

71. DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL  
2020.  
CROATIA

PREMIERE  
**MARA & KATA**

inspired by Petar Kušelj's radio show *At Home With the Gossipmongers*  
and Desa Begović Mrkušić's book *The Gossipmongers of Dubrovnik*

**DIRECTOR: SAŠA BOŽIĆ**

Kazerna  
20, 21, 22 July, & 3., 4., 5 August  
21.00, 21.30, 23.00 pm

**Author: Saša Božić** in collaboration with:

**Nataša Dangubić** as Mara

**Doris Šarić Kukuljica** as Kata

**Costumes:** Dubrovnik Summer Festival

**Parts of the following songs are used in the play *Mara & Kata*:**

*Tiho je negdje svirala mandolina, Adio Mare, Stare ljubavi, Izašla je zelena naranča, Zbogom ostaj moj cvijete ljubljani, Kad pjesma zrikavaca zamre and Dubrovačka jesen.*

We would like to extend our gratitude to their authors for granting us permission to use them.

*We would like to thank: Ivana Dražić Selmani for the cooperation in making the scenography site.*

Broadcasting of Radio Dubrovnik's famous show *At Home With the Gossipmongers* started in the 1960s and many of the citizens still remember how the streets of Dubrovnik would empty during each broadcast. In every episode, the characters of Kata and Mara, played by actresses Žuža Egreny and Desa Begović Mrkušić, were paid a visit by Uncle Pero (played by Renco Perce, afterwards by Tomo Šuljak) and this famous trio would comment on recent events in the city in the form of typical Dubrovnik small talk. The play *Mara & Kata* was inspired by this popular radio show and accounts of Desa Begović Mrkušić from her book *The Gossipmongers of Dubrovnik*; it is a story about the mentality of Dubrovnik and the character of its citizens, full of bitter-sweet elements, primarily those that revise and enrich our memories. The play revisits different epochs in Dubrovnik's history in a non-linear way, taking us from 2020 to 2000, and afterwards into the distant future. Nataša Dangubić and Doris Šarić-Kukuljica take us on an absurd journey through the City from the end of the nineties until the present day, the City that today sails towards its uncertain future.

## ***Mara & Kata***

1. Year 2020: *The exactness*
2. Year 2000: *With what they left us?*
3. Year 2040: *The future*

*This theatre project deals with the potential of memory in creating a new theatrical act. The play begins where the original radio recording of Mara and Kata ends.*

*Saša Božić*



In the sea of stock characters in Dubrovnik's literature, the most popular ones have always been parodic counterparts, regardless of whether their relationship was antonymous, like, for example, that of master and servant, cunning man and naïve man, or synonymous like our gossipmongers.

As they thoroughly address each city topic, Mara and Kata sharply and expressively comment on everything: from current political affairs in Croatia, tourist apartment rentals, to their preferred kind of tourists. With their extraordinary skill of jumping from one subject to the next, this Dubrovnik tandem relentlessly criticises everything and everybody with their specific humour, well-timed comic reversals, original language and absurd redefining of the term 'common everyday wisdom'. As we listen to their dialogue, we witness the creation of a new discourse of gossip which, as it develops, slowly takes on a form of pop-cultural philosophy, available to everyone and easily understandable. Classic, stereotypical gossiping undergoes a sort of metamorphosis into cultural-sociological speculation - of course, at all times keeping its enticing, perky and playful expression. *Mara & Kata* is also a story about Dubrovnik's recent history and all its citizens - from politicians who run it to the so-called *oriđinali*, unique individuals who make it what it is. Omnipresent in all periods, we can learn about their existence both from historical sources and present-day social networks. Or you can simply hear what Mara and Kata have to tell you about them. To illustrate the uniqueness of their conversations, it suffices to say that even the history of the Republic of Dubrovnik, when humorously approached by the gossipmongers, can be perceived from a gossiping point of view. In their discussions about a variety of topics, not even the subject of political correctness is spared, with each of them analysing it in a new, authentic way. By reconsidering Dubrovnik's way of living in the period from the 1990s onward and all the way into the future, our *courtyard analysts* continuously open new perspectives as they create the art of endless wasting of time.

*Antonela Tošić*

**Saša Božić** was born in 1979 in Croatian city of Vinkovci. He graduated Theatre directing and radiophony on the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb back in 2006. He was also educated in the field of contemporary dance and choreography in a non-institutional educational programs. He perfected his education at numerous seminars, workshops and residency programs in Croatia and abroad. He is an assistant professor at the Department of Stage Movement of the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb.

Saša Božić was appointed Assistant to Festival's Artistic Director for theatre programme on 10 October 2017, and again on 1 September 2019 for another four years.

**Nataša Dangubić** graduated in acting at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb and soon after graduation she became an acting ensemble member of the &TD Theater iz Zagreb. Today, she is a member of the ZKM ensemble, and has achieved a large number of notable roles in performances she performed on Croatian, European and world festivals. She often appeared in theatre roles in many theatre plays by Saša Božić, Oliver Frljić, Tomi Janežić, Bobo Jelčić, Joško Juvančić, Ivica Kunčević, Miran Kurspahić, Paolo Magelli, Franka Perković, Nataša Rajković.

**Doris Šarić Kukuljica** graduated at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb in 1982, and since 1992 she has been a permanent member of the ZKM ensemble. She played more than 130 roles in theater, and a smaller number for television and film production. She has recorded more than 400 radio dramas and radio shows on Croatian Radio, in which she has interpreted poetry and prose. She is an associate professor at the Department of Acting at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb. She has received numerous awards for her acting work, including the Croatian Acting Award for the role of Jela in 'Tužna Jela' directed by Ivica Kunčević (1998), the role of Jela in the Equinox directed by Joško Juvančić (2004), the Orlando Award for the role of Hekuba play directed by Ivica Boban and Orlando for the role of Mara in Geranium directed by Marina Pejnović (2019), all the above mentioned roles she performed at Dubrovnik Summer Festival.