

BITEF 212 : From the Idea to the Realization¹

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ABSTRACT: The Belgrade International Theatre Festival – BITEF is the first international festival launched on the territory of former Yugoslavia, and it is significant both for regional culture and for the history of world theatre. The First BITEF, sponsored by the Secretariat of Belgrade, was held in 1967, and it took place in Atelje 212. From its beginnings to this day, the festival has been held every year with no exceptions, generating a large number of documents, posters, audio-visual and other materials. This paper presents the political, cultural and historical events that influenced the creation as well as the shaping of the festival, but also its influence and the significance for the regional and the world theatre scenes. The paper also discusses the jurisdiction of the Historical Archives of Belgrade over the BITEF fond, as well as the entirety of archival materials relating to the first BITEF 212.

KEYWORDS: BITEF, theatre, Belgrade, Historical Archives of Belgrade, archival material, Yugoslavia

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1 Introduction

Ever since it was first set up in 1967, BITEF has been one of the most significant international cultural manifestations of the 20th century. Its significance can be seen in the exchange of artistic, theatrical, social, and cultural information between participating countries and the spectators. By giving artists a chance to get to know each other and cooperate, BITEF has also broken down prejudice regarding the people and cultures of politically opposed Eastern and Western Blocs and Third World countries. Belgrade, the socialist Yugoslavia, and especially BITEF, were becoming an exceptionally appealing and provocative neutral ground where artists, critics, theorists, culturologists, journalists and audiences from all over the world could meet and get to know each other. BITEF was also successful in paving the way for FEST and other international manifestations held in Serbia, most of which exist to this day. In this period, Belgrade was one of the quintessential capitals of culture people would turn to when they wanted to visit Europe and attend cultural gatherings of international significance.

The survival of BITEF during the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21th century bears witness, above all, to the respect held for the festival's jury, and the prejudice-free approach by artists and the audiences from all over the world. In its fifty years of existence BITEF has pushed many boundaries, becoming a cultural institution of national and international importance. It has also become a valuable resource for scientific research, a testament to which is the entire documentation kept in the Historical Archives of Belgrade and the BITEF directoriate.

2 Prerequisites for the establishment of BITEF

A large number of cultural and artistic institutions were founded on the territory of Yugoslavia after the Second World War, including theatres, cinemas, libraries, galleries and cultural centres. Several independent theatres were set up in Belgrade alone: the Terazije Theatre, the Belgrade Drama Theatre, and some time later – Atelje 212, the Zvezdara Theatre, and the BITEF Theatre. Every cultural centre in the country was required to have a stage which would host shows and theatrical pieces.

Yugoslavia's geopolitical and economic position contributed to the development of modern Serbian theatre. Even though Yugoslavia was close to the Eastern Bloc in the post-war period, its politics of independence gradually distanced it from the Soviet Union, in a process that culminated with Josip

Broz Tito's initiative to establish the Non-aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1962, opening the doors of Yugoslavia to the rest of the world.

Serbian theatre scene established itself as a part of European culture of special significance when the Yugoslav Drama Theatre participated in the Theatre of Nations festival in Paris in 1954, with Marin Držić's *Dundo Maroje*, directed by Bojan Stupica, and in 1955, with Maksim Gorki's *Jegor Buličov*, directed by Mata Milošević (Volk, 2003). During the 1950s and 1960s, the Yugoslav Drama Theatre's guest performances in most European capitals paved the way for the Belgrade stage culture and laid foundations for international cooperation in the field of stage art.

Famous people including Henry Moore, Irving Stone, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Peter Brook, William Saroyan, Elizabeth Taylor, Samuel Beckett, Louis Armstrong, Igor Stravinsky, Luciano Pavarotti, Salvatore Quasimodo, Alfred Hitchcock, Arthur Rubinstein, Mario Del Monaco and Burt Lancaster, visited Belgrade and contributed to its cultural life in the fifties and sixties further establishing international cultural cooperation during their stay.

Belgrade thus became a metropolis that embraced progressive views, especially with respect to art. The person most responsible for shaping the new cultural politics of Belgrade was Milan Vukos, who, after serving as a secretary of culture in the Social Republic of Serbia, became a vice-president of the City Assembly of Belgrade in 1967. All cultural institutions such as theatres, publishing houses, music production companies and film production companies, received special attention and substantial funding. This is precisely why the sixties are a decade of unique historical importance.

The year 1967 was a turning point in all cultural domains. The film industry produced films such as *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* by Aleksandar Petrović, *The Morning* by Puriša Đorđević and *Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* by Dušan Makavejev, which became world famous and influenced other film industries. Influential works were produced in the area of literature, as well as visual and applied arts, in line with international trends. It is in the spirit of these developments that festivals of international significance such as BITEF, BEMUS, FEST and the Joy of Europe, were founded. The centre of all these manifestations was Atelje 212, as its stage most clearly demonstrated a desire to follow in the footsteps of the international avant-garde.

2.1 Atelje 212

Mira Trailović (1924-1989), one of the most prominent women of the Yugoslav culture, especially of the theatrical world, was the founder and long-time managing director of Atelje 212 and BITEF. In 1953, together with Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz, (1922-1997), author and scriptwriter, she came up with the concept of a modern and avant-garde theatre in Belgrade, one that would, compared with the theatres, have a repertoire more modern, and a form more free, a theatre that would be more independent from the government. This theatre would include chamber plays, pantomime, chansons, monodramas, recitals and literary cabarets. The waiting-room of the news agency Borba was used to accommodate the new theatre, and Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz named this theatre Atelje 212, after the number of seats in the room. The grand opening of Atelje 212 took place on 11 November 1956.² Following this event, Mira Trailović, together with the Serbian teatrologist and author Jovan Ćirilov, founded the Belgrade International Theatre Festival - BITEF.

It was in May 1964 that the idea of organizing the first international theatre festival in Belgrade first came to public attention. Even back then, the building of Atelje 212 was considered the most apt for a review of chamber theatre achievements from around the world. In this way BITEF was set up at last, in 1967, and the slogan "New theatre tendencies" conveyed the power of the theatrical avant-garde of the late sixties, as well as of new tendencies of classical theatre.

Atelje 212 itself was most influenced by "New theatre tendencies", especially by the theatre of the absurd and other new literary movements, so its repertoire differed significantly from what was available in other theatres.³ The boundaries that existed between the stage and the audience were torn down on the stage of Atelje 212, and a sense of intimacy ensued that defined shared desires, feelings and aspirations for the creation of new, avant-garde theatre.

² [History of the theatre \(on-line\)](#)

³ In this multi-colored theatre programs were printed for the first time in Serbia. These programs were printed as magazines, and they included: the history of the play's stagings, the author's biography, the director's explanation of the play's concept, excerpts from previous critiques, sharp observations from contemporaries, and sometimes philosophical or political musings on the period. Following this model, daily bulletins were typed and printed during the festival; today they are stacked and kept in the archival boxes as documents of special significance.

What the Yugoslav Drama Theatre was for our capital in fifties and sixties, the Atelje 212 theatre became during the following two decades. Run by Mira Trailović, Atelje 212 and BITEF became one of Belgrade's trademarks, which are recognized and respected throughout the world to this day.



Figure 1. An invitation for the grand opening of BITEF 212

3 The first BITEF 212

“You could feel it in the air: the revolution in the way young people were behaving, and not only in the sphere of eroticism; America was troubled by the Vietnam War, aged dictators were ruling Spain and Portugal, the dictators in Greece had just come to power, Egypt and Israel were at war, Khrushchev was no longer with the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia was no longer burdened by severe international debt. It was a time of an increased importance in the role Yugoslavia played in international affairs, of rapid growth in living standards that promised the entry of our country into the big world of the developed countries” of a thirst for this world was growing exponentially with a desire to learn more about it. And at the same time, in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, not a single international festival existed.” (Stamenković, 2012)

At the height of these events, in 1967, as one of the first among the international festivals in Yugoslavia Belgrade International Theatre Festival, BITEF was created, under the auspices of Atelje 212.⁴ However, even though this came about on the insistence and with the engagement of individuals,

⁴ The first and the second BITEF were held in Atelje 212, but the organizers of the third festival were already following the international trends of negating the theatre in a traditional sense, and instead chose unconventional places for the performance of the theatrical pieces; the organizers were looking for new spatial

the festival became the expression of a common need felt by this society, thus taking on the features of a cultural institution. The need for the funding of such an organization was met with understanding, support, and financial coverage by the country's top political leadership. The festival was accompanied by a degree of propaganda previously unheard of intended to stir the public and provoke an emotional response. The tickets would be sold out as soon as they were on sale, in spite of the fact that they were not exactly affordable. For this reason some theatre pieces had to be performed two or three times, and the halls of Atelje 212 were overcrowded.



Figure 2. The advertisement of the first BITEF published in the daily newspaper *Politika* on August 26, 1967.

The initial BITEF board, comprised of Mira Trailović, Predrag Bajčetić, Dejan Čavić Jovan Ćirilov, Ljubomir Draškić, Borislav Mihaјlović, Slobodan Selenić, and Mlada Veselinović, created the festival programme comprised of utterly conflicting forms and expressions, awarding certain performances after the closing of the festival.

The BITEF 212 programme included the following theatrical performances:

1. The Kathakali Theatre (Kerala Kalamandalam, India); *Ramayana*

solutions for certain performances. Among these places were a gunpowder magazine in Kalemegdan, fair halls, factories, garages, quarries, sports halls, former war shelters, warehouses, underground passages and open spaces, demolished industrial and other complexes, as well as other theatre houses in Belgrade, and elsewhere in Serbia.

2. The Laboratory Theatre (Warsaw, Poland); Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *The Constant Prince* (El principe constant; Książę Niezłomny); direction Jerzy Grotowski
3. Théâtre de Poche-Montparnasse (Paris, France); Romain Weingarten: *Summer* (L'Été); directed by: Romain Weingarten
4. The Citizens Theatre, Glasgow (Glasgow, Great Britain); Olwen Wymark: *The Triple Image*; directed by: Michael Mitchum
5. The Drama Theatre (Skopje, Yugoslavia); Branislav Nušić: *The Deceased* (Pokojnik); directed by: Ljubiša Gregorijevski
6. The Comedy Theatre (Bucharest, Romania); William Shakespeare: *Troilus and Cressida*; directed by: David Esrig
7. The Theatre on the Balustrade (Prague, Czechoslovakia); Franz Kafka: *The Trial* (Der Prozess); directed by: Jan Grossman
8. The Slovene National Theatre (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia); William Shakespeare: *King Lear* (Kralj Lear); directed by: Mile Korun
9. The Living Theatre (New York, United States of America); Sophocles: *Antigone*; directed by: Judith Malina, Julian Beck
10. The Theatre Beyond the Gate (Prague, Czechoslovakia); Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: *Three Sisters* (Три сестры); directed by: Otomar Krejča
11. Nouveau Théâtre de Poche (Geneva, Switzerland); Friedrich Dürrenmat: *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* (Le Mariage de Monsieur Mississippi); directed by: Gérard Kara, Richar Vasu
12. (Moscow, USSR - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics); Soviet poets' recital entitled *Life is a miracle after all*; contributing: Bella Akhmadulina, Bulat Okudzhava, Viktor Bokov, Garoljd Registan.

“After the round table meeting commenced on Sunday 1 October, at 11 a.m. in the yellow salon of Atelje 212, where the participants were expressing their opinions regarding the best theatrical performance of the first Belgrade International Theatre Festival, the Board of Initiative of BITEF 212 withdrew to the café-theatre in order to come to a final decision. The following board members attended the meeting (listed alphabetically): the president Bajčetić, Dejan Čavić, Jovan Ćirilov, Ljubomir Draškić, Bora Drašković, Borislav Mihajlović, Slobodan Selenić, Mira Trailović, and Mlađa Veselinović. Journalists were also in attendance. The following decision was reached:

The first BITEF 212 considers that the following troupes provided the most valuable performances with regard to “New theatre tendencies” (in order of appearance):

- The Laboratory Theatre from Warsaw, with the theatrical piece *The Constant Prince* by Calderón
- The Comedy Theatre from Bucharest, with the theatrical piece *Troilus and Cressida* by Shakespeare
- The Theatre Beyond the Gate from Prague, with the theatrical piece *Three Sisters* by Chekhov.

It was decided that their names were to be inscribed on the memorial sculpture of the First Belgrade International Theatre Festival 212, as awarded performances".⁵

By awarding the Grand Prix to three performances, *The Constant Prince*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Three Sisters* our festival set itself apart from other international festivals.⁶ Atelje 212's *The Cat in the Sack* by Georges Feydeau, directed by Arsa Jovanović, was shown outside the competition. At the end, the question was raised whether BITEF would be held the following year, the City Assembly of Belgrade making the final decision.

Already during the first BITEF, there occurred a cultural clash of two great traditions – those of the East and the West. It was an obvious demonstration of the difference between the specific Eastern and Western experiences of observing the phenomenon of existence and the purpose of art. The Kathakali Theatre represented the former, and the Laboratorium Theatre the latter tradition.⁷

⁵ HAB, BITEF I 7.3., Bulletin no number

⁶ Awarding the official jury prize to certain theatrical performances was a type of propaganda, conceived by Mira Trailović. The idea was that certain artists that stood out in some way, or won over the audience and the board, would be awarded a prize by the festival, one that they could bring back to their countries. The award was a work of art built by Nebojša Mitrić, a sculptor. It could have happened that the Grand Prix award was divided equally among two or three performances, as was the case with the first BITEF (In 1990, this award was renamed Grand Prix Mira Trailović). Three more awards were subsequently introduced; the Special Award, introduced early on in the history of the festival to recognize an extraordinary style or genre of a performance; the Politika award, introduced in 1977 for a performance selected by a jury made up of the theatre critics of the newspaper Politika; and an unofficial audience award, which further engaged the audience through their voting for their favourite performance.

⁷ "During the first couple of years, BITEF became a meeting place for the East and the West: it brought American content to Europe, and Eastern content to the West. As soon as something would happen somewhere in the world, it would happen in Belgrade. No artist who missed BITEF was thought to have really vis-

The immense amount of energy successfully accumulated around BITEF was directed towards change. The energy of this type, with this intensity, was yet unknown in any other area of our theatre life. The Board of Initiative had to make compromises in the creation of the programme, ensuring invitations to perform were purposefully extended to marginal theatre troupes, from small, private theatres which could not compete with great ensembles, and which were all the more interesting for that very reason. In light of this, BITEF was a precious experience that left a strong impression on everyone present, especially since the authors were directly confronted with the audience and their questions during round table events.

Following the end of the first BITEF, when all the impressions were summed up, especially the results the success of the first, trial festival, the Belgrade Assembly decided to approve the budget and support the festival in the following season. Already during the second season BITEF became an integral part of the theatre life in Belgrade.

3.1 The New theatre tendencies

The repertoire of the first BITEF programme became a turning point of “New theatre tendencies”, that the festival has kept showing throughout the next five decades, so far.

The critical elite of the world theatre responded to the BITEF slogan “New theatre tendencies”. It was in Belgrade that you could see performances that have only recently become known to the rest of the world, and international media were there to take note of these performances. At that time, participating in this festival was considered a great privilege all over the world, because the festival was a pathway to the grand avant-garde society (Vagapova, 2010). Still, society never gave up on its traditional theatre; it accepted the BITEF programs as alternatives meant to enrich the cultural life, affirm the social order, and produce exceptional propaganda material for our country.

By the end of the sixties, one could notice an extremely expressive tendency in BITEF – a howling, a rage, a rebellion. BITEF was burdened with showing the entire world the openness of Yugoslav cultural politics, the state administration’s tolerant attitudes, and a break from the theory and practice

ited Europe. Artists from the East who couldn’t be received anywhere else would go to Belgrade. It was the only place where everyone could see their work. As far as the theatre is concerned, the way to the world is through Belgrade.” (Pašić, 2006)

of socialist realism in the area of art, but also with hiding the existence of political censorship (Prnjat, 2005).

During the first couple of years, the conservative theatre circles believed that BITEF was bringing some unprofessional theatres to Belgrade, which were undermining the academically grounded principles of this art form, confirming the decadence, moral demise and promiscuity of the West. Mira Trailović, Jovan Ćirilov and other members of the selection team defended their cause by saying BITEF was created to discover, not conceal. This meant that the performances shown during the festival did not depend on the selectors' personal tastes, but rather on their relevance in displaying a theatre trend present in the contemporary world, regardless (or rather because) of its shock value.

During the seventies, postmodernism was dominating all art forms, from literature to sculpture. With the arrival of postmodernism, almost everything was allowed on stage, and the borders between the old and the new in the area of stage movement became blurred. The drama theatre and the dance theatre were merged in the eighties, so ballet choreographies in particular became more and more present on stage. The BITEF theatre was opened on 3 March 1989.⁸ The nineties were very challenging for our country, even on the local theatre scene. This was a decade of nonverbal theatre, with little to no dialogue, many musical numbers, and stylized movement and gestures that reflected events from real life. During the 21st century, there was an onset of video-technology and cyber theatre virtual reality. BITEF kept track of all these phenomena, and showed them on stage as soon as they would appear.

3.2 BITEF – Its Influence and Significance

Theatre artists, and then artists from the fields of music and film, used Yugoslavia's political freedom to create BEMUS, the Belgrade Music Festival and the Joy of Europe, two years after BITEF was founded; in 1971, the first International Film Festival, FEST, took place. This also meant that

⁸ At the end of the eighties, the mayor Aleksandar Bakočević ceded the building of the abandoned evangelical church on the Bajloni market to Mira Trailović and BITEF, to be transformed into the BITEF Theatre. The theatre would be the Yugoslav centre of international collaboration, with no permanent ensemble, but rather hosting projects that brought people together. Regular troupes that fit the idea and the concept behind BITEF would be the guests of BITEF throughout the year.

our doors were wide open to artists from the entire world. The four aforementioned festivals exist to this day.

Yugoslavia's geopolitical position and status as a non-aligned socialist country made crossing state lines easy for almost all citizens of the world, festival participants and audiences alike. Theatres from countries with which Yugoslavia had poor diplomatic relations, such as Spain, Portugal, Israel and South Africa, would also attend BITEF.

From the very beginning, BITEF was extremely significant for all theatres and theatre pieces created on the territory of Yugoslavia, especially the ones that were part of this festival's programme. Many of these works received no international recognition, but the festival made it possible for foreign artists to come and see our performances. The first list of all theatre pieces performed at BITEF was compiled in 1997, on the occasion of the festival's 30th jubilee.

BITEF survived for five decades in a very turbulent world and an even more turbulent immediate environment. One finds it difficult to explain how this was possible in spite of all the regime changes, political conflicts, embargos and blockades, isolations, inflations, bombings and wars, coups, recessions, transitions and the popular revolutions.

Thanks to BITEF and the people gathered around this festival, the works of numerous theatre giants have been translated and published in Serbian. Heated debates were lead during festival's meet-the-author sessions and round table meetings held after every performance.

BITEF has hosted accompanying programs along with the main program, including BITEF on film (filmed retrospectives of theatre productions from previous festivals, or those that, for some reason, couldn't be included in the repertoire), various exhibitions, musical manifestations, workshops and lectures, and since recently, the BITEF ZONE, meant to directly include the community into the BITEF space. Every September, respected theatre critics and teatrologists from all over Europe have been visiting Serbia. The events of the festival have been covered in critiques and reviews published by various journals and newspapers from predominantly European countries.

4 The BITEF archival materials

The personal fonds of Jovan Ćirilov and the fonds of the Belgrade International Film Festival can be found in the Historical Archives of Belgrade.⁹ The BITEF archival materials are take up 170 metres, or 434 archival boxes.

The Historical Archives of Belgrade have collected and inventoried the BITEF archival materials on two occasions, between June and September 2004. Initially, 17 metres of archival and registry materials, covering the period from 1967 to 2003 were taken over, followed by another 128 archival boxes with 34 posters and a total of 40 catalogues, or 13 metres.¹⁰

In special boxes belonging to the fonds of the Secretariat of the City of Belgrade and its subfonds of the Secretariat for Culture, one can find the BITEF founding acts and legal terms and conditions, while its statute is stored in the BITEF materials fund.

⁹ For over seventy years, The Historical Archives of Belgrade has been successfully dealing with the protection, sorting, processing, publication and lending of archival materials relevant, primarily, to the study of the history of Belgrade and its citizens. The Historical Archives of Belgrade is one of this city's most significant cultural institutions. Founded in 1945, as part of the Belgrade City Library, it became an independent institution in 1947. The National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia had also reached a decision in 1945 to "protect and look after cultural monuments and antiquities." That was when the archives of all state institutions were placed under the protection of the state. (Драшкић, 1995)

¹⁰ The Historical Archives of Belgrade, as an institution meant to protect cultural goods and cultural heritage, on the other hand, has done everything in its power not only to protect BITEF-related documentation from wasting away, but also to classify and process this information in accordance with international archival standards. This means putting hard work into making these materials easily available to the public through the creation of an electronic informational resource that will be searchable on the internet. The BITEF archival fonds have been classified according to festivals, and subclassified into different classification groups according to the type of accompanying events and work related to this festival. The BITEF archival materials comprise theatre piece dossiers where one can find documentation, scripts, correspondence, photographs, posters, audio-visual and digital material, catalogues, advertisements, press clippings, photo albums, and visitors logs. In other words, there is a mine of different information that helps any form of multidisciplinary research, not just of local but also of international significance. (Latinčić et al., 2007)

The Department for the Application of Information Technologies¹¹ of the Historical Archives of Belgrade, together with the relevant archives services, has developed an information system Janus based on existing work processes, international archival and ISO standards regulating archival activity. New data is entered into Janus every day, which is searchable on the Archives' website.¹² Janus is, above all, a way in which to gain insight into the variety of materials in the possession of the Archives, as well as into their physical location within the Archives' premises.

Janus is a functional system that automates work processes in the Archives and improves the efficiency of customer service with the ultimate goal of producing an informatically arranged archive that quickly provides the requested information both to the Archives' users and online.¹³ In the Janus search engine, available on the Historical Archives of Belgrade website,¹⁴ a search query "BITEF" returns 628 results related to BITEF from the total of 522 fonds/collections, that is the 149,379 records¹⁵ on the documentation the Archives' workers had entered into Janus. No document can be accessed via Janus, but the full title and the signature of every document are generated, facilitating the physical search of the fonds and records. All materials relating to BITEF in the possession of the Archives can be viewed in the reading room of this institution.

4.1 The BITEF 212 Archival materials in the Historical Archives of Belgrade

The archival material belonging to the first BITEF 212, which took place from 8 September 1967, is located primarily in the BITEF fonds and in the the Secretariat of Belgrade. The employees of the Archives have listed the materials in an analytical inventory¹⁶ and then divided them into two boxes. Each box has its own inventory number, each document that can be found in the boxes has its own signature, and they are all listed in a certain order in the analytical inventory. Once inside the boxes, the materials are sorted into folders and envelopes according to their order and type.

¹¹ [The Department for the Application of Information Technologies \(on-line\)](#)

¹² [The Historical Archives of Belgrade website \(on-line\)](#)

¹³ [Janus \(on-line\)](#)

¹⁴ [The Janus search engine \(on-line\)](#)

¹⁵ Data retrieved on 12/04/2018

¹⁶ No analytic inventory for the first four BITEFs exists at this time.

In the first box, one can find a catalog, invitations, photographs, performances (from the first to the twelfth ensemble) and correspondence. This box is marked with an inventory number I. Clippings from serial publications (daily newspapers and magazines) related to the first BITEF are located in the box with inventory number II, in a dedicated book (periodicals collections or press clipping) each page of which features one clip and the name, date and place of the publication.

Searching the analytical inventory of BITEF 212, one first encounters the Analysis of the contents of both boxes, then the Indices to accompany the analytics, followed by The press clippings analytics, and lastly, the introductory text of the BITEF 212 catalogue, "Regarding the first BITEF", a text about the jury and the recipients of the awards from the last bulletin, as well as informative texts about the performances from the first Festival, also taken from the catalogue.

At the very beginning of the analytical inventory, the name of the fonds, Belgrade International Theatre Festival BITEF is presented, followed by the dates of the festival (8–30 September 1967), the range of the content signatures (HAB, BITEF, K-2 / I, 7, 3-7, 4, 1), the span of years during which the materials related to the first festival were created (1964–1968), and the total number of inventory sheets (276, including the list of materials in the periodicals collection). In the box, marked with an inventory number I, the material is divided into:

1. The general archive, containing the correspondence with the troupes represented within the program; information on the timetable of the performances, expenses, decor transport, cooperation, signed contracts; translations of letters and agreements; information on purchases of the equipment necessary or performances;
2. The program archive, containing two programs, one program guide and four program posters;
3. The theatrical performances archive, containing the material related to the performances of the first BITEF, a total of 14 sheets, 71 photographs, a drawing, two programs, clippings from newspapers, and a book.

The materials found in the first box consists of sheets (102), photographs (71 – all are black and white and most are artistic with authors' stamps), a drawing, programs (7), a book and clipping from a periodical. These materials are in Serbian, English, French, Italian, German, Czech and Polish.

In the second box, with the inventory number **II**, one can find BITEF periodicals collections photographs, and other printed materials. The ma-

terial found in this box contains sheets (276), photographs (4, all of which are black and white), a catalog, invitations (5) and posters (2), in Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian.

In the periodicals collection of the first BITEF, one can find clippings from various newspapers and magazines published in Yugoslavia starting from 8 July 1967: *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, *Ekspres*, *Borba*, *Jež*, *NIN*, *Radio Revija*, *Književne novine*, *Nedeljne novosti*, *FILM-Novosti*, *Susret*, *TV Novosti* (Belgrade); *Dnevnik* (Novi Sad); *Ljubljanski dnevnik*, *Naši razgledi* (Ljubljana); *Večer* (Maribor); *Večernje novine*, *Oslobođenje*, *Svijet* (Sarajevo); *Vjesnik*, *Telegram*, *Studio*, *Večernji list*, *Studentski list* (Zagreb); *Novi List* (Rijeka); *Nova Makedonija* (Skopje). There is a total of 280 clippings.

The authors of the newspaper articles about the first BITEF are Jovan Ćirilov, Vladimir Stamenković, Milosav Mirković, Dragan Gajer, Slobodan Selenić, Ivan Mazov, Momo Kapor, Muharem Pervić, Raša Popov, Toni Tršar, Petar Volk, Predrag Bajčetić, Dobrica Ćosić and others.

The box containing clippings from local press releases, also contains around thirty clippings from foreign newspapers and magazines, texts published between 1967 and 1972: *The New York Times*, *Time* (United States); *Financial Times* (Great Britain); *Die Presse Kultur* (Austria); *Życie literackie* (Poland); *Le Monde*, *Humanité*, *Le Figaro*, *Combat* (France); *Umanità*, *L'Unità* (Italy) and many others.

During the BITEF 212, fifteen bulletins were published, a single copy every day from 15 to 30 September 1967. All copies of these bulletins are kept in the Historical Archives of Belgrade and in the BITEF directorate. The bulletins contain regular and guest columns. The regular columns include the conception, the opening, the program of the performances, the round tables¹⁷ and the accompanying activities, the jury decisions, news and interesting facts. The guest columns include synopses of the performances, biographies, theatrical syntheses by the authors, directors, theatre critics and theorists, reports, press clippings and statistics.

¹⁷ Round-table discussions were held after every performance, free of charge. Some of the BITEF 212 round-table topics included contemporary theatre and the Eastern tradition; Jerzy Grotowski: On my work with actors; Is there an avant-garde in 1967?; New theatre tendencies beyond large cultural centers; Nušić and contemporary theatre; Shakespeare and contemporary theatre; Kafka and contemporary theatre; Theatre and the revolution; Films: Romeo and Juliet 63 – a discussion on method; The contemporary world and Dürrenmatt's dramaturgy. The round table publicly discussed the *Golden Round Table Award 212* and the recital *Life is a miracle after all*.

РАЗГОВОР ОВЕ НЕДЕЉЕ

МИРА ТРАИЛОВИЋ: БИТЕФ ИМА СВОЈЕ МЕСТО У ЗАЈЕДНИЦИ ЕВРОПСКИХ ПОЗОРИШТА

БИТЕФ, I београдски интернационални театарски фестивал, већ је за нама: прошле недеље отпутовао је и последњи гост, Атеље 212, амбициозни организатор ове код нас невидене театарске манифестације — чије вредности изгледа да још нисмо сасвим ни свесни — већ је отпочео свој редовни рад, поремећен фестивалом.

Мира Траиловић, управник Атељеа 212 без сумње је најзаслужнија личност што је Београд имао БИТЕФ: њена иницијативност као да нема краја. За време фестивала била је све, не само управник позоришта - домаћина: и преводилац, и конферансије, и дискуснтант, и развођник, и објашњавач. Слушао сам госте: њеног помоћника Ђирилова и њу сви су, на крају, обасипали комплиментима. А рад није био мали: толико



гоштију са свих страна света, с разним навикама и још различитим темпераментима — све је то требало каналисати, све уклопити у домаћи ред и наше не богзна како велике могућности. Па ипак: нема госта који на расанку није пожедео да — опет! — буде позван. Није ли то највећи комплимент Мири Траиловић и њеним сарадницима?

— Па, сад када је све готово, кажите нам: каква сте искуства стекли на првом БИТЕФ-у?

— Вероватно је најзанимљивије искуство изражено у интересовању Београда за овакву једну позоришну смотру. Не само да су представе пуниле Атеље из вечери у вече током три недеље, него су и разговори откривали једно живо интересовање публике за теме о позоришту и око позоришта. Пре БИТЕФ-а све је за нас било непознато: језичка баријера, карактер представа и њихов одјек, могућност организовања и примања великих ансамбла као што су румунски, словеначки, Ливинг театар. Међутим, тај део проблема се показао као савладајив и показало се да је потребно само да се покаже прави задатак, па да људи смотну и снаге и стила да се све препреке у том смислу савладају.

— Да ли је било каквих посебних захтева?

— Занимљива су искуства у вези са...

Figure 3. Article published in Politika newspapers on October 8, 1967: An interview with Mira Trailović about BITEF

5 Conclusion

Together with the Avignon Festival in France and the Edinburgh Festival of Arts in the UK, BITEF is considered to be the most esteemed annual theatre events in Europe. From the very beginning, BITEF has been a place where different cultures would come together and learn about one another, sending an open message of successful mutual understanding, regardless of political developments. In doing so, BITEF has influenced and continues to influence cultural events throughout the world.

Many monograph and serial publications have been written about BITEF both in Serbia and all over the world. The performances shown at the festival have been filmed and various features have been produced for TV and radio. For the last ten years or so, the latest festival news have been accessible on the Internet. Special exhibitions have been hosted showing materials collected throughout the history of the BITEF festival.

During decades of work, BITEF has created, collected and entrusted to the Historical Archives of Belgrade a lot of precious archival documents and registry materials, and these two institutions are expected to continue their cooperation in future. The BITEF directorate is also trying to raise the funds and adequate expert assistance as soon as possible, in order to begin the digitization process of these documents of extraordinary national and international significance. These documents are of exceptional importance for the world theatre and represent our society's cultural heritage.

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