

## GORAN STEFANOVSKI'S FULL-LENGTH THEATRE PLAYS

- ***Јане Задрогаз* - 1974 ("Yané Zadrogaz - a folk fantasia with singing")**

The play is a farce using Macedonian folklore collected by Marko Tsepenkov in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is regarded as the beginning of postmodern theatre in Macedonia and the first production toured theatre festivals in Belgrade, Paris and Caracas in 1975. There is no translation available.

- ***Диво месо* – 1979 ("Wild Flesh", originally translated as "Proud Flesh")**

The play is set in Skopje immediately before the Second World War and follows the fates of three brothers: one a disillusioned, alcoholic waiter, the second an employee of a German company, and the third a communist activist. It centres around the proposed demolition of their family home to make way for the expansion of the German company's showroom and focuses on the clash between Western and Eastern European values. It is Stefanovski's most performed play.

The English translation by Prof. Ralph Bogert was published in *Slavic and East European Arts*, Vol.2, No.1, State University of New York at Stony Brook, fall, 1983. *Wild Flesh* was given a performed reading at the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn, London during the Festival of Plays from the Former Yugoslavia in August 1993.

*Wild Flesh* will be published by Laertes in English in Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska's translation in [4 by Stefanovski and a I act](#) due out in 2025 [ISBN 978-1-942281-36-8](#).

- **Лет во место – 1981 ("Flying on the Spot")**

The play is set in 1878 at a time when Macedonia was part of the Ottoman Empire but the subject of the interests and influences of neighbouring states, as well as its own rival liberation movements. At the play's heart are two brothers, fresco painters, forced into a tragic situation.

*Flying on the Spot* is available in *Selected Plays*, Translation Project *Macedonian Literature in English* Volume 99, St Clement of Ohrid National and University Library, Skopje, 2011

- **Хај-Фај – 1982 ("Hi-Fi")**

Through the generational clash between a young man and his grandfather, the play deals with the stand-off between the old Yugoslavia on the high-wire between the politics of the Soviet Union and the United States, and the new Yugoslavia torn between traditional values and those of the high-tech, low-fidelity West.

*Hi-Fi/The False Bottom* (The Translation Series), translated by Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska, BkMk Press of the University of Missouri – Kansas, 1986 [ISBN 978-0933532496](#)

- **Дупло дно – 1984 ("The False Bottom")**

The play is "a passion for the theatre in three movements with a coda", showing that "to everything there is a false bottom". James McKinley in his Introduction to the 1986 BkMk Press edition wrote that this means "Art, even revolutionary art, is doomed by the death-seeking mechanism of human society, notably bureaucracy. There can be no reconciliation of Art or the artist with this fact. So, with the weight of "a dead, apocalyptic world" on his back, the Ur-artist Jacob can only conclude that nothing is as it seems, that falsity is all."

*The False Bottom* will be published by Laertes in English in Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska's translation in [4 by Stefanovski and a I act](#) due out in 2025 [ISBN 978-1-942281-36-8](#).

- ***Тетовирани души* – 1985 ("Tattooed Souls")**

The play follows a Macedonian postgraduate doing ethnographical research among his ex-patriate relatives living in the United States. The reality of their lives has a serious impact on this confident young man with his preconceived ideas.

*Tattooed Souls* will be published by Laertes in English in Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska's translation in [4 by Stefanovski and a I act](#) due out in 2025 [ISBN 978-1-942281-36-8](#).

- ***Црна дупка* – 1987 ("The Black Hole")**

This landmark play explores the human desire to escape from the mundane to another world with a higher level of consciousness. In the first part of the play, the protagonist seeks the ultimate orgasm, a permanent form of ecstasy, and dies in the attempt. In the second part, he is in a kind of purgatory, present in the world but unseen and unheard by the same characters from Part One, who go through a modified repetition of scenes and dialogue but in the very different reality of a brutal war.

*The Black Hole* is in *Five Plays*, translated by Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska, The Conrad Press, 2019 [ISBN 978-1-911546-62-7](#)

- ***Лонг плеј* – 1988 ("Long Play")**

This “rock 'n' roll mystery play” consists of 16 scenes, each based on a song from the 1960s, which forms an integral part of the situations, action and sense of what takes place on stage.

Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska's translation is not available in print.



- ***Кула вавилонска – 1989 ("Shades of Babel")***

The play is set in a small provincial backwater in Yugoslavia. The white elephant of an unused multi-storey car park towers over the town, a symbol of a past vision of future prosperity, its parallels with the Biblical Tower of Babel obvious. The local theatre has been demolished to build the multi-storey car park and the play has many allusions to what lies beneath it. Stefanovski said it spoke of a life “which was once music with a strong, solid rhythm, now turned into a tortured and painful improvisation”.

*Shades of Babel* is in *Five Plays*, translated by Patricia Marsh-Stefanovska, The Conrad Press, 2019 [ISBN 978-1-911546-62-7](#)

- ***Чернодрински се враќа дома – 1991 ("Chernodrinski comes back home")***

This charming play consists of thirteen mainly comic scenes, each a dramatisation of the intentional or unintentional traces which Chernodrinski, the ‘father’ of Macedonian theatre, has left in people’s lives.

It is available in French: *Černodrinski revient à la maison*, translated by Maria Béjanovska, L'Espace d'un Instant, Paris, 2013 [ISBN 978-2-915037-79-1](#)

- ***Sarajevo, an oratorio for the theatre – 1993***

Commissioned for the Antwerp European Capital of Culture, this poetic play evokes the soul of the Bosnian capital as its inhabitants suffer under siege with a parade of characters and objects from its past, present and future. Michael Custow in *The Independent* called it “a theatrical and civic milestone, created in the harshest conditions”.

*Sarajevo* is in *Five Plays*, The Conrad Press, 2019 [ISBN 978-1-911546-62-7](#)

- ***Баханалии* – 1996 ("Bacchanalia") after Euripides' *The Bacchae***

This play was commissioned for the Copenhagen European Capital of Culture. It is the reworked story of the intellectual, democratic and rational King of Thebes, Pentheus, who puts up a brilliant fight in protecting his state from the madness of the cruel god Dionysus. In the process, he is seduced by Dionysus, succumbs and loses his head. The theme of the play is irrationality (psychological, social, political and historical). It portrays, in particular, the seductive irrationality of nationalism.

The play is not available in print in English.

- ***Ex-Yu* – 1997 (a one-act play)**

This play was commissioned by The Tricycle Theatre, London. It was one of three short plays exploring the moral ambiguities of current global conflict in Haiti, Rwanda and Bosnia to mark the anniversary of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial. *Ex-Yu* centres on a young woman in the former Yugoslavia, questioning those who were present when her father took his own life during the war in Bosnia. Time Out wrote that the play “transcends exposition and news-cuttings to evoke a sense of loss that is poetically, humanly affecting.” Michael Billington in The Guardian called it “genuinely haunting”.

*Ex-Yu* will be published by Laertes in [4 by Stefanovski and a I act](#), due out in 2025 [ISBN 978-1-942281-36-8](#).

- ***Casabalkan* – 1997**

This play was also commissioned by The Tricycle Theatre, London. It is an adaptation of the plot of the film *Casablanca*, in which a man must choose between his love for a woman and helping her husband. It takes place against the backdrop of the Yugoslav Wars.

*Casabalkan* will be published by Laertes in [4 by Stefanovski and a I act](#), due out in 2025 [ISBN 978-1-942281-36-8](#).



## · ***Euralien* – 1998**

This play was commissioned for the Stockholm European Capital of Culture. It was a theatrical, interactive, station-to-station performance/event, a showcase of the "universal alien" that lives in all human beings and has a human face, dramatising how easy it is for us to fall prey to this beast, since it does not live outside us, but within. The audience, as they entered, were given passports of a non-European-Union country, stopped at "Fortress Europe" borders, asked to fill in visa forms and sample first-hand various forms of "alienation".

The play is not available in print.

## · **Hotel Europa – 2000**

This play was commissioned for the Avignon, Bologna and Vienna European Capitals of Culture 2000.

“I would like to examine two different master narratives in their ugliest, most vulgar forms. Let me call the eastern world Byzantium. It is a closed society, vertical, patriarchal, macho, rural . . . no democracy, no tolerance, no logical space for homosexuals – or women. . . This is a world of ethnic fundamentalism. It allows primarily for a big National Theatre, casts of thousands, operatic reckonings. . . On the very opposite of this world stands Donald Duck. He lives in an urban, fast, global, consumerist, post-industrial society. He has no mother, no father, no wife, no children. . . He is like a cowboy in a saloon whose life depends on being quick on the draw. Donald Duck is the bastion of political sterility and metaphysical failure. What eastern Europe has been witnessing in the last ten years is the entrance of Donald Duck into Byzantium. Goran Stefanovski

“*Hotel Europa* is about the people of Byzantium at the doors of another world, as they flee Donald's disastrous wild capitalism and the violence and corruption of their own post-Communisms and land in Western European social democracy. Seven scenes by Stefanovski, a Macedonian playwright now living in England, were staged by seven Eastern European directors, each with his own company, and performed in spaces scattered through an abandoned hundred-year-old cable factory on the outskirts of Vienna. All the scenes are about immigrants from the East stashed in transit limbo: a drunken patriot, a whore, a Mafioso, a blood-feuding Albanian, a homeless woman, runaway kids on their honeymoon, Odysseus.” - Erika Munk.

The play is only available in print in French, German, Spanish and Italian.

- ***The Hague* – 2000**

This play was commissioned by The Tricycle Theatre, London, but never performed. The protagonist is a translator/interpreter at The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague. He has to translate the words of a war criminal who was a classmate at school with him in Bosnia.

“I think I understand the two languages and I think I understand the two worlds and I think I understand how little the two worlds understand each other and I think I understand how little I can do about it.”

The play is not available in print.

- ***Everyman : An Immorality Play* – 2002**

The play was commissioned by Theatre Mélange.

Each character represents one of the seven deadly sins in the modern setting of a holiday hotel in Spain.

*Everyman* is available in Spanish, Romanian, Czech and Slovak.

- ***Демонот од Дебар маало* – 2006 ("The Demon of Debar Maalo")**

This farce is inspired by the tale of Sweeney Todd, The Barber of Fleet Street, who murdered his customers with a straight razor and gave their corpses to his partner in crime, who then used them as filling for her meat pies. Stefanovski's barber is taking revenge on the local corrupt politicians who have destroyed the historic parts of his hometown to build a concrete jungle and who are guilty of sexual violence.

The play is available in French, Italian, Polish, Slovenian and Croatian.



### · **Odisej – 2012 ("Odysseus")**

This play was commissioned and performed by The Ulysses Theatre of Zagreb, Croatia.

In Stefanovski's play, Odysseus is an anti-hero, a war criminal, guilty of almost casual atrocities at Troy and in his wandering since conquering the city. He lives in a world of gangsters, the accountant to the mafia-like gods, where no one can be trusted and anyone might be out to get him.

*Odysseus* is in *Five Plays*, The Conrad Press, 2019 [ISBN 978-1-911546-62-7](#)

### · **Огнени јазуци - 2013 ("Tongues of Fire")**

Like *Chernodrinski Comes Back Home*, this play consists of a number of scenes, each a dramatisation of the traces which Cyril and Methodius have left in people's lives. They were Byzantine Christian theologians and missionaries known as the "Apostles to the Slavs" for their work evangelising the Slavs and translating the Bible into Old Church Slavonic.

The play is not available in translation.

### · **Figurae Veneris Historiae – 2014**

This play was commissioned by the Slovenian National Theatre in Ljubljana to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

It is inspired by Magnus Hirschfeld's *Sexual History of the First World War* and deals with the impossibility of love in the world of politics. Each of the fourteen scenes is split up into sub-scenes and gives the staccato impression of a silent film, conveying the same sense of tragic farce told in stilted language.

*You can read more about Goran Stefanovski on his [Wikipedia page](#), which also lists his film scripts, TV and radio plays, TV serials, librettos, prose poems and adaptations, as well as translations of his work into several languages, and on his [Academic Career](#) page, which has lists of his books, essays, keynote speeches and articles.*