

the alpha group (A) & National Theatre Tuzla (BiH)

present

U IME OCA / in the Name of the Father

Docu Dance Theater by Darrel Toulon



With the generous support from:
Austrian Cultural Forum Sarajevo
University of Birmingham
Children Born of War (CHIBOW)

World Premiere

Wed. 20th March 2019, 7:30 pm



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U IME OCA / in the Name of the Father

Docu Dance Theater by Darrel Toulon

Music: Donika Rudi, Norbert Wally

Choreographic Assistant: Jessica Moretto

Dramaturgy: Helge-Björn Meyer

Production Management: Bostjan Ivanjsic

Costumes: Vesna Teodosić

Light: Nermin Brković **Sound:** Denis Hadžić

Developing Consultants: Sabine Lee, Amra Delić

Text developed with: Jelena Čajić, Nadia Delić-Klevstad

With:

Samed Alić

Ermin Avdić

Ivana Cook

Ajna Jusić

Jasmina Ibrahimović

Sadika Kahrimanović

Mirna Mišković

Marija Novaković

Norbert Wally

Feda Zahirović

Technical Director: Menes Mušić **Stage Manager:** Dragan Krstić

Stage Technicians: Fahrudin Mustačević, Almir Salihović, Huso Terzić, Senaid Subašić

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TO BREAK THE SILENCE

In 2014, I was invited by the Austrian Embassy, to work with the Kosovo National Ballet. Upon arrival in Pristina, and after speaking to some of the dancers, I realised that I had to change course, and use the wartime survival stories from their childhood. I created *YOUR STORIES, MY STORY* as a dance piece with documentary character. There was no choice. This was the beginning of a new chapter in my artistic and personal life: the development of docu dance theatre.

Approaching the various themes related to war, in particular gender-based violence, I wondered whether the children resulting from war-time rape; but here my queries were met with stony silence. The very people who had taken me into their hearts, and shared their stories of survival, about being witnesses to the atrocities of the war, were neither ready nor able to enter this territory with me – to discuss children whose existence dared not be acknowledged.

I realized that although there are a lot of books, films, features and other publications directly focused on the women who suffered, there was almost nothing concerning the children born to these women. The existence of children conceived through rape was given little or no attention. What I came up against was like a wall of silence until I found this headline in 2016: **Bosnian born of wartime rape in quest for his parents.**

First one, then several Articles about Alen Muhić, and subsequently the recent publications of researchers the Children Born of War Innovative Training Network (CHiBOW).

Suddenly the curtains parted, and I could visualize the scene: one man walks on-stage, from the darkness into the light, and breaks through the fourth wall ... asking burning questions about his parents ... the absent father ... in the end about himself ... he is joined by others ... we hear their voices ... they refuse to remain hidden ...

I understand anyone who needs to ask questions in the name of their Father, in the quest for understanding their identity. We all need to understand where we come from, who our parents are and what lives they have led. This gives us some comprehension of our identity. It is only by understanding this bigger picture, explaining our sense of purpose, that we can truly be free as individuals.

Darrel Toulon (Vienna)





BOSNIA – RAPE AS A GENOCIDAL WAR STRATEGY AND CHILDREN BORN OF WAR

In late 1992, reports of sexual abuses committed during the armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia first alerted the world to rape and other sexual atrocities as part of a deliberate and systematic campaign for victory in the war. *Newsday* journalist Roy Gutman reported mass rapes, seemingly carried out under orders in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing,¹ an account implicitly confirmed when the United Nations, in its Security Council resolution 820, condemned the *massive, organized and systematic detention and rape of women*.² Although the exact figures of these acts of sexual violence will never be known and estimates vary widely, it is undisputed that at least several thousand women (and men) were systematically raped. Many of the victims were under age, and often the assaults were committed in the presence of others, including the victim's families: their parents or children. Frequently, victims were violated by multiple assailants.

All sides of the war committed brutalities and all warring factions used gender-based violence.³ However, most atrocities were committed by Serb forces, regular but more frequently irregular units, against Muslim women.⁴ In most cases, rape was not spontaneous, but was used in order to humiliate the victim herself and her ethnic

community; the aim was to destroy the victim's identity and to render helpless the men who saw it as their obligation to protect. And in some cases, rape was used to impregnate women deliberately.

In Bosnia, as elsewhere, no precise figures exist about rape-related pregnancies; the most credible estimates lie between 400 and 600 children born of war.⁵ While forced pregnancy was not, as some have claimed, invented by the Bosnian Serb Army and its North Yugoslav National Army supporters, the practice involving systematically abducting and detaining women and girls of child-bearing age, subjecting them to rape until pregnant and releasing them only after it was too late for an abortion was codified as a war crime by the Rome Statute International Criminal Court in response to exactly these practices during the Bosnian conflict.⁶

While the impact of carrying a child born of rape on the mother is now widely acknowledged, the effect of being born of rape for the children themselves is far less well understood.⁷ Transgenerational transmission of trauma is well documented, and the intensity of the interpersonal trauma experiences by rape survivors in Bosnia suggests that childhood experiences of children born of war, were complex.⁸ But what the work of the Association of the Forgotten Children of War demonstrates just as well as the collaboration between the alpha group, the National Theatre in Tuzla and the Children Born of War in Bosnia is the desire of the CBOW and their mothers to overcome adversities and to become a force for good: a bridge between mothers and children, a bridge between ethnicities, a bridge between nationalities and a potent political force advocating for human rights that have been denied to numerous children born of war in Bosnia and elsewhere.⁹

Sabine Lee (Birmingham)

1 Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 64-76.

2 UN Security Council Resolution 820, 17 April 1993, article 6; <http://www.nato.int/ifor/un/u930417a.htm> (accessed 29.01.2014).

3 UN Economic and Social Council, *Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia*. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, 10 February 1993 E/CN.4/1993/50 and 21 February 1994 E/CN.4/1994/110.

4 Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992), p. 60, http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/un_commission_of_experts_report1994_en.pdf (accessed 29.01.2014).

5 R. Charli Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War. Setting the Human Rights Agenda in Bosnia and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 23.

6 Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996), theme 4.

7 S. Lee, *Children Born of War in the 20th Century* (Manchester: MUP, 2017)

8 Belma Bećirbašić and Dzenana Secic, 'Invisible casualties of war', *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 2005, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/invisible-casualties-war> (accessed 25.4.2014).

9 Sabine Lee and I.C.Mochmann, 'The Human Rights of Children Born of War: Case Analyses of Past and Present Conflicts', *HSR*, 35 (3) (2010), 268–298.

OPEN ROOM

How can dance be political if it does not make speeches, write pamphlets or postulate? Dance was and is political in two ways: either it reflects power relations and thus contributes to their strengthening, or it opposes the ruling powers and undermines their order. With its language, the expression and positioning of the body in space, dance has always interfered with social action. There is nothing more political than the human body on stage: when you place a body on a stage, it's about freedom, about being at the mercy of others, about respect.

In his Docu Dance Theater, dancer and choreographer Darrel Toulon, shows how complex and at the same time moving an artistic intervention can be. He takes a political stance in a specific, physical confrontation with our society by reflecting on the categories of historicity and topicality, publicity and privacy, sovereignty and humanity. His works form a space of reflections for our eventful present, in which he dedicates himself to the continual rearrangement of relationships, which makes negotiations possible and opens up temporary spaces of resistance. Only in this way can differences be marked.

Darrel Toulon also shows limits of personal sovereignty. His actors present themselves as fragile subjects, as people in their pure existence. Darrel Toulon does not proclaim any political messages to guide action. His specific arrangements and moving commentaries evoke complexity through empathy and sensuality. They open a space to the audience in which manifold reflections can be experienced. Only with the bodies, only with dance.

Helge-Björn Meyer (Berlin)



HOW CAN WE MAKE IT BETTER?

During the war (1992-1995) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 women and girls were exposed to sexual exploitation, rape, enslavement, unwanted pregnancy, forced motherhood, and other forms of sexual violence. It had been understood early on that in BiH as in the wars in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere children born of war (CBOW) had been born. What had not been understood, and is still not appreciated fully, is that the group of CBOW in BiH is far more diverse than merely comprising children born out of rape perpetrated by enemy soldiers. Inappropriate behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of women and female minors by peacekeeping and international humanitarian mission personnel operating in war-torn BiH similarly led to children fathered and frequently abandoned without the fathers taking responsibility after the end of their deployment. These children, alongside the children conceived of the enemy, remained in the shadow of the war - socially invisible and not heard of.¹

Official statistics of CBOW in BiH are lacking; their needs and vulnerabilities have been neglected and their rights, formulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child just a few years prior to the war in BiH, denied.² To date, only a few studies, including the Bosnian study conducted in 2016 and 2017 within the EU Marie Skłodowska Curie Innovative Training Network "Children Born of War: Past, Present and Future", have focused on the long-term needs, developmental conditions, identity issues, lived experiences and health outcomes of CBOW while growing up in a post-conflict context, indicating that they are being exposed to stigma, discrimination, childhood maltreatment, neglect, abandonment, social exclusion, health risks, and other forms of violation of the rights of child. There is evidence of high prevalence of traumatic experiences and mental disorders, as well as a complex and long-term impact of socio-economic and familial deprivation, emphasizing the importance of considering the CBOW as a particularly vulnerable group in post-war situations.³

In tradition-bound Bosnian culture, where negative societal attitudes exist with regard to rape and women victims of sexual exploitation, the issue of war-related rape, and even more so of children born of war remains a taboo. Therefore, until recently, this group remained hidden within the overall conspiracy of silence around this topic. Inspired by the research and the urge to protect women and children in conflict and post-conflict context, the Association Forgotten Children of War was founded in BiH. In the short time since its creation, the Association has already proved to have wider societal impact, breaking the silence and gradually sensitizing non-integrated post-war communities to the challenges faced by CBOW.

To better understand the situation of CBOW, the affected community needs to accept the ownership of the issue to be able to create the social and emotional environment that provides for their stable and fulfilling existence. Through my clinical and research work with survivors and through supporting survivors' activism, I have realised how important it is to re-humanize these persons not only through numbers and statistics but by foregrounding their realities, their stories, their self-representations, and by making their voices heard.

Knowing that the art plays an important role in dealing with the past and facilitating social and relational changes, using interdisciplinary, collaborative and interactive approach, IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER aims to provide an insight into the resilience of children born of war; it stages their struggle for dignity addressing the importance of psycho-social trauma recovery, empathy building and deeper understanding of all dimensions of human suffering in conflict and after.

On this sensitive journey we will hear the voices of children born of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, learn about their lived experiences, and explore the challenges they faced while growing up in non-integrated non-supportive postwar society; at the same time we are encouraged to imagine their futures as bridge-builders between the diverse parts of their identity-determining provenance.

Amra Delic (Tuzla)



BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND REJECTION: CHILDREN BORN OF RAPE AS BRIDGE BUILDER

Sexualised violence against local women by foreign or enemy soldiers has accompanied armed conflict throughout history. Recently, however, systematic sexualised violence has been directed at female civilians in the enemy population as part of war strategy. Yet, it was not until the genocide in Rwanda and attempts at ethnic cleansing by means of sexualised violence in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s that more widespread and open debates among academics, the public and the media were generated, and efforts to react to the problem among the humanitarian agencies were intensified.¹ In recent years, research into sexualised violence as a weapon of war and into children born of war, be it as a result of abusive, exploitative or consensual relations, has made significant progress. Wide-ranging case studies have shed light on conflict-related sexual violence in different historical and geopolitical settings, leading to a much more nuanced understanding of the experiences of the female survivors of such violent acts and some of the challenges of the children conceived of conflict-related sexual violence. Despite that progress children born of war are still a taboo topic in most societies. For some contexts, such as children born of World War II we now have a good evidence base.² This group includes for instance children of German Wehrmacht soldiers in different European countries or children whose father belonged to one of the four allied forces based in Germany and Austria at the end of World War II and whose mothers were German or Austrian respectively. But in these countries too, it took decades for the topic to come to the fore.

1 A. Delic, H. Glaesmer, Ph. Kuwert, 'Should the definition of the term "children born of war" and vulnerabilities of children from recent conflict and post-conflict settings be broadened?', *Acta Medica Academica* 2017. 46(1):67-69; J.-K. Westendorf, L. Searle, Sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations: trends, policy responses and future directions, *International Affairs* 2017. 93(2): 365-387; Olivera Simić & Melanie O'Brien, 'Peacekeeper Babies': An Unintended Legacy of United Nations Peace Support Operations, *International Peacekeeping*, (2014) 21:3, 345-36

2 R.Ch. Carpenter, *Forgetting the Children born of war: setting the human rights agenda in Bosnia and beyond* (Columbia University Press, 2010)

3 H. Glaesmer, Ph. Kuwert, E. Brähler, M. Kaiser, 'Childhood maltreatment in children born of occupation after WWII in Germany and its association with mental disorders', *Int Psychogeriatr*, 29(7) (2017), 1147-1156; S. Lee, *Children Born of War in the 20 Century* (Manchester University Press, 2017); M. Kaiser, Ph. Kuwert, E. Brähler, H. Glaesmer, 'Depression, Somatization, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Children Born of Occupation After World War II in Comparison With a General Population', *J Nerv Ment Dis* (2015) 203(10), 742-748; E. van Ee, R.K. Kleber, 'Growing Up Under a Shadow: Key Issues in Research on Children Born of Rape', *Child Abuse Review* (2013), 22, 386-397; B. Voicu, I.C. Mochmann, 'Social Trust and Children Born of War' *Social Change Review* (2014). 12 (2): 185-212;

The childhood living conditions of children born of war are often characterized by familial and societal areas of conflicts between integration and rejection. Concealment, financial problems, public and familial repulsion often played a role. When investigating the psychosocial consequences of these conditions, three core aspects have been found to be of salience: identity formation, stigmatization/discrimination and child maltreatment. In recent years, psychosocial research has shown for instance that German occupation children were at higher risk for child maltreatment and mental distress.³ German mothers and their children born of war often faced severe social stigma and discrimination in Post-World-War-II-Germany.⁴ There are many other populations of children born of war about whom very little is known on a systematic level. But even across different historical and geopolitical settings it seems that children born of war share these core experiences, despite the fact that there are specificities and differences in magnitude in different settings. For children born of war rape in the Bosnian War in the 1990 a first study has been conducted by Amra Delic, one of the PhD candidates in the CHIBOW-network (www.chibow.org). Beyond the empirical evidence provided by the ongoing analysis the study has stimulated the foundation of the Association Forgotten Children of War. Both, research and dissemination activities, such as a scientific symposium held in Sarajevo in May 2018 as well as the current docu-dance theater performance at the National Theatre in Tuzla are important milestones to raise awareness of the issues of children born of war rape and their mothers and to stimulate the societal discourse about them.



From testimonies of children born of war, it has become evident that the uncertainty about their identity is one of the most fundamental and persisting aspects that challenge their development and well-being.⁵ The question of identity, which originates in the past (Where do I come from?) and which spans the whole life from present (Who am I?) into the future (Who will I be?), leaves many children born of war rape with an impaired sense of belonging and identity. Most of them grew up without any knowledge or narratives about their fathers and mostly even a conspiracy of silence around their conception. Moreover their identity formation is specifically challenged by being the offspring of the *enemy*, being the offspring of a perpetrator, facing a lack of knowledge about the paternal origin or being born out of wedlock.

Beyond all the challenges and adversities it is important to underline that children born of war rape in Bosnia and elsewhere should not only considered to be secondary victims of sexualized violence but also to be a progressive source of understanding among mothers and children, among ethnicities, and among nationalities. It is for this reason that an integration of research and dissemination activities as a potent source of growth and healing on the individual and the societal level should and will be harnessed now and in the future. Thus I am pleased that this docu-dance theater performance comes to fruition and I wish all actors on the stage and beyond a successful performance in the hope and expectation that its impact will be sustainable beyond the performance itself.

Heide Glaesmer (Leipzig)

1 See for instance R. Lindsey, 'From atrocity to data: historiographies of rape in the Former Yugoslavia and the gendering of genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice* 36 (2002), 79–87.

2 Lee, S. (2017). *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*: Oxford University Press.

3 Glaesmer, H., Kuwert, P., Braehler, E., & Kaiser, M. (2017). Childhood maltreatment in children born of occupation after WWII in Germany and its association with mental disorders. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 29, 1147–1156; Kaiser, M., Kuwert, P., Braehler, E., & Glaesmer, H. (2015). Depression, Somatization, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Children Born of Occupation After World War II in Comparison With a General Population. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 203, 742–748.

4 Aßmann, A.-L., Kaiser, M., Schomerus, G., Kuwert, P., & Glaesmer, H. (2015). Stigmatisierungserfahrungen deutscher Besatzungskinder des Zweiten Weltkrieges. *Trauma Und Gewalt*, 9, 294–303.

5 Lee, S. (2017). *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*: Oxford University Press.



Authors of the essays

Amra Delic, MD, Mr. Sci. Med., Specialist in Neuropsychiatrist, at Plava poliklinika, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Psychotherapist and researcher with expertise in the field of conflict-related sexual violence and psychotraumatology. Also, Amra is a human rights activist, founder and supporter of the Association Helping Victims and Survivors of Sexual Violence in War *Our Voice* based in Tuzla, and the Association *Forgotten Children of War*, based in Sarajevo. In March 2015 Amra received the Gender Equality Award 2014 from the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Darrel Toulon, founding Artistic Director of the alpha group, attended the United World of the Atlantic and Central School of Ballet in London. From 2001 until 2015 Ballet Director at Opera Graz, creating dance and interdisciplinary works for Opera Graz, National Theater Maribor, Slovak Dance Theater, National Ballet Pristina, Zurich University of the Arts, and Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. Lecturer for Musik Dramatische Analyse at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and currently teaches Classical Ballet for Contemporary Dancers at Bruckner University in Linz. Awarded the Austrian Dance Productions Special Prize in 2002, and the Goldene Ehrenzeichen des Landes Steiermark in 2016.

Sabine Lee, Professor of Modern History at the University of Birmingham. She has published widely in the social consequences of conflict. Her most recent book *Children Born of War in the 20th Century* (Manchester University Press, 2017) focusses on the experiences of children fathered by foreign soldiers and born to local mothers in diverse 20th century conflicts.

Helge-Björn Meyer, CEO of the Saxon State Office for the Performing Arts in Dresden, is also a Dramaturg and Performer. He worked in Germany, UK, Austria, Kosovo and Lebanon, on dance, drama and opera productions and festivals.

Heide Glaesmer, Psychologist and psychotherapist, is the head of the working group Psychotraumatology and migration research at the Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology at the University of Leipzig. Her habilitation about the longterm mental health outcomes of WWII was awarded with the Gerd-Sommer-Award of Peace Psychology in 2012. Coming from her work on the WWII consequences she started to investigate the psychological consequences of growing up as a Child born of occupation in the post-war period in Germany. With her initiation the first study about this topic was started in 2013 in Germany. To enlarge the empirical evidence, she initiated comparable studies in Austria and in Norway. She is member of the International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children Born of War (INIRC).

All essays are original contributions to this booklet, written in March 2019.



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