar concept in connection with collaborative art practice. Instead of the concept of community charged with several meanings, he uses the term 'collective artistic practice', which means a temporary group formed in a temporary situation and is close in meaning to the neighborhood.

8 Sajátszínház – Közösségi színház (sajatszinhaz.org), English title: Community Theater

9 Roundtable Theater Education Center (Kerekasztal Színházi Nevelési Központ), since 1992, Káva Cultural Workshop Association (Káva Kulturális Műhely Egyesület), since 1997

performances in Hungary mean or could mean for adults. Civilians become involved during the interactive part of TiE performances, and during the creative process of community theater performances. In other words, a community theater performance is a forum because, among other reasons, a statement or problem coming from civilians stands at its center, they “enter into a contract” to examine this when they embark on the creative process together. These performances may be able to demonstrate - the one in our project is one of the best examples of this - that “ordinary people” are also capable of standing up, changing themselves and their environments. Our shared deficit is that fewer and fewer people dare to believe in this, and with less intensity.

We also perceived the upswing mentioned above within our company. By the 2010s, constant experimentation had become a shared value in the group. In addition to TiE performances, we were already doing other things: student theater performances, research theater performances, theater and dance performances, participatory performances with adults. The professional-artistic interest in community theater-making came naturally as a next step in this process. In the first years, we did not think of our creative work as a social intervention, we did not work from a socially critical standpoint, we were not lead to amplify marginal voices, and we did not envision liberation from oppressive power. Instead, we prioritized the reforming of pedagogical methodology and the expansion of the concept of theater. We modeled the processes that unfolded in England and the Netherlands in our own way, both involuntarily and unconsciously: we got from TiE to community theater. (These have since lived side by side in our work.) We have art and theater are our universal rights, theater, is our universal right, to which as many people as possible should have access, not only as spectators but also as participants and creators. Thus, the theater, as an institution, becomes our common space, and not the church of culture, that you are expected to visit from time to time. It is not only the workplace of the privileged, the “anointed”, and the talented ones, but rather a forum for discussing our common affairs, where theater professionals and civilians (children and adults alike) work together, have discussions, ask questions, reconcile and create something they consider important.

Over time, we have developed collaborations with young and progressive social researchers, with whom we have been able to step out of generally known pedagogical (and theatrical) frameworks several times. An important argument was that, to develop and keep the company together, we often need to discover new grounds for inspiration. Furthermore, we were very curious about the theatrical/drama pedagogical toolkit's effectiveness, that we use with children and young people, when used with adults, and about the extent and nature of the adaptations, we would have to make. Finally, we have become aware of the high degree of social sensi-

tivity in the company members, and a group-level commitment to more sensitive, challenging social issues that are sometimes treated as taboo.

THE PROCESS - How was the project implemented? How did the performance come to life?

Participants - why teachers?

Within the framework of the Civic Theater, this was our first opportunity of working with participants who were all members of the same social group, representatives of the same profession (notwithstanding, of course, their differences as individuals). Our initial idea was that there is this adult group that (at the level of Káva) we had and have the most to do with, the world of which we know well. This world carries acute, unresolved problems, it also reflects the major Hungarian social issues, and through their children almost every family has some connection with teachers. The COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of online education also brought them to the forefront of attention. The seemingly conscious dismantling of public education has been going on for many years in Hungary. Still, there is no revolutionary atmosphere in this area, but despair, apathy, and fear. (I'm writing these summarizing sentences after the (unsuccessful)end of perhaps one of the most cooperative, yet ineffective teacher strikes of recent past.) The social esteem of the profession is low, and Hungarian teachers are working in financial conditions remarkably poor in European comparison. There are a lot of system-level problems, and developments have lagged behind in many areas. The Hungarian public education system is obviously centralized, overregulated, depriving autonomy and imposing unrealistic administrative burdens on teachers. There is little substantive dialogue about the problems in this area, but the big question is how much the rest of society really cares (as in the last decade, for example, generally the sense of solidarity has been significantly weakened).

They have become the everyday experts of our project and performance. We thought that they know best the world of school, the problems of school users (students, parents, teachers), they can see the system-level difficulties, and they can and might even want to reflect on them. We hoped that they might want to talk and play about issues, phenomena, and problems such as autonomy, segregation or centralization, lack or prohibition of innovation, changes in the concept of knowledge, abolition of free choice regarding textbooks, difficulties in involving parents, burnout, disciplinary problems, the situation of Roma students or the crisis of the role of the intellectual. Actually, we were curious as to why they had become and remained teachers, at what moments they were proud of their profession, and at what moments they pondered leaving their profession.

At first, we faced the dilemmas of bringing together this broad social group repre-

sented by the participants, including teachers from the capital and rural areas, working in public, religious, and private schools, teaching small children, high school, and university students. Clearly, our goal was to find what they had in common.

What Was the Chosen Topic of the Performance?

Our starting point was thus the world of the Hungarian SCHOOL. We were aware that the chosen target group, and thereby the problem/phenomenon of our investigation, a political aspect. We, of course, saw this as a fundamental problem of the wider community, but by no means were we interested in the party-political implications of the word. We have reserved the right and opportunity to produce a performance that may have socially critical overtones. At the same time, we wanted to be careful not to “slip into” propaganda, not to create a political pamphlet.

The artistic tool (the theater) is interesting in this case because we hoped that the product created together would cross the stimulus threshold of a part of the recipient society and would pass on information about a social group (in this case, educators) that would not otherwise go through. Our goal was to amplify the voice of the teachers based on the Boalian idea.

General and Specific Goals at the Beginning of the Process

If we want to put our work in a theoretical framework, we need to refer to the concepts of DEVISED THEATER¹⁰ and autobiographical theater.¹¹ We created a complex theatrical performance differing from “traditional” theater. It should be mentioned that the performance, due to its genre, General and Specific Goals at the Beginning of the Process.¹² Here, one of the interesting concepts is the ego-document, when one’s own reality becomes a documentary (this is recognizably linked to the notion of oral history). Somehow the whole performance is “elevated” by the viewer’s knowledge: real stories of real people provide the basis for what they are seeing. We wanted participants to be actively involved in as many phases of theater-making

10 Devise = fictional, invented; a collection of theatrical strategies and methods that came to the fore in the '60s and '70s with the development of Western participatory democracy; in French: création collective

11 Through the autobiographical approach of theater, the personal stories and experiences of the participants are incorporated into the resulting performance at the content level: the “life material” is transformed and taken into a staged form with the help of theatrical tools.

12 Documentary theater: a historically authentic artistic representation of reality (Anna Hárs); examines the relationship between theater and reality (Kristóf Kelemen)

ing as possible. Not only did they give their stories, but they could also give suggestions and make decisions regarding the visuals, and had a say in the shaping of specific scenes, directing, and dramaturgical structure. This was not just about the degree of freedom. We had to constantly think about how much pressure we could put on participants who were not active theater-makers but civilians, and for whom presenting what they had to say on stage was an obvious challenge. Using professional arguments, we had to find a balance between the traditional (often omnipotent) role of the director and the chaos (everyone is directing). On the other hand, we also had to consider the moments where theatrical-professional aspects should take precedence over or in relation to community aspects. Sometimes, director's decisions "from above" had to be made. This "sway" was one of the most exciting games of this process. For example, in visual design, we could offer a visual frame created by the designer and fill it with content coming from the participants. Meaningful participation in all phases of working together also controlled what the shared message was, one which all participants could identify with, which was an appropriate risk for both the participants and the theater. This entailed a shared responsibility: don't do what you do because the director says it looks good, but also because the idea behind it is yours, and it is significant!

This attitude and technique has compelled all participants (including crew members) to constant self-definition: everyone, many times during the process, has had to ask themselves: who am I in this process and exactly why am I in it?

We formulated the **artistic goal** to create a public semi-fictional community theater performance based on the personal stories of the participants, and to present it 3-4 times. Our performance examines the relationship between reality and theater, resulting from the real stories of real people forming its base.

The search for and utterance of absolute truth was not the most important thing to us, this might be more a matter for the courts or investigative reporters. However, articulating the shared truth of informants, interviewees, and storytellers has become paramount.

It is generally true that Hungarian theater is fundamentally drama-based (meaning: the majority of the performances come from the world's classics and Hungarian drama literature). This tradition often prevents topics such as "problems of the Hungarian education system from the teachers' point of view" from entering the theater. This statement is also true for other social topics, more difficult, current

issues, or the problems of various minorities.¹³

Our **pedagogical goal** was to build a group of people who did not know each other before, but worked in the same field. We wanted the participants to become a community, at least temporarily. We aimed to strengthen the sense of community, create an atmosphere of trust that enables open speech, and establish cooperation between members. We wanted to improve the skills and abilities needed for better orientation in society. We hoped that the joint work would result in a community of opinion, a rather special “advisory group” whose members would have a great understanding and a complex interpretation of the school world. We thought that the company of Káva could count on their work and advice later on.

Our **civic education goal** was to encourage participants to be more active as citizens, to have a multidimensional and critical approach to the social problems placed into focus. We wanted to help create a more inclusive, open society with our project, in which we amplify the players' ideas with the power of the open community space (the theater).

On the one hand, the participants learned tools for self-expression, which allowed them to better understand how to stand up for themselves, and on the other hand, the participants' experiences were added together, thus multiplying their strength. In the project, we focused on the four main aspects formulated below that we wanted to improve:

- SELF-EXPRESSION (expressing general needs; learning how sharing them overlaps: family, friends, community, public);
- BEING TOGETHER / HAVING STRENGTH IN THE COMMUNITY (understanding that people who are isolated/left alone/lonely/desperate always have things in common, you are never alone with your problem);
- COMMON LANGUAGE (finding a language, a platform for communication between different people; sharing problems on a common platform);
- COURAGE FOR PUBLIC SELF-EXPRESSION (gaining the ability to express oneself publicly (what makes me a citizen), gathering enough courage to express a personal opinion about public affairs).

¹³Since there is no tradition of how to do such a performance, the real question is how do we create it. The theater – seen from afar – is after all a civic institution, it is a very difficult and interesting situation when we start thinking and playing about others (viz.: those who not yet or no longer belong to this world, or it's not clear if they do or not, who are not even known to this world)

Recruitment of Participants: The Workshop that Started the Process

Based on our online call,¹⁴ teacher applicants sent us stories about what it is like to be a teacher in Hungary today. Why did they choose this field? Have they encountered obstacles that made them want to stop teaching? What uplifting situations have they encountered that made staying on the field worthwhile? Twenty-four educators sent stories from all over the country and even beyond the borders. We then invited applicants to a workshop where they could meet us and each other, and get information about the project. We offered everyone present active participation in the project. It was a prominent aspect to schedule rehearsals in such a way that allowed every candidate take part in the project all the way through, even with a full-time job. Otherwise, only part-time teachers or those on maternity leave would have been able to take part.

The Group

Twelve teachers were eventually included in the group. They were the ones who undertook the nearly three-month-long process of once-a-week rehearsals, the intense main rehearsal days when we practiced for four full evenings after the day's work, and the stress of the performance, in a positive sense. Of these twelve, one is a man and eleven are women, three live and teach in the countryside and nine in Budapest, one of them is retired, four of them work in a primary school, four in a grammar school and three in some special educational setting. In assisting them, Káva provided the director,¹⁵ two actor-drama teachers¹⁶ who played with the group during rehearsals and performances, the writer-playwright¹⁷ who was present at rehearsals whenever she could, and a visual designer¹⁸ who also wanted to experience the whole project, so she, too, was, attending the entire time. In our view, these people - including the "experts" of the school and the theater - has become a tight-knit group for the months of the project and the time of the performances. The members of the company, the civilian players, are actors who want to impart their stories to the audience, to show their lives, their problems, and generate change. They are all part of what English terminology calls performing citizenship. The building of the theater - where these actions take place - quasi elevates

14 We have tried to publish this call in as many places as we could; we sent it to newspapers, online school forums, our own mailing list, influencer teachers

15 András Sereglei, actor-drama teacher at Káva; director

16 Márton Somorjai and Gábor Takács, actors-drama teachers at Káva

17 Júlia Róbert, playwright, community theater program manager of the MU Theater in Budapest

18 The other Gabriella Kiss, visual designer, professor at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts

and amplifies their voice, gives significance to the intention of the communication, introduces and shows the audience the message and the actors as theater.

Although the international Erasmus project was hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, luckily and thanks to looser health regulations in Hungary, the entire rehearsal process took place in person. We wore a mask and got tested when needed, but even so: we weren't forced behind screens, we could get involved in the process in person, with our entire personality.

The Course of the Session

Phase One - From Group to Community

During the project, we had the opportunity for a total of twelve sessions, for which we had to build a plan. In addition to these occasions came the last, fourth stage, a few longer days in a row, afternoons reaching into evenings, just before the premier. Roughly four occupations formed one block, each with its own main focus.

After the September workshop, twelve teachers undertook to go through with the project starting at the end of October, meaning they would take part in the sessions once a week and be present at the rehearsals and performances. The biggest challenge and the main goal of the first stage was to forge a community of these educators who did not know each other but worked in the same profession, whose members would be able to trust each other and talk honestly about themselves and their work.

An important consideration was to reduce compulsions for conformity related to the theater. We wanted to reassure participants that they were actually "good enough" to participate in the process, strengthen the idea that "they can't make mistakes", and increase their sense of safety. We wanted participants to understand and feel that theater is a public forum that provides courage for public self-expression.

It became clear from the very first occasion that, despite or precisely because of the difference, everyone was open and curious about the other. It became essential to formulate expectations about themselves, the staff, and the performance at the very beginning. These ideas provided the basis and legitimacy for the whole process. Below is a selection of these thoughts.

"It needs to have humor in it; I really like playfulness. It should undertake this topic! It's really good, because you don't have to go to a psychologist."

"This 'school thing' is taking its place in my head. May your creations and thoughts enhance my idea of school!"

"I was in a professional crisis when I saw this call. We shouldn't let it be pink, let's show the fullest picture of the school!"

"Let's make a great puzzle together!"

"I want to get to know the creative process. They can talk about us with such condemnation and disgust... I want to show that I am a human being, we are human, we want good for the world."

"How can I put complaints into an artistic form? I haven't done anything artistic in a long time ... it's a step out of my comfort zone. Many people my age give up the field very early."

"Not out of defiance, but I want to say something awakening: let's get to something positive in the school world!"

"In my whole life, I was interested in two things: teaching and theater. If we mold together all the many negative examples, how will it all become something of an encouragement and hope?"

"We've worked with the educationally 'injured' for years; we must launch social dialogue; we also need narratives different from ours."

"Here we also understand the unspoken things; a teaching staff has roles already assigned... and this is like a new company. I want to look at my teacher self. To give voice, to show, to shout in their faces, to cry in their faces, to slam a fist on the table - this is a very strong drive in me."

"My parents and siblings are all teachers. I don't have good experiences with educational institutions - it would be good to understand what went wrong."

"I'm a pretty rational being, but the three sentences I submitted came from my gut. I'm interested in doing theater. I don't understand what's keeping me in high school education, I want to understand what's so appealing about this medium. Making things visible and making a statement are worth doing in an artistic way."

"Every school I went to gave me only negative experience. I'm venting. I want this to be an eye-opening experience. When my acquaintances found out how much money I earned, one of them said: Yay, then I'm not the one earning the least!"

"It would be so nice to have a team come together that wants to say something!"

We also wanted the members of the group to voice for themselves and each other why we need to talk about this topic at all, why we need to talk about it in public, and why we need to talk about it in public through theater. Like so many times during the process, we have asked everyone to continue an unfinished sentence: "I think we need to talk about school today through a community theater performance because..."

"It would be good to communicate emotionally, not just by saying the words."

"The artistic form is the only way to say something while avoiding banalities."

"Every other way of speaking has been smeared or has become bullshit, pseudo-professional, or politicized."

"A lot of people don't know the real situation, they don't know what's going on in the schools."

"I am concerned about my own responsibility ... I should think about why I run away all the time..we don't stand up for ourselves...the title of my text is "The One Who Compromises" ... who is me..."

"We want to improve our own fate and thus the fate of the children as well."

"School has become an emotionally dangerous place - that's why we need to talk about it publicly. Theater can give us new question, a new perspective."

"Everyone has a connection to school and everything that is in society is reflected in it. There is a lot to talk about, not just the school."

"Everything else also needs to be discussed. This is judgment-free live discussion, that's why it's experienceable, it cannot be questioned. All we have to do is show our own sorrow, our experience. Even if change doesn't start, there's nothing else I can do. We can only talk about school, the theater gives us the give us the space for speaking."

"Teachers are usually silent, they sort things out. Seeing us speak out may give strength to others."

"This community creative process is at the same time a learning process for all of us."

To understand the process, it can be helpful to get to know the course of a specific session from each stage. I will first present the second session of the first phase, which took place on November 3, 2021.

In addition to getting to know each other, we have formulated the following sub-goals for this occasion: getting to know and learning how to consciously use the tableau as a theatrical technique; initiating thinking together about school; setting up a problem list; developing a common language and boosting courage for public self-expression.

Our session began with participants sitting in a large circle in the theater. We discussed the rules of mask use, making it clear that our joint decision entails joint responsibility. (Participation in the project was only possible after COVID-19 after getting vaccinated and with an immunity certificate.)

Then we introduced an open sentence that everyone finished according to their ideas. The sentence everyone had to finish was the following: "The most beautiful thing I've seen since we've met..." This game leads to visual thinking: everyone has to look for something beautiful through each other's eyes (imagining what the other is talking about). It was interesting that the participants used a lot of nature images, and feelings came to the fore. Everyone could say something and/but no one talked about "restless" beauty. The group put harmony first.

Participants then had the opportunity to reflect on their past (i.e. the very first) session. On the one hand, we wanted to raise the level of awareness and at the same time make the group communication as open as possible: there is room for criticism and doubt. We had a participant who stated at this point that they had been left uneasy and impatient about the fact that we did not start dealing immediately with the texts submitted with the application (and which were to form the basis of the performance).

Then followed a group logic game. Chairs are scattered in the space like dots on a ball, one is left empty. The game leader wants to sit down on an empty chair. They can only go slowly, but the group members can also run or negotiate. The point is to prevent the leader from sitting down by transfers to different chairs. The group is fighting the game leader. If anyone lifts their buttocks, they have to get going and are not allowed to sit back in their chair. The leader, of course, cannot be physically and violently prevented from moving around or sitting down. There are several valid “solutions”, but the general experience is that only repeated attempts and returns to the game can lead to real success. There is a high level of excitement in this game, requiring serious concentration and discipline from the group while also being very liberating. It works players physically, emotionally, and mentally as well. During the discussion after the game, the director brought up a very exciting point: he drew a parallel between the hesitation and the momentum of leaving the chair and between the momentum, content and intention of starting out in a performance as an actor, which visibly touched the participants.

The next game was included in the session plan primarily because of its ability to relax and lift the mood. We stand in a circle, with a volunteer in the middle, holding a sponge (or anything that doesn't break, it symbolizes the bomb). Eyes closed, the game leader designates the “terrorist” with a touch. Those in the circle must convince the person inside to give them the object (the “bomb”). If he gives it to an “innocent” person, he's saved, he can stand aside, and the person who receives the object takes his place in the middle. If you give the bomb to a “terrorist”, everyone “explodes” (it's worth waiting 3 seconds after the transfer for the effect). What made the game exciting was that the players felt the joy of being able, here and now, to lie with impunity, and the thin line between fiction and reality became very intriguing. Some of them found it difficult to keep up with the group pace, so we paid more attention to this when continuing the game. This game marked the end of the attunement phase, and we moved on to the main topic of the day, the scene of the school. We worked in two groups. The first group created a tableau image for the concept given by the game leader, i.e. a complex still image on which even the more complicated affairs can become visible. The second group then completed this picture. The goal was to get from displaying a very specific and relatively simple venue like a plaza to an abstract, intricate scene like the “house of joy”. After completing the images, the players had to give very detailed answers to the leader's questions, thus further developing and clarifying the scene created together.

In the next game, we split into three groups, and the game leader gave the following instruction to everyone: “Look for a common word, a concept that you've been concerned with lately, and when you have it, convert it into a tableau!” So the groups first had to agree on a common word or concept, and then the creative

phase began. The strange “phenomenon” that occurred several times during the three months of work made this game peculiar and exciting: when we showed each other the pictures, it turned out that all three groups chose the concept of time as the focus.

We stayed in the same groups and were instructed to make a tableau for the same word. These images could be placed anywhere in space, you could designate the point to view them, and you could decide what music to play during the display. Or you could create it without any tools, like before. The common concept was SCHOOL. Two groups managed to put together the picture, one did not, because the debate, negotiation, and creation took a lot of time. One of the two pictures depicted an exam situation, in which the “examiners” were sitting behind a long table, and we could view the picture by sitting one by one in the chair reserved for the “examinee”. The other picture was about the spirit of competition, the kind that inhibits free, experience-rich teaching.

In the last stage of making tableaus, we mind map of today's Hungarian education system. Working in groups of three, we discussed and identified the specific problems, and then formulated them in a still image. We looked through and discussed all the pictures and then made another round naming a total of eight problems:

- almost all members of the education system live in fear and in a compulsion to comply with those above them;
- harmonious learning and the achievement-addiction present at all levels are in sharp and irresolvable contrast;
- everyone is in a bound dance, no one can unleash their creativity: neither the teacher, nor the student, nor the leader;
- overtime, the helpful playfulness of the teachers fades out;
- there is a gap between the aims and functioning of the education system and the real world;
- teachers often speak ill of the children behind their backs;
- we don't know how to deal with weird, special, problematic kids because we lack methodology;
- indifference from teachers and the education system is often the cause and exacerbation of aggression.

The following discussion of the session was a reflective element: we asked participants to complete a sentence according to their own thoughts, the first half of which read: “It has become important to me today that...”. We then discussed some practical issues, and ended our second shared theater afternoon.

Participants also received a “homework assignment”: we asked them to look for and try to recognize the elements of the mind map that emerged in the second tab-

leau in their own - non-school - environment as well. If they discovered the place where the selected issue appeared, they had to take one or more photos of it. The pictures were to be magnified for the next session, displayed on the wall, viewed and analyzed together. With this game, we wanted to shed light on the fact that the social issues that appear in the world of school are, of course, not solely the problems of the school, but of the society in which we live. Even though we knew this, it was brains, this was now also a “sensory” experience, especially when we discussed the phenomena that were a problem for us.

In the other two sessions of the first phase, we continued to forge a community as our primary goal. We developed opening and closing rites for these occasions spent together. Each time at the beginning, we marked our mood with color paint (blue = calm, red = upset, excited) in a large bottle of water, and in the first round, we usually put our groupmates into picture about ourselves by completing an open sentence. At the end of the sessions, we reflected on everything that happened that day, orally or in a theatrical form, and we did the paint dripping game again.

Phase Two - Theater, but Not Yet a Performance

The main goal of the second phase of the process was to get the participants closer to the performance-to-be, but most of the theater games still had to be more about today's Hungarian education system in general and not specifically about the texts they submitted.

We wanted to discuss what the concept of a “rich story” meant, one that is worth thinking about and goes beyond itself. We focused on dramaturgical games that help moderate and condense different narratives. In several sessions, we worked with different types of monologues to get to know and love this theatrical form. Loosening up group members, and building relationships and trust remained on the table.

We talked a lot about what exactly our participants expected from the upcoming performance, and their intended audience.

We closed one of our sessions with this open sentence and the individual responses to it: “I want our viewers to be the people who...”

“... will be inspired by this in some way.”

“... could bring about change to our schools.”

“... are in a decision-making position.”

“... once went to school.”

“... scold the teachers.”

“... have suffered because of school.”

"... are parents, too."
 "... to whom this is really dedicated."
 "... are receptive to change."
 "... want to speak up, but haven't so far."
 "... for some reason are not really concerned with our schools."
 "... need the blur removed from their vision."
 "... consider teachers losers."
 "... know only one side of the school, but not the complex picture."

We had to return to the topic of the target audience several times. Finally, due to our possibilities (we had just a few performances), we decided to reach out to the widest possible audience and recommend the performance to those who "went to school," that is, to almost anyone who has experience of this institution.

As our project goes beyond the creation and presentation of the performance, we do not rule out the possibility of a theatrical or other action in the future that goes further with everything we have created over the three months. In connection with this, in the meantime, we designed and launched the project's own website, and through this website, we are still receiving school stories from Hungarian teachers.

From the second phase, I will present the session that took place on December 1st. In addition to the general goals of this phase, we have formulated the following sub-goals for this occasion: breaking the ice, building relationships, building trust, moderating and condensing narratives.

The first game of the session was one of our usual rituals: an unfinished sentence ("The best thing that happened to me since we haven't met..."). It was probably the game, this group needed the most. By this time, the members had learned to "take advantage" of this game: there were no more simplified stories and short answers, but dense episodes, sometimes full of dramas and cathartic moments.

This was followed by our other introductory game, with team members using pipettes and paints to indicate their mood at the start of the game.

There followed a game that requires physical contact: a group massage. We stand in a circle. Every person can "treat" the shoulders and back of the one standing in front of them. The reaction of the group members was interesting. It seemed they rarely came into such close contact with others. The game was considered as a great and refreshing experience.

We continued with a dynamic concentration game: different "command words" are uttered by the game leader (go, stop, shout, applause), and then they are alternately swapped and executed in this way (e.g. at "go" you have to stop, and at "stop" you have to go).

Then, there was another game involving the whole group that required physical contact: we walk around in space, and at the signal of the game leader, who names a specific body part and a color, we have to touch each other (we are not allowed to find that particular color on ourselves).

A confidence-building phase followed. We played the so-called "blind guide games" in which players had to lead each other in pairs under increasingly difficult conditions (one member of the pair has their eyes closed; the other player guides their partner with a fingertip, a touch on the shoulder, or just by voice). We closed this section with a group blind-snake game where the team leader leads the members, who hold each other's hands with their eyes closed. (The other team leader is at the end of the line and makes sure to keep the team moving so no one gets hurt.) We considered it essential to relieve stress and the pressure to achieve. The acting work at this stage was still quite unusual for them. We wanted the players to understand as better as possible: it was important to leave themselves in a state where they enjoyed the stage presence, but they were also focused and purposeful. With these practices, we helped them develop this fruitful and learnable state, and ways they could induce it.

This phase of play ended with creating a tableau. We worked in two groups, everyone in the group told a true short story from their school years that they found significant or exciting. We then put together a tableau featuring everyone, displaying the central moment of their story. We showed each other the tableaus, and everyone briefly told their story. This game could also be interpreted as a quick brainstorming, a collection of ideas, and at the same time, two impressive theater tableaus were very easily created out of this spontaneous theater game.

After the break, we continued with a creative writing exercise to fit newer texts into the text fabric of the upcoming performance. First, the session leader read one of István Örkény's original one-minute short stories.¹⁹ We then asked everyone to recall a moment in their lives that may have been decisive on the road to becoming an educator, as well as one when they thought about maybe leaving the profession. Both stories had to be written in the style of Örkény's one-minute stories. This was the necessary form that was both concentrated and liberating in an artistic sense. We read out the stories one after the other, in random order. When someone felt that their text should come next, they read it out (either of the two); we listened to everyone. It took a while for the members of the group to realize what the rhythm and mood of reading stories on top of each other might be. After this happened, the game went noticeably better, very "strong", dramatic texts were born, it was nice to listen to them.

19 István Örkény: *Leltár*, English title: *Inventory*

The closing reflection of this session consisted of two elements: first, we asked the participants to share their questions and comments regarding the first six sessions, and then we said goodbyes with the usual paint game.

We had a player who, during this reflection, expressed doubts about his own acting skills. This question provided an opportunity for a short discussion about the aesthetic aspects and expectations of community theater performances with civilians. We talked - also following the suggestion of one of the group members - about the dramaturgical work: how the semi-fictional story, the textbook and the framework of the play would be created with the help of the playwright. Finally, we were also able to discuss that despite many people having submitted problem-oriented stories and having a basically critical attitude towards the education system, there would still be a meaningful place for positive thoughts in our joint performance.

Phase Three – "Put Together" the Performance!

The third stage of the process primarily focused on the final product, the performance itself. Our main goals were: intensive introduction to the possibilities and rules of theater, the creation of a theatrical sign system, and learning about instinctive and conscious theatrical work. Since we met again after a long break in the winter, we had to get used to each other again. The playwright got more intensively involved, and together with the director, invented the framework of the improvised scenes for the participants, and then refined and shaped the texts of the resulting situations.

The detailed description of the first session in January provides an insight into the workflow.

After our usual routine/exercises (play with the fluids, open sentence), we played some rule games to improve concentration (playing with number strings, shifts of emphasis, dynamic skill games).

In the next round, we wanted the group members to meet the "shock" of the monologue, performing the text in a safe environment to get acquainted with the tools of a one-person theatrical performance in a playful way. We considered it fundamental to overcome fears about microphone use and decisively performing in front of others.

We asked everyone to come up with a campaign for a fictitious cause. The topic could be anything, but preferably some small, banal, annoying thing. They had to make up and hold the campaign speech. They could make a logo, create a symbol for the movement, use nonverbal elements for it.

We asked everyone to choose a banal matter to prevent them from putting too much effort into complexity and nuance, and helping them manifest themselves with greater intensity. It is not the weight of the cause that really matters. A quasi-spontaneous stepping into the role happens as well, both on the part of the speaker and the audience.

The shock was reversed compared to the scene-making exercises, as it occurred when receiving the assignment, and the group loosened up from this during the presentation. They were positively affected by the presence and exposure of the stage. "The flow carried them away." This was, in fact, a simplified modeling of stage presence, and a radical pattern of the player-audience interaction. It was also a dramaturgical task they had to "edit" themselves. No one gave up their cause, everyone made the speech, though several people visibly struggled with the task. They were very supportive and encouraging of each other. Some were forced to completely improvise because others chose the same cause, and there was one participant who kept saying that they couldn't do it, but eventually "fought their way through" the game.

We continued the session with a game of self-knowledge and knowledge of our fellows. We took out the classic "what if..." game, in which it becomes important what I'm trying to transmit to others about myself and how others see me compared to this. Someone leaves the room, and we pick someone we'll characterize. The questioner returns to the room and asks each group member a question: what would this person be if they were a building? What if they were a plant? What if they were food? And so on, a new question for everyone, and they answer it. Once everyone has answered, the questioner can guess. At the end of the round, we ask the person the conversation was about, which question was the most pertinent and which was the most surprising.

In the reflection phase of the session, we did not reflect on the day's work, but on the project as a whole. In the middle of the space, a circle marked with chairs symbolized our shared project. Everyone had to position themselves compared to it, indicating how they felt about the project that day (what is your position?, how do you feel?, where are you facing? what are you doing?). Everyone is like a statue. We then listen to everyone so they can tell why they placed themselves the way they did. The most common opinion was that they were eager to create the performance. Several people expressed concern about the final message of the project. They fluttered about learning the script. And they wished their story couldn't be identified. There were some who were outside the circle, but connected to a chair. In the following three sessions, the last ones before the main rehearsal phase, we focused on making the scenes of the play. We paid much attention to improvisations and increasing attention to one another.

Phase Four – Dress Rehearsal, Performances, Reflections

A new, semi-fictional story was born out of the collected and improvised stories, which was everyone's, and not one's personal story.²⁰ It was built on what the members of the target group provided, but tried to become something communal. We told this shared story in the theater. The first-person monologues of the players were then built upon and complemented by this place.

The most important feature of the theatrical language and aesthetics of the performance was its personal nature on the one hand, the polyphony in the sense that the final text consisted of sentences of different style, quality, content, and tone. The group obviously does not represent Hungarian teachers in general, yet they serve as a sample of what they are talking about, as they come from many different types of institutions and backgrounds. What they say is not of local interest or local value, but cannot be extended to the whole country, yet, they are experts in this field, and their profession and their lives make them authentic. Well-known motifs also emerged in the performance, such as famous cases, familiar characteristics. In any case, everything that came into being became inter- and hypermedial in the sense that the participants incorporated their cultural medium into the fabric of the play. Of course, a kind of fragmentation or mosaic nature remained and the performance did not become unified in style, but eclectic (choir was included in it just like monologue, dialogue between actors just like dynamic, symbolic action).

The main rehearsal phase lasted for four days, more precisely, the texts and actions were finalized in the afternoons and evenings of four consecutive days. That's how we got to the evening of February 5th, when we held the premiere of the performance in front of 40 spectators in the studio room of Káva. The first two performances took place in this space, the next two in the big hall of the MU Theater in Budapest, in front of 70 spectators. On the go, the interest in the performance became perceptible (tickets were sold out a few days), so after consulting the group, we added two more performance dates and raised the number of spectators to 90.

The afternoon after the first performance, before the rehearsal, we sat down to discuss the reactions we had received from the audience. We analyzed the experience, talked about everything we had experienced, and recalled what the audience had said about the performance.

“He (viz. a spectator) is not so fascinated by this whole world... the situations he brings are wildly good (a reference to the silent character of the Student, unnoticed by the teachers in the play), how much he lurks at their every moment, how he gets

²⁰ Personal stories told directly can even be dangerous to the “informant”, so we've removed the texts a bit from reality; we had to make sure that no one was put in an awkward position because of his artistic work here. On the other hand, the players were confronted with the fact that putting their personal stories in a new frame, letting others tell them and act them out might mean something very different to the viewers than the original idea, intention.

everything that is being a teacher .. "

"Didn't you notice that guy, or you just don't give a shit?"

"He's on his way."

"They were so overwhelmed, they really liked it"

"Being able to participate in plays later in life, not just as a kid, gives us hope."

"I felt safe among you, I wasn't nervous."

"I was and am very supported in this at home, (viz.: in making the performance, and participating in the project) this has been the main topic for months."

"Absolutely authentic."

"It's all about the teachers, and the pitfalls the ups and downs of being a teacher."

"It's great that people think about it - it's not meant to be understood this or that way."

"The humor of the performance didn't come through as much as the tension. We'd like to, but we can't really laugh at all this anymore..."

"Every current political issue was in it, but it became aestheticized and the whole thing became problem-oriented."

After the third show, we held a three-hour closing session where we played games that gave the whole group a chance to evaluate the process, and their place and role in it.

Part of the analysis was that we put two wrapping papers on the wall, with two questions that could be answered with a number and a cut length of yarn.

The first question was, "How much did attending Civic Theater rehearsals move you out of your comfort zone?" (Mark with a number between 1-10; 1 = not in any way; 10 = totally). The numbers obtained were 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 9, 10 (average: 6).

The second question was, "How much has everything that has happened in this group in the last three months affected your life?" (Mark with the length of the cut piece of yarn!) We cut a piece of yarn for comparison, which marked the "pretty much" level. Each participant cut longer pieces, there were four who cut nearly double the length and one was about three times as long.

Later, we took an unfinished sentence again, which everyone had to finish according to their own thoughts: "If someone were to think about getting involved in Civic Theater as a participant, I would tell them that..."

"It's going to be an exciting roller coaster."

"It will also be a great self-knowledge training."

"They should be very brave, very curious and then they can learn some unexpected stuff about themselves."

"It'll be fun."

"Always be honest!"

"Don't panic, but you will always panic anyway."

"We'll take care of you."

"You'll get to know a lot of interesting people in a very short time."

"It's worth the time and in the end, you will be terribly proud."

"Get into it, and think about what you're going to do next."

We tried to gather our positive and critical thoughts about the process. We talked about them divided into smaller groups, and then shared our results. A somewhat serious controversy arose over how the members of the group remembered us discussing the number of performances and the composition of the target audience. Some felt that all decisions were shared and transparent, except for the exact number of performances they were to play and the group they were targeting. As we progressed, several people felt that "everyone should see this", and they were somewhat disappointed by the total of six performances when it seemed that the play was successful and in demand. The real subject of the debate was how we can get our message outside of our familiar circle. How can we get out of the bubble we live in? We recalled the call for the project (in which we indicated that the performance could be put in front of an audience three or four times), and at that moment, we decided together to have two more shows. The players raised an important question: how can they achieve a greater impact than planned with the performance? How can they generate change with it? Perhaps this was the moment when they became a real group, a real community for a cause, and experienced that even important issues could be renegotiated and that there could be a common understanding and a common will after considering each other's arguments.

In a different game, we were curious about what we've learned in the process. The game leader asked questions on specific topics in the form of negation. The ones who agreed sat down, and the ones who disagreed remained standing. The leader asked for specific justifications from some in each round. Statements you could respond to were the following:

- In this process, I have not learned anything new about participation ...
- I have learned nothing in this process about what I can personally do (for the school as a CAUSE)...
- I have not learned anything new about theater in this process...
- I have not learned anything new in this process about what it means to be an active citizen

The last presentation of the project will take place in May after the writing of this study. The staff is constantly contemplating that if there is still momentum in the participants and a will to continue working together, we can suggest a suitable form for it. We are all interested in allowing participants' voices to go beyond their "bubbles". In the meantime, we created a separate sub-page for the project,²¹ where - following our call - new teacher stories began to arrive from the world of the Hungarian public education.

Summary

The third phase of the Káva Civic Theater project, which aims to create community theater performances with adult civilians and was also a pilot program for an international research project, is a significant step forward for our theater.

In the planning and execution of the performance titled *By Jiminy!*, and in the evaluation of certain sessions, a level of awareness has emerged that constitutes an improvement compared to the past. We managed to effectively coordinate the work of many theater and management professionals in order to make the production a success. The civilians present as creators (actors) have been able to complete the process with the knowledge that they/we have and made a strong attempt to amplify their voice in order to break through the existing communication wall.

One of the key internal questions of the project was whether we could move from community theater to social theater. Based on this study, it can be said that the shift has taken place, but our project will be complete in this respect if a program is created in the future that, as a continuation of our performance, will ensure that the new product – in the form of a film – will reach many interested schools, where new teachers and students can see it, and we can include meaningful conversations and debates about Hungarian public education into the screenings. We are very confident that these discussions, as well as the website created and the stories submitted, will provide new connections to educators' society and will generate change.

21 A Mi iskolánk – Gyere, nézz be te is A Mi Iskolánkba! (kavaszinhaz.hu), English title: Our School – Look inside Our School!

Project data

Rehearsal period:	October 2021 - February 2022
Number of sessions:	12 + 6
Duration of sessions:	180 ' / occasion
Number of performances:	6
Venues:	MU Theater Studio and Great Hall
Total number of spectators:	approx. 380 people

Players: Nóra Előd, Edina Péntes, Nóra Lantosi, Éva Réczey, Anikó Nagy, Luca Kertész, Dorottya Prinz, Zsuzsa Flaskay, Gabriella Kiss, Melinda Glasshütter, Roman Bognár, Stefi Szélpál, Márton Somorjai, Gábor Takács

Based on the text of the players, written by:	Júlia Róbert
Assistant director:	Márton Somorjai
Visual designer:	the other Gabriella Kiss
Supervisor:	Gábor Takács
Technics:	Márton Somorjai
Staff of the related research:	Márton Somorjai, Gábor Takács
Director:	András Sereglei

Communicator:	Fanni Kertész
Economic staff:	Petra Tóth-Bognár, Zsófia Balassa
Organizer, administrator:	Julianna Petró
Professional program leader:	Gábor Takács
Project leader:	Rebeka Dóra Kajos







Artistic Citizenship Education Through Community Theatre Practice

Parforum team

1. Introduction – Aims and Goals

The partnership has engaged in a step-by step development of participatory evaluation methods which suits to the existing practice of partners in community theatre-based citizenship education for adult learners. This collaborative process is to think through the issues of Citizenship Education in Europe, elaborate on the use of Community Based Theatre as a tool for it, and finally, working out an evaluation framework which assigns specified roles for individual evaluation methods.

By the end of the development process, we will have an embeddable online evaluation toolbox consisting at least twelve (3*4) methods and a step-by-step guideline for how to apply them at the specific stages of a community theatre program. The collection of methods is to consist of both individual and collaborative, verbal and non-verbal arts-based exercises allocated for a diagnostic, an intermediate, and a closing phase of a community theatre-based citizenship education process. All the exercises are meant to be easily manageable by the drama facilitators and results are meant to be easily interpreted by the lay participants. All methods will be presented through short descriptions. Additional documentation may also consist of worksheets, but their format will follow the specificities of the given methods (i.e. modifiable.pdf for diaries, .xls files for questionnaires, word documents for drama based evaluation games etc.).

This following report resumes the development work carried out in the project. It offers a shared vocabulary and a summary of potential evaluation frameworks that serve as the common surface for further collaborative choice of evaluation pathways (2.). It also covers the question of “what to evaluate?” in relation to possible goals of a citizenship education program (3.). It presents a range of evaluation techniques (4.), and finally gives an account about how the final evaluation framework was chosen by the partnership (5.).

2. Towards an Evaluation Framework

The partnership has realized that in different European countries community theatre professionals not only use different concepts for community theatre work, but shared concepts may have divergent meanings and may also refer to distinct practices. This is even more true to evaluation practices.

2.1. Subjects and Genres of Evaluation

For having a shared vocabulary for evaluation in arts-based programs, first we need to distinguish a set of basic genres that are often used interchangeably. We understand **assessment** as a full documentation or an organized description of only one part of a project (the case/situation/a phase/an aspect of a project is usually “assessed”). **Monitoring** stems for a predefined and repeated checking over the achievement of planned activities (a monitoring usually detects whether something promised has happened, or not). Evaluation, however, is even more specific. The aim of an **evaluation study** is to generate a set of debatable statements about a project, or its process, or its results. Therefore, it is always based on research (i.e. a systemic predefined data collecting activity with a legitimate perspective and a clear purpose). Holistic evaluation of a “full project” is not possible. Evaluations instead are carried out from a specific - artistic/cultural, social, pedagogic, financial, or environmental - perspective (and address a relevant community of expertise accordingly) and focuses either on the project process or on its results. (Though some evaluation systems may cover both).

A **process evaluation** is usually related to the expertise which the practitioners work with are embedded in. It typically asks how one should manage a similar process next time. This is often based on self-evaluation activities which cover the significant ethical, practical, and methodological domains defined by the given expertise (like drama education, community development, theatre directing etc.) Self-evaluation is often combined with first hand recollections of participants about the process in order to contrast the two and discuss the differences if needed. For self-evaluation, practitioners usually manage diaries, video logs, and generate a huge amount of documentation (notes, scripts, photos of rehearsal moments) that they may later reflect upon. Process evaluation is sometimes managed by external evaluators who are usually highly respected independent experts of the field (eg. theatre critiques, experienced pedagogues, ethnographers specialized in performance studies), who may also provide feedback for the sake of professional growth of the practitioners/facilitators.

Evaluating **project results** can also be more specific: it can cover outputs vs. outcomes.

A **project output** is an intended product or event which was supposed to be the main definite goal of the process – a stage presentation, a published book, a gathering together of certain people etc. Output evaluation is often mistaken for assessment, as both focus on a “full” documentation of the achieved product (through video footage, scripts, audience reflections), but output evaluation goes beyond documentation and also consists of reflection too, from an external perspective (e.g. a set of reviews by well-established critiques, a statistical analysis of audience composition, or audience elaborations on the product gained through group discussions).

We understand **project outcome** as practically everything else than ‘output’. It is either the intended or the unintended consequence of the project process. Outcomes are thus less visible than outputs. Project outcome can refer to of three different things:

1. **EFFECTS** of the artistic piece on its audience – immediate, reversible, rather individual level outcome. E.g. the state of mind of students when they leave the theatre space; or the “theatrical experience” of theatre goers captured after the show etc.
2. **INFLUENCE** of the intervention on a target group, or in a community – consequential but reversible, not so specific outcome, which is documented mostly individually, on a specific group of people. Eg. a new way of thinking among the stakeholders around the civic group presenting the piece; new policy issues decision makers have become conscious about; attitude shift towards specific behaviours among the students of a school etc.
3. **IMPACTS** of the project understood with respect to the social circumstances – long term, irreversible outcomes, mostly economic, or social (but may be psychological too). Impacts may of course be made up of a series of effects of specific activities (presentations, sessions etc.). Or can be a long accumulation of influences generated by a series of activities. Usually, it is more clearly observable than effects or influences, and therefore it is easier to provide supporting evidence. E.g. lay participants of a theatrical process change their career pathways; a small group of people in a marginalized community start community organizing in defence of their collective interest because of the project etc.

2.2. Evaluation Frameworks

After specifying the subject and the genre of the evaluation as defined above, we can go forward by fixing **an evaluation framework**. An evaluation framework usually defines the evaluation goals in relation to the project goals and the project design but chose its methodology and the validity claims in scientific terms. It also respects the autonomy of the evaluated project design, which may have defined its

objectives in much softer ways than the evaluation itself.

The Encyclopaedia of Evaluation (Mathison, 2004) treats forty-two different evaluation approaches and models (i.e. frameworks) ranging from "appreciative inquiry" through "connoisseurship" to "transformative evaluation", but first we only need to decide how to handle project goals and what period of the project should be investigated within the evaluation study. We may choose an evaluation framework from an abundance of available options, but we may distinguish among four distinct types of evaluation frameworks with respect to the significance of the project goals and the period of evaluation. Thus, in our case, we only need to decide if the pilot projects have any specified and shared goals in terms of citizenship education, and we need to assess in advance if those goals would become identifiable at the beginning or only at the end of the pilot projects. In other words, we may choose an approach from the following matrix:

	Formative	Summative
Goal oriented	e.g. Theory of Change led evaluation (1)	e.g. Impact evaluation (social, economic, etc.)
Goal free	e.g. (Qualitative or participatory) Process Analysis	e.g. Most Significant Change

Theory of Change: This framework is to improve the project design or its practical implementation and to help facilitators with their learning process. It can be applied before the project and gather data throughout the pilot. It is useful for understanding or clarifying the need for the project; to make clear the theory of change that the project is based on (ie. predefined inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes); to improve the project's design; to ensure that the project activities are being delivered efficiently and effectively. It also has its specific difficulties. The target group of the project must be defined and pre-assessed, requires dedicated time to develop and amend the TOC, presumes facilitators' flexibility in re-planning the process, and also needs significant time to collect data.

Impact evaluation is an outcome based summative framework, which is usually related to accountability in terms of economic and social impact. It is used during project implementation and post-project. The model is to assess whether the project has met its goals, whether there were any unintended consequences, what were the learnings, and how to improve them in the future. The difficulty with impact evaluation is that it needs well-articulated policy expectation (how the

project relates to current explicit and implicit policies) and subtle indicators must be chosen accordingly. The development of indicators may need time in order to be relevant and ready for comparative purpose (i.e., references must be defined); indicators also need to be coherent with each other and therefore made clear in specific dimensions (like awareness and knowledge; dialogue and deliberation; attitudes and motivation; behaviour and action; capacity and conditions, service systems and policies etc.) Impact evaluation is often preferred when quantitative evidence is needed about the “effectiveness” of a project.

Process analysis is a goal free formative framework that is to be used during project planning and implementation to explore the nuances of the professional process, explore immediate consequences, and define potential ways to continue the project. Focuses on internal immediate effects. It accommodates both quantitative and qualitative tools. It needs careful documentation, and expects continuous professional reflection from the team of facilitators. It also needs time for documentation and writing up; some writing skills is nice to have (ethnography). Usually, it does not provide convincing numbers for funders, but aims to address other professionals (colleagues and students in the field of theatre or arts education).

Most Significant Change (MSC) is one of the most popular evaluation frameworks today. It is a summative, however goal free approach that is used during the project implementation and post-project to explore the effects of an intervention on individuals and groups, and to see if that can cause social impacts too. It does account the impacts firsthand, but not always provide comprehensive information about the unintended impacts produced by an intervention. It generates both quantitative and qualitative data. It needs a very clear understanding of the immediate target group as well as the wider target group must be defined (of which participants are regarded as representatives of).

In theory, all of the above mentioned frameworks can be delivered in a **participatory way**. To understand the role of participatory “style” in evaluation studies Keen et al. (2005) propose five principles which foster social learning: 1.) Repetition makes social learning an iterative process. By asking a core set of questions again over time, it generates a process of reflection and allows comparisons about how participants’ thinking changes over time. 2.) Feedback and discussion allow participants to form their own understanding of a problem or issue within the broader context of the political community. It also ensures that conclusions emerge in a collaborative way involving both the facilitators and the participants. 3.) Group deliberations encourage participants to debate key issues around their own citizenship, and the key elements needed for more sustainable communities. Deliberation also provides room for individual opinions, and helps the group realise that there are no silver bullets for complex problems. 4.) Flexibility allows pro-

ject staff to update the goals of the project based on delivery feedback (adaptive management). It emphasizes adequacy over standardization, i.e. the significance of finding feedback forms that suit to the temporary state of mind of the participants. 5.) Integration underlines the significance of integrating different types of knowledges in evaluation, which helps participants to integrate evaluation results into their own social learning process.

2.3. Conclusion

After reviewing the above-mentioned pathways and deciding to do it in a participatory way the partnership has come to the following alternate statements about our common evaluation needs: **we may need** a goal driven formative evaluation of the participants in terms of learning outcomes (empowerment), social identity (engagement and empathy) with respect to the changing effects, final influence, and long-term impacts of the program. This requires a Theory of Change approach with little participation in evaluation from the lay participants. Or we may rather need a goal driven summative evaluation of the audience with respect to effects and influence caused by the program. This presumes an impact evaluation approach with the strong participation of lay participants in evaluating the results together. Or we may need a goal free summative evaluation of the institutional and professional environment with respect to influence and impact of the program.

For doing this all, as well as doing it in a coherent way, we probably need to develop a strong cause-effect model (a shared Theory of Change) about Citizens' Theatre focusing dominantly, but not exclusively, on the participants. This ToC model can help us throughout the program, coordinate what to document on the go, and see if the program works out as expected. The continuous collection of evidence and counter evidence would use various and engaging creative exercises to diagnose that what happens in the group is according to the baseline expectations or not. This approach may still leave room for as much program modifications as needed during the program delivery. This basic framework may also consist of simple and specific effect-surveys among the audiences in a way that lay participants of the program be able to discuss the survey results as an outcome of their own activity. Additionally, this framework may also ask professionals and stakeholders for feedback, though without seeking for specific impacts of the pilots, but rather to explore their attitude towards the 'Evaluation of Community Theatres for Adult Citizenship Education' program.

3. Defining the Educational Goals

The partnership also needs to come to terms with a common understanding of the legitimate goals of citizenship education. If we would like to evaluate pilots in a common framework, we need to specify our goals on the same level of abstraction. Therefore, we have not only searched for a working definition of “citizenship”, but also reviewed what have been the dominant thematic trends in citizenship education in Europe. Here, we take an historic perspective to help reflecting individual trajectories in our distinct home countries and for helping to develop individual understandings of how the accumulation of issues over decades may offer a pretext for specific goals of the local pilot projects.

3.1. What Is Citizenship?

If we are to develop a shared understanding of citizenship as such, we may start with a definition that democratic nation-states citizenship refers to as equal membership, a debatable set of rights/duties, plus participation in the political association (Bellamy, 2008).

MEMBERSHIP is to bring equality (among citizens) and can be debated in descriptive (vs. normative), exclusive (entitlements) vs inclusive (ethos) ways.

The core set of RIGHTS that we may see on our horizon can follow the Marshall (1991) model about the extension of rights. It consists of a civil element (liberty of the person, freedom of speech and thought, the right to own property, and the right to justice), a political element (which refers to the right to participate in the exercise of political power), and a social element (that concerns rights about economic welfare and security). We may also add the cultural element (which is the recognition of identities, and negotiations about what is personal/intimate and what is public/political today).

PARTICIPATION enhances the discovery of a public sphere for action, presumes an effort to understand the process of political decision-making; and involves deliberation (access to information and policy knowledge; competencies for critical thinking about issues; forming opinions about the common good and special interests) and political engagement at the end (which have levels citizens may climb upwards: from passive to active, from self-articulation/deliberation through real life action/participation to organizing for change/mobilizing others).

3.2. What Is the Subject of Citizenship Education?

Having a working definition for citizenship, we may track what thematic aspects of the idea of citizenship have been emphasized in Europe since the Second World War. By doing so, we can also reflect on what contemporary themes may relate to what aspects of citizenship mentioned above (at least in the case of the communities involved in the pilot projects).

In the 1950s, the main goal was to avoid another world war, and for this, citizens were supposed to learn about the dangers of nationalism and racism and a common set of fundamental human rights. From the 1960s, regional and ethnic revitalization movements led to the very problematization of collective vs individual rights. Since the 1970s, the so-called "post-colonial condition" (including labour migration) led to an enduring shift from multiculturalism to intercultural communication, to the 'discovery' of the idea of diversity, through which the question of shared values in a liberal state was problematized. During the 1980s, the low turnout rate on general elections in WEU parliamentary democracies became an issue in citizenship education, which brought about the new questions of activity, engagement, and participation: citizenship goes beyond the simple legal relationship between the citizen and the state, and it includes participation in the political, civil and cultural development of society.

From the 1990s onwards, a general reconceptualization of education took place within the so called "European Educational Space", which has emphasized competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) over literacy and led to the definition of "citizenship competencies", which needs specific exercises and real-life practice. (Another aspect in citizenship education was that it has also become a lifelong process, started early and never fully achieved.) Based on this educational shift, EU institutions proclaimed an ambition for European citizenship education curricula. By now, it has demonstrated limited results in practice (cf. collective remembrance programs, education for Citizens' Initiative), but a definition effort proved to be rather successful. EU documents issued after 2000 refer to either Participatory or Active Citizenship: "Participation in a civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy" (Hoskins 2006, Hoskins et. al., 2012), and emphasize that citizenship education should extend knowledge, skills (social, intellectual, technological), attitudes (respect for cultural and political diversity, respect for rational argument, interest in community affairs) and values (democracy justice, rule of law) and stimulate participation (Ruud, 1997; EU, 2006). Specific competences for a democratic culture were incorporated into a 'Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture'. Visually, the four basic elements mentioned in the first section, and can be used as a reference point for the Partnership to specify what 'content' we would like to achieve within the pilots and define what to evaluate on this horizon.

Though this model has remained generally accepted during the next decade, a set of new challenges emerged in the 2010s.

Intra-continental mobility and multiple belongings brought about new discussions around the "market of sovereignties" (i.e. inhabitants of Europe may chose a home state freely), which pose questions about the role of voting, taxation,

residency, and symbolic attachment to different levels of geographic areas (“is the national level the most important among neighbourhoods-level, or regional and continental level belongings?”) everyday issues for many.

At the end of the decade ecological crisis, global migration, and global inequalities became important questions. UNESCO sets “global citizenship education” in 2012 as requiring new skills and competencies for citizens: beyond the ability of imagining the interconnection of global, regional, national, and local issues, a new sense of empathy, solidarity, and belonging to a common humanity is needed. Sharing values and responsibilities, capacity to act effectively and responsibly at the local, national and global levels at the same time, and creative imagination for a more peaceful and sustainable world has been also emphasized (pretty much in the vein of the earlier conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism).

Political populism, post-truth politics, and the crisis of expertise (fake news, world view disorientation, collapse of traditional authorities) has also become a theme for citizenship education. Primarily, it led to a public outcry for teaching critical thinking, but it can be also addressed as a deeper citizenship education issue too. One related CE register focuses on the development of identity politics, including the foundation of “cultural rights” and “cultural citizenship”. Another CE aspect is the ever-ongoing mediatization of politics, which can be reformulated with respect to contemporary social media and around the concept of “digital citizenship” (i.e. a competence of exploiting the digital world while maintaining online safety, cf. Couldry, 2018). The recent concept of “performative citizenship” (Rovisco, 2019) also offers a framework to discuss related problems, though with a specific focus on the changing modes of political contestation. This is not only a mere result of the globalized and mediated world, but also related to new generational experiences: gestures of standing up for rights and organizing becomes a part of everyday lives of young people, newly emerging youth cultures and lifestyles organized around it (see e.g. the “Fridays for Future” movement).

3.3. Two Visions for Adult Citizenship Education

One may argue that all the problems and issues mentioned above problems and issues should be addressed within the K12 education system, for which drama education can be a highly effective tool. If doing so, why and with respect to what aspects an adult citizenship education would be needed?

On the one hand, we may consider the hiatus resulting from the institutionalization of CE. Formal K12 education in EU countries cover citizenship education reflecting four main aspects: political literacy, which often includes learning about issues in the course of social-historic subjects; critical thinking and analytical skills learnt in formal classes focusing on interpreting texts and deciphering information;

attitudes, values and behaviours most typically developed through non-formal education programs (like external TiE presentations and visiting museums); active participation mostly learnt through non-formal ways, like volunteering in specific civic initiatives. The paramount challenge is that schools tend to organize these interrelated teaching activities separated from each other. The effectiveness of teaching citizenship competencies and relating them to contemporary issues also strongly depend on other pre-existing competences of students. Therefore, complementary adult education programs are needed not only for new citizens (immigrants, refugees), but also for those who did not have access to quality education in schools. Adult target groups in need of CE may vary from country to country, depending on the social deficits of education systems and hot issues of national level public spheres. Thus, in Germany, a legitimate intervention may focus on immigrant communities, in Norway, it may address groups of unemployed people, while in Hungary, young adults and teachers outside of liberal minded elite schools can be all regarded as a relevant target groups and sites of intervention.

On the other hand, we may recognize that the continuously changing challenges of societies always require help for adults in orienting among political issues and providing new tools for reassessing themselves as citizens. In the *Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Social Justice* (Peterson, Hattam, Zembylas, Arthur, 2016), the authors evidence a distinction between the socializing and transformative aspect of citizenship education practices. The first referring to people learning to assume roles in different communities, thus to citizenship as status and the second referring to the ways people actively and democratically respond to issues of inequality and injustice, thus to citizenship as practice. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA, 2019) emphasize that citizenship education is commonly understood as a transversal goal of most activities carried out by adult education institutions. It can have a remedial function and offered to adults whose school curricula did not include citizenship education. But another learning is that newly required life skills are more often missing, so that individuals should first acquire new sets of participatory skills before they can speak and act as citizens (Vandenaabele et al., 2011). In this respect, CE can be conceptualized as a lifelong learning process always focusing on participatory competences required for community life in general.

3.4. Conclusion

As for a conclusion about what to teach through community theatre we may emphasize the following: CE always have a threefold goal structure in which participants are invited to think about membership issue related legal environment, and

action. CE is not only about citizenship but rather about democracy in practice within a dysfunctional representational democracy. CE for Adults tries to reopen a social space for collective self-articulation and learning about emerging issues in practice.

Based on the learnings mentioned above, learnings and with respect to the pilot community theatre projects under planning, partners have come up with the following more specific interests regarding evaluation goals: Káva Theatre (Budapest) would be most interested in the growth of knowledge among participants in terms of CE, with special respect to the development of their social identity and understandings of citizenships contents and politics. Bürgerbühne (Dresden) would be interested in evaluating the effective professional practices for developing influential (as well as self-assuring) theatrical representations of a good (diverse, multi-cultural) society. Bergen Borgerscene (Bergen) would be interested in the measurement of the outcome of a theatrical process and presentation with respect to empowerment, engagement, and empathy. To draw a definite conclusion about the goal of the evaluation, the partnership still needs to reflect on the common dramatic tools for adult citizenship education. Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre for Development, Theatre in Education, or Sociodrama (Role Playing) are all well-known tools that have been described from the perspective of citizenship education. The educational goals and methods of Citizens' Theatre as such may be also explored in this, with respect to the CE discourse and in relation to these more established applied theatre traditions. The work still remains to be done. Next, we may enhance the definition of what specific conventions, that pilots would apply, would apply are supposed to reach what specific goals of CE. The shared evaluation framework, in turn, would be able to reflect it and define the specific methods for delivering adequate evaluation in all the three cases.

4. Toolbox Components

Besides working out the questions mentioned above, partners have also started collecting a pool of creative evaluation exercises (from both their own practice and handbooks) that may fit to pilots and serve the purpose of Citizenship Education evaluation through community theatre practice. The list of exercises will be further amended and selected according to the final evaluation framework proposed for the community theatre pilot projects.

A) Many of the collected games and exercises are already on the repertoire of the partners and used to evaluate individual sessions at the end of group meetings.

1. **Catching the moment.** At the end of a session, participants chose a place where something important happened to them today. They stand at the point and tell the group their memorable moment. As a variation, facilitators may also ask to take the pose what they were doing in that moment. Both sharing the moment and articulating how they felt can be important for evaluation.
2. **Unfinished sentences.** As part of a regular check in and out, circle the facilitator may start a sentence that deals with an issue that is important to the group. (E.g. The best thing happened to me today is...) What is specific in this easy form is that it can be flexibly used both at the beginning and at the end of a session, so and it helps to make comparisons of the results. It can also be repeated throughout many sessions without exhausting the group and generating robust comparable qualitative data on the long run.
3. **Put yourself into the box.** A sheet with a rectangle is circulated among participants who put an 'X' representing themselves in relation to the group. Members do not need to put their monogram into the rectangle, and sheet only serve as a facilitator for discussing group cohesion. This fast exercise can be extended and repeated at both the beginning and end of more sessions in a row. Cross-session comparisons, by asking "how we arrived?", and "who we left behind?" can be also managed in participatory way.
4. **Oral statistics.** This is a simple, joyful exercise which can be good for both energizing and relaxing purposes. One gives an answer (a word, or a number), the others try to figure out what was the questions. It helps to explore group dynamic in relation to layers of a discussed issue. However, this cannot be very serious. Usually forms a passing part of a more complex task.
5. **I learnt nothing today/about** (based on AE, p.7). Begin with the whole group standing up. The facilitator makes a statement such as "I learnt nothing today" and asks participants to sit down if they agree with it. Those standing can then be counted and asked to elaborate on their learnings. As a variation, not only facilitators may recall the main concept of the day (about participation, arts, theatre, and politics), but the "sitting" members may decide what was the topic of the day and say "I have learnt nothing about..."

B) Some of the proposed techniques aim to track effects of sessions on individual group members. It is to further elaborate on how individual, off-the-session feedback can be facilitated (so that the whole group is able to reflect on positions of group members).

6. Social media for feedback. The simplest way to keep in touch with participants and also to provide private channels for feedback is a regular contact via social media. "How are you?" questions can be variegated and posed to members separately. Chatting must remain informal, avoid discussing other members is a must, and it is useful to limit it consciously in time. This may help to track individual pathways, especially in case of drop out, or late joining to the group.
7. Send and text message if you want to have a coffee. This is an alternate way for adults, who may prefer personal, or phone contact over social media chats. Same principles apply as above, but face-to-face explorations enhance deeper understanding of personal circumstances. (Note that this proposal to the group also forms the core message how the facilitator is available for the participants outside the group.)
8. Active Citizenship Scrapbook (based on CET, p. 9) We may ask participants to send photos representing a place where a practical idea. Related to a concept (e.g. for active citizenship) occurred to them during their inter-session times. Ask participants to send their idea in max two sentences too. Print out the photos (preferably in colour) and stick them on to a fixed tableau on the wall; add date, then add the date and subtitle. From time to time, the group can return to the scrapbook (or scrap table) checking newly emerging ideas and discuss how their ideas evolve over time. This form is mainly to follow individual reflection on group-based learning and enhance group reflection on the ideas of members. The exercise can be easily integrated into group life. Variations: 1) Depending on group size, a final discussion can be lengthier than usual. If the number of participants is above 20, and the volume of individual contribution reach 40, and especially if the group is heterogenous (in terms of age, gender and education) the group may also reflect on when they had more numerous or less new ideas, and what their recollection-based explanation is for this changing pattern. This it to understand when the process was the most inspirational and to whom. 2) A scrapbook can be made and published online too: participants can be asked to comment on each other's ideas, and further elaborate on practices they like, or question those they are sceptic about.

C) Partners have their own evaluation repertoire for the diagnosis of group formation over time. Core exercises are the following:

9. **Group of Puppets:** The aim is to visualize the position of individual participants in the group through puppets. This is a fast evaluation exercise and can be used at the end of sessions. Participants chose puppets, or any object representing themselves. It is nice to see how other participants position themselves in relation to what is already there. The purpose of the activity is to generate an opportunity for discussing changes. It is useful if it is a recurring part of checking out phases (three time in a process), and manage discussions like: where I was before, and where I am today.
10. **Group Barometer:** People standing in a line, have the possibility to move back and forward on the corridor. The facilitator asks individuals to reply to sentences (Step as much as you agree with the sentence. You do not have to respond in words but must react immediately.) First round of questions is by the facilitators, the second round is by the participants. It offers a diagnosis for the moment; no photos are taken. Usually half group goes outside, half remain on the stage at the end. A lot of small movements, moving style that express attitudes towards the questions are informative. It can be delivered also in public, on the stage during presentations. This is a usual part of participatory evaluation in the practice of all partners, however, the question of documentation and the atonement to social scientific rigour is a question. (For a more nuance, but also more exhausting application, see Team barometer.)
11. **Team barometer:** This is an alternate, more disciplined version to group barometer, which uses cards and asks team members to sit at the table for the time of the process. Dimensions of teambuilding can be defined as "expected amendments" of the group. It is a much slower version, but makes it possible to document results, and even to have the group reflect and analyse. The team may return to the same dimensions two or three months later to reflect on their progress. For a better result, avoid using the input data at a very early stage (when participants do not yet have expectations about quality teamwork amendments), and avoid looking for output figures at a very late stage (when the group has no chance to improve).
12. **Content box.** This is most useful as a check out ritual. Participants are asked to drop colour balls, or numbers in a box. Colourful balls may represent 'how content you are with the day' (green – content; yellow – indifferent; red – angry; blue – calm etc). Participants may drop more than one ballot into the box, and if the box (or jar) is transparent they may have a shared condensed look at the emotional state of the group changing over time. Different glasses may have labels of sessions also representing types of activities in a complex series. Variations: Using numbers (on a scale from 1 to 10) instead of balls may diminish the chance for constant visualization of group comfort but can be summarized more easily and turned into graphs at the end for collective reflection.

D) Explorations about the level of knowledge on specific issues, and an evaluation of real-world vocabulary for describing citizenship can be essential at the beginning of the dramatic process. This set of exercises should be extended especially if a ToC approach is applied.

13. Real words for citizenship (based on CET, p.7) This complex exercise presumes that if you want to develop a vocabulary of meaningful expressions regarding the topic you explore, you need to define a stimulus that is the perfect summary of your own understanding of the examined topic. This stimulus consists of five words (chosen by the facilitators) best circumscribing the topic. The output of the practice will be a nonsensical poem. (As it makes a difference between the facilitator and the group, which will see its heterogeneity.) This exercise is best when a group of people know each other well, but not the facilitator. The final output (the poem) in combination with music may also become a part of the final presentation. If doing so, the audience may also be asked about their recollection of key words in it.
14. Group statues: The facilitator asks complex questions, including definitions, and the group answers in statues. (What is belonging, activism, participation etc.?) This is to be managed in the vein of Image Theatre methodology by Augusto Boal, so that the group can develop creative answers together, or in subgroup, but oral inferences of meanings need to be managed collectively. The exercise can be repeated regularly, even more than once at a session.
15. Metaphor drawing. Visualizing the "answer" by drawing, making collages or other visual forms of expression. By doing so, participants translate their answers into another medium, and next they may transpose it into explicit wording. This is also useful for diagnosing the structure of very limited knowledge before the learning process and before getting comfortable with dramatic self-expression. When members place their individual products on the ground in the centre after one another, they can also play with positioning artistic objects in relation to each other. We can interpret results on a group level, and we may also return to a group composition by asking for amendments. This helps to see what kind of changes occurred in the subject.

5. Making a Decision About the Evaluation Strategy: Theory of Change or Process Analysis?

In order to arrange when and with who to use the collected evaluation exercises, and see if we need to add further evaluation games to the collection, we need to make a decision about the evaluation framework. At first, the partnership decided to explore the possibility of developing a specific Theory Of Change, but later we shifted to a Process Analysis approach.

The development of a Theory of Change (TOC) is promised to reflect the actual aims and goals of all the three individual projects and providing a general model suitable to the most typical step-by-step achievements in a successful community theatre project. A TOC planning workshop is a process which is generally used by an intervening team to define a socially engaged project's pathway starting from the specific needs of the participants and addressing the specific changes that the facilitators want to achieve with them. The main challenge in this approach is a constant thinking about preconditions of the expected final outcomes. A precondition is a change that needs to happen in order for an outcome to occur. Intermediate outcomes are also often caused directly by interventions. The TOC planning process also continuously addresses the question of why we think that our activities would lead to the outcomes we want, so making our assumptions explicit. Thus, a TOC does not simply reflect regular practice, but articulates what a project wants to be held accountable for. The output of a TOC planning process a pathway of change. It shows how we think that specific activities lead to intermediate outcomes (preconditions), which lead to further outcomes and impacts.

Although finally the Theory of Change approach was dropped by the partnership, in the course of the planning and reflection process the shared goals, their ladder of preconditions, and the presumed evidence for the achievement of these preconditions became explicit. The partnership have defined the five following general goals that they all expected to achieve during a community theatre project which deals with citizenship education: a strenghtened capacity of self-expression; experiencing the emotional and social power of communities; finding a common language for self-expression; gaining courage for public self-expression (in teams); realizing that the "theatre" is a public forum (and that other institutions and spaces may be used as theatrical spaces too). Though the framework was later dropped, a short summary of these goals and their preconditions is a significant output of our collaboration.

SELF-EXPRESSION: This is a capacity for expressing and articulating one's needs in general, but also indicating the awareness that it is levelled and can be exercised in different social situations (e.g. in the family, with friends, in public)

PRECONDITIONS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION	PRECONDITIONS OF THE PRECONDITIONS	EVIDENCE FOR PRECONDITIONS ACHIEVED
Awareness of one's personal needs	Capacity of self-reflection, self-honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open and close circle: more and more participant share, speak about their personal needs openly• voice their need more and more frequently• voice their critique of the program: propose ideas about activities
	Time beyond everyday businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active voluntary presence at group sessions
Language for expressing personal needs	Knowledge of different forms of self-expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They use the tools (painting whatever) to express themselves
Trust among participants and facilitators	Group safety, safe atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-organizing outside of sessions• they do what we ask them to do• they come and tell what bothers them (even negative feedback is a sign of trust)
People are interested in my personal needs	Ready to invest in knowing each other (not only in personal stage appearance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs of active listening: They are questioning each other, ask follow-ups
	Keep repeating the principle: "talk without fear, listen without judgement!"	
Maintaining voluntariness	Feels own importance, feeling of significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are not late, and do not leave early• active participation• ask more questions
	Raising dedication, commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mostly negative signs: do not reply etc.
	Flexibility in workshop planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole group or all the participants, who are needed at the session, are there

BEING TOGETHER/STRENGTH OF A COMMUNITY primarily refers to the apprehension that isolated/abandoned/lonely/desperate people always have common issues, and communities provide them with emotional shelter and a social capacity.

PRECONDITIONS FOR TOGETHERNESS	PRECONDITIONS OF THE PRECONDITIONS	EVIDENCE FOR PRECONDITIONS ACHIEVED
Awareness of at least one specific issue (topic)	Multi-layered discussion (diversity of participants) about the given topic of the theatrical work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we manage the discussion, or not? • similar stories come up during sessions • people report about the strength they gained, courage to share about the main topic (loneliness, diversity, education) • do they understand how personal stories will add up together in the performance?
	Active help of competent facilitators is experienced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of staff/ invitation of experts
	A safe environment dedicated for these issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated space and time ensured • all participate freely in trust-building exercises
Let the group become stronger without the facilitator People are interested in my personal needs	Let them stay together without any purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They start using WhatsApp; ask for each other's mobile numbers • participants tend to return from breaks together (or alone, which is a bad sign)
	Vivid group life (effervescence) is observable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy-going atmosphere (laughing), participants tend to build on each other's ideas frequently
Learning about the emergence of complementary roles (how to reach a consensual division of labour in a democratic way)	Get practical experience in cooperation, communication, teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance/presentation delivered as an example for the strength of a community • the "opening night" is evaluated as a successful collective effort
	Capacity in listening to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are not only sharing stories openly, but actively interested in each other's stories

PURSUIT FOR A COMMON LANGUAGE is an active search for an artistic common language among different people, the readiness of sharing their related problems on a common platform.

PRECONDITIONS FOR "COMMON LANGUAGE"	PRECONDITIONS OF THE PRECONDITIONS	EVIDENCE FOR PRECONDITIONS ACHIEVED
Ensured group diversity	50% open call and 50% of participants come through alternative channels (NGOs, or go into the field directly); look for people who never go to theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-define a level of diversity through objective markers (e.g. postal code for different parts of the city; age; gender; education; ethnic background etc.)
Safe group atmosphere	Accepted common/group rules Develop common rituals Develop an understanding of the difference between "private" and "public" Let participants understand the purpose of all exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe if they share personal stories• Observe if they take the chance to react to a Shared story or discuss freely the moral of a personal story• Note if they feel free to propose exercises• Note that if they ask questions about the purpose of an activity is a sign of trust in the facilitator
Appetite for a search for a common language	This purpose is understood and reflected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They help each other to use common language (e.g. one sits next to the speaker to "translate")• They all dare to try extensions to known exercises together• An FB (or Insta) group is launched, posting photos in it is OK for them.
	Enhanced patience and openness within the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants show readiness to try out different ways of speaking• Readiness to try out different genres of communication (relevant to the content)
Appetite for trying different artistic communication formats (street art, drawing, dance, poetics, song writing, podcasting, slam, tagging, graffiti)	Invite professionals if needed Rely on the skills of the participants Look for its fitting to the whole presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize their complain about overload or lack of interest in new forms• Everyone has developed a favourite language of preference.• Check if chosen styles and artistic forms are accepted by all of them

COURAGE OF PUBLIC SELFEXPRESSION: This is a skill for articulating themselves publicly (about “how I am a citizen”); but beyond public speaking techniques, they also gain courage for raising personal opinions in various situations.

PRECONDITIONS FOR “COURAGE of PUBLIC SELF-EXPRESSION”	PRECONDITIONS OF THE PRECONDITIONS	EVIDENCE FOR PRECONDITIONS ACHIEVED
Gain self-confidence/ self-esteem	Exercise recognizing what you are good at, though you have not yet realized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if more and more people are involved in group discussion • Participants ask for roles to be assigned to them • They use proposed forms more expressively (e.g., move a statue on their own)
	Feel comfortable in your body	
	Gain trust in your open voice	
Acquiring theatrical skills for public “speaking”	Develop an understanding that you can train how to use your voice. Exercise as much as you can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants use these techniques after the process in their personal or professional life (maybe without realizing it, but they may report voluntarily what they tried out between sessions)
Accept/be sure about the plurality of valid opinions	Participants need to accept that the workshop/process is not competitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants ask for others' opinions, actually interested in hearing them • They talk friendly with each other • Facilitators talk about the importance to listen to each other's opinions (or even about the freedom of speech in general)
Make participant feel that their voice matters	Facilitators receive, handle, and offer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance/presentation delivered as an example for the strength of a community • The “opening night” is evaluated as a successful collective effort
Accept/be sure about the plurality of valid opinions	Capacity in listening to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of interactivity in general • Joy of speaking (joyfully form their thought while speaking) • They share their own stories freely • They give feedback in a way to make performance better

RECOGNITION OF "THEATRE" AS A PUBLIC FORUM: refers to a shift in the mindset of citizens who may come to understand the idea that the theatrical space is both an aesthetic space (which can be also set up outside of theatre buildings) as well as public space where citizens can turn their private experiences into public issues.

PRECONDITIONS FOR CON-SCIOUSNESS ABOUT THEATRE AS A PUBLIC FORUM	EVIDENCE FOR PRECONDITIONS ACHIEVED
Arrange a socially accessible physical space for workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People who normally do not go to theatre decide to come, and take part in performances, debates of different kinds. (It is also possible to create theatrical performances in parks, shops, cafes, and other forums to reach a new and different audience.)
Ensure the presence of diverse participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that people are invited from different backgrounds. Invite people from various organizations, NGO's. Provide discounted and free tickets for certain groups, offer free food, promise easy involvement.
Break down the stereotypes attached to theatrical (or any other institutionalized) space among the actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write invitations together with the participants and discuss the ideal of the theatre you are doing together.• Rehearsal with the group at least partly online/outside the theatre building/in different spaces (This is easy at times of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
Let the audience understand that theatre is possible everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make your presentation interactive if possible, so that audience members can openly share their viewpoints, enhance discussions on the different opinions.• Make sure that the audience has some time and space to reflect on the performance they have been involved in, ask questions and the performers have time and space to reply.• Having a cognitive map of the locality of our life and thinking together where (and about what issues) we may develop a theatre may give a boost to further engagement

After developing the above mentioned Theory of Change, partners realized that checking the achievements may require a lot of time. This may be diminished only by focusing on more specific citizenship issues or applying an even more unified (rigid) methodology for delivering the pilot projects. Therefore, the TOC model was put aside, and a more flexible approach applied to provide room for individual pilot delivery. For this purpose, a Process Analysis questionnaire were developed which was meant to help Partners to keep a regular diary of their activities. Chapter 3 presents the country-based accounts developed by each partner through logging their activities in diary format (see Appendix.).

The Process Analysis framework proved to be useful in offering the requested flexibility. The collection of evaluation exercises could be used in a “free floating” way, be used depending on the needs of the local processes. Partners were still able to develop a shared structure (table of contents) upon completing their pilot projects and discuss which exercises were relevant, informative in the light of specific local concerns, and reflect practical difficulties emerging during implementation together.

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Annex

LUCKY NUMBER NINE

B: Club Zahlendreher

Script: Katja Heiser

Email: ka.jusch@gmx.de

Premiere at Bürgerbühne Dresden

04 May 2022

Scene 0 - Counting Things/Audience Statistics

At the entrance: Counting the audience under different questions

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| - Total number of audience members | Ali - Slide rule |
| - People with nail varnish | Sabine - Lines on arm |
| - A red piece of clothing or accessory | Michael - Clothes pegs |
| - People who like sad songs? | Lea - Strokes on blackboard |
| - People who like pineapple on pizza | Alaa - bell |
| | Wiebke - Balls in buckets |
| - People who have stolen something during their lifetime? | Isabel - Stamp |
| - Red or blue | Mahsa - drops in glass |
| - People who are smiling in the very moment | Maaria - Calculator |

At the end of the entrance: All players on stage, transfer their result to paper (or similar) and hang it on the line

Line up

Scene 01 - Statistics I

In series: Speaker steps forward

1 Isabel

2 of us were born in Saxony.

1 in Finland.

4 of consider more than one country as their home.

9 of us live in Dresden.

2 Sabine

3 of us have children.

3 of us have a cat.

3 Lea

2 of us are married have been married before.

4 of us have been on a theatre stage before.

2 of us are afraid of the dentist.

4 Ali

7 of us like sad songs.

4 of us like spicy food.

7 of us know someone who likes pineapple on pizza.

5 Mahsa

6 of us have cheated on someone before.

3 of us haven't.

Shuffle!

6 Sabine

6 of us have been cheated on before.

3 of us have not.

7 Maaria

4 of us have saved a life before.

7 of us know someone we trust 100%.

8 Isabel

9 of us have ever slept under the open sky.

9 of us have stolen something before.

8 of us wear coloured socks sometimes.

9 Wiebke

7 of us have walked into a glass door before.

Shuffle!

5 of us count ourselves as the more intelligent half of the room.

10 Michael

7 of us have given a present to someone else because we didn't like it.

7 of us were always the last to be picked for the team in PE class.

8 of us think they have jumped over their shadow recently.

1 person doesn't think so.

Shuffle!

11 Alaa

1 of us is 90% satisfied with their appearance.

1 of us is 67% satisfied with their appearance.

1 would be willing to spend over 1000€ on cosmetic surgery.

Lucky no Nine – Loop

Scene 02 - Ali: 4

This is chetyre.

Does anyone know chetyre? Do any of you know what that means?

Exactly. Four. In Russian.

In the town where I grew up in Syria, there was a Russian swimming pool. It was actually only for the Russian skilled workers who worked in the city. But because I had some good connections, I was allowed to swim there.

So I went there every day in the summer, straight to the ticket office, where the Russian woman who sold the tickets sat and said: chetyre.

Then she gave me the key to my locker.

Chetyre, four, was my personal locker number in the Russian swimming pool.

And "chetyre" is also the only word I know in Russian.

Scene 03 - Wiebke: 8

When I was 4 years old, my parents briefly thought I was a child prodigy.

One evening my family and I were sitting at the dinner table. My parents, my 6-year-old brother and me. My father asked to ask my brother an arithmetic problem:

Jonas, how much is $5 + 3$?

My brother started to calculate; counting on his fingers. I could see the wheels turning in his head, he was thinking hard. Not an easy task for a first grader. Meanwhile, I, 4 years old, sat in my corner and ate my bread.

All of a sudden I stood up, walked to the middle of the room and said: 8!

Suddenly everyone looked at me in amazement. My parents began to ask me enthusiastically more arithmetic problems. ...

Everyone asking mathematic questions

And I said....

8!

And so ended my child prodigy career.

Scene 04 - Roman Numbers

Wiebke & all forming Roman numbers with their bodies

Ali: Zero t-shirt

Wiebke:

Roman numerals are a method of representing numbers using Latin letters.

1

2

3

It was used in ancient Rome and can still be found to some extent today, for example as year numbers on historical buildings.

4

5

In the form commonly used today, it uses the Latin letters I, V, X, L, C, D and M as number signs for writing the natural numbers.

9

It is an additive number script with a supplementary rule for the subtractive writing of certain numbers, but without a place value system and a sign for zero.

15

16 + Ali

There was no zero!

It is based on a combined quinary-decimal or biquinary number system with the base numbers 5 and 10.

21

Rules:

Same digits next to each other are added.

22 + Ali

There was no zero.

No more than three identical digits may be next to each other.

46 + Ali

There was no zero.

Smaller digits are added after larger digits.

49

999

Smaller digits before larger digits are subtracted.

2000 + Ali

There was no zero.

The basic characters may only be subtracted from the next larger basic or auxiliary character.

2022

Always use as few characters as possible.

2022!!

Scene 05 - Turning numbers

Ali: 0

Isabel: 1

Mahsa: 2

Wiebke: 3

Maaria: 4

Alaa: 5

I am صفر.

Zero.

Nolla.

Zero.

I am the zero.

The Europeans did not know me for a long time.

The zero did not exist in the Roman numerals. You can see what has become of it...

I come from India: shoonye.

I was invented there about 1800 years ago, as a full-fledged number, not just as a placeholder.

You could add, subtract and multiply with me. I am the foundation of higher mathematics. (And the foundation of the financial system, digitalisation and...)

Around the year 700 of our era, the Arabs and the Persians adopted the Indian numbers. Not only the zero, but also the

١

٢

٣

٤

٥

Meanwhile, the numbers (in picture frames) come and line up (from top to bottom). It took a long time before the zero came to Europe, it appeared during the Middle Ages. For many people, and especially for the Church, the "round thing" was the work of the devil and therefore sinister.

The Indo-Arabic numbers were first written from top to bottom on long strips of papyrus to save space. The strips were then turned 90 degrees to read.

Please turn!
Numbers are turned on command
Ali looks, turns the 1 back again
 So, does this look familiar?
 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 -
Alaa looks sad
 What's wrong with you??
 Oh well, turn it again.
Alaa turns it again
 And 5 - The number of love...

Scene 06 - Mahsa 1354

Thirteen hundred and fifty-four.
 And actually that's ۱۳۵۴. That is the year I was born.
 Iran has its own calendar. The year always starts in spring in March. In Iran they only use this calendar and when I came here I always had to calculate every date!
 When did you finish your studies?
Mahsa calculates.
 That was ...
 When was your daughter born?
Mahsa calculates
 ...
 When did you move to Tehran?
Mahsa calculates
 ...
 And even on my own birthday.
 But actually I use an app for that...

Scene 07 - Michael: The 15th meridian:

I studied in a divided city. Divided by a river and by a national border. It is also divided into two languages. And the 15th meridian, on which Central European Time is based, runs through this city.
 This city is Görlitz.
 And the meridian not only runs through Görlitz, but also through the university where I studied and right through the canteen where I ate.
 But the crazy thing is although Central European Time stretches from Spain to Poland, the sun only peaks at 12 o'clock on the 15th meridian.
look up

Scene 08 - Can Feelings Be Counted?

Michael, Sabine, Ali

Conversation while setting up the dice

Sabine: Ali, on a scale of 1-9, how excited are you right now?

Ali: It's okay. About a 3.
 Michael, on a scale of 1-9,
 how satisfied are you with your life so far?

Michael: It's going quite well, so an 8.
 Sabine, on a scale of 1-9, how interested are you in politics?

Sabine: I just had dinner, so 2.
 Ali, how much do you like horror films?

Ali: Not at all, zero. Michael, how politically interested are you?

Michael: 8?
 Sabine, how musical are you?

Sabine: 9, of course.
 Ali, how shy are you?

Ali: Ali shows a 2 with his hands.
 Michael, how integrated are you?

Michael: Me, integrated, here??? Hmm 7.
 Sabine, you?

Sabine: 8?

To Ali: You?

Ali: I don't know.
 9?

Michael: Dear audience, now you know quite a lot about us,
 but we also know quite a bit about you...

Sabine: For example, we know how many of you are wearing
 nail polish today.

Someone takes the piece of paper with the number of audience members wearing nail polish from the clothesline and presents it.

Ali: And we know how many of you are wearing a red garment or
 accessory today.

Note & Answer

Sabine: We know how many of you like sad songs and how many of you like pizza with pineapple.

Note & answer

Michael: We even know how many of you have stolen something.

Isabel Note & Answer: But now we want to know even more. We want to know EVERYTHING.

That's why we have already prepared something.

Everyone puts on laser safety goggles, Sabine and Ali present the dice from 1 - 9, Under your seats, you'll find a small mirror..

You can take it in your hand and look at the questions I'm about to read out.

I will read them out a moment. We'll test this quickly. Please point to the 5 on our scale. And now ...on the one. And now on the nine. Okay. Very good. Now... back to our questions.

Sabine: On a scale of 1 - 9: how tired are you right now?

Ali: How much in love are you?

Michael How afraid are you of spiders?

ali How afraid are you of the future?

Sabine: How privileged do you feel?

Michael: How happy are you?

Stop, stay like that.

Look at the results

That is interesting.

Comment on the result (Impro)

Sabine : There is this World Happiness Index. You might have heard of it. It lists all the countries in the world and classifies them according to various factors that are supposed to measure happiness.

Michael And you are: Finland! The happiest.

Sabine: Here would be Germany...

Ali: And here, at the very end, is Afghanistan.

(And that's even measured before last August...)

Sabine: The evaluation criteria are a bit complicated, they consist of an equation of GDP, social cohesion, healthy life expectancy, free development of personality and corruption perception index.

Ali: Other very important criteria such as the political system, for example democracy or dictatorship, and the geographical influences of climate and environment are not directly taken into account.

So, whether you can measure happiness that way, hmm....

Michael: But we can check that out here in a moment.
We have our expert from Finland here, so she's at the top of the scale...
Maaria, can you come here for a moment?
On a scale of 1-9, how happy are you?
Maaria comes up with her number "4-6".

Scene 09 - Maaria: 4 - 6 Target Level of Blood Sugar

Between 4 and 6.

This is my target level of blood sugar.

In between should be my blood sugar. I check it several times a day.

I also have a meter that reminds me and sometimes beeps.

If the value was between 4 and 6 all night, then there is a straight line on it, then I am very happy. Sometimes I take a photo of it.

Oh, how happy am I on a scale of 1-9?

Scene 10 - Counting with fingers

Music

The hands appear one after the other in the cone of light and count from 1 - 5 in different ways.

1. european (arabic) begins with thumbs, variation 1 of the 4 Wiebke
2. european (arabic) start with thumbs, variation 2 of 4 Ali

Interlude 1

3. English/ USA: starts with index finger Isabel
4. Persian: begins with little finger Mahsa

Interlude 2

5. muslim (for counting prayers): with finger of the other hand per finger 3 joints Alaa
6. Chinese Sabine

Interlude 3

7. Japanese 1 Lea
 8. Japanese 2 Michael
- All remain on top & continue counting to 10*

Scene 11 - Lea: 12-Hour Time Difference

There is a 12-hour time difference between Hong Kong and Trinidad and Tobago. I know this because I spent a semester in Hong Kong I was a student, and my boyfriend at the time was in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sometimes we would Skype. 8 p.m. at my place was 8 a.m. at his. While it was already getting dark at my place and the day was almost over, I could sometimes see the sunrise on his screen.

That was strange, but at least it was easy to calculate...

When I wanted to talk to my parents on the phone, it was more complicated: 6-hour time difference. When they came home from work, it was already the middle of the night for me.

So it was really only possible at the weekend.

Stands up, walks/sits down in the middle

By the way - right now it's 8:30 p.m. here, 2:30 p.m. in Trinidad and Tobago and 2:30 a.m. in Hong Kong tomorrow morning.

Scene 12 - Alaa: 12 My Nightmarish 12th Grade

In Syria, you graduate from school, the Abitur, in grade 12. For me, it was a big dream to graduate from high school, go to university and be independent.

I tried five times in four different countries.

The first time, we, my family and I, had to flee Syria to Jordan shortly before the A-levels. I tried the second time there, but we travelled on to the United Arab Emirates.

There, I almost managed to finish school. I had very good grades and only the exams were missing, but we had to continue on to Turkey, then back to Syria. But we didn't stay long enough here either. Before I could finally graduate here on my fifth attempt, we went to Germany.

Fortunately, there are many other ways to further your education and find a job. I still sometimes have nightmares about grade 12 to this day.

Scene 13 - Statistics II

Michael

1 of us has already been to about 25 countries

1 of us speaks 5 languages

3 of us three of us could translate "tonight" into another language.

2 of us feel 100% female, 2 feel 30% female, the others in between.

2 of us feel 70% male, 1 person 2%, one 0%, the others in between.

On a scale of 1 - 9:

One of us feels that their level of privilege is a 9.

On a scale of 1 - 9:

2 of us feel that their level of luck is an 8.

On a scale of 1 - 9:

4 of us rate ourselves to be able to compromise as 8.

3 of us have made countless compromises in our lives.

2 of us have made 4.

1 of us can tell over ten jokes.

4 of us none at all.

1 of us has had 10 love romantic relationships so far in our lives.

1 person among us can hold their breath for 60 seconds, one for 15 seconds.

All hold their breath

Scene 14 – Isabel 34

Isabell wants to put the dice in front, the others ask her questions pathing by.

Questions for Isabel:

Wiebke At what age do you want to get married?

Mahsa How many children would you like to have?

Michael When do you want to build a house?

Alaa When do you want to finish your PhD?

Sabine When does aging start for you as a woman?

Lea What dress size would you like?

Ali At what age do you want to have a child.

Maria How old are you?

Isabell gets more and more annoyed and finally puts the dice down

This morning in my inbox: 34 unanswered emails....

Scene 15 - "Every 11 Seconds..."

Metronome sound.

All distributed in the room: counting up - "now" - movement, then texts: energetically to the ramp: movement - "now!" - Movement - back to place.

Alaa	Every 5 seconds, we blink once. Now!
Sabine	Every second, an average of 4.3 children are born in the world.
Now!	
Lea	Every second, two people die in the world. Now!
Mahsa	Every 27 seconds, someone became a millionaire in 2021, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic.. Now!
Ali	Every 11 seconds, a single person falls in love. Now!
Isabel	Every 4 seconds, a fruit fly loses its memory. Now!
Wiebke	Every 5 seconds, over 6 hours of video material is uploaded to YouTube. Now!
Michael	Every 5 seconds, 10 tonnes of rubbish end up in the oceans worldwide. Now!
Maaria	Every second, 5000 litres of cola are consumed worldwide. Now!
<i>Sabine comes forward, in the middle. Everyone falls silent.</i>	
Sabine	Every 2 seconds, our universe enlarges by 160 kilometres. One, two, hhhhh.

Everyone moves away from each other every two seconds.

Scene 16 - Sabine's Monologue: 100 There and Back

I drive 100 km to work every day; 50 km there and 50 km back.

50 km there: I fight against the remaining tiredness.

50 km back: I fight against the rising tiredness.

50 km there: Time to listen to music out loud.

50 km back: Time to think.

50 km there: Time to learn lyrics

50 km back: Time to sing along loudly

50 km there: Time to get excited

50 km back: Time to calm down.

I drive 100 km to work every day.

Scene 17 - Statistics III

The Number Crunchers in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Sabine

We are the number twisters.

At the same time: *8 players take dice to the front, put them on distance.*

9 of us are players.

3 are directors, assistants and set designers

Our rehearsal stage is 100 square metres or 400 cubic metres, which means each of us takes up 33.3 cubic metres.

There is no ventilation system.

According to current COVID-19 restrictions, 12 passive people are allowed to sit and talk in a circle of chairs on the rehearsal stage.

At a distance of 1.5 m.

All on cubes.

Without movement.

5 active persons are allowed to move, 3 passive persons are allowed to watch, the other 4 are allowed to do text exercises in the next room.

Four go outside, the others move with the dice

The following are not allowed: 6 active persons move and two passive persons watch.

Also not: 3 active persons move and 6 passive persons watch.

Nor: 4 active persons move and 5 passive persons watch.

Neither: 2 active persons move and 7 passive persons watch.

3 active people are allowed to move and 3 passive people are allowed to watch, the other 3 are allowed to do text exercises in the next room.

2 more go out,

All go back in

Line up again

We are the number crunchers.

The stage we are performing on has 200 square metres or 1000 cubic metres.

There is a ventilation system.

We are 9 players, 1 technician, a director, an assistant and 37 spectators.

We are allowed: 8 active persons to move, 29 passive persons to watch or to operate controls on the light desk.

Sabine leaves seat 9

When all 9 of us move, 1 spectator has to leave the room and is allowed to do text exercises in the next room...

Scene 18 – Lucky Number Nine

Choreography

All the Trees Are Upside Down

Quarantine Reflections

a performance about wood, water and air

Bergen Borgerscene

Script: Vibeke Flesland Havre

Email: vibeke@fleslandhavre.com

Premiere at Den Nationale Scene: 25th March 2022

Scene 1: A New Beginning

Vegard: They say that it happened on a street, on a market where they ate bat wings.

Crispy fried wings out of a deep fryer. They ate that kind of deep fried wings.

A delicacy for the rich Chinese, or for anyone who had become tired of food.

Then came the plague. It spread via the bat's tongue. Like a promise.

A kind of mythical law of nature. And I saw the entire picture of the bat cave, with the narrow,

narrow entrance, and out there, when they escaped in millions and millions.

They were to change all of humanity into something cryptic, a phenomenon.

We had forgotten to love ourselves.

Luka: When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out... It seemed like good timing.

Siri: The first word that came to me was actually "optimism".

Elio: I felt hope. The dolphins in Hong Kong came back and all of the sudden you could see the Himalayan mountains because the emissions of air pollutants have decreased. I think everyone thought, "Oh! Is this the time that we will take action? Now, when we did not even really try?"

Luca: I felt ready for a new beginning. A more real one.

Klaus: When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, I adopted a cautious attitude towards strangers.

Caro: I have valued eye contact more than before.

Klaus: I have had time to immerse myself in matters that I had never thought I would immerse myself in.

Inger: For me, the the COVID-19 pandemic period started with responsibility. Responsibility and reorganization.

Caro: For me, it was about life and death. Everything was turned upside down.

Johanne: When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, I started writing a diary. Then I started writing post-it notes about everything I was going to do. My apartment was like a post-it hell, with what I should think about and what I should eat and when I should go for a walk and when I should call people.

Siri: In a way, it was a new beginning.

Elio: But it takes more than a pandemic to change us. It must come from within. We must want it. But

I do not think we want it enough, because we want other things so damn much.

Caro: The breathing space has been refurbished and disaster preparedness has become a friend. But

I struggle with the sense of time. I have become a time-confused, strange creature. It is so weird.

Scene 2: Psychosis

Luka: I was psychotic when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. I did not know what was true. I tried to find the correct information about what was happening, but I did not know what was real. It is a cognitive process to understand what is happening in the world. When it is disturbed, other truths are revealed. So it's going on in my head, but I'm looking at it objectively. Like it is real.

Elio: How you see the world... We all have our personal lens, and then we have different filters, if you are in love, everything is like "wow", and if you are depressed you do not see the point.

Luca: There were a lot of things that triggered it. I tried hash brownies. And then I lost my wallet. And then I was on a "russebuss". And then I blacked out. And then I fell head over heels for a girl who was a bit seductive. My head was numbed, by all the things happening at the same time. It changed my basic understanding of what makes something real.

Elio: Falling in love in itself is quite intense... You know, when you pick a flower and count the petals: loves me, loves me not, loves me, loves me not. To me it is: "should I give all or nothing?" and when I'm in love, it's not even a question.

Luka: That was the tipping point, the other things led up to that infatuation, and then click... I slept very little... I stayed up late and then lost track of time. Two of my friends came to my apartment because I did not come to school. I was sent to the emergency room, and then my father came to see me. He explained that I was psychotic. I did not believe him when he said that.

Inger: My father fell down the stairs, and then he got some medicine that made him psychotic. He thought that he was the one who had created the coronavirus. He thought that homo sapiens was about to perish, and that it was his fault.

Luca: I was very stimulated. My brain worked very hard, it made new connections. It connected very concrete, real things with feelings, presumptions and thoughts. I no longer knew what was what.

Was this a thought or was it real? Was this something I thought someone said, or did they actually say it?

Inger: My father had to be admitted to hospital, and he absolutely did not want to go to the hospital, because the spot where he was sitting on his bed, that was the spot that held the world together. But he took my hand and we sat together for five days in the hospital, and we worked our way out of this delirium together. It was an extreme experience and it was all about the coronavirus in a completely absurd manner.

Luca: I was in a state where I thought I could see what other people were thinking. I could see what other people felt. Small, micromovements movements that people do with their faces and arms and their body language. Especially body language, that really affected me, and I made conclusions about what they wanted and what they were thinking and what kind of person they were, just based on these small movements. I was convinced that it was true. I felt completely clear-headed, completely awake. Maybe more awake than I've ever been.

Scene 3: The Dream

Vegard: I had a dream about New Year, about empty streets. All the streets were empty of people. Torgallmenningen was empty. Buildings without life. My apartment was empty. And this is how I've been dreaming lately - dreams of claustrophobia. I'm stuck in an elevator, that I can not pee, or can not go to the bathroom, and in the middle of everything, a fire starts. It was at this time in January or February that I dreamed of fire and how the fire spread. It can just start in one place and suddenly reappear in another place, through ceilings and walls and hatches and ventilation systems. They can burn underground or lock people inside buildings. The fire starts and I'm trapped or my best friend. We are trapped. We're stuck on the 5th floor.

Siri: I've never been afraid of the coronavirus. But I have been afraid of loss, afraid that something will happen to my best friend. What do I see, when I see the two of us It's a framework that I see when I look at the two of us. I see Vegard and me. Inside, he sits in a chair, I stand next to him. He sits, I stand. I stand, he stands. He sits up and gets back up to hug me.

Vegard: In the empty city streets outside, curious animals have come closer searching for new territories, searching for food in the shopping malls or in the empty buildings, cafes, bakeries. I saw it all happen, and when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Norway 2 months later, I thought about fleeing to the woods. Take my handicapped body with me and run to the forest. Away from all the authorities who wanted to catch me or imprison me, or throw me in quarantine or isolation, remove all possibilities to breathe. I had bat wings.

Siri: I'm afraid of losing what we have together now. The quiet everyday afternoons and evenings on the couch in your living room that you have decorated with pictures and pillows and hearts. Goblins and dolls.

Vegard: I turn on the TV and see: BREAKING NEWS: two people died from corona infection in Vestland today. It seems like a normal day. No drama. Just a smoldering virus that burns out or waits for an explosive growth. On the street, I still wear a mask. I walk with a crutch and still have MS. A random passer-by greets me with his left hand and asks me if I am blind. I take his hand securely and firmly and say: "I am blind in one eye" We committed a crime under the new moon, by doing this handshake that could spread from person to person like a plague. It was meetings like this that I praised during the quarantine period.

Siri: Am I afraid of being alone? Afraid to be alone with all the rooms I have inside me? All the rooms I can bring to you, lie down on your couch, know that I am loved just as I am. Someone has described your living room as a womb, and it has that energy: hot, cramped. A safe, clarified, cosmos. The fear of losing you, this space, falling off the cliff and into the universe, alone.

Johanne: I have 400,000 in my savings account. I wish I could exchange them for a cohort. A small family. Maybe a man standing in the kitchen doing the dishes. And a little girl who shouts at me from her room. Someone I can hug. Someone who answers. Someone who comes up with suggestions for what we should do tomorrow. Someone who is waiting for me, who knows me, who is my cohort.

Scene 4: The Hospital

Inger: After the hospital stay, my dad had to go to a nursing home. I drove him there, and he was prepared for being there. He thought everything would be fine and we would get through this together. What happened next, which I was completely unprepared for, was that they took my father from me. I was not allowed to come in, and he had held my hand for five days. I had to let go of my father's hand and leave him at a nursing home. We were not allowed to visit him. Books, clothes and sweets had to be wrapped in plastic and quarantined

for three days before being taken into the home. The only way we could communicate with him was to stand outside the window. He was two floors up and we begged and pleaded for a window facing the parking lot. So our pandemic period time consisted of standing below that window and communicating with Dad by phone. We took the dog outside, we took the children outside, on May 17 we were the only family standing outside in the pouring rain waving to dad. We stood there, the entire extended family and he stood on a balcony waving in the rain. After that we named him the King.

Klaus: I was living in Vienna whenduring the COVID-19 outbreak. I had no plans to go home, but after a lot of phone calls from my mother, I bought a plane ticket to Bergen. The day I was going to leave, I got up early and took the train to the airport. My eyes filled with tears, I had a runny nose and I started coughing. At the airport I got insanely sick. After passing security, I was taken aside. "Wie geht's?" I do not remember anymore until I woke up on the autobahn, in an ambulance. I was put in isolation. The staff was terrified. They were wearing full protective gear, and when I got food, the door was opened just enough so they could push the tray to me. I remember very little from the two days in isolation. I floated in and out of a kind of fever dream. There was something about television. There was no remote control, because it was unhygienic. I experienced that I turned on and off the television with the power of thought. It turned itself on when I wanted it to... The colors were very bright and the sounds very sharp. There was a mariachi band that played all the time. But when I dozed off, everything became just a nice jumble and nothing was sharp anymore. I had some strange dreams, or was it a TV show? There was something about a train ride, and then there was something about Harry Klein. He was wearing a white cowboy hat. Then I sat on the train to the airport was again. Empty train. Hardly a fellow passenger to see. The airport is also empty. I was standing in the huge check-in hall in Terminal 1, in the middle of rush hour, and it was empty of people, but the weight and energy of large numbers of people is still in the air. On the street I sat down in a cafe. There was a lady with a face mask about 20 meters away from me. We looked at each other. She drank beer. I never saw her take off her face mask, but there was less and less beer in the glass. I was just waiting for the mariachi band to start playing.

Scene 5: Move

Johanne: I have had time and peace to write during the COVID-19 pandemic. I've started writing a script, and I've had time to immerse myself into it. I've spent a lot of time with my characters, they've gotten new characteristics and I've lived

with them. There was an author who wrote that «I want life to be happening in the novel». And I felt that so well. Life it's what you can't control. But when I write, then anything can happen, everything that does not happen in life. The best part is when I enter a universe where the characters live their own lives. I may have a plan for where I'm going, but then the characters do not do as I had planned, they take over. That's the magic of writing. In a way, I have teammates who do things that I have no control over. When I enter that universe, I do not hear the sounds outside, and I do not think about being hungry or thirsty. Everything is turned off. It's a nice place to be, but I'm really tired when I get out of that flow.

Caro: I experience that when I float in that way, when I can sit and write for hours, or when the ideas just pop up, then there is an intense brain activity going on, which is both open and conscious at the same time. Which is not characterized by censorship. You allow yourself to think all thoughts. You let go of all control.

Klaus: I'm a trained musician, and there's nothing as wonderful as finding flow, or losing your sense of time while playing. The first time I became aware that it was possible was at my last student concert in Vienna. Suddenly everything became dusty, and the surroundings began to look like watercolors. The edges and the colors slid calmly into each other and I got a deeper contact with the music, with the audience. I have no idea if it lasted for a minute or five but I understood that this is the reason why I play at all. That was amazing.

Johanne: Most probably, what I seek out is that time disappears, like it does when I write, and when I swim. I make the swimming movement, true, very concrete. I can not just sit down and meditate. I have to do something. Like swimming, or writing. It becomes like a free zone, you know? Free from time. And under water, where I feel like I'm inside my mother's womb, I'm completely protected. Safe. I feel that my body is alive.

Caro: It's a sense of luxury to start your day swimming. Just getting up, taking a shower, jumping into the pool, swimming a few lengths underwater it's a feeling of being in paradise. Even if it's in a pool, it's sort of the same feeling as diving, like disappearing into a bubble, that time ceases to exist.

Johanne: I like that time ceases to exist. There's something safe in that. I can get very hung up on time. I can feel as if life is disappearing or that I have become too old and then that not enough has happened. I get very hung up on the fact that I should be somewhere else, and in two hours I will go there and what will I do next week?

Elio: I stress quite a lot, and then I'm not present at all... All the time: next thing, next thing, next thing.

Caro: There are two ways to be outside of yourself: one is the stress-produced way of being in the world. The other is similar to a meditative state where you disconnect the rational consciousness and are only focused on what is around you. It is a state where you get in touch with your own imagination. Your own creativity. The more lined up your day is, the harder it is to get into that flowing zone. It can disappear when you always have to be somewhere on time and you have to make sure that the bills are paid and that the hot water tank is fixed. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it possible for me to work less, and not feel the time pressure to the same extent, but I can still wake up at night and have a bit of that anxious feeling that I have forgotten something, that I have not checked my email frequently enough, that I have not done a good enough job. I once participated in a kind of "vision quests". We each found our place in the woods where we were to stay all night. We all were to bring questions that we wanted answered. Sitting outside, in the open air all night, and just listening to the forest, it was absolutely wonderful. I do not think I got the answers to my questions, but one sentence that kept coming back to me in the morning hours was that I had to care less.

Johanne: In the first lockdown, I didn't get to swim. That was when I started ice bathing. And it was super nice, but it was very limited with how many swims I managed to take. When the second lockdown was announced, it affected me psychologically also, even though I walked a lot. But then I saw that it said that the pool was open to top athletes. And I was wondering if I should try that then, but then it also said "for people who need rehabilitation". And then I thought, "This is my chance. This is my lifebuoy! We live in times of crisis and now it must be allowed to take care of ourselves and seize the opportunities that exist!" Then I went to my doctor and said: "I have to swim to live!" She wrote a note claiming that "Johanne must swim" and then I got access to the pool between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. on certain days. And it felt a little strange then, as if I was doing something criminal. I did not tell anyone, because it was a bit borderline. But in the end, I just didn't give a damn. It was incredibly good to know that when everything was shut down, I could go there! It became my refuge.

Scene 6: About Chopping Wood

Luca: I was at the cabin with my mother when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Suddenly, it was all over the news. That was all everyone talked about. Everything. We went to the cabin because of my psychosis. When we arrived, I sat down and screamed. I think it was a way to let go of the energy that I

had kept inside me. My mother understood that. She was not afraid. It became a kind of warm bubble to be in the cabin. I got into a new, daily routine. I chopped wood. At the same time, it became a shield from the rest of the world and what happened there. The psychosis went a little up and down in intensity. Sometimes I had very few symptoms, other times it was more. It is very satisfying to chop wood. You get a physical feeling in the body from splitting through something. Also, in addition there is the sound! You know, it's a bit like popping bubble wrap that you have received in the mail, you get immediate auditory feedback. And I chopped a lot of wood. Chopped down trees, chopped off the branches, sawed off the trunk, split the wood, chopped the pieces into firewood, stacked it and waited for it to dry. Also I carried water. That was my walk for the day. 5 minutes from the cottage and back, it was a routine, a ritual that I had created. It was calm and predictable and it was nice. When you are psychotic, you live as if you are normal, but what grabs your attention are other things than what grabs your attention normally. It's a bit like being a child. You are more open, less focused on specific things. Everything happens in a way at the same time. You make crossing associations, make new connections. One can hear pictures and see thoughts. When I chopped wood, for example, and thought of something, chopping wood could split the thought into two different thoughts: I chopped the thought in two. One thing that I became more aware of during psychosis is that we humans create dualisms. Every thought is a result of the fact that we have split something that came before. Just like the wood was originally a tree. I became interested in rewinding and seeing what came before the split. And there was a new division, which again led back to a new one. But sooner or later, there are two divisions. Two basic opposites that are two sides of the same coin. And before that, again there is a state that is not divided. Before light and darkness, feminine and masculine or good and bad, before the idea of right and left, there was, or there is still something that contains both thoughts together: light and dark, feminine and masculine. One implies that the other exists, and before they were two, they were one. Before our consciousnesses were different, they were the same. Subject is object, and object is subject. That is, there is no difference between the one who observes and the one who is being observed. It was a powerful experience to realize this. I no longer have the direct insight, but in a way I have a memory of that insight. And it's still pretty hefty. Nothing is separate. But that's not the world we live in now, is it? This chair that I sit on is separate from me and the coffee cup I drink from is separate from me. That's how we experience the world. But there is a deeper truth. It was this truth that I got an experience of when I chopped wood. For before the wood was the tree, and the fact that you are the tree is a deeper truth than that you are not. At a basic level, everyone's the same. I'm all this and you're all that. I am you and you are me. And we are stars.

Scene 7: Fragments of Life

Johanne: Wake up because a cat is meowing in the backyard.

Siri: Wake up because there is a mouse in the wall.

Caro: Wake up when one of our dogs crawls into my bed in through the stern hatch. There is a strong gale, and the boat we live in is moving strongly. I think the moorings need to be checked, but fall asleep again.

Klaus: Wake up. Notice that it's chilly. The thermometer shows 5 degrees inside.

Vegard: Wake up. Reading infection rates on Vg.no.

Luca: I notice that my hair is quite dry. It feels like I've been rubbing it against a balloon all night.

Inger: Dad talks about difficult dreams.

Johanne: Make coffee, lose the cup on the floor.

Caro: The fjord has calmed down and I get up. Get dressed and take both dogs for a walk. The moorings have obviously held.

Johanne: Coffee and snuff in bed. Write.

Caro: The dogs shit on the lawn in front of the Astrup Fearnley Museum.

Klaus: The panel oven has gone on strike. Must buy a new one.

Caro: Stop at shed 13, where the outdoor exercise machines are. Do some push-ups.

Johanne: Breakfast while reading the newspaper. New infection record and new press conference this afternoon.

Caro: Back in the boat. Wake up Solvei, we drink a wonderful morning espresso with coconut milk.

Vegard: Buy a morning coffee at Dromedar coffee bar in Torgalmenningen. Sit down at a table outside.

Caro: Solvei and I talk about everything- we enjoy that the pressure is about to subside.

Vegard: A guy I do not know sits down and starts talking to me.

Johanne: Call a friend. Do not get an answer.

Caro: The decision to resign from my professor job is final. Life is too short to be dominated by incompetent bosses!

Johanne: Vacuum.

Klaus: Buy an oil radiator at Claes Olsson.

Johanne: Write post-it notes.

Vegard: Eat two slices of bread with cheese for breakfast.

Johanne: Lean my head against the wall. Hear the neighbor snoring.

Caro: I prepare Zoom guidance with students and log on. Contact with students is still pleasant and meaningful - but the motivation to work through the resignation notice period for my employer is low.

Luca: It's quite nice too, with Zoom. It is often only myself, the lecturer and 2-3 others who participate actively in the meeting. Sometimes I wonder what the others are doing, those who don't have their camera on. Do they stare in horror at us who have our cameras on and who never got the Norwegian "Janteloven" beaten into our soul? Do they vacuum? I have done it myself in a lecture. As long as you have a bluetooth headset with noise reduction, you can follow just fine. The vacuum flow. Nice.

Scene 8: Climate

Elio:

It is only when I am alone or in silence that I take in the contrasts in the world. When I am free from distractions, I am reminded of all the good and the bad, and how I play into it.

Caro: I read that 700 million people now live in extreme poverty, that is 100 million more than before the pandemic. The differences are also increasing in Norway. Some are emerging, such as the large multinational companies in the pharmaceutical industry, media and technology. Has the room for critical reflection become narrower? I think so.

Luca: I wonder what society and technology will look like in 10, 25, 100 years. I hope that the thinkers of the future are not only intelligent but also healthy. That they are not sick. But what does it mean to be sick? What is having the wrong opinion, the wrong opinions, the wrong facts? Is it to disagree with science? I thought it was the critique of science that led to making progress. We can not stagnate. We have no choice, at the moment. Our ancestors put so much coal in the steam engine of civilization. We are accelerating and we can do anything about it. The machines are made by humans, just as humans are made of cells. We are part of an ecology we do not understand. And we participate in a pattern we can not see. There is something pulling all the strings in the background. But there is no secret group of people doing this, nor is it an alien from Jupiter. This is the pattern we have cultivated. The ecology we live in.

Caro: Do we want to return to normal? What normal? Walk to the rhythm, swallow the pill, take the syringe, make money, pay taxes, equip ourselves for war, buy buy buy... what, from whom?

Elio: The climate is my heart biggest concern. Because it is everything. It is the basis of everything we are. If we do not have a livable environment, we have nothing. It always affects the most vulnerable, right, just like with the corona. Our planet is simply stressed. Ecosystems are stressed. We are stressed! It is the fact that we are constantly buying new things. It's the use and throw away

mentality. It is not only harmful to the environment, I think it is harmful to us as well. I feel like we genuinely don't appreciate things anymore. Everything is very short-lived. There is something beautiful about taking care of things. When we take care of things, we give things greater value. You appreciate them so much more. There is something very nice about people who care about their things, and people who care about their people. I think that's what makes us happy, to take care. I have been to a fjord-watch seminar to learn how to take care of our fjords. I'm a fjord guard now. During the winter holidays, I demonstrated at Førdefjorden to try to take care of it. We have to change the way we live, the way we think, the entire economic system. But people do not want that. Change is uncomfortable. to change. That's what I mean by saying we do not want enough. We want a livable living environment, but we also have a hell of a desire for all the other things. Humans are damn short-sighted. We do not see the consequences of what we do. It's getting too big. We are hypnotized, or distracted. We can not see things clearly!

Luca: I often look at technology as just another flower on nature's tree. It seems that life itself has this built-in drive to become something new, and it is not possible to pause that process. We are in a way doomed to evolve. Doomed to develop. I believe that technology can and will be a bridge to rediscover the contact we previously had with nature. Maybe we can use technology to make technology itself greener?

Johanne: I'm glad that imagination exists. I can always grab it, count on it. I wonder where we are going, and if one day I will wake up to a new time and a new world.

Scene 9: Uro

Vegard: Today, I got a call from the Infection Prevention and Control Department, and they said that I got infected with coronavirus on January 12, and that my isolation period actually ended yesterday. This means that my isolation period had ended before I tested positive for coronavirus.

Luca: Today, I had to get tested for COVID-19. I hope I'm not positive.

Johanne: Everyone around me has had a COVID-19. I have not had it yet, so I'm starting to wonder what's wrong with me.

Siri: There's so much unrest outside of me. There are so many horror stories and guidelines for how we are supposed to live. When I walk out the door, I meet scared faces who look down and away as I walk by. I see signs that say "only five people inside the store at a time". If you are sensitive enough, like I think many of us are, then you can feel the fear as a vibration in the store, in the heartbeats of the people, you can see it in the way they walk, in the hesitation

when you meet someone you know and they wonder if they are going to pass by you or stop to talk.

Inger: I am from the countryside, like the really rural area. And I've never been in like coronavirus queues or anything. But then I came to Bergen, and then I was to take part in this experiment, and we were to have rehearsals at Sentralbadet. And then there are kilometers of people with face masks standing around the whole house and I had no idea what to do. Could I walk past them? Could I walk next to them? What should I do now? Could I breathe? I did not wear a face mask, because I had forgotten it. I hadn't established that habit, because we do not wear face masks where I come from. My God, what was I going to do? I felt like I had entered a plague area.

Vegard: It is in the collective horrors that I lose my appetite. I feel so helpless. I do not know if I look like the people around me.

Siri: Personally, I have felt an overwhelming calmness in recent years. It is as if the calm came with the coronavirus infection, it washed into me, not like a wave from the side, but like something from the underground. The earth opens up, and it flows up into me, into my legs, my arms, a warm stream, safe. A feeling of being filled. I have been so worried about life tasks and finances, that I have not had a husband and children. Now all these thoughts have been washed away by this underground stream. I can be, I can be useful. For now, when people are afraid, I can be there for those who need this new peace that I have received.

Vegard: No one has seen COVID-19. It's apparently very damn little. But it sets off something in people. Personally, I am afraid of the apparatus around COVID-19. The social clan itself. No one has ever seen the social clan. It's just there. That's why I sleep with my army jacket on. The system only takes care of the healthy. I know that.

Siri: Some days, I can sink into the same wet soil that the calm came from. The thoughts can disappear, and when I come up again from the sinkinghole, the calm is there. A bit like I am a ghost or mermaid, I can sink, and rise again with an even deeper calmness. And there on the surface, on land, you stand and watch. Seeing all this happen, seeing how alike we are. You and I, with lots of unrest and lots of peace, seeing how alike we are. And when you reach out your hand towards me, I take it and we are mixed together.

Scene 10: Presentation

Caro: Who are we, the people on stage here now? Are we similar to those who have received media attention in the during the COVID-19 pandemic? The age differences I guess is ok, but we are a pretty pale bunch.

Siri: We all look very similar.

Inger: I think we are very different! What we have in common is that we are ordinary people, we are not actors.

Siri: We only play ourselves.

Caro: My name is Caro, but in my passport it says Jan-Kåre. I am a social anthropologist and I now work as a part-time professor at the North University in Bodø.

Inger: My name is Inger. I have just taken over as general manager of MEMOAR, the Norwegian organization for oral history. Before that, I worked as an exhibition manager at Mjøs Museet. I was responsible for everything that had to do with audience contact during the entire pandemic, it was a demanding task.

Vegard: My name is Vegard. I have MS, and that is why I am on disability benefits. Before, I worked at Foto Knudsens' photo lab, and did running and highway biking. I like to write.

Siri: My name is Siri. I started doing photography when Bergen was hit by COVID-19. I came to Bergen. I sort of obtained a sharper and more present eye. I started noticing details that I hadn't seen before. Shadows from trees and buildings, the light at the forest ground, reflections in windows, puddles and coffee mugs.

Klaus: My name is Klaus. I feel like there are a lot of things I have gotten done.

Johanne: My name is Johanne, I am 37 and I have a 3-year plan. I really want children and a family. I have a slight panic for pandemics and world war, but give me 3 more years and we can talk again.

Klaus: As far as I know, I don't have any children.

Luca: My name is Luca. I study IT and in my free time, I make electronic music. Also, I have started experimenting with something called generative art. I like to make things that can make other things. For example, a computer program that makes pictures.

Elio: My name is Sunniva, but you can call me Eilo. I am in my third year at Katten and I am the leader of a local organization for "Natur og ungdom" (nature and youth). With regards to being young during the COVID-19 pandemic and missing out, that is something I have felt for a long time. I have ME. I remember thinking: "Now people can feel what I have felt for so long, being isolated, to not be able to participate in things, not be able to... You don't know what you have got until you lose it."

Scene 11: Living Situations

Klaus: When I came home to Norway at the beginning of the pandemic, I moved into a boat at Møhlenpris. It was both wet and raw and absolutely amazing. I was never cold. And those movements... it was almost like being in a cradle. The weather is experienced much more intensely on board, and then it has consequences. "Okay, now the wind is coming, I have to go out and check the mooring." I lived there alone, but I was never lonely. The nearest neighbor is only two meters from you, but you hear anything from boat to boat. If you want to have contact with people, you just go up and see if there is anyone else out and then you have a conversation. It's absolutely ideal. If you live so close together, you get on each other's nerves.

Johanne: One day I was so incredibly tired and sad, so I rang the neighbors' doorbell and said that I had lost my keys and could not get into my apartment. I was allowed into his apartment and then he asked if I had called anyone, and I said: "I have called everyone I know and I have nowhere to go." He has such an incredibly nice apartment! Then I sat down and asked: Could I have a slice of bread? I'm a little hungry." And then he cooked for me. Finally, I told him I had my keys, and then I asked if I could sleep there anyway. He did not understand why, but he let me. It was incredibly nice to sleep with another person in the same apartment.

Siri: Maybe the apartment was too cramped. The news was on all day with all the fear it brought. I went out the door, down to Festplassen where all the pigeons and seagulls are. They fly in flocks that suddenly turn and fly the other way. I could point my camera or mobile to the sky and take a series of pictures, and there was one picture where one seagull spread its wings in a way that made me think of freedom. Maybe freedom is even more important now, places are closed, it is cramped at home, few opportunities for movement. So much love then to be allowed to move away from the other, to other streets, people. When I'm allowed to leave you for a while, I come back with double the love I had for you.

Scene 12: Library

Elio: What makes you happy? Eating tasty food with good friends, taking pictures, reading, these are things that make me happy. I love reading. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I have read one book a week. Libraries are magical. It's just lots, lots, lots of stories, an entire library filled with text and words and things that people have been holding inside of them, and then got it out on paper. It's magical.

Caro: During the coronavirus pandemic, I have done something I had not done for years: I have walked aimlessly around a library and pulled out books and read all sorts of strange things without any useful perspective behind it, just because I wanted to. When I finished my doctoral dissertation, my job became so busy that I had to improve my time management skills. I could not spend unnecessary time on things that took the focus away from work. But after I quit my job, I have so much more time. Now I only work part-time,, so now I can allow myself to waste a couple of hours occasionally, and now I see that wasting a couple of hours... it's just the best feeling in the world! I may not be more productive, but I will definitely be a better thinker and maybe also a more present researcher if I waste a little more time. Yesterday, for example, I came across a collective edition of "Samtiden" from 1962. There I found an In it, I came across an essay by Kjell Bekkelund. He writes about how artists are valued. It was absolutely magical to read it, because it could just as easily have been written today! He writes that artists are the stepchildren of society.

Klaus: Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many performing artists think that "ok, were we that unimportant?"

Inger: Everyone I know in the cultural industry has worked so hard. They have tried to change things, make the best of the situation. Many of my colleagues in the music industry made hosted virtual/online concerts. We tried streaming at the museum too, but it went hilariously wrong. The physical encounter means everything. We had more and more meetings in Teams. And then it evolved to being creative on teams. It is not easy. There is a bad connection there, a screen is missing. There are a lot of technical issues and we have to stop and help each other so that the creative dynamics have no particular breeding ground, but we worked. We did not give up. I mean, ups and downs, ups and downs, work, change, adapt and implement. It has been tiring to be a creative cultural worker all the time.

Elio: We love to create! We also love to recognize ourselves in things. We all have the same basic feelings. We have the same basic needs. We are very similar. We all deserve love.

Scene 13: Falling in Love

Siri: Just when my friend's illness was at its most critical and my work clearance money was coming to an end - I met a motorcyclist far out in the woods in Hardanger. We fell in love with each other. He was 20 years older than me and an artist. While Bergen was full of restrictions and fear, he lived on a little

gem of a place in Hardanger. Me, being used to philosophizing and photographing around the streets of Bergen - learned to light a fire in the fireplace, cut rose bushes, harvest berries, cut grass. Take care of dogs.

Johanne: I have black belt in dating. Started with white and went through the ranks. Through all the colors. And then it turned black. I was on a Tinder date with a guy who was completely wrong. I gave him a hug when I left. The next day, it was my birthday. I woke up to my phone ringing and thought: "Exciting! Someone who wants to congratulate me on my birthday!" I noticed it was from a private number, but I answered: "Hello."

Karo: "Yes, hello! I'm from the Infection Prevention & Control Department. You have to be quarantined, you are a close contact."

Johanne: So it turns out that I have to be in fucking quarantine on my birthday just because I had hugged that guy! But I told the guy on the phone: "It's my birthday, it's not possible!"

Karo: "Happy birthday, unfortunately you still have to be quarantined."

Johanne: "Yes, but I made plans to go for a walk, I will go out to eat, I have invited guests. That does not work!"

Karo: Yes, That's not okay with me! you have to be quarantined.

Johanne: And then he started talking about how many days I had to stay indoors and that I had to get a test and just kept babbling, so in the end, I just hung up. And I never hang up.

Scene 14: Admission

Vegard: Then it happens. I'm picked up by bat wings. I'm picked up by time. I am drawn to my own dream. I think bats are actually angels, or health workers. Ambulance personnel in red and yellow overalls. I am on a stretcher and taken to Haukeland.

Siri: Wednesday, February 16. What I have feared happens: at 15.30 the ambulance comes and picks you up. You are weak and need hospitalization. I'm allowed to follow you into the ambulance, sitting behind the stretcher where you lie, holding your hand. I'm scared. We have never taken a journey like this together before. At the emergency room, we are greeted by two large electric sliding doors. You get a bed to lie in. I'm not allowed to come in. Suddenly, I imagine all the women who have given birth alone in the last two years. I think of people who have not been allowed to have their family visit. Everyone who had to die alone, without relatives. Suddenly I can understand in my heart what I have understood with my head: the feeling of being rejected at the door, of being separated from those you love the most, just when we need each other more than anything.

Vegard: I see everything in review. One picture at a time is shown in slow motion.
In black and white. I think I'm nearing the end.

Siri: Consider life as if it were a movie. Take a step back, look at it, see it for what it is.

Scene 15: Life

Johanne: No one is waiting for me. No new notifications my phone. The calendar is empty. My stomach is empty. How does a new day start? My forgot my morning routines. Can't remember the last time I showered. What I like to put on my sandwich. Do I even like sandwiches? (Elio goes out on the floor, puts on sweatpants lying on the floor and a hoodie) On the floor by the bed are the pants and the t-shirt. Soon my naked body will be on the floor and put on the costume. If there would only be a manuscript on the bedside table with instructions for the day. (Elio goes to the wheelbarrow and picks up the pile of scripts. She hands out one script to everyone) And imagine if the other characters could call throughout the day, stir the pot and suddenly I am in the middle of a drama with beginning and end and where everything turns out to be connected.

Elio: Get off the bus in the city center.

Johanne: Hiking in the mountains. See two squirrels.

Elio: Looking through rows upon rows of vintage clothes, I am nervous.

Klaus: Listening to news and the weather forecast on radio. There will be a full storm with hurricane in the gusts.

Elio: Meet Sander for the first time.

Inger: Mom calls, Dad has fallen.

Elio: Try on an 80s ball gown and buy it.

Klaus: It's quite windy already. The winter tarpaulin has begun to loosen.

Johanne: Jump in the fjord.

Luca: I get up. Mom made breakfast.

Siri: Going for a walk with the dog, Balder.

Inger: Dad fantasizes that the human race will disappear.

Vegard: Meet a friend at a cafe.

Inger: Dad does not want to go to the hospital.

Elio: We drink coffee.

Luca: Put on my overalls and airpods.

Inger: Dad decides to go to the hospital after all.

Luca: Chopping wood.

Klaus: The wind picked up and the waves became stronger. Must stay in crawling position to get the last clips attached.

Caro: Today's work is over.

Elio: We listen to music in the cemetery.

Inger: We listen to jazz while dad shouts that homo sapiens will disappear.

Luca: Listen to the secret patterns that Google has implanted in the music.

Johanne: Play music so loud that the neighbor knocks on the door.

Caro: The radio reports that infection rates in Oslo are increasing dramatically.

Inger: Dad has to put on a face mask. He is very scared, because a face mask is proof.

Elio: Kissing.

Siri: Photographing withered roses with snow on.

Vegard: Go to work out in Vikinghallen.

Klaus: It's thundering. The boat has started to heel and move. The sky is turning black.

Elio: I think I am in love.

Klaus: Tightening the moorings of a half-ton boat dancing back and forth is difficult. I have no idea which knots I should use.

Johanne: Lying on the floor. Looking at myself in the mobile camera.

Caro: I go to the library to pick up the amazing book Hålsningsceremonier - have some talks in an antisocial manner.

Johanne: The silence in the apartment is suffocating. I pinch my arm. I feel nothing. Am I there at all?

Luca: I dream again.

Klaus: The wind has become a small storm. Hundreds of ropes, perhaps thousands, howl in the wind.

Luca: I'm not sure if the dream or reality is more real.

Inger: Dad gets a private room and we live there together.

Elio: Must say goodbye.

Johanne: Put my phone on the table. Can't someone call me?

Caro: Our good friends on the other side of the park call and invite us for dinner.

Elio: Have dinner with someone else.

Vegard: Have dinner alone.

Klaus: It was not a good idea to have a free-standing oil radiator on a boat.

Siri: Balder opens the door and runs away.

Elio: Walking around the city, I decide that I have to meet Sander again.

Siri: Balder comes back by himself.

Caro: Talks with an old sami who was 13 years old when he had to flee to the mountains because Finnmark was burned by the Germans. A long conversation about the evacuation - the flow of refugees south. A wonderful meeting.

Johanne: Matches with Tinder-Håkon, he is 33.2 km away from me.

Elio: It's pouring rain and I meet him.
Luca: I am part of a ritual with a candle in the hope of sending a message to a Buddhist priest I have seen on the internet. Vegard is watching the news.
Siri: Trying to take a walk, but there are no street lights here.
Caro: We go for a bike ride with our dogs through the park to our friends - our cohort.
Vegard: Buy candy at Coop Extra.
Johanne: Go to the store. Buy snuff, chocolate and antibac.
Elio: We drink wine at his place.
Inger: Dad and I hold hands all the time
Siri: Everyone gathers around the long table.
Caro: Dinner with the cohort. We talk about life, the ocean and the arts.
Johanne: Forgot to eat. Crack two eggs on my forehead.
Klaus: Morten comes to visit. He is a composer. I have told him about the nagging choir and the enormous forces of nature. He thinks that the nagging choir sounds alluring.
Luca: The Buddhist priest answers me in a hallucination, he asks me: "What do you really want?"
Johanne: Message from Tinder-Håkon. He asks: "how are you?" Smiley face.
Vegard: Go to bed.
Elio: We go home by electric scooter.
Siri: We go to bed.

Scene 16: An Ending

Johanne: Give me a completely ordinary, boring, gray everyday life. Give me peace, stability and predictability. Zero drama. Give me someone who does not cancel, does not delay, does not keep a meter distance. Give me someone who does not cancel plans, shows up on time, who understands what I'm trying to say. Someone who answers me. A human being. Right in front of me. Without Plexiglas in between, without a screen in between. Without reservation.
Vegard: What happens when you eat wild animals? You bite off a piece from the ear. For example, the bat ear - and inside that ear, a scream is heard. You its danger. Danger from all directions.
Caro: Are you aware that life is dangerous at all times, and can you live well with that uncertainty?
Vegard: I think of medications, ME medications and the fear that they will disappear during the descent. I think I won't hoard anything, but that collaboration will be a far more natural approach. The law of the jungle is really natural, harmonious, not a violent chaos.

Caro: People are not born greedy and selfish, but they reach out to each other, especially when disaster strikes.

Vegard: I thought I was sick. Really sick. That there was something seriously wrong with me.

Siri: I was worried about you, so I wanted to come with you to Haukeland. I saw how sick you were.

Vegard: At Haukeland, I talked to an expert. She was a professor. She listened to what I had to say: that I was constantly losing weight, that I had lost my appetite, my zest for life.

Siri: You were so afraid of disease, of infection and of becoming infected. You just wanted to follow the rules to the letter.

Vegard: She read my entire journal. She saw that I needed to get out. Meet people again. It was the fear of coronavirus that was to blame for my ailments. The fear. Army jacket. I had been overwhelmed and needed relief.

Johanne: I beg you, when I open my eyes it is summer, the light dazzles me, annoying party music echoes through the wall from the neighboring apartment and blows the mindset the calendar pushes me into the streets, and into Røkeriet. I beg you, when I open my eyes I'm in the middle of the room, crouching through the crowd, and I will never again close my eyes.

Siri: I do not ask for more than this: that we know it, feel it, how closely we are connected. Together, with the animals, with the plants.

Johanne: COVID-19 made me realize how much other people mean.

Vegard: I have learned to live in the present, to not have future prospects. To be patient, hesitant.

Luca: I don't think I have learned that much from the COVID-19 pandemic. It gave me a small push.

Johanne: I have stopped following the recommendation rules. I have my own rules. I do not want to survive, but live. I have hugged more people than recommended. I have flirted during social distancing. I even shook hands with a guy I did not know.

Siri: What was the purpose of our meeting? There was no other meaning than that we should be present in the moment, the closeness that came when we showed vulnerability, honesty. No other opinion, nothing else we should do.

Luca: Time stands still, or more precisely, it does not exist. The only thing that exists is this.

Johanne: The yellow post-its, the nail polish, the vase, markers, pens, the water glass. My hands. The breath, the wind, the seconds. I am alive. Right now. Now.

RING THE BELL!

The community theater performance of Káva with teachers

Written by Júlia Róbert, based on the texts of the players

Email: kava@kavaszinhaz.hu

Premiere at Káva Színház Budapest, 05th February 2022

INTRO

Student mooning around, playing air guitar

Stefy and the choir step in

STEFY

6 o'clock - alarm goes off – coffee, milk and honey.

Rush rush rush - away from home - rush away, great hurry.

Smiling - good mood - and my way home is just smooth.

Evening - jolly - night prayer to soothe the mood.

6:15 alarm goes off - coffee - milk only.

Rush - scurry - head up! run boldly!

Faint smile on my face - my journey home lousy.

Evening - low-key - sleeping is not easy.

6:30 alarm goes off - coffee - espresso.

So hard - to depart - my pace - adagio.

I drop a forced smile - way home - run like hell.

My evening - slips away - my home is a shell.

My home is a shell...

My home is a shell...

My home is a shell...

LUCY

- An application deadline.
- Several sheets, A and B.
- A successful university admission.
- A great deal of pride.
- One September.
- A seemingly simple choice.
- Plus a teacher major.
- The laws of “lower resistance” or “in the absence of anything better”.
- Career arc with required piece parts.

PRINCIPAL

„Gentlemen! I asked you here because I have very unpleasant news to tell you: an auditor is coming to us.”

reactions:

preparedness, commitment, clique, socialization, reflection, portfolio, competence, communication, attitude, creativity, conflict, indicator, standard level, classroom

DOUBLE EDUCATION

Master pedagogue (master teacher?)

Mother

Sylvie, teacher

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Thank you so much for taking the time and energy to come in. Please, take a seat. In some places, it's uncommon to give personal feedback in these situations. As far as I know, so far it hasn't been in vogue here either, but I consider it important.

MOTHER Of course, thank you for the opportunity.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE And sorry for changing the date, I also got the information at the last minute, my colleague unfortunately couldn't get here yet.

MOTHER So it's just the two of us?

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I don't think we should wait for her.

MOTHER All right.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Maybe you could start, dear Mom, how are you all feeling? How is Matthew feeling?

MOTHER I'm very glad that in the end Matthew got into this class because back then the other parallel class was recommended.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Mrs. Rosie's?

MOTHER Yes, but Matthew had this mate in preschool, they didn't get along very well. He went to the other classmate, so I was glad Matthew ended up here.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE And - sorry to jump back - may I ask why the other class was suggested?

MOTHER (trying to recall) They do what Mrs. Rosie asks them to do, they get results sooner – things like that.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (slams on the subject) So they didn't recommend Sylvie and her methods.

MOTHER It's not about that. It's just that it was known that she prefers to play with them, moving slower.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (as if continuing for her) Which could obviously worry you as parents, that you don't understand what's happening with your child.

MOTHER But I was actually looking for such a teacher. I think it fits Matthew better.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (retreats) Of course, of course, every child is different.

Pause, Mom hesitates

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Please, continue!

MOTHER So I think Matthew found his place here. He already loved to recite poems in kindergarten, he always took part in the shows, and thanks to Miss Sylvie, this enthusiasm stayed with him. I was a bit concerned about math because no one in the family is good at it, but he seems to be overcoming the obstacles quite fine.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (trying to speed things up) So overall...

MOTHER We're satisfied, yes. Matthew's having a good time here.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Did you consider preparatory school?

MOTHER I don't know that yet.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE We are in third grade.

MOTHER Yes, we will have to decide soon.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I'll tell you why I'm asking. (his time has come) I don't see Matthew quite as you described him.

MOTHER (surprised) You don't?

MASTER PEDAGOGUE True, I've only been teaching the class for a few months now, but maybe that's why I still see with a "fresh eye". You won't be offended, will you?

MOTHER Of course not. I'm curious.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I'm so glad I was assigned next to Sylvie so I can help her. At first, the child was very nice, then later I was a bit surprised that he's still dangling his feet, that he often drops his pencil, that the counting discs never get back to their place - that's why I seated him away from Norbert.

MOTHER Yes, I wanted to ask about that.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Go ahead.

MOTHER With Miss Sylvie, the system so far has been that the children could choose who they wanted to sit next to.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (very understandingly) And Matthew chose his best friend, of course, but they were just holding each other back with Norbert.

MOTHER Holding each other back?

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Fooling around, whispering, not paying attention.

MOTHER Sylvie never mentioned this.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I thought sitting next to Julcsi might benefit him. She'll pull him together a little.

MOTHER Would have been nice to know about this.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I am sorry that Sylvie didn't properly inform you as the head teacher of the class. (pause, waiting to see if Mother will say something) Can we go on?

MOTHER Yes.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE So the real problem is that the child is essentially not making much progress. You could also see this in the test results.

MOTHER But what do those percentages mean? We couldn't quite figure it out.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE That's quite a problem.

MOTHER I mean, whether this is good or bad, what level you should even be at.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Yet one of our slogans is transparency. So that you may see everything in black and white, which grade corresponds to what percentage rate.

MOTHER We've received written feedback so far and it has worked very well. It was much more straightforward, after all these are kids not code numbers.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (is a bit offended, or at least acts like it) I know Sylvie used some other feedback method, Snow Whites and the Seven Dwarves, but these are the facts. So from these tables, you can see that his grades are getting worse. You might be happy with your child's performance.

MOTHER (now feeling her own person attacked) Well, we study quite a lot with him at home too, he seems to understand, he does everything.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (swoops down, gives the final stab) Still, this wouldn't suffice in another school. And it won't be enough for admission. This is a weak medium.

MOTHER (crushed) I see.

(Sylvie appears in the doorway during the following passage)

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (very kindly) I don't want to frighten you, dear Mother, I want to help. It's not your fault. You want the best for your child, don't you? But you see, this is what happens when the kids don't sit down and learn the multiplication table, but say "boom" in place of the numbers! Our young colleague tried something similar, if I remember well! Will the child "boom" at the test as well? Thank goodness he's not counting on his fingers!

SYLVIE (steps in) Did you get started?

MASTER PEDAGOGUE A while ago.

SYLVIE But it was annouced to start at four, no?

MASTER PEDAGOGUE It was changed to half past three, so I guess you didn't read the e-mail.

SYLVIE (sharply) I didn't get anything like that.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE (strikes back) Or you just haven't read it. (explains to Mother) A principal's email came about being allowed to start on an individual schedule. (to Sylvie) Look it up in your spam folder!

SYLVIE (to Mother) Excuse me.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE No problem, Sylvie my dear, I've started for you.

SYLVIE (a little sarcastically) Go on then, I will join in.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE I basically told her everything. Does Mom have a question?

MOTHER (confused, doesn't exactly understand what she's gotten into, who to be loyal to) I'm not sure... I've heard some very different information about Matthew than what I knew up until now.

SYLVIE Really? (wants to appear competent, she is the class head teacher) Matthew is completely fine, he's studying well, behaving well, I don't understand what could be the problem with him.

Sylvie and the Mother both regard the Master Pedagogue.

MASTER PEDAGOGUE Then everything is really okay! Mom, forget what I said. These reformed pedagogical methods will surely work in the long run. (to Sylvie) Creativity, communication skills, cooperation, right? - these are all very important and of course, to love each other. In any case, I will report to the Board that the parent-teacher conference had to be held in the absence of the head teacher.

MICROPHONE 1.

SUSAN

1 mother (also a teacher)

1 teacher (happens to be a role model)

1 determined statement

1 inspiring drama teacher (the devil for many)

1 theater hall

1 huge dose of theater passion

1 road I want to walk on

10-15 nice colleagues

1 all-consuming goal

Countless smiling and formative students

A few shyly uttered words: Thank you, Mrs. Teacher!

TEXTBOOK DISCIPLINARY

Teacher

Principal

KLIK School District Director

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (looks up from the papers) Everything is clear.

PRINCIPAL (to School District Director) Do you want to speak or should I start?

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (considerately to Principal) You are at home.

TEACHER Excuse me, I'd sit down too.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR I think you should go back to your place.

Teacher stops, goes back, sits down.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (with urgency) Good, let's get to it!

PRINCIPAL Sandra, you might have guessed why I called you in...

TEACHER Unfortunately not.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR That's pretty bad. We've come to know that there are serious anomalies in your class, you're obviously aware of them.

TEACHER (doesn't react)

PRINCIPAL (tries to help because this is embarrassing for him too) Textbooks...

TEACHER (she really doesn't get it) Yes?

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (doesn't have time for this) The school inspection has found that instead of the accepted textbooks that are free of charge for students, you have made parents buy a different set of textbooks and are teaching from them instead of the prescribed ones.

TEACHER But I...

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (carries on in a louder voice to silence Teacher)
It seems like you're not aware that this is a violation of the law, as free textbooks are provided by the state, and you have forced parents into severe extra expenditure. You can go ahead now.

TEACHER (surprised, she's sure she is right) The parents took the issue in a very cooperative and helpful way, when I told them at the first parents' meeting that I'm having more difficulties than usual with the children's learning and progress, with the development of basic skills - writing, reading. So I got permission from the parents to ...

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (cuts in) The parent is not your boss. What do you mean, you got permission from the parents?

TEACHER The parents asked, they specifically asked me to use this textbook because it worked with their older children. And they took on the extra costs themselves.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR Anyone can say, that the parents asked for it. Did you have them give that in writing?

TEACHER No.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR Then it didn't happen.

TEACHER But it's in the meeting record.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR I called it in and read it. It says here, that (looks it up, quotes) "switching textbooks is mentioned".

TEACHER (beginning to feel she's in trouble) It's not my fault the parent wrote it down like that.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR But this is an official document, we have nothing else to rely on.

TEACHER Anyway, after the parents' meeting, I also indicated to the Board that we'd like to use this textbook.

PRINCIPAL(he's in a bit of trouble too) And I only said we would get back to that.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR(to Principal) But the law states that ...

PRINCIPAL (defensively) You must know the vast number of emails a director has to read in a day. Statistics, regulations, submitting tables. I can't pay attention to every little detail. I said we'd get back to it.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR So you didn't give official permission.

PRINCIPAL I didn't.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR So what made your little colleague come to the conclusion that she has the support of the school management?

TEACHER I thought that if this was a problem, I would be notified by the management, but no such notification was made. (to Principal) You haven't gotten back to it a full semester. What is that, if not consent?

PRINCIPAL (strikes back) You should have gotten back to it before making an arbitrary decision.

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR (quasi-graciously to Principal) I think we can agree on a verbal warning and close the case.

TEACHER (in a louder voice, just having enough) Just a moment! What do you mean, a verbal warning? Once again, we forget about the most important thing, the children! About the great progress they made in the last months! How the new textbook works effectively! Most kids started to read without any problem!

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR I'm glad to hear that. Sounds like you are doing a good job. (covertly threatens) We would be in trouble if a future inspection was to reveal that your reading training was inadequate due to teacher unpreparedness or inexperience.

PRINCIPAL (now he wants to close quickly) So the verbal warning is acceptable to all of us.

TEACHER Not to me! And I can assure you, I will go further! I insist that this whole conversation be put on written record because we deserve recognition, not condemnation.

MICROPHONE 2. ADMINISTRATIVE DISCIPLINE

TAKI Don't print the Registry Sheets from the e-records, fill them in by hand! Don't write the grades only on the certificate, but also on an official sheet! It's not the same if you cross out the unused section of the table with a ruler starting from the top right corner to the bottom left corner, or from the top left corner to the bottom right! Top right to bottom left! Don't mess it up! Cross out the name of the subject formerly called 'morality' with a ruler and write 'ethics' next to it! If a name is left out of the strict alphabetical list, start all over again! But first, cross out the wrong section from the top right corner to the bottom left. Administrative discipline!

In the meantime the others are doing the choreography

SNEAKY

Teacher

Sneaky colleague

Teacher peeling potatoes

SNEAKY I can't believe it's over.

TEACHER (distanced for now) Yeah, yeah, we've made it this far again.

SNEAKY I'm already at Balaton in my head.

TEACHER Are you going to your mother-in-law's house again?

SNEAKY Moving down tomorrow, but no later than Monday.

TEACHER I envy you.

SNEAKY I would have rather skipped today's outdoor cooking as well.

TEACHER But you love these community events.

SNEAKY I'm actually glad we can chat.

TEACHER We usually don't.

SNEAKY Well, everyone looks down on PE teachers.

TEACHER That's not true.

SNEAKY We're the hillbilly dimwits, aren't we?

TEACHER Oh, come on! It's just that the PE storage is on the other side.

SNEAKY I can rarely even make it to the teachers' lounge during the brake.
How are you anyway?

TEACHER (laughs, starts to loosen up) Tired. I was really looking forward to
the end of this school year, but whenever it comes, especially when a cycle is
over, everything gets reevaluated.

SNEAKY But what's it like letting go of a class?

TEACHER I don't know, I have mixed feelings. Of course I know that's the way
it is, the world goes, but this was a class where the parents were cool too, which
is, as we all know, quite rare, and we were on the same wavelength with the kids
from the first moment, so now I'm letting them go with a heavy heart to be honest.

SNEAKY That's actually why I'm asking, what are your plans for the future?

TEACHER (bursts out spontaneously) My plans? I am not the one with the
plans, Mrs. Bolonyai is. (feels like he's exaggerated, corrects himself) But this
time it wasn't even discussed at the conference what would happen in Sep-
tember. The invitations of class homeroom teachers haven't been given out yet,
which is a bit weird.

SNEAKY But what is it that you want? I have nothing to do with it, of
course, I'm just asking.

TEACHER (he's now happy with the conversation) I obviously want a class,
they are so sweet when they act like some big fifth graders in the beginning!
And now some are taller than me.

- SNEAKY So you could go on. You're not tired.
- TEACHER Haven't you gotten tired this year? Honestly, what kind of question is that?
- SNEAKY No, but like really tired. It's not easy, what goes on here daily.
- TEACHER What's not easy is that we know almost nothing. I don't know what will happen to Katie in the end.
- SNEAKY She's going on maternity leave.
- TEACHER (cheers up) Really?
- SNEAKY It seems this time the baby is gonna be alright.
- TEACHER Oh, that's amazing! Mary either goes or stays.
- SNEAKY She's going, she's going. They are going abroad after all.
- TEACHER You see, it's good we had this talk! So we're practically in the same situation again, we don't have the people and we don't know who will take the two classes. Of course, I only know from corridor rumors that there's gonna be two classes.
- SNEAKY There will be just one.
- TEACHER Seriously?
- SNEAKY A larger one.
- Pause, this is completely new information for Teacher.*
- SNEAKY So you'd rather stay and carry on.
- TEACHER Sure. Maybe I won't even have enough hours, if I'm not the homeroom teacher of a class. And there's nothing else. Well, I'd be happy if we could hire someone new as a class as a substitute homeroom teacher, someone I could roll with.

- SNEAKY And did you ever think about going over to Sunflower?
- TEACHER Why?
- SNEAKY I know everything is changing there now. Betty is going to be the Principal.
- TEACHER I haven't talked to her in a thousand years.
- SNEAKY You two got along well. vagy The two of you got along well.
- TEACHER We used to be, yes.
- SNEAKY So she didn't reach out to you.
- TEACHER Not at all. (starting to get suspicious) But listen, is this an interrogation now?
- SNEAKY Of course not. We're just talking.
- TEACHER Oh good, okay then.
- SNEAKY We're done in the meantime, aren't we?
- TEACHER Yes. That was it.
- SNEAKY I'll take it to the cauldron then.
- TEACHER Okay, thanks.

Sunyi leaves with the bowl of diced potatoes, in the meantime skillfully taking out his phone. He calls someone.

- SNEAKY (into the phone) Howdy. He wants to stay... Didn't even know about Sunflower... Yes, Betti didn't reach out to him... and he's expecting to be... excuse me? ... No, I don't need time to think, I'll take the new fifth grade.

TEACHER BODY

Teacher (female)

Students (acted out by one person)

TEACHER Hello kids!

STUDENTS Hey there, Miss Teacher. How are you?

TEACHER I'm fine, thank you. You too, I see.

STUDENTS That's an exaggeration!

TEACHER Let's discuss the class field trip a bit more. Last time you were pretty enthusiastic about it.

STUDENTS Well, we're going, aren't we?

TEACHER Sure, sure. But I think we could be a little more specific about the programs.

STUDENTS Are you kidding us, Teacher? Don't freak us out! Let's not go to the Christian Museum again like in ninth grade.

TEACHER (self-critical) As far as I know, fortunately Mátrafüred has no museums, neither Christian nor any other kind.

STUDENTS Thank you, God.

TEACHER But still, we should plan the 24 hours we'll be spending together.

STUDENTS Teacher, we're together for the last time before graduation. Party. We don't want any programs! Anyway, we're just taking that chemistry test, and you're bothering our making us nervous with this too?!

TEACHER Well, good. But I'm not a shepherd. You should take a guard dog with you instead. You see. And what am I gonna do? Watch you party?

STUDENTS Cook that amazing goulash.

- TEACHER I'm neither a cook nor a shepherd, so you're going to have to take your share of this day. Now, I'll tell you my plans -
- STUDENTS Okay, tell us Miss Teacher.
- TEACHER Right, right?
- STUDENTS We can't wait!
- TEACHER I never come to class unprepared! I thought, if we're already in Mátrafüred, we would head out for a hike on Kékestető after lunch. What do you say?
- STUDENTS Miss Teacher is having a very funny day today!
- TEACHER It'll be wonderful! You'll lead the way, look at the tourist signs and up we go to the peak!
- STUDENTS Peaking is fine, but we'd rather do that at the house!
- TEACHER Take me seriously for a minute.
- STUDENTS *Shows that he's very serious now.*
- TEACHER So I was thinking we'd go up on this wonderful hike.
- STUDENTS Hike?
- TEACHER We look at nature, walk in the woods, we get to the top, and we look around.
- STUDENTS I've seen a tree once, it's nice.
- TEACHER Trust me, you should know me by now, it's been four years.
- STUDENTS Well that's exactly it.
- TEACHER I don't want bad things for you.

STUDENTS Miss Teacher is going up there?

TEACHER Yes. Why?

STUDENTS And then you'll roll down, or what? I'm serious, because we don't want bad things for Miss Teacher either. We've learned about it, it's very high, one thousand and ... one hundred meters, or what.

TEACHER It's less than a thousand and fourteen meters from Mátrafüred, but I thought that... it's possible, nay, sure I'll get tired too, because I'm not in such a good shape as you are, but I think if I'll get tired, maybe I could count on you. Maybe you'll help your old teacher out.

STUDENTS We'll carry you down in our arms! On our shoulders! We promise!

TEACHER I knew I could count on you!

STUDENTS We also have a request to Miss Teacher.

TEACHER Don't spare me!

STUDENTS We want you to join in the class dance!

TEACHER Me?

STUDENTS Come on, Miss Teacher! That would be so nice, so cool!

TEACHER

Dance

MICROPHONE 3.

DORIS worn out grass
 a row of wooden houses
 torn bunk beds
 kids in teams
 constant racket
 the older ones in costumes
 from obstacle to obstacle
 itinerary
 instructions are given
 the children follow
 games all day long
 I am shaping this too

“LARD SANDWICH” CHOIR

EVE Mrs. Magdy, what did you cook?
 “Eat me” soup, dear, and some jam cake.
 That sounds perfect, I’ll come at noon,
 Double serving, away I take!

Vegetable stew, you still have some?
 Or potatoes, fried meat maybe?
 Sure, I have them, where is your pot?
 Soup? Where do I pack carefully?

Mrs. Ildy, good morning, hey!
 Bread roll, cold cuts, and some butter!
 I will have three, to take away,
 Please pour some tea in my bottle!

Mrs. Magdy, if there’s still lunch,
 I would take two in my lunch box!
 Chicken nugget, pumpkin stew, yum!
 Brioche with grapes after lunch.

CHOIR Mrs. Ildy, wait a minute!

You dropped something from your purse there:

Pencil box and paper tissue

Scattered all over the place!

Hey, you left something behind there:

Lard sandwiches with cucumbers.

Mrs. Ildi, where you takin'em?

Those are our snacks, our leftovers!

SUSAN Yours is much bigger than mine! Let's swap!

Give me your cucumber, you don't like it anyway! The rest too! Stop throwing, idiot!

GABY

DORIS Let's go! Lard sandwich again, I can't believe this!

NORA *eats some more*

BREAKING THE RULE

Teacher (female)

Mother

Principal

Husband

Friend (female)

Teacher, immersed in her thoughts, drinking coffee in a cafe when the Mother arrives. We later go to other locations during the scene.

MOTHER Good afternoon, Miss Teacher.

TEACHER Good afternoon.

MOTHER May I sit here for a moment?

TEACHER Of course, please!

MOTHER I'm Mira's mom.

TEACHER Yes, yes, I remember her!

MOTHER I saw you from outside and thought I'd disturb you for a second because we're not allowed inside the school now and it's just so hard to say this on the phone.

TEACHER Is there something wrong?

MOTHER No. On the contrary. Actually we are very grateful to you! It did so much good for this kid, getting this role in drama class. She never really liked performing or anything like that and now she's opened up incredibly. So that's all I wanted to say, we're very grateful, and not just me, but all the parents. You're doing a great job.

TEACHER Thank you, it's really nice to hear you say that. But we had the last rehearsal yesterday.

MOTHER How come? Mira didn't say anything.

TEACHER Because she doesn't know. And please, don't tell her yet.

MOTHER What happened?

TEACHER (sighs) I shouldn't talk about this...

MOTHER Maybe we can help!

TEACHER (pause) I received a written warning!

Change of lights, Principal appears

PRINCIPAL Dear Csilla! I have come to realize that instead of promoting and presenting timeless literary works in the drama class you lead, you are taking up some stories of dubious standards that are not able to guide youngsters on their way, to promote their development by offering them a better world. In the future, please send me the class itinerary in writing before each occasion and expect your work to be supervised. Trusting in your cooperation, Lewis.

Change of lights, back to the cafe

TEACHER So I'm done.

MOTHER The kids will be devastated. Mira loves nothing else in school, but this drama class.

TEACHER They'll eventually find another teacher, a more suitable one.

Change of lights, we are in Teacher's apartment

HUSBAND And couldn't it be done in secret somehow?

TEACHER How do you propose I do that? Send the itinerary, do something else at rehearsal, and then if inspection comes, quickly switch to Wass Albert?

HUSBAND True, that's risky.

TEACHER And they could easily find out even without an inspection.

HUSBAND What do you mean? The kids are all on your side, aren't they?

TEACHER I think so, yes.

HUSBAND A bug then? It can't be that bad yet.

TEACHER Even the walls have ears - as they say.

HUSBAND Then don't do it at school.

TEACHER But where? I don't have the money to rent a room, and I can't expect that from the parents either.

HUSBAND We have a living room.

TEACHER Here?

change of lights, Teacher talking to a friend.

TEACHER (enthusiastic) And I suddenly felt free, and I don't understand why I'm not terrified when I'm usually a cowardly, compromising person, but now I feel like no, I'm not gonna leave it at that! That dick won't ruin what I've built.

FRIEND You're very brave! I certainly couldn't do that.

TEACHER But why? What can I lose?

FRIEND What can you lose? A lot! You tell the school you're done, while you invite the kids to your apartment?

TEACHER And from then on, it's a leisure activity outside of school with parental consent.

FRIEND What if one of the parents doesn't consent?

TEACHER Then that kid won't come.

FRIEND But they could easily report you to the principal.

TEACHER We do whatever we want outside of school.

FRIEND It's very kind of Zoli to offer the apartment, but these are children under 18. And anyway, you're going to let them into your private space? Then have a Hungarian lesson the next day, after they've peed in your toilet?

Change of lights, Teacher in her apartment, talking to the audience as if addressing the students

TEACHER Thank you for coming. That all of you came. I would like to tell you something. When I was in high school, my Hungarian once asked us about our plans once. Then, surprisingly to me as well, I said I wanted to be a teacher. Because I really want to give those I teach a much better experience at school than I've had until then. And when I imagined teaching, I saw something like this. (she means the students gathered around her in her apartment) So let us start the rehearsal now!

MICROPHONE 4

NORA children's eyes sparkling, the smell of school
 buzzing, bubbling laughter, indigo blue everywhere
 small palmprints on my dress, a hundred hugs a day
 I'm a princess and Ilona Zrínyi
 heart drawings, paper figures, pressed flowers
 a forest school, deers' eyes glowing in the moonlight
 an owl howls, a bat flashes away
 serenade every four years in our street, hundreds of lit up phones

A FORWARD POINTING SCENE

Student sits on table, then lies down. He is pulled in four directions by four people.

MELINDA I'm in the third year of high school. I'm sitting in my bench somewhere in the middle, but I'd rather connect forward with all of my nerves to where my teacher is standing and speaking.

Next to me, my girlfriend leans over to my ear: "Come on now, look at Valentine, isn't he beautiful, how nice it'll be to dance with him at prom, ah really now." I can't believe she doesn't realize I'm only interested in what's going on in the front.

So my Hungarian teacher would notice me, see how I'm hanging on his every word, what beautiful letters I take my notes with. "You see, you see, I know what you mean, what you're trying to say! We are one, I am you, I will be a teacher, that's the only thing worth living for, I will pass this on to everyone."

I am a teacher. That's for sure now, because after a year, they finally hired me. I'm going to work here, in this unknown school, I have a desk in the teachers' lounge, I can get into the teachers' elevator. My name will be written on the wall among the other colleagues. I get a discount on lunch. I became a teacher. Unfamiliar, closed, opaque looks everywhere. Boredom. Confusion. Steel toe boots, black. Jacket, bomber style. School disciplinary action, due to smoking. Mother has bruises. Father is an alcoholic. Criminal lawsuit.

It didn't work. I'm not going to charm them here, I'm not going to fascinate them. I am a teacher.

Pulling stops

Roman hands over the guitar to Student

PRINCIPAL "When will we see your honor?"

STUDENT "Tomorrow or the day after."

MICROPHONE 5.

NORA

- 1 children's room corner
- 6-8 babies seated side-by-side
- 1 little girl, 4 years old
- 1 storybook
- 5-6 imperative sentences
- 3-4 reprimanding words
- 3-4 words of praise
- a door opening softly
- young woman's face in the doorway
- smile





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Theatre and Pedagogy 13.
Towards the Evaluation of
Community Theatre





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A handbook

2022