

**COME QUICKLY, MY HAPPINESS IS AT STAKE!**

*Concept, text and performance*

*by*

*Igor Koruga*

*MA programme Solo/Dance/Authorship  
(SODA)*

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# **COME QUICKLY, MY HAPPINESS IS AT STAKE!**

*[Guests entered into the ¼ of the theatre space. There is a rope going from the right to the left wall, behind which is dark. No one can go there. Some shapes of furniture might be seen in that dark...and food maybe? This little space is crowded. Some neutral theatre lights are on. In one corner, there is a brown table with 100 small white plastic glasses with rakija. One plastic bottle of orange juice is provided also. The space got more and more crowded. And it is busy. Suddenly there is a sound of jingling of the glass...feels like the toast is about to start...and there...a beam of theatre light goes over the dark space following young man walking towards the crowd. Approaching with the glass in his hand, smiling at us...the master has arrived.]*

## **0. INTRO – SPEECH [performance + live social event] – 10 + 5 minutes**

*[1.intro speech of the master of the ceremony - Master is already sure of the direction and a lead; He's giving introduction on the course of the events: information on food, space and time, personal comfort, event, expectation...he's giving a ground address – a size thing, he's giving a assurance and re-assurance, positive tone, identifying expectations etc.MC introduces the host at the end]*

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening! We're very excited to see so many of you here tonight! I'm Igor Koruga and as you master of the ceremony tonight, I would just like to welcome you to this birthday celebration and invite you to have fun tonight, feel comfortable and enjoy food and drinks. We have provided the buffet food tonight; we tried to cover all categories from the vegetarians to non-vegetarians... I see some of you already tried rakija, it's a traditional drink from the Balkans, and this one is made from Serbian plumb. Whoever still didn't try it i would say: GO FOR IT! We also have non-alcoholic drinks and other alcoholic drinks at the bar (wine, champagne and bier

Well, to cut things, I'll introduce your host of the evening, the guy who came up with the initiative for this celebration. Instead of speaking, I'll ask you to give a big and warm applause for him...ladies and gentlemen, the host of this birthday celebration...Igor Koruga!

*[2.intro-speech of the host of the celebration – Host is having a desire for direction, but searching for the rightness of it. Expressing underlining motivation, desire, hope, point of justification, honest share of something, more private, less projecting out, more inner perspective, pathos. Something related to the host: How to capture info you're keep carrying it out so there is more tencity. Host introduces the guest-of-honor]*

Hi everybody, Thank you so much for coming and all the love and support. It makes me especially thrilled and exited because this is my first birthday celebration in Berlin. So I hope you'll enjoy it! Honestly, there's nothing special for me about turning 27 years. And it's giving me the understanding that the older you get, your birthday is less about you, and more about you and others around you.

We are continuously meeting each others, following each other's works, creating together, presenting together, etc. So we're together determining our lives, works, our future...Well sorry for this pathos... but I just want to acknowledge, that we deserve from time to time to celebrate our achievements, our goals, perspectives and desires. Therefore, as my present to you tonight, I wish to invite You to also celebrate not only my birthday, but to celebrate also...YOU. it's you who matters and cheers to that!

Tonight I made some exceptions and so I invited my guest-of-honour. So i would like to call up here for a small speech my special guest...which is the host...i mean...whose guest I am, even though being your guest...NO, HOST! Wait...i am your host, but the host of your host is the guest hosting your host as a guest...you know what i mean? Well, let's just give it a big applause for the woman hosting us in the Uferstudios for some time...Frau Barbara Friedrich!

*[Host goes and picks up the guest-of-honor, to come to the host and give few words. A short speech. Igor gives microphone to Barbara]*

### ***[3.Speech of guest-of-honor Barbara Fridrich]***

*[4. **Welcome** - Host thanks to the guest-of-honor, and then opens the rope, with performance of the text. Lights go on in the space, some smooth music in the background. Host opens the rope and continues the welcoming as people are walking into the space. Host addresses to the people on micro and micro level collectively or individually, switching back and forth, performing the text]*

**+ [start of the 1<sup>st</sup> open social event 5 min]**

I think we can start the celebration, by entering the space...please, please come in the theatre. You know, I like to think about small rituals that we do when we enter the theatre...

Like when we wait for the ticket, or maybe  
**[go in the space around the table]** we enter immediately in the foyer of theatre. And we wait with some offered food and drinks and we also see so many people that we know, and can communicate with...**[silence: going through the mass and just saying hi to the people, great to see you, happy to spent some time with you]**

And so when we communicate, we like to exchange, comment, flirt, play rolls, sell, ourselves, – or be in the corners, doing some concrete private action (reading, thinking, looking at the phone...).

But then you'll be noticing the fade out of the lights...and we all know what this is ladies and

gentlemen! It's a sign, we gotta go to the theatre space....

**[addressing to someone]**You sir! Do you have a ticket? Please show me the ticket ...Because we usually relate to the person taking tickets on the entrance...Then we enter the theatre space.

We search for the best place to seat, shall I seat here or there?

We are peaky,

We notice lots of people around, and get panicked, and need to just choose one seat!

**[macro]** And then, we have another fade out of the light,

**[in a fast mode:]** And this it ladies and gentlemen, there's no turning back. The show

is starting, the tickets are sold out, wherever you are with rakija or in foyer, no mor time for you, you have to run, you have to come in,

you start watching the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you process the show,  
you judge the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the thought  
you follow the thought  
you follow the thought  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show  
you're thinking: I'm out  
you're thinking: I'm out  
you're thinking: I'm out,  
you're thinking: I'm in,  
you're thinking: I'm out,  
you're thinking: I'm out,  
you're thinking to leave the show,  
you're thinking to leave the show,  
you see someone's leaving the show,

hurry, cause this fade out means only one: you become quiet in 5 seconds [silence: counting on fingers 5 sec]

you're watching someone's leaving the show,  
you go right back in, the show  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show,  
you're thinking: I'm in, the show,  
you witness the change,  
you witness the change,  
you witness the change,  
you stick to the change,  
you're stuck on that change,  
you process that change,  
you fell in love to that change,  
you think we're thrilled with that change,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you follow the show,  
you witness to the end of that bloody long show.

We give an applause and call performers anchor: 1 time for good, 2-3 times for very good and more than 3 times for best experience ever.

We stay after and celebrate the success of the artist...and this is where we can continue tonight...with celebration...please enjoy the food and drinks! Thank you!

**[last part of the 1<sup>st</sup> open social situation and celebration, music goes, 5 min]**

### **1. A SCORE FOR THE TOAST ABOUT PID -5 min**

*[1. Eye contact – focusing on one person in the crowd, approaching slowly and keep looking until that person looks back at me. In order to get the look, slowly trying to bodily get the attention. When person looks at me, I jump up quickly saying 'OK' and going to the position to start the toast.]*

*[2. Self-commenting – Monumental highlight about PID, talking very very fast, on the edge of not making it, but still doing it and repeating some words]*

- It is pathetic to speak about this health condition of mine, the health condition called Primary immunodeficiency, the Primary immunodeficiency that I was diagnosed when I was 13 months old. And statements about like a 'poor you to have to deal with

something like that'. Because of course it's hard, it's always hard to deal with any kind of bodily disorder.

- And PID is a bodily disorder, it is an immunological disorder where the body doesn't produce the antibodies, without which we cannot fight the bacteria and viruses that are floating around, floating around, they are floating around us. And then I have to have the treatment, which functions as a replacement, and this replacement functions as a empowerment...and it all comes down to the needle and a vein and ka-boom [showing physically how needle enters the vein and how the treatment enters the body]...and it usually takes 4 hrs.
- I find it quite cheesy and inappropriate to speak how hard it is for me therefore to live with it in Serbia, due to the economical and political conditions...and all about Serbia in 90's...and the war with Croatia and Bosnia...and what territory belongs to whom, and who should move where...and how this affected both countries caused the disbalance for Serbia to provide the regular treatments for me, which I have to once a month, once a month or otherwise i die. Putting me and other patients into position to witness the transparent calculation of which disease is cheaper: cancer, diabetes or PID.
- And i usually tend to get into this self-pitting about how it's hard to deal with it on the daily basis, trying to be accepted or treated equally as others are; and that pathetic fact trying to explain a million times, to the others and even to a doctors, what PID is and why am i ill;, and all this bacteria that are coming to my body, and coming and going, and coming and going, and coming and going, and leavin the marks and leaving the marks and leaving the marks on my body, turning my body into a bag of bacterial leftovers [small silence/pause].
- And thinking how many antibiotics i have to take and take and take and take and take and take and take and take. Usage of antibiotics – the physical addiction, the obsessive caution and hypochondria.
- And let me just remind ourselves how it's not helpful to support person with PID from the perspective of 'i'm so amazed how mature you are and how bravely you deal with it'. Because let me tell you something: 'You have no other choice! If you have an obstacle you don't whiney about it, you fight it! If you wanna progress, if you wanna build your dreams, if want to achieve something you're wishing for you have to fight over the top, with yourself, with your surroundings, with the system. You

have to fight, otherwise you end up in the rabbit hole, somewhere in the middle of Serbia believing that God will cure your condition, and not the medicine.

- And then in spite of all attempts to support a PID patient, people still are just passing by and saying hi, you are ending up alone with this medical condition

*[3. Invitation to a small group activity – I take the glass, and say loud and slowly with the tone of dedication and rising glass: 'Let us all stand up and make a toast to...' Then I change the performative mode and stay with the raised glass, talking the anecdote.]*

*[4. Anecdote – on having vaginal bacteria in my throat.]*

I remember one funny situation I had when I was 16 years old... I happen to had a huge pain in my throat. And I went to doctor to do some sample analyses, which few days later showed that I had a fungus infection, a kind of a candidiasis that actually is mostly and usually found in vaginal area.

So, when this was brought up in my family, my father was extremely proud of me, because he thought that got this infection through a sexual intercourse with a woman. And you know, having sex for the first time is important for a man (especially young man) in Serbia, because then you are proving to be a man, to be capable of taking care of a woman, to be a strong, powerful hand that will treat and carry the woman, guide a woman...it's like a huge thing for Serbia!!!

And this was embarrassing, because my father initiated a father-son talk, explaining me that I have to take care, to use contraceptives, how to put the condom, how to have sex. And I said: Ooh Dad, I wish i had sex with the girl also. But snap out of it! I didn't get this infection because of having sex, cause back then i didn't even have sex! I was just taking some antibiotics i had to take at that time, which usually are carrying in themselves those fungus bacterias that stayed there in my throat

*[5. Attention calling – taking a glass, making a sound for toasting and shouting: Attention please, I wanna say something...may I have your attention please!!]*

**[2<sup>nd</sup> live social in-between event 5-7 min]**

## **2. TOAST ABOUT NEEDS OF STUDENT IN THE INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION** **CONTEXT -10 min**

*[Props: two tables creating a stand for public speech or toast, with the red cover, one mice on the stand, and papers]*

*[1.preparation: Mumbling the text quietly in the microphone, flipping and arranging the papers and moving the arms through the 'common' positions during the public speeches. Something like going through the choreography of it. Suddenly interruption of it happens to start addressing.]*

*[2. Addressing: Loudly, clearly and positively looking as much as possible at the guests each time addressing happens.]*

Dear Artistic director of **Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum für Tanz Berlin**:

Prof. Nick Haffner,

Dear Managing director of HZT Eva – Maria Hoerster

Dear teachers of the HZT:

*[1<sup>st</sup> change of the position of arms]*

Prof. Dr. Ric Allsopp, Prof.dr. Christiane Berger, Prof. Dr. Franz Anton Cramer, Prof. Dr. Kattrin Deufert, Prof. Dr. Boyan Manchev, prof. Alex Arteaga, prof. Rhys Martin, prof. Thomas Plischke, prof. Ingo Reulcke, Sophia New, Ka Rustler, Cecile Ullerup Schmidt, and Britta Wirthmüller;

Dear mentors of the HZT:

*[2<sup>nd</sup> change of the position of arms]*

Lindy Annis, Simone Aughterlony, Antonia Baehr, Silke Bake, Marlon Barrios Solano, Daniel Belasco Rogers, Joris Camelin, Christina Ciupke, Martin Clausen, Dr. Susanne Foellmer, Paul Gazzola, Gintersdorfer/Klaßen, Wanda Golonka, Boris Hauf, Frauke Havemann, Ayara Hernández Holz, Dr. Pirkko Husemann, Ingo Keil, Andrea Keiz, Xavier le Roy, Ulrike Melzig, Eva Meyer-Keller, Andreas Albert Müller, Anja Müller, Sybille Müller, Martin Nachbar, Sophia New, Victoria Pérez Royo, Bruno Pocheron, Prof. Ingo Reulecke, Gabriele Reuter, Jochen Roller, Rubato: Jutta Hell und Dieter Baumann, Dr. Petra Sabisch, Isabelle Schad, Constanze Schellow, Angela Schubot, Odile Seitz, Irene Sieben, Peter Stamer, Berit Stumpf, Doreen Uhlig, Riki von Falken, Jeremy Wade, WILHELM GROENER, Christoph Winkler, Dr. Maren Witte, Nicolas Y Galeazzi, Siegmund Zacharias.

Dear guest teachers of winter term 2012/2013:

*[3<sup>rd</sup> change of the arms happens with some of the names, after which ]*

Silke Bake  
Regina Baumgart  
Janina Benduski  
Jan Burkhardt  
Rosalind Crisp  
Lutz Deppe  
Jeanine Durning  
Alain Franco  
Björn Frers  
Philipp Gehmacher

Wanda Golonka  
Christiane Hommelsheim  
Florian Malzacher  
Michikazu Matsune  
Elisabeth Molle  
Johannes Müller  
Johanna Peine  
Britta Pudelko  
Xavier Le Roy

Maria F. Scaroni  
Marcus Steinweg  
Joanna Warsza  
Anja Weber  
Alexandra Wellensiek

Dr. Stefanie Wenner  
Sigal Zouk

[New change of the position of arms after which, other positions spontaneously arrive]

Dear Administrative manager of HZT, Sabine Trautwein;

Dear Technical director of HZT Max Stelzl;

Dear Sound technician of HZT Nikola Pieper;

Dear 8 students of MA programme Choreography at HZT and Hochschule für Schauspielkunst 'Ernst Busch' 2012-2014;

Dear 17 students of MA programme Solo Dance Authorship 2011-2013 and 2012-2014;

Dear countless students of BA programme Dance, Context, Choreography at HZT 2010-2013, 2011-2014, 2012-2015;

Alumni students of HZT;

Pilot students of HZT;

Erasmus exchange students of HZT;

Friends and collaborators of students of HZT;

Friends of friends of students of HZT;

Producers and curators interested in works of students of the HZT;

Distinguished guests,

Friends and family,

And remaining unknown and not related to dance at all [*ovde malo pogledas po publici levo desno*]  
4 ladies and 3 gentlemen.

[*3. Toast through the reflection over the past: Change of the performative state, more into the kind of a casual lecture but with the emotionality that affects naturally the gesticulation of arms*]

Looking back, over my last 20 months of artistic research,

[*glava gore na svaku drugu rec ili frazu*] I learned that as a student and young emerging artist, doing an artistic research within institutional education, one usually reaches hardest and happiest moments. This happened to me in the third semester, where I defined and articulated my



practice and appropriate technical, conceptual and practical resources, positioned in relation to solo/dance/authorship and its contexts, focusing on the problem of hospitality.

But while presenting that research publically through the performative presentation, I choose an open draft form that was also the part of the research or an experience of hospitality. However the feedback and critique in school indicated something else (comparing to other works), officially declaring that the work [malo šljajfovanje kao pesmica] “showed an evidence of insight into the use of movement, composition, dramaturgy and language, and their implications, even if those insights weren’t consistently translated into creative achievements. The work demonstrated a high level of ambition, though this wasn’t fully realised; alternatively, the work achieved an impressive technical level though the imaginative reach of the work was limited”. For the guests tonight who aren’t so much involved in dance practices and education in dance in general, this statement would mean that basically the presentation was a piece of crap. With a considerable potential, but unfortunately never realized.

-This caused lot of frustration for me at that moment of the research. Most devastating fact to me was that my work was examined actually only through the performance, neglecting the research that lies behind that presentation. Therefore it looked like the ways I’ve chosen for presentation were “bad decisions” so I felt [gradually add hana’s movement ‘gracias’ and weird face]ashamed, and humiliated, and hurt, [hana’s ‘gracias’ movement] and angry, and disappointed, and sad, and nervous, and irritated, and stressed, and provoked, and annoyed, and disguised, and envy, and surprised, and confused, and cheated, and disrespected and deprived, and ruined, and discouraged, and de-motivated, and defeated, and exhausted, and drained, and disappointed, and de-touched, and hatred, and despaired, and neglected, and betrayed, and abandoned, and rejected, and alone, and frightened, and guilty, and intimidated, and hopeless, and helpless, and worthless, and unsure, and unloved, and victimized, and worried, and anxious, and trapped, and stuck [and x15 ‘erorr’]...[rukama povuci kosu unazad] However, what I learned out from this is that these frustrations were not coming out of personal emotions related towards someone or something, but more from certain needs and expectations that were not fulfilled. But I took out three for tonight:

-Need for supporting student’s independency in research rather than continuously question it, which after a while makes you think that authorities are gaining suspiciousness or no faith towards your work. This especially addresses the moments of indicating the failure in certain

student's aim or idea within art work, without clarifying in relation to what concrete criteria is this failure diagnosed.

-Need to be supported in specificity of the knowledge that student/artist brings in the institutional education context, for the sake of making it richer. Like for example, in my case, specificity of highly pretentious self-confidence and persuasive elocvency in exchange (sharing, debating, communicating etc.) knowledge with others.

-Need for a mutual process of transforming positions of authority and student flexible and processual, rather than only procedurally organized. Thereby articulation, invention, definition and production of knowledge can happen jointly; reducing the gap between the knowledge and ignorance assigned to the positions of the student and teacher. This was my biggest problem ever.

*[Change of the position: go sitting on the side and bringing microphone closer, crossing the legs and telling story from the past with the background music of a sad violin]*

-I remember, when I was 12 years old I paired up with close friend of mine, and we wanted to organize newspaper in the school, interviewing students what do they think about the mysterious guys in the school-yard selling drugs to us/children (this was a common situation in Serbia in 90's). And when we presented this to the principle of the school, he threw us out of the office, and he called my mum complaining and announcing that he will punish me (rebuke), for having crazy imagination that drugs are present in a school that he's been running for more than 20 years. And then my mother said to him to go to the school-yard and check whether this was the case or not, and to call her back. He hung up, never called back, we weren't rebuked, but we also weren't allowed to create newspaper.

*[link towards the next toast. Music starts, light changes etc]*

But in the end, it is a life lesson to accept that a performative art also must be considered within frameworks imposed by an overall social context and that the ways towards success must be paved by compromises with authorities... So it's ok, it's a part of learning and progress, and i'm just tired of complaining.. Therefore, let's just continue celebrating here...and actually, i think it's time for birthday cakes! Why sad topics? Let's have fun, that's why we all are here tonight anyways...

### **3. A TOAST with the Birthday Cakes 10 min**

*[I am walking in the room with the trolley full of cakes with the knife for cutting them and the plates. I'm pushing the trolley through the room, making people to move away, so that they don't get run over or stained.*

At certain moments I'm cutting the cake in the pieces and giving it to guests, asking them to choose which one they want, how many pieces etc.]

...Would you like some cake? Which one would you prefer? Chocolate one or with bananas?

...Why would you take bananas? Chocolate is much better for cheering you up. Or here...take both, why choosing? How many would you like? Only one? Why only one, take at least two.

But eat it gently. You have to feel the chocolate...how are you gonna eat it? Show me? Oh no, no, no, no. You have to enjoy it! It's the Belgium chocolate for heavens sake!

here let me show you! You see? Ok, practice it a bit i will come back....

Ok...NEXT! would you like some cake??...did you already eat your one? Yes? Here, have some more...and don't refuse it, I will get insulted.....

[I start walking around slowly and then speeding it up through the certain time, trying to reach as much people as possible. Ideally i should give all the cakes.]

#### **4. A TOAST TO MYSELF – 5 min**

*[1.Attention calling with the glass]*

*[2. Dedication – toast to myself that enters into a pledge, and comes back to the toast]*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm so honoured to be in such the centre of the attention tonight... I've been so grateful for this moment, and therefore, I would like to make one more toast, so please let us all raise the glasses for this toast...a toast...to myself! *[music from beauty and the beast instrumental starts]*

Dear artists, producers and curators, allow me please to present myself to You through skills and abilities that fully describe me:

Skill to be so enthusiastic, that could make even a dead person to become alive;

Ability to entertain my friends, family, and total strangers;

Skill to give empathy to people, even when sleeping;

But then, there's also this childish belief in a sustainability of social and human justice in the world, which rather makes me sustaining a crippling injury than doing anything the easy way in my life;

Than skill to be uncompromised in social relations, until achieving the ultimate satisfaction for both You and me;

Then this ability to throw food in an expensive restaurants and asking lots of 'wrong' questions in the middle of the ceremony in church;

Or being noticed only while stepping on your foot for 10 minutes, but unaware of it, because I'm looking at you and giving you a candid smile;

And skill to be an opportunist in business – getting what I want, and I always want it NOW!

So please, lift your glass...cause you won your own free pass to use

...my ability to use interpretive dance to describe philosophical concepts;

And to be a truth-speaker with no social graces;

[music pause] But just a minute! What's the rush? There's one more skill which doesn't make me blush! And this skill is the special one, it's the skill that isn't any fun!

It's a skill of making legendary miss-haps, mistakes or blunders in my life, mostly due to the stubborn swearing in very strong and opinionated viewpoints which I often fight for. And this skill is quite complex, so let me exemplify it to you. Like for instance, when I say:

I swear I will practice the role of theatre as a symbolisation of the social, in order to explore, show, analyse and transform the society;

I swear I will practice taking a risk in the performance;

I swear I will reduce the amount of artistic collaborations and falling in love with another artist.

I swear I will not question theatre and performance by using on stage elements like peeing, bleeding, vomiting, shit selling, tremulous singing, camp, trans making, body shaking, virtuosity, trash imagery and the glamour and transcendency of the heroic and star image.

I swear I will cordially practice creating a hybrid format, non-recognition, non-resemblance [music comes back from fade in] and non-sense of the theatre performance;

I swear I will not apply philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in work or any other obsession in contemporary dance;

I swear I will prefer an artistic research and organizing principles in choreography, rather than an artistic product, procedures or fixed logic systems;

I swear I will maintain politics rather than ethics in choreography, 'no' to choreography as a tool for self-reflection and self-criticality determining the knowledge; 'yes' to choreography as a question or a framework for analyzing ideology in performative modes; [raise a glass, drink the wine and smile like at the commercial]

[3<sup>rd</sup> open live social event] – 5-7 minutes

## 5.TOAST ABOUT THE BETRAYAL of THE CLOSE PERSON

*[Talking about the story from my life when i felt betrayed by a close person, and trying to re-construct this story and event/situation until every detail, dealing with my emotions, wishing to understand what actually happened there and 'who's fault' was there...(something similar to the Anti-christ movie)...while talking about this, I'm approaching to the one person, 'a victim' and talking only to her, everybody hear it, but i talk and talk...at some point, somebody will announce the end of the show...people will start going out, and i will still talk to this person, until she goes out...]*

Oooh it's great to have friends tonight here and celebrate. I really like celebrations, different kids...and I always get some special experiences you know....

I remember when I was 8 years old or something, I really had a special experience during one celebration...it happened to be a wedding celebration and also a groom's birthday celebration at the same time...You know a part of the family from my mother's side is actually coming from the middle part of Serbia, quite central area...and for a long time we had a house in one village, it's called Badnjevac (Badnje-Christmas), it was a house of my grandfather, we would go there every summer, and spring, even autumn...have holidays etc. Also, my grandfather had lots of family members there and relatives, many brothers and sisters, cousins etc.

And one of my favourite people there, was my grandfather's younger brother, my great-uncle called Zika, that was working as a school teacher/music teacher (in that village and others around) but also as a pop (estradni-objasni) artist, a singing artist usually performing on wedding ceremonies in villages in whole Serbia...he was singing folk-music and songs....literally, i was rarely seeing him 'cause he was always travelling, especially in the summer time, and working...but i liked him, because he was always enthusiastic, and liked to sing, and at that time i was also playing violin; so I loved to play it for him, he liked to listen me etc. Somehow I was always feeling close to him.

But one summer I remember, I was in Badnjevac alone with my grandparents. And my great-uncle Zika, was invited to sing with his band or fellow musicians at that wedding and birthday celebration in the village right next to our. I actually think it was the last time I saw him...And so he invited me to go with them to that wedding to play with other kids, he promised to my grandfather he will take good care of me, and he also allowed me to bring my violin, and to play it ...if i behave good...to maybe play violin with him and his fellows...even though i didn't know any folk-songs to play and i didn't want to play it for strangers, but i liked that violin very much...so i took it....

And so we came to that celebration...and literally, I was shocked, cause there was a huuuge garden and a huuuge tent, with literally 300 people....and this is a common thing for

traditional Serbian wedding celebrations....And first we got introduced to the host of the wedding, the father of the groom...and he was this big fatty guy with the beard and he had one golden tooth, and he had lots lots lots of deutsche marks in his shirt pocket...and he was just so proud at his soon...and the first thing he gave us was a home-made Rakija (made of Serbian Plumb), and he pushed me also to drink one shot...at first my grandpa tried to stop this, but this host he had this little bit of a violent attitude and so he was like insulted, so he insisted and i had to drink it....it wasn't my first time to drink it, but as a kid you usually don't take it...you know....and then celebration was going on...my grandpa Zika was singing, everybody dancing, singing, eating, celebrating, drinking rakija...there was some few kids there...and as my Grandpa was singing, there was so much money flying around....and the musicians tried to collect it all, and i also was running around to collect it....it was actually the first time i put 200 DM in my pocket...

But then i remember, there was a moment when this host insisted that someone from musicians should climb on one little table and sing a song...and that table was also full with flower vases, and of course because of watering the flowers this little table was friable, half-ruined....and all musicians there were bulky and heavy...and then suddenly my Grandpa suggested that I should climb on that table...and play my violin...he started to speak to everybody how I play wonderful, and that everybody should listen to this...and then somehow everybody were interested in that...also insisting to hear me playing, everybody yelling...and i became stressed and begging my Grandpa not to do it, the host became angry.....i got very scared, but then My Grandpa came and he said that i have to listen to that man, and do what he says, and that it's nothing big...and that if i don't do it he will also be very disappointed in me...and so...i accepted to do it...and just as I climbed on, and put the violin on my shoulder, the table broke down in million pieces, and flowers got broken, i felt down and instead of helping me or saving me, everybody started to laugh and make fun and jokes of me...and so i felt quite humiliated...and also in pains a bit...my shoulder was actually hurting me...and i wanted to go home, I felt unpleasant....

And then i remember that at one point I was with all guests in the middle of garden, watching this bizarre situation, where my Grandpa and his musicians were climbing on the walnut tree, not so huge, but also big...and people helping them to climb on it...but with all instruments, one musician even had a contrabass, other had cordione etc. And they started singing songs...but people would always interrupt them by saying: 'no, that's not the one, do the next one!'

...later in my life i learned it was a kind of a tradition in celebrations called 'singing birds', where during celebrations musicians climb on three and sing/play music....And after some music repertoire is performed on the tree, hosts take bucksaw and start scraping the three, until it falls down with musicians.....

And this exactly happened to my great-uncle and his fellows in a very front of my eyes... they were singing, and people just started cutting the tree, and the three just fell down together with the 'birds'....nobody was injured, but the contrabass was broken....and my great-uncle had just few bruises and scratches....but nobody cared, the money was just flying around...and they continued singing....until the very late in the night...but then next morning I told everything to my grandparents, and they were arguing with my great-uncle, and my grandfather even hit my great-uncle, then some issues around the house and the inheritance came on the surface, and my grandmother took me away for a walk...and when we came back I have never seen my great-uncle again until today....

But what I remember also is that right down in front of that falling tree at the wedding celebration, or around it, while my great-uncle was on the tree, there were some group of big bulky men, very loud and also drunk. And they were the ones who were insisting on musicians to sing the repertoire... But what was to me interesting was that they had these long and big white sticks or cudgels...my grandfather also explained me once, that these men are called 'toljagari'(cudgel-men), and they come sometimes uninvited to the celebrations and drink and eat for free and that they are violent, if you say no to them, you might get into the trouble (you might be beaten up)...which to me nowadays explains why my great-uncle didn't fight to don't even get on that tree....but what i remember foggy is that between the moments of me falling down from the table and my great-uncle from the walnut tree, I was crying in front of one of these men with cudgel, explaining that I was angry at my great-uncle and even lying some things about him, saying that for the half of the celebration he was singing only one repertoire of songs...

So they probably requested from this host of the celebration to do this ritual, and host couldn't say no to them. And this is the interesting moment, how the host actually can't say no to the guests, and has to continuously keep the guests entertained...everything needs to be keep going, as also it was the case tonight here in theatre...guests need to be animated or moderated or else, they are leaving angry and not satisfied...