

Juliet Fierman
 Alex Schaffer
 Luis Colon
 Giampiero Indica
 Matt Schapiro
 Linda Creamer
 Alex Johnson
 Alex Schaffer
 Matt Schapiro
 John Sharpe
 Randy Schein
 Lenny Singer
 Irma St. Paulie

October 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 @ 7:30 PM
 October 12, 19 @ 3:30 PM
 La MaMa E.T.C.
 74 East 4th St. • New York, NY
 212.475.7710

La MaMa E.T.C.
 presents
 in association with
 First Avenue Co.
COYOTE, TAKE ME THERE!
 A New Play by
 Sophia Barak-Oshry
 Directed by
 Liat Lib
 From the
 Alexander Zuckerman

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COYOTE, TAKE ME THERE!
 A New Play by
 Sophia Barak-Oshry
 Directed by
 Liat Lib
 From the
 Alexander Zuckerman

M.F.T.C.
Trague
 Play by
 Ashkovsky
 Leslie Lee
 Ashkovsky
22 - Febuary 8
 8pm Sun: 2:30 & 8pm
 M.F.T.C. 74A East 4th St.
 (bet. 2 Ave & Bowery)
 Box Office / tickets on line www.lamaina.org
 to my sister Stacey M.



*Sophia
Romma*

EDUCATION

2005: Ph.D. in 19th Century Russian Literature from the Gorky Literary Institute, Moscow, Russia.

1997: MFA-Dramatic Writing + Film at New York University.

1995: BFA-Dramatic Writing +Film at New York University.

WORK EXPERIENCE

2011: Active member of the Dramatists Guild of America (Women's Initiative) Instructor of Memoir Writing From The Heart (Crash Course) at Negro Ensemble Company
Instructor of Hollywood and Its Alternatives (10 week course) at Negro Ensemble Company

2010-12: Literary Manager for the Negro Ensemble Company (on Theater Row) Teaches Writing for the Classic American Narrative Film and Avant-garde Cinema at the Negro Ensemble Company, Summer and Fall Semester

2010: Taught Beginning Playwriting and Fundamentals of Screenwriting, Summer and Fall semester 2010, at the Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center. Taught Writing for Classic American Narrative Film and Avant-garde Cinema at the Negro Ensemble Company Summer and Fall semester

2009: Subcommittee of the NYU Keogh Awards Committee

2008-11: NYU Alumni Association Board Member

2007-08: NYU Tisch School of the Arts Behind the Scenes Judge of the Autumn Playwriting Festival, Taught The Russian Short Story: Nostalgia, Poetry and Heartache of the Russian Soul at Lander College for Women

2006: Instructor of Advanced Playwriting and Screenwriting Workshops at Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center

2004-05: Wrote for Catalogue »Essence of Life—Essence of Art«.

2002-04: Ran a playwriting & screenwriting workshop at Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center.

2001-04: Professor of College Writing I + II and American Literature at Touro College, NYC.

2001-04: Professor of Art of Western Civilization at Moscow University Touro. Occasionally instructs screenwriting at the New York Film Academy.



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In The Eyes of Hope (1997)

at La MaMa Experimental Theater

Is a series of eight vignettes accompanied by soft, fine Jewish/Yiddish tunes and Russian Folk Music, tracing the immigration wave breaking against the shores of American soil and coming to grips with the American social climate. The story revolves around

a poor asthmatic young woman-an aspiring writer,taking refuge in the Youth Hostel Quarters; living and breathing the adventures of her invented characters. As if a child unlocks the secrets of her emerging writer's tormented soul and holds the key to unlock



her artistic mind; we discover Sonia, the main character, struggling with the sheer craft of writing a play, all the while puffing away at her Primatene Mist. As her asthma grows to a crescendo, Sonia hears voices in her head in the form of an actual audience. For once in her life, she finds that her characters have become that very audience, and that she herself, is in fact part of her very own play—the writer preoccupied with her childhood, family and tragic life. We are thus taken on a journey through Jewish/Russian immigration, as a breeze of nostalgia lifts us to the brink of insanity. This production at La MaMa E.T.C. was directed by Leslie Lee, who has received an OBIE Award and a Tony Nomination for his play, "First Breeze of Summer".

Directed by Leslie Lee

CAST:

*Marie Dame, *Irma St. Paule, Amelia Fowler,
*Tammy Minoff, Scott Ardizzone, Alex Schaffer,
Lois Colon, Juliet Furness, Matt Schapiro,
Linda Creamer, Giampiero Iudica, John Sharpe,
Marlene D'Amore, Alex Johnson, *Randy Schein,
Liz Maccie, *Lenny Singer, Colette Delacroix
Judd Rubin

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

**Performed at:
La MaMa E.T.C.**

A NEW PLAY
BY
SOPHIA MURASHKOVSKY

DIRECTED
BY
LESLIE LEE



COYOTE, TAKE ME THERE!

graphic artwork design by Yuri Krasny

Coyote, Take Me There! (1999)

at La MaMa Experimental Theater

This play is about the Russian/Jewish and Latin American/Hispanic immigration and the unveiling of the American dream. The central folkloric image of the play is the Creeping Coyote (Fulvia Vergel), who is interwoven in two stories: the Russian Jewish experience in Nazi Germany and the Mexican migration experience. The evening begins with monologues and then with the story of two girls: one Russian Jewish (Dagmara Dominczyk), one half-Jewish/half-Hispanic (Nicole Gomez), who are found slain. They are mysteriously brought to life, and what follows are scenes alternating between the two experiences, with the Coyote character as the American Dream who seduces the Rabbits (the Jews) and the Porcupines (the Mexicans.)

A play by **Sophia Murashkovsky**

Directed by **Leslie Lee**

Composer/Musical Director by **Alexander Zhurbin**

CAST

*Fulvia Vergel as The Creeping Coyote

*Dagmara Dominczyk as The Russian

Alex Johnson as The White Texan

Anna-Maira Jomolca as Hildegarda

*Walter Krochmal as The Porcupine (the Mexicano)

Javier Rivera as Young Bambino

Marilyn Ruth-Moore as The Older Fascist Narrator

Aaron Samson as the Rabbi's Son

Rachel Shwayder as the Rabbi's Wife

Erik Singer as the Younger Fascist Narrator

*David Winton as Master Rabbit (the Rabbi)

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

STARRY, STARRY RUSSIAN CABARET
with that extra spicy Latin sway, . .



*You Are Cordially Invited
To An Enchanted Evening
At*

NADINE'S RESTAURANT
99 BANK STREET, GREENWICH VILLAGE

BENEFITTING "COYOTE, TAKE ME THERE!"
A NEW PLAY BY SOPHIA MURDASHKOVSKY
DIRECTED BY OBIE-WINNER LESLIE LEE

MONDAY
DECEMBER 7TH, 1998
9:30 PM





Defenses of Prague (2004)

at La MaMa Experimental Theater, Bowery, NY

A fast-paced shifting mystic tale of Golem's revenge on the Gypsies of Prague, who stole his Shem, or the Good Word of God, from his mouth; and in turn churned him into a sardonic, maniacal lunatic. Set against the brink of the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968; the play revolves around a Tsiganka (Gypsy-Sorceress) symbolically named Prague, who finds work in Golem's sacrilegious Cabaret, which is housed in a synagogue on the outskirts of a crowded ancient Jewish cemetery. The Golem, once the guardian of the ghetto, is once again on the loose, as he torments Prague, his international cabaret guests—who are actually the creations of his own diabolical imagination, and plays host to a lost, psychotic Russian soldier invading Czechoslovakia. In Golem's Cabaret, Prague falls under the power of its mythical MC, who is said to be an actual descendant of the Rabbi who gave life to the legendary 17th century humanoid, the Golem of Prague. Having taken him as her Pimp, Prague learns that he had corrupted her Gypsy mother's soul as well, leaving Zemphyra The Vamp, to wither away on the grey cobblestone streets of Prague. This mystic tale is told through satirical cabaret witticisms and lively cabaret performances, accompanied by hypnotic Gypsy and Flamenco dances and igniting Russian Gypsy music.



Directed by Sophia Murashkovsky
Co-directed by Leslie Lee

CAST:

Malia Miller as Gypsy Prague
*Walter Krochmal as The Golem
Svetlana Yankovskaya as Zemphyra The Gypsy Vamp
*Meghan Andrews as Lady Di
*Amitai Kedar as Mihai The Romanian Thief
Valery Baranovsky as The Gypsy Fiddler
*Channie Waites as Shemika the African-American Journalist
Vina Less as Maria the luscious Austrian
*Grant Morenz as Herr Hoffmeister
Robert Eggers as Vano Romano or "Red Star"
Maya Levy as Zazulia the Innocent Gypsy Rose
Udi Razzin as the I-Italian Stallion
Dan Kastoriano as Jean-Paul the Gay
Erin Lehy as Nadia the Russian Bitch
Maria Hurdle as Paulina the Czech Wise Crack
Julie Said as Katya the Slovak Slut

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association



Shoot Them In The Cornfields! (2006)

at the Producers Club Theater (Theater Row, N.Y.)

A new play by Sophia Murashkovsky, is directed by Yuri Joffe, a noted, Stanislavski prize-winning director from Moscow's Mayakovsky Academic Theater. The play is a fictionalized family history that time-trips between World War II, the Khrushchev reign, and the heady days of the coup d'état of 1991. It is a first-person account of an aging Jewish woman, Yelena Levina, and her husband, Mikhail Levin, who were both banished to Butirka, one of the most notorious criminal prisons of the Soviet Union, for entrepreneurship during Nikita Khrushchev's oppressive anti-intellectual reign in 1958. In an ethereal poetic voice, Ms. Murashkovsky paints the unbearable life story of Yelena as an account told to her granddaughter, Sonya. The latter is a rambunctious second generation American writer who is gripped by asthmatic paralysis and youthful neurosis. The young woman resists her grandmother's tale due to her own desire to forsake America and move to Russia for a twisted soldier, Dimitri, who once served in Afghanistan. The drama springs off the premise of an ancient Russian Proverb: "To live a life is not as simple as crossing a field." The sensitive play spins a spool of romanticism as Mikhail, our young hopeful soldier, meets his future bride in the moments before his deployment to Stalingrad. With her grandmother's words ringing in her head, Sonya undergoes an ironically parallel journey fifty years later, in the three days that shook the world in Moscow during the coup d'état of 1991; as the lust of a hot-headed soldier overrules the innocence of a young girl's first love. The dramatic treatment is time-tripping and impressionistic, with abundant use of surreal flashbacks, live music, filmed flashbacks and rhyming poetic dialogues.



directed by **Yuri Joffe**

CAST:

Malia Miller as Sonya

*Carolyn Seiff as Yelena Levina

Bill Cory as Mikhail Levin

Grant Morenz as Ivan Griazny

*Charles Sprinkle as Young Mikhail Levin

*Lara Theodos as Young Yelena Levina

*Adepero Aduye as Sonya's best friend, and a civil rights activist

Joey Klein as Dmitri

Alona Tarniak as the Prostitute in prison

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

set design: Nikolay Sviridchik

sight and lighting design: Rod Barnes

choreography and staging: Marco Puente

character movement: Grant Morenz

costume design: Galina Gaintseva

vocalist/musical director: Stephen Borsuk

director of cinematography: Mario Chioldi

dancing: Amir Raissi, Nuria Martinez.

Absolute Clarity (2006-2007)

a spiced romance, at the Players Theater, Greenwich Village, NY

The piece is a cinematic, tragicomic coming - of - age story. Its central character, Clare, is a lonely lover, an irreverent dreamer, a rebellious daughter, and the obsession of jazz musicians. She evokes a number of Dostoyevskian themes as she lives in a world of melodies and double meanings: love is still love, even if it's imagined; death is still death, even if it's an accident. Clare struggles to actualize herself as an artist, fights for independence against her mother, briefly joins a pickpocket-filled jazz band, and revisits the lawyer and judge of her childhood custody trial, triggering disastrous consequences. Her world is populated by women who, like herself, grasp for kernels of happiness, and by men that they love and betray, who also abuse them mercilessly. Sophia Romma wrote her play in consultation with Radzinski, a contemporary Russian playwright/historian/novelist and with his approval, Romma transformed his play's teenage protagonist into a personal creation of her own.



"She," renamed Clare, became what in Russian cultures would be called a "white raven"--an artistic nonconformist, like Treplev in Chekhov's "The Seagull." Her dialogue is written rhythmically, to be accompanied by a punk jazz-band comprised of pickpockets, whom she briefly joins and which accompanies her scenes. Subplots were also introduced that "raise the stakes" for Clare's youthful odyssey. She fights doggedly for independence from her mother, a former porno star who is now a lounge dancer. While searching for her birth father, she finds the lawyer who lost his case for custody of her as a small child and seduces him, leading ultimately to a tragic ending. Clare also engages in stunning episodes that are only played out visually, as when she paints her own body inside a "confessional" as an ultimate act of adolescent defiance.

Directed: Yuri Joffe

CAST:

Cara Francis as Clare Kline
*Victoria Guthrie as Patsy Kline
*Mark Light-Orr as Counselor Daniel Weitz, Esq.
*Inbal Samuel as Sylvie Weitz
*Alexandra Basquet as LaBelle Watson
*Steven Greenstein as Judge Roberto Capria
*Jason Yochanin as Moses
*Alexander Elisa as The Duke
*Brienne Berkson as Tita Marie Ache
Patrick Knighton as Joey De Jazz, the Leader of the Pickpockets

The musicians are played by:

*Alexander Elisa, *Jason Yochanin, *Brienne Berkson, and Patrick Knighton

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

playwright: Sophia Romma
sound design: Zachary Williamson
set design: Anastasia Glebova
costume design: Anastasia Glebova
lighting design: Russel Drapkin
scenic design: Gregg Bellon
costume realization: Robert Eggers
stage manager: Sergio Cruz

The Past Is Still Ahead (2007-2009)

Premiered at the Cherry Lane Theater in NYC (Off-Broadway)

The tragic tale of Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva sheds light on a slew of high profile Russian - Jewish poets oppressed by the Communist Regime. Set in the poet's final days in 1941, the play is an unfolding series of reflections on a poetic soul in search of spiritual liberty. The story spins off the shards of the poet's shattered, dramatic life as it was destroyed by a tumultuous period in Russia's history.

The playscript draws generously from Marina Tsvetaeva's poetry and letters, including her correspondence with Rainer Maria Rilke in the summer of 1926. (Marina never actually met



her cherished Rilke, but their correspondence was an escape from the political turmoil and social devastation of the Russian Revolution). Throughout the play, Marina consults her Muse, an angelic beauty who softly sings her poetry. She also engages in dialogues with her stern, cynical mother, who ferociously grinds her fingers to the bone on a piano, perched center stage. Marina sings poetic madrigals and longs for the end of a rope to cease her misery. Always in need of friends, lovers, and the company of poets, she engages in a mystical tango on stage with her raven-haired lesbian poet lover, Sophia Parnok (based on the poem "I'm glad your sickness is not of my will"), which her innocent husband, Sergey Efron, views from aside, in utter distress. In Act 2, she is mercilessly interrogated by an NKVD Officer, who appears as a dark presence throughout the play, representing the horror and pressure to which Tsvetaeva was subjected in the final days of her life.

The Past Is Still Ahead premiered at the legendary Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater in Moscow, Russia in 2007 and was directed by Yuri Joffe and François Rochaix. It was also performed in 2008, as an Off-Broadway Production at the Cherry Lane Theater in New York, where it was directed by Sophia Romma and François Rochaix.



written by Sophia Romma
directed by Sophia Romma and François Rochaix
at the Cherry Lane Theater, NYC.

CAST:

Yelena Romanova as Marina Tsvetaeva
Alexander Rapaport as the NKVD Officer
Inna Leytush as Maria Meyn (Tsvetaeva's Mother)
Tosh Marks as Rainer Maria Rilke,
Blok, Pasternak, Mandelstam, and Rodzevich,
and Veronika Mitina as Tsvetaeva's Muse

music composed by: Dimitri Shostakovich

Performed in Oxford in May of 2009 and at the Pushkin House in London, also in May of 2009. In November of 2010, the play was performed at the Millennium Theater in New York City.





Plays

A sweet word of advice (2008-2010)

A one-act play written by Sophia Romma, inspired by Anton Chekhov's 19th century short story "Mire," spins a stark tale of a young Russian Jewish Émigré, Svetlana Moiseyevna—eccentric, poetic, with a most enchanting feminine vixen's voice, who captures the heart of a twenty-eight year old renegade Lieutenant, James Perso Arrivederci. "A Sweet Word of Advice" is an explosively liberating, funny and maniacal assault on the banality of materialism, and the hypocrisy of war—ultimately a celebration of unearthly, unexpected and untimely love.

The play featured Laura D'amico (in 2008 at the JCC Theater, NYC) and Naomi McDougall Jones (in 2010 at the Jewel Box Theater, Theater Row) as Svetlana Moiseyevna, Tosh Marks in the role of Lieutenant James Perso Arrivederci, *Alan Mirchin as Slava Rothstein and *Carolyn Seiff as Tovah Rothstein.

*Actors appear courtesy of Actor's Equity Association

"A Sweet Word of Advice" premiered on Sunday, June 8th, 2008 at 10 PM at the:

JCC in Manhattan
334 Amsterdam Ave at 76th Street
New York, New York 10023





“A Sweet Word of Advice”

A new One-Act Play

**Written and Directed by
Sophia Romma**

**premieres on Sunday, June 8th, 2008 at 10 PM at the
JCC in Manhattan
334 Amsterdam Ave at 76th Street
New York, New York 10023**

A sweet word of advice

Set Design by Inna Bodner, Sound Design by Dimitri German, Stage Manager, Zana Borisevic.

"A Sweet Word of Advice" shall enjoy a reprise once more, at the Midtown International Theater Festival, at the Jewel Box Theater, on July 22nd, 24th and 25th, 2010.



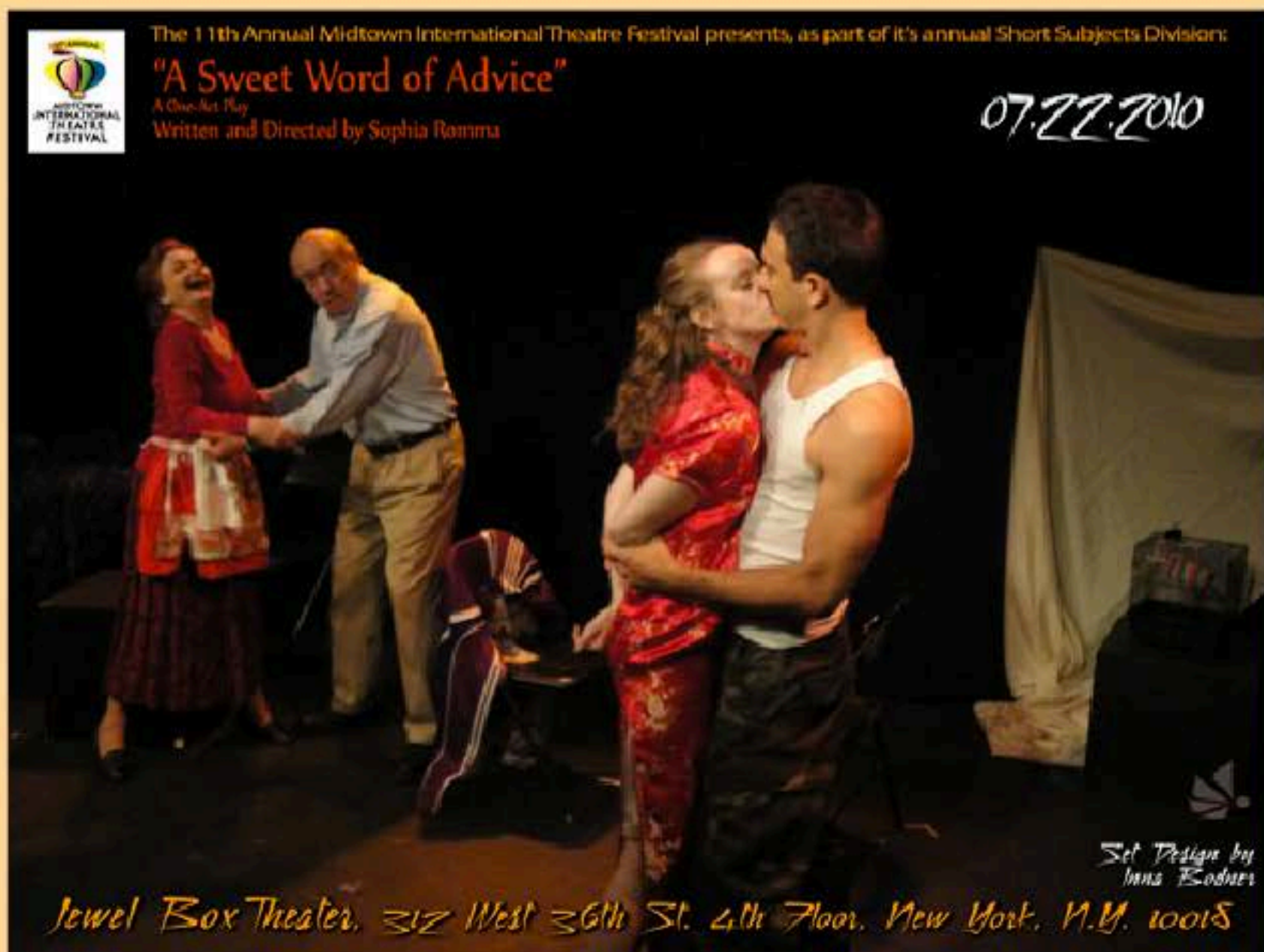
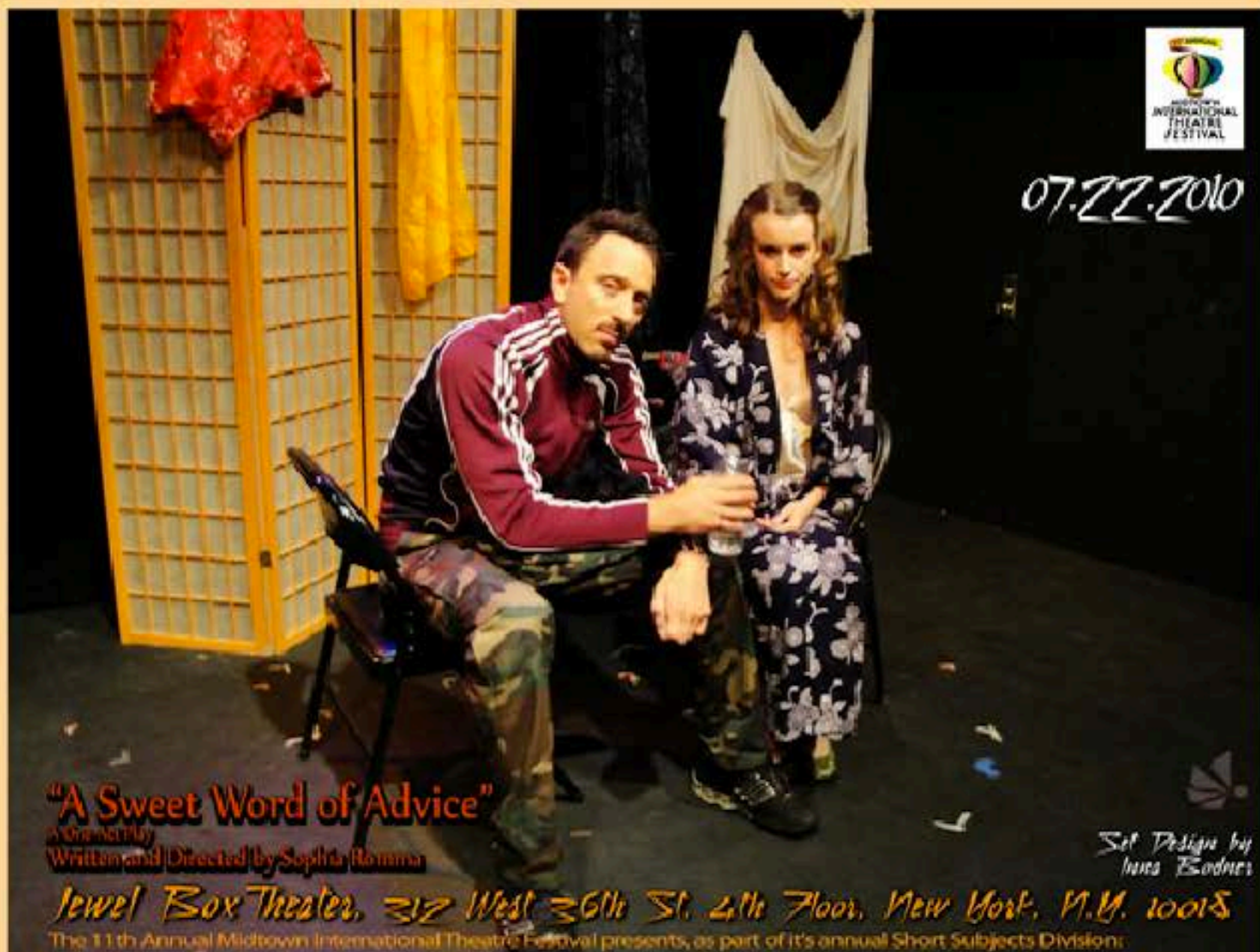
"A Sweet Word of Advice"

A new One-Act Play

Written and Directed by Sophia Romma

**June 28, 2008
JCC in Manhattan
334 Amsterdam Ave at 76th St.
New York, NY**

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Plays

"With Aaron's Arms Around Me" and "The Mire"

The plays were performed at the Cherry Lane Theater in Greenwich Village in New York in December of 2010.

Produced by The Negro Ensemble Company, directed by Charles Weldon.





THE **NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY** INC.

PRESENTS TWO ONE-ACTS

"WITH AARON'S ARMS AROUND ME" & "THE MIRE"

WRITTEN BY SOPHIA ROMMA DIRECTED BY CHARLES WELDON

"WITH AARON'S ARMS AROUND ME": For two young women (one a Jamaican Émigré and the other a Russian Jew) struggling with inter-racial relationships; love is a universal theater. Love has no boundaries, adheres to no creed nor any color, no borders and no religion exist; there is no care for age, no reverence for space or time.

STARRING **NAOMI MCDOUGALL JONES** AND **LATONIA PHIPPS***

"Both plays deal with the eternal themes of intolerance and bigotry



in the eyes of and through the experience of two young Émigrés."

"THE MIRE": An eccentric poetic Russian Jewish Émigré, seduces an Italian American Lieutenant recently back from the haunting war in Iraq. She reels men in, gets under their skin, and she never relinquishes the debt - and that's that!

STARRING

TOSH MARKS, ALLAN MIRCHIN*
NAOMI MCDOUGALL JONES AND **CAROLYN SEIFF***

Friday Dec. 3rd through Sunday Dec. 19, 2010
At **THE CHERRY LANE STUDIO THEATER**
38 COMMERCE STREET NEW YORK CITY

between
Bedford
&
Hudson



*These artists are members of the Actor's Equity Association

'With Aaron's Arms Around Me' is a short and sweet piece that, although quite subtle in its implications, really expresses the playwrights views. The emotions of the actresses were impeccably portrayed.

'The Mire' was a grand performance as well. I was a bit unsure of what to expect of a 19th century Russian short story by Chekhov, adapted to the theatrical stage in the 21st century; but I was impressed. The play was performed in an entirely modern fashion, yet still holds true to Chekhov's themes. The play feels a little too long, especially compared with Chekhov's version, but by the end you are wishing there was just a little more. The play is also sufficiently humorous, dramatic, and suspenseful so there is never a dull moment.

Eddy Bogaslavsky, Brooklyn, NY (audience comment)

Plays



New York Times Review (from the Arts and Leisure Section, December, 2010, by Andrew Webster).

In “Aaron’s Arms” one college student interviews another for an assignment. The droll, cynical Tanya (Naomi McDougall Jones), a Russian-American Jew, questions Madeleine (LaTonia Phipps), an aspiring dramatist from Jamaica, about her relationship with her Jewish boyfriend, Aaron — how they met, and how his parents greeted their union with dismay. Tanya has reason to be curious: her own boyfriend is a Roman Catholic Italian-American, and she has been baptized, to her parents’ mortification.

As Madeleine tells her tale, a portrait emerges of a generation far less concerned with intermarriage than its forebears. Ms. Phipps sustains the island lilt and meandering passages with ease, but her character is almost too saintly. It’s Tanya’s acerbic comments that get the laughs. The play ends abruptly, with the audience wanting more of her.

“The Mire,” an adaptation of Chekhov’s short story “Mire,” feels more complete. A disaffected Italian-American deserter from the Iraq war (Tosh Marks) goes to the home of Svetlana, a Russian Jew, seeking payment of a debt she owes his brother.

Svetlana (Ms. Jones) lives with her grandparents (Carolyn Seiff and Allan Mirchin). They are stock characters, but the actors, especially Mr. Mirchin, play them with comic dexterity, confounding Mr. Marks’s humorless lieutenant. He is further undone by Svetlana, who speaks in effervescent wordplay artfully derived from Chekhov, and is ensnared in her (and Ms. Jones’s) enchantments. So is the audience.

“With Aaron’s Arms Around Me” and “The Mire” continue through Sunday at the Cherry Lane Theater, 38 Commerce Street, West Village; (212) 239-6200, necinc.org.

Published by Andrew Webster for the New York Times.

Doroga (2012)

"Doroga" is a new jazzy Émigré play by Sophia Romma, directed by Yuri Joffe, of the legendary Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater. It spins a tale of transient dislocated Meshuggah souls, shattering the prism glass of their Eastern European past and etching a deep wrinkle on America's complex, demanding turf of liberty.

At the Dramatists Guild of America (as part of the Women's Initiative Friday Night Footlights Reading Series) on April 27th, 2012

The Dramatists Guild of America Women's Initiative

The Women's Initiative at the Dramatists Guild has been established to achieve women's parity in theater and to support women in the theatrical world. That is our mission. Enjoy the staged reading of "Doroga".

The Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater



The Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater is one of the major theaters in Moscow, of equal standing with the Moscow Art Theater, the Chekhov Theater of Moscow, Gorky Theater of Moscow, Savrimenik Theater, Leninsky

Comsomol Theater, The Pushkin Theater, The Maly Theater and Ostrovski Theater of Moscow. When founded in 1922, the Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater nestled itself in a historic building that had previously housed the Paradis Theater in the late 19th century, hosting foreign and St. Petersburg theatrical troupes and celebrities of the time, including Sarah Bernhardt and Eleanora Duse. Its credo is that any theater's expressive means must be renewed permanently to provoke deep-rooted dramatic reaction from contemporary audiences. The Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater is pleased to work with Sophia Romma as one of their playwrights in residence. Her plays are moving and controversial. She is the only Russian born American playwright on the Board of Directors at the Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater in Moscow and the only woman playwright in residence in the history of the theater.

The Negro Ensemble Company



The mission of the Negro Ensemble Company, Inc. (NEC) is to provide African-American, African and Caribbean professional artists with an opportunity to learn, to work, to grow and to be nurtured in the performing arts. The overall mission of the NEC is to present live theatre performances by and about black people to a culturally diverse audience that is

often underserved by the theatrical community. Women playwrights are just as important and must not be forgotten. Therefore, the NEC makes it a point to produce and actively support plays by female playwrights, whose voices should equally be heard. We are very proud of Sophia Romma, as a playwright and as our colleague. She has demonstrated an indelible soul and is a great advocate for minority voices in the theatrical arena.

Starring:

*Walter Krochmal, *Allan Mirchin, *Carolyn Seiff, Tosh Marks, Gwenevere Sisco, *Randy Schein, Linda Meris, Bettina Bennett, Dana Pelevine, *Adriana Sananes

*Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association





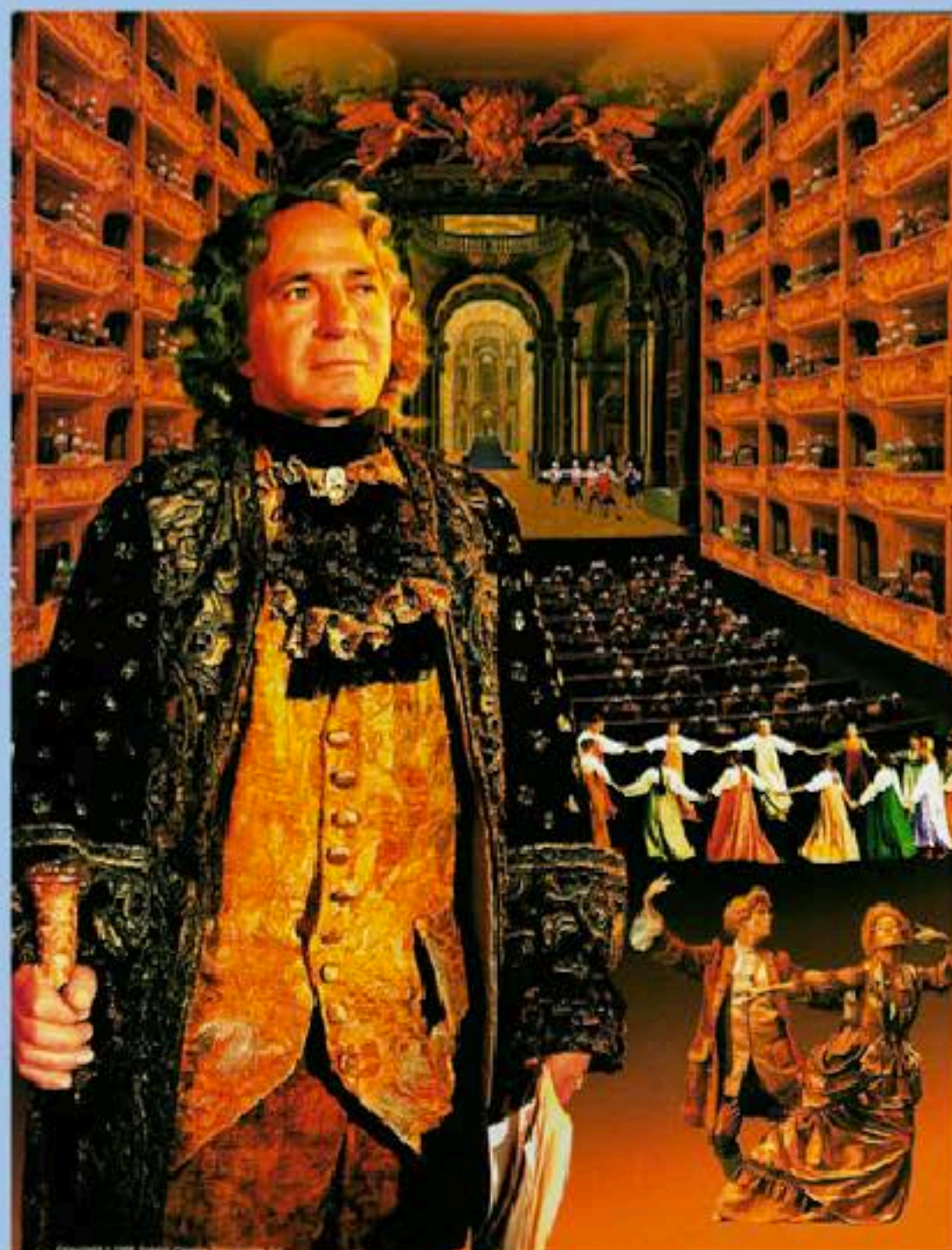
Pook Liza

Liza (Barbora Bobulova) is a good - willed and beautiful peasant girl who dutifully tends to her frail, ailing mother while handling chores in their simple village in the outskirts of Moscow, Russia. One day she catches the attention of a dashing nobleman named Erast (Gabriel Olds), who is smitten instantly and begins paying Liza secret love visits every night. The pair keep their affection pure and chaste, and yet, can any good come of this star - crossed romance between the slumming lord and the farmer's daughter? Perhaps not, as narrator Ben Gazzara, playing Karamzin himself, phantasmagorically bursts onto the glorious Russian front where golden cupolas glaze in the rays of the sun, breaking the Brechtian fourth - wall, solely to remind us of the utter sorrow of a love that while classy, may never hope to be classless.

written by
Sophia Romma

directed by
Slava Tsukerman

Cast:
Ben Gazzara
Lee Grant
Barbora Bobulova
Gabriel Olds



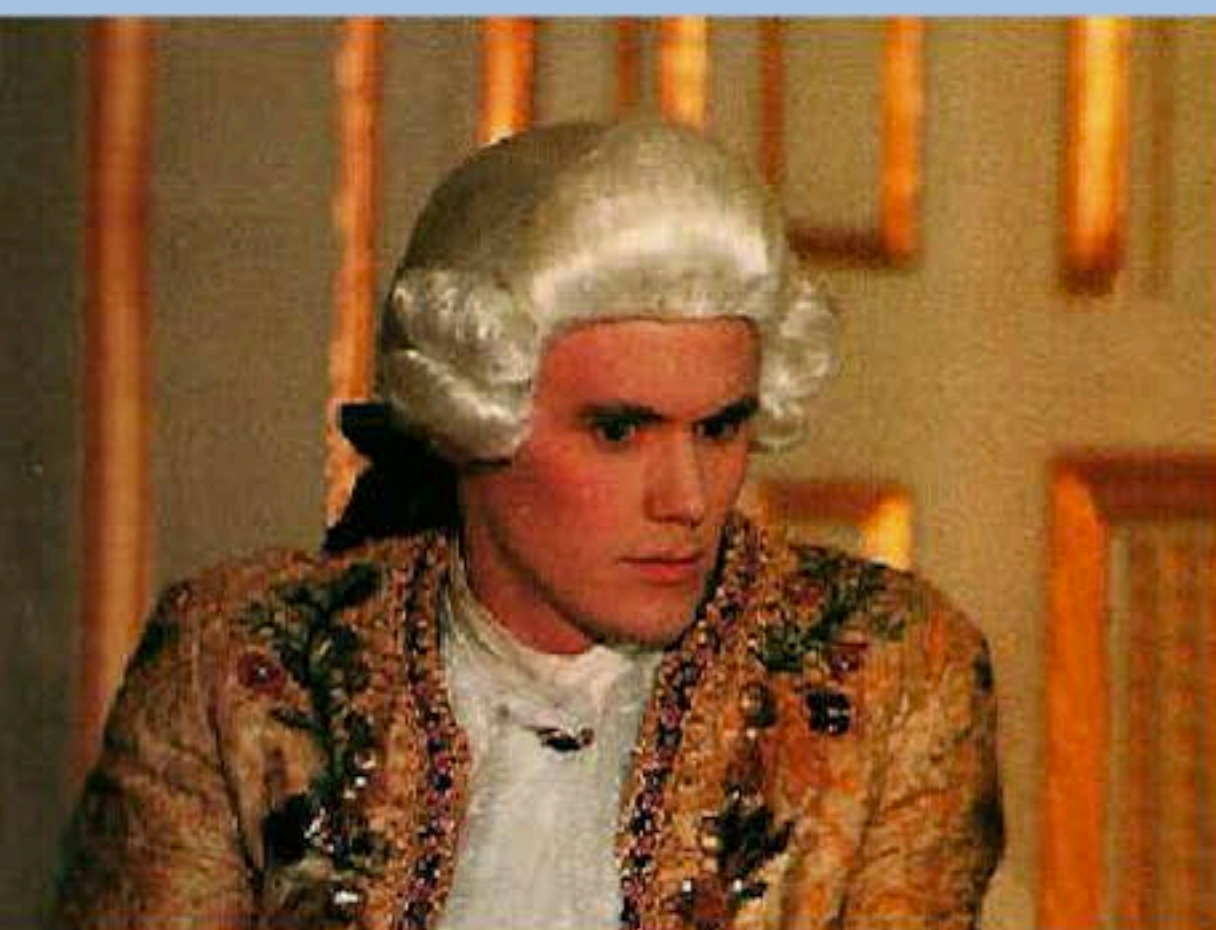
Poor Liza starred Academy Award Winner Lee Grant as Countess Elizabeta and Academy-Award Nominee, Ben Gazzara ad Nikolai Karamzin. The film premiered at the Loewe's Movie Theater in Greenwich Village, NY, in 1999.

It ran at the Anthology Film Archives as a limited engagement, as was described by critics as "the most beautifully lyrical film ever shot..." The film went on to compete at the Cairo Film Festival and won the Garnet Grand Prix Bracelet for best screenplay at the Gatchena Literature in Film Festival, in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2001.

»The most lyrically beautiful drama phantasma to ever unfold on the silver screen« The Village Voice

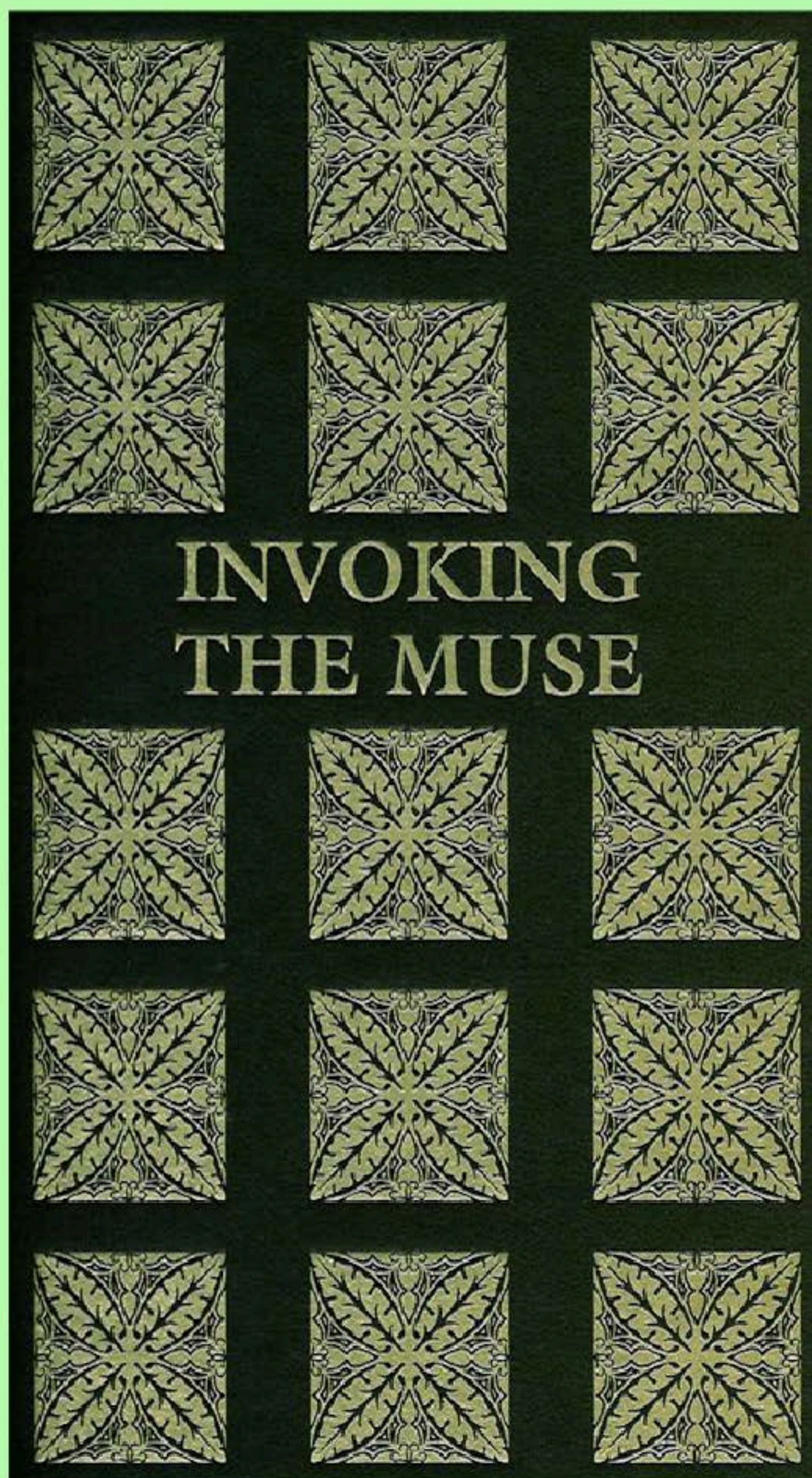
»An independent jewel...a poetic ballad of words interwoven with stunning visuals«

The Anthology Film Archives



AWARDS:

- Won coveted Grand Prix Bracelet for best screenplay at prestigious Gatchena Film Festival in St. Petersburg in 2001.
- Competed at 21st Moscow Int'l Film Festival's hors-concourse
- Competed at Cairo Film Festival
- Presented at Sochi Film Festival "Kinotaur", where it won for best directing in 2001
- Presented at Anthology Film Archives
- Presented at Great Neck's Art Center
- Directed by Slava Tsukerman, cult-classic director of Liquid Sky
- Starred Academy Award Nominee, Ben Gazzara and Academy Award Winner, Lee Grant



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Emerald May

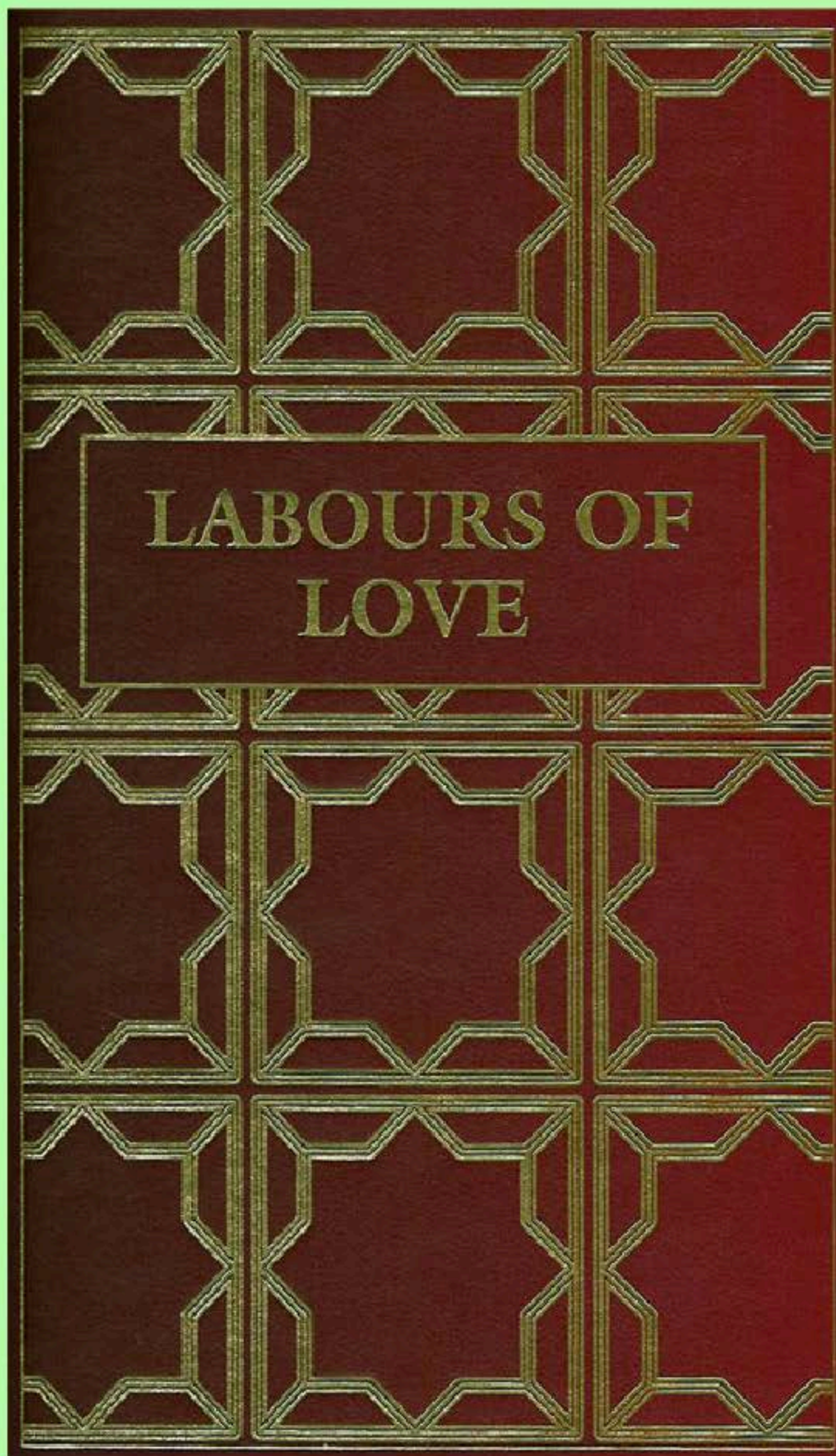
For my only sister, Stacey Murashkovsky

Under the heavy-hearted sky,
With boisterous storm clouds,
Bloated by the bitter rain-
Ice pellets thrashed against our
Crumbling window-pane.
Yet all the while, we slept,
Two bodies mashed beneath
These dove-white sheets.
And now, with arms apart,
Like wayward church bells yonder chiming,
With winding feet to feet,
My cold had long awaited
Your delayed sweet heat.

The pleasant breath of waking day
Received our droopy eyes.
Our love had finally churned
This April butter
Into a luscious emerald May.

Sophia Murashkovsky

I dedicate this poem to the memory of my sister; in memory of her eternal flickering love which shall sustain my life each and every Emerald May.



Compilation © 2005 Published
by Noble House Publishers

What If?

To my only baby sister, Stacey

What if in writing this I cause the ink to bleed
Over the paper's sturdy face the blotchy blue,
The poet's words will tempt with greed.

What if by writing this,
The day to murky night, my author's hands shall feed?

What if this note for note,
And measure here for measure,
A soldier's war-infested mouth with gluttony shall breed?
What more must my poetic verse on this Earth treasure

When pleasure proves to be unearthly seed-
spawned from the den of Satan at his leisure?
What if in framing prose I dedicate a god to you?

What if a stanza broken here and there,
Composes song and harkens tone to hue?

What if, by chance, granted this writer's circumstance,
The poem would ask of you for one swift dance-
The toe bowing to toe-igniting courteous romance?

What if in setting pen to sheet,
I summon hail and beating snow, then murderous sleet?

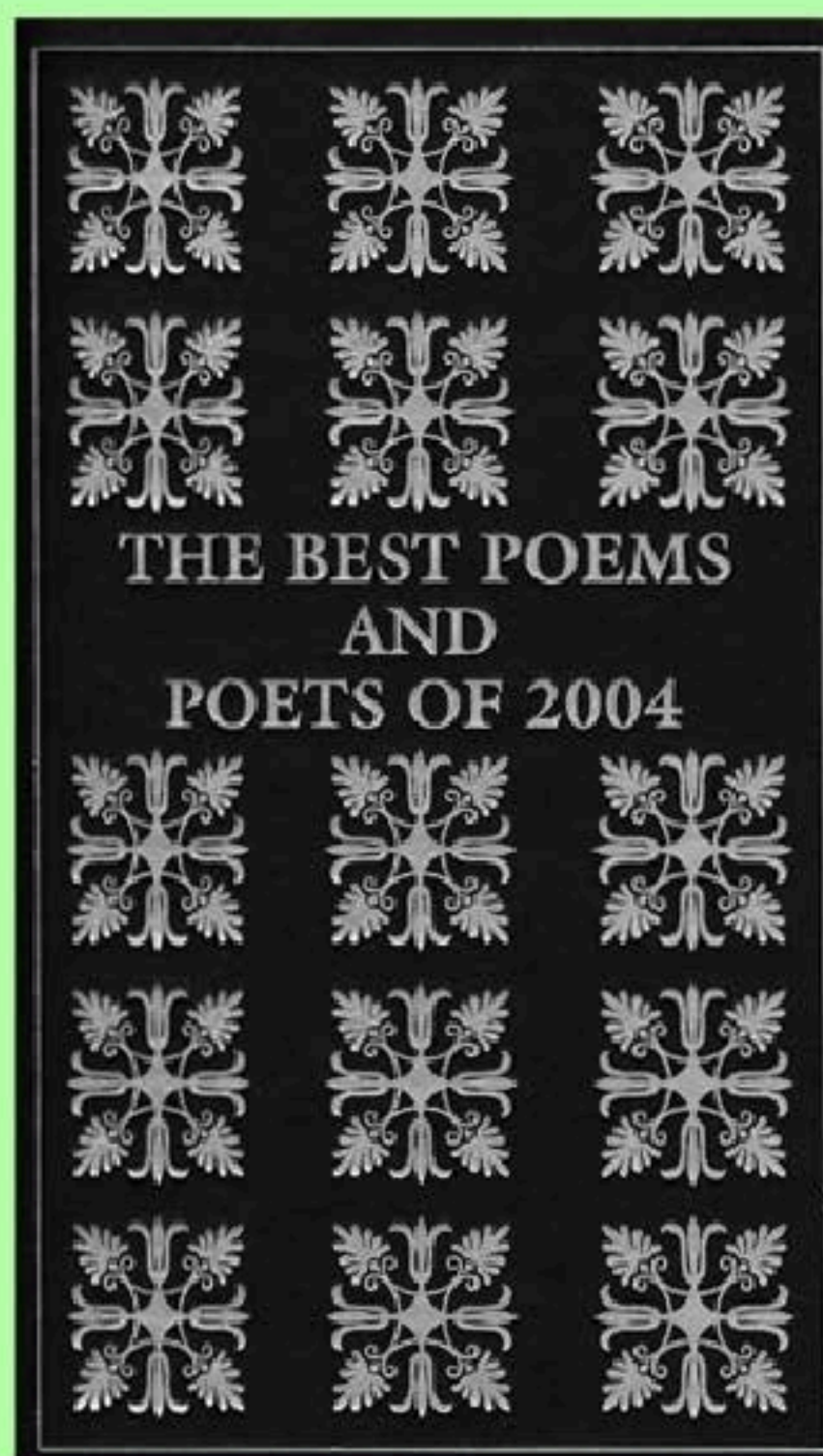
What if there is no if?

But only will?

What if by filling in the blanks,

Your love from me
My heart would steal?

"What If?" toys with the idea of the poet as God, able like the magician to churn day into night, and perhaps even to revive the dead. I dedicate this poem, once more, to the boundless memory of my only sister, Stacey, a brilliant, flickering flame.



With my poem, "Our Fatal Wound," I've attempted to express a deep moaning of the soul from the bereaved, a longing for my sister. A poet, with unruly words for weapons, may only hope to deliver a glimpse of an indigo afternoon at the very core of amber autumn. My sister, however, showered the family with poetic revelation--golden, neon, and brilliant. She entered this world like a flash, for a brief second in time, believed in God, in the righteousness of man, ignored strife; and so in our hearts shall rest eternally remembered. There is no antidote for the poison of death. Thus, we suffer a fatal wound.

Our Fatal Wound

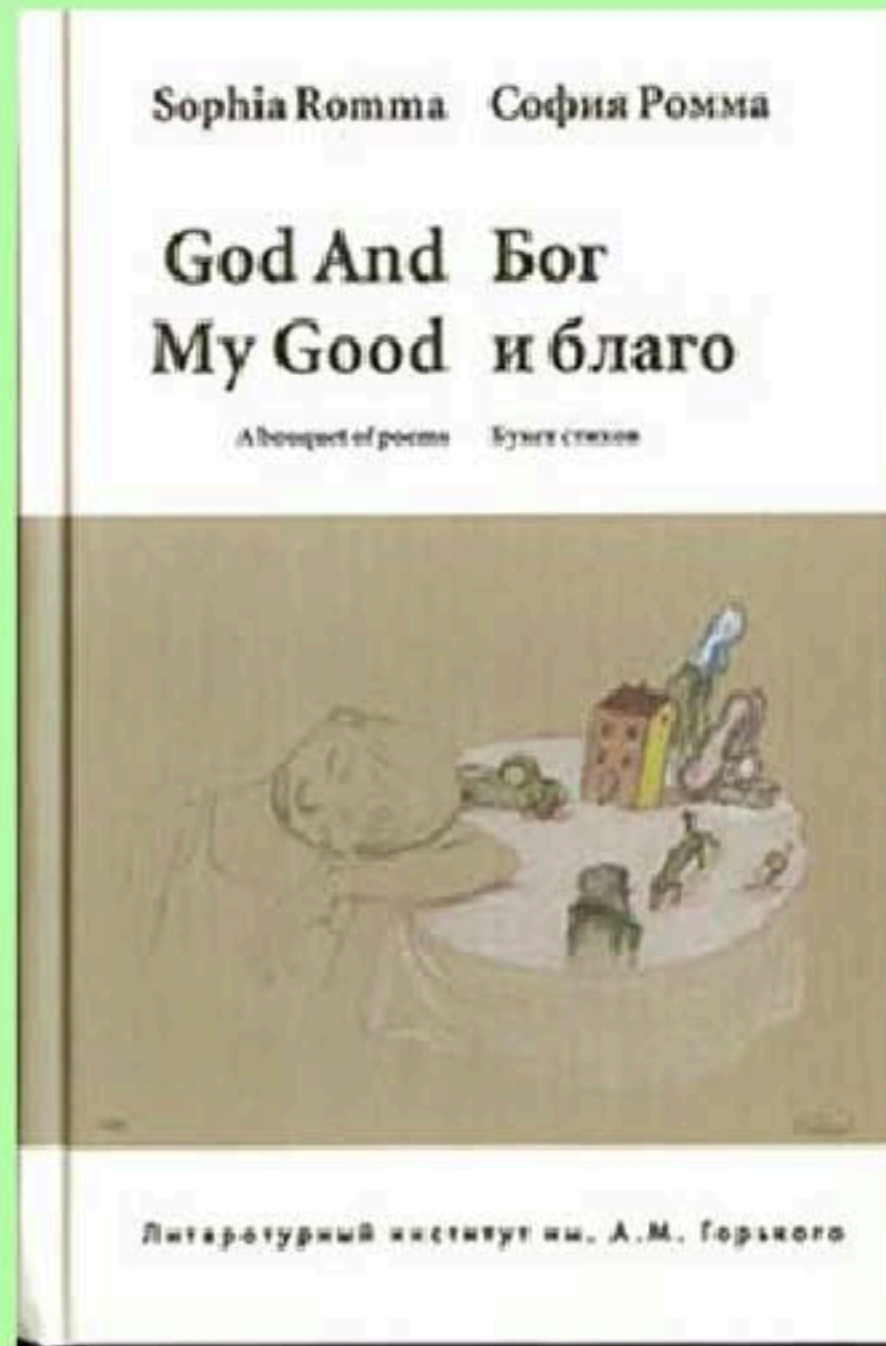
To Anastasia Murashkovsky

There was no amber afternoon for you today;
Nor any lilac night to leave your gentle body rested.
There was no spark of lemon light to claim your auburn hair.
No rainbow glanced from under blotchy rain at you;
No God, who once had promised you eternal life.
No tender soul to bid you well,
Or wish you peace upon your travels.
There are no earthly words to match your witty tongue;
No gallant swords to fight your brave-heart war.

Whoever took the liberty to snuff you out,
Is branded now, for always-
And straight to the inferno bound.

There is a wound in Heaven.
There's blood against the sky.
There's no invented time machine,
To make the idle days fly by.

There is no crafty fire,
To warm our forlorn house.
We live here, mercilessly vacant-
You have forsaken us.



A bouquet of poems by Sophia Romma.
New York, 1986--Moscow, 2005.
Published by The Maxim Gorky Literary Institute, 2005.

VOICES VANISHED

I am among the many now who've seen,
The relic Twin Towers vanish.
I hear the howls whipped
By the rising dust,
And in the center of the earth--
America is lost, by some fanatic lust.

The sooty helpless ones,
They cross the bridge.
I've let my stomach slide.
Although from God, I cannot hide.
There must be some other "plan" for me.
Some deity has kept me safe in bed,
With seven months of pregnancy.

They rummage through the rubble;
Those relatives of displaced ones--
Never to be found!
The beaten downtown streets,
Bemoan the shadows of the tourists' glow.
I once turned on the tube,
And thought it was the "Morning Show!"

It isn't over yet...
How could the so-called enemy
Treat innocent civilians, lethally, like that?
I won't touch anything today at all,
I'll starve myself--
And sob as our brave heroes fall.

The scraping of my heart
Aches for this wounded country's soul.

For all those who perished in September 11th, 2001

JERUSALEM THORN

A spiteful Old World shrub
Was lately brought to me.
I knew it well for it was of the buckthorn family—
With its olive thick foliage,
Curling over me.

I wove that crown of thorns against my
Wailing wind of liberty.
I swear the Savior's Crown,
Was truly meant for me!
But then life's jester stole
From under me,
The spikes of Shrub-
Christ's beloved thorns.

Oh dear Jerusalem thorn,
How prickly you can be.
A jerky road religion's built from
Christ's tormenting thorns,
And still, today, I'm certain
Jesus
Has been dying for our sins,
Although I'm not his favorite
Woman—
Not by any means.

ROSE FEVER

I've never seen her more adorned
And baited by the "light".
I've never sensed so strongly—
That there she was, and once more is
As if it were...
How long ago when our rails parted?

While blowing steam,
Our train headed for her north,
Though at that time
My south
Had soon departed.

I've often thought of her since then,
And now her presence touches me again.
The flour whiteness of her hair
The moonlit skin,
My temples throbbing with her hypertension pain.

I've never seen her more at ease,
Or more at home,
In comfort on her own...
And strolling through her melancholy
Smooth piano keys,
It seems she's longed for me too long.
Perhaps, as long as I've been drearily broken-
hearted.

November 8th, 2008

(Six years of grief, with no sight of relief)

The gilded golden leaves reveal
a testimony to your tears.
They gather softly in the graying puddles by the shadows
of a tired day,
They sweep across my bulging heart; and as the wind
screams out your name,
The stirring memory of loving you, after six god forsaken
years, remains the same.
Yet stronger grows the scent from your tender nape,
brushing against my skin.
The family pretends each day to live,
but there is no escape from our prison, within.
And our dear mother simply cannot break the
chains of pain.
She's still in life, and yet a specter now;
her soul lives on no more.
There is no remedy in autumn;
no potion in a vile to pass the time.
No poet's rhythm in a line, no wine, no God Divine.
The bitter afternoon turns violet dark, I rub my eyes.
By lampposts veiled in smog and fog, the barren branches
Scratch your holy Name.
The family is lost; brimming with sadness—even
a touch insane.
And though I've gained this maddening Fall, a baby boy,
I long for you, my baby sister, still, for you're the only one
Who ever could bring to my heart, the pulse of light.
And churn our endless drippy mourning, into joy.
Into the sweetest cherry marmalade melodies
On rainy damp, November days.

A DAY IN THE LIGHT OF THEATER

Actors, with faces warped, oh how they swoop;
 carry each emotion off.
 While sailing with brutal features,
 against the breaking wind of day.
The theater, bursting out with laughter, in the background.
 And yet look yonder, there:
 a spectator or two--have gone astray.

What can I, the ultimate director, say?
 I've led them into passion, war,
perhaps I've even trashed them all—I'm such a boar!
 Once or twice I'm sure I've made them mad!
I'm known to whore about with this feeling and that...
 But I am wise; I let them go when they need rest.
I make them stay, when I want them to play a scene, it's true,
 I can be bitter mean.
 My lips quiver with heat as I observe them,
 entwined in some dramatic dream.
I do confess; that with my verse, I can be quite obscene.
I own the rights to the entire show; I am the genuine hero.
At least, behind the scenes, I still believe in truth, my actors know.

Gypsy performers come and go; still my words beg to stay...
To spread across the page, as weapons cursed and tossed.
But still pronounced, and acted on the stage, with rage or love;

 I've marked my script with rouge, indulgent,
 you may say, why, yes, I know.
For this show and for that one too, my soul I've always shed.
 I care not who bed whom,
or why that airhead girl behind the curtains bled.
 Or why I'll scream at that damn heroine,
 "Off with her blasted head!"

I am above the rest in honor,
instead of watching them perform,
I'm brewing up a storm, flirting with delight—
I'm off to scratch my ear, that hour of the night is near...
I've taken my valerian root and plunged
my eyes towards the empty ceiling,
Where the Second Act, I fail, for reasons,
unbeknownst to anyone, to actually hear.
I do so need another drink, I fear.

Alas, I've grown worthless to my reader, now.
As I've been raped and beaten
by the bastard daughters of the amphitheater.
Much like King Lear—that's the harshest truth to face,
Whether you like me in this role
I play or if you simply don't dare care to say.
Whichever is your pleasure, rest assured,
that in the world of theater,
Measure, for measure, I shall always get it served my way.

The Soldier Born

Dangling in the snowy abyss,
The wide strokes of fate paint a cease fire.
Lips parted, the soldier heaves a hiss.
Retires into the night, defeated, his strength depleted.
The light of day—now fading.

He's fought for his country and for me,
with boisterous missiles,
With swords he fought, with blades, grenades.
Still the shades of tomorrow may yet dawn.
And then perhaps a little boy, another soldier,
Into this torn and battered world shall be born.
And while his cold world is at war,
That One, there in the green, yonder...
He simply can't fight any more.

His limbs are aching; he has a broken will.
His Mama's in the kitchen baking,
Hurry home!
I'll be on that porch, waiting,
Behind the open-wooden door.
As my heart continues shaking,
As it never had before!

His Fingers Clenching My Guitar

For my only sister, Stacey

These figs for thumbs,
Grating my supple heart to crumbs.
And in this Cubist's eyes,
I'm thus disgraced.
While he's already crafted olives with my ballet face!
Sipping at lust from waterfalls,
That mirror, mimic, mutate aching me,
These nimble days he's calling it his "Art"
With such audacity!
His Fingers Clenching My Guitar.
Those used and borrowed limbs,
Romancing Eastern European in-betweens.
Molested by his alcoholic violent dreams,
We've dipped to serious extremes,
Temptation dangling off his lingering seams.
His fingers clenching my guitar.
Oh, lofty lover love me as you are!
His fingers pluck at my unnerved guitar.
I once did so, oh, how I yearned to love, you know.
Yet still his fingers grope for my guitar.
I learn to loathe each willful string, brewed by deceit,
Though I have been a willing captive, begging at his feet!
Lord, how I do detest this "Artsy" one,
With whom I fancied once to be a Movie Star!

Love Is Our Religion

The lips with brush strokes wide preserve,
The harvest lust of his mist, her herb.
The traces of his mouth reveal a steadfast heart,
In contrast to our girlie “cheating”
Will against his earnest curves and curving curls.
His winding light of tongue above her temple beats,
As my discreet wound of a bloated heart absorbs,
The glory of their so-called warped, mystic wit.
And yet we’ve swapped our love for many others too.
May God have mercy, for beauty in monogamy,
We surely never knew!

The moody river ribbons dance beneath our lids.
The sunken pillow and the blood-shot sheets,
Embark upon the journey of our twisted passion’s heat.
My purple ardor stains and madly sweeps over his mustached face.
Two coquette’s bittersweet revenge over one man’s amorous rage!
Resting his chin within the chiseled charm,
Of heaving powdered bosoms,
The lacquered lakes of lace sweep over limbless oceans,
Which we vengefully embrace.
Tumbling amongst the weeds, face to face,
Drawing nearer to a haunting cease.
The curtains afire, blaze with our lecherous sleep,
While our ancestors in heaven weep.
Still, no boundaries in the Trinity of Love exist.
Thus, all the taboos thrust at us—vanish dutifully before us.
We are each other’s prison—love’s our only jail.
Now, we grant you, the jury,
Permission to sentence this lewd three-way affair.

The Damsel In Distress

Whether by beastly claws or by the sharp of blade,
The Damsel In Distress
Sunday afternoon was laid to rest.
The willows chuckled at the painted ebony of sky,
While ivory clouds imbedded with the portrait of her
Porcelain skin, had slowly floated
by to a parade of shrieking
Death bells, the church, the painted cross,
and then the reign
Of Christ wept for the gruesome pair
of guilty hooded cloaks,
Both longing in this life to be,
Nothing but worshipped millionaires, you see.
They stood against the drenched
and out of focus villagers.
Their bellies bloated with the kernels of an empty greed.
The music shifted from the
burdensome air and blew about,
The shards and crystal crimson petals once in bloom,
Speckled like the flies at supper, 'round her tiny
Wooden coffin.
As soggy silhouettes knelt low,
Beneath the paper crescent of a fading moon.
The fiddle and the cello played, and in the background,

In her homage, familial respects were ever so austerely paid.

The preacher prayed, the voices had in chorus,
Trembling, whispered, at holy last, a lisp of fear unveiled from
Two deceitful bodies.

The murderers among the crowd revealed her husband,
Lured onward by his lady lover, a vicious partner in this
Horrid crime!

The damsel's slaughterers, who having slain with
Swords for words, bore their confessions to and unforgiving
Father Time.

As I, the poet, grasp my pen, consult my sobbing wine,
And clutch this gnawing, bleeding heart of mine.

With White Gardenias in Her Hair

A Tribute To Billie Holiday

There at the Blue Note where the Jazz spells ruin,
There by the blunt and unforgiving moon,
We swoon, with white gardenias in her scarecrow hair.
Her salty lips, the sea drawn air.
Like blood of burgundy brushed off my mystic memory.
Her carousal bravado velvet voice catches my ear.
I've let the tablecloth with vodka spill.
I fear the blow from her mad raving raven lips.
I sense the tambourine remark upon her swaying nimble hips.

There by the Olive Tree we'll meet.
How I will clumsily dance and step all over her
Fatigued and swollen feet.
With white gardenias in Billie's silvered hair,
She'll gaze at me and bid the artist on his way.
I won't dare budge.
I have a great deal more to say.

Oh Lady Day, how can I conjure
up your most expressive face?
We've never met nor can I ever pray erase,
The bopping of your brow against the drowsy microphone.

Or how you once, in drunken dreams,
caressed my sallow cheeks.
Your soulful kindred lyrics always do the trick.
I still so hope to resurrect my Billie, though.
And then perchance, one sacred heaven's night,
Alter our bitter doom, into a sweeter Holiday of life.

Infertile Me

Damn straight to hell the wind that howling hauled him in.
Dread all those thoughts bursting from drunken bubbling rain.

Mimicking him.

The lips desire what the ears have heard.
The heart's raped by the sickle of his fibs,
If only truth be told.

My marigold entwining with his jet black hair.
My supple chest heaves to the rhythm of his final,
Cheating breath.

So I undress and flip my bare breasts,
Over to each side.

And peering through the mirror, I rewind.
That mortal creature-woman glaring back at me,
Abrupt and interrupted, ageless, sexless,
A victim of untimely infertility.

Where were the angels hiding
when they lost their faith in me?
They swear that love is blind, but love has eyes.
In love, I've swapped nothing but manly lies.
Baited by men, then tricked all over again.
I share a tender female's animosity,
For heartless, careless,
endless macho male monstrosity!

Essence of Life-Essence of Art is a Catalogue/Exhibition presenting thirty Eastern European Artists, comprising approximately 250 artworks. This unique catalogue is written in essay form by Sophia Murashkovsky along with Jadran Adamovic, the curator of the exhibition. It consists of personal interviews with the artists.

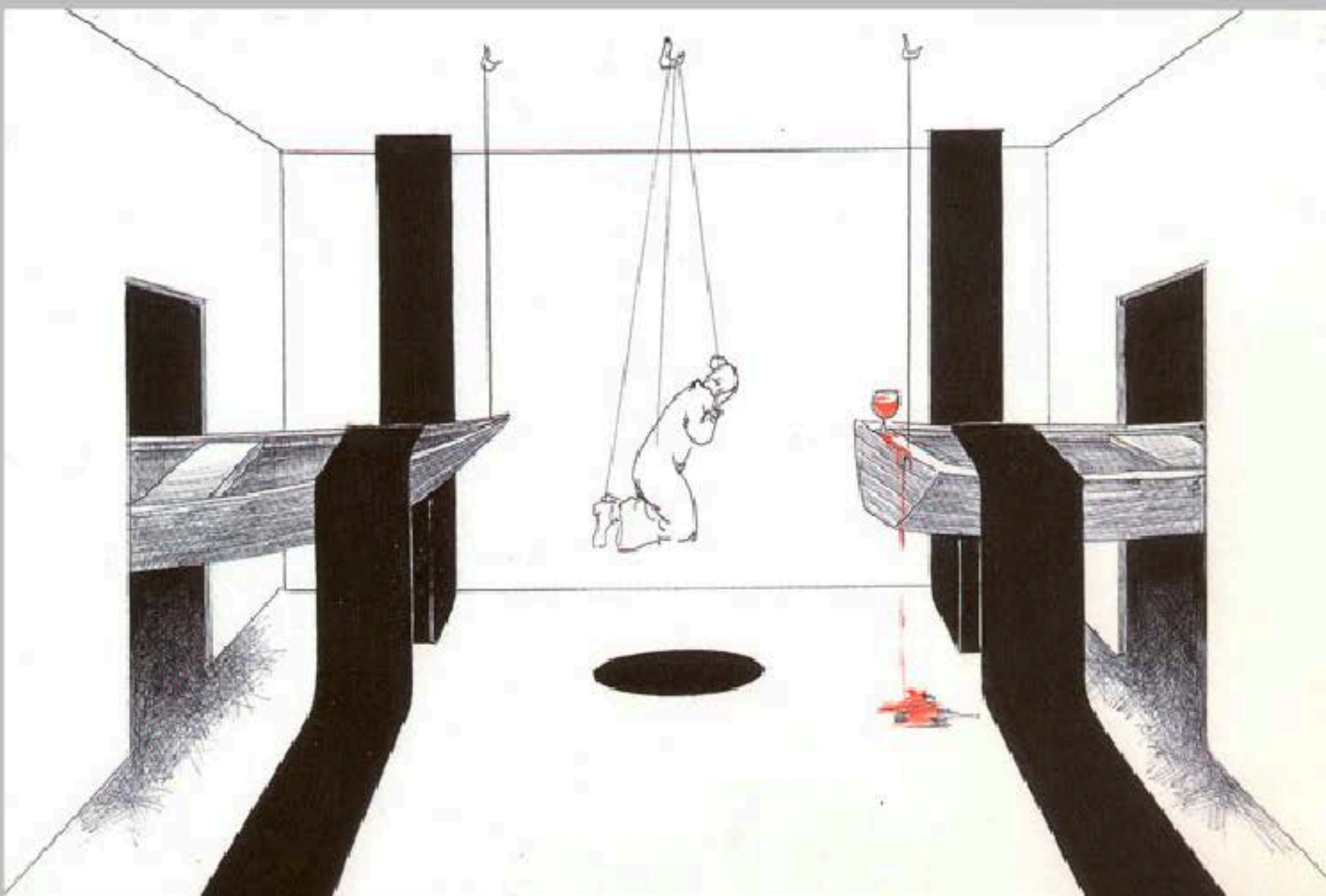
The artwork and catalogue have been exhibited in Budapest, Hungary, Moscow, Russia, and the exhibition opened at the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg in June of 2006.

Ms. Murashkovsky's essay, Garden of the Avant-garde, serves as the foreword for this catalogue.

The Garden of the Avant-garde

The apparition of motion in these lyrical artists, intangible yet possessive and occasionally tinged with the blood-orange sun summoned to paint the Moscow winters off-white, called upon to experiment with a Collective Action or two, engaged in the enormous endeavour of the A-Ya publication (the unofficial Russian Art Review), or Russian Samizdat Art, wending down courtyards covered with snow and mud merely to do Apt-Art, Domesticating Pyramids, catching butterflies to the pricking and ticking of Kafka's Hard-Heads and pursuing Pivovarov's Yellow Man, serves as quite a phenomenon in the entirety of the functional or dysfunctional, metaphysical, ethereal art world of the Avant-gardists, in my opinion. I am an avant-garde poet, whatever that means. Emigration to the United States has naturally caused a transplantation of my Russian spirit. I swear by all the stars, by all the Gods and heavens above, my utmost faith in this warm intelligentsia who have so thoroughly developed new and experimental concepts in their art. I believe in Jadran Adamovic, in his relentless pursuit of the artist's communicable soul - in each artist's predicament and their status in life as in art.

I grew up among artists - Ilya Kabakov, Yuri Krasny, Lev Zbarsky, Lev Meshberg and Oleg Vassilyev, just to mention a few. Nothing, however, prepared me for the complete immersion in the garden of the Avant-garde as the project Essence of Life-Essence of Art. I must admit, the road has been convoluted. In ten months it's been a bumpy ride pleasantly speckled by the gentle rocking hands of extraordinary souls such as Kabakov, Makarevich and his wife, Elagina, whose scientific friend had tried to feed the Soviet nation through determination; by visionary artists such as Roza El-Hassan, who is in fact Overpopulation, by Sugar's workers' mitts with infinite, vastly stretching life-lines, Albert's Blind, and Pepperstein's poetry, Milomir's passion for photography that had literally blown my poetic mind - and then who could ever forget Braco Dimitrijevic's Casual Passer- By who questions the



"The way" by Dimitri Prigov,
Drawing from the catalogue "Essence of Art"

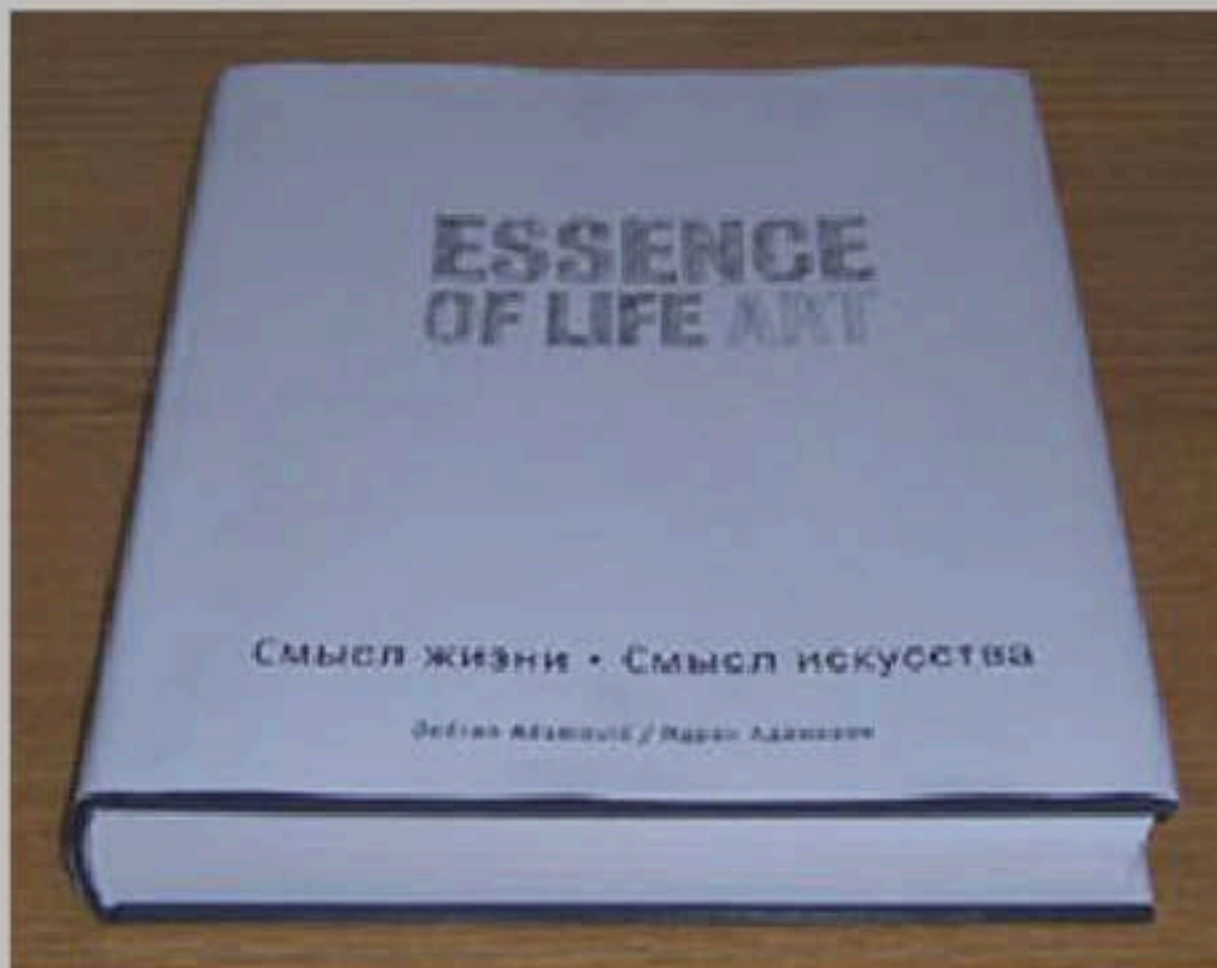
identity of any man or artist, singling out the meaningful greens in the Garden of the Avant-garde. There exists a fundamental ideal in the Avante-gardist that has never been that of violent disruption or the tumultuous break-up of ice in the river of contemporary modernism. It seems to me, a mere writer of diluted prose and melodrama, that movements such as Pop Art, conceptual art and hyper-realism have translated the innovations of the avant-garde into the language of the high art aristocracy. Each artist with whom I sat down to tea, or milk, or any other dainty superficial beverage is in fact, in Mr. Adamovic's words, "an individual, an entity" with a familiar dilemma and a divine artistic concept. There is no true artist, no real first Avant-gardist. In the Garden of the Avant-garde, whether in Budapest, Prague, Moscow, Zagreb, or in Ljubljana, there are artists who are still climbing to an apogee from which they can present themselves for scrutiny, in order to survive against all odds in contemporary history and, above all, to be exposed artistically on the film of life.



"Crystal ball" by Viktor Pivovarov,
drawing from the Catalogue "Essence of Life"

I have been orbiting this Avant-garde earth for a while now. I have lived, breathed and eaten art. I am at the closest proximity to the "celestial" and the "terrestrial" tilt of these conceptual artists.

I am inviting you to partake in this shaded Garden of the Avant-garde dream, to dance for a fleeting second to the beat of the Cosmos, of the Conceptual rhythm. I invite you, essentially, to step into the Essence of Art and ultimately to delve head-first into the very core of the artist's heart!



Catalogue English/Russian version

About the Author

Playwright/Poet/Screenwriter/Director, Ms. Romma is the author of three plays, "Love, In The Eyes Of Hope, Dies Last", "Coyote, Take Me There!" and "Defenses Of Prague", directed by Leslie Lee and produced at La MaMa E.T.C.

She is the author of "Sickle" also directed by Leslie Lee and produced at the American Theater for Actors, and "Absolute Clarity", an Off-Broadway production at the Players Theater, directed by Yuri Joffe of the celebrated Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater in Moscow, Russia. Her play, "The Past Is Still Ahead", directed by Swiss director, François Rochaix, has been performed as an Off-Broadway production at the Cherry Lane Theater, has toured London at the Pushkin House, and has been performed at the JCC Theater and at Oxford University. It has also been performed to rave reviews at the Mayakovsky Academic Art Theater and at the Millennium Theater in Brooklyn, NY. Her most recent play, "A Sweet Word Of Advice" which Ms. Romma also directed, was performed at the JCC Theater in Manhattan and at the Midtown International Theater Festival. The Negro Ensemble Company has just presented Ms. Romma's two-one acts, "With Aaron's Arms Around Me" and "The Mire" as an Off-Broadway production at the Cherry Lane Theater. The plays were directed by Charles Weldon and received grand reviews in the New York Times. Ms. Romma is the author of the Garnet Grand Prix Winning film, Poor Liza, (first prize for screenwriting and best original film at the St. Petersburg Literature in Film Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia.) The film was directed by cult-director of Liquid Sky , Slava Tsukerman and starred Academy Award Winner, Lee Grant and Academy Award Nominee, Ben Gazzara. She also shot and directed the Award-Wining documentary, "Sex Acts For Hire" (an undercover glimpse into the Russian prostitution ring).

Ms. Romma has taught Drama at the Lander College for Women, Screenwriting at the New York Film Academy, and Fundamentals of Playwriting and Screenwriting at the Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center. She will be conducting courses on Screenwriting 1 and The Fundamentals of Playwriting this spring at the NEC, and is slated to conduct a course, entitled, "Classic Narrative Hollywood Film and Avant-garde Cinema" next term. Ms. Romma will now teach Memoir Writing From the Heart (crash course) and Hollywood and Its Alternatives at the NEC, beginning January, 2012.

Her new play, "Doroga" premiered at the JCC in Manhattan on March 8th, 2012. It was just presented at the Dramatists Guild of America (as part of the Women's Initiative Friday Night Footlights Reading Series) on April 27th, 2012, and received standing ovations. Sophia Romma's collection of plays produced at La MaMa Experimental Theater, and on Off-Broadway at the Players Theater and at the Cherry Lane Theater, is awaiting publication late autumn 2012 by Liberty Publishing, NYC.

NEC Position: Literary Manager

