



PRESS KIT
RESIDENZTHEATER / MILO RAU (IIPM)

THE DARK AGES

CONTENT

0	CREDITS	3
1	THE DARK AGES	4
2	MILO RAU / IIPM	6

CREDITS

THE DARK AGES

A PRODUCTION OF RESIDENZTHEATER MUNICH IN COOPERATION WITH MILO RAU / INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL MURDER (IIPM)

PREMIERE: 11 APRIL 2015, RESIDENZTHEATER MUNICH // FOLLOWED BY A PREMIERE CONCERT BY SLOVENIAN GROUP LAIBACH

CONCEPT, TEXT & DIRECTION: MILO RAU

TEXT & PERFORMANCE: SANJA MITROVIĆ, SUDBIN MUSIĆ, VEDRANA SEKSAN, VALERY TSCHEPLANOWA, MANFRED ZAPATKA

DRAMATURGY: Stefan Bläske, Sebastian Huber SET & COSTUME DESIGN: Anton Lukas CAMERA & VIDEO DESIGN: Marc Stephan MUSIC: Laibach DRAMATURGICAL ASSISTANTS: Lucia Kramer, Rose Reiter DIRECTION ASSISTANT: Jakub Gawlik TRANSLATION: Marija Karaklajić RESEARCH: Stefan Bläske, Mirjam Knapp PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT IIPM (TOUR): Mascha Euchner-Martinez

<http://www.residenztheater.de>
<http://international-institute.de>

1. THE DARK AGES

What happens to people when their beliefs and states fall to pieces? On what foundations is Europe built? From 1945 to 1995, from the collapse of the Third Reich to the siege of Sarajevo: In the second part of his Europa trilogy, entitled "The Dark Ages", Milo Rau focusses on the dark history of a Europe in the process of unifying. Actors from Bosnia, Germany, Russia and Serbia tell their stories of displacement and homelessness, of departure and arrival, of dedication and despair. As in Rau's previous acclaimed production, "The Civil Wars", and accompanied by music composed for "The Dark Ages" by Slovenian cult band Laibach, its biographical close-ups paint an intimate tableau of a continent which has been broken repeatedly - a political psychoanalysis of our time.

On stage: a podium in the style of the (national) socialist culture of representation. It rotates to reveal an interior. Five actors from Bosnia, Serbia, Germany and Russia sit there and speak to the camera in turns. Their faces are projected onto a large screen, their stories joined together musically over five acts, connecting their biographies with historical questions and events. Interruptions to lives enter an exciting dialogue with the major system changes of the ideological period. In the centre we find stories of escape and displacement, of war and new beginnings. While "The Civil Wars" dealt with Western Europe, "The Dark Ages", 20 years after the Srebrenica massacre and 70 years after the end of World War II, shifts its focus to the East, in particular to the more recent history of violence in the Balkans.

In focus here are the specific views of five individuals: **Vedrana Seksan**, an actor in the Bosnian National Theatre who tells of her experiences during the siege of Sarajevo, of surviving a hail of grenades as well as of the crisis of a long-lasting postwar period. In Belgrade, **Sanja Mitrović** danced through the nights of the NATO bombardment before leaving Serbia to work as a performer and director in the Netherlands, home to UN War Crimes

»Captivating ... a political psycho-analysis, a journey to the heart of the war of our time.«

*Libération on „The Civil Wars“
the first part of the "Europe
Trilogy"*

Tribunal. **Sudbin Musić**, as a Bosniac youth, survived the massacre and concentration camp and currently works in his hometown as a human rights activist. He was recently able to identify the remains of his father in a mass grave.

Valery Tscheplanova and **Manfred Zapatka** from the Munich Residence Theatre ensemble play alongside these three actors with Yugoslavian roots. Zapatka's memories stretch back to the German postwar period, to stories of forced housing and the return of his father from war captivity. Valery Tscheplanova emigrated to Germany with her mother from Soviet Kazan. She is a puppeteer, was discovered by Dimiter Gotscheff and toured the world with Heiner Müller's "Hamletmaschine".

The music for "The Dark Ages" was composed by the Slovenian cult band **Laibach** who for decades now have been thematising the relationship between ideology and art by citing quotations from social realism, "Nazi art" and popular culture. Laibach has had a symbolic meaning for two generations in the Balkans. At their 1989 concert in Belgrade, they predicted a bloody and shameful downfall of Yugoslavia, while their 1995 concert in Sarajevo on the day of the Dayton Agreement marked the end of the Bosnian war. Actors from the "Dark Ages" ensemble were in attendance at the two concerts: Mitrović in Belgrade and Seksan in Sarajevo. In the sense of the *Theatrum-Mundi* effect, much like in "The Civil Wars", these biographical stories are brought together by means of questioning both mechanisms and the ways to make the theatrical productions of power and art, spectacle and politics.

2. MILO RAU / IIPM

Milo Rau was born in Bern in 1977. He studied sociology, German and Roman studies in Paris, Zurich and Berlin under Tzvetan Todorov and Pierre Bourdieu among others. He started his first reporting trips in 1997, travelling to Chiapas, Cuba. From 2000 he worked as an author for Neue Zürcher Zeitung, and from 2003 as a director and writer at home and abroad.

»The most sought-after director in Europe.«
Stuttgarter Zeitung

In 2007, Rau founded the theatre and film production company International Institute of Political Murder which he has been running ever since. His theatrical works and films have been invited to some of the biggest national and international festivals, including in 2012-2013 the Berliner Theatertreffen, Festival d'Avignon, Theaterspektakel Zürich, Noorderzon Performing Arts Festival Groningen, Festival TransAmeriques, Wiener Festwochen, the Kunstenfestival Brussels and the Radikal Jung Festival where he was awarded the critics' prize for direction.



»An artist's life is obsessively driven by very specific themes. For me, that theme is violence.«
Milo Rau

Alongside his work for stage and film, Milo Rau lectures on direction, cultural theory and social sculpture at universities and colleges. His productions, campaigns and films (including Montana, The Last Hours of Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu, Hate Radio, City of Change, Breivik's Statement, The Moscow Trials, The Zurich Trials, The Civil Wars and The Dark Ages) have been touring in more than 20 countries around the world.

In 2014, Milo Rau received u. o. the "Swiss Theatre Price", the "Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden" (for "Hate Radio"), the Special Jury Price of the "German Film Festival" (for "The Moscow Trials") and the Great Jury Price of the German Theatre Triennale "Festival Politik im Freien Theater" (for "The Civil Wars").

Milo Rau's philosophical essay "What is to be done. Critique of the Postmodern Reason" (2013) became a bestseller, was awarded as "Best Political Book 2013" by the German daily newspaper Die Tageszeitung, while his play "The Civil Wars" was selected as one



of "The 5 best plays 2014" by the expert's commission of Swiss State Television.

The Belgian newspaper La Libre Belgique recently named Rau "Europe's most sought after director", with the German weekly Der Freitag calling him "the most controversial theatre director of his generation".