

Faruk Begolli was born on January 25, 1944 in the town of Peja, Kosovo. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Acting from the School of Drama in Belgrade, Serbia. He has appeared in over seventy movies and television series of varying genres making him one of the most famous actors in the former Yugoslavia.

Faruk Begolli is responsible for creating Acting as a major in the Department of Dramatic Arts in the School of Arts in Prishtina, Kosovo. He has held the position of director of the "Dodona" Theater in Prishtina for almost ten years where he produced over twenty plays. In addition, Faruk has also headed The Society of Film Actors of the former Yugoslavia and The Society of Theatre Actors in the region of Kosovo.

He has received awards and recognition from both the former Yugoslavia and the region of Kosovo for his work in the dramatic arts. Faruk currently teaches Drama in the School of Acting at the University of Prishtina.

Faruk Begolli is now, without a doubt, one of the most emblematic figures of Kosovar film and theater.

He currently lives and works in Prishtina.

Faruk Begolli u lind në Pejë, më 25.01.1944.

Studimet për aktrim i kryeu në Fakultetin e Dramës, në Beograd. Ka luajtur në mbi 70 filma e drama televizive, metrazhesh e zhanresh të ndryshme, duke u bërë kështu njëri prej aktorëve më të popullarizuar në ish-Jugosllavi. Për një kohë ka drejtuar edhe Shoqatën e Artistëve të Filmit të ish-Jugosllavisë.

Për gati dhjetë vjet ka qenë drejtor i Teatrit "Dodona" në Prishtinë, ku ka bërë rregjinë e mbi 20 shfaqjeve teatrale.

Është themelues i Drejtimit të Aktrimit në kuadër të Degës së Arteve Dramatike, në Fakultetin e Arteve, në Prishtinë.

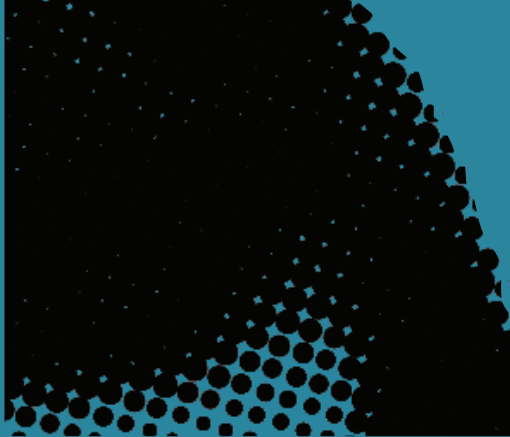
Për punën e tij si aktor është nderuar me mirënjohje të shumta në kohën e ish-Jugosllavisë e, poashtu, ka marrë çmime e mirënjohje të ndryshme kombëtare.

Punon si pedagog i lëndës së aktrimit në Fakultetin e Arteve të Universitetit të Prishtinës.

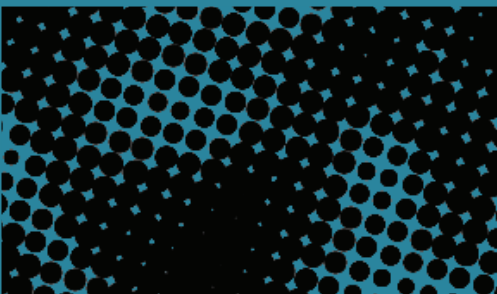
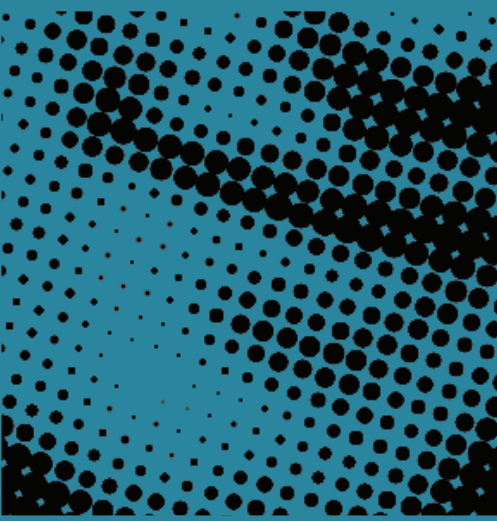
Ka qenë kryetar i Shoqatës së Krijuesve të Teatrit të Kosovës, por, mbas një kohe të shkurtër, ka dhënë dorëheqje nga ky post.

Faruk Begolli tashmë është padyshim një prej figurave më emblematike të artit filmik dhe teatror kosovar.

Faruk Begolli jeton dhe punon në Prishtinë.



Jeton Neziraj



FARUK BEGOLLI

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MONOGRAPH

INTEGRA

Jeton Neziraj

FARUK BEGOLLI

inTegra

Prishtina, August 2008

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„That’s my nature... Now they’re asking me: ‘Are you getting bored staying here, at home...?’ And I am living like this for forty years; I leave the house and go to Dodona, there I drink coffee. I make jokes... Then I go to the bar, there I read all newspapers and I stay with friends, then I go back home, I eat, I read or I do not read and I watch movies... I do not live in solitude... I don’t know even the meaning of the word “solitude”. I am never alone. So, I am prepared for forty years to lie like this in the bed... And don’t rattle... I am serious...“

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Maggiori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a small mark above the "i".



che
SS

I move a white day,
He moves a black day.
I advance with a dream,
He takes it to war.
He attacks my lungs,
I think for about a year in hospital.
I make a brilliant combination
And win a black day.
He moves a disaster
And threatens me with cancer
(Which moves for the moment in the shape of a cross)
But I put a book before him
He's obliged to retreat.
I win a few more pieces,
But, look, half my life
Is taken.
If I give you check, you lose your optimism,
He tells me.
It doesn't matter, I joke,
I'll do the castling of feelings.
Behind me my wife, children,
The sun, the moon and other onlookers
Tremble for every move I make.
I light a cigarette
And continue the game.

(Marin Sorescu)

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CONFESSION OF A GREAT ARTIST



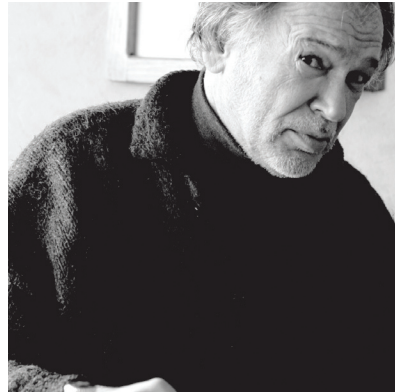
There are some people about whom, when they are born, when they create, the way they live or the way they change something in the environment where they live seems fascinating, it seems as a kind of unusual miracle. Artists like Faruk Begolli are rare to find. They are born seldom. And they are born with a mission in this world. The humanity finds in them bits from secrets of life and world, it finds questions about dilemmas of time, finds out the traumas of people pressed somewhere deep down in his past, finds out the past and the future.

We that have lived nowadays with Faruk Begolli, we must have been lucky. All of us. Even those who saw only a single move where Begolli played, they have lived in the same city where Begolli have lived, those who read Begolli's name in the newspaper or those who met him in the street and bars, those to whom he was a professor, those who have seen him in the stage, cinema or television, those who have seen him driving his car, those who have played with him in the movie or theatre, all of them are lucky.

The life and the way he has lived the life. The work and the way he worked. The creation and the way he has created: are unusual, are fascinating.

This book is short journey through Faruk Begolli's life as an artist and as a man. A journey that sincerely catches landscapes of a tragic life but also the proud one. Imagine a little child that grows in village fields and farmlands. A small child that lives in the house with too many people. And that child goes to the field to pick up uncollected beans and then sell it. Then that child after many years so miraculously becomes a movie star adored by millions and millions of people.

This is Faruk Begolli's story. A story of a great artist.



THE DAYS OF EARLY OLD AGE

“*I didn't do anything wrong for what I did in this life. I don't feel sorry at all for what I didn't do even much more. I didn't leave any stone unturned. I have lived with pleasure. And now I am waiting. And what am I waiting for? I am not waiting for plaudits, neither result nor critics or... Hugh? I am waiting for a rest... To go.”*

On a summer day. We are planning to go somewhere out of Prishtina and to settle down in a trailer in the camp site. The Rugova Mountains are pointed out. A week of settling down. We are taking along foods and drinks, dictaphone and we'd chat. Raki and snack, of course. This week?

One day we are terrible shocked with the news that Faruk Begolli doesn't feel quite well. We hope everything is going to be okay very soon and the plan for interviewing him will be accomplished like we've planned it. But in following days his walk began to deform. Something from the “inside” was harassing him.

“Sciatica. I had it once before. That's how it is. It buries me alive. The last time it hammered me.”

It's heat. Someone is mentioning Ulqin.

“Let's go to Ulqin and there we'd realize the interview. While eating fish we'd chat.”

After a few days someone had to help him in walking downtown to a café, to his preferred corner. “I am wondering how people can walk upright?” he used to say joking with his own walk. Young artists and colleagues come alternately surrounding the table where he sitting. They asked him shyly about his health.

“The public always loved me”

He made open jokes about his illness and challenged it with his famed irony.

“This time I have it deep down,” he said. Once he even mentioned the cancer. All of us that were around him hanged back.

His health was getting worse. He had to go for an X ray. The first checkup in Prishtina resulted alarming and indicated something bad. In Skopje they made a detailed X ray. “The black film” of an X ray revealed the bad thing. We were stunned and sad. Everybody was whispering for the bad thing. “Have you heard?” The finding of X ray was “delayed” for Faruk Begolli. Delayed... Who’d tell him what was going on? He was still waiting.

“I just want to know what will reveal those X rays, and if it’s a cancer, then I’ll go back drinking raki.”

He began to “plan” his funeral. Who’d read poems and who’d have a speech there. People that were around him all those days were in real trouble because of his humor.

“Astrit, you should read the letter at the commemorative program. Be pathetic as more as you can, shed your tears, but don’t turn around to look at my picture.”

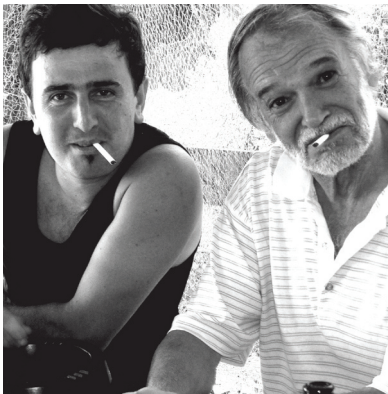
X ray findings didn’t come yet. His health is getting worse.

“I’ll crawl to Ulqin. We’d finish the book there. There at Voja’s place, we’d drink raki and eat fish and chat.”

We all become enthusiastic with his will and encouragement that the work on the book should continue. Begolli shows us a copybook with records and details from his past, a copybook with paper clippings from early years and saved pictures collected by his former wife Zoja Begolli.

Medical alarming was exact. At the same time we all hope and pray for him.

“I’ve been told that someone has found on internet that I’ve played in about 70 movies. These records can be given in two pages. There is no need to overload the book with stale information. Then in Ulqin I can tell you jokes and stories related to the making of movies. For instance, I’d tell you when I went for the first to Pula Film Festival and I didn’t know how to eat seafood. Until then I only saw fish stuck in cans. I didn’t know how a crab looked like and what were sea fruits? I was just a villager from Baran. And them, movie critics and movie people said, “Why aren’t you eating, Mr. Faruk, eat.” And I, in fact, I didn’t know how to eat those foods and then I’d say, “I am not hungry, I don’t feel like eating.” Ah, these kind of jokes I’d tell you when we go to Ulqin, and then you should collect some more from others and combine them. But if they bring the copybook from Belgrade, then it’ll be easier, because there are many details written and they’d be very useful for you and me. Yesterday I said to the man I’ve sold the apartment to mail me my copybook. I think I’ll get it soon.”



After a long tiring expectancy for medical tests from Skopje, which “were not coming,” he decided to go to Ulqin. In the summer scene of Ulqin one of his comedies will be staged. At the border, the actor Armond Morina, who was driving the car and accompanying Begolli, skillfully passed the long line of cars. Up to the Montenegro’s border, Armond’s popularity was of great help, even further. In front of the Montenegrin custom police, Begolli rolls down the window slowly and shows up his face.

“Dobar dan, Gospodine Begolli...” (“Good afternoon, Mr. Begolli...”) the police welcomed him because they recognized from his earlier films. They gave him compliments saying, “You don’t grow old at all.” There’s no doubt, Begolli was delighted. He liked when he saw people still remembered him and loved him.

“The public always loved me,” he said.

The long trip to Ulqin exhausted him more but he didn’t give up. Ulqin awaits him gloomy. The sea waves seemed troubled. The first night was over flooded by showers that scare you to death. Everything seemed frightful. The hotel room and lobby became the only places where Begolli could stay. His walk became more difficult and now he could move only if he leaned on somebody. We go in turn to pay him a visit in his hotel room. He stayed immobilized there and only from time to time goes down in the lobby to drink a coffee and read the newspapers that we brought him. Almost everybody who passed there recognized him. They greet him and they took pictures with him.

At Ulqin’s Castle, in one of the nights of Summer Festival, one of his comedies is staged, performed by students. He heads to the Castle to act there. His role in that play is symbolical. Two people helped him to climb slowly through the stones of pavements that lead to the Castle. He sat among the audience. People looked at him with admiration. After the play, he gave an interview to a female journalist, who wanted an opinion about the play and festival. He responded with an extraordinary lucidity not showing any sign of tiredness or weakness. Unfortunately, his health prevented him to stay any longer in Ulqin. We were forced to come back to Prishtina. So, we didn’t mention the interview anymore. Our story was becoming similar to ancient myths, where the people or titans disappear and take with themselves a part of an important secret.

Begolli rarely went downtown for a coffee. He doesn’t drink raki any more. “The medical findings” from Skopje’s clinic “arrived” late. The threatening that was coming from cancer he responded with a wilder threatening “Let me die as soon as it is possible.” He ignored doctor’s requests for a therapy and cure.

“The sooner, the better. There’s no cure for it, only delay.”

And when others greeted him with “good bye” he responded back with “See you in Drago-dan”, up there, where Prishtina’s cemetery lies.

In 2000, he was asked if he ever thought about “the deep old age” Begolli answered that he never thought about it, but also neither wanted to live through the deep old age.

“Simply, as soon as I lose the strength, I want to go to Heaven, to die somehow easily and

“Simply, as soon as I lose the strength, I want to go to Heaven, to die somehow easily and beautifully. As for me, I had enough, I am satisfied with my life, because realistically I didn’t expect to live this long”

beautifully. As for me, I had enough, I am satisfied with my life, because realistically I didn’t expect to live this long.”

Enver Petrovci confirmed that Faruk Begolli was never afraid of anybody. As he said, “Faruk never cared for anyone else and he was never afraid of death.” Fadil Hysaj said, “While facing and challenging the illness Faruk Begolli is still triumphant.”

“He is the only person I know that so manly is facing a mystery, which simply is a kind of metaphysical fear in front of something we are not familiar to and do not know it. In this role he is magnificent. As for me, in all this Faruk Begolli is triumphant. The way how he has ‘accepted’ his illness, the way how he communicates with such delicate humor, without any doubt in his timbre of voice he is simply fascinating.”

When we visited him for the first time in his sister’s house, where he is staying now, we didn’t inform him that we were going there. We knew it before, that if we had asked him, he wouldn’t accept it. At the door he looked at us, for a few seconds in silence, with a reproaching look, but he didn’t say a thing. In fact, we were expecting everything, even to drive us away, just like he did with a former female student a day before. Right after she has shown up at the sill door, Faruk just waved her to go away. Her prayers couldn’t help her. He just drove her away and that’s it. In the beginning he didn’t said anything to us, then after a while he began to swear us why we didn’t call him and asked for a visit. Time passed and in meantime the atmosphere there began to get more relaxed. He wasn’t deciding to come with us for a coffee. Yes, I’ll come, he said, but then when we wanted to leave, with a little arrogance, he addressed to us: “Come on, you just take a walk. And later I’ll see if I am coming or not. If I am coming, I’ll let you know.”

He was going out very rare. And it’s been very long time since he couldn’t go out. Challenged by the pains and by the friends’ pressure, especially from those who studied with him in Belgrade, he was obliged to take into consideration doctors recommendations. He began to take chemotherapy...

“In the beginning I gave in. I said that I didn’t want to have anything with this any more, thinking that everything would go easily. But it hurts, it hurts... And the friends... Those friends from Belgrade. Because I didn’t want to tell them anything. So, they’ve been told about it and then all of them called me. From my class, from the first class seven of them had the cancer. A friend of mine, a female, called me from Israel. All of them tried to persuade me on the phone, “You should do this and you should take this medicament...” And they convinced me. They keep calling me regularly. They convinced me about this shit, chemotherapy. Because this won’t heal you, but it will block it a bit and you don’t feel pain. It gives this piece of life more quality. All you have to do is waiting. But, at least when I am with you, I enjoy it, I read the newspapers. Because, for a month I couldn’t get up at all out of my bed. I didn’t have appetite, I didn’t feel anything. I just gave up. But death didn’t want to come and take me... And this is only a delay, but ... Well, at this moment I can get up, I can do everything, I can sit and talk with you, when it hurts and I take some pills, this one ... So, now I am fooling around, I get up and walk, then I am boasting “Well, today I made three steps in the room. Now I have appetite. One day I will drive crazy ‘my enemies.’ I want to dress, but I don’t know whether to wear orange pajamas or the other one, and to put a big bed like in those alternative plays. And I’d walk downtown, so people can say,”God damn it, look at that motherfucker... How come that this piece of shit isn’t



dead yet.”

From time to time we paid him a visit. His sister Aslihaja was taking care of him all these last years. Now when he is ill, she’s always near him and takes care with lot of love. She welcomed rare visitors, those that Begolli accepted in his room and she served them with a juice or a coffee. During all these times, Begolli has accepted only a few visitors. The room where he is lying is very dark. There’s a television in front of the bed, which is almost always on.

Finally, he decided to cooperate and talk. Gradually he brings back his memory and chews the past and the life lived from an artist. Once upon a time he was one of the leading stars in former Yugoslavia. A star adored by tens of millions people everywhere in former Yugoslavia. He was a charming actor, whose fame continued to shine even among nowadays generations. From the bed, where he was lying, about which he said that it looks “like a jungle,” Begolli for the first time completely unveiled his life. A small “machine” beside his head registered his words, silence, cries and breathing.

“Now we are talking, since I am dying. Are we going to make the book ‘while he was alive’, or not? Now the book is being made. I will die and you’d finish it later. There are two possibilities, ‘We made it while he was alive... We didn’t talk about this thing...or, we have begun while he was alive, and we are going to die...and he died.’ These things are very important. Think of it.”

The artist and a Man. Faruk Begolli, or “Çara,” (Chara) as they used to call him; his friends and mates. A famous artist. Our hero from old-time films. A lover boy and a partisan, about who people shed tears when he got “killed”, usually in the end of the movie.

A life of an artist and a bohemian. Artist, for whom life and movie were a game, as a beautiful game, from which he’s taken only pleasure.



*Orson Wells
said There are
some people
that simply
camera loves
them*

Orson Wells said, "There are some people that, simply, camera loves them." Certainly, one of them was Faruk Begolli, too.

He played in about 70 feature films of different lengths and in tens theatrical performances. Cover magazines of those days in former Yugoslavia were filled with his pictures, he was celebrated as the most beautiful man in Yugoslavia, and they've praised him and raved about his work as an actor. The audience adored him and beautiful girls "were dying" to meet him. Within a day he used to receive "a bag of letters" as he pointed out. About his films many fan clubs were founded in various towns.

Even today in his sixties he has the same youth charm in his face. Thin, fine bones and well-proportioned body. On his forehead his soft hair waves as a rare forest of silver. But the years, however, has swallowed up a small part of the hair which still is not losing the shining of his charm.

Nostalgic eyes, always clear and shining. His look full of lively interest, as a knife stabbing, it astonishes you and completely "disarms" you. It's hard to lie while he is looking into your eyes. It seems that all creative force of this man bands together in one spot – in his eyes. They are his weapon, as Samson's hair.

But his image for those who has never met him is broken at the first moment. The expected arrogance and an imagined bestiality in such a meeting vanish immediately. Then in front of you are different eyes, different smile and his voice changes. He appears, Faruk Begolli, the real one.

The actress Melihate Qena said that Faruk Begolli even in his life has behaved like a "Bey", with grandiosity. And, according to her, this kind of behavior has made impact among other people that he was "untouchable."

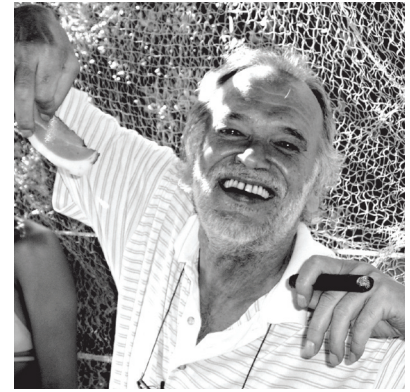
"On the contrary, he is so delicate, so clean and so pure. Perhaps I have never met any other man with such virtues. And if you get to know him better, then you'd understand that these virtues are not fake, but they are part of his life and his character, it's his nature."

Begolli's memory is still fresh. With a strange penetrating force he gets back into his past and seems that he has kept it untouched in his memory. Nothing has been lost, not even a detail.

Faruk Begolli, a man that during the seventies and the eighties was considered to be famous as much as Josip Broz Tito himself, and nowadays in Kosova he is considered one of the emblematic figures of Kosovar art. His sensational career of an artist, mainly in movies, his outstanding work with students, gave him rightly reputation of "the institution himself." An actor, professor and director of Dodona Theatre.

"I can't separate the work at Dodona, the work as a professor and the work as an artist. I appreciate them all. Because all these works fill each other."

Begolli said he had a principle in his life, if he started a work then he has to finish it. So, the process, especially its end, has brought him a particular pleasure.



"Whatever I did, I did it without thinking, without having a preliminary plan. Even the life itself is like that, without plans. I had a principle in my life, and here it is: start the work, and after that you'll see where and what. And: the work must be done. No matter of sacrifices, no matter of circumstances, and that work have to be done. It doesn't matter what the outcomes are, it doesn't matter what the critics say: the work has to be done. And if it is possible to be done with pleasure."

BOHEMIAN LIFE

Faruk Begolli had an old car, "Yugo" a Yugoslav trademark, with the doors which cannot be closed and the brakes that you have to press hard if you want to put in function. With Drina cigarette, made in Nis. There are hardly to be found other men in Kosova that smokes the same cigarettes like him. When he sat in his preferred bars he always had a glass of raki in front of him and daily newspapers that he browsed everyday. That's him, Faruk Begolli. He is a man, as he puts it: "mainly optimistic". He gets angry very quickly, but it passes him very quickly.

"When Begolli started to drink," said some of his friends, "It's necessary for you to have in disposal all the free time of this world. He doesn't care about time, except that he wanted to squeeze his pleasure until the end; until he empties the bottle of raki."

"As for me, I cannot say that I got affinity to visit galleries, but I can say that I have affinity to go to a bar. There I feel good. If I go to a gallery, I'd take a walk, I'd get tired and I'd take a look at paintings. That's interesting. But in a bar, there I know things better, there I am an expert."

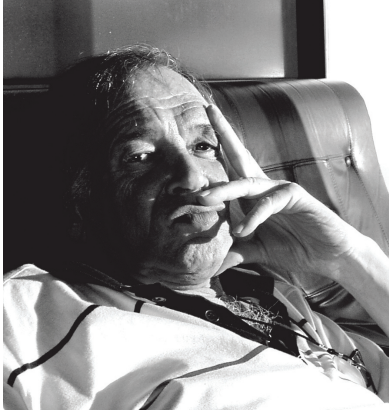
The table where Begolli sat to drink was usually surrounded with other people, students or his colleagues. Enver Petrovci said, "Begolli was a man that never spared his money and he always have paid drinks to students." He also said that, "Begolli had always impressed me as a man who had a lot of money." Fadil Hysaj thinks that Faruk Begolli was a bohemian, who felt good being with other people around him.

"In that table where Faruk Begolli sat no one dared to pay. He didn't allow it. Because he was the King of the table. This was principle of his life. You were a guest at his table. This was his lifestyle, a bohemian that felt good being with people around him. Begolli was a bohemian indeed."

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A part of inspiration for Begolli's performances came to him when his eyes become smaller because of raki. But, since he knew well that the next day will wipe the thoughts that came during drinking, he, usually, finds somewhere a piece of paper and puts down the ideas (as drafts) for theatrical performances, scenes, characters or other things that had to do with students. Thus, in a piece of a paper you can find "weird" sentences as "... to make a performance: men talking about women, and women talking about men... and with..."

"When I work either in a movie or in theatrical performances, even while I teach, when I stuck somewhere, when I fail a bit and I do not see any solution then I go and get drunk, alone. I get real drunk. And then my brain works perfectly. Seriously. Also I get many ideas while drinking. Usually I write in pieces of papers, newspapers, because if I don't put



“If I was concerned about how to be a rich man, now I’d have that richness”

them down, then they’ll disappear tomorrow and I’ll forget them all.”

Begolli has lived intensively, although that recently his daily route has been almost the same: home-Dodona Theatre- faculty- bar-home. This active life were banded together his work as artist and the zest toward drinks and never-ending parties, Begolli considers this as a key to success.

“I think if I haven’t lived like I’ve lived, a life full of activities with friends: man and women. I wouldn’t achieve anything. Just because I drank raki, just because I sat with many people of various profiles, so, this life, let’s call it bohemian, has flourished me, and helped me not to be a “disciplined worker.” Yes, just that friendship, just that raki has enriched my imagination and has motivated me. So, without that part of life, certainly this other part of life as an artist would be very, very poor or maybe it wouldn’t exist at all. Thus, both parts of me are complementary, they fill each other.”

As a film artist Begolli sometime used to get paid very well. But he never thought of saving “money”, to build a house, to own an apartment or at least to buy a new car. His style of living was and remained “from day to day.” All the money he earned he spent with his friends and mates. In fact, as he put it himself: “I was rich, but I never thought about richness.”

“I still do think that I am rich. Everything I had, I’ve spent to please myself. If I wanted to be rich, today I would have a house, and... Money in the bank. As for me the film was always a game, even my life I’ve lived as a game; so, while you are here, enjoy it and make the best out of it. Well, I never was a materialist and never thought about these things. But, it’s true that I made a lot of money, but it’s also true that now I have nothing. And if I was concerned about how to be a rich man, now I’d have that richness. Everything I did, I did it with pleasure and for pleasure.”

He has kept the sense of humor till today. From the bed, where he is lying, he “behaves like a spoiled child” and demands respect.

“You should bear me, because I am a sick man, I am dying. It seems that you have spoiled me, just to please me, to love me.”

These words that were said humorously, in a way they hide a certain truth, the one that Begolli has said in a radio interview in 2004, on his sixtieth birthday. None of Kosova’s institutions were concerned to congratulate this anniversary. Begolli was thrilled but not irritated to explain it:

“As long as people are alive, our society do not give them even a hope or a confirmation that they are alive and that they have done something for this country. And when a man dies then all television and radio stations, theatres, cultural and state’s institutions can’t stop praising the dead man for a day or two. This always happens when someone dies, and while you are alive, I don’t why, but nobody loves you, even they do not encourage you to keep on going or to keep on working.”

CHILDHOOD

“ *There’s nothing better than to go to a well and drink water from a bucket. The sun is parching you while the water is cold... That’s enough when you are thirsty... You drink water and sweats run down your neck... As in movies, as they say... If you drink milk, then you should spill a little, so the others can see you that you are drinking milk... I’d give my soul just to drink one more time from the well.”*

It’s hard to find people who talk so passionately about their childhood, in the way Faruk Begolli speaks. He considers the childhood as the most beautiful part of his life. Even though, at that time, life wasn’t much friendly toward him and his family.

A macabre event occurred when partisans killed his father. But for him as a child, that didn’t put on him any extraordinary pressure. At least not in his early childhood. His mother and his sisters tried to compensate the absence of his father. They did the best they could to raise him and help him grow up properly.

If there is anything about Faruk Begolli does not “hesitate” to talk then it’s his childhood. From the room where he is lying, he speaks in a very nostalgic tone about memories of his childhood and he says that they are, “the most beautiful part of my life!” Burdened by illness and tired of boring days, he recalls the childhood and life in a village.





“The space... the space is freedom... In Baran, when I just took few steps out of home, endless fields and farmlands were lying in front of me...”



This feeling of enthusiasm about the space was intensified especially during the difficult moments of illness, when the room and sultry atmosphere bring to a man endless boredom; as a thirsty man, who in dreams sees springs of cold water and rivers that gurgle in the mountains. He really yearns for that time and life, now when his life became a room-life. That's the reason why he said, when he realized from what is suffering, “It's better to die with a good taste of life.”

Faruk Begolli was only 6 months old when communists killed his father, the well known Bey, Sefedin Begolli, who during 1920-1940 was a land baron with a reputation and owner of tens of houses and hundreds hectares of lands in suburbs of Peja. After a failed marriage with a Viennese baroness, in his sixties, Sefedin Bey was married to Elmaze Pasha, a woman that descends from an authoritative family. Sefedin Bey's second wife, Faruk Begolli's mother, was the daughter of Jashar Pasha, the niece of famous Albanian patriot Haxhi Zeka. With his second wife Elmaze, Sefedin Bey had seven children, four of them lived. Elmaze was devotional Muslim.



In 1943, after the Germans bombarded Peja, during that period of fear and anxiety, Elmaze with her four children, the daughters: Nevruze, Aslihane and sons Faruk and Adil, has moved from Peja and settled down in Baran, a village in outskirts of Peja, where they owned a house, there where their sharecroppers lived. The house in Baran was shared with the family members of old man Avdyl Gashi and his son's family members. Tafa, son of Avdyl Gashi, was the host. With them the Begolli family during the next years lived as one family.

After the communists won the war, they began a campaign “as agrarian reform,” which had to do with collectivism and cooperatives. Thus, the Bey's lands and properties were confiscated and given to the state. Toward Beys and to so-called “degenerated aristocracy,” as the communists used to call them, in conformity to their political philosophy, they had a fierce and bestial campaign, which resulted in killings, burning their houses and usurping their lands. Of course, that Faruk Begolli's father, Sefedin, as a Bey, was one of the targets of this destructive campaign.

“I was only 6 months old, when my mother, my brother Adil and my two sisters moved from Peja to a village to hide from bombardments...And then the war, in the year of '44 we were left there in the village and were “free”...And when the nationalization, confiscation, arrests began...My father was caught and killed, my mother went through investigation, prisons, police...You know, it's a history...And me, as a child, I didn't know anything about those things...So, it was a very difficult and bloody times, and for me, as a child, it was a lovely time... Because I had all that space and all that freedom... I was still just a child...”

*...it was a very
difficult and
bloody times,
and for me, as
a child, it was
a lovely time...*

FATHER'S DEATH

Many years later Faruk Begolli from his relatives has heard few versions about his father's murder.

In autumn of 1944, after the communists' victory Sefedin Bey felt that he was in danger and left his home. He found a shelter in a house in Lumbardh village. The host of that house dug a little tunnel under the fire-place in the cook-room and there he hid the Bey. Then the fire-place was covered with an escutcheon and upon it they lit the fire for family's need.

From Baran, where they were settled temporarily, Faruk Begolli's mother a few times through the darkness has visited her husband that was hiding in Lumbardh. But not for so long, because these visits were noticed from some people, who, to avoid the pressure or to gain any benefits, has informed the communists about Sefedin Bey's possible shelter.

Since they discovered Bey's seat, the communists has surrounded the village and then started a military expedition and tortured the villagers. They were expelled from their houses and were left without food and water. According to one version, Sefedin Bey has committed suicide, he took poison. Meantime a sclerotic old woman who thought that Sefedin Bey is not alive and wanting to help the villagers that were tortured, asked loudly, "what happened to Bey?" and then ran toward the place where he was hiding and removed escutcheon. This is one of the versions, but there is another version which says, in fact, the communists found Sefedin Bey and then they've killed him. After they have pulled him out of the hiding place under the fire-place, they put him in a van, then put him in a chair and tied him with a rope and then they put a cigarette in his mouth, and afterwards they drove the van through the main street of Peja, banging the drums and cheering, "We have captured Sefedin Bey, the people's biggest enemy. Come, see and be convinced yourself!" Many people from Peja, including relatives of Begolli family, went to the street to see "the enemy," even some of them were forced by partisans to spit at Bey's corpse. Then later the partisans have wiped out the corpse from the face of earth. Neither then nor later, the Begolli family members ever found Sefedin Bey's grave.

Those villagers that helped Bey in hiding were arrested and have spent many years in former Yugoslavia's prisons and casemates. Some of them died there.

Sefedin Bey's murder was hold forth and proclaimed as a murder of people's plotter enemy. People were forced to write and sing songs against Jashar Pasha and Sefedin Bey... A later song that will be sung in guest parlors, influenced from the spirit of communists' victory against "enemies," will end with this refrain:

Jashar Pasha, Sefedin Beg
To Albanians you brought only mischief

Bey's murder was followed by burning of the houses and towers, which were his property. Jashar Pasha's house was burnt in the street then called "Omladinka" in Peja, which was, as they say, "one of the most beautiful houses in Kosova!" even the five floor building in

“I have the most beautiful childhood... That’s the best part of my life... Although, later I had beautiful life... good life in every respect... But the later part cannot be compared with childhood...”

Belgrade was confiscated, in Dobrasina Street, one floor was property of Sefedin Bey’s first wife.

Faruk Begolli says that they never suit anybody about these confiscations, since he claims that he didn’t want to cause any traumas to the present owners of those properties.

Besides properties, the terror has conquered the family members. One of Sefedin Bey’s brother, Sami Bey, knowing that he might have the same luck of his brother has ran off to Rugova Mountains and together with some other people has created a small unit of renegade outlaws, which would fight against communists...Sami Bey was fighting in that unit until 1949, when he was killed by communists.

The youngest Sefedin Bey’s brother Gjergjiz, moved to live in Subotica. Many years later, he will tell Faruk Begolli all what happened to the family, to a man that one day will become one of the most famous movie and TV star in former Yugoslavia.

CHILDHOOD IN BARAN

From all that ownership they used to have; now they owned only 5 hectares of farmlands and an old house in Baran, where Sefedin Bey’s wife and children lived together with Tafë Gashi’s family. The house had a large backyard with a lot of trees. They had there livestock and chickens, a cot and ordure in the backyard. Now Tafë Gashi was in charge of Sefedin Bey’s property and all his estates. The land baron and sharecroppers lived and shared the good and the bad.

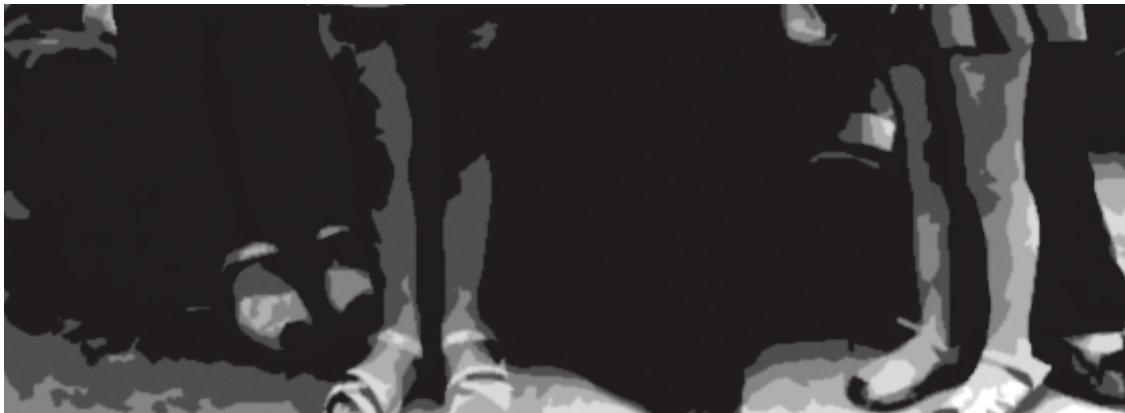
“As a child I didn’t know who was baron land or sharecropper... I have grown among them as with family members... They have suffered like us, too... They were imprisoned, they were shot too... But about all this I don’t know anything, I didn’t experience it... I have the most beautiful childhood...That’s the best part of my life... Although, later I had beautiful life... good life in every respect...But the later part cannot be compared with childhood...”

Sefedin Begolli’s family fate, his wife and four children, was left in the hands of the head of Gashi’s family, who also was taking care of his family members.

Faruk Begolli’s mother for a long time after those tragic events will suffer a lot going from to one police station to another, from one prison to another, from one party’s office to another informative conversation persuading her to give evidences to them that were asking for her “enemy” husband.”

As a child Faruk Begolli will grow up with caresses of his mother, sisters and grandmother, Jashar Pasha’s wife.

“During the vacation we often went to my grandmother, Jashar Pasha’s wife and my mother’s stepmother. I used to call her “mother” and she had sixteen dewlaps. Yes, she loved so much, thus I didn’t see her ugliness. She took me often to Peja. Istref Begolli with his sisters used to come there very often to visit my grandmother.”



*“You go out
and see...your
eyes are full of...
space...”*

Faruk Begolli recalls so passionately his life as a child in Baran. The life in village he calls it a kind of “miracle.” The house, where he has grown up, used to have a large backyard full of apple-trees and plum-trees. The spring brought to him and to other children tasty fruits. And the children crushed them with their small pocket knives, which they used to have wherever they went.

“AS for children the village is a miracle. When spring comes, you have everything to eat: crabs, cornels, bullace... You, as a child, have a small pen knife and with it you fix the fruits as it suits you.”

It was a huge house where Begolli’s lived. Nearby were a drainage ditch and a drinking fountain. Also there was an old oak with huge and cramped boughs. Faruk and other children climbed up as squirrels through the oak boughs and build up there little huts. Somewhere in the backyard was a big hole created by a bomb, which was dropped during the war. Faruk together with other children made tunnels and all kinds of labyrinths there. Meanwhile, in the summer with pumpkins the made “carts”, and they pulled them across the backyard. Above the backyard was a slope where children used to slide as in skating during the winter in the snow, even in the summer too.

“I remember when children used to say, “Put your ass in embankment,” then I used to climb up and slide downwards, I used to rip up my pants. When I went home my mother beat me and then she patched them.”

His mother loved him. She loved him even the he “didn’t left a stone unturned.” She loved him more because he looked like his father, Sefedin. As a kid, Faruk Begolli liked to get dressed as a man. His mother bought him men’s long white gaiters and sleeveless smock and he was proud and boasted in front of other children. The poverty that they were living wasn’t noticed by Faruk. His sisters and others around him took care about feeding him.

“I didn’t feel the poverty or the troubles that my family had in those days. My sisters always put aside a crust of corn bread for me, ‘so when he wakes up we don’t have anything else to give him’...”I wasn’t aware of these things then. I understood them later!”

As a child he “fooled around” as he says, going everywhere and neither he could sit or stand still wanting to search every corner of the backyard, field or farmland, which surrounded the house or the village where he lived.

“In that huge space I felt so free...“!

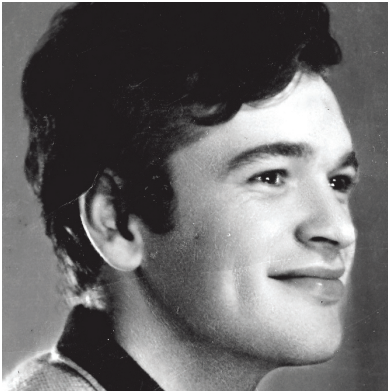
This freedom that was offered to him by the space of the village, and in general the life itself in village will remain the most beautiful part of Faruk Begolli’s life, his best memory ...

“You go out and see...your eyes are full of...space...”

He speaks with a lot of respects about his mother and his sisters and also he mentions “Mother Rukë,” she was mother of Uncle Tafa. She was in charge of cooking and milk



products in the house. After a long running and tiring games across the backyard, Mother Rukë often pulled from the cellar a tomato and crust of bread and gave to spoiled Faruk, as his mother used to say “he couldn’t sit or stand still!”



The dynamic life in village seems to be ideal for Faruk Begolli’s temperament and he was always apt to the unknown and in “creating” things that never existed before. “Creating” through game. “Living the life as a game” and “acting and artistic creativeness as a game” will remain as a motto in his later life and activities.

SCHOOL

The first three years of elementary school he finished in Baran. But he knew how to read and write before he went to school and he used his brother’s, Adil, books and copybooks. He incited from childish curiosity used to take his brother’s copybooks and tried to puzzle out his brother’s homework. He followed his brother and wanted to go to school, even that he was too young for school. In the house nobody dared to “hit the youngest child,” except Adili, who, of course, used to beat him when nobody was around. Adil was two years older than him, he beat him and he didn’t want Faruk to follow him. Then, his mother would ask the teacher to accept Faruk in the class, as if he was a regular pupil, that’s how they calmed angered Adil...



Faruk Begolli for a year, even though he was not registered in the school, took lessons in the same grade as his brother Adil. He was zealous and one of the best pupils in that grade. So, as a reward for this, his teacher has enabled him to pass to the second grade, and together with other children he was registered regularly. His mother asked not to recognize the first year, but his teacher insisted and he passed to the second grade. He was awarded a towel for the success he achieved. He entered the second grade as 6 year-old boy. Many of his copybooks and other things for school he bought with the money he saved from selling the beans and corns, which he had found and picked up in the fields after the harvest.

“When collectivization occurred...everybody took part in the time of the harvest, together, brigadiers, and I don’t who else... And what was left after the harvest, beans, corns, we, the children went there and picked up and then we would go to market and sell it. For instance, we could collect two kilograms of beans... and then we bought things for school... In those days, there weren’t any chocolates...”

Once, his teacher, Idriz Hoxha, has beaten him very badly, because Faruk has forgotten the copybook in his shoulder bag. So, for this mistake he got spanked, 25 times, with a stick he has chosen himself. These 25 spankings Faruk Begolli will never forget. Except this, Faruk Begolli will never forget his first love of the third grade...

“I used to carry her bag, and this a kind of way to express love. I used to carry her bag and I used to get jealous if somebody else carried it...”

During the classes’ breaks and before the classes the pupils used to play various games. But, of course, the preferred games were inspired by the war of that time between “Parti-



sans and Balists.” And, certainly, partisans’ popularity then was at its peak and without any doubt all the children were “partisans.”

„We played partisans against balists in the school. We all wanted to be partisans, and since I was the youngest then they ordered me to be balist.“

RETURNING TO PEJA

In 1952, in those days when OZNA-s tortures toward Begolli family has ceased, they decided to go back again to Peja. But now they didn’t have the house they used to have, so they lived as tenants and for a long time they lived in poor conditions. And Faruk for the first time experiences the poverty and misery. Now he was attending the elementary school in Peja. Even after they moved from Baran to Peja, Faruk Begolli wouldn’t go back to village for a long time. The only time he went there was during the summer vacations when he was in the secondary school. The return to Baran will remain to him an everlasting dream. He never gave up of this dream even when he was famous as an artist. On the contrary, he kept saying that he wants to go back there and build a small house with a small garden.

“Well, when I made money, then I was an artist... I had and I still have a wish to build a small house in the village, with two or three plots of onions, something that would keep me busy... And there I’d spend the summer...Two or three chickens there... And I’d prefer going there than to seaside... I had the plot where I’d built that house...But I know that this is only an illusion, a kind of a dream...”

Town life will bring to Faruk Begolli sadness and a lot of troubles. He felt sad when he thought about his village friends and life there. He longed for that big house and the backyard with apple trees and plum trees, he longed for Mother Rukë’s crusts of bread, and also the hole in the garden, drainage ditch, the huge oak with its top and many other things...

In Peja they lived with revenues they got from that small piece of land they had. His uncle Muharrem Pasha, son of Jashar Pasha, somehow helped them to survive the poverty and sufferings. In those days of poverty, he helped them as much as he could... Istref Begolli, son of his Aunt, and his sisters took care of them. Later Istref Begolli would become one of the most powerful names of the movie and especially of the theatre in former Yugoslavia. He will be one of the main impetuses for Faruk Begolli to begin his journey toward the art of acting...

At once the magical world of village will collapse just to be replaced with a completely hostile and cruel world. Facing a circle of new people and with different mentality Faruk

*“When you fall
in love, every-
thing seems so
beautiful...”*

Begolli felt broken and disdainful. In the school he faced the first terrible shocks. Teachers calling before the classes: “Our enemies Beys...” or Sefedin bey is our enemy...”, will hurt him and push him to hide within himself... Even his coeval will ignore him and despise for a long time.

Caught between disappointment and final breakup and the struggle to fight for, he chose the latter one. His decisiveness and family encouragement, especially mother’s encouragement, helped him to conquer over the distress and despise.

After many years, his difficulties will cease. He will grow and develop, after a few years he will be very popular as handball goalkeeper.

A thin boy with beautiful face, without any doubt must have been very attractive for young girls in Peja. But more than true events, he and his friends will spend many evenings talking about girls, each of them fabricating unusual stories about “adventures” with this or that girl, who was going mad after them... Still, sweet love stories about those days are unforgettable for Begolli.

“When you fall in love, everything seems so beautiful... You say: O God, how did you make her... I am serious... And your friend says: goddamn it, look what have you done... But for you she is the best one...I remember, when she said: from now I am not with you anymore, and we had just started going out. My word of honor, I remember, I couldn’t stand on my feet, I grew pale, if I didn’t lean, I’d fell down to the ground... She left me. This one I will never forget...I couldn’t stand on my feet... But this one wasn’t my first love...But I was so stupid, because every one for me was, let’s say, the first one...But they didn’t last too long...Because I am made of high intensity...When I love, I love...But they do not last long...Still they are intensive...Often, very often I’ve fallen in love...And I, an artist... Most of the time I was outdoors... You fall in love and then you don’t to part easily ...And I never was the one that wanted to part...”

TITO’S BATON AND HANDBALL

After a while, his success in the school will be evident. In the seventh grade, from the school where he was attending, he was appointed to hand a baton to Tito in the square of Peja. Of course, this act was an extraordinary privilege for every child or any adults. And, this undertaking wasn’t done by the school to rehabilitate “enemy’s son,” but it came as a ‘pressure’ of Faruk Begolli’s success and outstanding work as a pupil. But after he handed the baton, the political structures began to ‘spin’ this act and found behind it “tendentious” and “noxious” intentions for the people. How come that ‘enemy’s son’ to deliver Tito’s baton? Aftermath, the homeroom teacher was dismissed.

In that early age Faruk Begolli becomes impassioned with handball. This passion lasted for years. He, 14 years old, will become an excellent player (goalkeeper) of Budućnost handball club, which will placed as the best Kosova’s team in second division of Serbia. As a goalkeeper, he was very movable and he liked to defend especially when he knew that many beautiful girls were in public, whom they admired.

“When we saw that there were a lot of girls in the public, the teammates were very happy and said that nobody will score against you today.”

When he got register in gymnasium, now he was popular in Peja, as a sportsman and also as a talented reciter. With Migjen’s poem “Youth song” he made the audience to stand up and enthusiastically applaud.

Later, as handball goalkeeper he’d play for ORK Beograd, a team which was close to be promoted to the first handball division. From time to time he made some money while playing for team. In one of the decisive games in stadium of Tashmajdan in Belgrade, where they were expecting to be promoted to the first division, the goalkeeper Faruk Begolli was lost in “space and time” and he will conceive too many goals.

“...I was the first goalkeeper and I was substituted with the second goalkeeper, but every time I went to the pitch I conceived a lot of goals. And we lost from the team of Zrenjanin...”

After this unintentional “failure”, Faruk Begolli decided to move from team of Beograd. Since he couldn’t live without sport, he made some contacts with Borac, a handball team from Ferizaj, and he accepts to play for them. At the Borac, he becomes friend with well known defender of those days, Sheqer Shllaku, and he will teach him some new “tricks” of defending. Except with Sheqer, there he introduces himself to other players and later became friend of them: Sahit Sahiti, Bahri Sojeva and Fahri Buçinca.

In those days volley-ball was at its peak of popularity and Begolli’s enthusiasm for the game was outstanding. He often, just for coming to Ferizaj, will falsify train tickets and will travel the whole night with slow trains. Usually, as a reward for the game he’d take a lunch from the team or a poor dinner.

An unusual event from that time of his early youth will be imbibed. With a group of friends he decided to run away to Albania, to the place we thought of it as of a paradise. After they made all plans, they set the day when will leave Kosova. But, after this decision, something was eating him inside and he was under a cloud about this act: what will become of him? What will happen to his mother? On the other side, he gave the word to his friends and didn’t want to “give up” of his promise. After a few days, when they found the connection to cross the border which was under a harsh control, and when everything was going as it was planned, Faruk Begolli gave up and didn’t show up at the meeting place. For many nights he couldn’t recollect himself. He felt sorry for his friends as he scrupled for not joining them. Meantime, his friends had a bad luck. They were betrayed by a compatriot and were caught at the border by a border patrol.

His older brother, Adil, began to study in Ljubljana, meanwhile Faruk Begoll, then 17 years old was hesitating to register at the faculty, which doesn’t need a lot of money to be spent, because the poverty was burning them out, no matter that he says, “I was a son of Bey and nephew of Pasha!” But the escape from poverty came in a form of scholarship, which was



being granted to the distinguished students in those days. Faruk Begolli was granted with such a scholarship, but only if he was to study metallurgy. Except for the scholarship the other favor to Faruk Begolli was that he didn't have to take test to get admitted there.

Two days before he was going to the faculty, his mother and sisters cooked crumpets and some other sweets, thus they wanted somehow to sweeten his "parting."

In the moment when he had to leave, he greeted his sisters, but he was as "frosted" when he reached his mother's hand. He couldn't take any further step.

„I was aware that this was our definitive parting. I couldn't leave. I never saw her tears. She didn't cry even there. She just said in commanding voice: "Go! Go now!"

Faruk Begolli picked up his suitcases and left... After his first steps, he cried. He wasn't ashamed and he didn't wipe his tears. At the train station he was thinking of going back home, but he surpassed this tempting. He took the train to Belgrade but still was thinking to take the train that will bring him back to Peja.

In the morning, when he arrived to the train station in Belgrade, his friends welcomed him there. They teased him and took his crumpets and other sweets that his mother and sisters cooked for him.

"My friends were aware of my boredom and they used to say: You are still a child."



LIFE IN BELGRAD

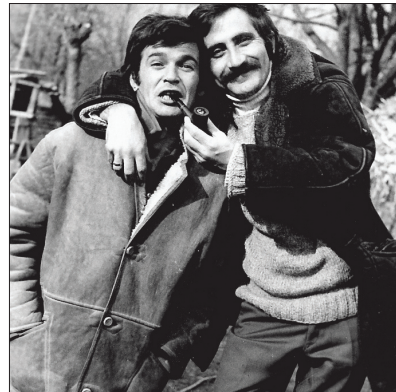
“ *I am a man who loves woman's beauty, not only her beautiful appearance, but also her inner beauty because that's very important. Women's beauty inspires me. And, in this research for inspiration I've met my wife.”*

Metallurgy studies didn't challenge at all Begolli. He wasn't satisfied at all with profession he chose. And as a result of this non-motivation he failed the exams. So, he had to leave Belgrade, since he couldn't justify to his family his further staying and waste of time. He decided to go back again in Peja, where he thought he might find a job as a teacher in elementary school in villages nearby. But, surprisingly, this goal wasn't achieved, because none of the schools there did show any interest and readiness to accept him as a teacher. Meantime he decided to study Economics in Prishtina. Thus, in 1961 he was registered there, and successfully passed his exams. But, after a year spent in Belgrade, he had a lot of difficulties adapting in Prishtina. Then, again, he decided to move to Belgrade and to continue his studies in Economics. There he continued his second year, where at first everything seemed to be going on the right direction except for some small difficulties. Now everybody thought and was convinced that Faruk Begolli finally has found his true profession. But, he still wasn't satisfied. Many things didn't work. So, something had to be changed. At once, he became disdainful in the classes, to say it briefly, he wasn't concerned about lessons at all. He was complaining, but he didn't know why he was complaining. After a while, they enable him to go back again to Prishtina in the same faculty, with a formal argumentation that there, in Belgrade, he couldn't succeed because of the language. After he came back to Prishtina, he began to intensify his engagement for studies and he showed success. But again, the enthusiasm and his will faded out very soon. After finishing the second year, he went back to his hometown Peja. During the summer break, Begolli was bearing in his mind many doubts and dilemmas. No one, not even Begolli himself, didn't know what direction he was about to take in his life. And meantime, during those summer days, he met his cousin, Istref Begolli to whom he confessed (complaining) about "sufferings" and dissatisfactions he had while studying economics. Then Istref Begolli, perhaps knowing his complexion, almost accidentally suggested him to register at

the Academy of Arts in Belgrade, branch of Acting. Something began to move, so at least he had a ray of hope. Begolli was thinking about the theatre stage and film camera. Who would ever say: Faruk Begolli, an actor?

Those days he met Ekrem Kryeziu, who, also, left his Law studies unfinished, and decided to study Dramaturgy in Belgrade. Ekrem Kryeziu motivated Begolli to enroll in acting classes. Begolli decided to compete, fearing that he will not pass the entrance exam, especially after he understood that a part of entrance exam is a written essay. But, Ekrem Kryeziu was encouraging and promising that he will write the “essay” for him.

In Belgrade, nearby the location where the exam would take place, were about a thousand young people who were heading towards acting, directing and dramaturgy. Begolli became “terrified” and almost all his hopes evaporated. He couldn’t imagine that from



that crowd of people he is going to be amongst the best twelve students. But, as Begolli himself points out, “when luck wants to strike you, it strikes you, when luck doesn’t want to strike you, it won’t strike you!” From one thousand contestants, he achieved to be among those who were selected to take the entrance exam. He was among five hundred applying candidates.

Ekrem Kryeziu wrote his written part, meantime Begolli “picks himself up” and shows his talent in other issues of entrance exam. There he declaims Izet Sarajlic’s poem, a Bosnian poet. Facing the professors in commission, he felt disarmed because he took the performance very emotionally. It seemed that everything was okay. The crowd of contestants was becoming smaller while Begolli passed through two “classes” of entrance exam, and he got qualified among the thirty-four candidates. Without any doubt this was the last challenge he had to face. This was the last obstacle in the long marathon in becoming a student of acting. This was going to change his course of life. He had only a week to get prepared. For his final exam he chose and prepared in Serbian language Mayakovski’s poem Clouds in Pants and in Albanian a monologue from play I Will Not Get Married for Money. The entrance exam – the last part of it has sealed his fate as an actor. Commission issued the final evaluation for 12 accepted candidates and among them was Faruk Begolli’s name. His life changed a lot after this entrance exam. The doors of another world



were opened for him, a world which was unknown to him before.



He began his first year of studies in academic year 1963/1964, in the class of Minja Dedic, with his colleagues: Svetlana Bojković, Petro Bozović, Branko Miličević, Josif Tatic, Lane Gotovac and Dzurđze Svetić etc. Begolli began his class with this generation but ends it with another one. In his first year of studying, Begolli did an extraordinary attempt and digested and perfected diction of Serbian language. The faculty, the third one, he began very zealous and completely convinced that this will be his future profession.

Begolli as a student of acting continued to play handball for Borac of Ferizaj. From Belgrade he went very often to Ferizaj to play his part as a goalkeeper of his team. This was crucial time when he had to choose between handball and acting. This was made clear to him by his professor Minja Dedić, asking him to choose between acting and handball, because according to him the double engagement caused him problems. Of course, Begolli finally decided to go for acting, although he never gave up his connections with sport. He even nowadays continues to be a big “fan” of sports, especially of football. In those days, a newspaper, among others, wrote: “When it has to do with a football, Faruk Begolli forgets everything.” He never lost his interest for football, nor even now in his old age. During the world football championship it’s hard to find him out of his house. There’s nothing more important for him than football during those championships.



Even today he is in touch with his high school friends. He kept his friendship with them. He mentions a few of them Skënder Boshnjaku, Jusuf Gacaferri, Skënder Rodotina, Ali Berisha etc. But during his acting studies in Belgrade he became friends with two young fellows, who remained his forever friends. They were Josif Tatic - Tale or Jataganac, as Begolli calls him and Laslo Svirtlih - Laci, they are actors from Begolli’s class.

„I have built my comradeship when I registered the Faculty of Arts in Belgrade. It all started at the faculty, one was from Novi Sad, I was from Peja, and the other was from Zrenjanin, while other colleagues were from Belgrade. Whether you want to or not, those Belgrade colleagues after classes went to their homes, so always we three were together. Well, sometimes circumstances impose you to get along with particular people. We, three of us, began to live intensively. Sometimes we were together for 20 hours...Often we dwelled together. All we did we did it together. We were inseparable, like we are today. Jataganac is still an actor, while Laci is distinguished doctor. And as for me, in my profession, now I don’t know whether I am a teacher or an actor? In those days, it was sure that three of us wanted to become actors. This comradeship began in the sixties, so, it means it lasted for 45 years. It happens that you don’t see your friends for two years, but they are still your friends. If you are in trouble, you call them, if you need something, you call them or if you celebrate something you call them. The comradeship doesn’t depend on daily basis, but the comradeship is somewhere inside your heart. At least you have a man somewhere, he has you, too.”

After a few years, when he has already entered the world of movie, Begolli becomes one of the most popular actors in former Yugoslavia. Enver Petrovci said that there wasn’t a man that didn’t know Faruk Begolli and in Kosova everybody was proud of him.





A good part of time Begolli spent at the Yugoslav Writers Club, a restaurant where movie people sat, among others, and where they talked about contracts, where they appointed roles in movies etc. Ekrem Kryeziu used to dwell at that time at City of Students (Belgrade) said that he had difficulties to wake Begolli up early in the morning.



„We lived together in City of Students and there wasn't a night that Faruk came before two or three in the morning. When he had to go to shooting, I was obliged to wake him up early in the morning. I used to tight his bed with a kind of string and shook him from distance. I woke him up from distance, because if you were near him he would hit you with legs or fists, he didn't like to be awakened.”

The young actor, Faruk Begolli, very soon was adored by many young girls all over in former Yugoslavia. Actress Melehate Qena said that she knew Begolli from Belgrade, in 1967, at the time when she began to study acting. According to her, Begolli was famous since he had played in four or five movies and women were “chasing” him.

“Begolli was always chased by beautiful women. Many women had chased him. And believe me every woman was dreaming of him. He was always gentle... Begolli had many women. This is true. I think that Begolli had a hard life. Because it's difficult to be “chosen.” He never had opportunity to choose. No, women had chosen him always... Begolli differs from Don Juan, because Don Juan has chased women, while Begolli didn't chase them, they were after him...”



Famous Begolli went from one to shooting to next one, when he wasn't at shooting, he spent his spare time with snack, raki and cigarettes, which will accompany him forever. Begolli was in troubles with young girls, as many of his colleagues agree and people that knew him from old days. The young girls kneeled in front of him and he couldn't get rid of them that easily.

“As for women, I never chased them. On the contrary, I had to tell them in the best cultural manner 'I can't.' This 'I can't' was a part of life, pleasure, beauty....Love is something different, but in other cases I always tried to be fair, and to behave like a gentleman, not to hurt women. I had troubles with women. They said: why don't you love me, why you do this, why you do that...And me, I did what I could.”

In fact, women were the truest fans of his films. Every time when it came to vote for value of a certain movie, the audience women always voted him and Begolli always won.

Enver Petrovci said that Faruk Begolli loved women and most of the time he didn't care about their appearance or age. According to him, he loved them all and he was very gentle with them.

Fadil Hysaj said that Begolli, those days, was a kind of “Sex symbol”, adored, especially by women, as he pointed out “he was their dream.” According to Hysaj, most of the young people of those days were dreaming to have similar career like Begolli had.

Faruk Begolli gets married with Zoja Gjakoviq, an excellent Serbian woman, about her he speaks with a lot of respect. Many Begolli's colleagues speak of her with respect. “He had



“I am happy with that love, I am happy that she was my wife. I have thanked her that she offered me that wonderful love . . .”

a very nice wife, very lovely,” Enver Petrovci said. The director Ekrem Kryeziu said about her that she was “a wonderful woman.” Kryeziu paid a lot of compliments to Zoja Begolli: “Zoja was a better person than Faruk. Her name is Zoja, but in fact she was a real Lady.”

Zoja was a professional ballerina at the “Narodno Pozoriste” in Belgrade, later she bore her husband second name – Begolli. During all those years of marriage, she was, as Begolli said, “the backbone.” But after 17 years of marriage, Begolli divorced her. Zoja continued to bear his surname, Begolli, without any doubt for the respect she had for her former husband.

“During these last years I didn’t talk much about love, because there was once a real love and, as a result of it, a marriage. We were together for 17 years. She still bears my surname. But when it ends, it ends unfortunately. We are still friends. From time to time we call each other. Very often we called each other during the war. But since we understood that both of us were doing well, then we started to call each other very rarely. I am happy with that love, I am happy that she was my wife. I have thanked her that she offered me that wonderful love, that marriage, that friendship and that marvelous piece of life.”

MEDIA HISTORY

Even today many people recall a media history about Faruk Begolli. In 1982, one of his declarations would cause anger among many people in Kosova. In a television program, which was dedicated to Albanian students' demonstrations of 1981, Begolli, was interviewed in a quite different context, he declared publicly that he liked Belgrade and that he felt comfortably in Belgrade. This declaration was perceived differently from what it meant to be for real, but this caused unseen anger among people in Kosova. Many of them looked

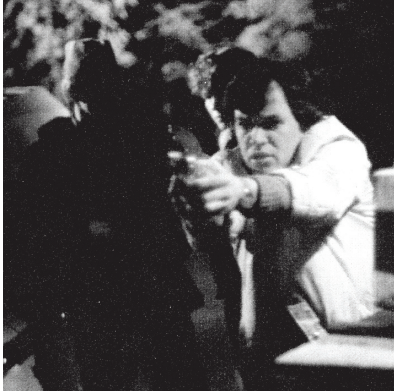


at him as “homeland’s traitor.” This declaration, with so common human preferences, in those days’ political circumstances, was misunderstood and misinterpreted extremely.

About this declaration given in the eighties, many years later in an interview for Kosovar newspaper he explained clearly whole that history and its background:

“I never was engaged in politics, and I don’t have any such ambitious. What I have said at that time, I don’t deny. I have said that most of my life I’ve spent in Belgrade. I have my memories, good memories, regardless of denigrating attitudes of Belgrade’s politicians toward Albanians. When I accepted Belgrade Television proposal, they didn’t tell me the intentions of the program. They asked me to talk about the way how I became so popular there and what I felt for Belgrade. I had no idea what was the planned political background of that program. Then my declaration was edited and was “mutilated.” And if they had edited it completely as I’ve said I’d get plaudits but it happened as it happened and...”

The movie director Ekrem Kryeziu said that he was hurt after that declaration:



“I never run away from my roots, but I never thought that this was the most important thing in my life.”

“I cannot recall it precisely, I might be wrong, but what hurt me, and all the people around was that he said ‘he felt in Belgrade like at sweet home, and when he approaches Belgrade he feels like going back to his hometown. I might be wrong, but it was something like that. Perhaps we were irritated by Belgrade excessively and every good word said about Belgrade we felt it as a national insult. “

His former student and later his colleague, actor Enver Petrovci, even nowadays says that he doesn’t understand why people in Kosova felt insulted from Faruk Begolli’s declaration.

“It was that time after the year of 1981, when Serbian televisions and journalists constantly provoked us. Faruk said that he felt good in Belgrade and that he was feeling there as a Belgrade child. Why not? Yes, why not? I don’t know why people had misused that declaration. Neither Faruk, but nor Bekim Fehmiu ever denied that they are Albanians. With Faruk, in the bar, in the street, in the theatre or wherever we met in Belgrade, we always talked in Albanian never in Serbian. All in all, is there any Albanian that lived in Belgrade and about whom people here in Kosova do not have any prejudices? And the people that once we were proud of them, just because of the fact that they were distinguished in Belgrade, later they were cursed here.”

But Begolli still says the same thing about Belgrade.

“No matter that someone can misunderstand me or misinterpret me, I still do love Belgrade.”

Meantime, to clarify his position of an artist toward the hometown, in an interview given to a Croatian newspaper recently, he declared:

“I never run away from my roots, but I never thought that this was the most important thing in my life.”

Philosopher Shkëlzen Maliqi considers that Bekim Fehmiu’s and Faruk Begolli’s fame as a movie stars in Belgrade, in those days have changed that traditional and superstitious perception of Albanian as a strange being in Yugoslav spaces or as “uncultured” or “a barbaric” or “a sawyer.” According to Maliqi, both Begolli and Fehmiu were cult actors of those days.

“Bekim Fehmiu was the first Albanian and Yugoslav actor who break through in world cinematography, after he played the role of Ulysses in a movie and Italian television series. While, Faruk Begolli as a young man became a star of Yugoslav cinematography and a couple of years later, after the foundation of Kosovafilm, he also became a star of Kosovar cinematography.”



MOTHER'S DEATH

Since that first day when Begolli took the train to Belgrade, he never could go back and stay a little bit longer in Peja. From Belgrade, then later from Prishtina, he visited his mother from time to time. He intensified his visits after she had a stroke in 1993. She was paralyzed and at the same time and gradually became sclerotic. So, from then, most of the time Begolli spent beside his mother. Even though she barely recognized him and hardly knew who he was.

“She’d asked me, who I was, then she called me with various names, with different names, with boys names, with girls names or with the names of our relatives. Rarely could I convince her that I was Faruk, her son.”

Later, his health became worse. One day, at the Dodona Theatre while Begolli was directing Ymer Shkreli’s play “Nations Heroes” they called him and informed him that she was dying. Begolli arrived there before she died. Around her were all of them: brothers, sisters and other relatives, including Begolli’s uncle Muharrem Pasha.

“...I cuddled under her arms, I began to cry, to moan, after a while she died in my arms. My sisters consoled me, but I couldn’t stop crying. Then they began to scold me, even they shouted at me saying ‘leave her, we have to dispose her because she could stiffen in the way that I was holding her.’”

After the nineties, in the time of political turbulences, Begolli rarely contacted his school friends, but those contacts never ceased completely. Recently, the class of his generation from faculty gathered in a bar to recall the time they’ve passed together during studies. They called him from there and all of them talked to him:

“I was sick from pleasure. I went back into memories, well, it’s very difficult to go back and recall that time. Luckily, from those days I have got good memories. Only the good things I will try to remember from that time. My buddy Josif Tatiç constantly calls me. I am afraid that if I go to Belgrade I will cry. I don’t want to think about those things.”

Shkëlzen Maliqi considers that, for Begolli, the decision to leave Belgrade was a difficult decision. He thinks that the divorcing his wife Zoja had effect in this decision, but, as he says, this thing cannot be an adequate argument.

“About real reasons why did he left Belgrade and career of the star of Yugoslav movie, he never talked publicly. With the fame and connections he had, Faruk by all means could

”...Being in company with people out of your profession, you can see a different world”

continue the career of a successful actor. But he had a personal disappointment with the world where he was a star. And that world was falling down very quickly, by opening the way for the political and cultural primitivism and fascism. This feeling was the main motive why Faruk consciously began a new life and career, concentrated mainly in the “role” of a professor of acting in Prishtina.”

Generally, Begolli was impassioned with feelings about friends. After returning to Prishtina, by the end of eighties, he met a lot of young friends. He could be seen very often associated with his former students or with other colleagues. For Begolli, comradeship was one of the most important things in life besides profession and love. But, the true friends, he says, he didn't have more than three or four.

“The friendship from youth remains forever and it never changes. You may not see that person 20 years or 30 years, but he's your friend. He trusts you and he supports you and vice versa. So, when you are young it's easier to make friends, it's easier to find a friend. Then when you grow older, it's harder to find a friend. Me, with all these years, I cannot find a friend, I cannot find a real soulmate.”

According to Begolli, the best friendship is between two friends that have different professions. The tiring hours in rehearsals or shooting, tiring meeting with colleagues and other people from the same profession can be balanced in parties with friends from other professions. And at the same time, you accumulate, because you perceive information out of the world of your profession.

”...Being in company with people out of your profession, you can see a different world. This thing helped me a lot, since my friends were not from the same profession as me. I had intimate friends, let's say intimate, as they say, he is my soul mate.”

One of his closest friends during the last years was Albert Maloku, he is economist. He is trader. Albert used to associate him in endless raki parties, and also now he is taking care of Begolli, when he's ill. End he is one of very rare people whom Begolli allows to visit him in the room where he is laying.

“Albert is my friend now, but I had other friends before. He didn't have any idea about the things I did and he even never came to any of my premieres. Never. He said that the things we artists do, he doesn't understand quite well. And I, later and I understood this thing. In the beginning I tried to explain to him. Listen, I said, I am doing this thing, listen to me a little. Because I needed it, I was young, and he was listening, listening and then said: ‘Do you know that I don't understand you at all. You are talking about something else. Tell me something about peppers or football.’ But later I began to realize that it's very important to have friends out of your profession. I am talking about real friendship, not about friends with whom I drink raki. I came back in Prishtina. I know them all, they were my students. I associate with them and I go with them in the bar, in the faculty. Almost everywhere. But I have find another friend, who isn't involved at all in this thing, and who didn't even go to the theatre until he met me. He is a trader, man, and when we sit, he doesn't talk about trading, nor I talk about art. We have one quite different life and chat. This means, that I caught, perhaps, the last train ten or fifteen years ago, to make another friend, but a friend that I can a true friend.”

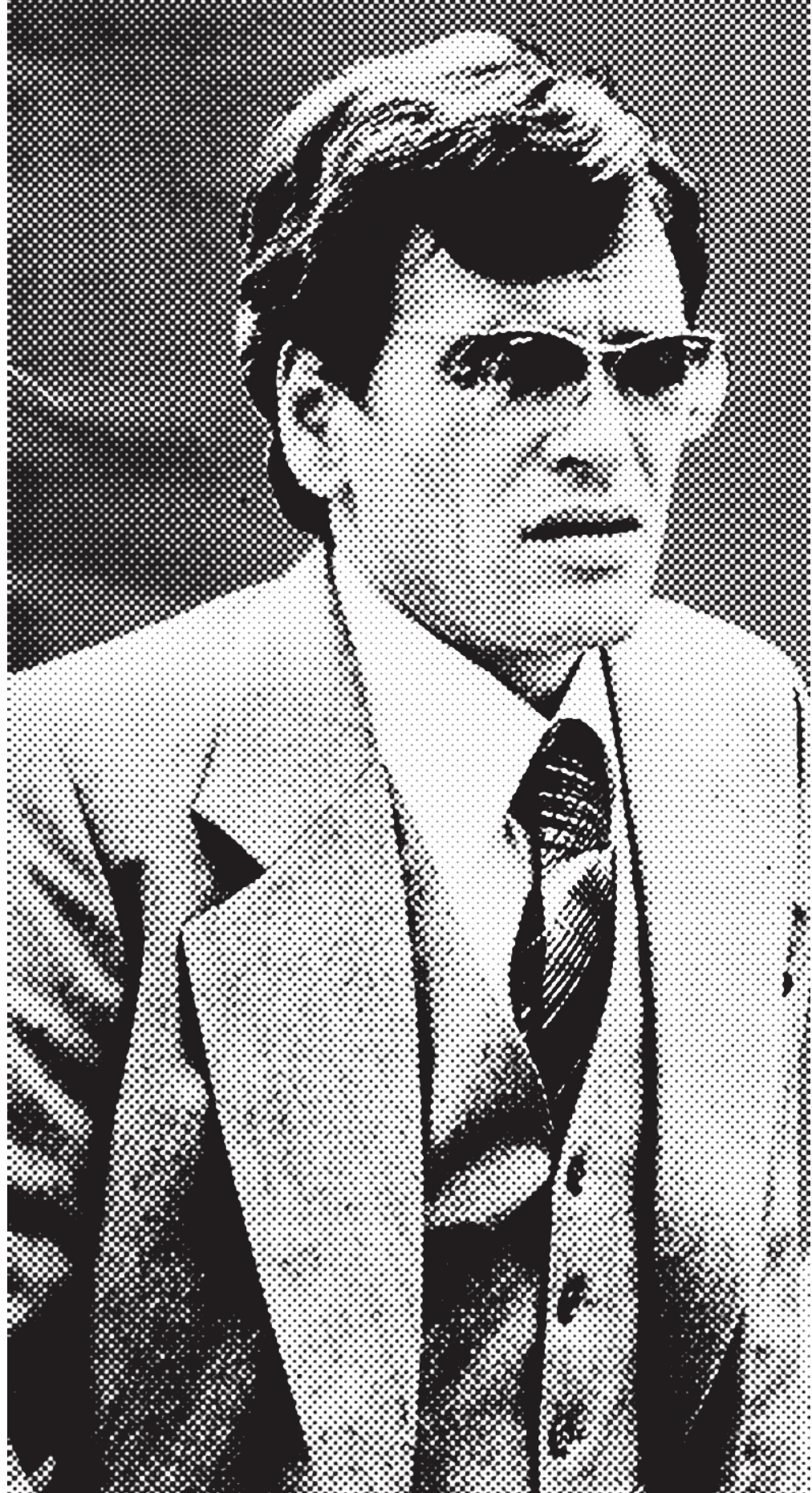
THE LOOK IN THE PUPIL OF THE SUN

“*Sometime I am overwhelmed by longing for the time when I was young, when I was shooting movies, when I went from one shooting place to another through all former Yugoslavia.”*

He had an excellent movie career. In the golden years of former Yugoslav cinematography, Faruk Begolli was one of the most adored actors from audience and most wanted by Yugoslav movie directors, and also from Kosovars too. The movie directors were provoked by his charm and warmth that he gave to the movie characters. A young actor, full of energy and sense for acting, Begolli with a dizzying speed became a movie star.

Until now he has acted in about 70 movies; artistic and television of various lengths, produced by movie houses and televisions all over Yugoslavia. He has played leading roles and supporting roles. He won few important awards, but he was awarded with the best prize from audience wherever his movies were presented. His fame and popularity never fade out. Now his popularity continues to grow even when theatre goes see him very rare in the movies.

“In the academy I entered without any information, unaware of what was going on in the world of movie. And as for it I am completely naïve or a virgin. Hence I didn't have any idol. Of course, there were actors I liked. In those days I watched mainly western movies. Then Bekim Fehmiu was an example to me. Because when I was admitted there, he was known as a legend in his work. So, in a way, I got tired from people saying: well, Bekim is working. And I was quite a different person. I was interested in friendship and bars more than in working. And they, the professors kept saying: Bekim practices for three or four hours a day. After that I asked Bekim (because he has helped me a lot and welcomed me in the beginning): ‘Do you really work for four hours a day?’ he answered, ‘It's not four hours, I



“She was hurt a lot by my movie wounds and sufferings. Since then she never wanted to watch my movies.”

work for five hours a day’.”

In 1966, when Begolli was in the second grade of his studies, the distinguished Yugoslav movie director Veljko Bulajiq, visited Academy of Arts in Belgrade, hoping to find an actor that would play the leading role in his movie “POGLED U ZJENICU SUNCA.” When Begolli met the movie director, he tried to cover his mouth with a hand because of the fallen teeth. Bulajiq had understood the shyness of the young artist and said to him: “I know that you are toothless, laugh freely.” Everything ended very quickly. Begolli gave up and he wasn’t even dreaming that there might come out anything of the visit of that movie director.

“I gave up, because I didn’t believe that he would pick me up, and I used to say: ‘Would a man pick up a young toothless artist?’”

But after a few months Begolli was invited for shooting rehearsal. In those rehearsals he met other contenders, distinguished artists of those days, who were on trial for the same role or for some other roles in the movie. In these rehearsals Begolli for the first time faced the professional work and team of professionals. He wore the costumes of the character and stepped in front of other actors trying to find resemblance with the character, which the movie director thought that they suit to Begolli. His partner was Zivojinovic, a known actor of those days, meanwhile there were famous actors among contenders: Bekim Fehmiu, whom Begolli then admired and Rade Serbedzia. In a rehearsal scene even Bekim Fehmiu himself took place. But he was so emotional and wasn’t in a good shape.

The character that Begolli had to interpret was a young boy, who helped an ill partisan with a camp fever to walk across the forest, which was continually shielded by the enemy. The event had to take place in a difficult ground, in a snowy winter.

“During the rehearsals, the movie director kept saying: ‘You don’t know anything.’ And me, I really didn’t know a damned thing. But I was still in the second grade of studies. So, I responded with these words: ‘Yes, I don’t know a damn thing, because they didn’t teach us these things’”.

After this event Begolli was disappointed and hopeless and went back to Belgrade. But it came out that movie director’s provocations were not for real. After a month, Begolli surprisingly found out that the role was given to him. Of course, the faith he was given made him feel as a real actor. At that time a newspaper wrote about it in the corner.

“I walked in the street and looked at people, just to see do they know, does a passerby know that I was Faruk Begolli, the one about whom the newspaper wrote that day. And all the time, I was thinking how to tell them: hey, do you see me; I am the one about whom the newspaper wrote. And the written piece was, in fact, in a corner of the newspaper with a few lines about it.”

Shooting were going to be taken in Zagreb. Begolli went there and joined the movie crew. He had one more motive: he was getting paid quite well for the role. They dyed his hair. Within a short time they fixed his two frontal teeth, which had fallen. During the first days, before the shooting started, Begolli felt like a real king, surrounded by young girls and



flashes of reporters' cameras, which followed almost every his step.

But this "idyll" soon was over, just after the shooting began. He had a bad luck, because his first experience with a movie was a bitter one, so bitter, that he once thought of leaving once forever the profession of actor and to go back to Peja for good. His relations with the director were extremely tensed. As a debutant without any previous experience in new profession, Begolli felt frustrated and wasn't ready at all to face troubles that were increasing.



The movie director's "Method", almost drove him crazy, since the director directed the shooting with shouting and so nervously. Life seemed to Begolli like a hell. For a moment he thought of annulling the contract and to borrow money somewhere to pay back the movie director. He wanted to call his mother and ask for money, but he hesitated. All this seemed a very complicated task.

"The only movie that I didn't feel any pleasure while shooting was this one. Since the beginning my life became 'hell', because the director was shouting. But I really didn't know a thing; I did know neither technique of the movie nor of acting. I was thinking to run away from the crew, but how to run away, how to give him back the money and leave the shooting. To make it short, the first movie was 'hell.'"



Begolli, whom during this first shooting was celebrating his 22nd birthday, and one day he argues with director, who accused him of being "untalented" person and "cowardly." After assaulting the director, Begolli ran to the woods and there cried broken and hopeless.

"Bata Zivojinovic came to the woods with his wife and took me. They brought me to my room and began to talk to me and encouraged me. Then together we sang some sad songs. I will never forget that night."

During those days Begolli and director Bulajic looked at each other nervously, but none of them tried to break the contract. As it seemed both of them were aware of consequences of such a move.

The next months were more relaxed and the cooperation with the director was stabilized. Since Begolli opposed the "tyrant" his colleague looked at him with admiration, because many times they, too, were treated badly by the movie director.

This bad experience during the first shooting had effect on him not to watch his movies, but he did it occasionally. And luckily, this bad experience in his first movie wasn't repeated in the future. Begolli in other movie shooting found only pleasure and he never got bored.

When his mother saw the first time the movie Pogled u zjenicu sunca, where Begolli played a role of a man sick of typhus, they had to take to hospital. She couldn't stand "movie death" of her son, because it looked to her as a real death. She called his profession "damned."

"She was hurt a lot by my movie wounds and sufferings. Since then she never wanted to watch my movies."



His previous plans to abandon this profession and to go back to his mother in Peja, evaporated quickly. The bitter experience from his first movie gradually was left behind as a distant event. Meanwhile the pressure to keep going came after the second offer to act in another movie. This was the case where actor's "demon" awakened within him. He almost cried from the enthusiasm. Again he felt his inner talent for acting, something from inside kept saying to him that he had to face a new challenge and a new adventure

The second movie where he acted was called San. It was directed by Purisa Djordjevic, whom at that time was a known director. The nightmare of previous movie was gone and dead. Begolli began shooting of the second movie, but this time cooperation with director was excellent. Even the director was getting enthusiastic with Begolli's work. The shooting were advancing and the crew was relaxed.

After the second role follows the third, the fourth... Begolli was becoming one of the most wanted actors. Just like in those western movies where the bandits were pursued by sheriff with "wanted" posters. So, it seemed that for Begolli the movie directors sent out a wanted circular written on "we want him for a movie." Faruk Begolli, wrote a Yugoslav magazine of that time, belongs to a group of actors that in early beginnings of their career have dedicated their life to movie acting.

The absence at the academy was considered as "absences with a cause" by the professor of his class, so Begolli didn't have any problems about it. He was even given a leading role in student's performance of the second grade: "Children of the Sun," written by Maxim Gorky. But this will be one of the rare roles in the theatre. In general, after that period he refused roles that were offered him for a theatre stage. This was due to his engagement in movies. He graduated from faculty with little breaks.

From beginning of his artistic career, Begolli recalls a meeting with Tito, a former Yugoslav President. After the premiere of the movie Bitka na Neretvi, directed by Velko Bulajic, Tito expressed his wish to congratulate the movie crew.

After the applause, actors and crew were lined up to greet the famous man of that time, Comrade Tito. The queue of actors began with those of supporting role and ended with those who had leading roles. Begolli was the third from the last. Tito was greeting them alternately, meanwhile was shaking from enthusiasm.

"...He came to me, with his white gloves. I was looking at him, but I noticed that he was not looking at me at all and his eyes were somewhere far away. He offered me his hand and said: 'Simpatican si ti, mladac '(You are a likeable, young man) and moved on. I was thinking that he wasn't looking at me, and who'd say that he'd recognize me. And now he recognized me: there wasn't a movie that he hadn't seen. He sat and watched all our movies. Once we were his guests. At least once or twice during the festival he used to come and watch the movies."

"For most actors of his generation when they got a role in a movie it was unforgettable

event, a marked day, while for Faruk Begolli it's a marked day when a movie begins without him," according to a newspaper of 1976. In 1976, when Begolli was 33 years old, he had played exactly in 33 feature films. In that time, in former Yugoslavia they were shooting at least 16 films per a year. Begolli was almost in every movie that was shot. He was almost unavoidable. The work in movies brought him pleasure again.

"The more you take part in movies, the more your life improves and you feel happier. That's the better side of it. But, there's the other side, which brings a difficult and troublesome and uncertain life, with all those sleepless nights, a life completely out of your home and family. So, the pleasure and displeasure go together."

Begolli acted in some very successful television movies. In 1972, he acted in a television movie *Të ngjuarit*, a movie in Albanian language, produced by Radio Television Belgrade – Albanian edition. The screenwriter and director of this movie was Ekrem Kryeziu, a friend of Faruk Begolli during his studies. There were other actors, except Faruk Begolli, who played in the *Të ngjuarit*: Melihate Ajeti, Shani Pallaska, Istref Begolli etc. Faruk Begolli was involved in almost all Kryeziu's later movie projects, including *Kur pranvera vonohet*, *Epoka para gjyqit*, *Buka e hidhur*, *Darka e dreqit* and *Dashuria e Bjeshtëve të Nemuna* etc. As for his movies Kryeziu considers that he made good selection, especially with Faruk Begolli in role of Abdyl Frashëri.

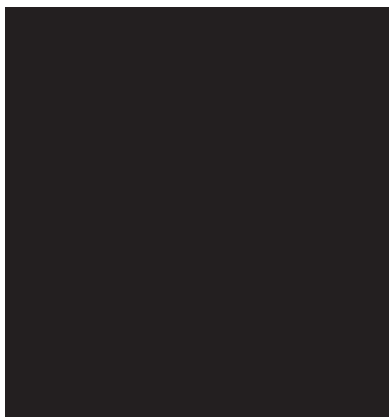
"If I ever made a good selection for acting in my movies, then the best one was with Faruk Begolli for the role of Abdyl Frashëri."

In Prishtina Television he played in television play *Fluturimi i micakut* directed by Emin Halili.

A movie that will bring success to Begolli is the *Prva ljubav*, after this movie began the establishing of Faruk Begolli's Fan Clubs everywhere in Yugoslavia. His popularity after this movie reaches the top. Every morning his apartment door almost got blocked from a bag of letters, which he received from his fans all over Yugoslavia.

Important movies of that where he played were *Proka*, screenplay was written by Eqrem Basha and it was directed by Isa Qosja, *13 Jul* directed by Radomir Saranović in this movie Rade Šerbić had a role, too. Then a movie the *Përroi vërsues*, screenplay





was written by Petrit Imami and it was directed by Besim Sahatçiu, the Cuvar plaze u zimskom periodu directed by Goran Paskaljevic, Pavle Pavloviq directed by Mladimir 'Purisha' Gjorgjeviq, Valter brani Sarajevo, directed by Hajrudin Krvavac, Bitka na Neretvi directed by Veljko Bulajiq, Sarajevski atentat directed by Fadil Hagjiq, Operacija Beograd directed by Zika Mitroviq, Uka i Bjeshkëve të Nemuna the screenplay was written by Abdurrahman Shala and Murteza Peza and it was directed by Miomir Stamenkoviq. Except Begolli, in this movie take place: Ljuba Tadiq, Abdurrahman Shala, Josif Tatiq, Vesna Krajina, Branko Plesha, Melihate Ajeti etc.

RED ATTACK

The movie Crveni udar directed by Predrag Golubovic, has an interesting background. It was based upon a story from the World War Two, as it was confessed by Ali Shukria, former contradictory and anti-Albanian politician, a participant of World War Two. The movie plot occurs in mine of Trepça and it deals with a group of miners; they come from all of nations in former Yugoslavia, who undertake raids against German forces. The movie is distinguished by black humor, of that kind that only people who had become accustomed by fear and death has it.

"Three fools have blown out three poles somewhere in Trepça. And this was considered a big thing. And now they made a movie out of it."

The movie was co-production of „Avala Film," and Kosovafilm. The leading roles were played by Bata Zivojinovic, Boris Dvornik, Abdurrahman Shala, Xhevat Qena, Bert Sotlar, Faruk Begolli, Shani Pallaska, Olivera Katarina, Istref Begolli, Ragip Loxha, Adem Mikullovci, Skender Radotina, etc. The shooting lasted about 50 days. They worked for 16 hours inside the mines of Trepça.

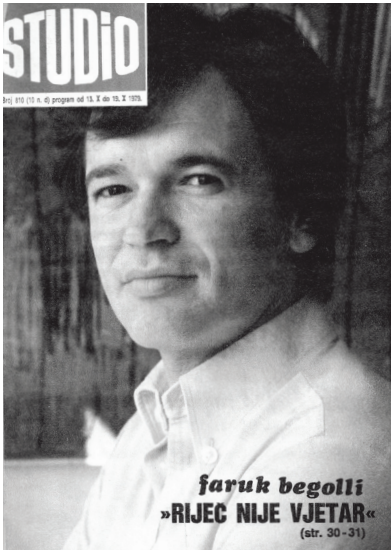
"This was the plot: 6 guys are in love with a woman, Olivera Katarina played woman's part. And even I was in love with her. I had the role of a painter. We were seven communists. Xhevat Qena acted marvelously. He was fantastic. He drove us all crazy. And we made the movie."

Immediately after editing, the movie was elected to participate in Pula Movie Festival. This would be its first presentation to the audience. People from the Kosova Community of Interest went to Pula, since it was co-production of Kosovafilm. But until then they didn't see the movie, because its editing was done at the "last moment." In Pula, before it was presented to the audience, the movie was presented to people of Community of Interest. They weren't satisfied at all, and they demanded that movie not to be presented in the festival.

"Especially Ali Shukria was categorical that the movie shouldn't be performed at all. He was angry because his 'role' in the movie was minimized. His confession was almost completely changed. We were seven 'czars' that were ruling a mine. And these guys who came to Pula Festival wanted to forbid the movie. But there was a problem, since it was a co-production. And those from Avala Film said to these of Kosovafilm: if you want, you



can forbid it in Kosova, but here we want the movie to be performed. Well, I don't know... Now these 'ours', it's sure, that they have complained, and all those political connections, well I don't know. I didn't give a damn. I slept all day and I drank all night. And I didn't know what was going on."



In those days Tito after he woke up from siesta, by custom asked to see a movie in his cinema. According to an "unwritten rule", for every Yugoslav new movie that he watched, he invited other politicians to watch it together, who at that time were in vacations in Brione. Usually, if he watched a Croatian movie, he invited Croatian politicians... and Slovenians... Kosovars... And in that day, when he decided to watch the movie Crveni udar, he invited as a guest a high official of the Communist Party of Kosova, Fadil Hoxha with his wife, Vahide.

"...And he watched the movie together with Fadil and Vahide. Tito has watched the movie delightfully till the end. And if he didn't like a film, then he didn't watch it until the end. But, they said that there wasn't a movie that he didn't watch. He was a man that liked movies. When the movie was over, Tito laughingly said to Fadil: 'Dobar ti je film, Fadile'. (Fadil, the movie is good.) After this Tito's praising, Vahide, Fadil's wife, found a connection, and I don't know how, she succeed to reach these people from Community of Interest, who wanted to forbid the movie in Pula: "Just shut up, and don't talk rubbish." But they left the festival on that very day."

It's worth mentioning the fact that in Pula Festival, Crveni udar was awarded with the third prize of jury.



THE HARD YEARS

In 1977, Faruk Begolli played the leading role in the movie Zestoke godine produced by Sutjeska film, directed by Zika Ristic and Ravil Batirov. The shooting of this movie began on 12 September 1977 and it was shot in Tashkent (USSR) and Yugoslavia.

Around midnight someone called. And Zoja Begolli, Faruk Begolli's ex-wife picks up the telephone. She listened to the man on the phone, laughed and then called her husband, "they are calling you from

Tashkent." Begolli thought that it might be a joke. But later he was convinced that the director Zika Ristic was on the phone, who has called from such a distant town. The crew in Tashkent watched the movie Dervis i smrt, where Begolli played the role of Aleksander Dragovic and this convinced them to offer him the leading role in the movie Zestoke godine, Yugoslav-Soviet co-production. The screenplay was written by Zika Ristic and Oljusha Adisheva. Begolli was asked within two days to travel to Tashkent. He had dilemma. Fear of flights was torturing him. From a short explanation he understood that his role he was going to play was wonderful. Finally, he decided to go there. But before he signed the contract, he insisted to read the script. He trusted the director Ristic, but as he said, "the work is something else." After two days Begolli arrived in Tashkent, as it was asked from him.



“What can I say? I am scared to death when I have to take a plane and I try to avoid it as much as it possible. The longest flight until then was only 45 minutes, but the flight from Beograd - Moscow – Tashkent lasted 7 hours.”

After he read the script, Begolli understood that his role is “a role that all actors would die just to get it and actors wait for such a role for years and years.”

After the tiring trip, the first days in Tashkent he spent lying in bed, he was exhausted. He had headache, and his legs were numbed, almost he didn't feel them.

“I paced the room as a lion in a cage. I read articles, newspapers and everything that was within the reach. That's how it was until the dawn.”

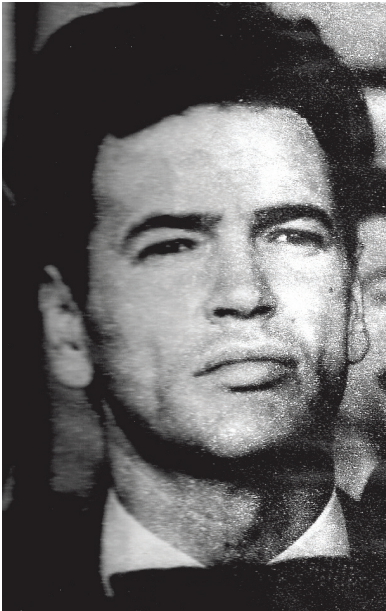
Begolli asked for 15 days off after he read the script. He wanted to become accustomed by the habits and customs of people, from where a movie character was coming. This request was accomplished without any hesitation. During the next fifteen days he went to museums, galleries, villages, markets, weddings, Moslem seminaries, etc. These visits were of the great help to get accustomed with the environments and the way of living in Uzbekistan. Begolli has good memories from the time he passed there. He explained it in an interview of that time, when people there understood that we came from Yugoslavia were friendlier.

The shooting began by the end of September. The movie crew was mixed. Except actors from former Yugoslavia, there were many other actors from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Moscow.

The character he played spoke Serbian, while other actors from USSR spoke Russian. A good working and a friendship atmosphere was overwhelming among the crew. Everything was functioning perfectly and everybody understood well each other. One month and a half passed very quickly. Begolli there met wonderful people, and also professionally he had an excellent experience, and usually the actor was the “epicenter.” The movie directors Ravil Bahtirov and Zika Ristic, very often worked with actors for hours just to shot a frame. Begolli during that time was associating with Artikom Xhanom, a known actor from Turkmenistan. Begolli said that it was a pleasure to act along him. In this movie Begolli's partner was Aljmira Ismailova, a young actress from Tashkent.

But who was Aleksandar – Sasha Dragoviq, the character that Begolli's was interpreting? Born in a small village, as 16 years old he went to the First World War. Together with his older brother, Zlatko Martiņević played his role, were captured. Their military camp was near the Russian border and they together with a group of prisoners escape to Russia and there they joined the Russian army. They took place in October Revolution and fought until the end, until the final demolition of counter-revolution troops. It is known publicly that in those fights about 35,000 former Yugoslavs took place. And the character that Begolli played had many transformations: internal and external. Aleksander with a certain mission succeeds to get within the counter-revolutionary forces. There he met a young girl, who wanted to revenge her murdered father.

“Almira Ismailova played excellently the role of that girl. After a short love story, the movie



ends tragically, the girl was murdered. Aleksander before going to accomplish his last mission has this dialogue: 'Sasha, everything ends here. I've heard that the revolution started in China. Shall we go together there?' 'My comrade, we will go. But, first of all I have to go home. It has been such a long time since I haven't seen my hometown and any of my relatives. I want to see my hometown, my home and the field around it, the river, just one more time that's all.'

Begolli was really zealous and highly addicted to the movie. He, simply, liked the movie. According to him the life and the work must be seen and taken as a game. As a game that gives you pleasure.

"I love my profession! I love acting because it gives me pleasure. A game that brings you pleasure. Neither the critics nor the audience or...No, no, as a game that satisfies my inner needs. So, everything I did, I did it with pleasure. Every time I took the acting as a 'game,' I acted well. And when I wanted to play the roles like that, with analyses and I don't know how, I didn't act well. But when I approached the role as a game, I always was more creative, more freely, with blossomed imagination...Then my brain worked perfectly."

About his successes, Begolli thinks that he was lucky. According to him, he was lucky to get the role in his first movie, and also in some other important movies.

"...I played in a movie for two days. The next they informed me, 'No you won't play in it.' Of course, I got disappointed, I don't why and how. Then I went to a bar because I am a bar man. When I was disappointed, I didn't go to theatre or to a gallery to suffer but to a bar. Then I went to a bar with some other guys and with a director, who'd start his own movie within five days. And I didn't want to talk to him. The next day, he called me and appointed me a leading role. Then later I asked him 'what's going on? How is it possible?' In that day in a bar with him were his daughters and his wife. They have praised me a lot and then tomorrow he invited me. That's how I lost a role but I got another one. And this one I got was much better than the one I lost. So, isn't this a luck? I don't trust horoscope and in these stars, but there's still somewhere something's 'boiling' and that's not depending on you."

Without any doubt Begolli was conquered completely by the movie world. Except the roles in movies, he was very active in other events around movies. In former Yugoslavia for a mandate he was the Head of Yugoslav Movie Artists' Association. Meanwhile, in 1980, he was director of Filmski susreti in Nis-80. Strangely, a newspaper wrote in 1980, that this year Faruk Begolli is not nominated for any awards in this Festival, that's why he is elected to be the head of jury in Festival of Nis. Freed from expectation feelings and nomination awards fevers, he was one of the most joyous and blissful guests, the newspaper points out.

He became a regular visitor in most of festivals, because very rarely happened to occur that in a festival in former Yugoslavia not to be shown a movie where he played.

During that period Begolli worked with different directors. Except the feature-length movies, he acted in short movies, and also in television plays. One of the most of his dearest roles in short movies, Begolli mentions the movie Biografija Jozefa Sulca. Protagonist is





a German soldier, who rejects the orders of his superiors to commit massacres among civilians (the event occurs during World War II) and then he gets executed with other civilians. It is a true story. This movie was a big international success. Begolli got outstanding praises by critics for his role in this movie.

A bulletin edited by Pula festival in 1979, among others wrote: "In movies of Yugoslav production Faruk Begolli as an actor has achieved to realize excellent and interesting roles in last years. He is loved by public in Pula, and with a particular attention they wait for each his new movies."

But he didn't accept every offered role. When he was mostly wanted, Begolli very often rejected offers of directors. Now he recalls the fact that in many supporting roles he has made more money than when he had played in some leading roles.

"When you like a role, you don't think about money, and even sometime you say to yourself and others 'this one I'd play for free.' But in those roles where I didn't want to play, but the directors or producers wanted me to play, that's where I got paid the best. Yet, these are the roles where the actor doesn't achieve anything, he just does his job but there is nothing good in it... I had my principle: if the script is bad, if the character is bad, then I asked about money. I refused, usually those roles that didn't have any values, but even there wasn't any money in it."

Begolli played different characters. But the directors liked to give up roles of partisan heroes, who die in the end of the movie, leaving the theatre goers with tears in their eyes or characters of romantic lovers.

"I have played a lot different roles. But as a partisan I began, afterwards the audience loved me. Because in the first movie I played a role of sorrowful partisan, so...I'll tell you an anecdote, I just don't want to forget it: once a director has changed the script because of me. The character I was playing didn't have to die, but the director decided to change it, to kill me in the end, he used to say, the audience is crying. I give you my word of honor, trust me, he changed it because I wasn't supposed to die there. Because when I died, people shed tears."

Shkëlzen Maliqi said that, in general, Faruk Begolli played the role of positive heroes in that part of Yugoslav and Kosovar cinematography which eulogized National Liberation War and Communists ideals.

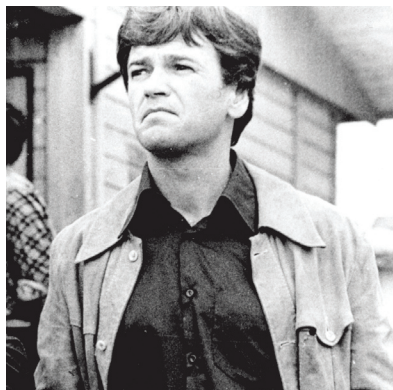
"Sometimes in those days the movie directors exploited his appearance up to stereotype. Faruk was handsome, with a forever young image, incomparably photogenic to build up a



cult model of an idealized hero of the revolution period and in building the socialisms.”

Begolli was unsatisfied with quality of those days Yugoslav movies, in 1979 in an interview declared:

“If I could choose the roles, then certainly I wouldn’t play so often in Yugoslav movies. I hope that I will have better roles in next movies. I am convinced that screenplays are very bad and also the organization is very bad, too. These factors are interrupting the development of Yugoslav movies, and I think that something must be done urgently.”



In politically engaged movies, as most of the movies were at that time *Era dhe lisi*, after Sinan Hasani’s novel, a former high communist official in former Yugoslavia. The scenario was written by Petrit Imami and movie was directed by Besim Sahatçiu. Faruk Begolli played one of the two most important leading roles. *Burim*, a character played by Faruk Begolli, was a young communist fighter who fights for communists party ideals after the World War II. The movie talks about the consolidation of people’s government after the war and confrontation with “remains” of fascism. This movie won many awards at Pula Festival, which was renowned in former Yugoslavia (Petrit Imami was awarded with Golden Arena for screenplay, while Abdurrahman Shala was awarded with Bronze Arena for his role in this movie.) *Era dhe lisi* was shown on TV in 6 episodes.

In Pula Festival in 1979, two movies were presented where Faruk Begolli had played: *Era dhe lisi k* and *Zestoke godine*. After the show, on the first day of Festival, *Era dhe lisi* got plaudits. The next day newspapers said that the movie won’t leave festival without any awards. So, related to this, Begolli in an interview given to Festival’s bulletin, declared:

“I think that this year for the first time I am being presented here with two important roles. Also, after 14 years of my career as an actor, I had pleasure to work in these two roles, which enabled me to get engaged and get involved in maximally artistic research. I am very pleased also for my cooperation with movie directors Besim Sahatçiu and Zhika Ris-tiq”.



He played in a short movie in 1979, the movie was called *Duart e pastra*, screenplay was written by the dramaturge Fadil Hysaj and it was directed by a student of direction Ismail Ymeri. The movie was produced by “Kosova Film”. Except him, in the movie *Istref* Begolli played a role, with whom Faruk will play in some other movies in future. *Duart e pastra* was a school movie of a student in fourth grade and it was about individual in totalitarian system.

In those days press Begolli addressed harsh critics even toward the Pula Festival, about which he thought that it has lost its credibility to select the best movies.

“Look at Pula, for instance: who is more capable in “kitchen,” and who can make deals with most of the jury members, he will win. I don’t expect to be awarded in Pula Festival. I wouldn’t feel good if I am awarded.”

According to him Pula Festival was so much politicized; a completely political festival, as

he called it. In the festival each of six republics and two provinces had their own representatives, and also Pula Festival had its own representative. These representatives were mainly men who knew how to “fight” because each republic and province had a nominated movie, so their skills and insistences were very important in representing their republics or provinces. Begolli thinks that in Pula was no objectiveness.

In the movie *Partizanska eskadrila*, directed by Hajrudin Krvavac, Faruk Begolli plays one of a leading role. In this movie the known actor Bekim Fehmiu had a role too. Even that the movie speaks about partisan aviation and Begolli plays one of a leading role, he never flew by airplane. Begolli, in one of his earlier interviews explained:

“Director Krvavac had understanding and gave me an “earthly” role: the others fly, but I wait them down. I never travel by plane. When I have to go somewhere, I usually take the train, bus, car or bicycle.”

In the movie *Kur pranvera vonohet*, a movie of Kosovar production, directed by Ekrem Kryeziu, Faruk Begolli plays one of the leading roles. The screenplay was written by Azem and Ymer Shkreli. It was based on Fadil Hoxha’s war diary, a partisan charismatic leader from World War II. The shooting of this movie lasted more than two months. Faruk Begolli in this movie plays a role of *Vetëtima* (Lightning). This movie had its premiere in Pula Festival. Meantime it was shown on Prishtina Television in series. Ekrem Kryeziu said that he had difficulties with “spoiled Faruk Begolli.” Who sometimes went too far with his kind of humor. In a love scene, *Vetëtima*, the character played by Faruk Begolli, had to kiss a woman. During shooting, Begolli didn’t accept to do it before the director does it himself.

“You are a director and you’d show me how to do it practically.”

But, even the director didn’t remain beholden to him with “mischief.” So, one morning as they were getting ready to begin with the shooting in a village somewhere in Kosova. Begolli was insisting to take a “shot” of him, because he didn’t want to wait any longer. The director Kryeziu was getting sick by Begolli’s insistence. Without any hesitation he decides to shoot Begolli in a scene that wasn’t at all in a screenplay.

“I really couldn’t stand him anymore. Other actors were beside me. Come on, Faruk, now climb the top of the hill, I said. He was dressed with military uniform. With heavy boots, with





a jumper, military blouse...and loaded with armament.”

Of course, Begolli obeyed director's order. The first run wasn't "enough," so the scene has to be repeated. And Begolli in that heat had to climb to the top of the hill and finally when almost got exhausted and couldn't stand on his feet, he asked the director "was it a good, the scene?" The director answered, "It was excellent, but I didn't shoot at all." This wasn't meant to punish Begolli, but to discipline him from fussy behaviors.

In two Kosovar movies *Era dhe lisi* and *Kur pranvera vonohet* about 100 actors were engaged, some of them were Begolli's students graduated from Teachers College, department of acting. Many years later this department was shut off

Faruk Begolli's mother never understood her son's profession, which she labeled as a "devil's profession." Her dream that her son will come back disappeared. She gave up of her hopes that her son one day will come to Peja, similarly, like he left on that day.

"My mother never accepted what I was doing. Sometime when other women were saying to her: 'Last night we saw your son and he acted well,' she felt a bit proudly, but when they said, 'We saw your son kissing in a movie last night,' this didn't make her happy at all."

Begolli would return to Peja to shoot the movie *Si të vdiset*, directed by Miomir 'Miki' Stamenković. Some scenes were shot at his uncle's house, Muharrem Pasha. Begolli played the leading role, but there also played Xhevat Qorraj, Abdurrahman Shala, Xhevat Qena, Istref Begolli, Shani Pallaska etc.

Begolli in his movies played beside well known actors of that time. Just to name a few Rade Sherbexhija, Bata Zhivojnoviq, Olivera Katarina, Bekim Fehmiu etc. About Bekim Fehmiu, Begolli always talked with a lot of respect. On anniversary of Bekim Fehmiu's 70th birthday, Begolli in an interview for a local newspaper in Kosova declared:

"He is our pride, the only international we Albanians have. A great actor! And a real man! He is very good friend of mine, we've played together in a few movies."

After the nineties when Yugoslavia was overwhelmed from political troubles, Begolli comes back for good. His engagements in movies were less and less. The last movie that he played in Serbia was *Bulevard revolucije*, it was produced in 1992. Begolli in this movie plays beside his friend, a known actor. Ljubisha Samarxhiq. In fact, the last movie that he realized out of Kosova is a Slovenian movie *Felix*, directed by Bozhe Shprajca. In this movie Begolli plays one of leading roles. In one of his later interviews about his



engagement in this movie he declared:

“I was happy that I’ve played in this movie because I got back the hope that the creator survives regardless of this our unseen Balkan stupidity.”



After this movie, he played only in Kosovar video-movies. One of his best roles in Kosovar movies before war was the one in the movie the *Dashuria e Bjeshkëve të Nemuna*, a movie directed by Ekrem Kryeziu, as well the screenplay was written by him. In this popular movie of that time, Begolli plays a role of a girl’s father, who came back to her hometown from America, then she fell in love with a young man, but unfortunately she cannot marry him, because of family ties.

After the war Faruk Begolli plays in some short movies directed by students, as well in some television movies which weren’t very important. Because of “professional reasons,” as he said, he refused the leading role in the movie called *Syri magjik* directed by a distinguished movie director Kujtim Çashku from Albania.



His last feature movie, where he plays a role is *Etjet e Kosovës* directed by a young director, Sunaj Raça. During the premiere of this movie in Prishtina, the audience applauded him when he appeared in the screen. For many people, Faruk Begolli, in this movie was the same old-time Faruk Begolli.

Faruk Begolli has a deserved place in former Yugoslav and Kosovar cinematography. Even all agree in one issue: Begolli with his roles has brought to the audience warmth and outstanding subtlety.

Begolli as a movie artist and as well as a man was “extraordinary, unrepeatably and unrivalled” Meli Qena said about him

And Isë Qosja points out the reputation that Begolli had as an international actor. According to Qosja, in international scene Begolli was estimated, especially after the short movie *Biografija Jozefa Sulca*, where he realizes a completely different role from those previous ones.

But as for the roles of romantic lovers or “sorrowful” partisans, as Begolli called them himself, Fadil Hysaj considered that such roles were the most wanted by the directors and as well from the audience.

“Those roles of romantic heroes were relevant in the history of cinematography. These kinds of movies were the most wanted at that time and in this aspect I think that Faruk Begolli was a very successful actor of the cinematography that existed at that time.”

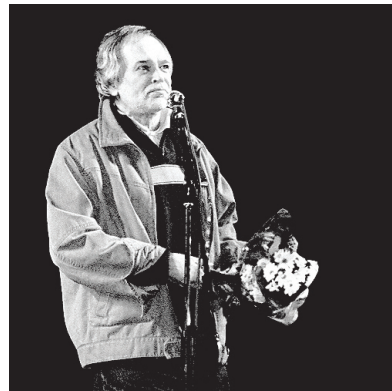
AWARDS

“It seems a bit paradoxical, but in his extraordinary career as a movie actor, Begolli wasn’t awarded very much and acknowledgement. Even though he said “I didn’t care about them.”

In 1972, in the Movie Festival Sopot, he was awarded with the prize “Junak Kosmaja” for the leading role in movie Si të vdiset.

In a regional festival held in 1998 in Celje, Slovenia, Faruk Begolli was awarded with a prize for the best actor of Festival, for his role in Dashuria e Bjeshkëve të Nemuna.

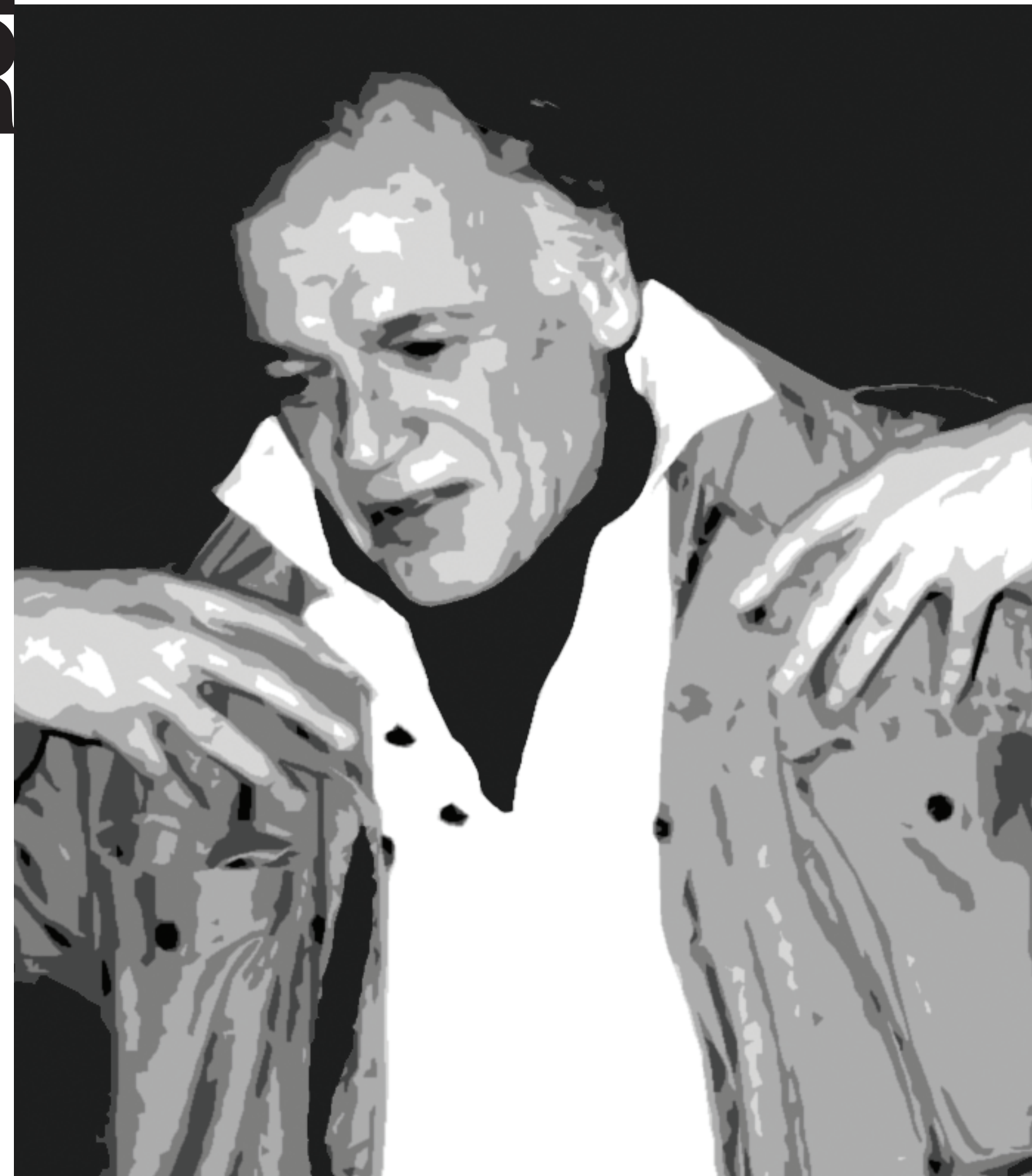
In 1998, the “Salbatring” Fund from Ljubljana awarded Faruk Begolli with annual award for achievement in cinematography and also for organizing theatrical life in Kosova. In 2004 Students Festival “Skena UP”, awarded Begolli with a Special Prize. The award was given to by former Primer minister of Kosova Bajram Rexhepi. In 12th Festival of Albanian Movie in Tirana he was awarded with the Prize the Best Actor (supporting role). This award was given to him for his role in movie Etjet e Kosovës.



PROFESSOR

“ I HAVE NEVER
WISHED TO BE
PROFESSOR OR
DIRECTOR BUT
I BECAME BOTH
PROFESSOR AND
DIRECTOR ”

Professor Faruk Begolli. By the end the sixties, when he was on the top of his career as a movie actor, surrounded by fame and popularity, he started another “trip”, completely different from the job he was doing until then. He never thought before that one day he will be a professor. In fact, this was the profession he never liked. But in Belgrade the meeting with a writer and publicist Ramiz Kelmendi brought to a sudden turn in his future and career. Ramiz Kelmendi has proposed him to come back to Prishtina and to work with Students of Teacher’s College, Department of Acting, which was expected to be established at that time. In those days in Prishtina existed an acting studio, which was functioning within People’s Provincial Theatre of Kosova (PPTK). Director Slobodan Popic worked with students of that studio. According to Begolli, he was meritorious for Kosova’s Theatre. Popic was employed as director in PPTK. Except Popic in this studio were engaged other directors and actors. Students had some subjects and studied in Serbian and this, according to Ramiz Kelmendi who was trying to persuade Begolli, was so paradoxical and



unacceptable because he thought that they were creating half-actors.

Begolli, was just graduated from the Academy, and was scared from Ramiz Kelmendi's proposal, who talked to him in patriotic tone saying that opening the school of acting was very important for Albanians.

"I was saying to him, 'that I don't know anything' and 'I don't know what the theory is', and that, 'everything I did is thank to my talent, otherwise I couldn't graduate from Academy,' and things like that, but he kept insisting. Ramiz Kelmendi is really charming man and I have loved him and respected since my childhood, and also when he was working as a journalist."

Ramiz Kelmendi had won. Very soon Begolli would appear in front of the students as a professor. After a while, Studio for Acting of People's Provincial Theatre (PPT) was turned in the Branch of Acting within Teacher's College. This was enabled thanks to writer's engagement and also at that time director of PPT, Azem Shkreli.

THE FIRST LECTURE

Begolli's coming in Prishtina as a professor was positively evaluated by people of theatre and also by common people. Prishtina was getting back its star together with brightness and gained fame.

The first lecture and meeting with students made Begolli to shudder from fear. Nothing was helping him nor talent or academy or fame... nothing was functioning. He was shuddering. For a few seconds he was frozen and stupefied. Students, there were about 20, were lined up and were waiting their idol, the famous Faruk Begolli, whom they have seen only in movies until that day.

"I began my first lecture... I know that I was trembling from the fear. All students were looking at me and laughing. It was the first time that they were looking at 'living' Faruk Begolli, because at that time I was a bit famous, since I had played in four or five movies or even more... And they all were looking at me as I was trembling.... For a long time, I don't know how long, I didn't know how to begin, what to say... And they were looking at me and I was looking at them, then it occurred to me that I should sit down..."

After the first lecture he returns to the theory. He started to reread all what he has read during his studies in Belgrade: Stanislavski about the actor, Artaud's and Elia Kazan's articles about actor and theatre. During those two years he read more theory books on acting and theatre than during all his life.

"So, from these preparations, when I went to those classes, I was lecturing there more than half an hour, but nobody understood anything... And I was happy that 'I am clever' and then I extended my lecture... But those were so 'interesting' lectures and most of the students didn't understand anything, and some of them in last rows were sleeping..."

“I began my first lecture... I know that I was trembling from the fear. All students were looking at me and laughing”

A funny beginning and so different from the way how he will teach acting to the students twenty years later: a little bit of theory or not at all, but more exercises and practices, because, according to him, the students through practice will achieve conclusions of theories.

Some of the students from first and second class from Teachers' College – the Branch of Acting, like Enver Petrovci, Kumrije Hoxha, Bajrush Mjaku, Selman Jusufi, Drita Krasniqi, Skender Tafa, Avdush Hasani, Luan Daka, Fadil Hysaj and many others, will be the base for Kosova's theatre and cinematography. In future in Kosovar movies these students will perform beside him, some of them were very successful. They will be included in the company of People's Provincial Theatre of Kosova. Enver Petrovci will be graduated from Belgrade Academy for Acting and will become one of the most popular actors of theatre in Belgrade. And also Bajrush Mjaku, will become one of the most demanding actors and very famous. Fadil Hysaj will continue his study for directing and theatrics in Sarajevo. And then he will come back to Kosovo and become one of the most famous theatre directors in Kosovo. Hysaj says that professor Faruk Begolli has a lot of influence among the students of his generation.

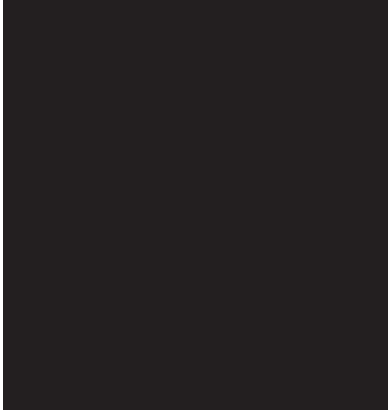
“His relations with us students I can say that it was the most awesome part of our youth which has bestirred a fanatical enthusiasm about theatre and a sound ambition to be great actors... He demanded from us to cultivate the cult of work and zeal toward the profession. All this for us was a bit of surprising because at that time we were looking at him as a movie actor but a little spoiled... There was a contrast with the image we had about him and what we found in him: he didn't tolerate the delays or non-fulfillment of duties, but he estimated the good student's work... We have discovered within ourselves inexhaustible energy. We often spent nights on the stage where we were doing some practices at the Teachers School. We, 6 students, lived as a new six family members, where the only topic was what we'd bring tomorrow in the class of acting.”

By the end of the sixties the earlier initiative for founding a Branch of Dramatic Arts within the Faculty of Arts was renovated again, due to insistence of Muslim Mulliqi, a painter, and Bashkim Shehu, a composer.

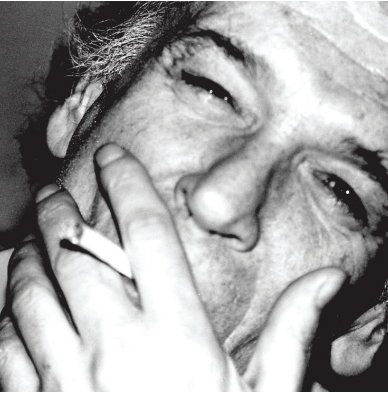
The founding of Branch of Dramatic Art was doing at the right time, maybe crucial time, because there was lack of young actors. There was a need for renovation. Kosova Assembly after two or three years of efforts, finally, approved the request and in 1989, was opened the Branch of Acting, which later will follow with other branches e.g. Theatre Direction, Dramaturgy and then Movie Direction

Shkëlzen Maliqi said that Faruk Begolli's returning to Prishtina was one of the most important gestures and initiatives that will have effect on directions of developments in culture in Kosova, in dramatic years of the two last decades of 20th Century.

“With his zeal and professionalism Faruk becomes one of the pillars of cultural and spiritual resistance of Kosovars toward exterminatory pretensions of Serbian regime.”



Opening of the Branch of Acting was an enjoyment for everyone and especially for the youth that aimed the world of movie and theatre. Faruk Begolli had the most difficult responsibility to consolidate the team of professors.



“When we founded the Branch of Acting, I asked our famous actor Bekim Fehmiu to take the guidance, while I’d be his assistant, but he didn’t accept it. Then I became a lecture without having a university degree. Since I was found in that situation, I addressed to my young colleague Enver Petrovci, my former student. I asked him to come and work together. I was trying to persuade him, to come and work as a professor, in the same way that Ramiz Kelmendi did to me long time ago. Enver Petrovci accepted my invitation and since then we are together at the faculty.”

In the entrance examination of the first generation of students was a large number of candidates, more than 150. And most of them were young people that really loved acting. The admitted students of first class were lucky. Begolli thinks that that was the most successful class, because, according to him, they worked with an outstanding discipline. Many actors of that class now are active creators and very successful in theatre, movies or as teachers at the Faculty of Arts.

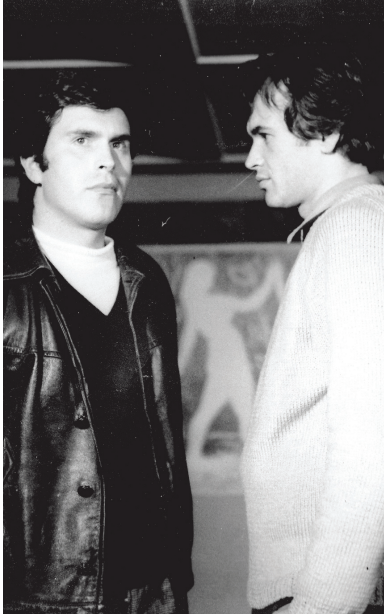
At that time Faruk Begolli traveled from Belgrade to lecture in his class. He come with pleasure and felt proud that he was professor of that successful class, which was working with zealous and persistency.

Shorthanded of teaching staff, Begolli, except acting, gave lectures in other subjects. He said that he replaced the absent professors.

Enver Petrovci started to work with the first class. Petrovci already had a successful career. In the first class he lectured diction. Meantime in the second grade he will have his own class. Begolli, also, praises the second class of actors, which has worked under Petrovci’s direction.

Later Abi Nokshiq and some other professors joined this small group of professors. It seemed that everything was functioning perfectly. But at that time, some of the classes were held in Serbian language and students had language difficulties. It must be said that at its beginning the Branch of Acting in Prishtina was supported and helped a lot by the Faculty of Drama in Belgrade. The difficulties and little obstacles of that beginning were covered with everybody’s impetus and enthusiasm. Although that enthusiasm of beginning got paled in next classes, Begolli said. Unfortunately, the political events that will follow in that time will have extraordinary effects in the work of students-actors.

After three years of successful work, the Serbian regime of that time forcibly expelled them from Faculty, the same as it did with all Albanian students from University of Prishtina. Because the collaboration and the connections that they had, the Deanery of Faculty of Arts in Belgrade and especially professors of the Branch of Drama will protest and demand to discuss the decision of Serbian regime. But this protest wasn’t of great help and Begolli with his colleagues will seek for alternative solution.



After a few months, the Branch of Acting will continue the work in an abandoned building near the Faculty of Economics. The building where the classes were organized was destroyed almost completely and there were neither windows nor doors. As Begolli said, it was as “public WC.” The Faculty functioned there for months and two other classes were admitted at that time. But after many months of work there, they were forced to leave the place, because one day Serbian regime has completely destroyed the building. Faruk Begolli was so proud that in those circumstances and conditions has managed to work with students and to have good results.

“From this distance, when you talk about those events, it seems that you ‘really did something,’ that you never gave up... It seemed to us that we were doing something against that regime and it seemed that we are undertaking a kind of protest... The engagement about the work and the students’ discipline meant disobedience to regime and it was a certain philosophy against obedience.”

From that first class of 1989 until now 15 classes of actors have graduated. With his students, except the work as a professor, Begolli always worked on the stage as a director. He preferred that etudes and school exercises to rework and to perform them for the audience. Of course, as a director Begolli worked on plays of distinguished authors like Ionescu, Dario Fo etc. there were at least 30 directing that he has done even though Begolli never called himself a director.

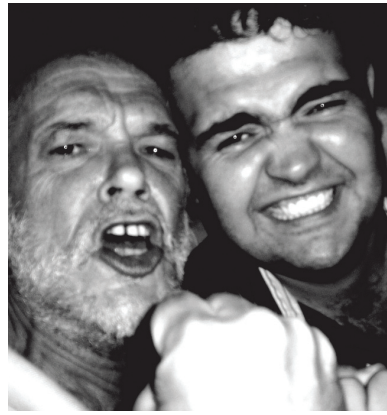
“I didn’t have and I don’t have any pretensions to become a director. I am an actor and I’ll remain an actor until the end.”

His engagement as director he justified with the need of students to act on stage. His directing, as he said, always was in function of actors play and the intention was to show students talent and creativity. Most of this performances, according to Begolli, were realized because students’ needs.

Characteristic of his work with students is without any doubt the way he got connected emotionally with them. He considered them as if they were his children and treated them in that way. The initiator and a founder of the Branch of Acting, emblematic professor of this department, so the main part of his time he will dedicate to his students-actors, respectively to their trainings. Director Ekrem Kryeziu said that he doesn’t know any other professor that is more zealous, more beloved for students than Faruk Begolli. While his former student Armond Morina, an actor, said that Begolli treats everybody the same and he never made any differences between them. Shkëlzen Maliqi said that Faruk Begolli in his work with students has appeared very intelligently, due to his experience and not because of his theoretical qualifications, he applied system of work concentrated on actor, on individual teaching.

With students as professor Begolli was straight and insisted from them to work and research.

“With students I didn’t have only pedagogical relations as well I had parental relations with



them. When those students, those children, because they are like mine children, when you succeed to know them better, to reveal their souls and mind, then you can expect results... So, there must be achieved a high level of intimacy in relations with students, so, they can trust you... If you don't create such relations, then there the results will be poor... The main duty of a teacher is to develop that what a student has within him, that what is a part of his soul... Because all students have different worlds, someone is melancholic, someone has complexes, and someone is shy... People think that actors are shameless, but this is not quite right. Actors are shy, and especially when they are at the beginning. And, this is the teachers' task, how to help students to create self-confidence, not to fear to go out on the stage, not to be shy... The actor develops like a flower, it begins from roots, stem, leaves and the smell comes later..."

Sometime when students do not act conform his criteria, naturally if they aim to develop as actors, Begolli knows how to be 'harsh.' Many years ago, to one of the class of acting he demanded from them to repeat the semester. Angered students by this action decide to "fight," since they considered that professor's decision was unjust. And they decided to "lodge a complaint", and addressed it to administrators of Faculty. And, of course, for challenging the professor's decision they found their arguments about his rigorousness. However, Begolli didn't retreat from his decision that those students of acting have to repeat the academic year. Neither students pleading nor the administrators pleading did convince him to change his mind. He defended his decision, saying that he did it for the good of students.

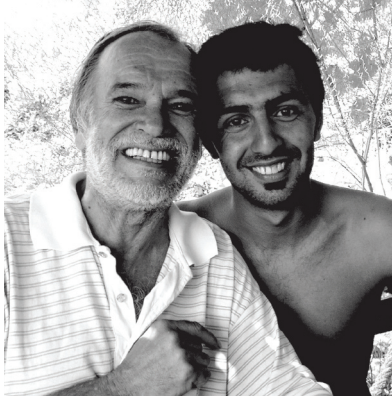
But, at that time, he was really touched by his students' letter of complaint, to which he will respond with a letter, too. Title of the letter was "Greeting letter" among others he wrote:

"My dear ones!... You said that your aim is to be as well as possible on the stage. But this was my aim too, to be as well as possible on the stage, to be great on the stage... Every your win, every your triumph on the stage is my win and my triumph... Every state has its own constitution which has to be regarded, since it is the base of that society. It's like this, or not?! But even, this, our profession has some rules that must be taken into consideration. Since the ancient world have existed, and they continue to exist even today, codes and rules which together makes that what is called 'actor's ethic.' And there's not only actor's ethic, but also the ethic of student and teacher. Every profession has its own codes and its laws, because without them it can't function. Since the first class we met, I've told you that acting is 'act', is 'action.' But, to act and to accomplish an action, you need to work, to prepare. And the work and preparation demand conditions and circumstances, they demand seriousness and patience and many other things. Without these qualities 'acting' on the stage cannot be accomplished, cannot be convincing... This is the way that leads to success and this is the way to stay longer on the stage ..."

Begolli is known as rigorous and "soulless" professor as for admission of students out of institutional and professional rules. Many students, feeling the danger of strong competition, they tried to find other ways to be admitted to the Branch of Acting, using family con-



nections or even by using bribery. Begolli, in his first years of teaching, claims to have had many offers, which later disappeared since people understood that Begolli is not a man with whom they can make such deals.



“Usually there are many interceding on someone’s behalf. In the beginning when the Branch of Acting was established, there were many interceding on someone’s behalf, but later they didn’t dare to do it, since they understood that I am not their right man for it. In the beginning they promised me a Mercedes Benz. Especially after the war I had many pressures. They said that if you don’t admit this or that, they’d kill me... But, everyone knows that I am not the right man for interceding on someone’s behalf...”

Armond Morina, an actor, said that immediately after the war, as we were sitting in a bar with Begolli, a man came to our table and left there a letter, where was written the name of a candidate that they had to admit as student of acting.

“Begolli, without reading a name of candidate, tossed it and threw it away. He didn’t even accept to talk to that man... But that man later threatened Begolli. I used to say to Begolli: why don’t give their names to the police, but he didn’t want to deal with such things. If any of candidates has interceded, then Begolli at the entrance examination in front of all candidates said to them: you have interceded, haven’t you? He ashamed them in front of all the people...”



According to Begolli, entrance examination for acting is very subjective and it’s very difficult to make the selection of the best, regardless of partiality and regardless of efforts to select the best.

“Who knows how many people I have saved for not admitting them, but who knows how many talents I have rejected... Once a candidate came to entrance examination with a monologue of Shakespeare’s Ophelia, and when I asked him why didn’t you take Hamlet but Ophelia, he said: I couldn’t find Hamlet anywhere.”

The studies are the road, a kind of canalizing the students’ knowledge and a kind of orientation of how to come to the knowledge. As for Begolli, the greatest pleasure remains rehearsals, because there you can research, you can look for ...

“Because then when you go to perform, there is stage fright, emotions... You don’t know where you are... A kind of raving... You don’t know what you have to do... Someone embraces you but you don’t know why...As for me the audience never gave me a torture, but only pleasure... I am talking for audiences as an actor, but also as director...”



During these many years of working as professor of acting in the Faculty of Arts, in Prishtina, Faruk Begolli has created a reputation of a professor of principles and not being an opportunist. In one of the meetings of the Branch of Dramatic Arts, within the frame of Faculty, when they were discussing candidacies of nominees for to-be professors in this department, Begolli finding himself among swindlers he resigned from all positions he had in the Faculty, remaining only a professor. Infuriated, he left the meeting and he never went to any of the meetings that were held in the faculty.

THEATRE

“ *When play dies and character play dies, too, the one that you played as an actor... A part of your life dies... This is bad for an actor, isn't it?”*

Known and accepted as a movie actor, Faruk Begolli will have little contacts with the world of theatre. But from time to time he will return to the theatre and realize excellent roles. His career in theatre, in fact, began much earlier. At the time when Begolli was in high school, he will act in a comedy Makaronat e shejtanit directed by Kristë Berisha. This theatre history from childhood will be as school ring which, from to time, will withdraw him from the world of movie toward theatre stage.

When he moved from Peja to Belgrade, where he was studying Metallurgy, he will be often among theatre goers of theatrical performances in Belgrade theatres, and particularly in “Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozoriste“, since in that theatre was engaged as a regular actor his cousin Istref Begolli.

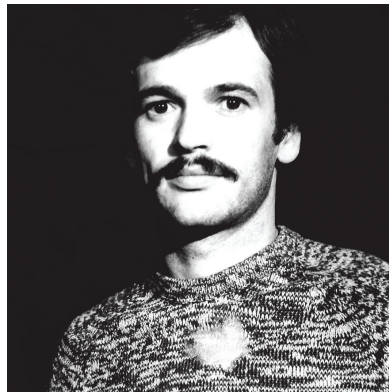
“I went to every theatrical performance and saw them all. So, whether I wanted or not I went to the theatre every night, because Istref was there, and it was much warmer there... and I enjoyed sitting in the buffet with actors. They all knew that I was Istref's relative and they treated me with respect and loved me... But at that time I didn't have no idea that one day I'll be an actor.”

Later, after he gave up Metallurgy and after he studied Economics for another two years, he will go back again in Belgrade. But now he is convinced that one day he'll be on the stage of theatre. During his first year of studying he met Bekim Fehmiu, an Albanian actor known internationally. Thus going to theatre became more frequent and Begolli will be in the audience every single night. It was important for him to go to the theatre. To him it didn't matter that a certain performance he saw at least fifteen times, he liked to be near Istref Begolli and Bekim Fehmiu.



Begolli in his second year of studies will begin his journey in the world of movie. So in the theatre he performed very rarely, even though he had many offers from all theatres of former Yugoslavia. As a student he performed in “Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozoriste,” but also in “Narodno Pozoriste” in Belgrade.

One of his first important roles in theatre was Rosenkranc, in Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Meanwhile, In Kosova for the first time he acted in Samuel Beckett’s Ah, Joe directed by Isa Qosja, it was combination of cinema-theatre performance. His partner in this performance was Kumrie Hoxha, an actress and his former student. With this performance Isa Qosja was graduated and this was his final exam. The hall of People’s Provincial Theatre of Kosova was occupied with rehearsals of Hamlet performance and thus the rehearsals for Ah Joe were held everywhere where it was possible. At that time when the theatrical performance was performed Qosja’s concept was very advanced. Perhaps because it was for the first time in former Yugoslavia when a movie and theatre were combined and,



in fact, the separating wall between these two media melted in that performance. The role in Ah Joe, Begolli considered it as an interesting experience. He appreciates it a lot, especially Isa Qosja’s concept.

“Isa did the stage adaptation in that way that we two, the characters, enter wrongly from movie to theatre stage, we live there, but then they expel us and we go back again to movie...”

In the beginning the commission of professors, that had to evaluate the work of student-director Isa Qosja, was very skeptical, but after they saw the premiere they were astonished, especially by the concept of how functioned jointly the movie and theatre.

«It’s interesting that Artistic Council of People Provincial Theatre had doubts about the performance, its ideas... But after they saw the performance, they had a meeting and said that this performance should be delayed, because it wasn’t the right time and I don’t know what... But the time it was like that and I understand them... Because, realistically, even that the performance was full of metaphors and signs, and I don’t know what, some things were very clear and it was known to whom they were referred... Then Isa and I said that we are not going to performed it on the theatre stage but in front of theatre, and they cannot prevent it... And we really wanted to perform it there; in front of theatre’s stairs...We were

really determined to do it. But, But then they deferred and everything passed smoothly, the performance was a big success... It was written and said a lot about it... »

The director of performance Isa Qosja said that Faruk Begolli or “Çara” as he called him is an actor of European reputation. He praised Begolli’s modesty and his professionalism in this performance.

“‘Çara’ accepted to get into garbage, in garbage yard and from there to go in front of audience... He entered into garbage and immediately burst out from that garbage... An actor with European reputation came out from garbage, without complexes... His communication with me was as if I was an experienced director and he a beginner, and in fact it was the opposite...”



As he talks about how this performance was accepted positively from critics and other people Qosja told us about a small “conflict” with Begolli, which didn’t spoil the relationships between them. On the contrary, a kind of deposit of humor was created between them.

“Once, while working on ‘Ah Joe,’ I cursed ‘Çara’ very harsh... You fucking bastard, you are a lousy man. There a lot of men like you everywhere, I said, but he didn’t get angry on me. He mentioned it, recently, with humor and even to his students he talked about it.”

After Ah Joe Begolli will play in a very important performance, e.g. Dervishi dhe Vdekja which was written by Mesa Selimovic and directed by Vladimir Milcin. In this performance, except Begolli, there played Abdurrahman Shala, Istref Begolli, Xhevat Qena, Bislim Muçaj, Drita Krasniqi etc. It was a well selected team of leading actors of PPTK. With this theatrical performance, almost after twenty years of absence Abdurrahman Shala returned to the stage. Except the actors in this theatrical performance a group of Polish ballerinas was involved. They didn’t have to say a word, but they danced and got along with “bohemian’s” scenes, whose character was played by Faruk Begolli.

“In that theatrical performance I played Hasan, a bohemian always in company of women.

There's really a fantastic scene. I am in company with two ballerinas having fun. When Nuredin (Istref Begolli) walks in and he expels them and starts a dialogue with me, then there begins their tragedy."

This theatrical play was performed almost everywhere in former Yugoslavia: in Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, in Belgrade was presented in celebrated "Atelje 212", in Zagreb and in many other towns. At that time PPTK had a consolidated company and the production level was quite competitive with other theatres in former Yugoslavia.

Another performance where Begolli played was Teki Dervishi's "Bregu i pikëllimit" directed by Vladimir Milcin, which was an outstanding spectacle with about 40 actors. The performance lasted two hours and twenty minutes. And then "Një varr për Boris Davidoviçin" written by Danilo Kis and directed by Agim Sopi. In a Festival in Novi Sad, this performance was awarded with seven of eight possible prizes.

"It was only me that I wasn't awarded, since in jury was my former professor. The professor knowing my nature approached me and said that he intentionally dismissed me, so at least one prize should be given to any other performance."

After the war, in 1999, Begolli was elected the head of the Kosova Theatre Creators Association, but he resigned after a short time. He justified his resignation with "everyone failed, including me."

Begolli directed and had almost a symbolic role in an emblematic performance of Dodona Theatre "Profesor... jam talent se jo mahi." There he played the role of Professor, who is in a commission for admitting students in acting class. This structure almost remained the same in all 6 versions of "Profesor..." Surrounded by the audience and with an ashtray



beside him, he communicated with actors on the stage.

Shkëlzen Maliqi said that it is a pity that Begolli in these two last decades didn't have many opportunities to prove and testify his talent of a great actor, not only in the movie but also in the theatre. According to him, as though the projects where he was engaged were not so ambitious.



KING LEAR

Begolli took a long break before he came back again to the theatre stage in 2006. For more than 15 years he didn't act on the stage. It wasn't that he didn't have offers from directors but because he didn't want to. In an interview after the war, he declared:



"...I haven't played for almost fifteen years, but...Often when I read a good play, I find a character that I like, I find myself thinking I'd act like this or like that, because... I always think I'd played that so good... I can't sleep on that night...You know, the first impression of the play, the first meeting with the character... And you do, let's say a good performance and there's no audience! In these circumstances, for an experienced actor, trust me, it's very difficult to play in the theatre without audience... This is the main thing, when I think about other things; I haven't played for such a long time, this and that..."

For a long time he will be tempted by such dilemmas. But he didn't take any further steps to act on stage, even that his eyes he kept toward the stage... He waited! He waited for circumstances to change, for better times to come for theatre. Years passed, but unfortunately nothing changes. Theatre life becomes gloomier. Begolli sat and waited.



"But regardless of these things, I still haven't say goodbye to this issue...I still think that that moment will come when I'll go to the stage. And that moment must come...This desire never dies within the artist, otherwise he won't be an artist..."

In 2006, after many sleepless nights, after many nightmares and artist's efforts, Begolli decided to return to the theatre. Director Fadil Hysaj offers him a role, that many call it "King of Roles". Faruk Begolli as the King Lear!

"I've longed enough for acting. Lear is a challenging role! For couple of days I couldn't stop thinking about it, I couldn't sleep...It's a difficult role...Then I convinced myself that I can do it. But then comes those secondary reasons; let these students see that I can do it, I was teaching them for years and they never saw me acting on the theatre stage...It's an excellent role and I wanted to see myself where I am. Because for such a long time I haven't played in the theatre...It was a real challenge to me...A challenge until I didn't decide to take it, but when I decided then I did it with a lot of pleasure..."



Begolli's comeback to the theatre almost after 20 years made a sensation in Kosovar press and media. The newspapers were full of titles like "King Lear, an Emblem for Faruk Begolli", "Faruk Begolli Suits the King Lear's Throne," "The Great Comeback"...

"As for me the King Lear turned out as I was expecting it. Because there at the National Theatre, just stepping inside is a depressing thing...If you just enter there you'd say to yourself 'Faruk, get the hell of out here...'. A huge theatre, not organized, without conditions...But all these things I left behind and with the director we've tried to find a line, about which we're determined to realize that line; without getting involved in the directing of the theatre performance, without getting engaged with the theatre company, without getting involved with...And we found the pleasure... Because the rehearsals are for the artist; you research, you have troubles, nothing goes well on a particular day, you don't know how to solve that scene, you don't know how to express that thought, you don't know how to carry

*...You will be Lear on stage,
but Lear's sufferings you
have to carry in your life...*



out the relations with your partner... So, the theatre has this pleasure of rehearsals, and during all the time there is a researching way, which begins completely different and then you come to something quite different, so it's something where you see your development as an actor...Every rehearsal brought to me a pleasure...The second shows do not bring me any pleasures...But the second shows are the prize of those pleasures that you have during rehearsals..."



For many people Begolli's comeback was the event of the year. Begolli came back to the stage with that old energy, with an extraordinary responsibility and brought to the public an excellent performance. A triumphant comeback and an extraordinary gift for Kosovar audience, for all those who hoped that would see Begolli on the stage. Armond Morina, an actor, who played a role in the performance, considers him lucky that he had a chance to act beside his professor Faruk Begolli. As for him it was as a dream of life. While Fadil Hysaj, the director, Begolli's experience called as something extraordinary. He said that Faruk Begolli's life and the one of Shakespeare King Lear's life is similar in many plans.

"Begolli is Lear in all plans. All his life, the way of living is like Lear's life. Begolli is a man who had a kingdom and they have misused his kingdom in all aspects... There's an analogy between Faruk Begolli and Lear. Begolli is a man that trusted a lot the people who had approached him, a man who has divided his kingdom not quite justly. This is a man that doesn't have anything but him... I think that at King Lear he played an excellent role. I attempted to create a certain Lear that exists within Faruk Begolli, not to create out of Begolli a new Lear."

King Lear had some successful second shows in Kosova and also was performed in International Festival – MESS in Sarajevo. His return to Sarajevo, where he lived and worked for a long time, excited Begolli.

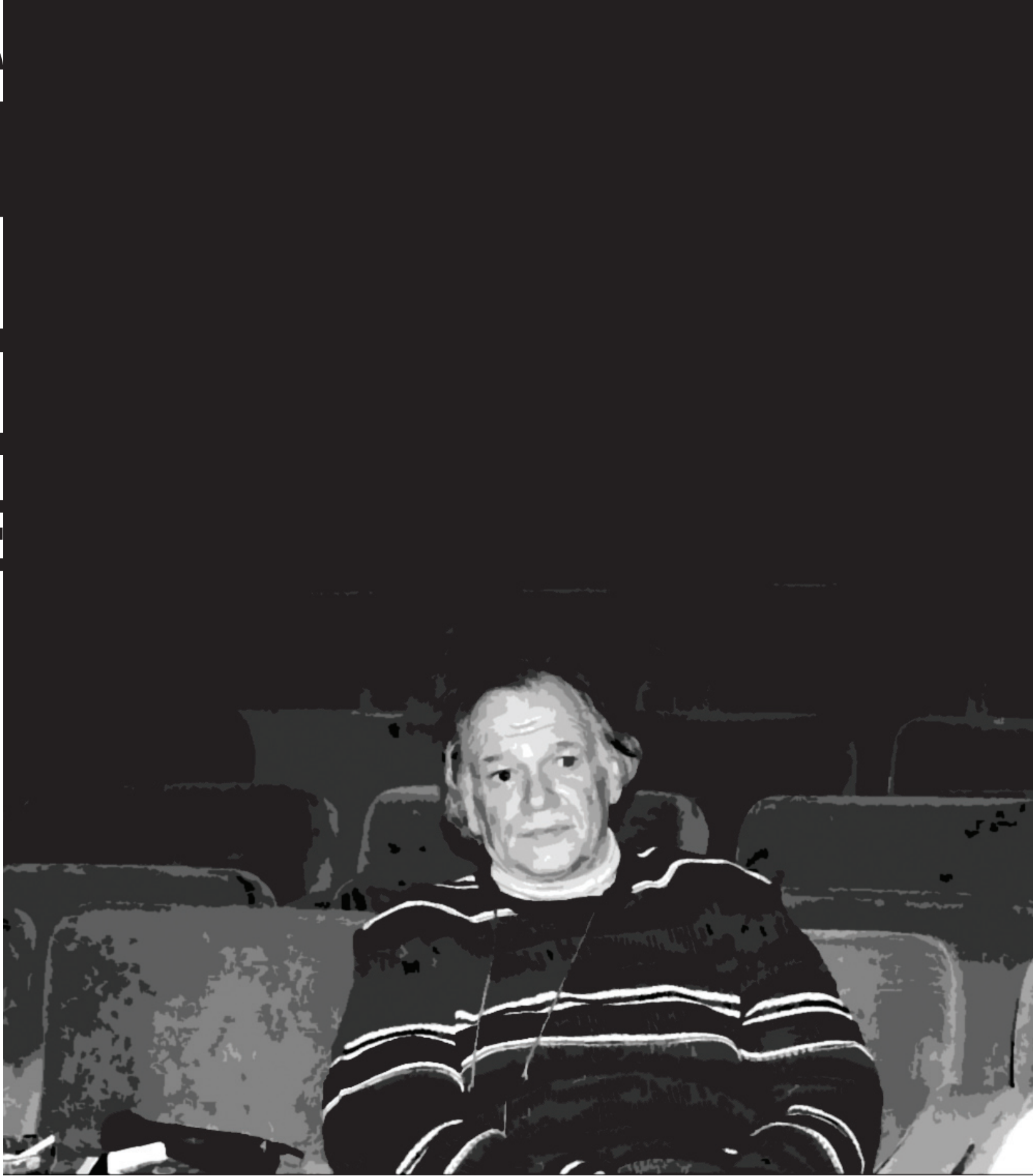
"It was an experience to remember, that I will never forget, not an easy experience. Of course, I didn't meet Shiba Krvavac nor Mirza Idrizovac, because of what happened in Sarajevo must have torn their hearts apart. I didn't meet nor Davor Popovic, a good friend of mine. But there came a lot of my other friends, to see me as Faruk and me as Lear."

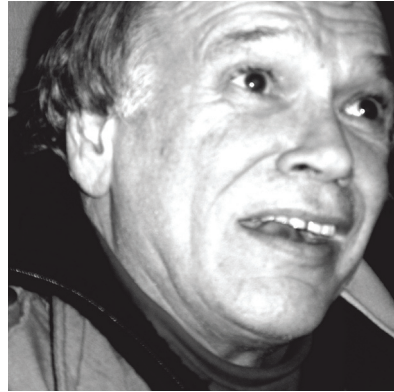
After a few second shows King Lear was removed from repertoire of national Theatre in Prishtina. Begolli never stood up on the stage again, since his health was getting worse and worse. It seemed as if Lear's asked Begolli a condition: you will be Lear on stage, but Lear's sufferings you have to carry in your life...

A KING IN A SMALL KINGDOM— “DODONA” THEATRE

“I am only an actor and I will remain like that until the end.”

An office in the second floor, which, in fact, looked much more like an ordinary storage room. His real office was in a small buffet, in the entrance of Dodona Theatre. That small alcove was his kingdom, surrounded continually with young artists and colleagues; he was getting lost in tobacco smoke and steam of teapots. Especially in the evening you could find him there, before the performances, which usually began at 19:30. And after the performances, when another kind of ‘shows’ were beginning there, not now in theatre hall but in that small buffet. The beginning of long parties usually had a big circle of people, and later that circle was getting smaller and smaller, four, three, two people... Often Begolli was left there only with any of buffet’s worker, who had to keep serving him and after all to drive him home, if for this thing the “king” was convinced. The theatre’s buffet was that Faruk Begolli’s nest, where he practiced his artist’s reign. In that narrow alcove, which usually was blurred by tobacco smoke and was thickened by the smell of raki and snacks, Begolli shaped his initial ideas for performances he realized.





“There’s nothing in this world without raki. Raki, alcohol and company... To me alcohol was like those children’s game; when you say to them finish this job and then we’ll give you chocolates. And these never ending parties were inevitable part of job... Because, for instance, on that day when you perform well then you are satisfied with yourself, so, you have to celebrate. But when you under perform then you are not satisfied with yourself and again... To me raki was never my need. It always was to me an element of good life, and of pleasure, but never as a need...And my body never depended on alcohol.”

Very rarely he went to the office, better to say he barely went up there, all his jobs he managed from the buffet. Of course, these were not official jobs; typing on typewriter or computer, correspondence with politicians or other people, and even he didn’t have to deal with numbers, as well never wrote reports or requirements... No, his reigning was very simple, in fact, damnably simple, the one that only artists can do.

Melihate Qena was one of his accompanists in those parties until late at night, and she said that as for Begolli Dodona Theatre was more than a home.

While, Isa Qosja, a director, finds an analogy between the role that Faruk Begolli has played in his theatrical performance Ah Joe and Faruk Begolli as a man and a manager of Theatre Dodona.

“The character that ‘Çara’ played in ‘Ah Joe,’ the lost man, the ragged man, he liked it so much; as appearance and as emotional state. And that explained in a way that man: the worldly attitude, drawing room manners, dress-coat and extravagancy didn’t belong to Faruk Begolli. He liked the role he played in ‘Ah Joe.’ Rags, broken soul and being haunted... So, this explains ‘Çara’ in a way, although he was a man of glitter, a man adored in drawing rooms and in important parties. But he wanted a different kind of life... And thus he liked Dodona Theatre, as it was, a symbolically ‘ragged’ theater.

The story of this kingdom theatre is perhaps of one of the most characteristic stories of theatres in the world. The main part of this story was created by Faruk Begolli, by whom this theatre was very often identified. In those circumstances of occupation and violence in the nineties in Kosovo, a small theatre in margins of Prishtina was made as a cultural oasis that challenged the strong smell of gunpowder and teargases.

Theatre of Youth, Children and Puppets was founded as a theatre company in 1986. Six years later, in 1992, in Prishtina, this theatre company moves in recently built building, which later will be known as Dodona Theatre. In this theatre, except the children scene, the evening scene was functioning, too, where there were performances for adults.

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Enver Petrovci, a famous Kosovar actor, after a short time that he was appointed as manager of Dodona Theatre was forced to quit, as a result of repressive measures, as they were called at that time the measures that Serbian government was undertaking towards institutions and individuals everywhere in Kosova. Few days before these measures, as if he felt the danger of being forced to leave Petrovci had made almost a secret agreement with Faruk Begolli, according to which FTD, Faruk Begolli's firm, was renting the evening scene. A fictive contract, signed in a hurry, had sealed the luck of this theatre for better. Faruk Begolli almost in piratical way was appointed a sovereign of this theatre.

Meantime, a couple of hundreds meters away The National Theatre of Kosova was cleansed completely from Albanian actors, while the management of the theatre was handed to the hands of Serbs loyal to Milosevic regime.

“At that time I had founded a private firm – FTD, for theatre and design, I made a fictive contract with Enver Petrovci, by which it enabled FDT to give performances in evening scene. While Enver Petrovci with that agreement made a kind of ‘covering’ by which he could be justified if he was accused by the regime... This contract enabled the continuity of Dodona Theatre’s work.”

The future theatrical performances in the evening scene were FTD productions, and FTD paid 20% of the sold tickets. But the evening scene was used for students’ examinations; those who studying acting and theatre directing.

Most of the actors that played in the evening scene were students of acting. Dodona Theatre was a kind of workshop for young actors and directors to gain the first experience, and all of them were studying at the Faculty of Arts. Because they were short of budget, most of the performances in this theatre had very poor stage designing, while the costumes for many performances were made by the actors themselves.

Finding himself in such situation, Begolli, until then known as an actor and professor of theatre, began to direct theatrical performances. Later, he will never admit that he got engaged in this ‘profession’ because of artistic credo, but because “the need of students”, the need that the students of acting had to play on the stage. Of course, that this explanation seems more convincing.

“My directing in those theatrical performances was in the complete function of actors’ play. In all those performances I have tried to bring to light not my creativity as a director, but the talent of actors. All those performances I did because of students’ need who were studying acting.”

The performances at this theatre were created with low budget or without any budget at all. In those ten years of work at the Dodona Theatre he directed thirty theatrical performances.

“Even though I have realized about thirty performances, I will not call myself a director. I didn’t have and I don’t have any pretensions to become a director.”

However, if we follow the opinions of critics about those performances, we’d see that some of Begolli’s directing didn’t pass unnoticed, and even some of them are estimated as very matured.

Some of the performances that were directed by Begolli are: “Profesor... jam talent se



jo mahi”, “Tregimi zoologjik”, “Heronjtë e kombit”, “Kur kishe mujtë me m’pa, qysh më kishe pa”, “Këngëtarja tullace”, “Dashuritë e Xhorxh Uashingtonit”, “Mbytma burrin”, “Maturantët”, “Stjuardesat”, “Mbreti Ibish”, “Hajnat nuk vijnë gjithmonë për të keq” etc.

“PROFESSOR . . . I’M A TALENT FOR REAL”

The first theatrical performance in the evening scene of this theatre was “Profesor...Jam talent se jo mahi,” directed by Faruk Begolli. And this performance was played 315 times in pan-Albanian lands and Diaspora. The performance was made from two student’s etudes of the first graduating class of Acting from Faculty of Arts, after the same model of Sarajevo’s performance. This comedy had a great success.

“Profesor... Jam talent se jo mahi” is considered an emblematic performance of Dodona Theatre. The premiere and more than 20 second showing were given in former National Provincial Theatre in Prishtina. Then the performance was transferred to Dodona Theatre and was played there hundred times. As for the number of second showing and as well for the number of theatre goers the performance “Profesor... Jam talent se jo mahi,” is record holder in Kosovar theatre. Actors in this performance (except Luan Daka) were Faruk Begolli’s students of first graduating class. Begolli’s initial “career” as a director doesn’t seem to be so encouraging.

“In the beginning we had a lot of difficulties, especially when touring in various places, we had small number of theatre goers there, that’s why I started calling, humorously, the performance a ‘fiasco project,’ and some of the actors that played in the performance not knowing the meaning of the word took it as something affirmative.”

Only three tickets were sold for the second showing in Skenderaj. Even so, the performance was given there in front of 50 other children, which were allowed to enter for free. After that second showing in Skenderaj, the performance was cancelled temporarily. It continued after three months, at the inauguration of the present building of Dodona Theatre. With this performance the evening scene at Dodona Theatre was opened. After this the performance “Profesor...” experiences the boom of theatre goers in Dodona Theatre and wherever it was performed. Almost in every town where it was performed people requested for three or four or even more second showings. From these incomings, for sure they were not that high, actors could feed their families. One of a few newspapers of that time wrote:

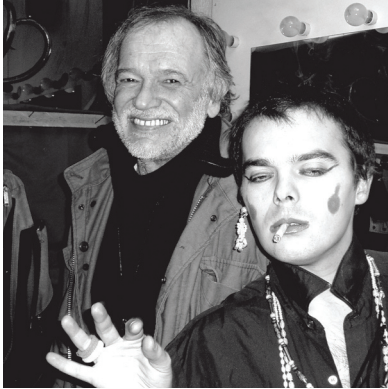
“These days when theatre is not closed and there is still being talked in Albanian, the students of Acting, directed by professor Faruk Begolli, realized and performed successfully the theatrical performance ‘Profesor... Jam talent se jo mahi,’ which presents a real freshness in our dead cultural life...”

And without any doubt, the cultural life was really dead. Dodona Theatre was the single



cultural 'window' where theatrical events or even the common performances were regarded and perceived from a different point of view.

The conditions where the artists of this theatre worked were minimal, or there were no conditions at all. The company that was engaged in performance worked for free, in meantime Faruk Begolli and other actors were compensated from sold tickets of second showings.



"Except the desire and the will for working, we didn't have anything else, even not a single damned dime."

Begolli tells us that for the theatrical performance "Zoo Story" the company had to steal two fir-trees in the woods near Prishtina and a wooden bench, which was taken somewhere in the town.

The reputation of this theatre was outstanding and Faruk Begolli's engagement and of the others in this theatre was appraised a lot by the public and other cultural circles. In the time when was expected to be given the premiere of "Heronjtë e kombit," which was directed by Begolli. Meanwhile, as a symbol of protest against the violence of Serbian regime in Kosova, Kosovar journalists were on hunger strike. And because of this the author of the play, Ymer Shkreli, has suggested, as a sign of solidarity with the journalists in hunger strike, the performance to be delayed for favorable time. But, meantime, the hunger strikers sent a message to the theatre company that they wish that the premiere should be given as it was scheduled.



The theatre, which was managed by Begolli, had a busy agenda and except performances there were organized many various activities e.g. exhibits, book promotions, concerts and many other cultural activities. Except the popular comedies, there were performed other plays and political plays, too, which indirectly spoke about occupation and the violence that Serbian government was committing towards Albanians. The performance "Waiting for Godot" directed by Fadil Hysaj, a Kosovar director, as a part of stage design had a small tank. Its message was futuristic and had to do with disaster that was being prepared for Albanians.

Dodona Theatre was that "piece" of freedom, which was offered to the public for those few moments so far as the performance was on stage. If the theatre goes out of that hall walked in fear, inside this little theatre hall the audience felt free; they could laugh and cry freely.

Begolli's performances were so popular and very often the theatre goers were left outside because the hall was too small for all of them that wanted to see it. Some young "gangsters" climbed the roof of this theatre and secretly got inside just to see the performances.

Going to the theatre in those circumstances was a challenge itself. Theatre goers usually took alleys avoiding the Serbian police, which were patrolling all the streets. Actors and other people that were engaged in this theatre dealt with such challenges constantly. Very often, when rehearsals lasted until late at night, some the actors preferred to spent the night in the theatre.

However, the most difficult part was performing in other towns. The van that transported

“I have decided to fight at all costs, to stay alive and to realize the performance ‘Professor... 8th part.’”

actors had to pass through Serbian police check points. And facing the Serbian police was never a pleasant thing. Once while the actors were coming back from the field, were forced to burn Albanian national flag, which was used as a requisite in a performance.

These kinds of events have marked the history of this theatre. But real dimensions of the outstanding role of this theatre were understood later, when the war was over. During that time, Begolli's and others main goal was to have a theater and give opportunity to young actors to act on the stage. But making the theatre at that time, today, from this perspective, it comes out that it had another mission; to keep alive men's spirit, the hope for better future, in a time when everything seemed gloomy and without any perspective.

Begolli was lead by artist's instinct. His job was very practical and he never wanted to quit what was doing. His insistence of that time he didn't see as a patriotic act, but as a reflection from an artist.

Since it was the only “cultural window” in Kosova, Theatre Dodona was turned into a symbol of Kosovar theatre. Faruk Begolli identifies the Dodona Theatre's role as “protest against violence and pressure that came from Milosevic's regime.”

“After all, I can say that without ‘Dodona’ in Kosova we'd have a huge cultural emptiness and a big gap between young and old generations of artists... For those ten years we didn't have cinema or television, so ‘Dodona’ was the most important backbone particularly for theatre and of Kosovar culture, in general... I think that there we did a certain protest against violence, a kind of manifestation of pride and dignity, a kind of non-obedience...”

Practically, during that time, until the war was over, Dodona Theatre would remain the only cultural institution which was allowed to organize cultural activities in Albanian language.

Until now it remained as a kind of mystery why Serbian government allowed the theatre activities of Albanian artists in this theatre? Because this was children theatre and they didn't see any danger and threaten from this kind of theatre? Because this theatre was build deep on the margins of the town and they didn't believe in its power? Or, simply, perhaps activities of theatre were tolerated thanks to outstanding authority that had Faruk Begolli in Kosova and Serbia and as well in former Yugoslavia? Or, simply, because they didn't give a shit about it? Mystery and the truth might never been known! But that mystery now is not very important. What is important is the activity of this theatre during the time of occupation. Except the theatre productions, which mainly were comedies, this theatre was used as a scene for the students of theatre, who were receiving education in cellars of Prishtina, since they school buildings, similar to theatres, were shut down by Serbian regime.

After the war, Begolli returns again to his kingdom. To the same walls, the same scene, the same small buffet... Some of the actors were scattered all over the world, but Adriana was the one that was missing forever. Everybody was missing her. After a couple of years, Begolli initiated publishing of a small monograph of Adriana, and also he will help organizing an anniversary on her death. However, Begolli was initiator for publishing a monograph on Dodona Theatre.

After the war he continued to realize other comedies, including of the hit performance of



4th, 5th, 6th and 7th part of “Profesor...” His comedies now dealt with different issues than those before war. Among others, his actors in these comedies will satirize war and prewar situations and as well vices of Kosovar society that has just come out of war: corruption, unlicensed construction, pseudo-patriotism, political war etc.



Popularity of these comedies during the years began to fade away. In general, after the war the interest of Kosovar public for theatre has suffered a drastic falling, year after year. Begolli was elected officially manager of Dodona Theatre, continued in the same rhythm as before. So, even now in completely new circumstances Dodona Theatre under the direction of Begolli continued the way it has paved from the beginning.

After few consecutive mandates, in 2006 Begolli’s candidacy for manager was rejected. For many people, this decision of municipality officials was seen as a wrong decision, especially knowing the fact the Begolli was near retirement. For some people this decision was an immoral act, taking into consideration Begolli’s contribution for this theatre. A friend of Begolli and at the same time his collaborator, Shkëlzen Maliqi, an analyst and a philosopher, wrote an editorial in his column in one of our daily newspapers and in the end of the article he wished to Begolli good old age. Without any doubt that this ‘greeting card’ has lessened Begolli’s anger that he might felt.

“When I left the position of Dodona’s manager, Shkëlzen Maliqi, in his article wrote that he wished me safe and creative old age. This ‘greeting card’ became for me as a supporting pillar in my life.”

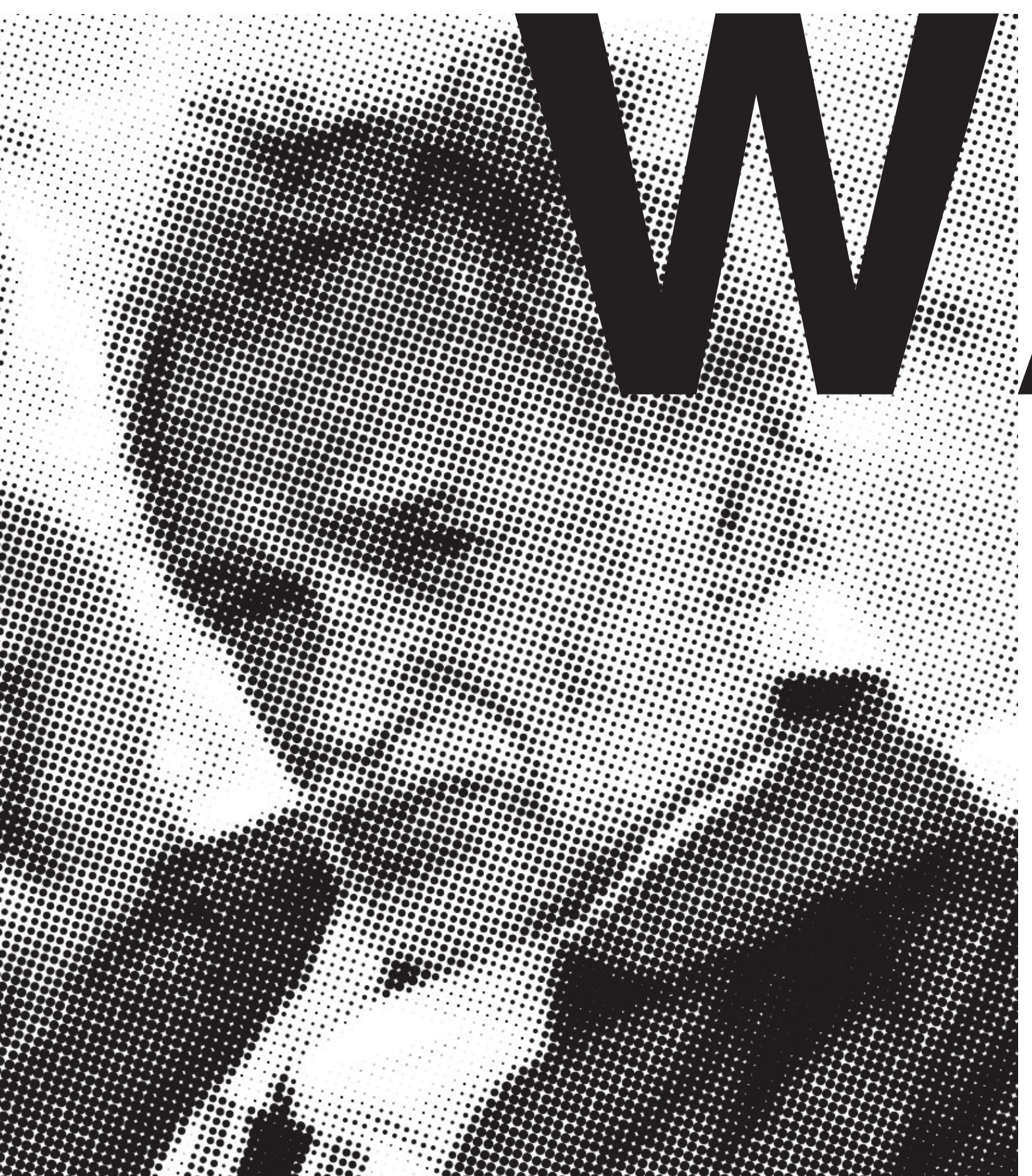
Isa Qosja, a director, thinks that Begolli never used his reputation and fame to make out of it any privilege or benefits. He considers that Begolli’s departure was done unjustly.



“I have impression that except Dodona there’s no other place or job that “Çara” would have any aspirations about it. And I know that he was hurt when he left Dodona, the place he loved so much. He has created that Dodona, he created those men there. It was his corner he loved enormously. A scene, a bar... When they discharged him from there, I think it hurt him, it saddened him and for a moment he became nostalgic... And I feel bad that in the end they gave him that opportunity of sadness and nostalgia... I think that he had to stay there. He felt so good there, as a little king, as an emperor... And they didn’t need to take that empire from him.”

But Begolli’s connection with Dodona Theatre never ceased. From his sister’s house where he is currently staying and lying with doctors’ recommendation, he gave to someone his car and said to him that he should drive around Dodona and then to park it in front of it, just how he was doing constantly for years.

Many months later, when the doctors diagnosed him with cancer, he found strength again and went to Dodona Theatre to guide his theatrical performance. From the small hall of Dodona he communicated with characters on stage with only a few participants. This really was a triumphant comeback! To the media that were waiting to meet him for such a long time he said briefly: “I have decided to fight at all costs, to stay alive and to realize the performance “Professor... 8th part.”



ABR

The beginning of the war in 1998 found Faruk Begolli in Kosova. Even that the war was bursting all over Kosova, he continued to work with his students. Few days before NATO airplanes began bombing Serbian military forces, he faced a tragic event. One of his students, a young actress, Adriana Abdullahu, who had just graduated while she was drinking coffee with her colleagues in one of Prishtina's bars, got killed in a terrorist attack.

“On that day we held examinations in the hall that the Serbs just gave us back, in the Teachers College. It was an examination with students that were in Luan Daka's class. This was the last exam that the students took during the war. After the exam, Adriana took my both hands and asked me, ‘Professor, I know that you don't go to pubs, but this time, please, come, we'll go there only for a coffee.’ And I, as always, said to her laughing, ‘Go away, girl, I am not for those pubs... go away, go away...!’ She has asked many times to go with her to pubs, but on that day it was quite different. I didn't know that it was the last time that I saw her. I will never forget that moment, when I didn't go with her to satisfy her desire... It happened... I couldn't believe... There I realized what it means to lose a child...”

Adriana's death came as a sad and bad tiding for people. It was like an alarm for the evil that was approaching. The first day after Adriana's murder, Faruk Begolli together with other artists have tried to organize a commemorate gathering in Dodona Theatre for Adriana, but they were prevented by installed Serbian manager. “Those that are killing us are preventing us to hold a commemorative meeting,” Faruk Begolli said at that time. But the commemorative meeting was held in



the small backyard of this theatre. With short speeches, professors and former Adriana's colleagues were recalling the memory of the young and talented actress in esteem and cursing her murderers.

On the day of the funeral, Adriana's former colleagues were getting ready to go to Ferizaj, to her hometown. But Begolli had a dilemma and he suggested them not to go there, "One of my children got killed, I don't want to lose the others," he thought before asking his students, Adriana's former colleagues, not to go to Ferizaj.

"Martial law" of Prishtina, as Begolli called it, began immediately after the first bombs dropped by NATO airplanes were falling on Serbian forces. In this tragic theatre, Albanians had the role of victim. People were forcibly expelled from Prishtina. Paramilitaries were expelling people from their houses and deported them to Macedonia and Albania. About 1 million people (half of Kosova's entire population) were forcibly deported. In Prishtina few people decided not to leave the town. Faruk Begolli with his family was one of those few that decided not to leave. He was scared to leave Kosova, not from the fear of war, but the fear of loneliness and 'spiritual decomposing' which could follow afterwards. He has decided to stay at any cost, believing that if he leaves then he will be nobody and remain just a number...

"I, with my experience, know that a man away from his place, a refugee, is in a real trouble... He loses his identity... Then you are nobody... Even the closest friend when he offers you a cigarette, you think, 'he is offering it to you because he feels pity about you... So, I knew that if get out of here, I will be nobody... I am not from Kosova anymore, I am not Faruk Begolli anymore, and I am not a man anymore... I, with all those dilemmas, decided to stay here... Because I thought, it's the same; if I leave I'll lose my identity, if I stay here I'll lose my life... Which is more important: life or identity...? Until the man is alive, the identity and his place is the most important... And if he dies or doesn't die, that's not very important. The man lives not to prostrate himself, not to bring yourself in situations when you are nobody, then you don't have identity, you are just a 'number'... And I didn't want to be turned into a number."

OPERATION BELGRAD

During the first days of NATO bombardment on Belgrade television they were showing war films and in most of them Faruk Begolli played. And in meantime, while in those films he played a brave partisan fighting against German fascists and local traitors, in reality he was expecting Serbian police to come and expel him forcibly out of house. And the police threw him twice out of his home, but he with his sister went to his brother, Adil, and didn't want to leave.

"One day while they were showing on TV the film "Operacija Beograd" directed by Zika Mitrovic, where I played fearless liberator of Belgrade, Serbian police came and expelled us from my house."

His many friends from Belgrade and other towns outside Kosova found his phone number. Josif Tadic – Jataganac, one of Begolli's closest friends was constantly in touch with him.

He called Begolli in every two or three days. Jataganac and some other friends knowing what was going on in Kosova tried a lot to “get him out” of Prishtina. They were really worried about Begolli. They sought for every possible channel and even tried to convince a bus driver to go and evacuate Begolli and his family. His friends’ efforts to save him from hell, made him happy and encouraged him, but Begolli wasn’t convinced to leave Kosova.

“...They had plans and plans, meantime I was saying: can you imagine this, now, going to Serbia... They always found options to save me. They were my friends and they were never infected by propaganda. The comradeship doesn’t have religion, entity... The comradeship has a man... The comradeship has the man undressed form anything else...”

FLOWER BLOSSOMS IN TIME OF WAR

Near the house where Begolli stayed during the war was a garden. The quarter of “Taslixhe” was almost empty, people were deported, and gardens were almost covered by grass and weeds, no one took care of them. Begolli calls it “it looked like an oasis in the wilderness.” He liked to sit in the balcony and to listen to radio news and to look at the garden with flowers and the grass that was growing. There was also a beautiful cherry tree and Begolli watched it blossoming.

“As a mother that is always near her baby, I was watching a cherry tree blossoming; as a leaf bud appeared, its slow developing... I was observing it carefully, which one will blossom today, which one is about to blossom, which one blossomed yesterday...”


It seemed that all the hope for life was shaped in that cherry tree, in smell of blossoming flowers. Then after blossoming the cherries began slowly to ripen. As an expert of plants doing a research about cherry trees, Begolli would observe carefully cherry ripening, the boughs and every piece of it. Then later he began to eat them.

“...Then I began to climb, at the beginning the low boughs, and since I climbed it every day, later I saw myself on the top of the cherry tree, as I used to do it as a child, when I climbed on the top of the tops... There were some people in neighborhood so I used to give them cherries... So, I had a physical action... My legs strengthened... I was like a monkey jumping from a branch to a branch...”

Almost at the same time when war was over the fruits were gone. But the war story had a terrific episode too. Faruk Begolli and his brother, Adil, were doing rituals of an ordinary war day. In their house walked in two Serbian police, who were registering the remained population in Prishtina. The police recognized Begolli.

“..It was something dreadful. Come on, you asked for Albania, so, get dressed and go...’ I began to get dressed. In the beginning I was trembling, it’s normal in such situations. And they kept saying, ‘No, now take off you clothes? Then, do you have any money?’ I pulled out all the money I had. They threw it on the floor. Then they said, ‘Well, now you two have attacked us and we are going to kill you.’ At least for two hours they tortured us like that.





But, sometime a man gets strength from somewhere, I don't how. In the beginning I was trembling, I was listening to them and I begged them, 'Come on, take me wherever you want, do whatever you want... Come on, kill me...' It was completely different strength and power and perhaps a superhuman peacefulness..."

Luckily everything ended well without any tragic epilogue. The police asked Begolli to pay them a lunch. They took 200 Deutchs marks and left, leaving him a message, "Don't curse us, because we might not swallow the lunch!"

During the war days Begolli used to wake up in 5 a. m. and listened to the radio news. From the window near his bed he could see roofs of houses almost covered with crows. The mornings seemed mourning. He thought about those wild caws of crows as a knell that something horrible was happening... The same sight every morning: roofs covered with cawing crows.

At that time, during the war days Begolli abandoned his immortal "buddy" – alcohol. For couple of months he didn't have a sip of it, although that in his house he had countless bottles of alcohol. He decided to be self-restrained and to experience soberly those moments of anxiety and horror. He decided to see and face the war and horrors of that war as he used to do it in films. The difference, without any doubts, was obvious. What was happening wasn't a play. There wasn't any camera shooting. He was Faruk Begolli, not the artist, not the professor... It was Faruk Begolli, the man.

When the war was over and NATO troops entered in Kosova, Begolli felt like a lost man. For a long time he wouldn't go out of his house. He couldn't believe that everything ended so "easily."

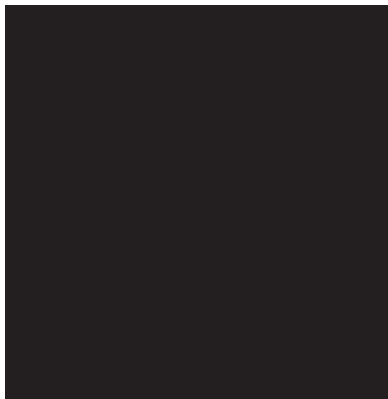
He doesn't think that his decisiveness to stay in Prishtina was a sign of courage. He doesn't think that he was brave. He stayed in Prishtina because he loved himself and he didn't want to be turned into a "number."

"I have stayed here as human being, unprotected and without being able to do anything... Except that I dealt with the sense of fear... This wasn't bravery... The bravery is something else... And as for my life, I still don't know whether I was a brave man or not. I don't know how to explain the meaning of the word bravery. But if you are determined and you are committed to the things you like and you do it with pleasure and if this is called bravery then I am a brave man. Because I went to study when I had very poor economical conditions, because among 500 contenders for actors I was accepted as one of those 12... So, I had lived through many challenges in my life... And if this has anything to do with bravery then I was really a brave man. Sometime, when I read a screenplay, I used to say to myself: this is impossible to be done... But then I 'asked' myself: well, go, then you'll see... And whatever begins, in fact, must end... I don't know any other kind of bravery..."

After the war Begolli didn't go much out of Kosova. He never went to Belgrade, not to Zagreb or Ljubljana. But he went to Sarajevo with King Lear

"I had a kind of feeling that... And even I am not trying to get back the love I had once. I want to save with love that wonderful life that I had once, those wonderful friends, those wonderful loves and that wonderful creativity, of course, without it the other things wouldn't have existed. I do not dare to think about Belgrade. My friends are inviting me. And even they think that I am afraid. But I have stopped a wonderful life. Now I have built a wall and I don't want to think anymore about it, because I loved so much Belgrade. In a way I am afraid. I want to keep those good memories I have."

Even nowadays, so many years after the war, Faruk Begolli keeps waking up at five o'clock in the morning; it's the time when used to listened radio news during the war. He wakes up, like in a rave searching for a radio station. He listens to the 'noise' for a while and then sleeps again... An unconsciousness ritual, as a memory of a passed time, of that time when in the sunrise roofs were covered in black with terribly cawing crows...



OF HOW MUCH
OR YOUNG
INSPIRATION
ARTISTS
FOR YOUNG
ARTISTS
ARTISTS

INSPIRATION FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

After so many efforts I think I have achieved to pick up those the most important peaces from Faruk Begolli's life and work. Without any doubt there are many other things left out of this book, willingly or unwillingly. I couldn't go to Belgrade and meet some of the people with whom Faruk Begolli worked. I really wanted to go there. Begolli himself didn't accept such an idea. He used to say that it wasn't necessary and we couldn't 'pull out' any important thing for the book. We have respected a lot his thoughts and wishes about this book.

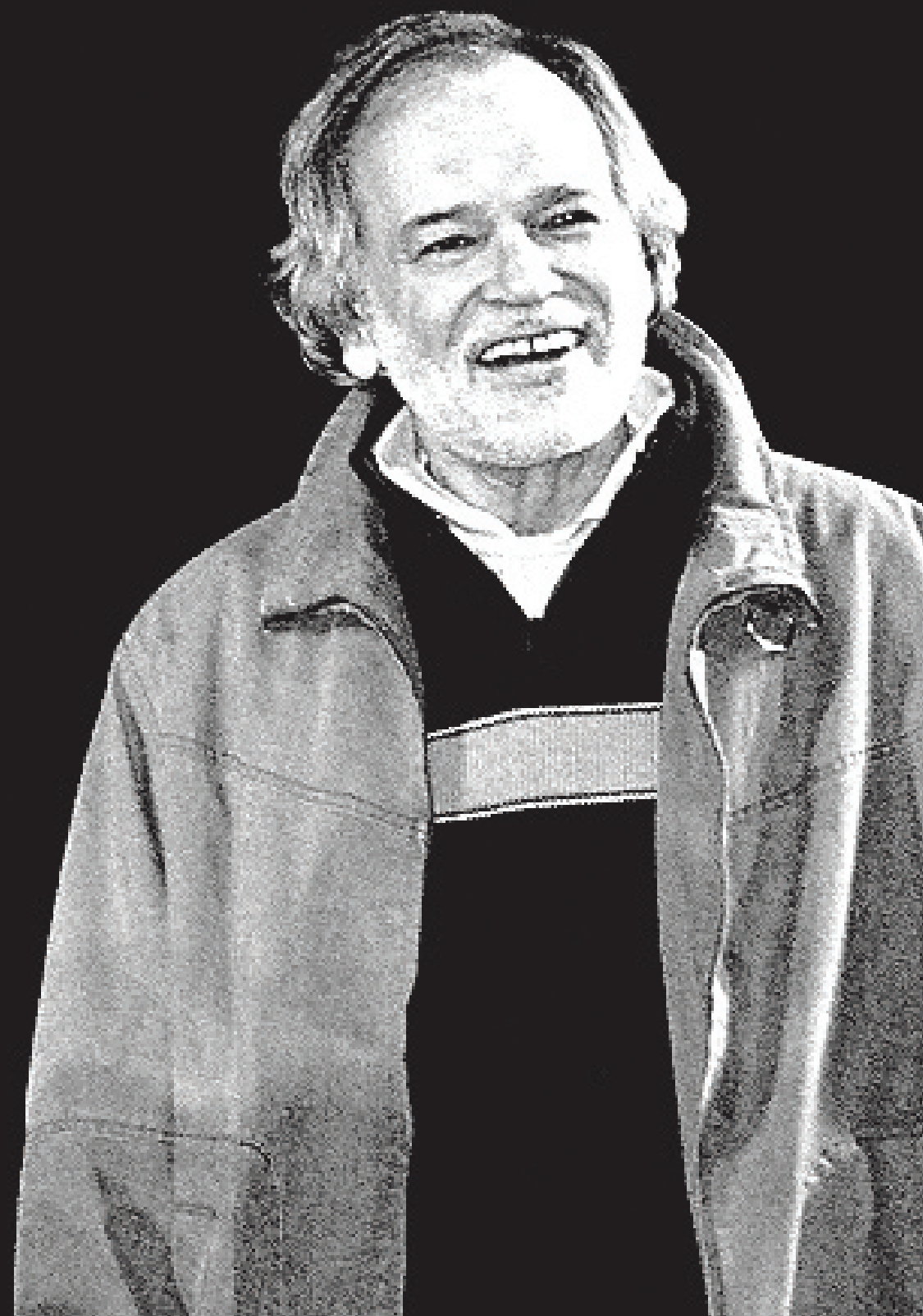
Monday. 4 June. After midnight.

The last time I met professor Begolli was the last Sunday. Usually on Sundays I brought him newspapers, since the shops near his house do not sell newspapers. During other days his sister Aslihaja, a wonderful woman who is taking care of him for months, brings him newspapers. The last Sunday when I met the professor, he wasn't feeling good. He was in pains. "It hurts me," he said and he didn't say anything else.

We are expecting that this book will be ready for publishing. It's the end, when I am "smoothing" the written parts. Without any doubt, the "errors" will be discovered later. A lot of things will be missing. But, again, I hope that errors and the "missing things" are little things comparing to the good things that can be found in this book.

I began writing this book a short time before Faruk Begolli got ill. The illness was unfaithful to him. I have to say that all of us who were involved in preparations of this book were confused. But that confusion didn't last too long because the professor, even that he was ill, was the one who insisted to prepare this book.

This book is finished. I hope that story of Faruk Begolli's life, of this great man and artist will serve, above all, as an inspiration for young artists.



FARUK BEGOLLI -

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1. "THE LOOK IN THE PUPIL OF THE SUN" - (1966)
Director: Veljko Bulajic
Scenario: Stevan Bulajic, Veljko Bulajic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Milena Dravic, Mladen Ladika, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic.
2. "DREAM" - (1966)
Director: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Scenario: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Roles: Ljubisa Samardzic, Mihailo 'Misa' Janketic, Olivera Vuco, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Mija Aleksic, Ljuba Tadic, Faruk Begolli, Sinisa Ivetic.
3. "CHILDREN OF DUKE SMIT" (1967)
Director: Vladimir Pavlovic
Scenario: Vladimir Pavlovic
Roles: Miodrag Andric, Faruk Begolli, Slobodan Djuric, Desa Dugalic, Renata Freiskorn, Radmila Gutesa, Jovan-Burdus Janicijevic, Milan Jelic, Ingrid Lotarius.
4. "MORNING" - (1967)
Director: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Scenario: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Roles: Ljubisa Samardzic, Neda Arneric, Milena Dravic, Mija Aleksic, Ljuba Tadic, Faruk Begolli, Neda Spasojevic, Jelena Zigon.
5. "OPERATION BELGRAD" - (1968)
Director: Zika Mitrovic
Roles: Dusan Bulajic, Aleksandar Gavric, Faruk Begolli, Dusica Zegarac.
6. „DOCTOR HOMER'S BROTHER“- (1968)
Director: Zivorad 'Zika' Mitrovic
Scenario: Zivorad 'Zika' Mitrovic
Roles: Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Voja Miric, Jovan Milicevic, Ljuba Tadic, Pavle Vujisic, Zdravka Krstulovic, Jelena Zigon, Faruk Begolli, Istref Begolli, Abdurrahman Shala, Minja Vojvodic.
7. "SARAJEVO ATTEMPT" - (1968)
Director: Fadil Hadzic
Scenario: Fadil Hadzic
Roles: Lucyna Winnicka, Bert Stolar, Janez Rohacek, Predrag Finci, Faruk Begolli, Svetolik Nikacevic, Maks Furijan, Majda Potokar.

FILMOGGRAPHY

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8. "MIDDAY" - (1968)
Director: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Scenario: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Roles: Ljubisa Samardzic, Neda Arneric, Faruk Begolli, Dusica Zegarac, Mija Aleksicm, Ljuba Tadic.
9. "MY OWN SIDE OF THE WORLD" - (1969)
Director: Vlatko Filipovic
Scenario: Vlatko Filipovic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Izet Hajdarhodzic, Iva Marjanovic, Olivera Markovic, Radmila Radovanovic, Pavle Vujisic, Dragan Zaric, Jelena Zigon.
10. "NERETVA'S BATTLE" - (1969)
Director: Veljko Bulajic
Scenario: Stevan Bulajic, Veljko Bulajic
Roles: Sergei Bondarchuk, Anthony Daëson, Milena Dravic, Boris Dvornik, Curd Jürgens, Franco Nero, Hoëard Ross, Lojze Rozman, Ljubisa Samardzic, Oleg Vidov, Orson Éelles, Faruk Begolli, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Abdurrahman Shala.
11. "MY DEAR IRENE" - (1970)
Director: Nikola Stojanovic
Scenario: Nikola Stojanovic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Petar Bozovic, Dragomir Cumic, Magda Fedor, Dina Rutic, Marinko Sebez.
12. „OUR HABITS" - (1970) (TV)
Director: Jovan Konjovic
Scenario: Ljubinka Bobic Faruk Begolli, Milan Gutovic, Olga Ivanovic, Ljiljana Lasic, Toni Laurencic, Olivera Markovic, Branko Milicevic.
13. "REQUIEM" - (1970)
Director: Caslav Damjanovic
Scenario: Caslav Damjanovic
Roles: Ty Hardin, Giorgia Moll, Abdurrahman Shala, Danilo 'Bata' Stojkovic, Faruk Begolli, Dusan Janicijevic.
14. "FIRST LOVE" - (1970)
Director: Zoran Calic
Scenario: Zoran Calic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Aleksandar Gavric, Ljiljana Lasic, Vesna Malohodzic, Miodrag 'Ckalja' Petrovic.

15. "THE CONFINEMENT" - (1971) (TV)
 Director: Ekrem Kryeziu
 Scenario: Ekrem Kryeziu
 Roles: Melihate Ajeti, Faruk Begolli, Istref Begolli, Shani Pallaska.
16. "THE WERNER FAMILY ON THE ROAD TRIP" - (1971)
 Director: Karl-Heinz Bieber
 Scenario: Hannes Dahlberg, Heinz Oskar Eüttig
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Djordje Nenadovic, Rut Rex, Inge Eöloffberg, Gerhard Wollner.
17. "HOW TO DIE" (1972)
 Director: Miomir 'Miki' Stamenkovic
 Scenario: Branimir Scepanovic
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Xhevat Qorra, Jelena Lakovic, Abdurrahman Shala, Xhevat Qena, Istref Begolli, Bogdan Jakus, Enver Kaçaniku, Fatmir Lama, Shani Pallaska, Sabedin Shahiqi.
18. „VALTER SAVES SARAJEVO“ - (1972)
 Director: Hajrudin Krvavac
 Scenario: Djordje Lebovic
 Roles: Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Rade Markovic, Ljubisa Samardzic, Neda Spasojevic, Dragomir 'Gidra' Bojanic, Slobodan Dimitrijevic, Rolf Römer, Pavle Vujisic, Faruk Begolli.
19. „BREAD“ - (1973) (TV)
 Director: Ekrem Kryeziu
 Scenario: Azem Shkreli
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Istref Begolli, Arianit Çela, Milutin Jasic, Milot Kryeziu, Snezana Niksic, Shani Pallaska, Josif Tatic, Dusica Zegarac.
20. „ALONE“ - (1973)
 Director: Radomir Saranovic
 Scenario: Radomir Saranovic
 Në rolin kryesor: Faruk Begolli.
21. „JOSEF SULC BIOGRAPHY“ (1973)
 Director: Predrag Golubovic
 Scenario: Predrag Golubovic, Danko Popovic
 Në rolin kryesor: Faruk Begolli.
22. "SB CLOSES THE CIRCLE" (1974)
 Director: Miomir 'Miki' Stamenkovic
 Scenario: Dragan Markovic, Dusan Perkovic
 Roles: Slobodan Dimitrijevic, Dusica Zegarac, Rade Markovic, Voja Miric, Faruk Begolli.
23. "DERVISH AND DEATH" - (1974)
 Director: Zdravko Velimirovic
 Scenario: Borislav Mihajlovic-Mihiz
 Roles: Voja Miric, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Boris Dvornik,

Olivera Vuco, Faruk Begolli, Branko Plesa, Abdurrahman Shala.

24. "RED ATTACK" - (1974)
Director: Predrag Golubović
Scenario: Branislav Bozovic, Ratko Djurovic
Roles: Bata Zivojinovic, Boris Dvornik, Abdurrahman Shala, Xhevat Qena, Bert Sotlar, Faruk Begoli, Olivera Katarina.
25. "UKA FROM CURSED MOUNTAIN" (1968)
Director: Miomir Stamenković
Scenario: Abdurrahman Shala, Murteza Peza
Roles: Abdurrahman Shalja, Josif Tatic, Vesna Krajina, Branko Pleša, Melihat Ajeti, Darko Damevski, Dragutin Felba, Faruk Begolli.
26. "PAVLE PAVLOVIC" - (1975)
Director: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Scenario: Mladimir 'Purisa' Djordjevic
Roles: Mija Aleksic, Dusan Antonijevic, Stole Arandjelovic, Faruk Begolli, Ljubinka Bobic, Bekim Fehmiu, Olga Jancevecka, Skender Radotina, Bozidar Stosic, Ljuba Tadic, Josif Tatic.
27. "DOWN WITH ARMS" - (1975) - (TV)
Director: Mario Fanelli
Scenario: Drago Kekanovic
Roles: Stole Arandjelovic, Miha Baloh, Faruk Begolli, Vojislav Brajovic, Mirko Bulovic, Zvonimir Crnko, Dragomir Cumic, Branko Cvejic, Aleksandar Hrnjakovic, Jovan Licina.
28. "MEDUZA E SAJANIT" - (1976)
Director: Slavko Almazan
Scenario: Slavko Almazan
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Mirjana Nikolic
29. "PINNACLE OF ZELENGORA" - (1976)
Director: Zdravko Velimirovic
Skenari: Mladen Oljaca, Curica Labovic, Zdravko Velimirovic
Roles: Alain Noury, Bozidar Pavicevic-Longa, Dragomir Bojanic-Gidra, Velimir (Bata) Zivojinovic, Faruk Begolli, Rados Bajic, Josephine Chaplin, Gordana Kosanovic.
30. "BEACH GUARDS IN WINTER TIME" - (1976)
Director: Goran Paskaljevic
Scenario: Gordan Mihic
Roles: Irfan Mensur, Danilo 'Bata' Stojkovic, Dara Calenic, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Faruk Begolli.
31. "NIGHT VISIT" (VIZITA NATËN) – (1978)
Director: Isa Qosja

Scenario: Isa Qosja
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Ankica Milenkovic, Fatmire Osmani,
Shani Pallaska, Ahmet Spahiu.

32. "FORTUNES" - (1978)
Director: Predrag Golubovic
Scenario: Predrag Golubovic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Miroljub Leso, Veljko Mandic, Bert Sotlar,
Mirceta Vujcic, Zoran Zindovic.
33. "EPOCH BEFORE TRIAL" (1978) - (TV)
Director: Ekrem Kryeziu
Scenario: Ekrem Kryeziu
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Hadi Shehu, Istref Begolli, Afrim Kasapolli, Xhevdet Lila,
Ragip Loxha, Ramadan Malaj, Hazir Myftari, Shani Pallaska, Ahmet Spahiu.
34. "TO ARRIVE BEFORE DAWN" (1978)
Director: Aleksandar Djordjevic
Scenario: Vlastimir Radovanovic (adaptim sipas romanit të Pasko Romac)
Roles: Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Zlata Numanagic, Ljubisa Samardzic,
Bekim Fehmiu, Faruk Begolli, Velimir Zivotic, Slobodan Dimitrijevic.
35. „WIND AND LIS“ - (1979)
Director: Besim Sahatçiu
Scenario: Petrit Imami
Sipas romanit të Sinan Hasanit
Roles: Abdurrahman Shala, Faruk Begolli, Melihate Ajeti, Qemajl Ajdini,
Istref Begolli, Fehmi Grubi, Masar Kadiu, Sylë Kuqi, Xhevdet Lila,
Sylejman Lokaj, Ragip Loxha, Ramadan Malaj, Shani Pallaska,
Antigona Qena-Kaçaniku, Xhevat Qorra, Muharrem Shahiqi,
Adelajde Sopi, Ahmet Spahiu.
36. „PARTISAN ESCADRILE“ - (1979)
Director: Hajrudin Krvavac
Scenario: Djordje Lebovic, Miljenko Smoje
Roles: Bekim Fehmiu, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Ljubisa Samardzic,
Faruk Begolli, Branko Djuric.
37. „THE HARD YEARS“ - (1979)
Director: Zivko 'Zika' Ristic
Scenario: Zivko 'Zika' Ristic
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Bora Bozanic, Vesna Cipcic, Cane Firaunovic,
Almira Ismailova, Mikhail Kononov.
38. "WHEN SPRING DELAYS" - (1980)
Director: Ekrem Kryeziu
Scenario: Azem Shkreli

- Roles: Hadi Shehu, Melihate Ajeti, Abdurrahman Shala, Faruk Begolli, Skender Tafaj, Enver Petrovci, Istref Begolli, Elhame Hasani, Xhevat Qorraj, Muharrem Qena, Ismail Gami, Sabri Fejzullahu, Hazir Myftari, Jahja Shehu, Josif Tatic.
39. „TRACE“ - (1981)
 Director: Darko Bajic
 Scenario: Darko Bajic
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Gorica Popovic, Minja Stevovic, Nada Vojinovic.
40. „COULEE OVERFLOW“ - (1981)
 Director: Besim Sahatçiu
 Scenario: Petrit Imami
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Istref Begolli, Xhevat Qorraj, Abdurrahman Shala.
41. “AUGUST 13” - (1982)
 Director: Radomir Saranovic
 Scenario: Milo Djukanovic, Ratko Djurovic
 Roles: Petar Bozovic, Miki Manojlovic, Petar Banicevic, Petar Rajevic, Rade Serbedzija, Velimir ‘Bata’ Zivojinovic, Faruk Begolli, Ljiljana Dragutinovic, Josif Tatic.
42. “DIH”- (1983)
 Director: Bozo Sprajc
 Scenario: Zeljko Kozinc
 Roles: Ivo Ban, Faruk Begolli, Demeter Bitenc, Ranko Gucevac, Angelca Hlebce, Zvone Hribar.
43. “MUTINY OF TIMOK” - (1983)
 Director: Zivorad ‘Zika’ Mitrovic
 Scenario: Zivorad ‘Zika’ Mitrovic
 Roles: Ljubisa Samardzic, Velimir ‘Bata’ Zivojinovic, Ljuba Didic, Faruk Begolli, Jadranka Selec, Vesna Cipcic, Irfan Mensur.
44. ”PROKA” (1984)
 Director: Isa Qosja
 Scenario: Eqrem Basha
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Masar Kadiu, Çun Lajçi, Ragip Loxha, Adem Mikullovc, Hazir Myftari, Muharrem Qena, Xhevat Qena, Xhevat Qorraj, Abdurrahman Shala.
45. „DANGEROUS TRACE“ (GJURMA E RREZIKSHME) - (1984)
 Director: Miomir ‘Miki’ Stamenkovic
 Scenario: Milutin Jankovic, Dragan Markovic
 Roles: Milan Strljic, Vladica Milosavljevic, Velimir Bata Zivojinovic, Alen Nuri, Enver Petrovci, Faruk Begolli, Xhevat Qorraj, Petar Arsovski, Abdurrahman Shala, Danco Cevrevski, Istref Begolli.

46. "THE RED BARRACK" - (1985) (TV)
 Director: Aleksandar Mandic
 Scenario: Milenko Vucetic
 Roles: Rados Bajic, Faruk Begolli, Milutin Butkovic, Ivan Jagodic, Dubravko Jovanovic, Erol Kadic.
47. "DO IT IN YOUR WAY" (1986) (TV)
 Director: Miroslav Lekic
 Scenario: Jelica Zupanc
 Roles: Faruk Begolli, Predrag Ejodus, Olivera Markovic, Cvijeta Mesic, Zlata Numanagic, Josif Tatic.
48. "VUK KARADZIC" - (1987). Në dy episode:
 Director: Djordje Kadijevic
 Scenario: Milovan Vitezovic
 Roles: Miki Manojlovic, Faruk Begolli, Aleksandar Bercek, Branimir Brstina, Dragana Varagic, Marko Nikolic, Velimir 'Bata' Zivojinovic, Dragan Zaric, Vladan Zivkovic, Ljuba Tadic.
49. "A HOUSE IN FRONT OF RAILWAY" - (1988)
 Director: Zarko Dragojevic
 Scenario: Zarko Dragojevic
 Roles: Ljubisa Samardzic, Slobodan Bestic, Andjelka Milivojevic, Faruk Begolli, Dusica Zegarac, Zaim Muzaferija, Meto Jovanovski, Dubravko Jovanovic, Vasja Stankovic.
50. "NIGHT AT MY MOTHERS HOUSE" - (1991)
 Director: Zarko Dragojevic
 Scenario: Zarko Dragojevic
 Roles: Radoslav Andjic, Stole Arandjelovic, Faruk Begolli, Snezana Arunovic, Olja Beckovic, Ivan Bekjarev
51. "OPERATION CARTIER" - (1991)
 Director: Miran Zupanič
 Scenario: Miha Mazzini
 Roles: Borut Veselko, Faruk Begoli, Haris Burina, Srečo Špik, Judita Zidar, Brane Grubar, Ratko Polič.
52. "REVOLUTION BOULEVARD" - (1992)
 Director: Vladimir Blazevski
 Scenario: Vladimir Blazevski
 Roles: Bojana Maljevic, Branislav Lecic, Miralem Zupcevic, Miroljub Leso, Olivera Markovic, Dusan Janicijevic, Anita Mancic, Dragan Petrovic, Uliks Fehmiu, Marija Savatic, Faruk Begolli, Haris Burina, Kapitalina Eric, Enver Petrovci.

53. "LOVE FROM CURSED MOUNTAIN" - (1997)
Director: Ekrem Kryeziu
Scenario: Ekrem Kryeziu
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Diellza Kolgeci, Donat Qosja, Adhurim Demi.
54. "PHOTOGRAPH" - (2003)
Director: Jeton Ahmetaj
Scenario: Jeton Neziraj
Roles: Faruk Begolli, Blerim Krasniqi dhe Emine Toska.
55. "METROPOLIS" - (2005)
Director: Sunaj Raça
Scenario: Zymber Kelmendi
Roles: Blerim Destani, Sunaj Raça, Faruk Begolli, Blerina Binaku, Faik Gashi, Isa Kurtishaj, Ardita Lala, Basri Lushtaku.
56. "KOSOVA'S THIRST" - (2006)
Director: Sunaj Raça
Scenario: Sunaj Raça, Vath Koreshi
Roles: Rajmonda Bulku, Blerim Destani, Faruk Begolli, Meto Jovanovski, Bislim Muçaj, Sheqerie Buqaj, Tinka Kurti, Basri Lushtaku, Ermela Teli.

LITERARY SOURCES AND INTERVIEWS

For writing of this book about Faruk Begolli's life and creation many various artists and collaborators were interviewed: Isë Qosja, Fadil Hysaj, Melihate Qena, Kumrie Hoxha, Armond Morina, Shkëlzen Maliqi dhe Enver Petrovci.

Also many newspapers, magazines and websites were used e.g.:

Ars Poetica (Nebi Islami's interview Faruk Begolli, which was very important especially for the childhood chapter),

Dodona – 1992 – 2002 (Jeton Neziraj, Shkelzen Maliqi),

Rilindja, Koha Ditore, Lajm, Zëri, Zëri Javor, Teuta, Express, Nada, Bota e re, Ekspres, Novosti, Oslobodenje, Bilten-Pula, Politika, Dnevnik, Tv Revija, Tv Novosti, Svijet, Zdravo etj.

Radio Free Europe (Two interviews: Branka Mihajloviq (Serbian section) - 29.10.2005 dhe Bekim Lumi (Albanian section) - 02.02.2004)

The Internet Movie Database – IMDb.

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