

THE LIFE OF GORAN STEFANOVSKI

1952

Born in Bitola, then in the Republic of Macedonia, part of Yugoslavia, on 27th April into a theatre family, his father an actor-director, his mother an actor. Over the next decade, the family moves to other towns in the Republic to work in different theatres, ending up in the capital, Skopje.

1963

On 26 July, Skopje is struck by an earthquake which killed over 1,070 people, injured between 3,000 and 4,000 and left more than 200,000 people homeless. About 80% of the city was destroyed. Luckily, Goran was in Ohrid with his father and brother and they returned home to find his mother alive and unharmed. They spent months living in a tent before being given a house built with donations from Finland.

1974

Graduated from the English Department of the University of Skopje as the best student of his generation. He had also studied playwriting, screenwriting, history of drama and theatre directing at the Academy for Theatre, Film and Television, University of Belgrade, during his third year.

Took up a post as Script Editor in the Drama Section of the Macedonian National Broadcasting Service.

Wrote his first play, *Yané Zadrogaz* (a folk fantasia with singing), based on Macedonian folklore collected by Marko Tsepenkov. The production by Slobodan Unkovski at the Dramski Teatar in Skopje was exceptionally successful and was presented at theatre festivals in Belgrade, Paris and Caracas.

1975

Best New Playwright Award of the Young Writers' Society of Novi Sad

1976

Married Pat Marsh, an Englishwoman appointed lector at the University of Skopje by The British Council in 1974.

1978

Joined the University English Department as an Assistant Lecturer in English Literature, focussing on teaching drama, especially Shakespeare.

1979

Awarded M.A. from the University of Belgrade with a dissertation on *Stage Directions as the Foundation of the Theatre of Samuel Beckett*.

Wrote *Wild Flesh* (a play for the theatre), which won the Award for Best Yugoslav Play of the Year at the Yugoslav National Theatre Festival, Novi Sad, the following year. *Wild Flesh* is Stefanovski's best-known play and it has figured in the literature curriculum in secondary school education in North Macedonia for many years.

Spent the academic year 1979-80 with a scholarship from The British Council in the Drama Department of the University of Manchester, researching for a PhD dissertation on Edward Bond, corresponding with and meeting the playwright.

1980

Awarded The October Prize of the Republic of Macedonia for exceptional artistic achievement (highest award of the Republic).

1986

Appointed Head of Playwriting Department at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Skopje, teaching Creative Playwriting, Theory of Drama and History of Drama - Shakespeare course.

1987

Wrote *The Black Hole* (a play for the theatre). Paolo Magelli, the Italian director of the first production, said it marked Stefanovski's outgrowing of national borders and declared it to be "the best text in Europe in the last decade". *The Black Hole* won Best Play of the Year Award at the Yugoslav National Theatre Festival, Novi Sad, for 1988. It was the examination project of the students of direction at the Brooklyn College Department of Theatre, New York, in 1988. It was produced at the Leeds Workshop Theatre, UK, in February 1990. It has also had eight other international productions.

1990

Spent the spring semester at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, as Fulbright Outstanding Artist Scholar, teaching Introduction to Dramatic Writing at the Department of Theatre, Speech and Dance.

1991

Start of the Yugoslav Wars, which led to the break-up of the state. In 1992, Goran's wife Pat and two children settled in Canterbury, UK, after she had spent the summer teaching on the Pilgrims' summer school and took up a full-time post at Canterbury Language Training. Goran commuted between Skopje and Canterbury for the next six years, being appointed Full Professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Skopje, in 1995.

1992

Commissioned by Chris Torch of the Jordcirkus theatre group in Stockholm to write a play about Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital then under siege, for the Antwerp European Capital of Culture. *Sarajevo, an oratorio for the theatre*, went on an extensive tour across Europe the following summer, including the London International Theatre Festival and the Hamburg International Summer Festival. The text was published in London, New York and Illinois. Goran went on to write plays for the festivals of European Capitals of Culture in Copenhagen (1996), Stockholm (1998), Avignon (2000) and Bologna (2002).

1994

Old Man Carrying Stones commissioned and produced by the Green Candle Company, London, premiered at the Lilian Baylis Theatre at Sadler's Wells, London in 1994.

1996

EX-YU commissioned by The Tricycle Theatre, London. Directed by Nicolas Kent.

1998

Visiting Professor at the Swedish Institute of Dramatic Art in Stockholm for two years. His *A Little Book of Traps (a scriptwriting tool)* was published by the Institute in 2002. It has been translated and published in five languages to date, including Chinese.

Only Human commissioned by HMR, Sweden, for the 50th anniversary of The Declaration of Human Rights, and directed by Suzanne Osten.

2000

Hotel Europa performed in Avignon, Bologna and Vienna, three of the Cultural Capitals of Europe for 2000.

Settled in Canterbury and taught classes in screenwriting and playwriting at the University of Kent before taking up a post at Canterbury Christ Church University in 2002, teaching screenwriting there until his death in 2018.

2002-2003

Artist in residence with Theatre Mélange, Resident Playwright Award, sponsored by The Arts Council of England. Commissioned to write *Everyman*, premiered at the Atelje 212 Theatre in Belgrade, Serbia, in 2003. English production and UK tour by Theatre Mélange in 2004.

2007

Winner of the Vilenica International Literary Prize, awarded by the Slovene Writers' Association to a Central European author for outstanding achievements in the field of literature and essay writing.

2012

Commissioned by the Ulysses Theatre of Zagreb, Croatia, to write *Odysseus*, a burlesque subversion of Homer's heroic epic poem with clear and moving references to the Yugoslav wars and their aftermath.

2014

Figurae Veneris Historiae, commissioned by the Slovenian National Theatre in Ljubljana to mark the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

2018

Keynote speaker at the International Federation for Theatre Research World Congress in Belgrade in July. Goran's last public appearance was to receive an honorary doctorate from the [Krastyo Sarafov National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts](#) in Sofia. He died on 27th November in the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford, shortly after being diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour.