



inflections

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Hungarian Director Laszlo Marton discusses his production of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya

Internationally-acclaimed Hungarian director Laszlo Marton shared his love of Chekhov with a group of UNC students and professors at a "Meet the Director" event on Monday, February 10. He also discussed his upcoming production - with Playmakers Repertory Company - of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*.

Marton, who is at UNC as the David G. Frey Distinguished Visiting Professor in Dramatic Art, described Chekhov as a unique playwright with an unequalled ear for dialogue and human interaction.

"Chekhov doesn't judge his characters. He doesn't believe he's God and knows everything better," Marton said.

To illustrate his point, Marton

described a scene in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* in great detail. The scene involves

drama, and passion. Chekhov, however, wrote the scene so that Vershinin is late,

Masha grows tired of waiting and leaves her house. When Vershinin finally arrives, he is forced to stand waiting with Masha's sister Olga who despises him. Marton laughed as he described the tension of Vershinin and Olga waiting on stage together. When Masha does eventually return to the house, Vershinin's train is about to leave, and he glances at his watch as he embraces Masha for the final time.

Marton said it is the subtlety, humor and understatement in such scenes that makes Chekhov his favorite writer.

Marton said Chekhov often explored the loss of hopes, dreams and aspirations in his characters. For



Laszlo Marton describes a humorous scene in Chekhov's The Three Sisters. In his talk, Marton said what drew him to Chekhov was the understatement, and the great balance between comedy and tragedy in Chekhov's plays./photo by Will Bettmann

the final farewell between Masha, one of three sisters, and Vershinin, an army officer with whom Masha is having an affair.

Marton said almost any other playwright would have made the scene "big," full of

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P2 | Ambassador presents Bosnia-Herzegovina as lesson for future U.S. interventions

Ambassador Robert Beecroft, head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, urged UNC students to look at Bosnia-Herzegovina as a model from which important lessons can be gleaned during a lecture he gave at the Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence on Thursday, Jan. 9.

“The world is becoming increasingly untidy, and there will be a need for us to intervene,” he said. “The question is: what kind of states do we want to see come out of crisis situations?”

Beecroft has worked for the U.S. Department of State since 1971, including postings in Bonn, Paris, Cairo, Jordan and Burkina Faso. He spoke to a group of UNC students participating in the Vienna Burch Field Research Seminar last summer (see *inflections* vol.6, no.5), and was invited by one student, Margaret Midyette, to come speak in Chapel Hill.

Beecroft gave some background history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the oft-repeated

assertion that “when Bosnia-Herzegovina sneezes, the Balkans and the rest of Europe catch a cold.” He said Bosnians deal well with foreigners, having been occupied in the last thousand years by



Ambassador Robert Beecroft addresses a student's question during his talk on January 9./ photo by Will Bettmann

the Byzantines, the Ottomans, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hitler, and then Tito. He placed much of the blame for the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina on what he described as a territorial battle fought between Milosevic and Tudjman.

Beecroft also placed some of the blame for the high casualties in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the U.N.'s failure to enforce peace in the

region from 1991 through 1995.

“You have to mean what you say and you have to be prepared to enforce it. At least in the Balkans,” he said.

One of the main

questions Beecroft raised was: “How do we know when a state is in good enough shape that we can leave?” He said the presence of elections alone was not enough, and that there also had to be rule of law. He said a country, which had a functioning court system, non-corrupt police and judges, and a prison system could be said to have rule of law.

Beecroft went on

to note that corruption seemed to be endemic in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that the black market was still alive and well.

“Corruption is a way of life in this part of the world,” he said. “It’s a Mediterranean culture. Everyone knows everyone... It’s not Switzerland, it’s Sicily.”

Another factor Beecroft noted as an impediment to change in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the inflexible mindset of many Bosnians, particularly of older generations.

“I am so tired of dealing with the same old dinosaurs who fought in the war, and in some cases started the war,” he said.

At the end of his talk, Beecroft urged the audience to consider a few factors when examining both Bosnia-Herzegovina and possible future U.S. interventions.

“First, how can we conceive together a reasonable, sustainable outcome in any state? Then, we need the structure and means to get there. And finally, we need a sunset clause, a point when we can say, ‘we’re there, now let’s get out.’”

Ed Roslof (1994 UNC-Ph.D. in Russian history) accepted the position as director of the Fulbright program with Russia and will be leaving for Moscow at the end of the semester. Currently an associate professor at United Theological Seminary, Ed recently published his revised UNC dissertation with Indiana University Press, *Red Priests: Renovationsim, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*.

Vasa Mihailovich, Professor Emeritus of Slavic Languages and Literatures at UNC, had three books published in 2002 in Serbia: a book of prose poems, *Sesta rukovet*, a book of short stories, *Elze i druge price*, and a book of haiku poetry, *Vrane na snegu*, all in Serbian.

Edward A. Tiryakian, Professor of Sociology Duke University, published "Third Party Involvement in Ethnic Conflict: The Case of the Kosovo War" in George Kourvetaris, et. al., eds. *The New Balkans: Disintegration and Reconstruction* (East European Monographs/ New York: Columbia University Press). He is also Director of the 2003 Fulbright New Century

Scholars Program, "Sectarianism, Ethnicity and Culture in Ethnic Conflicts Between and Across Borders"

Chad Bryant, Assistant Professor of History at UNC, recently had an article entitled "Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1947" published in the winter issue of *Slavic Review*. He also had an article published in *Kudej* a Czech-language journal of cultural history. In February, he will present a paper at a conference hosted by the Watson Institute at Brown University. The conference is entitled "Categorization, Identification, and Recognition in the Imperial/Soviet Perspective".

Ohio University Press's just released inaugural volume in its Polish and Polish-American Studies Series, *Framing the Polish Home: Postwar Cultural Constructions of Hearth, Nation, and Self*, features two essays by UNC-CH Slavic Languages and Literatures faculty:

Madeline Levine's "Home Loss in Wartime Literature: A Typology of Images," which examines images of home and homelessness in writings about World War II and the Holocaust in Poland, and **Beth Holmgren's** "At Home with Sienkiewicz,"

which analyzes the creation and public resonance of the "gift home" an adoring public subsidized for one of its favorite writers, Henryk Sienkiewicz. Holmgren's essay "Writing the Female Body Politic (1945-1985)" appears in Cambridge University Press's *A History of Women's Writing in Russia* (2002). Her essay on early twentieth-century Russian and Polish "bestsellers" — "The Importance of Being Unhappy, Or Why She Died" — was published in *Imitation of Life: Two Centuries of Melodrama in Russia* (Duke University Press, 2002).

Milada Vachudova, Assistant Professor of Political Science at UNC, and Andrew Moravcsik had an article entitled, "Bargaining Among Unequals: Enlargement and the Future of European Integration," published in *EUSA Review* (Fall 2002). Vachudova gave a talk titled "National Interests, State Power and EU Enlargement" at the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in Bratislava, Slovakia on December 19, 2002. Her trip to Prague and Bratislava was sponsored by the CSEEEES. Vachudova will be presenting a paper at a small workshop titled "Evaluating the Success and Failure in Postcommunist

Reform" at Claremont McKenna College, California in February 2003, and presenting a paper "International Institutions and Choosing the Path of Economic Reform" on a panel that she organized at the 44th annual convention of the International Studies Association in Portland, Oregon in February 2003.

Alison Rowley, Visiting Assistant Professor at CSEEEES Duke University, has accepted a tenure track position in Russian history at Concordia University in Montreal. In the fall, she had two articles published: "From the Concerns of Women to the Concerns of the State: Soviet Women's Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Solanus*; and "Miniature Propaganda: Self-Definition and Soviet Postage Stamps, 1917-1941," in *Slavonica*.

Peter Bajomi-Lazar, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, Kodalyanyi University College, Szekefehervar (Hungary), is a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the UNC-CH School of Journalism until the end of May. He is also a doctoral candidate in political science at Central European University. While in Chapel Hill, he will carry out research on journalism ethics and self-regulation in the United States.

P4| Padraic Kenney discusses movement of revolutionary ideas in Eastern Europe

Padraic Kenney, author of two books on Eastern Europe, gave a talk at the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies, entitled "Oppositional Networks and Transnational Diffusion." Kenney's talk explored how ideas were passed from country to country during the revolutions that swept Eastern Europe starting in 1989, a theme he began developing in his book *A Carnival of Revolution*.

Kenney began his talk by citing the inadequacy of Timothy Garton Ash's well-known quip that "the revolution in Poland took ten years, in Hungary ten months, in East Germany ten weeks, and in Czechoslovakia ten days." Kenney noted three fundamental errors in the logic of the statement - that the transitions were only the result of a long-term underground movement of civil society that had been functioning for more than ten months, weeks or days; that the transitions were not inevitable; and that the socialist governments did not fall like dominoes in a line.

In order to emphasize how the ongoing opposition movements were linked by ideas



Padraic Kenney makes a point during his talk at the Slavic Center on Tuesday, January 21./ photo by Will Bettmann

but functioning within entirely different social milieus, Kenney presented a transnational approach to history. He then illustrated how ideas were diffused across borders by delineating six literary modes of dialectic diffusion.

The first mode was "command," defining the essence

of Soviet society and economy as one led by the party. Kenney noted that Gorbachev's leadership was one of an absence of command. The second was "text," generally in the form of academic journals outside of the countries themselves. The third was

"legend," which he defined as an inspiring story or movement that encouraged others to act, noting Radio Free Europe and the stories of the Solidarity movement in Poland as an example of this kind of "legend. The fourth was what he called "pilgrimage." Kenney cited the Gdansk shipyard as an example of a place people, notably

German and Hungarian oppositionists, came to visit, and at which ideas were shared. The fifth he called "courier/missionary," and defined as "the export of revolution at the lowest stratum." This mode was spread by those who "spread the gospel of revolutionary change." The sixth mode he called convocation - the coming together of dissidents from all over Eastern Europe.

To illustrate his point, Kenney quoted a Hungarian activist who said he'd gotten the recipe for conscientious objection from Poland. He also pointed out that this type of transnational history may be about symbolic acts rather than specific recipes. He said when visitors saw others "acting with freedom," they learned how to act themselves.

As in *A Carnival of Revolution*, much of Kenney's argument revolved around Poland, which he called "the key border," and "the site" of the 1989 revolutions. He said one key to Poland's success was that "people are willing to put up with diverse ideas, with pluralism."

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example, in *Uncle Vanya*, the arrival of the beautiful young Elena causes Both Vanya and Astrov to question themselves and their lives

Marton began his talk by describing the great success of the Vigszinhaz Theater in Budapest, for which he has been artistic director since 1985. He said the situation in Hungary had - not surprisingly - changed drastically with the collapse of communist rule in Hungary in 1989. Prior to that point, the theater had been a central arena in which Hungarians

challenged authoritarian rule. Marton said the theater had developed a "kind of metaphoric language," that the audience understood, but that censors were unable to prevent.

"After 1989, that kind of bravery is not an issue anymore," he said. "You have to find a different way to get to your audience."

The direction Marton took as artistic director was to make a big effort to build up a new audience and to initiate programs designed to bring young people to

the theater. Marton also chose to place a major focus on directing classic playwrights like Chekhov, Shakespeare and Ibsen.

His efforts (and skill as a director) appear to have paid off, as the Vigszinhaz entertained 400,000 visitors last year, in a theater that can seat 1,800 on any given night.

"It's a very encouraging thing - the possibility to create theater with classics. It's a good sign," he said.

Marton first came to UNC two years ago when he

directed Moliere's *School of Wives* for the Playmakers Theater. He first met Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art Ray Dooley at a festival in New Mexico, and the two have maintained a friendship over the years.

The Playmakers production of *Uncle Vanya* will run from Feb. 26 to March 23, 2003. Marton's talk was presented by the CSEEEES and the Department of Dramatic ART. CSEEEES is also a contributor to the production of *Uncle Vanya* by Playmakers Repertory Theater.

Spring 2003 - Upcoming Events

IP5

Feb. 26 - March 23

Playmakers Repertory Company will perform Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, directed by Laszlo Marton of the Vigszhaz Theater of Budapest. For information on tickets, call (919) 962 - PLAY (7529), or check the Playmakers website: www.playmakers.org.

March 1

The AATSEELS of the Carolinas 2003 conference will be held at the Toy Lounge in Dey Hall, starting at 9:00 am. For more information on the conference, check the website www.unc.edu/~bbiljana/AATSEEL2003.html

April 9

The Russian music group, Moscow Nights, will perform as part of the Russian Culture Fest at the ArtsCenter in Carrboro. Local school groups will

come to the Arts Center and walk through a 3 or 4-part "cultural gallery" to learn about Russian language, folk artifacts, geography and history. Moscow nights will perform at 9:30 a.m. (elementary) &

presents an authentic picture of Russian folk traditions and culture.

April 10-12

The Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies will host a confer-

and International Studies; and Michael Klare, author of *Resource Wars*, and Five College Professor of Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College; and Martha Brill Olcott, senior associate at the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace, who has written a number of books and articles on Central Asia. Her most recent book is entitled *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*. For more information on the conference, visit the CSEEEES website at www.unc.edu/depts/slavic.

April 23-24

Professor Valerie Bunce from

Cornell University to UNC on April 23-24, 2003. She will give an undergraduate lecture and a graduate seminar. Bunce is one of America's leading political scientists studying comparative politics and the transitions to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Bunce's visit to UNC is sponsored by the CSEEEES.



The Yale Women's Slavic Chorus performed their unique repertoire of songs from Slavic countries, including songs from Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Russia, and Ukraine on Thursday, January 9th. The event was sponsored by (and held at) the Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence and the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies, and was just one of a number of events sponsored by the Slavic Center this spring. See above for other events./photo by Will Bettmann

11:30 a.m. (middle) Group members Vitality Bezrednov, Oleg Kruglayakov and Boris Kipchakov have centered their repertoire on Russian folklore masterpieces. Ranging from humorous songs to elaborate lyrical suites to pulsating dance numbers, this lively program

ence, "Contemporary Security Challenges in Eurasia."

Confirmed speakers include: Joseph Pressel, former U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, and Special Envoy to Nagorno-Karabakh; Anara Tabyshalieva, visiting fellow at the John Hopkins University School for Advanced

RUES grad helps with summer program in Siberia

Kate Lessey, '01 BA in Russian and East European Studies, was on campus on Feb. 13 to talk about about a summer volunteer program at Lake Baikal that she has helped to put together. Volunteers for this project will spend the summer in Siberia working on the Great Baikal Trail. Participants must pay for their own airfare, but will not incur many costs in Russia. Lessey

described the program as a great opportunity for undergraduate students who are interested in Russia but do not yet have the language skills to study at a University.

She also talked about an English language program in International Environmental Science at the University of Joensuu in Finland. This program offers a month long field

course that studies the environmental problems in the Karelia Region of Russia. Lessey spent a semester at Joensuu and is hoping to start an MA program there this fall.

For information on the Great Baikal Trail volunteer trail building project, check the website: <http://www.earthisland.org/project/viewProject.cfm?subSiteID=1>.

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