

**A Story about a House – No. 20, Drinčićeva Street**

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## **SUMMARY**

A Story about a House – No. 20, Drinčićeva Street The house at No. 20, Drinčićeva Street, located in the centre of Belgrade, was built before the Second World War. Today, it houses the premises of the Architects' Collective and RadioAparat. Who designed and built it, when exactly was that, and who has lived there? What do the pianist Ivana Rakić Ilić and the programmer Rastko Ilić think when they pass through Drinčićeva Street today? They were born and grew up in the house at No. 20, Drinčićeva Street. What are their memories of their childhood spent there, of their father, the TV director Ratko Ilić, a bohemian spirit who used to gather an interesting company around him – from the trumpeter Fejat Sejdić to the poet Ljubomir Ršumović, from the Russian poet Vladimir Vysotsky to the movie director Dušan Makavejev... And what it all looks like to them from today's perspective. Along with a great many documentary sound recordings, we hear about this from a sister and brother, Ivana Rakić Ilić and Rastko Ilić, as well as the architect Zoran Dmitrović.

**ArtworksAudio, Belgrade, Serbia**  
**Programme City in Passing (RadioAparat)**



## A STORY ABOUT A HOUSE – NO. 20, DRINČIĆEVA STREET

*Birds twittering*

**Ivana:** You know how nice it is when you're in the middle of the city but are fenced off and you don't hear anything, and seem to be... as if you were in a village... when you wake up in the morning, you don't hear a thing... just... just the birds... and then you come out into the yard, which is completely fenced off... and you can have breakfast there... you can... it's yours... it's something very... very nice, kind of, and intimate... and then you go out of that house...

*The door creaks*

**Ivana:** ...and then you're in the centre of the city.

*The noise of the city, car sirens honking*

**Ivana:** One two... One two...

**Rastko:** ... three four... three four... My name's Rastko Ilić... born at No 20, Drinčićeva Street, on 31 August 1983... I grew up in a very artistically inclined family, but here I am, a graduate of computing studies, ending up as a programmer, creating a digital content.

**Ivana:** I'm Ivana Rakić, then back to Ilić again... I was also born in Drinčićeva Street, on 18 February in the far-off year of 1975... right, but I followed in my father's footsteps, so I graduated from the Music Academy. I entered the Academy at the age of 15, for I was rather talented, but then... I mean... also... everything unfolded in our house.

**Radonja:** Tell us, how much do you know about the house at No 20, Drinčićeva Street?

**Snežana:** Is it known at all which architect designed the house?

**Rastko:** I don't know that.

**Ivana:** Zoran will be able to tell you that. Zoran will know, 100% sure, for he's an architect, he's researched it already. I gave him, literally on a sheet of papyrus...

**Rastko:** The design...

**Ivana:** ... the original... the original... plan of the house. The sheet started to crumble, so I went to... get it photocopied... I don't know... I... you know how it is... when we sold it, unfortunately, I don't know exactly who built it, but I do know that it dates from 1913...

*The sound of the intercom*

**Male voice:** Who's that?

**Snežana:** Call Kiza, will you... Right...

**Zoran:** I'm Zoran Dmitrović Kiza, architect from Belgrade.

**Ivana:** Ask him to show you... it's quite valuable... for that... that plan is so brittle, and that is the first plan... the original plan. So that is says exactly who the architect was... and while we're on the subject... Zoran knows it, he knows all that... After all, he deals with it professionally.

*The rustling of sheets containing the plan*

**Zoran:** Here it is, these, these are the plans of both houses, I think, the one at No 18 and the one at No 20... but the numbers are different... and our house is... 24

**Snežana:** And the numbers have remained the same, right?

**Zoran:** No, this one is listed as No 18. And these, these are the original plans... that is, we were at No 18, and are now at No 20. This, this is the original...

**Snežana:** That was your house, or did you buy it from someone? I mean, as a family.

**Ivana:** No... we...

**Rastko:** ... ours...

**Ivana:** Yes, ours... I mean, until, until...

**Rastko:** We were born there...

**Ivana:** Yes, yes, my brother and I were born there... and it actually... we moved to our aunt's... that is... she was a teacher... the house was actually hers, she'd had it built...

**Radonja:** As far back as before the war...

**Rastko:** Actually, our father, yes...

**Ivana:** Our grandfather, our grandfather... after 1913... that is to say, before the war...

**Snežana:** So, it was your grandfather who had the house built?

**Ivana:** No, our grandfather didn't have it built, it was the father of ... of my... of that grand-aunt of ours, Nadežda Lemajić her name was.

**Zoran:** It's written there, that it was built in 1926, just like the house at No 18... they were built at the same time...

**Snežana:** *(from a distance)* In accordance with the approved building plan, which should correspond in every respect to the provisions of the Urban Development Law for the City of Belgrade... on 26 May 1929. It was completed on

30 August... 1929.

**Zoran:** Ah, 1929...

**Snežana:** The building of that house began on 26 May 1929, and was completed on 30 August 1929...

*Laughter*

**Snežana:** What do you say to that?

**Zoran:** Well, when you have a good building plan...

**Snežana:** April, May, June, July... four months... The architect was Dujam Granić, teacher at the Secondary Technical School in Belgrade.

**Zoran:** Right.

**Snežana:** He designed the project... Mrs Marković Nadežda...

**Zoran:** Nadežda Marković... we know that...

**Radonja:** Who's that lady?

**Snežana:** That's the aunt...

**Zoran:** She's the aunt that had it built...

**Radonja:** That's the grand-aunt...

**Snežana:** The grand-aunt who lived on her own and had it built.

**Radonja:** Nadežda? **Ivana:** Lemajić... **Radonja:** Lemajić...

**Ivana:** Yes, she was a teacher and lived there with her mother... the two of them lived there... and she decided not to have any children, for she wanted to take care of her... her mother... So that she remained...

**Snežana:** A spinster...

**Ivana:** Not just a spinster, but a virgin until the end of her life...

**Radonja:** Well, whether she was a virgin, that's an open question...

**Ivana:** No, she was... she's very well known... her... her works can be seen at the Ethnographic Museum even, our mother gave them... she dealt with woodwork... she had fantastic tools... and she worked and drew on silk... she made a lot of furniture there...

**Rastko:** ... picture albums bound in leather...

**Ivana:** Leather albums... yes...

**Rastko:** We have some that we're planning to donate to the Ethnographic...

**Ivana:** Right... like bookmarkers... she was... she really was a miracle maker... so that she was probably a virgin...

*Rustling of paper*

**Snežana:** And this is a certificate...

**Zoran:** Of the time of building... of what was built...

**Snežana:** When it was built... what was built... what was done...



**Ivana:** I knew my father's grad-aunt... she lived downstairs... there are two floors and the attic... and the cellar... but there were two flats, two housing units... and she lived downstairs... I never knew her mother, but I knew her... she died when I was two already... I remember her, but sort of vaguely... as if through a mist... So that I remember her as a nice, quiet, sweet little lady...

*Atmosphere, a dog barking...*

**Zoran:** The house was for sale... somehow, it was immediately... the former owners turned out to be very nice and friendly, and so we bought the house, never having planned to live in it, but to use it as a work centre... for us, for our studio, for the Architects' Collective gallery, and for RadioAparat... so that the entire house-building is currently being used... as, I don't know... a small-scale centre... I don't know myself what to call it...

**Snežana:** So, you bought the house from the first owners?

**Zoran:** Why, from...

**Snežana:** From the family...

**Zoran:** Right, from the family... those who inherited... very interestingly, the house remained in the possession of the family, it wasn't nationalised... actually, two families remained in two flats, so that there was no extra space to be nationalised. That was how we got hold of the house... the house was for sale, quite literally, due to a set of circumstances.

*Music broadcast by RadioAparat...*

**Rastko:** Kiza is a buyer who, as far as I'm concerned... I'm glad that the house was bought by someone who is at least from an artistic milieu... and in addition to that... I'm glad that... he actually didn't change... true, the spatial arrangement is different... some walls were pulled down... the interior has been adapted as a

working area... but he kept our door frames, for instance... the façade is pretty much weathered... so at least when I pass by the house, I see it... I see it as it used to be... and I'm very glad because of that... I'm glad that he left it that way...

**Ivana:** As for me, when we were selling the house... for about seven days I felt rather ill and cried all the time... I couldn't resign myself to it... for, it's a house, you know... it's not... it's not just bricks... in the end, I made my peace with it... he did, too, of course... that those were bricks, after all... for those bricks saw all our nearest and dearest die... my father... our father and our mother... all that is gone, and they are no longer with us... but what I mean is... after all, those bricks had... when you say that a house has a soul... it really does... This one really somehow... whoever comes here – doesn't want to leave. Literally, of all the guests who came to us... why would so many people return anyway... they didn't come back just because of us, the atmosphere we had in the house, but quite simply... we brought that spirit into it... and that house... lived and breathed somehow... It literally breathed with us... we did a lot to make it... it was accessible to people... why, they wouldn't have stayed there for three days otherwise, just didn't feel like going home... wherever you go – come home eventually... but with them, it was – wherever you go, come to No 20, Drinčičeva Street and never leave.

*Laughter*

**Rastko:** No, it was always like... as far as I understood... all their friends were like... when they didn't know what to do... I mean... be it in the middle of day or night... hey, where are we gonna go, let's go to the Ilićs... to all of them, it was a way station, sort of... and they'd stay long... Really, people liked sitting there... the house had warmth, so they say... and they felt relaxed and free to talk about whatever they liked... with no one keeping watch over them... they felt free to exchange ideas, disagree, among other things... all sorts of things went down there... but it was... the atmosphere was warm... really... always...

*Door opening... entering the house... the stairs*

**Rastko:** There's a story about the house, for example, that our grand-aunt... there's a newspaper clipping containing a photo taken after the bombing of Belgrade, where you can see Drinčićeva Street, where our house stands...

**Ivana:** Yes, that's very interesting... our house...

**Rastko:** All the houses stand...

**Ivana:** It stands, and another one stands... I mean, these really old ones... but that's why we got...

**Rastko:** The lower ones, kind of... and now, and now... there were... those urban legends about our house... I don't even know who started them... or where they came from... I think it must have come from our parents... that this grand-aunt had someone's mortal remains, those of some saint or other, built into the house... and so now... we joked about it... like, that was what saved it... I shouted... yes, that's why he's pressuring us now to give him back... in view of the fact that we often had problems... like...

**Ivana:** I think that... I've heard stories about our... about Drinčićeva Street... that those houses were actually built on wells... Turkish wells... so that... there were plenty of ground waters there... so that we don't know exactly which ones...

**Rastko:** The point is, there were so many stories... some ours... some were brought by others, surrounding that house... and when I say there was a kind of mystique being created... so it was... fact is... and it somehow surrounded our father as well...

**Ivana:** That's true, but Ratko (our father) would joke about it... there, we have ghosts in the house... whereas my late aunt... Ratko's sister, kept saying that this house... was protected by Saint Nicholas... actually, he was our grand-aunt Nadežda's patron saint, she was the one who left the house to us... but then my aunt... she said that it was not true, but that the protector of the house, and it might have something to do with that saint's mortal remains... but that's out

of the question... there's no way I can believe that story... no way... it's so...

**Rastko:** ... That's morbid...

**Ivana:** Yes... that's really... not even in a fairy tale... that the protector of that house is St Haralampios. What I mean is that the house is unusual, that it's not a standard one... that life in it was of a standard variety... and that its pati- nisation followed some sort of a standard life... well, it didn't.

*Street noises, sounds of cars...*

**Rastko:** No 20, Drinčićeva Street... although I am a lot younger and was born at a time when all those stories and the mysticism surrounding that house had subsided... to us it is definitely still a living object... quite simply, it's not just a house or an object, it's a soul that was left for us there... and not just one soul, but a set of Belgrade souls from a particular period... The stories that we listened to, the people we grew up next to... just as far as I can remember, and it was more intensive by far before I came onto the scene. Those who passed through that house included... ambassadors and... and... street musi- cians... who came from the streets to play on our patron saint's day... and art- ists... journalists... politicians... quite simply, it was like it represented a portal through time for everyone. And it always welcomed everyone. And everyone left something in it or took something away from it. But our father was a bo- hemian, a free spirit, an artist who, as many have said, was a very likeable and much loved man...

**Snežana:** Likeable... you mean, handsome?

**Rastko:** No, no... absolutely... he weighed more than a 100 kilos, had a beard and dressed in a very haphazard manner... but he had... charm and was very positive...

**Ivana:** He was very cool, let's be quite clear about that... he was a cool fellow just like that... in the beginning... if we are to begin dealing with the house chronologically, then we should also deal with our parents chronologically... the way they actually looked...

**Rastko:** I don't remember them like that... when I was born, they were already different... but judging by photos... he certainly attracted an incredible number of people... as a director, he travelled the world over... making programmes and working for TV... and he met a lot of people that way... So a great many people came to our house... I think that between 20 and 30 people came on a daily basis...

**Ivana:** ... Yes, interesting...

**Rastko:** They came from early morning to early morning.

**Ivana:** I like telling my children about it... now that we all have our own lives, our own flats... I like telling them that the house in Drinčićeva Street was sort of magical... it was... we were somewhere along the way for people coming from Miljakovac, from Banovo brdo, people who...we were always on the way... so that for us, for example, never a day passed without, as Rastko says, about 15/20 people dropping in, for there were no empty periods, when we could sit down and have a meal as a family, have some rest... we'd always have someone in for lunch, either Muharem Pervić (theatre critic)... who... when I was a little girl, Muharem would come, drop in on his way from TV... they got together with Ratko and came for a bowl of soup... and then... Gorjana... my dad would call out to Gorjana: *Gorjana, have you made any soup?*... *Yes, I have*... and then my mother... who was the most selfless woman I know... both as a mother... and as a wife... really... and then Muharem arrives... so Muharem drops in... and Muharem's still there after three days... so I got up one morning and said... *Look, I'll call a taxi for you now so you can go home*... for Muharem's still there...

**Muharem:** Why, that is, I was... I couldn't come to my senses... at all.

**Ivana:** For it would start, for instance, on Monday, then be extended to Tuesday, then Wednesday... sitting on the same chair, at the same table... without moving

at all... just to the toilet and back... Also, various polemics were on- going... conversations... all sorts of ideas circulated... and you could drink to your heart's delight. Then you take a bit of a rest at the table... and eventually I saw him off home... Then they said to me... *Oh, but you drove the man out...* Well, I mean, after three days... I think it's time to go home...

*A mobile phone rings... conversation... Van Morrison... the ambience of a room*

**Ivana:** I was lucky, while our parents were still young... to have 40 kids come to my birthday. We were allowed to write on walls... therefore, everyone could express themselves any way that they wanted... the walls were written all over... we had a bed... some sort of a Bongo that we'd jump on... do summer- saults, all sorts of things... I had a clown spread across the entire wall... I had clowns for my birthday... it was always... Gorjana and Ratko had this... not

only did they wish that people should come to our house, they also had the ability to attract them... I'm talking about the house now... each time they say... *this is really out of the ordinary...* ours was not a fancy house, fairy tale- like... like.... Swarovski crystals hanging all around... but just like... in the end it became a dilapidated house... like *The Fall of the House of Usher...*

*Speaking both at once*

**Rastko:** ... it had an attic ceiling... a bottomless hole when it came to repairs...

**Ivana:** That's right... you wouldn't believe it... a slight digression from this whole story is... for example... as Ratko was a director... he discovered the late trumpeter Fejat Sejdić... and he made films about him. As Fejat was al- most our godfather, he came to us on our patron saint's day... come 20 Jan- uary, we awaited with trepidation to see whether he'd come all the way from Bojnik... he'd bring the entire orchestra to our house on our patron saint's day. You know, a patron saint's day matters! And then 11 trumpeters arrive and...

**Rastko i Ivana:** ... And 300 people...

**Rastko:** ... in a flat occupying a surface of 60/70 square metres...

**Ivana:** Yes, 75 square metres...

**Rastko:** It expanded to encompass a part of the lower floor...

**Ivana:** And in one room there would be 100 people... **Rastko:** As it was in winter... and we didn't have a yard... **Ivana:** That's how it was... then...

**Rastko:** The house does have a yard... we didn't use it for the patron saint's day...

**Ivana:** You can only imagine the effect it had on the attic ceiling... when 11 trumpeters start blowing... and we all start jumping... it was the equivalent of the Los Angeles earthquake...

**Rastko:** And among the guests were people like Bora Dugić (flute player), Luis (musician), the late Tika Arsić (actor)... so each year... our godparents were Dragan Nikolić and Milena Dravić (actors)

**Dragan Nikolić:** Justice is to be found in movies only, there no happy ending in real life, I hope we'll meet again... I'm your future. Bye...

*Music*

**Ivana:** Our godfather is Ljubivoje Ršumović (children's poet)

**Ršumović:** For centuries, it would appear / the wolf and sheep have been near /  
When he sees the sheep grazing / the wolf's teeth are amazing / When the  
sheep sees his eyes / she just freezes in surprise / Herself the  
sheep cannot defend / the wolf feeds on her fear no end / Why that is, I don't  
know / why they detest each other so.

**Ivana:** So those were people... well-known names... Radoslav Zelenović... those were people...

**Rastko:** But they were from various domains... that was the most interesting thing

for me... one is a singer, one a poet, that man is a prominent disco folk singer, appearing on television...

**Ivana:** And the next man doesn't have anything in common with any of the others, he's an electrician... quite simply, those are...

**Rastko:** And there were people you'd go over to and ask... Who are you?...

**Ivana:** That was...

**Rastko:** Who are you?... Have you come to see Ratko?... No, he says... Gorjana?... No... Ivana?... No... Rastko?... No... I just came in from the street... He'd heard the music...

**Ivana, Rastko:** It was a Montenegrin who'd missed the correct address, he was supposed to visit his friends at No 18 who were also celebrating their patron saint's day... He entered No 20 accidentally... and he liked very much what he saw... he went off... took the present he'd bought for his friends to them, came back to us, and we were officially acquainted with him at 7 in the morning... my father comes... that was very funny... he asks my mum: *Who's this fellow?* She says: *I've no idea...* He asks me: *D'you know this man?...* *How would I know him, he's much older than me...* He had a very nice time, he thanked us profusely and said: *If you should need anything from Montenegro, I'll see to it, through the Government... I'm with the Government....* there, you see what kind of scenes we had...

**Rastko:** There were such comical scenes aplenty...

**Snežana:** How was it for you kids, growing up in such an atmosphere?...

**Ivana:** Phenomenal...

**Rastko:** Disaster...



**Ivana:** He doesn't like that... to me, it was... I like...

**Rastko:** Disaster... never had any peace...

**Ivana:** So what...

**Rastko:** No privacy... never any peace... we never sat down as a family... how can I put it... from today's perspective, after all these years... it looks magical... shall we say, it's highly unusual for someone to grow up like that... gather experiences he might otherwise never have had... and get to know all those people he might never have met... I can say that at my present age... but would I wish for my child not to have any peace and to sit with twenty people instead of sitting with me – probably not...

**Ivana:** I would always wish for my child to go through something like that, to sit with such people...

**Rastko:** But we are a bit different in terms of temperament... true... but we are different otherwise, too...

*Fejat Sejdić*

**Radonja:** How does it feel being inside this house today?

**Ivana:** Well, we're not in it today... **Radonja:** You never go there? **Ivana:** No...

**Rastko:** I went there a short while ago... I recently visited it... in order to give the new owner something that had reached me somehow... and the other way round... well, it's strange, it feels strange... melancholy... growing up in that house is something that can never happen again... probably not... and wherever we live now... I'm trying now in my new flat to establish a connection with where I am... It's not the same... no matter how often I say that it's my flat, my flat... bought by myself and all that... it's not simple... it's not the same...

**Ivana:** Now when... I have to pass through Drinčićeva Street... I often pass this

way... I drive... and I don't look at the house... my husband used to have a garage there... so they repaired car engines... anyway, we were... when I was growing up there, there weren't many children around... and I was rather lonely as far as the neighbourhood was concerned... that's why I grew up with all those actors, singers... and I was always quite an impossible child, so my father always asked my mother: *Will she be asleep before the guests arrive?* (laughter) For I mainly...

**Rastko:** Right, right... and when he started missing his daughter around 2 in the morning, he's wake you up and place you in the middle of the table, amidst all that company...

**Ivana:** Yes... and then he'd say to me: *Come on, get dressed... we're going to eat ćevapi...* So I'd get dressed immediately... I'm going to eat ćevapi... but... that's the kind of kid I was... also, I was a loudmouth... when someone was gossiping... I'd always wait for the next one... and that's why he kept asking if I would be asleep by the time they came... and that was very nice... where- as he was a wonderful, truly wonderful, quiet kid... no, really... he really was a good kid... yes... poor darling...

**Rastko:** Yes... true, it wasn't... I made... I was clumsy... I did some silly things... broke stuff and so on...

**Ivana:** All right, he would fall... but that's how it goes with children... what I mean is... as I grew up so lonely and without people around me... I picked up an awful lot of those stories, experiences, from various greats, really... there was a black table in our dining room and you wouldn't believe who sat at it... Bulat Okujava and Vysotsky...

*Vysotsky's voice presents the poet, saying that he works at Moscow's Tagan-ka theatre...*

**Ivana:** For Vysotsky never gave interviews... he was a very reticent man... but he let our Ratko make a programme about him... it was called *Hamlet on Ada* (Ciganlija)... and it was wonderful... he, too, was in our house...

**Rastko:** Actually, they were making a museum in Poland... dedicated to Vys-

otsky... so they came to Serbia... and they asked for that recording... and as a kind of treat... they wanted to give our father an honourable mention... as the only man who managed to interview Vysotsky... and so, in that Polish muse- um there is a small exhibit mentioning Ratko Ilić... next to Vysotsky himself...

*Vysotsky sings*

**Ivana:** Every evening they had a different dinner... And then Gorjana... I found some cookbook... she was saying... every evening... for example, if we had the Portuguese Ambassador for dinner... as we socialised with him... Alvaro, his name was... he even wrote a book about Drinčićeva Street... I can find it for you...

**Rastko:** And also Bandaranaike...

**Ivana:** Sirimavo Bandaranaike... no, she never came there...

**Rastko:** How come?

**Ivana:** ... They went to Dubrovnik to see her... and maybe...

**Rastko:** I have a photo...

**Ivana:** I don't know... I'll take a look... In any case... she had this cookbook – lest she should repeat herself... and she prepared so many different dishes... never wanted to repeat herself... so that every time... and every evening there was company... each and every evening...

**Snežana:** How could all those people be accommodated in 70 square metres?

**Ivana:** It was organised differently... we had two entrances... in the part of the house now overlooking the yard... on the first floor... there was my room, then a small bathroom... and then you entered the living room... the dining room... so that... everything happened in that dining room... for example...

**Rastko:** The answer to that question is... by having people stand... where there

was a will...

**Ivana:** Precisely...

**Rastko:** People sat on stools... they stood... they could eat from small tables...

**Ivana:** That's interesting... when Rastko was born... how old were you? You were born when he was having the place renovated... the house? In '83?

**Rastko:** I was... in '83... we went... when I was born...

**Ivana:** To Olga's place?

**Rastko:** No... we went on a summer holiday... Mother said: Come on, get the children's room in order... since it was divided... it was possible to make a flat then... a small studio apartment plus a two-room flat... so we came back...

**Ivana:** We didn't come back yet... we found out before...

**Rastko:** Someone had told her that Ratko was pulling the small room down...

**Ivana:** He pulled the whole house down...

**Rastko:** He pulled the whole house down, saying... how else shall we accommodate more people on our patron saint's day...

**Ivana:** Not only that... he also said... how are we to watch TV... while eating...

**Rastko:** He did all sorts of things to it...

**Ivana:** He pulled down that dining room, in fact, so that we should have more room for the patron saint's day...

**Rastko:** So that... the children's room was gone...

**Ivana:** Yes... the small bathroom was gone... the children's room was gone...

everything was gone... and only that was left... so that we were astonished when we came back... our mother was...

**Rastko:** Then we had to move to our grand-aunt's, at No 6, Drinčičeva Street... and that was fun...

*Van Morrison, sounds of barking, the atmosphere of a house...*

**Ivana:** Ratko took the least care of that house. Therefore, speaking about the house itself, it was solely maintained by our mother. She took a loan to have all that pulled down, after all, and when he died... for he died at the age of 50, and she lived on for 22 more years after that... she took care of everything... when the roof needed mending, she took care of that... the drainpipes... she was simply a very capable woman who took care of everything...

**Rastko:** He... let me tell you an anecdote... who was a director, a man surrounded by cables, camera and electricity, he didn't dare change a burnt fuse, he was afraid of electric power...

**Ivana:** Not a fuse, a light bulb...

**Rastko:** No, I remember Gorjana going... you know that copper... so she mends brass fuses...

**Ivana:** She made that contraption using wire, the one I know how to make now... how fortunate that we had such a capable mother, now we can be caretakers...

**Rastko:** And our mother came from an entirely different background compared to our father... Father was a bohemian... his own father also a bohemian... everything falling apart, you don't know when someone comes in, who wakes up when... And she was from the family of a journalist, a man who once managed Tanjug and a mother who followed such a man...

**Ivana:** ... Secretary General of the *Politika* daily...

**Rastko:** Right...

**Ivana:** Gorjana Jakšić

**Rastko:** Gorjana Jakšić... and they were actually from Pariska Street, which was once an architectural miracle, and one of those flats, at No 14, Pariska Street...

*Three people speaking in unison... No 14, Pariska Street*

**Ivana:** Aralica, Peđa Milosavljević... (famous painters)

**Rastko:** As a sort of honour... they made it possible for him to participate in that project, to get a flat there... And from that orderly, quiet bourgeois life... where everything was known... money was no problem... the payment of bills was arranged based on household agreement... she entered chaos and obviously fell in love with that chaos... however much she yelled: *I came from...* she found that chaos enchanting. She felt a kind of freedom there... but eventually everything came to depend on her concerning those bills...

**Ivana:** Everything...

**Rastko:** Our father lost the phone... do you know what it meant to lose a phone line in '90... you know, when you had to wait for a year to get a phone line... well, he forgot to pay so many bills for that one phone line, we had two, and he lost that one...

**Ivana:** And he loved talking on the phone...

**Rastko:** ... and that fell through... quite simply, he wasn't a bureaucratically oriented man, couldn't take care of anything. So, she actually took care of us, the house and him...

*Sounds of the door closing and footsteps...*

**Radonja:** Right, what happened to those numerous friends of his? **Rastko:** When he died, 99% of those people disappeared. **Radonja:** Disappeared...

**Rastko:** So when we talk, among other things, about the soul of that house, I think that a large part of the spirit of that house, of the socialising that went on in it, was brought in by him... Quite simply, I think that our mother was not a person that they socialised with. They were rather more attracted by that freedom of his, manifested in every domain, so most of them just disappeared. A lot of them, to be quite clear about it, were his generation... he wasn't even among... he was among the last of them even though he died very young... a lot of them died quite young...

**Snežana:** ... Such were the times...

**Rastko:** Such were the times, such generations... they passed on... lots of them due to drinking, they just couldn't avoid the reality that hit us... a lot of them weren't there already...

**Ivana:** Right, but Gorjana was somehow... I was glad when she found her way again, when she was done with television, when she switched to opera. She was always fascinated by the opera. She even worked for the Musical Youth when she was young, for she grew up in Paris, she attended a boarding school there. So that she travelled with Zubin Mehta, she really had a good background, it was just a little different from my father's. It was also to do with art, actually... and she loved operas... she got to know Maya Plisetskaya, and she brought her to Belgrade... as they say... Gorjana could work miracles...  
so...

**Rastko:** They were both incredibly capable...

**Ivana:** What can I say... Ratko received some award, and at the moment he was making *The Binoculars* programme with Ljuba Ršumović... and they were on the North Pole... in that little house with North Pole written on it... they were sitting in that tiny house with nothing in it... a tiny house, two metres by two... The phone rings... he says *Hello...* and says... *Mister Ilić, for you...* my dad looks and says

*What?* And my mum goes: *Hey, just to let you know, they gave you this award!*  
So she found him even on the North Pole. I mean... they were quite a symbiosis...

**Rastko:** Yes, right, but also, when he'd come back from filming a programme, and was at the customs someplace, I don't know between which two countries, and he'd shout: *Hey, we'd like a roast lamb!* And it would materialise at the customs, my mother would take it there or send it to him somehow... you have no idea what kind of stories we used to hear. Especially from Makavejev while he...

**Makavejev:** We really had all those freedoms, except for the freedom to live in a flat you bought for yourself. You had all the freedoms, to live and to earn a living anywhere in the world, except in your own country.

**Ivana:** It was in that house that they filmed... that's a fact..

**Rastko:** In the cellar... there...

**Ivana:** *Mysteries of the Organism* (the movie)...

**Rastko:** *Mysteries of the Organism*... the scene with the severed head... the famous one... was shot there...

**Ivana:** Yes...

**Rastko:** Right there... yes...

**Snežana:** In the cellar, right, was it under the garage?

**Ivana:** No, that's where RadioAparat is now.

**Snežana:** RadioAparat's over there...

**Ivana:** Yes, that's where the filming was done...



**Rastko:** For quite a long time, he was assistant director to Makavejev... they worked there together... as organisers, they worked... and they were friends... until his death, and we stayed in touch with Makavejev....

*Milena Dravić from the movie: Comrades, even now I'm not ashamed of my Communist past!*

**Ivana:** When I tried to enrol at the Academy [of Dramatic Arts], and when they were about to accept me, I was, I was prevented...

**Rastko:** You passed the entrance exam there...

**Ivana:** My mother wouldn't let me...

**Rastko:** That's not true! That's how you like to remember it!

**Ivana:** Well, that's not how it was...

**Rastko:** That's how it was!

**Ivana:** Well, now life starts from Drinčićeva Street... this is how it was led... (incomprehensible)

**Rastko:** That's not true, your father said...

**Ivana:** And so the story goes...

**Rastko:** I was there after your audition, which was really... she was great actress, she really... she manifested all her potential... and they accepted her. Our father said: *I know how actresses fare, what they have to do, so my daughter will not be one.* And that was the end of the story. Mother supported him, of course, for she already excelled at the piano, but it's not that our mum wouldn't let her...

**Ivana:** You see, that's what it's like when you let your brother tell his own version of the story, I won't interfere, I'll remain reserved, that means I'm in the right.

*Sounds of the Bajloni Market*

**Rastko:** ...Whether we like the fact that we sold it or not, that's another story...

**Ivana:** Yes, I know that... When we were finished with that house, I have no... when I got over it, I have no emotions about it, except when I start telling my children about it. Fortunately, my children had the opportunity to grow up there, so that... in that wonderful yard, where we had a swimming pool built. The way it is, 29 November Street is there, that's where I live now, so I know what it's like to experience an earthquake every day, and the famous green market is nearby. That means, we went to the market about 700 times a day. That was going out for us, some went to cafés, we go to the green market. We keep company with peasants there.

**Snežana:** The Bajloni Market...

**Ivana:** Oh, yes, that's our market...

**Rastko:** That's where we got the provisions for all those people who passed through our house...

**Ivana:** Yes... *laughter*

**Rastko:** It wasn't going out, quite simply, you had to feed all those people...

**Ivana:** True, right...

**Rastko:** I mean, to be quite clear, the whole market knew us.

**Radonja:** Your father's gregariousness was actually paid for by your mother.

**Rastko:** Yes...

**Ivana:** Our mother paid for it...

**Rastko:** True... And she remained alone eventually. There's another part to that house, which came after his death...

**Ivana:** He was too much of an artistic and spiritual being to... he could not at all resign to the situations that were unfolding in the country.

**Rastko:** The war was very traumatic for him, the fact that he couldn't do anything about it... it gnawed away at him...

**Ivana:** I mean, it was the life of an artist that wasn't artistic in the end. That's what killed him, no longer living his dream, which was over, but living to survive.

**Rastko:** He managed somehow... to find money for us...

**Ivana:** Which is logical...

**Rastko:** But what absolutely did not agree with his being or anything else... and that led to further lack of care and everything... and I think that in the end he just... no longer...

**Ivana:** The stress factor, he simply killed himself with all that drinking, and so...

**Rastko:** And that was resolved quite simply... that's how it happened. But, you know, I was... my father died when I was 12...

**Ivana:** He was very young...

**Rastko:** I was very young, I remember those stories now, the patron saint's days and everything as if through a mist, all that, those are just details from some video cassettes... What I remember more is the other part, when we were left alone with our mother. And then, I was more attached to our mother, not only because I was a male child, which is how it goes, I suppose, I don't know, but also we turned to her more... so, as a child I turned to her and Ivana,

and from early on, my father was no longer... he was no longer there and couldn't be there. What I remember more... As Mother was also a law purely unto herself. Not everyone would be able to manage that, anyone... Now she seems to have a slightly marginal role in this story, compared to our father, only she was anything but that... She was a very shrewd, highly specific woman, a noisy woman, a... cantankerous and likeable person who tells you something to your face and then hugs you three minutes later, saying: *I didn't say that...* Like a caricature from a movie, a woman who seems to have come straight from a theatre stage... and then I remember, the moment I walk in through the door: *Hey, go to the market place, this...* The moment I get back: *Oh, I forgot this as well... now, go get this... do that...* It was a scene of constant dynamism with her, same as with Ratko. They always had something going on... there was no peace. Even now, when I walk into this house...

I am somehow overwhelmed... but, looking at it from this perspective... everything that got on my nerves when I was a boy I somehow miss now... now it's... it's not that I think that this house has... the house itself has a soul to the extent that all of us left a part of our soul there or somehow through the memories that we relive all the time... is that the building there, would there be a hole there tomorrow... that location is, that location... I stand in front of it, all that comes... comes and goes... is lived through, then you go on... in that respect I am slightly different from my sister, for as I say, I lived the harder part of my life together with her, and I don't have that many memories, only of... Just like all of us who lived through that period in this country... there were all sorts of things....

**Ivana:** Only, I think that fragments of the soul remain in certain real estate objects that one owns during one's lifetime... So that... you always build in bits of yourself somewhere.

*Sounds of the market place, Van Morrison, the street, cars, the clanging of trams*

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## About the authors

**Snežana Ristić** graduated at the Faculty of Architecture of Belgrade University. Has been involved in criticism and writing in the field of architecture, as well as photography. Has held a number of photography exhibitions. Golden Microphone Award for outstanding work in the field of radio and creativity radiophonic (2015). She was Editor-in-chief of Cultural department, Radio Belgrade 2. Has worked with Radonja Leposavić as a co-author since 1993.

**Radonja Leposavić** graduated at the Department of Art History of the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University. Worked in a museum and curated several exhibitions. Published the book *Dada-clipping* (2000) and edited the book *Past Present* (2004). Co-author of the project: *Tito Effect*, Museum of Yugoslav History (2009), edited book *Attention! Criticism!?* (half a century of the October Art Salon, Belgrade), 2009. Golden Microphone Award for outstanding work in the field of radio and creativity radiophonic (2013) and Lazar Trifunović Award for reviews on contemporary and visual arts in written and electronic media (2014). He was editor at Radio Belgrade. Has worked with Snežana Ristić as a co-author since 1993.

**Snežana Ristić** and **Radonja Leposavić** were authors and presenters, for more than two decades, of the weekly programme *City*, broadcasted by Radio Belgrade 2. They are authors and presenters of the programme *City in passing* on RadioAparat.

They are authors of over 600 documentary radio programmes and documentary drama programmes for Radio Belgrade 2. In 2000, they realised their own project *Mirror for Radio B92* in 24 instalments. They are authors and presenters of panel discussions *The transition of Intellectuals at Belgrade's Media Centre* (2001).

They have published the following books: *Voices from the Black Hole – What Did You Do during the War?* (1999) and *Eight Lectures by Nikola Milošević* (2000). They have contributed to the Zagreb magazine *Arkzin*, Belgrade magazines *Reč*

and the weekly Vreme.

**Festivals:** Prix Italy, Prix Europe, Prix Marulić, Grand Prix Nova, The Winters

Tales – UK Radio Drama Festival...

Documentary Optimism broadcasted in selection The Best Radio Documentaries from Prix Europa 2011, Goethe-Institut, Washington (USA), January 2012.

2012, Prix Marulić, Documentary *Over There Far Away*, short list (4) 2011, Prix Italia, short list (3), in Documentary category for *Optimism*, 2016, Prix Marulić, short list (4) for *DaDa 100* in Short Form category

**Awards:**

2007, Prix Marulić, second Commendation in Documentary category for *Words that Wait*.

2011, Prix Marulić, Grand Prix Marulić in Short Form category for *Optimism*.

2011, Prix Marulić, second Commendation in Documentary category for *DaDa for Repeaters*.

2011, Prix Italia, special Commendation in Documentary category for *Optimism*.

2016, UK radio Drama Festival, First prize in Short Form category, for *Snow White, made up Horror*

2017, Grand Prix Nova, Third place in Short Form category for *Voices – Exercises in style*

2019, Prix Marulić, Third place in Documentary category for *Lili Marlene*

2019, Grand Prix Nova, Grand Prix in Short Form category for *Lili Marlene – Serbian Cutting*

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