



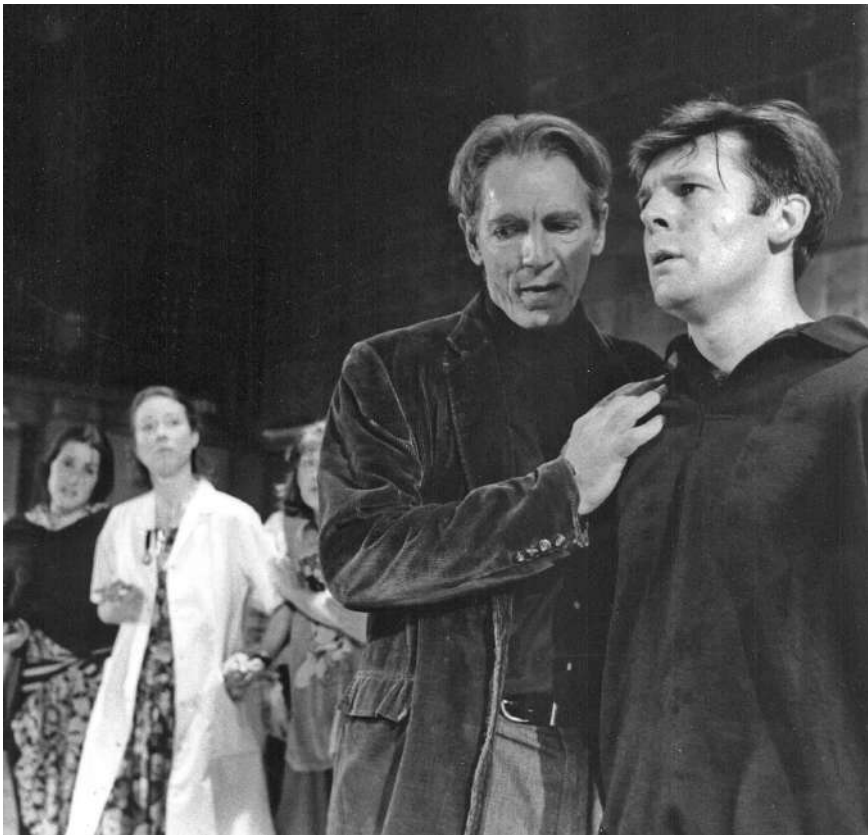
What about Leonardo?

A group of patients at a neurological institute exhibit a variety of bizzare behaviors, although behind their compulsive mannerisms seem to lie identifiable and universal human needs: the need for love, the need for approval, the need for security. Their problems are diagnosed as organic, not psychological in origin, and so, according to Dr. Hoffman, the head of the institute, incurable. But the psychologist Dr. DaSilva, coming to the institute to find a subject for her PhD, thinks otherwise.

Dr. DaSilva believes she can teach Mr. Martin – who has retreated into the comfort of total amnesia and then developed an extraordinary ability to learn and remember everything – to be another “Leonardo”, a renaissance man of the 21st century. But does this represent “progress for the human race” or is it a cruel delusion? When the other patients mischievously start teaching Martin other things – rude jokes and Shakespeare – poetry seems to touch something elemental, an inner core of feeling in him that has not been lost. Is this his “real” identity, something more than a parrot-like imitation?

But Dr. DaSilva’s teaching has great power, as she finds to her cost. Sinister forces become interested in Martin’s potential usefulness, and he learns the lessons of violence as easily as the lessons of “culture” – without understanding the meaning of either. The final attempt to save Martin by giving him back “the freedom of choice” comes too late; by acting out the literal meaning of Shakespeare’s poetry he commits mayhem without realizing what he has done.

The play, for which the author consulted his nephew, a neurologist, and a number of books, among them *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks and *The Man with a Shattered World* by A. R. Luria, probes the nature of identity and individual freedom in the context of a society riddled with greed, ambition and heartlessness. It is peopled with characters that offer extraordinary potential for actors (following the Slovenian premiere, no fewer than three received major awards).



What about Leonardo?, Lilian Baylis / Sadlers Wells Theatre, London, 1995
Peter Marinker as Dr. Hoffman and Peter Lindford as Martin, in the background
Julia Tarnoky as Rebecca, Michele Copsey as Nurse, and Katharine Barker as Mrs. Twitch
Directed by Janine Wunsche



What the critics said

“This excellently constructed play (smoothly flowing, superbly witty, accomplished in dialogue, with bitter undertones) was directed by Dusan Mlakar with great subtlety and a feeling for nuances... To audiences, *What about Leonardo?* offers enjoyment on many levels – a well-crafted, funny and thought-provoking text has been brought to life by a team of actors who almost surpass one another...”

Lojze Smasek, *Vecer*, 1992

“Flisar’s play excels not only because of imaginatively (and accurately) employed results of psychiatric research, but also because of his brilliant dialogue, excellent characterisation and lightness, almost elusiveness of his message. This is no doubt the best Slovenian play of recent years...”

Matej Bogataj, *Republika*, 1992

“*What about Leonardo?* – which puts Evald Flisar right at the top of contemporary Slovenian drama – isn’t trying to be a philosophical treatise – it’s a very dramatic, theatrical work, a spectrum of human destinies and a battleground of opposing ideas and ideologies. On this basis, Dusan Mlakar builds *teatro mundi* of our times by unobtrusively underscoring the playwright’s main dramatic intentions...”

Vladimir Kocjancic, *Radio Slovenia*, 1992

“Evald Flisar has written one of the best Slovenian plays for many years... This almost exemplary drama was subtly directed by Dusan Mlakar. You won’t



believe it, but the conflict in the play really is between two different views of right and wrong... In other words, a real dramatic conflict, fought out to the bitter end... the sort of conflict we used to call the art of drama..."

Rapa Suklje, *Dnevnik*, *TV Slovenia*, 1992

"In a dramatic ending, the playwright reveals all his scepticism of the complacency of science, manipulative politics and impotent arts, and leaves us a single ray of hope: trust in the primary emotion of love and total respect for the individual's right to be special and different..."

Slavko Pezdir, *Delo*, 1992

"...a confrontation with literature, with the "therapist" Shakespeare – a confrontation with which Flisar wittily and dramatically poses the question of the dangers of literature if it escapes (or is lured from) its natural habitat of aesthetic catharsis into unpredictable, uncontrollable mythological regions of the unconscious... The tumultuous applause on the opening night confirmed the great success of this theatrical event..."

Veno Taufer, *Delo*, 1992

"The play is written concisely and clearly, each character has a function, nothing is left to chance... Humorous sequences introduced by the inmates are imaginative and funny... The complexity of the play and the manner of its staging confirm the undiminished power of literary drama and literary theater as a whole..."

France Vurnik, *Sodobnost*, 1993

"A remarkable study of a man out of touch with himself, who presents the journey from amnesiac to automaton with the sad, lost look of a man obeying instructions from he knows not where..."

Jeremy Kingston, *The Times*, London, 1995



“A brilliant comedy set in a neurological institute, which examines the nature of identity and freedom in a greed-ridden society...”

The European Magazine, 1995

“Following Pinter and Peter Brook, Evald Flisar’s *What about Leonardo?* is the latest piece inspired by the clinical writings of Oliver Sacks... In the theatrical context, as material for psychodrama and robotic performance, the play’s ideas become charged with sinister comedy...”

Irwing Wardle, *Independent on Sunday*, London, 1995

“What distinguishes Flisar’s clinically surreal comedy is its curious lack of center. The playwright takes no sides, but sidles up to the increasingly absurd juxtapositions of lunatic scientists, sane patients and American superpowers with an airy quirkiness...”

Kate Stratton, *Time Out*, London, 1995

“The finest of dividing lines between normality and madness is expanded into an almost unbreachable chasm in this profound comedy by leading Slovenian writer Evald Flisar... This is certainly a funny, unnerving and highly theatrical experience, dealing with the fragile nature of human identity...”

Roger Foss, *What’s On*, London, 1995

“*What about Leonardo?* stands out as a clearly and dramatically structured play with a rich palette of meanings and characters. It won me over at the first reading... My knowledge of the novel (and later movie and a play) *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* did not diminish my interest in Flisar’s play, and neither did Peter Weiss’ marvellous work *The pursuit and execution of Jean Paul Marat*. In spite of superficial similarities all three plays are completely original; three great artistic achievements ...”

Hallmar Sigurdsson, director of the Icelandic production, *Sodobnost*, 2002



What about Leonardo?, Lilian Baylis / Sadlers Wells, London, 1995
Julia Tarnoky as Rebecca and Peter Lindford as Martin
Directed by Janine Wunsche



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

Best Play of the Year Award 1993

Preseren Fund Award 1993

Characters

Dr. Hoffman

Dr. DaSilva

Nurse

Mr. Martin

Rebecca

Leaning Man

Professor Caruso

Mrs. Twitch

Mr. Sniff

Mrs. Martin

Dr. Roberts

Reporter



What about Leonardo? was first produced at the Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, on October 9, 1992. It was directed by Dusan Mlakar with the following cast:

Dr. Hoffman
Dr. DaSilva
Nurse
Mr. Martin
Rebecca
Leaning Man
Professor Caruso
Mrs. Twitch
Mr. Sniff
Mrs. Martin
Dr. Roberts
Reporter

Franc Markovcic
Veronika Drolc
Nadja Strajnar Zadnik
Milan Stefe
Darja Reichman
Matjaz Turk
Ivan Jezernik
Vera Per
Joze Mraz
Marija Lojk
Borut Veselko
Marko Simcic



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

Act One

1.

The play is set in the day room of a neurological institute. There are two doors, one at the back, the main door, and one at the side. Furniture is drab and functional. We begin with an aria from Troubadour, sung in darkness by Professor Caruso. As the curtain rises, we see Martin, Caruso, Rebecca, Mr. Sniff and Mrs. Twitch. Caruso is standing on a chair, singing and waving his arms as if conducting an orchestra. Mrs. Twitch is standing in front of him and twitchily imitating his gestures. Rebecca, dressed back-to-front and inside out, is crouching on the floor and listening to Caruso's singing. She looks enthralled. Sitting at the side, with his back to Caruso, is Martin, who is talking into an imaginary telephone. Mr. Sniff is sniffing around as if trying to locate the source of a particular smell.)

(Professor Caruso concludes his aria and takes a bow. So does Mrs. Twitch.)

REBECCA (*claps*): Oh you sang so beautifully, Professor! Applause, Madam.

(Mrs. Twitch frowns and sticks out her tongue.)

MARTIN (*into the imaginary phone*): Yeah, sure this a delicatessen shop. Oh, good morning, Mr. President, what can I do for you? The time... (*Consults an imaginary wrist watch.*)... is exactly... what?... half a pound of minced mutton.

REBECCA: Applause, Mr. Martin.



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MR. SNIFF: I knew it. This room has become the target of cosmic rays. Highly dangerous, something will have to be done. Otherwise we may go mad.

CARUSO (*another bow*): I thank the esteemed company for a truly magnificent applause. You know how it is, even a great artist, no matter how modest, feels a strong need for recognition. (*He climbs off the chair.*)

REBECCA (*claps*): Oh you sang so beautifully, Professor!

(Caruso sits on the chair, closes his eyes and begins to perform complicated mental calculations, rapidly counting on the fingers of his hands.)

MARTIN (*into the imaginary phone*): No, Herr Admiral, meine Frau does not like spaghetti, so it's now really time for you to repair my car... why?... because my left foot is itching.

(He replaces the imaginary receiver, removes his right shoe and begins to scratch the sole of his foot.)

MR. SNIFF (*sniffing*): Unbelievable. Freshly cut grass, with a whiff of parched soil. (*He picks up Martin's shoe and slowly brings it up to his nose.*) Not at all, more like the hair of a wet cocker spaniel. (*He sniffs at the heel.*) Chicken shit. (*Drops the shoe.*) Interesting, but inedible.

(Rebecca rises and rushes towards the shoe. As she passes Mr. Sniff, he sniffs at her and frowns.)

MR. SNIFF: Damp woollen carpet. Spilt chicken soup.

REBECCA: Oh my little shoe, my little shoe! (*She presses Martin's shoe to her chest and rocks it like a baby.*) My dear sweet little shoe. Soon the spring will return, leaves will fall, and crackle under my body when I roll around in them, oh how they will crackle!

MARTIN (*rises*): In any case it's a beautiful day. I think I'll go for a walk, as I always do. Or not.

CARUSO (*rising*): Tuesday. No, Friday...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MARTIN (*enthusiastically greets Caruso*): Oh hello there! Long time no see. Isn't it a wonderful day? (*Caruso looks at him with fear.*) Don't you remember me? Oh I am sorry, Headmaster, I didn't recognize you, it's my eyes. True, I wasn't at school yesterday, but I do have a note from my mother... (*He searches his pockets.*)... Unfortunately I seem to have lost it.

CARUSO: Friday.

MARTIN: I agree.

CARUSO: No, Saturday. February the 13th in the year 3565 will be Saturday!

REBECCA: I danced, and I danced, and I danced. The floor was so smooth, and he was so elegant. My sweet little shoes with stiletto heels made the sweetest of sounds... tap tap... tap tap... tap tap...

CARUSO: ... tap tap, tap tap...

MRS. TWITCH (*moving to the center, a bundle of tics, jerks, grimaces and compulsive extravagant gestures*): What about this one? Ha ha ha. Some missionaries christianized a tribe of cannibals, who then decided they would eat fishermen only on Fridays. Ha ha ha. What about this one –

CARUSO: What about this one? Twenty-fifth March in the year 8560 will be Thursday! What about this one? (*He bows.*) Applause!

(The others ignore him.)

MARTIN: Herr Goethe, warum trinken Sie Wein vermischt mit Wasser? Wein allein, sagte Goethe, macht dumm – das beweisen die Herren am Tische –

REBECCA: Oh you speak so funny, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN: My dear lady. (*Kisses her hand.*) All the best from the bottom of my heart. We've just had a delivery of fresh pineapple, and bananas, and apple strudel, will half a pound be enough, shall I wrap it for you?

REBECCA: Don't you know how beautifully the leaves crackled under me? He rolled me around in the leaves and he... I won't tell you what he did to me, but above me there were the tree tops, and the sky... turning round, turning round, turning round...

(Rebecca starts dancing, revolving faster and faster, until she loses her balance and falls. Martin's shoe ends up in front of Caruso's



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feet. Caruso looks at the shoe, then looks at the others, who are looking at him.)

CARUSO: Goal!

(Caruso kicks the shoe towards Mrs. Twitch, who kicks it towards Mr. Sniff... soon they're all playing football, shouting "Goal! Goal! Goal!" Into this mayhem walks Nurse, carrying a tray with medicines and a jug of water. She puts the tray on the table and watches the "game" until the players one by one become aware of her presence and stop kicking the shoe.)

MARTIN (*deferentially*): I wish you a very good morning, Mrs. Marchenko. Excellent weather, isn't it? How is your husband? Got rid of sciatica? And how are the grandchildren? And how are you, still having problems with your wooden leg?

NURSE: Sit down, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN: No no, it wouldn't be nice for a man not to offer his seat to a young lady on the bus. In any case I'm getting off at the next stop.

NURSE (*starts preparing medicines*): What stop is that?

MARTIN: I think it's... I have to check the ticket. (*Goes through his pockets.*) I seem to have lost it. You'll have to give me a new one, conductor. The trouble is, I don't know where I'm going. (*He looks puzzled and worried.*)

MR. SNIFF: I want to report a disturbance. This room has become the target of cosmic rays. They're coming in through the walls, some strange, unknown, dangerous energy.

NURSE: I'll tell the doctor.

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one, I'm sure you haven't heard it. The train passenger says to the booking clerk: "A return ticket, please." "Where to?" says the clerk. The passenger says, annoyed: "Back here, of course, didn't I say return?" Ha ha ha. Why isn't anyone laughing?

NURSE: First the pills.

MRS. TWITCH: I don't like the white ones, give me those purple ones.

MR. SNIFF: The purple ones are mine, I never get any others. (*He sniffs at the pills on the tray.*) Funny. They smell of sawdust today! They always smelled of ground acorns. Give me those capsules.

CARUSO: The capsules give me diarrhea, I insist on the white ones.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(Nurse notices Rebecca, who is lying where she fell, and rushes to help her.)

NURSE: Rebecca? Are you asleep?

(While Nurse is occupied with Rebecca, Mrs. Twitch, Mr. Sniff and Caruso surround the tray and help themselves to the pills, nearly coming to blows over the jug of water. They nearly choke on the pills, which they swallow all mixed together, a handful each. As Nurse rises and looks at them, they try unsuccessfully to feign innocence. Mr. Sniff belches. Nurse, puzzled by their behaviour, returns to the table.)

NURSE: Sweet Jesus and Mary... *(She runs towards exit.)* Doctor... *(She disappears.)*

CARUSO: I suddenly feel very strange.

MRS. TWITCH: Serves you right, it's your fault anyway. Oh... I feel horrible.

MR. SNIFF: I feel wonderful. Are there any left?

(Hoffman and DaSilva enter chatting.)

MARTIN *(delighted by their arrival)*: Oh hello there. Wonderful morning, isn't it? What will it be today? Mortadella, as usual? Five ounces of the Hungarian?

HOFFMAN: Who do you take me for, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN: I'm sorry, it must be my eyes. You're my old friend Willie, of course. *(To DaSilva, confidentially.)* Willie is a good fellow, we go to the beach together.

HOFFMAN: Wrong again, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN: Of course, how silly of me. You're Mr. Robinson, you've come for your loaf and ten ounces of cheddar. *(He turns and reaches towards a non-existent shelf. Finding empty space, he freezes for a moment, then slowly turns around. He looks worried, frightened.)* Where am I? *(He fixes his eyes on Hoffman.)* Excuse me, Mr. Baker, we've run out of bread.

HOFFMAN: No, Mr. Martin, I'm not Mr. Baker either.

MARTIN: Of course you're not. How could you be, I've never seen you in my life.



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HOFFMAN: Even that isn't true. You see me every day. I'm Dr. Hoffman, the neurologist. And this is Dr. DaSilva, the psychologist who has just joined our team. She'll try to make us feel better.

MRS. TWITCH: I feel better, I feel dangerously well.

MARTIN: I feel neither good nor bad. I think I don't feel at all.

MRS. TWITCH (*pushing her way into the foreground*): Have you heard this one? Patient says to the doctor: "Doctor, I keep thinking I'm a chicken." "How long has that been going on?" says the doctor. "A little over a year," says the patient. "But why didn't you come to see me earlier?" says the doctor. "I would've done," says the patient, "but my wife wouldn't let me, she said we needed eggs." Ha ha ha. Why isn't anyone laughing?

HOFFMAN (*explaining*): An interesting case of Tourette's syndrome.

MRS. TWITCH: Yes, uncontrollable tics. Grimacing. Wild disorganized gestures. Provocative behavior, vulgar joke telling.

HOFFMAN: It's possible to lessen the symptoms with Haldol –

MRS. TWITCH: I don't like it.

HOFFMAN: Doesn't half a milligram a day help?

MRS. TWITCH: It does. You. So you don't have to worry about me. But I'd much rather be what I am, Mrs. Twitch, I'd prefer to sing and dance and swear like a witch – fuck, shit, bitch – I'd prefer to scratch my ass and swing from the ceiling –

HOFFMAN: Thank you, Madam –

MRS. TWITCH: Thank you, Sir, (*To DaSilva.*) thank you, Madam.

HOFFMAN (*to DaSilva*): We may have to increase the dose. (*Turns to Caruso.*) Well, Professor, what's new?

MR. SNIFF: I'd like to report a disturbance. This room –

NURSE (*returns panting*): Doctor, something terrible's happened.

MR. SNIFF: Something very dangerous. This room has become a target of cosmic rays.

NURSE: No –

CARUSO: We swallowed all the pills.

HOFFMAN: You decided to be good for a change, well done.

CARUSO: There were six purple ones, four white ones, eight oval greenish ones, and fifteen flat ones, in addition to twelve capsules. I swallowed three capsules, four purple ones, one white one and no oval ones, because Mr. Sniff and Mrs. Twitch got to them first. Why doesn't anybody believe me?



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

NURSE: I turned my back for less than a minute, because of Rebecca –
where is Rebecca?!

MR. SNIFF, CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH: Where is Rebecca?!

(They all realize that Rebecca is still lying on the floor. Nurse and Hoffman rush to help her.)

NURSE: Rebecca, wake up. *(She slaps her left, then her right cheek.)*

MR. SNIFF, CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH: Rebecca, wake up!

(Rebecca slowly sits up and embraces Dr. Hoffman who is kneeling beside her.)

REBECCA: Doctor... Poem.

HOFFMAN: What, now? *(He gets up and looks around.)* Where is the
Leaning Man?

MR. SNIFF, CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH: Where is the Leaning Man?!

NURSE: I think he's out in the garden.

REBECCA *(imploring)*: Doctor, poem...

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva, do you know any romantic poems, about nature,
seasons?

DaSILVA *(embarrassed laugh)*: Not a single one.

REBECCA *(insistently)*: Doctor, poem!

HOFFMAN: Nurse?... No, you know only nursery rhymes... Professor?

CARUSO: Yes, I could sing –

HOFFMAN: We don't need an aria, Professor, we need a poem.

CARUSO: I could begin with The Bartered Bride –

HOFFMAN: Professor, you're going to wait your turn.

REBECCA: Doctor, poem, poem!

HOFFMAN: What did I recite last time, Nurse?... No, that wasn't good...
Okay, take your places.

(Nurse arranges the patients and DaSilva into a semi-circle behind Rebecca, and joins them. Hoffman faces them and bows.)

REBECCA *(clapping wildly)*: Poem, poem!

HOFFMAN *(scratches his head, strokes his chin, coughs)*:



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When you're old and grey and full of sleep
And nodding by the fire, take down this book
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.
How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;
And bending down beside...
Bending down beside... beside...

(Makes an apologetic gesture.)

NURSE *(clapping)*: Bravo, Doctor, bravo, bravo!

(General applause, including DaSilva.)

REBECCA *(clapping with childlike enthusiasm)*: Poem, poem, poem!
(She gets up and starts to dance.) How I danced, how I danced... and
above me... the sky... and the stars... and the leaves, how the leaves
crackled.... oh how they –

MR. SNIFF, CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH: – crackled, how the leaves
crackled...

(They join Rebecca, dancing in a similar revolving manner.)

HOFFMAN *(to DaSilva)*: Usually she is terribly awkward. She spends
hours pushing her right hand into her left glove, or her left foot into
her right shoe. She is full of mental and cerebral defects. But when
she dances she becomes a complete person, composed, synchronised.

*(Rebecca stops dancing; she is followed by Mrs. Twitch, who is
followed by Mr. Sniff, who is followed by Caruso.)*

NURSE: Come here, Rebecca. Look at yourself.

REBECCA: Rebecca knows how to dress, doesn't she, Sister?

NURSE: Like a professional model.

*(She pulls off Rebecca's jumper, which is inside out and back to
front, and helps Rebecca put it on again the right way.)*



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN (*to DaSiva*): Professor Caruso has calculated – Professor, come here – (*Caruso approaches.*) – tell Dr. DaSilva what you concluded about Rebecca's way of dressing.

CARUSO: Well, every day she puts on eight different pieces, from socks to pullover. Depending on the order in which she does it she can dress in 39 million different ways, of which only five thousand are really practical. By the laws of probability she may chance on one of the practical ways some time in the next twenty years.

HOFFMAN: In the meantime Nurse has to spend at least half an hour a day helping Rebecca get in and out of her clothes.

CARUSO: Is the young lady aware that May the 1st in the year 62,320 will be Wednesday?

HOFFMAN: Probably not, Professor, thank you for this urgent and vital piece of information.

CARUSO: Also, I'd like to take this opportunity to delight the young lady with an aria from Boris Godunov.

HOFFMAN (*consulting his watch*): Another time, Professor? (*To DaSilva.*) Professor Caruso can sing arias from 4835 operas.

CARUSO (*offended*): You know perfectly well that the true number is 4853.

HOFFMAN: I'm sorry, Professor.

CARUSO (*to DaSilva*): 4853.

(DaSilva realizes she is being sniffed at by Mr. Sniff. She freezes and looks at Hoffman.)

MR. SNIFF: You smell very nice.

MRS. TWITCH, CARUSO: You smell very nice!

MR. SNIFF: Soft, sweet, smooth, durable...

HOFFMAN (*explaining*): An exceptional case of olfactory hallucinations... Mr. Berger smells everything that we smell a hundred times more intensely. He also registers hundreds of smells which for us don't exist –

MR. SNIFF (*to DaSilva*): I can tell you that last night you had salad for dinner, with lemon juice instead of vinegar. There is something else I smell: you're a little embarrassed and don't really know what to say.

DaSILVA (*transparent lie*): Pure fantasy.

MR. SNIFF: And there is one more thing I smell. Dr. Hoffman is far from happy with your arrival. Was he forced to accept you?



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HOFFMAN (*embarrassed*): You were quite right – a lot of it is fantasy.
MR. SNIFF: Nurse, too, would be happier if you hadn't come. As far as she is concerned, there is only one doctor in the world, and that's –
CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH: Dr. Hoffman!
NURSE (*deeply embarrassed*): For punishment you won't get any dinner tonight.
MR. SNIFF (*sniffing towards the door*): I smell people who are not even here. I can tell you who is going to walk through that door right now. The Leaning Man –

(Leaning Man enters, tilting to the left like the Leaning Tower of Pisa.)

LEANING MAN: Who's stolen my spectacles again? When is this going to end?
MR. SNIFF: I can smell your spectacles, Mr. Leaning Man, but I'm not going to sneak on the culprit.
REBECCA: Professor Caruso has stolen your spectacles! (*She looks at Nurse.*) Rebecca is a good girl, isn't she, Nurse?

(Caruso pulls Leaning Man's spectacles from the inside of his jacket and gives them to Leaning Man. Leaning Man puts them on, straightens up and slaps Caruso's face.)

LEANING MAN: Next time you'll get three. (*He notices DaSilva, whistles.*)
New patient?
HOFFMAN: New doctor, Leaning Man.
LEANING MAN: Well, I wasn't far off, then.
HOFFMAN (*explaining*): This gentleman, we call him Leaning Man for the sake of simplicity, has a problem with his inner ear, due to Parkinson's disease –
LEANING MAN: However, he is the only one in this dump who is completely sane.
HOFFMAN: We made him a pair of spectacles – just a moment, Mr. Leaning – (*He removes the spectacles, Leaning Man tilts to the left.*) – with two clips extending forward from the rims, and from them we hung two pendulums, making a kind of spirit level which tells Mr. Leaning when he is standing upright – (*He replaces the spectacles, Leaning Man straightens up.*)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

LEANING MAN: – so that Mr. Leaning now has three pendulums instead of one.

NURSE: Not to mention how wicked he is.

LEANING MAN: (*to Nurse*):

I am one, my lady,
whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
have so incens'd that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

HOFFMAN (*explaining*): Leaning Man used to be a Shakespearian actor.

LEANING MAN: And this sexy young dame – what's the purpose of her being here?

HOFFMAN (*claps his hands*): Are you all here, can you hear me?

MR. SNIFF, CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH (*clap their hands*): Are you all here, can you hear me?

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva has come from the university department for clinical psychology. She is going to do a research on the effectiveness of psychotherapy on patients whose defects are purely organic –

LEANING MAN: And how would you put that if you wanted people to understand you, Doctor?

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva would like to prove a scientific hypothesis. She is doing a PhD.

REBECCA: What's that, Sister?

CARUSO: That means she'd like to become a doctor.

REBECCA: The lady isn't a doctor?

HOFFMAN: She is, but she'd like to become one more.

REBECCA: How can she be two doctors and only one lady?

MR. SNIFF: Doctors are clever, they always find a way.

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva will be spending the next month or so at the institute. She'll be observing your behavior. She is going to choose one of you for the subject of her special study.

REBECCA: Rebecca, Doctor! Tell the lady who wants to become two doctors to choose Rebecca!

MRS. TWITCH: I would suggest myself, mainly because I'm terribly bored. The title of the study could be –

LEANING MAN: "That witch Mrs. Twitch who behaves like a bitch with an itch."



What about Leonardo?, The Bellairs Playhouse, Guildford, U. K., 1998
Harry Myers as Martin, Paola Bontempi as Dr. DaSilva,
Pepjin Cladder as Leaning Man
Performed by Guildford Acting School, directed by Gemma Eddington



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

CARUSO: Doctor, I'm not saying that I should be the one, but I am available. You know how it is – even a great artist, no matter how modest, occasionally wants to become the subject of a scientific study. I count on your recommendation.

HOFFMAN: You're all candidates –

REBECCA: Rebecca too?

HOFFMAN: All of you. But it's Dr. DaSilva who's going to –

(Mr. Sniff has picked up Martin's shoe which was lying where Rebecca had dropped it, and now offers it to DaSilva.)

MR. SNIFF: This is the shoe of the man you're going to make the subject of your study.

DaSILVA *(politely accepts the shoe)*: Thank you.

LEANING MAN *(to Mr. Sniff)*: Are you trying to play a Great Dane again, poodle? *(To DaSilva.)* He thinks he can smell the future.

(Martin, who has been keeping in the background, suddenly rushes towards DaSilva.)

MARTIN: Good morning, Mrs. Hildebrand. Wonderful day, isn't it? What will it be? Mortadella, as usual? *(Pause. DaSilva is looking at him.)* I remember. Ten ounces of the Hungarian.

(Blackout.)

2.

(DaSilva, Martin, Hoffman. Martin is seated.)

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, what have you got on your feet?

MARTIN: Same as you, Madam. Five toes on each. *(He counts on the fingers of his left hand.)* One, two, three, four, five. *(He counts on the fingers of his right hand.)* Five, four, three, two, one.

DaSILVA: These are your fingers.

MARTIN: No, these are my toes. *(He points his left forefinger at his left foot.)* One, two, three, four, five. *(He points his right forefinger at his right foot.)* One, two, three, four, five.



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DaSILVA: Is that all you've got on your feet?

MARTIN (*staring at his feet*): I may have another thing or two, but nothing forbidden.

DaSILVA: Shouldn't there be something else there?

MARTIN (*scratching his head*): If you say so. There's nothing I miss.

DaSILVA: What's this, Mr. Martin? (*She offers him his right shoe.*)

MARTIN (*examines the shoe without looking at it*): A soft surface, bent in on itself. On one side it has a bulge it doesn't have on the other.

DaSILVA: You've described the thing. What is it?

MARTIN: Some kind of bag?

DaSILVA: For what?

MARTIN: Papers? Potatoes? How should I know? (*He feels the shoe.*)

DaSILVA: What could this bag contain, Mr. Martin? Part of your body, perhaps?

MARTIN (*with his hand inside the shoe*): A glove? No. (*He puts the shoe on his head.*) A baby's hat, too small for me.

DaSILVA: Compare this bag with the one on your left foot.

MARTIN (*bends down and feels his right foot*): Impossible. Sock? (*He feels the shoe in his hand.*) This bag is a sock?

DaSILVA: No, Mr. Martin, this bag is a shoe, your right shoe, put it on.

MARTIN (*confused*): Of course, shoe.

DaSILVA: Put it on.

MARTIN (*stares at his right foot*): This is my shoe, is it? You know, I don't see too well, it's my eyes. This is my shoe? (*He bends down and touches his right foot.*)

DaSILVA: That's your foot.

HOFFMAN (*pulls the shoe from Martin's hands*): Shall we do it this way, Mr. Martin? First we'll put the shoe on the floor (*He does so.*), then we'll put your foot inside it (*He succeeds, not without difficulty, in maneuvering Martin's foot inside his shoe.*), and presto! – they're both where they belong.

MARTIN (*touching his right shoe*): This is my shoe? (*Hoffman nods.*) And this is my foot. (*He touches his left shoe.*) Then it isn't all right, because my foot should be inside my shoe. (*He removes his right shoe and tries to force it onto the left one.*) This shoe is too small for me. (*Casually, without being aware of it, he puts the right shoe back on his right foot.*) In any case I prefer to be barefoot.

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, do you know where you are?

MARTIN: Of course, Madam. I'm here.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

DaSILVA: And yesterday? Where were you?

MARTIN: I'm always here. Whenever, wherever, this here follows me. It won't let me be anywhere else.

DaSILVA: How do you feel at this institute?

MARTIN: Wonderful. The students work hard, they attend lectures regularly, they respect me, most have passed their exams. Except you. What's your name?

DaSILVA: I didn't know you were a professor.

MARTIN: Professor? Me? You're joking.

DaSILVA: What are you, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN: Isn't that obvious?

DaSILVA: Tell me, please.

MARTIN: Why do you bother me with such silly questions?

DaSILVA: Because I think you don't know who you are.

MARTIN: I'm Dr. Hoffman, I'm in charge here. And you've come here for treatment because you're confused – you bother people with silly questions. I can't help you, unfortunately, maybe my colleague can.
(*He indicates Hoffman.*)

DaSILVA: And the children?

MARTIN (*looks around*): Where?

DaSILVA: Your children. Where are they?

MARTIN: At school, where else. Holidays in the mountains. Don't know exactly where, but they're safe, wherever they are.

DaSILVA: How many do you have?

MARTIN: Two, three, four, five, you know how it is. Children are God's gift, aren't they?

DaSILVA: Don't you miss them?

MARTIN: If necessary.

DaSILVA: And your wife, do you miss her?

MARTIN: Of course I do. Inasmuch as I do. On the whole I don't, on the whole I don't care. Really, es ist mir ganz, ganz egal.

DaSILVA: When did you last see her?

MARTIN: Yesterday. The day before. Last week. No? A month ago? Two? Actually fifteen years ago.

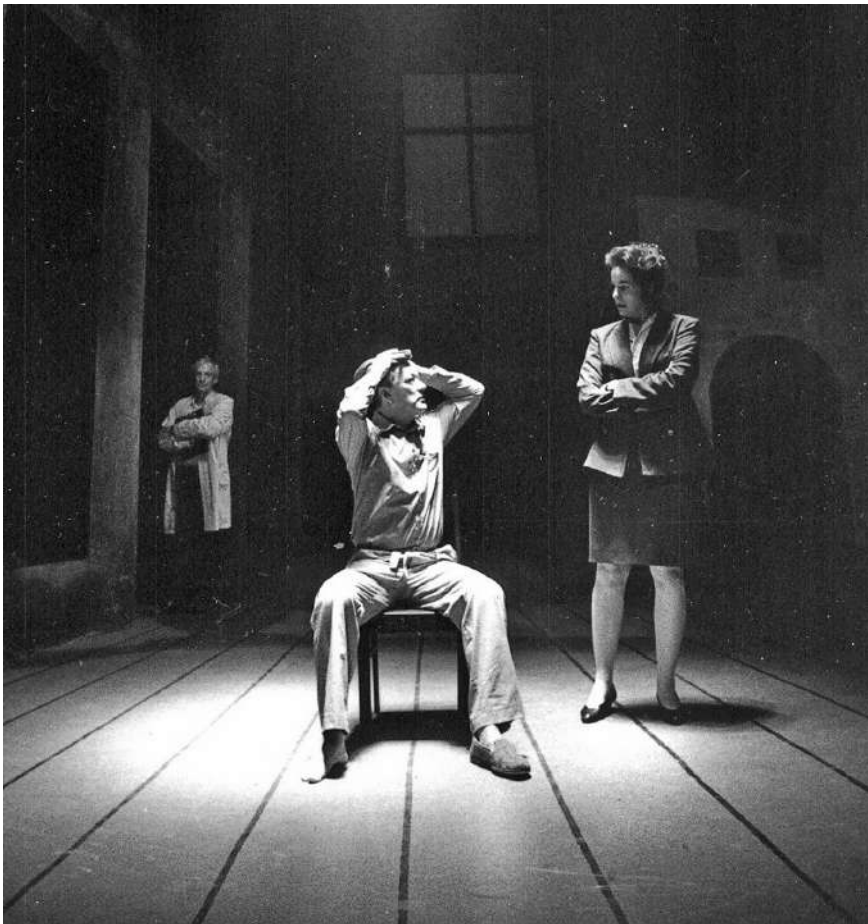
DaSILVA: Isn't it time you saw her again?

HOFFMAN (*intervenues sharply*): Not a good idea.

DaSILVA: Why not?

HOFFMAN: Because Mr. Martin doesn't recognize his wife.

DaSILVA: If we could get him so far that he would –



What about Leonardo?, Reykjavik City Theater, Iceland, 1994
Thorstein Gunnarsson as Martin, Maria Sigurdardottir as Dr. DaSilva,
in the background Petur Einarsson as Dr. Hoffman
Directed by Hallmar Sigurdsson





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: He doesn't recognize her because of his prosopagnosia – the last time she was here he tried to spread her on a piece of toast, mistaking her for butter.

MARTIN (*into an imaginary phone*): No, Madam, we don't accept orders for sausages over the phone, you'll have to come here I'm afraid. (*Replaces imaginary receiver.*)

HOFFMAN: Besides, all her visits so far have left him deeply perturbed.

DaSILVA: In other words, among the causes of his condition is psychological trauma.

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva. This isn't a mental institution. I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm a neurologist. These people are not crazy. Their defects are organic, physiological. The clinical name for Mr. Martin's condition is Korsakov's syndrome –

DaSILVA: I have a PhD in clinical psychology.

HOFFMAN: Then you should know what I'm talking about.

DaSILVA: I do, except that I don't understand what could have caused a complete memory loss.

HOFFMAN: Alcoholic degeneration of mammillary bodies.

DaSILVA: Amnesia caused by alcohol is always temporary and limited.

HOFFMAN: That is why Mr. Martin remains a complete enigma. We can only speculate about the additional causes of his condition.

DaSILVA: And what are your speculations?

HOFFMAN: I'm inclined to see Mr. Martin as a victim of the selfish, overdemanding world. He failed to or didn't want to fulfill expectations of those around him – parents, peers, society. Wife. He was too weak, however, to draw a line and say no. So the only solution he found was retreat – into alcohol, into partial, and finally into complete oblivion.

DaSILVA: So I'm right: if psychological trauma can cause or at least aggravate an organic defect, psychotherapy can be the decisive element of cure.

HOFFMAN: The only question is what kind of psychotherapy.

DaSILVA: How many kinds are there?

HOFFMAN: Legions, as you know perfectly well.

DaSILVA: The aim of my research is to prove that my method works –

HOFFMAN: For you or the patient? Don't take this personally, but your method is based on the assumption that the patient's behavior must be modified to conform to *your* vision of what is good, just and



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healthy. For me that's an act of aggression. It denies the patient the right to his own truth.

DaSILVA: And what is the truth I'm trying to deny Mr. Martin?

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva. I'm responsible for these people. I don't want to hinder your work, but I can't allow any of my patients to suffer any kind of damage.

DaSILVA: And what kind of damage would Mr. Martin suffer if he saw his wife?

HOFFMAN: At the moment he's in a state of optimal balance. That suits him as much as it suits us.

DaSILVA: But we're not here to fight for our own peace and quiet. We're here to help people.

HOFFMAN: To help *them*. Not to help ourselves to academic titles at their expense. *(Pause. They look at each other.)* I'm sorry. That wasn't fair.

DaSILVA: Pity. I was prepared to go a long way for us to be allies.

HOFFMAN: It isn't too late for that. As long as you realize that you're a guest at this institute.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman. I've come here to test an idea. How can I do that if I'm not allowed, within the limits of my project, to exercise my own judgement?

HOFFMAN: Ideas are all very well, but in practice we find that things simply happen.

DaSILVA: Aren't you ever tempted to try and cure some of your patients? *(Pause. They look at each other.)* I'm sorry. That wasn't fair.

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin is outside our reach. The main victim of his amnesia isn't memory, although it's almost completely eradicated, but his ability to feel. He's indifferent to everything equally and to nothing in particular.

DaSILVA: Does that mean that the best we can do is to remain indifferent to him?

HOFFMAN: There's nothing left inside him that your kind of therapy could activate.

DaSILVA: And that's the reason I shouldn't try? *(They look at each other.)* What is the real reason, doctor? Are you afraid that I might succeed where you've nothing to show except failure? Or do you regard these people as your personal property and can't bear the thought of any of them leaving you to resume normal life? *(Pause. They look at each other.)* I'm sorry, Doctor. I can hardly believe I said that.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: At least you've put your cards on the table.

DaSILVA: I promise I won't do anything without your permission. All right?

(Martin fixes his gaze on DaSilva.)

MARTIN: I'm so glad you came, Madam. I'm Dr. DaSilva, the new psychotherapist. Shall I examine you now or later?

(Blackout.)

3.

(Hoffman and Mr. Sniff are sniffing around the room.)

MR. SNIFF: Here, Doctor, closer to the door.

HOFFMAN *(approaches the door and sniffs vigorously)*: What sort of smell do they have, these cosmic rays?

MR. SNIFF: A highly disturbing smell.

HOFFMAN *(sighs and looks at his watch)*: That's all very interesting, but I can't see what I can do.

MR. SNIFF: That's up to you, Doctor; my duty is simply to warn you.

HOFFMAN: I'd leave them alone. They've probably been here all the time, it's just that you didn't smell them.

MR. SNIFF: No. Strange magnetism has appeared in this room, a vortex of crosscurrents, here – *(He stands in the middle of the room.)* – if I stand here I smell something terrible. Do you know that animals smell an earthquake long before the first tremor? Do you know that the pig smells its own death 24 hours before the butcher sharpens his knife?

HOFFMAN: I accept full responsibility for the cosmic rays. Satisfied?

MR. SNIFF: No. If animals smell that lightning is going to strike a tree and start a fire they flee the forest before the storm even begins.

HOFFMAN: What do you suggest? That we, too, flee? On to the streets?

MR. SNIFF: You must decide.

HOFFMAN: Do you think we are safe here for at least another day?

MR. SNIFF: Depends on what we're facing.



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HOFFMAN (*looks at his watch*): I, personally, a nervous breakdown, Mr. Berger. I suggest that for the time being we carry on as if these cosmic rays were no more than your personal statement about the world we live in.

(*Rebecca enters.*)

REBECCA: Doctor, what does that mean? Professor Caruso said that I am clickety-clackety-boom.

HOFFMAN: When did he say that?

MR. SNIFF: Today. Yesterday. The day before. Hundreds of times.

HOFFMAN: That means that Professor Caruso will get a clip on his ear.

REBECCA: When I was very little, still teeny-weeny, my Mammy died.

MR. SNIFF: Last time you said granny.

REBECCA: I said Mammy. My Mammy died – (*Nurse enters.*) – Sister, Professor Caruso said that I'm clickety-clackety-boom. What does that mean?

NURSE: That means that for at least two days he won't be allowed to sing a single aria. (*Looks at her watch.*) Aren't you having physiotherapy?

REBECCA: I hate it. Am I dressed O.K., Sister? (*She spreads her arms and suggestively wiggles her hips. She has her trousers on back to front and the cardigan buttoned up on her back.*)

NURSE: After the latest fashion. And now quickly to the physiotherapy room. Take her, Mr. Berger. Doctor has a visitor.

MR. SNIFF: I'm conducting a research into cosmic rays.

NURSE: What are you doing here, then? I've just heard that they are entering the physiotherapy room at all angles.

MR. SNIFF: That's impossible, I'm the only one who... I'll check it out. (*Goes towards exit.*)

NURSE: Mr. Berger!

MR. SNIFF: Oh yes... (*He takes off his right shoe and shows it to Rebecca.*)

REBECCA (*runs after him*): Little shoe, sweet little shoe... (*They disappear.*)

HOFFMAN (*sighs*): Who is it?

(*Mrs. Martin enters, wearing a fur coat and lots of jewellery.*)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN (*proffering his hand*): Mrs. Martin.

MRS. MARTIN (*placing her handbag into Hoffman's hand*): Dr. Hoffman.

(*Removes her coat and hands it to Nurse without looking at her.*)

HOFFMAN: What can I do for you, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: No doubt you will tell me.

HOFFMAN (*handing Mrs. Martin's handbag to Nurse*) Mrs. Martin –

MRS. MARTIN: I have very little time, Dr. Hoffman. So I'll take a seat.

(*She sits on the nearest chair and looks at Hoffman.*)

HOFFMAN: Mrs. Martin, your husband is not feeling well. We had to give him a heavy dose of barbiturates. (*Moves behind Mrs. Martin and gesticulates wildly to encourage Nurse to leave.*) I'm afraid he'll remain in a deep sleep for at least three days.

(*Hoffman repeats his gestures with more urgency; Nurse finally gets the message and leaves, taking Mrs. Martin's handbag and coat with her.*)

MRS. MARTIN: Are you telling me that he's got worse?

HOFFMAN: No, he hasn't.

MRS. MARTIN (*hint of worry*): He's got better?

HOFFMAN: Not that, either.

MRS. MARTIN (*openly worried*): Are you thinking of sending him home?

HOFFMAN: No.

MRS. MARTIN: Then I don't understand why I'm here.

HOFFMAN: Neither do I. Obviously a misunderstanding. (*Pointedly looks at his watch.*)

(*DaSilva enters, looks at Mrs. Martin, smiles.*)

DaSILVA: Hello. I'm Dr. DaSilva. Your husband will be here in a minute, he's just finishing his lunch.

HOFFMAN (*suddenly in a hurry*): Do forgive me, Mrs. Martin... Urgent duties... (*Leaves.*)

DaSILVA: Mrs. Martin, I'd like to have some details about the way your husband fell ill.

MRS. MARTIN (*icily*): What is your name?

DaSILVA: Dr. DaSilva.

MRS. MARTIN: Miss Silva, if you're hinting that my husband's illness has anything to do with me I'm going to sue you for defamation.

DaSILVA: Mrs. Martin –



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MRS. MARTIN: Nobody ever thinks of me, how much I suffer –

(Makes a show of emotion, but fails to convince.)

DaSILVA: I'm trying to help you, and your husband –

MRS. MARTIN: Really? He's been here for three years.

DaSILVA: Well, I've been here for three days.

(Martin enters, engaged in a lively conversation with himself.)

MARTIN: Then they said they'd like to hang me. And they did, they tied my feet together and suspended me from the ceiling, and they placed a tub of icy water underneath, into which they kept lowering me, using a winch...

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, allow me to interrupt you – do you know the lady?

(Mr. and Mrs. Martin stare at each other.)

MARTIN *(slaps his forehead)*: Of course, how could I forget her? This is Dr. DaSilva, the friendly new psychotherapist who's going to make us all better. How are you today, Madam Doctor, patients all right?

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, I am Dr. DaSilva.

MARTIN *(staring at her in complete disbelief)*: You're joking, girl. You're an assistant in my delicatessen shop. Why else would you be wearing a white coat? Come on, serve the lady, don't be so lazy, can't you see she's waiting?

MRS. MARTIN: This is terrible.

MARTIN: Isn't it? Thousands of people are out of work, yet you can't get a decent girl for the shop. I'll do it myself. Ementaler, you said? *(He turns to reach for the cheese, finds nothing, feels all around, turns again with a look of astonishment on his face.)* Strange...

(Hoffman enters. Martin fixes his eyes on him.)

MARTIN: Oh, hello, Hans. What're you doing here?

(Rebecca enters running, with Leaning Man's shoe in her hands. Leaning Man, tilted and without his spectacles, is right behind her. She disappears through the side door.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

LEANING MAN (*out of breath*): Doctor, do something, I've had enough of these crazy women, on top of which someone's got my spectacles –

MARTIN: I'll sort this out right away, this really is unheard of... (*Follows Leaning Man out through the side door.*)

MRS. MARTIN: I'm paying you to make him better, but he's getting worse.

HOFFMAN: Your husband is like a man trying to catch up with something that keeps eluding him. To span the chasms of emptiness that keep opening up under him he has to go on inventing people, places, stories –

DaSILVA: He has to keep improvising a world for himself.

HOFFMAN: Delirious, quasi-coherent world of ephemeral images and illusions. But for him this world is real –

DaSILVA: I don't agree with that.

HOFFMAN: As far as he's concerned there's nothing wrong.

DaSILVA: As you see, Mrs. Martin, I believe that your husband can be helped.

MRS. MARTIN: Couldn't you sort this out between the two of you? I don't even know what you're talking about.

DaSILVA: Mrs. Martin, wouldn't you be happy if your husband got his memory back? And returned home? And life went on as it used to before this happened?

MRS. MARTIN (*frostily*): Of course I'd be happy, But we must think of him. After all his life here isn't so bad. He's safe.

HOFFMAN: Hundred percent, Mrs. Martin.

DaSILVA: Tell me, Mrs. Martin, was there something concrete, some kind of event which caused him to lose his memory?

MRS. MARTIN: He wasn't hit on the head, he didn't crash his car, he didn't eat poisoned mushrooms, if that's what you mean.

DaSILVA: Not quite. Was there a misunderstanding between the two of you, a quarrel maybe?

MRS. MARTIN: Doctor, tell this young lady that I'm not responsible for the state of my husband's mind.

HOFFMAN: That's perfectly obvious.

MRS. MARTIN: Tell her.

HOFFMAN: I'll do that at the earliest opportunity.

MRS. MARTIN: Tell her now. Are you afraid of her?

HOFFMAN: Right... (*Turns to DaSilva.*)



What about Leonardo?, Lilian Baylis / Sadlers Wells, London, 1995
Peter Lindford as Martin, Jenny Bolt as Mrs. Martin, Andrew Hobday as Caruso
Directed by Janine Wunsche



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(Rebecca enters through the main door with Leaning Man's shoe.)

REBECCA: Little shoe, my sweet little shoe... How we danced, and the smooth wooden floor... my shoes made the sweetest of sounds... tap tap... tap tap... *(She starts dancing.)*

(Leaning Man follows her in, tilted and limping.)

LEANING MAN: Listen, girl... Give me my shoe or I'll smack you so hard that your head will start doing tap tap.

REBECCA: And above me, above me there was only the sky, and the trees, and the stars, all turning and turning and turning... *(She stops turning and escapes Leaning Man through the side door.)*

LEANING MAN: Give me my shoe or I'll grab you by the... *(He turns to DaSilva.)* Who's nicked my spectacles? *(DaSilva shrugs, he turns to Mrs. Martin.)* See what they keep doing to me? They can't bear to have someone sane among them. *(Mrs. Martin, frightened, looks at DaSilva.)* Why the hell am I telling you this, you're just another silly cow. *(He follows Rebecca through the side door.)*

MRS. MARTIN *(shocked)*: I need a cigarette... Where is my handbag?

REBECCA *(re-entering)*: Above me... above me there was only the sky... turning, and turning, and turning... *(She starts to spin, loses her balance, falls, remains motionless on the floor.)*

(Leaning Man re-enters, tilted, limping and out of breath. He bends over Rebecca and retrieves his shoe.)

LEANING MAN: What about this one? Why do women have slightly bigger brains than hens? So they don't shit all over the courtyard. *(He puts on his shoe and leaves.)*

MRS. MARTIN: If I don't get a cigarette I'll go mad!

(DaSilva goes towards the main door and bumps into Mr. Sniff.)

MR. SNIFF: Nowhere else... Only in this room... *(Sniffs at DaSilva.)* No...

(He approaches Mrs. Martin who gets to her feet, terrified. He sniffs at her methodically from head to toe. Mrs. Martin clutches at her heart.)



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MR. SNIFF: No cosmic rays here... You smell of bonds, precious stones and make-up powder. *(He goes on his knees and starts sniffing around the floor, leaving through the side door.)*

MRS. MARTIN: This is the last time I'm here... The last time.

(Martin enters through the side door. He looks at his wife.)

MARTIN: Good afternoon, have you been waiting long? The train was late, it crashed into a lorry at a barrier crossing, I got off and continued on foot – *(He stares at his wife as if suddenly recognizing her.)*

DaSILVA: Who is this, Mr. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN *(angry, embarrassed)*: Why is he staring at me without saying anything?

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin –

(Martin has become catatonic, freezing in a curious posture, with one arm half raised, with an empty stare.)

MRS. MARTIN: This is unbearable. *(She hurries to the main door and out, followed by Dr. Hoffman.)*

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin?

(Martin shows no response.)

(Blackout.)

4.

(Martin is kneeling and staring emptily into space. Caruso is standing behind him and singing an aria from Aida. Hoffman and Nurse are seated. When Caruso ends, they clap. Caruso bows. Martin does not move.)

CARUSO: He used to like my arias. Shall I sing him another?

NURSE: You've sung five in a row, to no effect.

CARUSO: If necessary I'm prepared to sing ten, twenty –





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN (*rising*): If I were you I'd hurry to the dining room and give another recital there.

CARUSO: They're all tone deaf. It's all the same to them whether they hear a Bach cantata or a circular saw.

HOFFMAN: That's not true, Rebecca has a profound, exceptional feeling for music.

CARUSO: Yes, but she is – as you know perfectly well – she is – (*Makes a screwing gesture with his forefinger.*) clickety-clackety-boom.

HOFFMAN (*gently but firmly leading Caruso to the main door*): No one is clickety-clackety-boom at this institute, Professor.

CARUSO: I'm certainly not. Easter in the year 4203 will be on Friday the 14th of April!

HOFFMAN: Tell them that, Professor, they'll be overjoyed by the news.

CARUSO: And one more thing –

HOFFMAN: Tell them that as well. (*He pushes him out through the door and waves at him.*) Au revoir. Bye bye. Adieu. (*He turns back, looks at Nurse, sighs, goes to Martin, looks at him.*)

NURSE: What's happened to him, Doctor?

HOFFMAN: I've no idea, Nurse. All I know is that I know less and less.

NURSE: Do you think Mr. Martin has a soul?

HOFFMAN: What do you think? Does he? Or has the illness chewed it to pieces? In the beginning there was still hope, because he was aware of his loss.

NURSE: Although he was so sad most of the time.

HOFFMAN: He was lost. But it was precisely because of this that it seemed possible we could still save him.

NURSE: He suffered –

HOFFMAN: That's why, Nurse, that's why it seemed that he could still connect with reality, make sense of things. Of emotions he had lost but could still recognize.

NURSE: Love –

HOFFMAN: That as well, yes.

NURSE: Happiness.

HOFFMAN: No doubt.

NURSE: Emotions that we all crave, don't we, Doctor? But some of us are afraid to admit that, aren't we?

HOFFMAN: Some of us have other priorities, Nurse. (*He waves a hand in front of Martin's eyes; there is no response.*)



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Milan Stefe as Martin and Majda Grbac as Nurse
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(DaSilva enters through the main door.)

NURSE *(who doesn't see her)*: This clever Miss is responsible for all this. *(Hoffman makes a coughing sound to warn Nurse of DaSilva's presence.)* Why do you let her do things behind your back? This wouldn't have happened if – *(She turns and sees DaSilva.)* – this wouldn't have – if, if – well, that's my opinion, I simply said what I think.

(DaSilva ignores Nurse and goes to Martin.)

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin? *(She takes Martin by the hand and gently pulls him to his feet. He offers no resistance. DaSilva turns him towards her. He responds as if having no will of his own.)* Mr. Martin? *(He stares at her completely bewildered.)* Can you hear me?

(Hoffman approaches, takes Martin by the hand and leads him to the main door. Martin follows him with short mechanical steps. Hoffman turns and leads Martin back.)

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin, do you know who I am? *(Martin stares at him completely bewildered.)* Nod your head if you hear me.

(Martin remains bewildered.)

DaSILVA: We have proof that I was right.

HOFFMAN: Something frightened him, that's hardly proof.

DaSILVA: What else do you need?

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin's been through so many unexpected metamorphoses that I wouldn't be surprised if this had nothing to do with his wife at all.

NURSE: I think so too.

DaSILVA: Yet only a minute ago it was you who said that this wouldn't have happened if –

NURSE: I have complete trust in Dr. Hoffman's expertise.

DaSILVA: I'm sorry, Nurse, I have no intention of discussing points of medical science with you.

(Rebecca enters through the main door, running backwards and holding Leaning Man's shoe. She bumps into Nurse, who bumps



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into Hoffman, who bumps into DaSilva, who bumps into Martin. All of them find themselves on the floor. One by one they get up, except Rebecca. Leaning Man, tilted and limping, enters through the main door, bends over Rebecca and tries to pull his shoe from her hands.)

REBECCA: My little shoe –

(Leaning Man succeeds in getting his shoe back, but he instantly drops it. The shoe is picked up by Mr. Sniff who has just entered through the main door.)

REBECCA: My shoe, my little shoe... *(Mr. Sniff hands her the shoe, she gets up and starts dancing.)* He guided me over the smooth wooden floor... Tap tap, went my little shoes –

LEANING MAN: You know what I'm going to do to you –

(Mrs. Twitch enters through the main door.)

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one? Two male centipedes stood on the pavement when a young female centipede comes walking past. "Good gracious," says one male centipede to the other, "have you ever seen such a nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs..."

MR. SNIFF, LEANING MAN, MRS. TWITCH: ... such a nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs...

MRS. TWITCH: Why isn't anybody laughing?

LEANING MAN *(snatching his shoe from Rebecca)*: If you do this again I'll put my hand under your skirt.

MR. SNIFF, MRS. TWITCH: ... such a nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs...

REBECCA: Oooooohhhhhh... *(She collapses and lies motionless on the floor.)*

(Caruso, wearing Leaning Man's spectacles and singing an aria from Carmen, enters through the main door. Everybody is listening. Martin stares at him completely bewildered. Nurse helps Rebecca to her feet. Caruso stops singing and bows. Applause. Leaning Man, clapping, approaches Caruso, pulls his spectacles off Caruso's nose, puts them on, straightens up, slaps Caruso's face.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

CARUSO: I'm willing to delight this charming audience with some more arias, beginning with the main aria from a little known opera –

HOFFMAN: Professor, give your audience a chance to recover from your previous artistic rendition –

LEANING MAN (*sarcastically*): Ha ha ha. Ho ho ho.

HOFFMAN: You should take a little rest as well, now that you're standing upright again. Come a little closer, everybody. I'd like to introduce you to Mr. Martin. (*The patients form a semi-circle.*)
I want you to say all at once: good afternoon, Mr. Martin.

PATIENTS (*except Martin*): Good afternoon, Mr. Martin.

(Martin, completely bewildered, looks at one after another.)

LEANING MAN: What happened to him, has he run out of gobbledygook?

CARUSO: He's not normal any more, he's gone clickety-clackety. Click-clack.

HOFFMAN: I want you to approach him one by one, shake his hand and ask him how he feels. Will you start, Rebecca?

REBECCA: Good afternoon, Mr. Martin, do you have shoes for me? I'd like to go dancing.

(Martin stares at her utterly bewildered.)

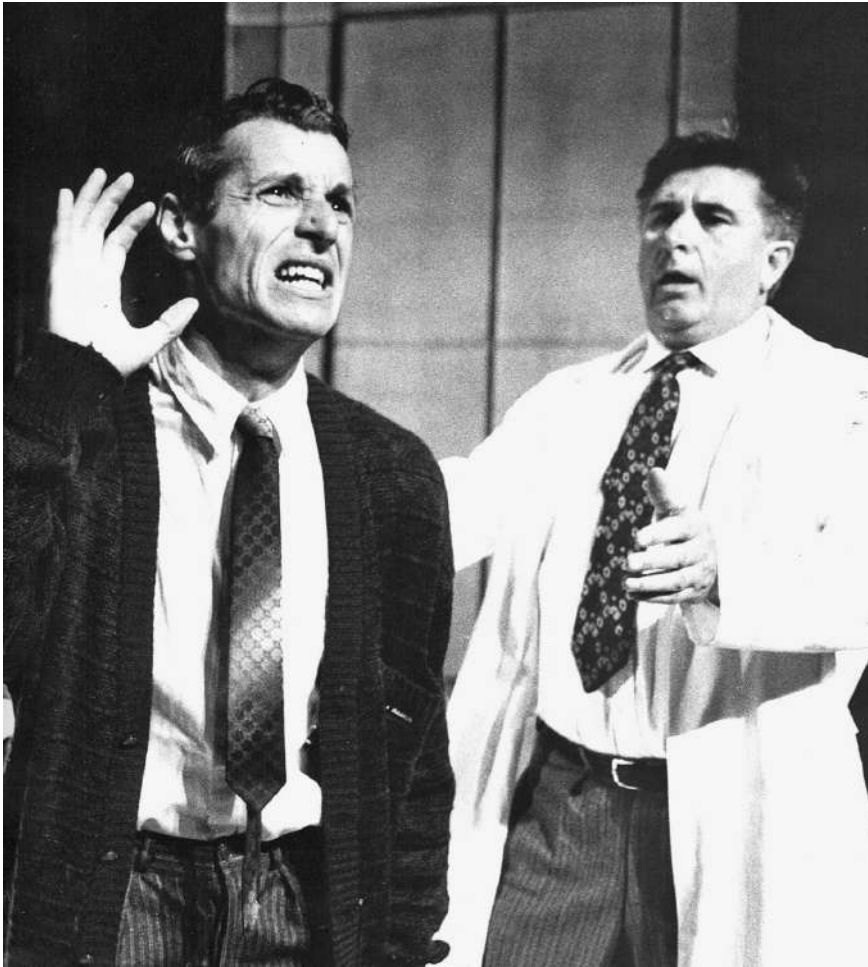
MRS. TWITCH: What about this one –

LEANING MAN, MR. SNIFF, CARUSO: ... such a nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs, nice pair of legs...

(Martin looks at all three in turn. Caruso steps in front of him and sings part of an aria into his face. In the meantime Mr. Sniff gives him a complete sniff-over. Martin remains bewildered.)

LEANING MAN (*steps in front of Martin and yells into his face*): Twenty ounces of Camembert and a tube of mayonnaise. Come on, on the double.

(Martin's bewildered stare doesn't change. Leaning Man turns to Hoffman who is lost in deep thought.)



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Milan Stefe as Martin and Franc Markovec as Dr. Hoffman
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

NURSE (*approaching*): Are you not feeling well, Doctor?

(As if responding to a command, the patients – with the exception of Martin – step towards Hoffman and ask):

PATIENTS: Doctor, are you not feeling well?

(Hoffman turns and watches them.)

NURSE: Doctor isn't feeling well because we have lost Mr. Martin.

DaSILVA: Or because he's realized that pills are not enough.

HOFFMAN (*snaps*): Really? I don't want to be rude but a thing or two I believe I should tell you.

NURSE: High time, Doctor. Go on.

PATIENTS: Go on, Doctor.

HOFFMAN: I've devoted twenty years of my life to cases like this. I'm not interested in illness as a deviation from normality – what I care about is the individual striving to preserve his identity in adverse circumstances –

DaSILVA: Then we understand each other.

HOFFMAN: Understand? You and I?

NURSE: That's a good one.

PATIENTS: That's a good one!

HOFFMAN: Each of these people – call them patients of you like – lives in a world marked by deficit or excess – but each of them lives at the same time in a sufficient world. (*Turns to the patients.*) Are any of you unhappy?

PATIENTS: No, Doctor.

HOFFMAN: There. Do I have a right to break into their worlds, which are complete in a way, and try to force them, by hook or by crook, back into the framework of our normality?

DaSILVA: Not only a right, Doctor, a duty.

HOFFMAN: If the patient is happy in his condition, should I try to cure him at the expense of his happiness?

DaSILVA: Are you asking me or telling me?

HOFFMAN: How is it possible that my patients are relatively content, whereas I who am, or at least should be, normal – simply because I'm treating them rather than the other way round – cannot find a moment of peace which wouldn't at once be destroyed by a nagging



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doubt about the decisions I make in my efforts to turn these people into something resembling what I am myself? If pain and doubt are the price of normality, what is that essence of normality which makes this price worth paying?

DaSILVA: Hope? Belief that things can get better?

(Pause. DaSilva and Hoffman look at each other.)

HOFFMAN: Noble words. The question is, can we turn them into reality with false promises and hypocrisy.

DaSILVA: I can't afford defeatist philosophy. I must think about my research.

HOFFMAN (*gestures at Martin*): And this is a result of your scientific method. Congratulations.

DaSILVA: From me to you, for being consistent. A while ago you tried to convince me that this has nothing to do with his wife's visit, but now you're telling me it's all my fault because I asked her to come. Make up your mind. If it is my fault I was right: the causes of his condition are at least partly psychological. Which means that no neurological defect can be purely organic, which means that only psychotherapy can help such patients back to normality.

HOFFMAN: Fine. It doesn't matter now anyway. Continue with your research. Please.

DaSILVA: Thank you. If you don't mind I'd like to continue with Rebecca.

REBECCA (*jumps*): Rebecca!

HOFFMAN (*complete disbelief*): What about Mr. Martin?

DaSILVA (*looks at Martin, coldly*): He is no longer of interest to me, such as he is.

(They all look at Martin, who – still completely bewildered – looks at everybody in turn.)

(Blackout.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

5.

(Martin, Caruso and Leaning Man. Caruso, seated, is engaged in his interminable calculations.)

LEANING MAN: Well? Is or isn't?

CARUSO (*triumphantly*): Easter in the year 40,253 will be on the 16th of April!

LEANING MAN: Is or isn't?

CARUSO: Will be, I said.

LEANING MAN: Is or isn't God?

CARUSO: Ah...

LEANING MAN: What do you mean, ah? Are you going to tell me that you don't know?

CARUSO: I want you to stop maltreating me.

LEANING MAN: That means that God is.

CARUSO: I don't know.

LEANING MAN: You're the proof. And this bewildered salami seller. You've got too much of what he has too little. He remembers nothing, you remember everything. But your everything's just as worthless as his nothing. Such a paradox, Professor, has nothing to do with chance. Only God can make fools of us in such an exquisite way.

CARUSO (*shrugs*): My personal favorite has always been Bach –

LEANING MAN: What Bach? You're a freak.

CARUSO: I'm not.

LEANING MAN: Of course you are. Your memory swallows everything you come across. You're a robot.

CARUSO: No.

LEANING MAN: Don't you know by heart the entire telephone directory of the metropolitan area?

CARUSO: That's nothing unusual.

LEANING MAN: Don't you know by heart the entire ten volumes of the Dictionary of Music and Musicians?

CARUSO: No! On page 320 of Vol. 3 I fail to remember the second paragraph!

LEANING MAN: Don't you know by heart all the operas, as well as all of Bach's fugues and cantatas?

CARUSO: Music is my life.



What about Leonardo?, Theater of Zoran Radmilovic, Serbia, 2001
Zdravko Maletic as Caruso, Milutin Veskovic as Leaning Man,
Predrag Grbic as Martin
Directed by Dejan Krstovic



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

LEANING MAN: But that's all mechanical, Professor. You can't sing.

God is making a fool of you.

CARUSO: What about you?

LEANING MAN: What about me?

CARUSO: Shakespeare! You know him by heart!

LEANING MAN: Only the parts I played, and even those I must try very hard not to forget.

CARUSO: I don't.

LEANING MAN: No, you must try very hard not to remember. God is abusing each of us in a different way. But neither as cruelly as he's abusing this fellow here.

(He positions himself in front of Mr. Martin and grins at him. Mr. Martin returns the grin. Leaning Man winces and moves away.)

CARUSO: I, too, know Shakespeare by heart.

LEANING MAN: All of it?

CARUSO: Only the bits I heard from you.

LEANING MAN: "Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?"

(Leaning Man and Caruso look at an imaginary sky. Behind them, Martin follows their gaze.)

CARUSO: "By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed."

LEANING MAN: "Methinks it is like a weasel."

CARUSO: "It is backed like a weasel."

LEANING MAN: "Or like a whale?"

CARUSO: "Very like a whale."

LEANING MAN: Congratulations. We must give a performance one of these days. The audience may not be very appreciative –

(He looks at Martin, whose gaze is still directed at an imaginary sky. Leaning Man joins him and looks in the same direction. They're joined by Caruso who, too, follows Martin's gaze.)

MARTIN: "Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?"

(Leaning Man and Caruso step away from Martin and exchange glances.)



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LEANING MAN: "By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed." (*He waits for Martin's reaction, but Martin continues to gaze at the "sky."*)

CARUSO: "Methinks it is like a weasel."

LEANING MAN: "It is backed like a weasel."

CARUSO: "Or like a whale?"

(Martin continues to gaze at the "sky." Leaning Man waves a hand in front of his eyes. Martin slowly lowers his gaze and looks at Leaning Man.)

LEANING MAN (*makes faces at Martin*): Yoohooooo...

(Martin's bewildered stare doesn't change.)

CARUSO (*makes faces at Martin*): Yoohooooo...

MARTIN (*mimics Caruso*): Yoohooooo...

(Leaning Man and Caruso exchange astonished glances.)

LEANING MAN: What on earth's going on here?

MARTIN: What on earth's going on here?

LEANING MAN: Booooooo...

MARTIN: Booooooo...

LEANING MAN: Hop. (*He jumps.*)

CARUSO: Hop. (*He jumps.*)

MARTIN: Hop. (*He jumps.*)

LEANING MAN: Now we will run to the door... (*He runs to the door.*)

MARTIN: Now we will run to the door... (*He runs to the door.*)

LEANING MAN: And now we'll run back... (*He runs back.*)

MARTIN: And now we'll run back... (*He runs back.*)

LEANING MAN: Professor, there're two possibilities. Either I've finally gone mad myself, or we're witnessing an historic event.

MARTIN: Or we're witnessing an historic event.

LEANING MAN (*facing Martin, raises five fingers*): How many fingers?

MARTIN (*raises five fingers*): How many fingers?

LEANING MAN: Professor, give him one of those infinite numbers.

CARUSO: 835629256836207134235.

MARTIN: 835629256836207134235.

LEANING MAN: Sing an aria. The Barber of Seville, whatever.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(Caruso sings the beginning of an aria from The Barber of Seville.)

MARTIN: Now we will run to the door... *(He runs to the door.)* And now we will run back... *(He runs back.)*

LEANING MAN: Tone deaf.

MARTIN: Hop. *(He jumps.)* Booooo.

LEANING MAN:

Had it pleas'd heaven
to try me with affliction, had he rain'd
all kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head,
steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
given to captivity me and my utmost hopes...

MARTIN: *(repeats verbatim)*

LEANING MAN: What're you staring at, you cretin? I'll kick your face in.

MARTIN: *(repeats verbatim)*

LEANING MAN: Give him more numbers, Professor. *(He removes his spectacles to rub his eyes and leans to the left.)*

CARUSO: I'd much rather sing an aria from –

LEANING MAN: Didn't you see he's tone deaf? Come on, teach him the multiplication table.

CARUSO: I won't.

MARTIN: I won't.

(Caruso steals Leaning Man's spectacles. Leaning Man tilts to the right.)

CARUSO: Some people can't stand upright, ha ha!

LEANING MAN *(follows Caruso round the room)*: Give them back, or I'll pull out every one of your hairs!

(Martin tilts to the right and follows Leaning Man round the room in the same way that Leaning Man follows Caruso.)

MARTIN: I'll pull out every one of your hairs! I'll kick your face in!

(Rebecca enters at speed, carrying DaSilva's left shoe; she is followed by DaSilva.)



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REBECCA: My little shoe, my sweet little shoe, what a beautiful shoe...
How I danced, how I danced, how I danced... (*She dances around the room.*)

DaSILVA: Don't be naughty, Rebecca –

CARUSO: Some people can't stand upright, ha ha!

LEANING MAN: Give me back my spectacles, Professor, or I'll kick you so hard you'll end up flat on the ceiling.

MARTIN (*rushing round the room, but now leaning to the left*): I'll kick you so hard you'll end up flat on the ceiling. (*He begins to limp like DaSilva.*) Don't be naughty, Rebecca... (*He begins to mimic Rebecca's dance movements.*) My little shoe, my sweet little shoe –

REBECCA: What a beautiful shoe...

(*DaSilva comes to a halt and stares at Martin.*)

MARTIN (*stops dancing, looks at DaSilva*): Hop. (*He jumps.*) Boooooo...

(*Rebecca, still nursing the shoe, dances out of the room. Leaning Man catches up with Caruso. He retrieves his spectacles and kicks Caruso's behind.*)

LEANING MAN: Well, have I kept my promise, or haven't I?

DaSILVA: What's happening here?

MARTIN: Now we will run to the door... (*He runs to the door.*) And now we will run back... (*He runs back.*)

LEANING MAN: Watch this, doctor...

(*Leaning Man makes faces at Martin. Martin makes faces at Leaning Man. Leaning Man grimaces. Martin grimaces back in the same way. Leaning Man spreads his arms and mimics a bird flapping its wings. Martin does the same.*)

(*Caruso sings an aria from Aida. Leaning Man performs an arhythmic dance, made up of strange, jerky movements. Martin faithfully repeats the dance without any effort. Caruso stops singing.*)

DaSILVA: When did all this begin?

LEANING MAN: A few minutes ago like a bolt from the blue.

CARUSO: 94356829184723.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MARTIN: 94356829184723.

LEANING MAN: Watch this, doctor... (*Recites*):

Good God, what a night that was,
The bed so soft, and how we clang,
Burning together, lying this way and that...

MARTIN: (*repeats verbatim*)

LEANING MAN: I wonder what he'll do if I fart. Come on, Professor,
let's hear the sound of your wind.

CARUSO: Fart, unfortunately, I can't. I am, however, in a position, to
sing an aria from Faust instead. May I, Doctor?

MARTIN: May I, Doctor? Come on, let's hear the sound of your wind.

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, do you know who I am?

MARTIN: Hop. (*He jumps.*) Boooooo.

LEANING MAN:

I'm Martin the Parrot,
if you say boo, I say boo,
whatever you do, I do, too,
I'm Martin the Parrot.

MARTIN: (*repeats verbatim*)

(*Mrs. Twitch enters and proceeds towards DaSilva.*)

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one...

DaSILVA: Not now, Madam. Ask Mr. Martin if he knows who you are.

MRS. TWITCH: I don't even know myself who I am – how should he,
who doesn't know who he is himself?

MARTIN: I'm Martin the Parrot... Hop. (*He jumps.*) Booooo. (*He begins
to imitate Mrs. Twitch.*)

MRS. TWITCH: Holy Mother! Is he trying to make fun of me?

DaSILVA: No, Madam. What's happening is phenomenal.

MRS. TWITCH: Oh really? I've been doing that for five years, and the
best I've ever been called was Lady Obnoxious.

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin has begun to fight for rehumanization.

MARTIN: The best I've ever been called was Lady Obnoxious.



What about Leonardo?, Lilian Baylis / Sadlers Wells, London, 1995
Andrew Hobday as Caruso, Peter Lindford as Martin, Anna Gilbert as Dr. DaSilva,
Katharine Barker as Mrs. Twitch
Directed by Janine Wunsche



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

LEANING MAN: And in his fight for rehumanization he's already made the first step: he's become a woman! (*To Martin.*) Check what you have in your trousers before calling yourself a lady.

MARTIN: Hop. (*He jumps.*)

DaSILVA: Listen to me. Listen, all of you.

CARUSO, LEANING MAN, MRS. TWITCH: Listen, all of you.

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin is in a very delicate phase of his illness. You must promise you'll leave him alone. No naughty poems, no obscene jokes –

CARUSO: I could teach him the Dictionary of Music and Musicians in ten volumes –

DaSILVA: No! Promise. Raise your fingers and solemnly swear.

(Mrs. Twitch, Leaning Man and Caruso each raise two fingers.)

DaSILVA (*goes towards exit, turns*): What did you promise?

MRS. TWITCH, LEANING MAN, CARUSO (*each raising two fingers*):
No naughty poems, no obscene jokes!

(DaSilva leaves. Mrs. Twitch, Leaning Man and Caruso exchange conspiratorial glances and turn to Martin.)

LEANING MAN: Go fuck yourself.

MARTIN: Go fuck yourself.

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one, I'm sure you haven't heard it.

MARTIN: What about this one, I'm sure you haven't heard it.

LEANING MAN: Booboori boobooriboom.

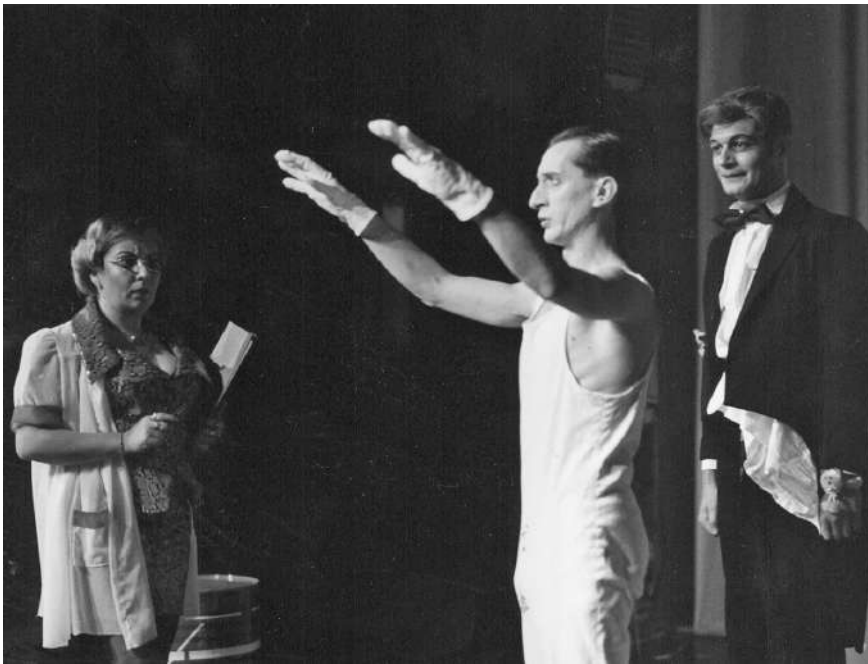
MARTIN: Booboori boobooriboom. I am, however, in a position to sing an aria from Faust instead. May I, Doctor? Hop. (*He jumps.*) Booooo.

(Blackout.)

6.

(Martin, Hoffman, Nurse, DaSilva)

MARTIN: Booboori boobooriboom. Hop. (*He jumps. He looks at Nurse.*)
Booooo. (*Nurse is shocked.*)



What about Leonardo?, Theater of Zoran Radmilovic, Serbia, 2001
Selena Ristic as Dr. DaSilva, Predrag Grbic as Martin, Zdravko Maletic as Caruso
Directed by Dejan Krstovic



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

DaSILVA: What do you think, doctor?

HOFFMAN: Something has been reactivated, there's no doubt – but what?

MARTIN:

I'm Martin the Parrot,
if you say boo, I say boo,
whatever you do, I do, too,
I'm Martin the Parrot.

DaSILVA: One of Leaning Man's jokes.

HOFFMAN: I'm afraid that may also be the true nature of Mr. Martin's change.

MARTIN: Now we will run to the door... *(He runs to the door.)* And now we will run back... *(He runs back.)*

HOFFMAN: And now we will stoop... *(He stoops.)*

MARTIN: And now we will stoop... *(He stoops.)*

HOFFMAN: And will remain like this until we're told to rise.

MARTIN: Are told to rise.

(Hoffman rises. Martin also rises.)

HOFFMAN: Pure mimicry.

DaSILVA: But why, Doctor, why?

MARTIN *(to Nurse)*: Go fuck yourself.

NURSE: Why is he saying such horrible things? If he really remembers everything we could teach him something nice.

DaSILVA: Thank you, Nurse, for speaking my thoughts so precisely.

NURSE: That doesn't mean I agree with you.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman, isn't it obvious what's happening?

HOFFMAN: On the contrary. We're faced with a great neurological puzzle.

DaSILVA: We're presented with a great opportunity.

HOFFMAN: For what?

NURSE: I can't see any.

HOFFMAN: Besides, Mr. Martin is of no interest to you, you've chosen Rebecca.

DaSILVA: That's less important. Compared to what we're presented with here that's of no importance at all.

MARTIN: Boobooriparrotboom.



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HOFFMAN: And with what are we presented here?

NURSE: Careful, Doctor. You've already made one mistake.

MARTIN (*to Nurse*): Go fuck yourself.

DaSILVA: Thank you, Mr. Martin. (*To Hoffman.*) Look, Doctor. When Mr. Martin was overwhelmed by the chaotic stream of impressions, to which he could respond only with silence, it looked as if he was condemned to spending the rest of his days in a state of confused amazement. He stopped being a person. Can't you see what he is doing now? He is building a surrogate personality. He is building it with borrowed material, with everything he can lay his hands on.

HOFFMAN: It only seems so. His actions are not expressions of will but mere reflections of what other people do.

DaSILVA: That's not true. All right, it may be true, but it's only temporary.

HOFFMAN: Now we will run to the door... (*He runs to the door.*)

MARTIN: Now we will stoop... (*He stoops.*)

HOFFMAN (*surprised*): And now we will run back... (*He runs back.*)

MARTIN: And now we will run to booboori boobooriboom.

DaSILVA: Rise, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN: And now we will run back... (*He rises.*)

DaSILVA: Look, Doctor. Mr. Martin has entered an acutely mimetic phase –

MARTIN (*grabs hold of Nurse and sweeps her into a dance*): Little shoe, little shoe... How I danced, how I danced... And above me there was only the sky... above me only the sky... (*He comes to a halt and looks up, pointing a finger at an imaginary spot on an imaginary sky.*) "Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?"

DaSILVA: – and in this phase he is fully teachable, hungry for information, open to everything.

NURSE: Then why not teach him to be what he used to be: Mr. Martin, owner of a delicatessen shop.

DaSILVA: Recite him a few lines of that poem, Doctor.

HOFFMAN: I see no reason –

DaSILVA: Please.

HOFFMAN (*grudgingly*):

When you're old and grey and full of sleep
And nodding by the fire, take down this book
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MARTIN: *(repeats verbatim)*

DaSILVA: Well?

HOFFMAN: Mechanical repetition of lines hardly means we can turn him into a poet.

DaSILVA: We can turn him into anything we want. Can't you see what a unique opportunity this is?

HOFFMAN: No.

DaSILVA: Imagine a man with an inner vacuum. A man who has an overriding need to fill this vacuum with something meaningful, something that would give him the feeling of being complete again. And who snatches at whatever words, gestures and signs he can get from other people, soaking everything in like a sponge. Such a man is standing in front of you.

HOFFMAN: So?

DaSILVA: This man is like an empty vessel into which you can pour whatever you like.

HOFFMAN: Meaning what?

DaSILVA: Meaning that you can give him the best of everything: the most ideal combination of the most ideal human characteristics. You can create a superman. An actual, real, flesh-and-blood new man.

(Hoffman suddenly laughs. Nurse, encouraged, also laughs. Finally Martin laughs, too.)

HOFFMAN: Now we will run to the door? And now we will run back? This is the material out of which you hope to fashion a superman?

MARTIN: Now we will run back... *(He runs to the door.)* And now we will run to the door... *(He stoops and remains in this position.)*

DaSILVA: What is needed is intensive carefully prepared work. A detailed scientific plan. This is an historical project.

HOFFMAN: It's out of the question.

MARTIN *(rises)*: And now we will stoop... *(He runs back to the middle of the room.)* This is an historical project.

DaSILVA: I presented the plan to the head of my university department. He is enthusiastic.

HOFFMAN: That's his problem. I'm not.

NURSE: Another conspiracy. Worse than the first one.

DaSILVA: And what would we lose if we tried?



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HOFFMAN: The right to call ourselves sane. What would you like to create, for God's sake? A nonfunctional psychological monster, capable neither of love nor hope nor anxiety nor any other human feelings? Or a two-legged beast without any moral and ethical self-restraint?

MARTIN: Go fuck yourself.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman...

HOFFMAN: Put this ghastly idea out of your head.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman. This opportunity is too unique, too phenomenal for me to pass. I'll do everything I can, and I mean that, to realize it.

HOFFMAN: Over my dead body.

NURSE: And mine.

MARTIN: And mine.

(Blackout.)

7.

(Hoffman. Nurse ushers in Mrs. Martin.)

MRS. MARTIN: Doctor, I'm disappointed in you. *(She hands Hoffman her handbag, which he passes on to Nurse; then she hands him her fur coat, which he wants to pass on to Nurse but changes his mind.)* Why didn't you let me know what's happening to my husband?

HOFFMAN: Because nothing special is happening to him.

MRS. MARTIN: That's not what I heard.

HOFFMAN *(passing Mrs. Martin's coat to Nurse)*: Tittle-tattle of irresponsible people.

NURSE: At this institute only Dr. Hoffman has diagnostic powers.

MRS. MARTIN *(to Nurse)*: Wouldn't you feel less burdened if you took my coat and handbag to some place where you keep such things?

(Nurse hesitates; she looks at Hoffman, who nods. Nurse goes out.)

MRS. MARTIN: Dr. Hoffman...

HOFFMAN: Mrs. Martin...

MRS. MARTIN: Can we talk about this like two reasonable people?



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: Evidently you've recently met Dr. DaSilva.

MRS. MARTIN: I've never seen so much enthusiasm. Even if she fulfills less than half of her plan, it is our duty to help her.

HOFFMAN: It's our duty to bring her to her senses and help your husband.

MRS. MARTIN: She gave me her word that my husband is merely a shell. He has to be made into a human being. She said that right now my husband is like an empty canvas on which we can paint whatever we like. We can turn him into a top scientist, artist, musician, mathematician, businessman. We can turn him into all that and more, and all of the very best. Dr. DaSilva said that my husband has exceptional talent –

HOFFMAN: Where did he suddenly get it, I wonder. Your husband is not a genius, he is ill.

MRS. MARTIN: Do you really want to destroy the only hope I've ever had? (*She produces a handkerchief and dabs at her eyes.*)

HOFFMAN: Hope of what, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: That I'll have a husband at last I can be proud of. Who will give me a thing or two, greater comfort than I've been forced to become accustomed to.

HOFFMAN: In that case you'll be better off if Dr. DaSilva turns your husband back into what he was.

MRS. MARTIN: In short, Doctor, I've given Dr. DaSilva permission to go ahead with the project.

HOFFMAN: What about Mr. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN (*shrugs*): He's out of his mind, so legally I'm responsible for him.

HOFFMAN: Shall I send for him?

MRS. MARTIN: Why?

HOFFMAN: Not to ask him whether he agrees with the plan to turn him into a superman – simply so you can see him, express your moral support, wife to husband – no?

MRS. MARTIN: What's the point, with him being out of his mind?

HOFFMAN: Then I don't understand why you're here.

MRS. MARTIN: I think we're both clever enough to know why.

HOFFMAN: I'm the last obstacle in the way of this glorious experiment. Silly old fool who won't let go of his obsolete principles.

MRS. MARTIN: You mustn't think that I don't respect your principles –

HOFFMAN: It's just that they're not very practical.



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MRS. MARTIN: I know nothing about psychology. All I know is that Dr. DaSilva is offering me a new lease of life. All you are offering is that things remain as they are.

HOFFMAN: It's not a question of what anybody is offering *you*, Mrs. Martin. We're talking about your husband, who is my patient. Rats, bunnies and chimpanzees *are* abused in the name of science, but people can still say no, thank God – and if they can't, they have doctors who can say no for them.

MRS. MARTIN: Dr. Hoffman, how much a year do you make as Head of the Institute?

HOFFMAN (*moving towards the door*): Nurse! Coat and handbag, Mrs. Martin is leaving!

(DaSilva enters, followed by Martin. Mrs. Martin looks at DaSilva and spreads her arms in a helpless gesture.)

DaSILVA: And we've just come from a meeting, haven't we, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN: Booboori boobooriboom.

DaSILVA: From a meeting with the chairman of the board of directors of the institute. And what did the chairman say, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN: And what did the chairman say, Mr. Martin? The chairman said: Mr. Martin, Mr. Martin... The chairman said that Mr. Martin is now the subject of the experimental project XXX.

DaSILVA (*unfolds a sheet of paper and holds it up in the air*): And here is the piece of paper authorizing me to proceed.

MRS. MARTIN: Congratulations! Good work! (*She claps.*)

MARTIN (*claps*): Congratulations! Good work! Booboori boobooriboom!

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman. The project will be carried out on the premises, so I count on your professional support.

HOFFMAN: How magnanimous of you to offer me the place of an assistant at the institute I've been running for the last fifteen years.

DaSILVA: I'm offering you partnership in an historic undertaking.

HOFFMAN: I fear that on this project of yours there is no room for two.

DaSILVA: As you wish.

HOFFMAN: What's more, if I were you, I wouldn't order champagne just yet. The board of directors will have to take my opinion into account as well. (*He goes to the door.*)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MRS. MARTIN: Doctor, just one more thing... (*Hoffman turns.*) Coat and handbag, please. (*She smiles at him triumphantly.*)

MARTIN: The chairman said: we're standing on the threshold of infinite possibilities. We can help nature to make an evolutionary leap onto the level of superman. The name of this institute will be engraved in the pages of history with letters of gold. The chairman said booboorigboom. And now we will run to the door... (*He stoops.*)

(*Blackout.*)

8.

(*Hoffman, seated and pondering, is surrounded by the patients, including Martin, each in his or her favorite pose. Nurse is standing close to Hoffman, watching him.*)

CARUSO (*approaching carefully*): Excuse me, Nurse, is doctor not feeling well?

NURSE: No. He isn't.

CARUSO: Why not?

NURSE: He had ugly things done to him behind his back.

MR. SNIFF: Doctor has come under the influence of cosmic rays. They are strongest exactly where he is sitting. He refused to listen to me. Soon it'll be our turn. It's high time we escaped.

LEANING MAN: Tail between legs, poodle. Come on, off you go.

REBECCA: Doctor is very good, Rebecca likes him very much.

NURSE: Doctor is too good. But he doesn't know women, and he's very naive. And too proud, too obstinate, to listen to any advice.

CARUSO: Is Doctor aware of the fact that Christmas in the year 2853 will be on the 25th of December?

NURSE: I think he is, Professor: Christmas is always on the 25th of December.

CARUSO: In that case I'm afraid I can't help him.

MRS. TWITCH (*twitching closer*): I can cheer Doctor up in a second, can't I, Doctor? "Coffee without cream," says the man to the waiter. "I'm sorry, Sir," the waiter says, "we have no cream, will coffee without milk be all right?" Ha ha ha. (*She looks at Hoffman, who slowly turns around and smiles.*)



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REBECCA (*shoves Mrs. Twitch aside and stands in front of Hoffman*):

Doctor, poem.

HOFFMAN: Some other time, Rebecca.

REBECCA: Now now now!

HOFFMAN: Will you, Leaning Man?

LEANING MAN: Always willing. (*Comes forward.*)

How she blushed, my dear little heart,
as I delivered a thundering fart –

HOFFMAN (*rises*): Enough.

LEANING MAN: I'm sorry, I thought –

NURSE: You're an evil man – doing this now when Doctor needs support.

LEANING MAN: I'm really very sorry, I'll instantly treat you to a few
lines of Byron –

REBECCA: I don't want a poem no more.

(*She goes backstage, falls to her knees, lowers her head and remains motionless. Hoffman beckons to Nurse, who follows Rebecca and tries to cheer her up.*)

MARTIN: I'm really very sorry, I'll instantly treat you to a few lines of
Byron. I'm a parrot called Martin, experimental project XXX.

MR. SNIFF (*removes his right shoe and offers it to Rebecca*): Little shoe?

REBECCA (*grabs the shoe and jumps to her feet*): Oh little shoe, my
sweet little shoe... (*Starts dancing.*) How I danced, how I danced...

CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH, MR. SNIFF: Tap tap... tap tap...

REBECCA: ...my shoes went on the floor...

CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH, MR. SNIFF: Tap tap.. tap tap...

REBECCA: ...and above me, above me... was only the sky... only the
sky... only the sky...

CARUSO, MRS. TWITCH, MR. SNIFF (*start imitating Rebecca's dance movements*): ...tap tap... was only the sky... tap tap... was only the sky...

NURSE (*starts dancing*): ... and above me was only the sky... only the
sky... above me... (*Becomes aware of Hoffman's gaze, stops dancing.*) Sorry, doctor. Couldn't help myself.

HOFFMAN: No, that's fine, Nurse. I'm glad they'll have you to rely on
when I'm gone.

NURSE (*turns to the dancers*): Enough.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(The dancers come to a halt one by one, with Rebecca last. She refuses to return Mr. Sniff's shoe. He shrugs and allows her to keep it.)

NURSE: Doctor has decided to leave us.

(Complete silence.)

REBECCA: Doctor doesn't like us any more?

MRS. TWITCH: He's fed up with us, aren't you, Doctor? I'm surprised he's put up with us for so long.

NURSE: I think Doctor still likes us. But that's far less important to him than his pride.

HOFFMAN: My decision is a matter of principle.

MR. SNIFF: What about us?

REBECCA *(runs up to Hoffman, stops and awkwardly bows)*:

When you're old and grey and nodding
by the fire, and slowly read...

HOFFMAN: ... take this book and slowly read...

REBECCA: ... take this book and dream of the soft look...

REBECCA, HOFFMAN, CARUSO, LEANING MAN: ...you had once in
these eyes of yours...

HOFFMAN *(moved)*: Rebecca, is this possible?

REBECCA *(offers Hoffman Mr. Sniff's shoe)*: A little present from Rebecca.

HOFFMAN *(takes the shoe)*: Thank you, Rebecca. May I return it to its
rightful owner? *(Gives the shoe to Mr. Sniff.)*

REBECCA: Doctor, what about us?

MARTIN *(quickly, mechanically, without feeling)*: Human civilisation
has reached the stage at which we must take evolution into our
own hands. We can no longer leave it to the spontaneous process of
nature. What has Homo Sapiens created in the last two thousand
years? A world of waste and filth, of poisoned rivers and forests and
oceans, a world without ozone. For the survival of man we urgently
need a transformation of man into booboori boobooriboom. And
now we will run to the door... *(He stoops.)* And now we will run
back... *(He runs to the door, becomes manic.)* Even if we succeed in
creating no more than one one one one human being who will
incorporate all the best best best human characteristics, we must



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Milan Stefe as Martin
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

not shirk the duty pressed upon us by professional ethics and our own conscience. There may indeed be a risk associated with this undertaking that we cannot foresee, but what is a little risk compared to the importance of the results we may achieve booboori boobooriboom, especially as the man in question has been written off anyway. And now we will stoop... *(He runs back to the middle of the room. He grows distant and sad.)*

Had it pleas'd heaven,
to try me with affliction, had he rain'd
all kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head,
steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
given to captivity me and my utmost hopes...
me and my utmost hopes...

(He stares, in a tragic pose and profoundly unhappy, into space. Hoffman slowly approaches Martin. He is followed by Nurse. Finally the patients, too, make a step each towards Martin.)

HOFFMAN: Don't worry, Mr. Martin.

PATIENTS: Don't worry, Mr. Martin.

HOFFMAN: We'll make sure that you're protected.

NURSE *(joyfully announcing)*: Doctor isn't going to leave us!

PATIENTS: Doctor isn't going to leave us!

MARTIN: Doctor isn't going to leave us. Hop. *(He jumps.)* Boooo.

CARUSO: In that case I'd like to use this opportunity to delight you with an aria from The Marriage of Figaro.

(He climbs onto a chair and begins to sing. At the same time he "conducts" an "orchestra." Everybody is listening. Mrs. Twitch, standing in front of him, mimics his gestures.)

(Lights slowly fade.)



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9.

(Everybody except Martin and DaSilva. Patients sit and crouch in various poses, Hoffman is nervously pacing up and down, Nurse is watching him. Hoffman looks at his watch, sighs, looks at Nurse.)

CARUSO: What're we waiting for?

REBECCA: What are we waiting for, Doctor?

LEANING MAN: Better times.

NURSE: For the results of Doctor's inability to be the boss in his own house.

MR. SNIFF: Everything that's happening here is due to cosmic rays. *(He sniffs the air.)* There's worse to come.

REBECCA: When I was very small, teeny-weeny one, my Mammy died.

LEANING MAN:

And because I have Mammy no more
I'm stranger than ever before.
I dress like a drunken fool,
That's not an exception, it's a rule.

REBECCA *(jumps)*: That's not an exception, it's a rule!

(Nurse crosses to Leaning Man and removes his spectacles. Leaning Man tilts to the left.)

NURSE: You'll get them back when you apologize.

LEANING MAN:

If a woman is a little overmature
and in love with the boss who prefers beer
her evenings are all without cheer,
for her agony there is no cure.

REBECCA *(claps)*: What a nice poem, Mr. Leaning Man! Applause, Professor! Applause, Doctor! Applause, Sister!

(Leaning Man bows, imitating Caruso.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

NURSE (*retreats to the back wall*): You can forget about spectacles for at least two days.

LEANING MAN: Fine. Then I will now start slowly and methodically to destroy this fine furniture.

(Reaches towards the nearest chair.)

NURSE: If you as much as scratch a single chair you can pack your bags and go.

LEANING MAN: Are you going to throw me out?

NURSE: Why are you here at all? You could just as easily be at home.

LEANING MAN: I'm here because I like being among people where I'm the only one who is reasonably sane.

NURSE: Because here you have enough people to victimize.

LEANING MAN: Give me back my spectacles or I begin. *(He picks up the nearest chair.)*

HOFFMAN: Oh for God's sake... Nurse... Enough of these childish games... Give him his spectacles.

NURSE: Only if he apologizes.

HOFFMAN: Leaning Man.

LEANING MAN: Only if I get back my spectacles will I save the institute the cost of replacing this fine furniture.

(Hoffman quickly walks over to Nurse, pulls the spectacles from her hands, walks to Leaning Man and sticks them on his nose. Leaning Man straightens up.)

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one –

HOFFMAN: Madam, take pity on us.

CARUSO: As an artist who is a slave to his wish for self-expression, I would say the following: it is surely high time for me to delight the audience with a little-known aria –

HOFFMAN (*turns and marches towards the main door*): I'm not going to wait all day for the Gypsy and her dancing bear.

MR. SNIFF (*sniffs*): They're almost here... *(Hoffman stops and turns.)* Any moment now... One, two, three, four, five...

(DaSilva and Martin enter through the main door.)



What about Leonardo?, Lilian Baylis / Sadlers Wells, London, 1995
Anna Gilbert as Dr. DaSilva, Peter Lindford as Martin,
in the background Andrew Hobday as Caruso
Directed by Janine Wunsche



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: At last.

REBECCA: What about the Gypsy and her dancing bear, Doctor? Are they not coming?

NURSE: They're already here.

HOFFMAN: Can we start?

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin. Would you dance with me?

(Martin stands in front of DaSilva, bows, takes her hand, they dance a waltz.)

DaSILVA: Rumba.

MARTIN: Rumba. *(They dance.)*

DaSILVA: Samba.

MARTIN: Samba. *(They dance.)*

DaSILVA: Lambada.

MARTIN: Lambada. *(They dance.)*

(Martin moves like a professional dancer. Hoffman knits his eyebrows, Nurse fails to hide her astonishment. End of dance.)

REBECCA: Oh how you danced, Mr. Martin! How you danced, how you danced... Applause, Professor! Applause, Leaning Man!

DaSILVA: Einstein.

MARTIN: A pacifist who gave us the atom bomb. He died believing in God, denied by the results of his work. He left us with mysteries greater than any he managed to solve.

DaSILVA: Catullus.

MARTIN *(mechanically)*:

Iucundum, mea vita, mi mihi proponis amorem,
hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuum que fore,
di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit,
adque id sincere icat et ex animo,
ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita
aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.

DaSILVA: Lao Tsu, Tao te Ching.

MARTIN: *(recites a few lines from Tao Te Ching in Chinese)*

DaSILVA: How many languages do you speak so far, Mr. Martin?



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MARTIN: Twenty-nine.

DaSILVA: What do you think of Man in his present state?

MARTIN: I think that Man's center for intuition and center for feeling slipped from the level of consciousness to the subconscious, so that Man connects with his environment only through the center for thinking, which he calls "I." The education of the New Man must be based on a reconnection of the conscious with the subconscious, so that Man may finally function in accord with his real aims.

DaSILVA: Thank you for your attention, Dr. Hoffman.

MARTIN: Thank you for your attention, Dr. Hoffman.

REBECCA: Thank you for your attention, Professor. Thank you for your attention, Leaning Man. Thank you for your attention, Sister.

DaSILVA: Any questions?

MARTIN: Any questions?

REBECCA: Any questions?

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin... (*Slowly approaches him.*) How do you feel?

(*Martin looks at DaSilva.*)

DaSILVA: The question should be more concrete. For example, how do you feel at this very moment?

MARTIN: Within our darkest moments, our brightest treasures can be found.

HOFFMAN: And how do you feel generally?

MARTIN: Generally we mustn't suppress our negative feelings; by doing so we distance ourselves from positive ones as well.

HOFFMAN: Yes, but what does that mean – how do you feel right now, this very moment?

MARTIN: Within our darkest moments –

HOFFMAN: Feelings, Mr. Martin! How do you feel inside – are you sad, are you glad, are you frightened? What's in your heart – hope, despair, resignation?

MARTIN: It may not be the situation or the feeling that's causing the problem – it may be rejecting the feeling or situation that's causing it.

HOFFMAN: That may be so, Mr. Martin, but I want to talk to *you*. I want to hear about *your* goals, *your* wishes.

MARTIN: I close my eyes, take a deep breath. As I breathe out I say to myself: My body is now relaxing. And again: My mind is relaxing. And again: I'm free, nothing binds me.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: How many degrees Fahrenheit is 40 degrees Centigrade?

MARTIN: One hundred and four.

HOFFMAN: If the air temperature is 104 degrees Fahrenheit, is that cold, warm or hot?

MARTIN: That's 40 degrees Centigrade.

HOFFMAN: Is that hot, warm, or cold?

MARTIN: That's 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin, what's the nature of each process?

MARTIN: If I'm building a house and someone says it won't keep out snow and rain because it has no roof I find it childish to have to explain that I can't hang a roof in the air but first have to build walls, in the same way that I cannot build walls before I lay the foundation –

DaSILVA: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

HOFFMAN: All right. I accept that this may be no more than the first stage. But suppose that you've exhausted the opportunities given you by the neurological storm in Mr. Martin's brain – a storm which can blow itself out as suddenly as it started, I hope you realize that. Suppose that you have here the final result of your efforts. A superman. Adam of the new generation. How would you describe him?

DaSILVA: As a man who is supreme in three basic fields of human endeavor.

HOFFMAN: And what are these fields?

DaSILVA: Intellect, art, religion.

HOFFMAN: In other words, Mr. Martin should become a man with a brilliant mind, some kind of Schopenhauer, shall we say, and also an artist of genius, some kind of Van Gogh, if we limit ourselves to the visual arts, and finally he should become a saint, some sort of Mother Theresa in trousers, am I right?

DaSILVA: Very crudely, yes.

HOFFMAN: Don't you think that these basic fields of human endeavor, as you call them, are mutually exclusive?

DaSILVA: What about Leonardo? (*Brief pause.*) Isn't it possible that the first man of the new renaissance might be equally, if not more universal?

HOFFMAN: Even the most universal man can act only in accordance with his values.

DaSILVA: And why shouldn't Mr. Martin be able to do that?



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HOFFMAN: Because values are functional only if they're the fruit of experience, not if they're learned by rote.

MARTIN: Booboori, boobooriboom.

REBECCA (*jumps*): Booboori, boobooriboom.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman, you're a man without any imagination. Without ideals. Can't you envisage a man who won't be only universally capable, but will also be kind, just, averse to killing and taking what isn't his, and who will neither suppress nor cheat nor exploit? And even if the project fails, shouldn't we at least try?

HOFFMAN: Tell me, Dr. DaSilva, does Mr. Martin have an inner voice which tells him: you're going to do this because it's good or useful, but not that, because it's bad or meaningless?

DaSILVA: Ask him.

HOFFMAN (*looks at Martin*): And now we will run to the door and bang our head against the wall.

(He runs to the door, stops, looks at Martin.)

MARTIN (*shakes his head and looks at his watch*): Now we will have a lesson in Hebrew, then we will paint with watercolors, and then we will practice Brahms' Violin Concerto in D Major.

(Hoffman slowly comes back. DaSilva is amused.)

DaSILVA: Well, Doctor? Any other objections?

(Hoffman stares at her. Stares at Martin. Acknowledges defeat by spreading his arms in a gesture of helplessness.)

(Blackout.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

Act Two

1.

(Martin, Rebecca, Leaning Man, Caruso. Rebecca is kneeling, the others are standing around her.)

REBECCA: When I was still very little, very tiny teeny one, my Mammy died.

LEANING MAN: Mammy.

MARTIN: When I was still very little, very tiny teeny one.

REBECCA: My Mammy died. Big tears ran down my cheeks, huge wet tears, into my mouth, salty, very big tears.

CARUSO: Did you like your Mammy?

REBECCA: I cried, but not for her – for myself. She went somewhere warm, forever warm. But I remained here. There was winter inside me. *(She shivers.)*

LEANING MAN: And then?

MARTIN: She went somewhere warm, forever warm.

REBECCA: Then I was cold for many years.

LEANING MAN: And then you danced, and he led you over the smooth wooden floor.

LEANING MAN, CARUSO: Tap tap...

LEANING MAN: ... went your shoes...

CARUSO: ... tap tap...

MARTIN: On the smooth wooden floor.

REBECCA: No.

CARUSO: No?

LEANING MAN: You said so. He rolled you around in the fallen leaves, and above you all you saw were the trees.



What about Leonardo?, Theater of Zoran Radmilovic, Serbia, 2001
Marija Arsic as Rebecca and Predrag Grbic as Martin
Directed by Dejan Krstovic





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

CARUSO: And the sky.

LEANING MAN: Turning, and turning, and turning.

REBECCA: No!... That was my story.

LEANING MAN: It wasn't true?

REBECCA: He promised he'd take me to a dance. But I had no shoes...

(She starts to fight tears.) All I had were boots with laces... Heavy, ugly, threadbare boots...

MARTIN: With laces.

REBECCA: Nobody wanted to buy me shoes. Nobody... So I couldn't go. He didn't want to.

LEANING MAN: But you went anyway. In your imagination.

REBECCA *(crying)*: I wanted a story, I wanted songs, poems! Everything...

(Caruso, Leaning Man and Martin stand and watch. Martin takes a step towards her, hesitates, takes another step. He places his hand on Rebecca's shoulder and gives it a gentle squeeze. Rebecca stops crying, turns her head and looks at Martin. They look at each other, she grateful, he surprised at his action. He straightens up and moves away.)

REBECCA: Poem?

(Martin looks at Leaning Man, then at Caruso.)

CARUSO: I could, as an exception of course, because my *metier* are arias, sing one of Strauss' *Lieder*, I mean of course Richard Strauss –

REBECCA: Mr. Martin will tell me a poem.

LEANING MAN: What are you waiting for? The girl wants a poem. If possible – look at her eyes – a love poem.

REBECCA: Poem! *(She claps her hands with childlike enthusiasm.)*

(Martin recites Catullus, this time not mechanically but with feeling, looking Rebecca in the eyes.)

MARTIN: *Iucundum, mea vita... (etc.) (He bows.)*

REBECCA *(jumps to her feet and claps)*: Oh wonderful poem, beautiful wonderful poem, especially as I don't understand a word. Applause, Professor. Applause, Mr. Leaning Man.



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(Caruso and Leaning Man clap. Martin claps, too.)

CARUSO: I think this might be a good moment for me to ask you a rather interesting question. Are those gathered here aware that Easter in the year 8352 will be on the 29th of March?

LEANING MAN: Those gathered here don't give a hoot about that, Professor. Rebecca and Mr. Martin are going to dance.

REBECCA (*expectantly*): Little shoe, little shoe?

MARTIN: Rumba.

(He dances rumba. Rebecca is trying to join him but is too awkward. Leaning Man and Caruso, a little less awkward, imitate Martin.)

MARTIN: Samba. (*As before.*)

LEANING MAN: And now?

CARUSO: And now?

LEANING MAN: And now we're going to perform a play.

REBECCA: Oooooohhh. . . (*She jumps and claps.*) Story?

LEANING MAN: Story.

CARUSO (*wagging a finger at Leaning Man*): What are you up to?

LEANING MAN: For our amusement, Professor, we're going to coax these two onto the thin ice of romantic love. And when the ice breaks, we're going to laugh.

CARUSO: That's not right.

LEANING MAN: Is it right that I cannot stand upright without having two pendulums swinging in front of my eyes? Is it right that you have more information stored in your head than two thousand computers, and fewer brains than a reasonably intelligent chimpanzee? If God can have fun at our expense, why shouldn't we have fun at other people's expense?

CARUSO: Rebecca is a small, vulnerable creature.

MARTIN: And when the ice breaks we're going to laugh.

REBECCA (*jumps and claps*): Story!

LEANING MAN:

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

CARUSO:

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it – Ding, dong, bell.

CARUSO, LEANING MAN, MARTIN: Ding, dong, bell.

REBECCA (*jumps*): Oh, story! More!

MARTIN:

What find I here? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion! Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
should sunder such sweet friends...

LEANING MAN: If you be well pleas'd with this...

MARTIN:

If you be well pleas'd with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.

LEANING MAN: Fair lady, by your leave...

MARTIN: Fair lady, by your leave...

LEANING MAN (*pushes Martin and Rebecca together*): ... claim her
with a loving kiss.

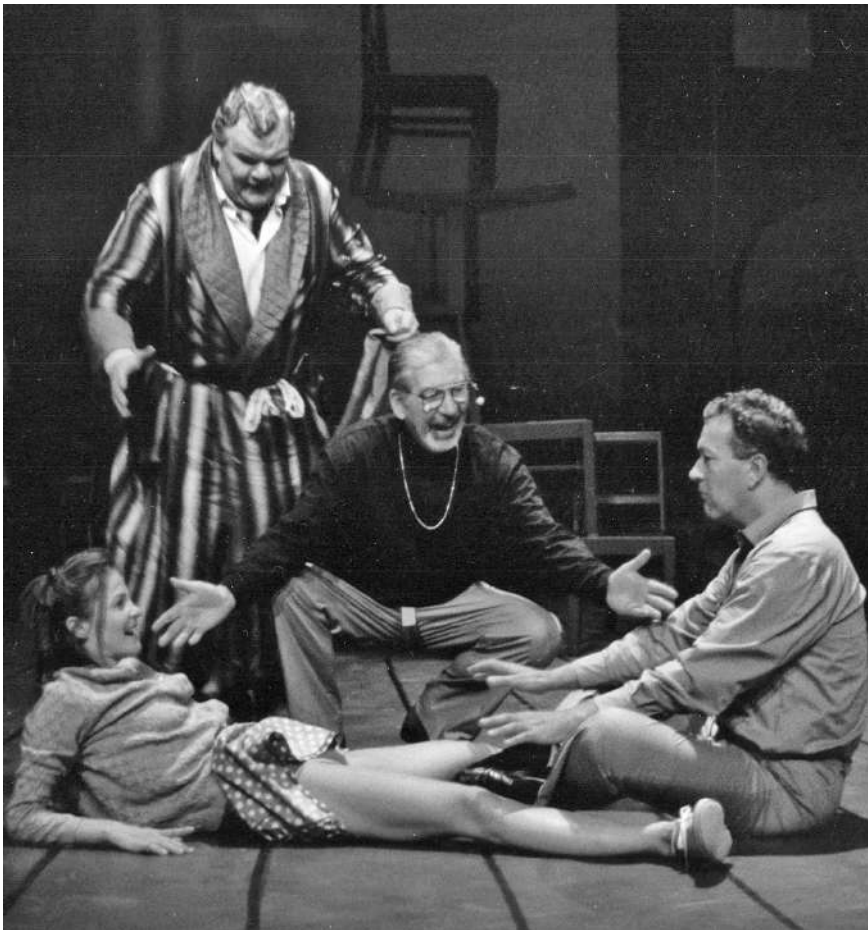
(*Martin gently kisses Rebecca on the forehead.*)

REBECCA (*sighs*): Oooohhhh... Story...

(*Leaning Man steps behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders.*)

LEANING MAN: You see me, Mr. Martin, where I stand...

REBECCA: You see me, Mr. Martin, where I stand...



What about Leonardo?, Reykjavik City Theater, Iceland, 1994
Magnus Olafsson as Caruso, Ari Mathiasson as Leaning Man,
Vigdis Gunnarsdottir as Rebecca, Thorsteinn Gunnarsson as Martin
Directed by Hallmar Sigurdsson





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

LEANING MAN: Such as I am...

REBECCA: Such as I am...

(Hoffman and Nurse enter through the main door. They pause and listen.)

LEANING MAN:

But the full sum of me is sum of nothing:
an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd...

REBECCA: Unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd...

LEANING MAN:

Happy in this, she is not yet so old
but she may learn...

REBECCA: But she may learn...

CARUSO:

Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
commits itself to yours to be directed,
as from her lord, her governor, her king.

REBECCA: Her governor, her king...

(Leaning Man joins their hands and pushes them into an embrace.)

LEANING MAN: How sweet the moonlight...

MARTIN:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

REBECCA: Sweet harmony...



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(They gaze at an imaginary sky, enthralled, hand in hand. Behind them, Leaning Man and Caruso exchange conspiratorial winks. They put their hands across each other's shoulders and assume a similar posture, gazing at the sky, barely able to suppress laughter.)

(Hoffman and Nurse approach. Leaning Man and Caruso become aware of their presence, move apart, grin apologetically.)

LEANING MAN: Just passing the time.

HOFFMAN: So I see.

CARUSO: We meant no harm.

REBECCA *(disengaging herself from Martin's embrace)*: A wonderful story, applause, Doctor, applause, Sister!

(Hoffman claps, looks at Nurse who hesitates, then joins him. Martin claps, too.)

REBECCA: You see me where I stand, such as I am, a girl unseason'd, unschool'd, unpractis'd. Am I a good girl, Sister?

NURSE *(fiddling with Rebecca's clothes)*: Ask Doctor.

REBECCA: Am I a good girl, Doctor?

HOFFMAN: You're always a good girl. For a change even Leaning Man wasn't bad today.

LEANING MAN *(not sure he can believe this)*: You mean I won't get a clip on the ear?

CARUSO: We meant no harm.

HOFFMAN: I would even suggest that you carry on with this.

LEANING MAN *(exchanging glances with Caruso)*: Are you joking?

HOFFMAN: No.

NURSE: Are you sure, Doctor?

HOFFMAN: Positive.

REBECCA: Rebecca loves poems! And Mr. Martin too!

MARTIN: How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank...

REBECCA: And I? Leaning Man, tell me, what do I say?

LEANING MAN:

Here will we sit, and let the music
creep in our ears...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

REBECCA: Creep in our ears... More! More!

(Leaning Man looks at Hoffman.)

HOFFMAN: I'll be very pleased if you carry on. But I must ask you a favor. Not a word about this to Dr. DaSilva.

LEANING MAN *(grins)*: Conspiracy?

REBECCA *(jumps)*: Conspiracy!

MARTIN *(jumps)*: Conspiracy! Hop!

NURSE *(satisfied)*: Counterconspiracy.

HOFFMAN: Are we agreed?

LEANING MAN *(looks at Caruso)*: You can certainly count on me, the problem is this walking software with a computer virus.

HOFFMAN: Professor?

CARUSO *(crossing his lips)*: Sshhhhhhhhhh!

REBECCA *(follows suit)*: Ssshhhhhhhhh!

(They all look at Martin.)

MARTIN *(follows suit)*: Sssshhhhhhhh!

(Blackout.)

2.

(On the left two rows of chairs. On the right Reporter and Cameraman, preparing equipment for filming a TV documentary. In front of the chairs Hoffman, DaSilva, Rebecca, Caruso.)

REBECCA: Doctor, will I also take part in the film?

HOFFMAN: Of course.

REBECCA: And Mr. Martin?

HOFFMAN: Definitely.

REBECCA: Will the film be a story?

HOFFMAN: In a documentary sense.

REBECCA: A story about Rebecca and Mr. Martin, yes? *(She jumps and claps her hands.)*



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HOFFMAN: I'm afraid not. More a story about Dr. DaSilva and Mr. Martin.

REBECCA: No!

(Her face darkens, she lowers her head and goes to sit on the farthest chair, turning her back. DaSilva follows her and puts her hand on Rebecca's shoulder. Rebecca turns and pushes her hand away.)

REBECCA: What are you doing to Mr. Martin? You don't like him.

(Nurse enters through the side door.)

NURSE: Doctor, Leaning Man is up to his tricks again. He is coaching Mr. Martin to say horrible things in front of the camera.

HOFFMAN: For example?

NURSE: I'd rather die than utter such words.

REPORTER: We can start now, if everything is O.K.

DaSILVA: It is.

REPORTER: The arrangement is up to you, but not too close together, please.

HOFFMAN: Nurse, bring them in.

(Nurse leaves through the side door.)

REBECCA *(moves to the middle of the front row)*: I'm going to sit next to Mr. Martin.

HOFFMAN *(to DaSilva)*: I couldn't be doing this with greater reluctance.

DaSILVA: We need money, Doctor.

HOFFMAN: Far from getting any donations, we may turn ourselves into a laughing-stock.

DaSILVA: You worry too much.

(Mr. Sniff, who has entered through the main door, is sniffing at the camera which Cameraman had put on a small table. Mr. Sniff climbs under the table, making the camera wobble. Reporter and Cameraman grab the camera to prevent it from falling off.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

CAMERAMAN: Watch what you're doing.

REPORTER: One of yours?

HOFFMAN: This is Mr. Berger, an unusual case of olfactory hallucinations.

MR. SNIFF (*gets to his feet*): I know where you were before you came here. In a place where they'd just laid a woollen carpet.

REPORTER (*astonished*): You're right. (*Instructs Cameraman to start filming.*)

HOFFMAN: Mr. Berger had a traffic accident and suffered a slight concussion. Since then he's been living in a world overwhelming in its immediacy –

MR. SNIFF (*to Reporter*): You, for example. I smell a mixture of fear and contempt, as if you didn't quite know how to behave in this place. You think this is a madhouse.

REPORTER: Fascinating.

MR. SNIFF: Take this gentleman. (*He looks at Cameraman.*) Full of defiant anger. I could smell it as he was coming up the stairs.

(Reporter and Cameraman exchange glances.)

MR. SNIFF: But that's nothing compared to what I'm about to tell you. For some time now I've been smelling cosmic rays. Something will happen in this room. Someone will die.

(Reporter looks at Hoffman who, behind Mr. Sniff's back, taps his head to indicate that Mr. Sniff shouldn't be taken too seriously.)

MR. SNIFF (*sniffing in the direction of the side door*): My colleagues are about to enter in this particular order: Leaning Man, Mrs. Twitch, Professor Caruso, Sister and Mr. Martin.

(And that is the order in which they all enter. Nurse helps them choose seats.)

REBECCA: Mr. Martin will sit next to me. "Here will we sit, and let the music creep in our ears..."

(Martin, whom Nurse had put two seats away from Rebecca, with Caruso between them, moves into Caruso's lap. Caruso pushes him



What about Leonardo?, The Bellairs Playhouse, Guildford, U. K., 1998
Anna Clayden as Mrs. Twitch, Karen S. David as Nurse, Mathew McRae as Caruso,
Harry Myers as Martin
Performed by Guildford Acting School, directed by Gemma Eddington



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

off and moves to the chair vacated by Mr. Martin, while Mr. Martin sits down next to Rebecca. Holding hands, they gaze at each other.)

DaSILVA: Rebecca, go back to where you were sitting before.

REBECCA: No.

MRS. TWITCH, CARUSO, LEANING MAN: No, no, no!

MRS. TWITCH (*into the camera*): What about this one? The patient says to the doctor: "Doctor, my depression is getting worse, I think that tomorrow I'll do myself in." "In that case," the doctor says, "I must ask you to settle your bill." Ha ha ha. Why isn't anybody laughing?

REPORTER (*looks at his watch*): Could we have a go at this a little more seriously?

DaSILVA: Yes.

REPORTER: Could both doctors remain where they are, at the side, and could you, Nurse, step back, over there, to the other side?

(Nurse complies.)

REPORTER (*into the camera*): For some time now we've been hearing rumors that the city's Neurological Institute has become the seat of a highly unusual experiment which may have far-reaching consequences for science and for human development. Well, here we are in the lion's den so to speak, to find out if there is any truth in these claims – or allegations, depending on your point of view. (*He turns towards the patients.*) Let's, for a start, meet the patients who are – if I may put it like that – normally abnormal. As it happens they're all victims of various types of brain and nerve damage, some of them presenting with quite bizarre symptoms. They all have what we all have, but some of them have too much of it, and some have too little. (*Approaches Rebecca.*) What, for example, is your problem, Miss?

(Rebecca looks at Hoffman for guidance. He smiles and nods.)

REBECCA (*coily*): My problem is that I'm Rebecca and that I like Mr. Martin.

REPORTER (*approaches Caruso*): And how would you describe yourself?

CARUSO (*rises*): Before we go any further I want to ask the television audience if they're aware of the fact that 29th February in the leap year 38,203 will fall on Wednesday.



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REPORTER: Thank you... *(He wants to move on but Caruso seizes the mike and pulls it close to his mouth.)* Furthermore I'd like to delight the audience with what is currently my favorite aria from currently my favorite opera The Tales of Hoffman –

(Reporter tries to pull the mike out of Caruso's hands, but Caruso refuses to let go; in desperation, Reporter looks at Hoffman.)

HOFFMAN: Professor –

(Caruso grabs the mike with both hands and starts to sing. Leaning Man, who is sitting behind him, rises, removes his left shoe and hits Caruso on the head. Caruso stops singing, lets go of the mike and starts nursing his head.)

REBECCA *(jumps to her feet)*: Little shoe, little shoe, give me my little shoe!

LEANING MAN *(putting his shoe on again)*: You can see now that I'm the only one in this dump who's not completely bananas, and that includes the medical staff, who are crazier than all of us put together.

REPORTER: Well, that's an interesting –

MRS. TWITCH *(tries to get hold of the mike)*: What about this one, I'm sure you haven't heard it –

REPORTER *(turning back to the camera)*: As you can see we're dealing here with different forms of departure from what we call normal behavior –

HOFFMAN *(trying to intervene)*: Not quite...

REPORTER: Later, Doctor... *(Continues.)* We also have here a gentleman, however, whose symptoms could hardly be described as abnormal, but perhaps – more appropriately – supernormal. This is largely due to the unflinching determination of Dr. DaSilva who valiantly fought for, and won, the right to set up a project without a precedent in the history of medicine and psychology. Can you explain, Dr. DaSilva?

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin... please get up, Mr. Martin...

(Martin rises, smiles, bows, sits down again. Rebecca never lets go of his hand.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin was a victim of progressive amnesia. He lost his identity, slipped into an abyss of emptiness. He started to look for a way out by –

MARTIN (*rising, followed by Rebecca*): I'm Martin the Parrot.

(*He sits, followed by Rebecca.*)

DaSILVA: – by imitating everything that he saw and heard –

MARTIN (*rising, followed by Rebecca*): If you say boo, I say boo, whatever you do, I do, too. (*He sits, followed by Rebecca.*)

REPORTER: And then, if I understand correctly, you set up the experimental project XXX to turn Mr. Martin into a man who will have the best possible characteristics of the best possible individuals, and none of their faults.

DaSILVA: To put it in the crudest terms –

REPORTER: And to that end you hired a huge number of experts: painters, musicians, mathematicians, philosophers, chemists. And with their help Mr. Martin rapidly grew into something the world has not seen before – or so you say –

DaSILVA: Again, this is a crude simplification –

REPORTER (*turning to Martin*): Mr. Martin, how many languages do you speak?

MARTIN (*rises, followed by Rebecca, and recites mechanically*): English German French Italian Latin Greek Ancient Greek Hebrew Swahili Chinese Japanese Russian Czech Hungarian Romanian Danish Dutch Portuguese Spanish Arabic Hindi Urdu Thai Swedish Slovene Slovak Bengali Finnish Pushtu Parsi Zulu Burmese Malay Pidgin Esperanto Bahasa Indonesia.

CARUSO (*who had counted on his fingers*): Thirty-six.

DaSILVA: And Hausa.

MARTIN: And Hausa.

CARUSO: Thirty-seven.

REPORTER: Tell us, Mr. Martin, about your musical feats.

MARTIN: Beethoven Bach Albinoni Rachmaninov Bartok Stravinsky Liszt Elgar Rodriguez Albeniz Tchaikovsky Strauss Strauss Strauss Mozart Barber Mendhelsson Berlioz Brahms.

CARUSO (*who had counted on his fingers*): Nineteen.

DaSILVA: And Bruch.

MARTIN: And Bruch.



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CARUSO: Twenty.

(DaSilva hands Martin a violin. Martin performs a short passage from Bruch's violin concerto. His playing is brilliant, astonishing. He returns the violin to DaSilva.)

MARTIN: And now we will run to the door... *(He runs to the door.)* And now we will run back... *(He runs back, sits. Rebecca resumes holding his hand.)*

REPORTER: What was that?

DaSILVA: His daily exercise.

HOFFMAN: Come on! These are regressions, slips to the early stages –

MARTIN: Booboori boobooriboom.

ALL PATIENTS: Booboori boobooriboom.

REPORTER *(into the camera)*: As you can see it is easy to understand why this project has given rise to so many rumors, disturbing not only sensation-hungry newspapers but scientific circles as well. And, it is rumored, even some government ministries. However, a closer inspection may reveal that all is not what it seems. *(Approaches Hoffman.)* Dr. Hoffman, as the chief neurologist you at first objected to this project going ahead – why?

HOFFMAN: This project treats man as if he or she were a mechanism which can be assembled, disassembled and programmed at will, in the same way that nature, too, can be changed according to any whim that happens to take our fancy –

REPORTER: And what is man, if not a mechanism?

HOFFMAN: Man is an organism. Isn't that obvious? Mechanism is made up of parts, but organism begins as a seed, a cell, and it grows and develops, it is unique, irreplaceable, with its own intelligence which doesn't function like a computer program but according to laws of its own.

REPORTER: In your view, Dr. Hoffman, is this project doomed to failure?

HOFFMAN: Depends which project you have in mind.

MARTIN *(rises, followed by Rebecca)*: Experimental project XXX. *(He sits, followed by Rebecca.)*

HOFFMAN: That's not a project, that's sailing without a compass towards an invisible iceberg which may be closer than most of us think. Mr. Martin has been my patient for almost three years. The only



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

project for me is to save him from a certain shipwreck. To give him back his ability to choose and to trust his own judgement.

REPORTER: And how do you intend to do that?

(Hoffman hesitates, looking for words.)

DaSILVA: Well, Doctor, how do you intend to do that?

REPORTER: Dr. DaSilva, after all we've heard do you still insist that your project has merit?

DaSILVA: And what have we heard? Sailing into the unknown, says Dr. Hoffman – should I defend myself because of something that I should be proud of? Even Mr. Martin can dismiss this shortsighted reproach. Mr. Martin, The Columbus Syndrome.

MARTIN *(rises, followed by Rebecca)*: Columbus wasn't looking for America but for a shortcut to the East. If we asked him as he was setting off to describe what he was hoping to find at his destination he could describe only what he already knew. That would have nothing to do with the final results of his journey. *(He sits, followed by Rebecca.)*

DaSILVA: Sailing into the unknown is what science is all about. Without hope and trust we'd still be living in caves and catch frogs for dinner. According to the Jewish mystical tradition God created man because he needed a partner in creativity. It is our duty to realize and transform through our work all the silent potential of the planet that is our home –

HOFFMAN: And never mind the price –

DaSILVA: The price may sometimes be higher than we'd want, but in the final analysis well worth paying –

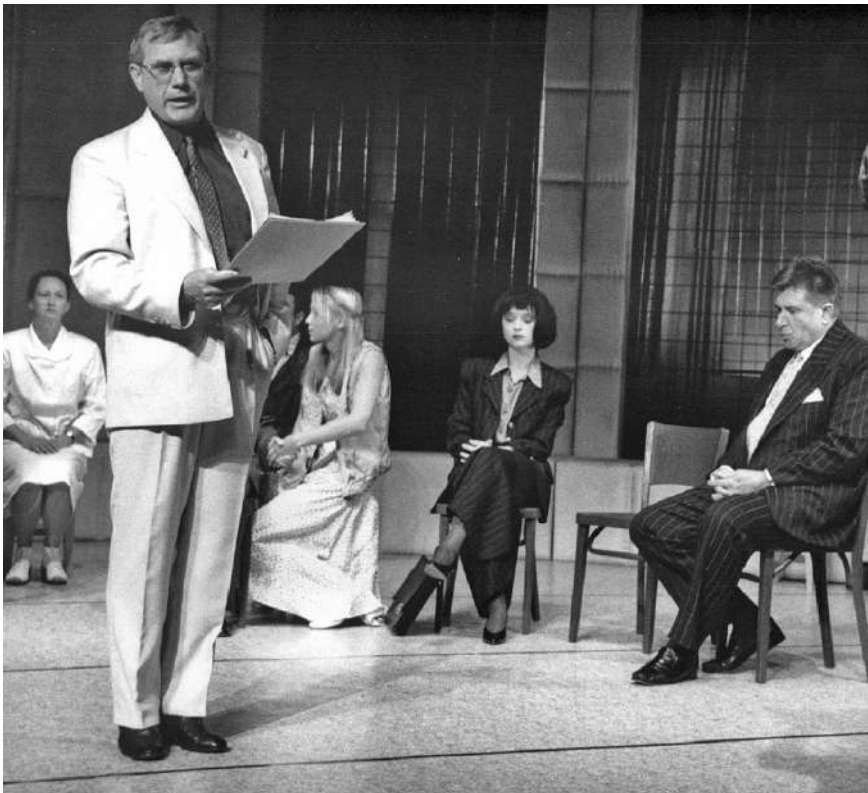
HOFFMAN: Because the aim justifies the means –

DaSILVA: May I finish, Dr. Hoffman!?

HOFFMAN: Go ahead.

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman is talking about freedom of choice, inner coherence, autonomous motivation as if this was something I had denied Mr. Martin. It's true that he's without all that, but he was without it long before I started the project.

HOFFMAN: Let's for God's sake stop talking about this as if we didn't know the true nature of the problem. The problem is that we cannot transform a pathological state into supernatural abilities.



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Marko Simcic as Reporter, in the background Nadja Strajnar Zadnik as Nurse,
Darja Reichman as Rebecca, Veronika Drolc as Dr. DaSilva,
Franc Markovcic as Dr. Hoffman
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

REPORTER: You will agree, though, Dr. Hoffman, that the abilities demonstrated by Mr. Martin are hardly natural –

HOFFMAN: Precisely. They're not abilities at all, but symptoms of a mysterious illness.

REPORTER: Dr. DaSilva?

DaSILVA: What Dr. Hoffman calls illness is, I believe, no more than a natural capacity of the human mind, freed from the restrictions of the ego with all its habitual mechanisms of worry and self-defence. The moment Mr. Martin reconnects with his self-awareness the ego will again occupy the lost ground. The creation of a new man is, I think, possible only before that happens. In any case we simply don't know how to make Mr. Martin aware of himself.

REPORTER: Is that true, Dr. Hoffman?

HOFFMAN: No. The process is already afoot.

REPORTER: Is that true, Dr. DaSilva?

DaSILVA (*looks at Hoffman*): I know nothing about that.

HOFFMAN: The only two things that connect Mr. Martin to his deeper, human layer, to the sediment of his earlier life, are music and drama. I believe we can make a breakthrough, if it is possible, only here. A good example is our Rebecca –

REBECCA (*jumps to her feet*): Rebecca would like a poem, Doctor!

HOFFMAN: In a moment, Rebecca –

REBECCA: Now, Doctor, now!

ALL PATIENTS: Poem, poem!

HOFFMAN: If you wait a few minutes you'll get more than a poem.

CARUSO (*rises*): Will I be allowed to sing an aria from Leoncavallo's *Pagliaci*?

HOFFMAN: Yes, even that.

CARUSO: On second thought I'd prefer *Madam Butterfly*...

(Leaning Man hits Caruso on the head with his left shoe. Caruso sits down and nurses his head.)

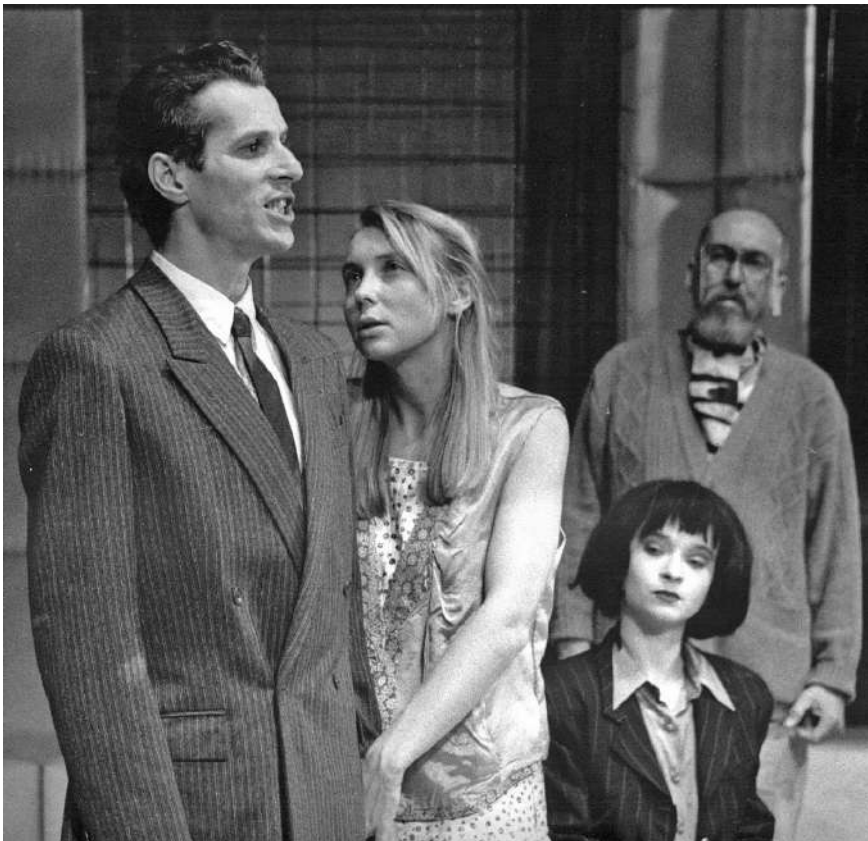
MRS. TWITCH: What about this one –

HOFFMAN: Madam, please, let me finish.

NURSE: Sit down, Madam.

ALL PATIENTS: Sit down, Madam.

(Mrs. Twitch sits.)



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Milan Stefe as Martin, Darja Reichman as Rebecca, Veronika Drolc
as Dr. DaSilva, Matjaz Turk as Leaning Man
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: We have used drama as therapy before, but only in selected cases and without any particular success. It would've been of no help to Mr. Martin in the early phases of his disease. But now there is a hope that brief flashes of emotion he seems to experience when he and Rebecca enact scenes from Shakespeare may one day connect into something more permanent, perhaps into an emotional reawakening which will put him in touch with his story and give him back what's by far the most important thing he had lost: judgement. Because each of us can function as a normal individual only as long as he is able to say, and believe: this is I, I want this, I don't think so.

REBECCA (*jumps*): I don't think so!

HOFFMAN: I suggest that Mr. Martin and Rebecca perform a short scene from whatever play by Shakespeare –

LEANING MAN: Unheard of! That after all the trouble one took, one doesn't get as much as a passing reference –

HOFFMAN: It was of course our Leaning Man who initiated Mr. Martin into the mysteries of dramatic art –

DaSILVA: Behind my back, and outside the project I'm conducting.

HOFFMAN: Another project is taking place here, for which I am responsible. It's called treating the patients.

DaSILVA: You mean an attempt to treat them, because since I got here there have been no signs of any of them getting better.

HOFFMAN: Since you got here Mr. Martin has got decidedly worse.

REPORTER (*turns to Martin*): And what do you think, Mr. Martin?

REBECCA (*jumps*): And what do you think, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN (*softly*):

Come away, come away, death,
and in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O! prepare it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
on my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
my poor corse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
lay me, O! where
sad true lover never find my grave
to weep there.



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3.

(Martin, Leaning Man, Caruso, Hoffman, DaSilva. Hoffman and DaSilva, seated at different ends of the room, have turned their backs on each other and are stubbornly staring into space. Leaning Man is pacing up and down between them and watching them. Martin is sitting at the back and memorizing the contents of a huge encyclopaedia. Caruso, standing, is singing an aria from Rigoletto. As he comes to the end, he bows. Everybody ignores him.)

LEANING MAN:

Why are these doctors
fighting with so little grace?
Are they mad, are they ill,
or touched by the cosmic rays?
Why are these doctors
behaving like silly buggers,
jumping each other
like midnight muggers,
making all of us shudder?
Why –

HOFFMAN *(turning)*: All right. All right, Leaning Man. Enough.

LEANING MAN: I heard that God created man because he wanted to have a partner in creativity.

DaSILVA *(rising)*: I'm not going to give up the project.

HOFFMAN *(rising)*: And I won't abandon the patient who's been placed in my care.

LEANING MAN: A temporary truce? Or a merciless fight to the last patient?

(Mrs. Martin makes a stately entrance through the main door, followed by Nurse.)

NURSE: Doctor, I couldn't stop her –

(Mrs. Martin turns and hands Nurse her handbag. She has no coat, it's summer.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MRS. MARTIN: For you, so you won't look so empty-handed. (*She walks to the nearest chair, sits down, looks at Hoffman, DaSilva.*) Well? Don't you think you owe me an explanation?

DaSILVA: How do you mean, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: We agreed you'd keep me informed.

DaSILVA: About the general progress, yes. You wouldn't be interested in clinical details.

MRS. MARTIN: I certainly never gave you permission to turn my husband into a public clown.

DaSILVA: That's not our intention.

MRS. MARTIN: His face is grinning at me from every magazine, every newspaper, every TV screen.

DaSILVA: Publicity is an unavoidable evil, we need funds.

MRS. MARTIN: Funds? What about me?

LEANING MAN: What about me?

CARUSO: What about me?

MARTIN: What about me?

MRS. MARTIN: How is it that he can play the piano, drums, flute, violin, trombone, even bagpipes, yet you don't seem to be able to teach him what you promised?

DaSILVA (*acutely embarrassed*): This is hardly the moment –

MRS. MARTIN: I've kept my part of the bargain.

HOFFMAN: What exactly did we promise, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: You, nothing. But this young lady went so far as to visit me at home to fill me with promises she knew she couldn't keep.

DaSILVA: At the beginning everything seemed possible; we had no idea the project would take a different turn.

MRS. MARTIN: So you won't keep your promises?

DaSILVA: I didn't say that.

HOFFMAN: What promises, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: I was told that my husband would be able to guess the number of the winning lottery ticket.

(*Hoffman looks at DaSilva. She doesn't know which way to look.*)

DaSILVA: That was meant as a possible side effect – you can't honestly say that you weren't told about the main aim of the project.



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MRS. MARTIN: What good is a husband who can explain to me in thirty languages twenty theories about the origin of the world, if his annual salary equals that of my parakeet?

LEANING MAN: Most rightful judge!

MARTIN:

And you must cut this flesh from off his breast;
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

LEANING MAN: Most learned judge! A sentence! come, prepare!

MARTIN:

Tarry a little: there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh;"
Then take thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh.

CARUSO: O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

MRS. MARTIN (*rises*): I'll wait another two weeks. If there're no results I will cancel my permission for the project. (*She looks at Martin.*) Horrible, what you've turned him into. (*She pulls her handbag from Nurse's hands and makes a stately departure through the main door.*)

(*Hoffman looks at DaSilva.*)

DaSILVA (*defensively*): I needed her signature. You're gloating, of course.

HOFFMAN: Not at all, this presents a problem for me as well.

DaSILVA (*warily*): Why? Can she take him away, take him home?

HOFFMAN: She can do that any time she wants to. Not that she does.

But she may do it to spite you.

DaSILVA: I'll get a lawyer. I'll prove that it's wrong for a wife to have an automatic right of say over her husband's treatment.

HOFFMAN: Good luck. The case will drag on for years. In the meantime the project will of course be suspended.

DaSILVA: God... (*Briefly buries her face in her hands.*) The only one who can help me is Dr. Roberts.

NURSE: Careful, Doctor.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN (*after a pause*): We've already talked about him. I thought we agreed –

DaSILVA: We didn't. You insisted that he wasn't suitable.

HOFFMAN: I don't trust him.

DaSILVA: I shouldn't have listened to you. The government agency he works for was prepared to take on the financing of the project.

HOFFMAN: Did you ask yourself why?

DaSILVA: It fascinates them. How stupid of me. How useful Dr. Roberts would be right now! In fact, without him I cannot see a way forward. So I'll hire him.

HOFFMAN: There're other ways to get money.

DaSILVA: Not because of money. The agency he works for has a lot of clout. If Mrs. Martin does decide to ruin the project she'll find herself facing an obstacle that'll make her think twice about it.

HOFFMAN: There's another slight problem.

DaSILVA: What's that?

HOFFMAN: I won't allow you to hire Dr. Roberts.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

(Blackout.)

4.

(Everybody, plus Roberts.)

DaSILVA: Well, what're you waiting for?

PATIENTS: Good morning, Dr. Roberts.

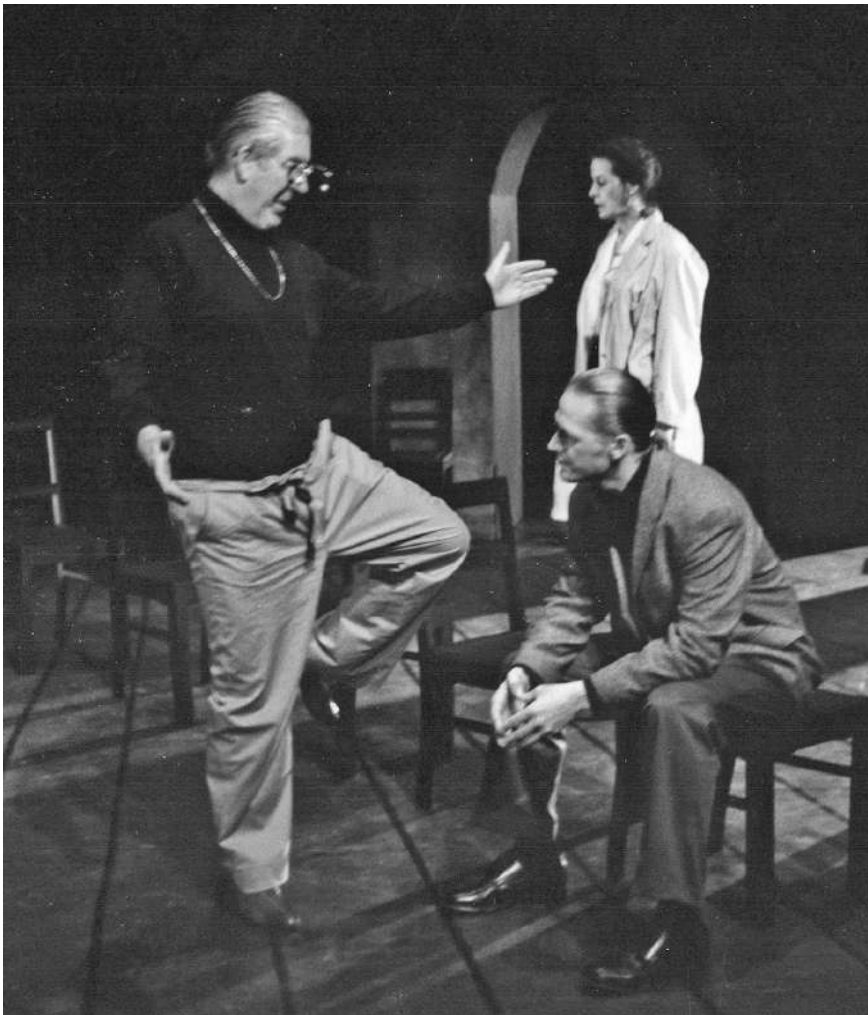
DaSILVA: What else?

PATIENTS: Welcome.

LEANING MAN: Welcome to the dump in which only one man can be called reasonably sane –

CARUSO (*snatching Leaning Man's spectacles*): – honest and upright! (*Runs off.*)

LEANING MAN (*follows Caruso, tilted to the left*): Give me my spectacles, Mr. Telephone Directory, or I'll make you sing an aria from the opera So help me God.



What about Leonardo?, Reykjavik City Theater, Iceland, 1994
Ari Mathiasson as Leaning Man, Thor Tulinius as Dr. Roberts,
Maria Sigurdardottir as Dr. DaSilva
Directed by Hallmar Sigurdsson





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(Nurse blocks Caruso's way, pulls the spectacles off his nose and gives them to Leaning Man, who puts them on and straightens up.)

NURSE: You're naughty, Professor.

CARUSO: Dr. Roberts, what is your favorite opera?

ROBERTS: I don't like opera.

CARUSO: Good God... Well, when is your birthday, then?

ROBERTS: Why?

CARUSO: So I can tell you what day it'll be when you'll celebrate the beginning of your sixty-fourth year.

DaSILVA: Professor, give Dr. Roberts some time to adjust.

CARUSO: There is very little time left, we are all of us every minute a minute older.

LEANING MAN: Dr. Roberts, may I ask you something? Why do you have such a long sour face, is it diarrhea or constipation?

REBECCA *(steps in front of Roberts)*: Poem.

ROBERTS: What?

REBECCA: Poem for our Rebecca, who likes poems.

(Robert looks at Hoffman.)

HOFFMAN: Do you know any poems about nature, spring, summer, that sort of thing?

ROBERTS: No.

LEANING MAN: Not a single verse? What sort of doctor are you? We are all poets here, even our Sniffy-Sniff, aren't you, come on, Mr. Poodle, give us your latest sonnet.

Whoof whoof whoof
whraaf whraaf whraaf
where is the nearest tree,
I'll burst if I don't have a pee –

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one, Dr. Roberts? Patient says to the doctor: "Tell me, doctor, will I live to be a hundred?" "Do you smoke and drink?" the doctor asks. "Never," the patient says. "Do you drive fast cars, gamble, chase women?" "Who do you take me for?" the patient objects. "Well," says the doctor, "why on earth then do you want to live for another fifty years?"



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(Roberts bursts into a convulsive laughter. Mrs. Twitch stares at him in complete disbelief.)

MRS. TWITCH: Did I say something funny?

(Roberts stops laughing.)

MR. SNIFF *(walks up to Roberts and sniffs at him)*: Something is wrong with you. You attract cosmic rays. They used to be here, in the middle of the room, but now they move around with you.

(Roberts looks at Hoffman.)

HOFFMAN: Well, you've met Dr. Roberts, and he has met you. You may go.
NURSE: Come on. Back to your rooms.

(Martin starts towards the main door.)

DaSILVA: Not you, Mr. Martin. You stay.

(Martin comes back. Rebecca takes his hand.)

REBECCA: Rebecca too.

HOFFMAN: Rebecca too.

REBECCA *(jumps)*: Rebecca too! *(She smiles at Martin, who smiles back.)*

(Nurse leads the patients out.)

HOFFMAN *(to Roberts)*: You seem to be in a state of shock.

ROBERTS: Lack of experience.

DaSILVA: Of course Mr. Martin is something completely different.

REBECCA: Rebecca too. *(To Roberts.)* When I was still teenyweeny, my Mammy died.

MARTIN: Mammy died.

ROBERTS: I'd be happier if my work didn't involve people outside the project.

(Hoffman looks at DaSilva.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: To a degree the project does involve other patients. Especially Rebecca, who... Let me demonstrate... *(Turns to Rebecca and Martin, who are holding hands and gazing into each other's eyes.)*
Time for a poem.

REBECCA *(jumps)*: Poem!

MARTIN *(jumps)*: Poem!

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin will tell you a poem. And you will help him.

REBECCA: Rebecca likes helping Mr. Martin.

HOFFMAN: How does that one go, Mr. Martin... "And thirty dozen moons..."

MARTIN:

And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
about the world have times twelve thirties been...

REBECCA *(impatiently joining in)*:

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,
and as my love is sized, my fear is so...

MARTIN:

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do –

REBECCA:

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from... and from...

(She looks at Hoffman for help.)

MARTIN: ... from your former state...

REBECCA: Oh thank you, Mr. Martin. From your former state...

ROBERTS: By the sound of them they're completely crazy.

(Hoffman and DaSilva exchange glances.)

HOFFMAN: This is Shakespeare. We encourage that.

ROBERTS: Why?



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HOFFMAN: Because the rhythm of the words and their dramatic charge appear... to... destroy inner barricades... create room for... emotional closeness, and that's good.

ROBERTS: Why?

HOFFMAN: Well, because... (*He looks at DaSilva.*) We're clinging to a slight but growing hope that this innocent, almost naive form of love will not only help Rebecca, but reawaken Mr. Martin.

(Roberts starts pacing up and down.)

ROBERTS: Wouldn't it be more sensible to multiply and strengthen his special abilities?

HOFFMAN: What can he do with them, until he becomes what he used to be: an autonomous being capable of responsible decisions.

ROBERTS: Why, if others can decide for him?

(Hoffman looks at DaSilva. Nurse enters through the main door.)

NURSE: Excuse me, Doctor... There're two gentlemen outside, want to speak to Dr. Roberts.

ROBERTS: Yes... (*Goes towards the main door.*) Back soon... (*Leaves.*)

HOFFMAN: Who are those gentlemen?

NURSE: Didn't want to say. Something funny about them.

(Hoffman looks at DaSilva.)

DaSILVA: Let's not jump to conclusions. He's come with excellent recommendations. Not to mention the money we'll get for the project.

HOFFMAN: That's what worries me. I think I'd like to take a look at these gentlemen.

(He leaves through the main door, followed by Nurse.)

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin? (*Martin looks up.*) Molecular structure of geological layers at the bottom of the Pacific.

(Martin approaches and looks at her.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MARTIN:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

DaSILVA: No, Mr. Martin. Molecular structure –

MARTIN:

Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
creep in our ears...

(He keeps looking at her and coming closer.)

soft stillness and the night

become the touches of sweet harmony...

(DaSilva is slowly retreating before his advance until she reaches a chair and sits. Martin sits on the chair next to her and takes her hand. DaSilva is frightened. Hoffman enters through the main door, stops, looks on. Rebecca runs to him, clutches at his hand, watches Martin and DaSilva with growing fear.)

MARTIN:

Such harmony is in immortal souls;

But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay

doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it...

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,

fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,

which is the hot condition of their blood...

(Draws DaSilva into a violent embrace.)

Good God, what a night that was,

the bed so soft, and how we clung

burning together...

REBECCA *(runs to Martin and tries to pull him away from DaSilva):*

No! No! No! No! *(Martin surrenders to her will.)* You said you'd take
me to a dance! Little shoe, little shoe!

MARTIN: Tap tap, went little shoes on the floor...

REBECCA: And above me there was only –

MARTIN: The sky!

REBECCA: Turning, and turning, and turning...



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MARTIN: ... and turning, and turning...

(They dance holding hands, leaving through the side door. Hoffman helps DaSilva to her feet.)

DaSILVA *(in a state of shock)*: Thank you, Doctor.

HOFFMAN: I think you should take the rest of the day off.

DaSILVA: I'll be all right. *(Her legs give up on her and she has to sit down.)*

HOFFMAN *(pacing up and down in front of her)*: Some facts will simply have to be faced.

DaSILVA: Some facts, or some playwrights?

HOFFMAN: Shakespeare is innocent. The problem is that what looked like our greatest hope doesn't seem to be more than just another automatism.

DaSILVA: You're capable of admitting a mistake – what a surprise!

HOFFMAN: How much simpler everything would be if you found the courage to admit some yourself. I'm surprised you've so far failed to see the main fallacy of your project.

DaSILVA: Have I?

HOFFMAN: Even if the project succeeds beyond your wildest dreams, you won't be able to replicate Mr. Martin's abilities. There will always be only one Mr. Martin. How can you talk about the dawn of a new man?

DaSILVA: I have known that for some time.

HOFFMAN: Yet you carried on with the project.

DaSILVA: Big dreams are difficult to give up.

HOFFMAN: Then you'll agree that we must transfer the emphasis from your ideas onto Mr. Martin the man. We must do everything possible to reactivate his free will – even at the cost of all his new abilities.

DaSILVA: Yes. And what is that everything possible that we must do?

HOFFMAN *(sarcastically)*: I'm sure Dr. Roberts will have an idea or two.

DaSILVA: I'm sure he will.

(Blackout.)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

5.

(Martin and Roberts are practising Japanese martial arts. They are at kendo; each has a kendo stick in his hands. While practising, they utter guttural "samurai" fighting sounds: haaaaaah, hoooooooo, hrrreeeeh, etc.)

ROBERTS: You must hold your stick more lightly... So you can feel and test the strength of my attack... Don't you feel that my stick always gives a little, it's always flexible?

MARTIN: Haaaaaah, hoooooooooh, hrrreeeeh.

(They take up poses and fight.)

ROBERTS: Enough of this. Karate.

(They lean kendo sticks against the wall and approach two chairs which are facing towards each other three feet apart. A slightly longer piece of wood is spanning their backs.)

ROBERTS: What did we say?

MARTIN: Only one blow.

ROBERTS: What else?

MARTIN: I must imagine the wood is four inches lower than it is.

(Martin brings down his hand on the wood and breaks it at the moment Hoffman and DaSilva enter through the main door.)

HOFFMAN: What's going on?

MARTIN: Only one blow.

ROBERTS: We always have only one blow – why?

MARTIN: Because it may be too late for the second.

(Roberts picks up a third chair and places it across the first two by resting two of its legs on each seat. Martin positions himself in front of the chair, lifts his head and closes his eyes.)

ROBERTS: One, two, three, four...



What about Leonardo?, Reykjavik City Theater, Iceland, 1994
Thor Tulinius as Dr. Roberts, Thorsteinn Gunnarsson as Martin, in the background
Maria Sigurdardottir as Dr. DaSilva, Petur Einarsson as Dr. Hoffman
Directed by Hallmar Sigurdsson





WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

DaSILVA (*in panic*): What's he going to do?

ROBERTS: ... five.

(Martin splinters the chair with a single blow of his head.)

DaSILVA: For God's sake! (*Runs to check Martin's forehead.*)

MARTIN: Booboori, boobooriboom.

HOFFMAN: We had no idea you were teaching Mr. Martin skills of this nature.

ROBERTS (*picks up kendo sticks and throws one to Martin, who catches it effortlessly*): Didn't you?

HOFFMAN: We agreed on a program of physical fitness.

ROBERTS: Haaaaaa! (*Strikes a fighting pose.*)

MARTIN: Hoooooh! (*Strikes a fighting pose.*)

ROBERTS: Hhhrreeeeh!

(They attack each other and fight.)

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman!

(Hoffman shrugs helplessly and waits for Martin and Roberts to stop fighting.)

HOFFMAN: Dr. Roberts. From now on things like that are wholly unsuitable. We have decided to reduce the teaching program to a minimum and devote our best efforts to helping Mr. Martin regain his freedom of choice.

ROBERTS (*fiddling with his kendo stick*): I don't remember any such decisions.

(Hoffman and DaSilva exchange glances.)

HOFFMAN: Decision was taken by Dr. DaSilva in agreement with the chief neurologist who is in charge of the institute. As a matter of fact we've been hoping that you would help us with this modified plan.

ROBERTS: Might be difficult.

DaSILVA: There seems to be some misunderstanding.

ROBERTS: I think so, too.



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DaSILVA: I suggest that we clear it up.

ROBERTS: I accept your suggestion.

DaSILVA: Well?

ROBERTS: Well what?

(DaSilva looks at Hoffman.)

HOFFMAN: Dr. Roberts, may I ask you to explain your position?

ROBERTS: You may. *(Strikes a fighting pose.)*

MARTIN *(strikes a fighting pose)*: Haaaaaaah! Hoooooooooh!

ROBERTS: I think your decision is wrong. Hhhrrrrreeehh!

DaSILVA: Why?

ROBERTS: The world is already full of people who have freedom of choice. Why bother to add one more to the five billion?

(Hoffman and DaSilva exchange glances.)

HOFFMAN: Don't you think that Mr. Martin, if he were able to choose for himself, would be completely different from the other five billion?

ROBERTS: So much the better that he isn't able to choose for himself.

DaSILVA: Why?

ROBERTS: Because he could choose not to use any of his special abilities. Or he could use them for trivial aims.

HOFFMAN: I see. He could decide to be of no use.

ROBERTS: It's taken you a long time.

DaSILVA: Of use to whom?

ROBERTS: To all of us who don't look at the world as naively as you.

DaSILVA: I demand that you explain what you mean by that.

ROBERTS: You really don't understand?

DaSILVA: No.

ROBERTS: Well, I don't understand you. You had a super project that needed only a few touches to be a complete success. Now you want to dismantle it. Billions of dollars are spent each year on designing a computer that could think. You, for a mere half percent of that sum, managed to create a biological super robot. Can't you imagine what that means?

DaSILVA *(buries her face in her hands)*: Oh my God! My God!



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(A tenfold echo of her words reverberates through the air. The only one who reacts to it is Martin, who drops his kendo stick and presses his hands to his ears.)

MARTIN: Oh my God! My God!

(A violent explosion of sound, the “first aural hallucination,” consisting of successive and simultaneous snips of Caruso’s arias, passages from Shakespeare’s plays, Martin’s language lessons, etc. – as if the chaotic content of Martin’s “new mind” were trying to break out of its enclosed space. Again only Martin reacts to this, holding his head with both hands and twisting under the blows of the chaotic mixture of sounds. When silence returns, Martin helplessly falls to his knees, lowers his head and remains motionless.)

DaSILVA (concerned): Mr. Martin, what is it?

ROBERTS: On your feet! *(Martin obediently stands up.)* Attention! *(Martin, holding his kendo stick like a rifle, straightens up and clicks his shoes.)* Now we will march to the door... *(Martin mechanically marches to the door, stops.)* And now we will march back...

(Martin marches back to the middle of the room.)

ROBERTS *(to Hoffman and DaSilva)*: Still can’t see? Obedient, automated fighting agent who speaks all languages, masters all types of combat, can pilot war planes, feels comfortable with every kind of weapon, can carry out whatever task he is given, unburdened by doubts, moral qualms or concern for his safety –

HOFFMAN: Dr. Roberts, I’m afraid your work on this project has come to an end.

ROBERTS *(after a pause)*: Do you really think that my people will let it go, after they virtually bought it?

HOFFMAN: The money will be returned.

DaSILVA: To the last cent.

MARTIN: Booboori, boobooriboom.

ROBERTS: Not only is there no need to return the money, you can get more. You two personally. My people think that your expertise would continue to be of use. Think about it.

DaSILVA: How dare you!



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ROBERTS (*shrugs*): It's the taxpayers' money.

HOFFMAN: Tell your people to go to hell. I'm going to ask Mrs. Martin to withdraw her permission for the project and demand that her husband be returned to her care.

DaSILV A: Good bye!

ROBERTS (*with a self-satisfied smile pulls a folded sheet of paper from his pocket, unfolds it and gives it to Martin*): Read.

MARTIN (*reading*): "Due to my expectations in connection with Project XXX not being met, and because I am worried about my husband's health, I hereby withdraw my permission for the said project, obtained under false pretences, and entrust my husband to the competent psychiatric care of Dr. Roberts. I confirm that I am satisfied with the amount of damages I received, and solemnly swear that I have no further claims."

(Roberts pulls the statement from Martin's hands, folds it and returns it to his pocket.)

ROBERTS: Didn't you get a copy? It may have got lost in the post.

(Blackout.)

6.

(DaSilva, Hoffman, Nurse, Martin, Mr. Sniff, Rebecca, Mrs. Twitch)

REBECCA: Doctor, why is Mr. Martin so sad?

(They all look at Martin, who is sitting on a chair lost in thought.)

NURSE: We're all rather sad today, Rebecca.

MRS. TWITCH: I'm not –

MR. SNIFF (*putting his hand over her mouth*): Ha ha ha, don't you see I'm laughing?

NURSE (*looking at Martin*): This is terrible, couldn't we lodge a complaint?

HOFFMAN: Only in heaven, Nurse.

NURSE: I knew this wasn't going to end well.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: Mr. Berger, do you still smell cosmic rays?

MR. SNIFF: Yes.

HOFFMAN: Where are they?

MR. SNIFF: With Mr. Roberts.

NURSE: Those two friends of his were here again. Whispering about something. Exchanging papers. Then they drove off in a hurry. (*To DaSilva.*) I hope you're satisfied.

HOFFMAN: The only thing that matters now is what can be done before it's too late.

NURSE: It is too late. I think they're planning to take him away.

HOFFMAN: We haven't got much time, but we do have some.

NURSE: I think they're on their way now.

HOFFMAN: No. Dr. DaSilva and I have accepted Dr. Roberts' offer to remain on the project.

NURSE (*stares at Hoffman for a long time, then starts to remove her white coat*): Looks like it's time for me to sign on at the job center.

HOFFMAN: Nurse, for God's sake –

NURSE: I must say I've never been so disappointed in my life –

HOFFMAN: We didn't really accept his offer – we only pretended we did, to buy time!

NURSE (*puts her coat on again*): Do forgive me, Doctor. What shall we do?

REBECCA: What shall we do, Doctor?

HOFFMAN: I don't know.

DaSILVA (*rises*): I may have a solution.

NURSE: That's all we needed.

HOFFMAN (*admonishing*): Nurse...

NURSE: Now it's all my fault... (*She produces a handkerchief and dabs at her eyes.*)

REBECCA: Why are you crying, Sister? Was Doctor nasty to you?

MRS. TWITCH: What about this one –

MR. SNIFF (*placing his hand over her mouth*): Thank you, Madam, that, too, was a hilarious joke, ha ha ha.

DaSILVA: My God! Can't we get rid of these people, at least for a while?

HOFFMAN: Nurse, take them away.

NURSE: Come on, Rebecca. These people are not wanted.

REBECCA: Rebecca stays with Mr. Martin, doesn't she, Doctor?

DaSILVA: I'll go mad!

NURSE (*pulls Rebecca towards the main door*): Madam... (*Mrs. Twitch follows.*) Mr. Berger...



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DaSILVA: You stay, Mr. Berger.

REBECCA (*crying, pushing Nurse away*): I'm not going... Mr. Martin needs Rebecca...

(*Mrs. Twitch takes Rebecca by the other hand; she and Nurse drag Rebecca out.*)

DaSILVA: Mr. Berger, go out to the main gate. As soon as you smell cosmic rays –

MR. SNIFF: I come and tell you that Dr. Roberts is on his way.

DaSILVA: Thank you.

MR. SNIFF: I think I can smell him from a distance of two miles.

DaSILVA: Now, Mr. Berger. (*Mr. Sniff leaves. DaSilva turns to Hoffman.*) I'm afraid you won't exactly like my idea.

HOFFMAN: I'm listening.

DaSILVA: You said that right now Mr. Martin functions as a passive information system.

HOFFMAN: Yes, and?

DaSILVA: In other words, he needs an outside agent, or, as you say, manipulator.

HOFFMAN: Carry on.

DaSILVA: Something would have to influence this passive system to make it function actively. To enable it to organize outside information into a series of permanent –

HOFFMAN (*impatiently*): – renewable mental states, yes.

DaSILVA: And to form it into sequential patterns in a way that even Rebecca is capable of.

MARTIN: Rebecca! Booboori, boobooriboom!

HOFFMAN: Dr. DaSilva –

DaSILVA: What he needs is a kind of awakening. Someone or something has to kick-start the engine.

HOFFMAN: The question is what.

DaSILVA: There's one thing that might just do it. Probably the only thing that can do it.

MARTIN (*rises*): And now we will run to the door... (*Marches to the door, turns around.*) And now –

(*A violent explosion of sound, the "second aural hallucination," similar to the first one, but consisting of different elements. Martin, terrified and in physical pain, doubles up.*)



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

MARTIN: Oh my God! My God! *(Silence.)* And now we will run back...
(Exhausted, shaking all over, he bends his knees and remains motionless in a crouching position.)

DaSILVA: What has the greatest power of all, Dr. Hoffman?

HOFFMAN: No idea.

DaSILVA: Sex. *(Pause.)* That, I believe, is the only shock that can put Mr. Martin together again.

HOFFMAN: I hope you don't think that Rebecca –

MARTIN *(gets to his feet)*: Rebecca. Boobooriboom.

DaSILVA: How can you even think that? Surely I'll be decent enough to correct my own mistakes.

HOFFMAN *(looking at her half amused, half contemptuous)*: Well, at this stage of the project you won't be needing my help, I'm sure. *(Abruptly turns and walks towards the main door.)*

DaSILVA: Dr. Hoffman... *(Hoffman goes out.)*

(DaSilva paces up and down, looking at Martin. She sits down and ponders. She gathers her courage, gets up and takes a deep breath.)

DaSILVA: Mr. Martin... *(She holds out her hand.)*

MARTIN: And now we will run back... *(Runs back and takes her hand.)*

DaSILVA: And now we will sit down...

(She leads him to the nearest chair and sits down next to him. She smiles at him. He smiles back.)

DaSILVA:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

MARTIN:

Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
creep in our ears...

DaSILVA:

Soft stillness and the night
become the touches of sweet harmony...



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MARTIN:

Such harmony is in immortal souls...!

DaSILVA (*putting Martin's hand on her left breast*):

Do but note a wild and wanton herd,
or race of youthful and unhandled colts...

MARTIN:

Fetching mad bounds, bellowing
and neighing loud...

DaSILVA (*putting Martin's other hand on her right breast*):

Which is the hot condition of their blood...

MARTIN:

Which is the hot condition of their blood...

(Martin pulls DaSilva to her feet and sweeps her into a tight embrace. As their lips are on the point of touching, we hear a violent explosion of sound, the "first aural hallucination." Martin pushes DaSilva away, steps back, doubles up.)

MARTIN (*shouting through the noise*):

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!

DaSILVA: What is it, Mr. Martin?

(End of sound explosion.)

MARTIN:

Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(He stares at DaSilva. Makes a step towards her. She starts retreating, he follows her.)

MARTIN:

Put out the light, and then put out the light.

DaSILVA *(frightened)*:

How sweet the moonlight...

(Leaning Man enters through the main door, stops and looks on.)

MARTIN *(catches up with DaSilva and clenches his fingers round her upper arm)*:

When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
it needs must wither –

DaSILVA: Such harmony is in immortal souls –

LEANING MAN *(stepping forward)*: Wrong. “Will you come to bed, my lord?”

DaSILVA *(grateful for the cue)*:

Will you come to bed, my lord?

MARTIN:

Have you pray'd tonight, Desdemona?

LEANING MAN: “Ay, my lord.”

DaSILVA: Ay, my lord.

MARTIN:

If you bethink yourself of any crime
unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
solicit for it straight.

(DaSilva is desperately looking to Leaning Man for help.)



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LEANING MAN: "Then Lord have mercy on me!"

DaSILVA: Then Lord have mercy on me!

MARTIN: Amen! with all my heart.

LEANING MAN: "But while I say one prayer."

DaSILVA: But while I say one prayer.

MARTIN: It is too late.

(He starts to strangle her. DaSilva slowly sinks to her knees. As Martin withdraws his hands, she topples over and lies motionless on the floor.)

LEANING MAN: What, ho! my lord, my lord!

MARTIN:

What noise is this? Not dead? not yet
quite dead? I that am cruel am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.

(He picks up his kendo stick and drives the sharp end through her heart.)

LEANING MAN: My lord, my lord!

MARTIN: Who's there?

LEANING MAN:

O! good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

(Roberts and Caruso enter through the main door. They stop and stare at the scene, aghast.)

MARTIN:

What's best to do?..
O, insupportable! o heavy hour!

LEANING MAN: Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse...

MARTIN:

Of sun and moon, of sun and moon...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(Roberts warily watches Martin. Martin watches him.)

MARTIN *(strikes a fighting pose)*: Haaaaaaah! Hoooooooooh!

ROBERTS *(grabs his kendo stick and strikes a fighting pose)*: Hhrreeeeh!

(They wait, eyeing each other.)

LEANING MAN: Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MARTIN:

Then yield thee, coward,
and live to be the show and gaze o' the time;
we'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
Here you may see the tyrant.

(Roberts attacks. They fight. Martin knocks the kendo stick out of Robert's hands and hits him. Roberts falls. Martin kills him with the sharp end of his kendo stick.)

CARUSO:

Hail, king! for so thou art; behold,
where stands the usurper's cursed head:
the time is free...

LEANING MAN: I bleed, sir: but not kill'd.

MARTIN:

I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
for, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

LEANING MAN:

O thou Martin! that wert once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,
what shall be said to thee?



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MARTIN:

Why, any thing:
an honourable murderer, if you will;
for nought did I in hate, but all in honor.

(Martin stabs Leaning Man with the sharp end of his kendo stick. Leaning Man collapses and dies. Caruso flees through the main door. Martin sits on a chair and looks at the dead bodies in the middle of the room.)

(Mr. Sniff enters through the main door. He sniffs around, sniffs at Martin.)

MR. SNIFF: Mr. Martin... Can you feel them? The cosmic rays... They've jumped into you!

(Martin looks at him, bewildered. Mr. Sniff disappears through the main door. Martin sits, looking at the bodies. Hoffman, Nurse, Rebecca, Caruso, Mr. Sniff and Mrs. Twitch pile in through the main door. They stare at Martin. They stare at the bodies. Rebecca runs past the bodies and sits down next to Martin.)

REBECCA: Oh Mr. Martin... *(She squeezes his hand. He looks her in the eyes, smiling warmly.)* You're not sleepy?

(Martin shakes his head.)

REBECCA: Dr. Roberts has fallen asleep, Leaning Man too, and the lady who wants to become two doctors has fallen asleep as well. They're all so tired that they fell asleep.

(Martin nods.)

REBECCA: You're not?

(Martin shakes his head.)

NURSE: Doctor...



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: No, Nurse. Wait.

MARTIN:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

REBECCA (*delighted*): Poem?

(*Martin nods.*)

REBECCA:

Here will we sit, and let the sound of music
creep in our ears...

MARTIN:

When I have pluck'd the rose.
I cannot give it vital growth again...

REBECCA: Growth again... Help me, Professor.

CARUSO (*stepping forward*): Will you come to bed, my lord?

REBECCA: Will you come to bed, my lord?

MARTIN (*looking at her, after a pause*):

Have you pray'd tonight, Desdemona?

CARUSO: Ay, my lord.

REBECCA: Ay, my lord.

MARTIN:

If you bethink yourself of any crime
unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
solicit for it straight.

CARUSO: But while I say one prayer.

REBECCA: But while I say one prayer.

MARTIN: It is too late.

(*Martin puts his hands round Rebecca's neck and proceeds to strangle her.*)



What about Leonardo?, Reykjavik City Theater, Iceland, 1994
Vigdis Gunnarsdottir as Rebecca and Thorsteinn Gunnarsson as Martin
Directed by Hallmar Sigurdsson



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

NURSE: Doctor!

REBECCA: Ooooooh, you're tickling me...

HOFFMAN (*stepping forward*):

When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
it needs must wither...

MARTIN:

When I have pluck'd the rose...
When I have pluck'd the rose...
(*He loosens his grip.*)

HOFFMAN: O balmy breath –

MARTIN (*gently kisses Rebecca*):

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
justice to break her sword!
One more, one more...
(*He kisses Rebecca again.*)

REBECCA: Oh Mr. Martin...

(*A violent explosion of sound, the "third aural hallucination," a mixture of the first two. Martin pushes Rebecca away, presses his hands to his ears, sinks to his knees. The noise grows unbearable, then slowly abates into a series of musical and speech patterns, culminating in Bruch's violin concerto, which is followed by silence. Martin slowly gets to his feet and looks around. He is confused and surprised.*)

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin?

MARTIN (*looking at Hoffman for some time*): Doctor?

HOFFMAN: Do you know who I am?

MARTIN: Of course I do.

HOFFMAN: Tell me.

MARTIN: You are joking, I hope, Dr. Hoffman.

HOFFMAN: And you are?

MARTIN: Peter Martin. I own a delicatessen shop.



What about Leonardo?, Ljubljana City Theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1992
Majda Grbac as Nurse, Joze Mraz as Mr. Sniff, Vera Per as Mrs. Twitch,
Ivan Jezernik as Caruso, Matjaz Turk as Leaning Man,
in the foreground Milan Stefe as Martin, Darja Reichman as Rebecca
Directed by Dusan Mlakar



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

HOFFMAN: If the air temperature is 40 degrees Centigrade, is that cold, warm or hot?

MARTIN: That's pretty hot for me, Doctor, what about you? (*Looks around.*) Who are these people?

MR. SNIFF (*approaches and sniffs*): You smell very nice, Mr. Martin. No longer of cosmic rays.

REBECCA: Rebecca too.

MR. SNIFF (*sniffs at Rebecca*): Rebecca smells even nicer. (*Sniffs the air.*) They're gone!

MARTIN (*only now becoming aware of the bodies*): What's happening? Where am I?

HOFFMAN: Among friends, Mr. Martin. How do you feel?

(Everybody's eyes are on Martin. He takes a few aimless steps and stops. He looks at Hoffman. He wants to say something, but fails to find the words. He is overcome by emotion. He takes a few more aimless steps. Stops. Stares.)

REBECCA: Doctor, why is Mr. Martin so sad?

HOFFMAN: He's come back from a long journey. He's come back to the world he left many years ago, and he is not sure that he is still welcome. When he was ill he seemed whole: now, when he is whole again, he is split: between yes and no, doubt and conviction, fear and courage. Now the only thing he really possesses is the freedom to say no.

MR. SNIFF: Has he brought anything from where he was? Has he kept any of those marvellous gifts?

(Nurse hands Martin the violin. Martin caresses the strings and slowly moves to the middle of the room, close to the bodies. He plays with the strings. Then he looks at Hoffman, Nurse, Rebecca, Caruso, Mr. Sniff, Mrs. Twitch, in that order. He looks at Rebecca once more and winks at her. Rebecca jumps and smiles at him. Martin wedges the violin under his chin and starts to play. He plays a short passage from Bruch's violin concerto – faultlessly, brilliantly, with feeling. He bows.)

REBECCA: Oh what a nice poem, what a wonderful song, you played so beautifully, Mr. Martin! Applause, Doctor! Applause, Sister!



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(Applause. Martin takes another bow. He gives the violin back to Nurse.)

HOFFMAN: And now, Mr. Martin?

(Martin looks at Hoffman. Then he slowly looks at each of those present in turn.)

HOFFMAN: What are your plans? *(Martin shrugs.)* Will you go home?

MARTIN: No.

HOFFMAN: To your wife? No?

MARTIN: No.

HOFFMAN: Your delicatessen shop?

MARTIN: No.

HOFFMAN: What then, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN *(after a pause)*: I don't know.

HOFFMAN: Let's put it like this. Until you're sure what you want, you can stay here, with us.

MARTIN *(gratefully)*: With pleasure, Doctor.

REBECCA *(jumps)*: With pleasure, Doctor. *(She takes Martin by the hand.)* And now Mr. Martin will take Rebecca to a dance, won't you, Mr. Martin? *(She pulls him towards the main door.)*

MARTIN *(obediently)*: To a dance.

REBECCA: Bye bye, Sister. Bye bye, Doctor. Professor Caruso, bye bye.

CARUSO: Good bye. *(He waves.)*

MR. SNIFF, MRS. TWITCH, CARUSO: Bye bye.

REBECCA: You too, Mr. Martin. Say bye bye.

MARTIN *(obediently)*: Bye bye.

REBECCA: Bye bye, everybody.

MARTIN *(suddenly startled, pricks his ears)*: Just a moment. I think it's the phone. *(He returns to the middle of the room and picks up an imaginary telephone receiver.)* Yes, this is the shop, yes. Oh good morning, Mr. President! What can I do for you? Can you wait a moment, please? *(He replaces imaginary receiver and straightens up.)* And now we will run to the door... *(He runs to the door.)* And now we will run back... *(He runs back and picks up the "phone" again.)* I'm sorry, Mrs. Hildebrand, we're right out of gorgonzola. And now I have to go because I have some urgent business to attend to. *(He replaces the "receiver" and stares at his feet. He jumps.)* Hop. Boooooo.



WHAT ABOUT LEONARDO?

(He looks around. He looks at everybody in turn. He stares ahead. He lowers his head and sinks to his knees. The others move towards him and form a semicircle.)

HOFFMAN: Mr. Martin?

MARTIN *(looks up at Hoffman):*

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

CARUSO *(steps forward):*

It is a nipping and an eager air.

MARTIN:

What hour now?

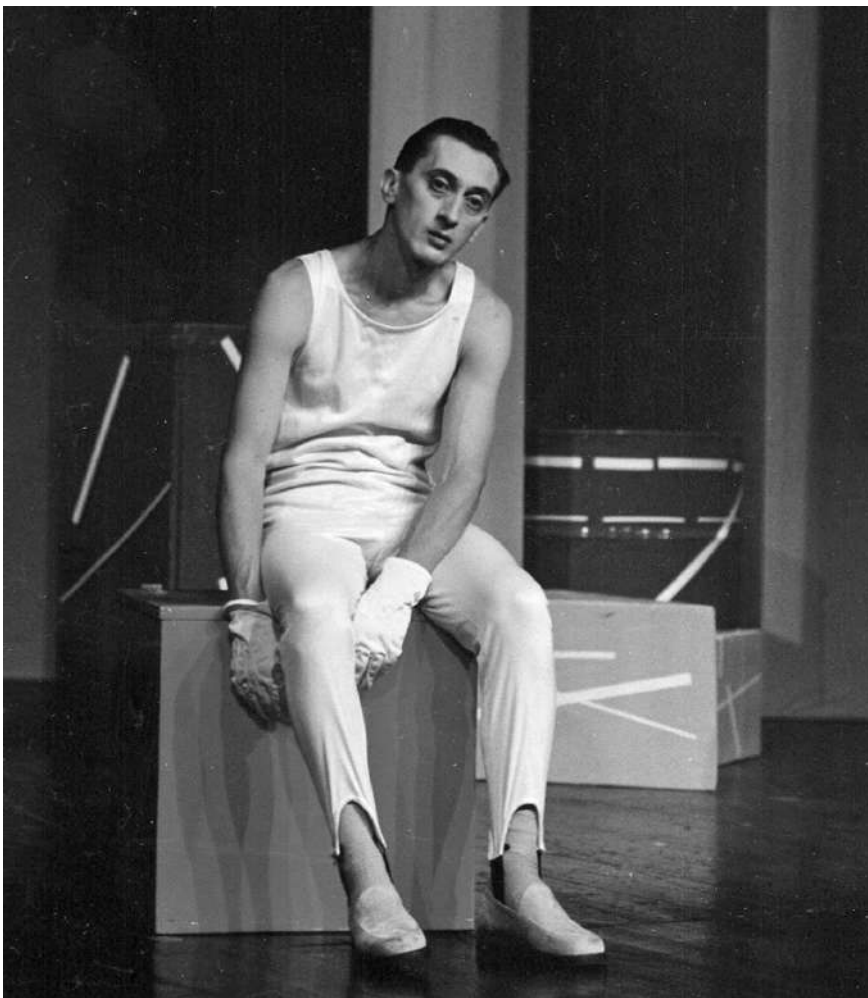
CARUSO:

I think it lacks of twelve.

MARTIN:

No, it is struck.

(Lights slowly fade to blackout.)



What about Leonardo?, Pozoriste Zoran Radmilovic, Serbia, 2001
Predrag Grbic as Martin
Directed by Dejan Krstovic

