

CIVIC

## The House of Glembajs

By: Daliborka Uljarević

### *Will you go back into the night of Glembajs or you know you're worth more? It's up to you...*

One great thing about the old education system was the mandatory reading list of literature, whose length and scope had upset many, but if you're from a small town where it rains for at least two seasons per year, it was a lovely escape route to different worlds and dimensions.

Looking at the recent events that marked the year 2010 and will continue to shape the 2011 from the prism of the house library, my eyes fall on **Krleža's** "House of Glembajs".

This powerful and complex psycho-social drama was never, if I'm correct, staged on the Montenegrin theatre scenes. What the theatre missed out on, our reality creatively made up for, and we have been living it through in all its hues, complexity and weight. Everything happens in a single night with Glembajs, in a few late hours which cruelly reveal the glory and misery of a seemingly prestigious family of bankers. A night after which nothing was ever the same. Not for them, and not for the public which watched their every move. That night uncovered all the mirages, the lies and alienation of those rich in material wealth and social powers, but already debunked, impoverished and weak as human beings.

In a single night, in the vacuum between the departure of the longest-surviving Balkan politician **Milo Đukanović** and the arrival of his successor **Igor Lukšić**, in Budva, we witnessed a series of screen-like arrests. And nothing will ever be the same again after that night in our, until very recently united, omnipresent and sovereign family of Glembaj rulers.

What will be the next moves on the part of our Glembajs, in this decisive night which is still going on and where the only thing known for sure is that they cannot all make it through the night, is the favourite subject of speculation, although we know that there will be no easy way out. It is therefore slightly distasteful to be already reaching for the medals and veterans' laurels on account of a single battle which is important, but not decisive.

It is important because it demonstrated the extent of immobilisation of our institutions, whose authority has been systematically undermined and which can only act out their duties once they've received the approval from the circle of political influence and special interests, not because they have been swayed by the efforts those who had initially pointed out the problem.

The decisive battle will be the one that will take itself beyond the control, orders or wishes of our Glembajs. In preparing for it, we need every man and we cannot afford to underestimate any individual civic efforts. This is where we face the problem of the lack of any credible political alternative whose quality would raise it out of the mud into which the country had been trodden by the Glembajs. And the alternative can only come from a change of methodology, of the discourse of public issues, through articulation of the existing, but rare civic courage into a new driving force.

And while we witness the upheavals in the house of our Glembajs, we have to change our approach from kamikaze to systemic change. The latter requires a lot of knowledge, dedication, with the possibility that the fruits of our efforts will be used to somebody else's benefit. The first is easy, it brings instant fame, but the sustainable results are questionable. The problem of our political and other elites is that (sub)conscious choice of the first track, more easily taken, but which only brings us back into the loop of impotence.

Or, let's translate this into the terms of a recent regional experience. Opposition in Serbia was most visibly represented by **Vuk Drašković**, president of the Serbian Renewal Movement. He was hailed the king of public squares, his rhetorical skill and charisma shook Serbia although his offer was no more modern or practically different from what the ideology he so passionately opposed. A decade later, he is a marginal figure in Serbian politics, his achievements in fighting **Milošević** are nearly

forgotten, and his name is associated with small political benefits he reaps from participating in the current Serbian government.

At the same time, **Zoran Đinđić**, president of the Democratic Party, had difficulties getting through to the voters, his approach did not promise a smooth road to success. Symbolically, it tried to steer Serbia towards modernisation and out of the prison of provincialism, and was therefore heavy and required brave people. This carefully constructed road got a chance once Đinđić became a prime minister of Serbia, but it was soon blocked by the murder of the man who is now considered the man of the decade in Serbia. There were more people at Đinđić's funeral than there were voters for his idea of Serbia. His struggle took him out of the swamp, and he paid a terrible price for his courage and vision.

Is there anybody in Montenegro today with a vision to counter the swamp we live in, without noticing how used we had become to it? Is there a political party or a personality to tell us what choices to make in order to create Montenegro into a modern country? Have our Glembajs destroyed every spark of new effort, or are we just not brave enough to try, or both?

At the moment, **Jagoš Marković** is staging the Glembajs in the Belgrade Atelier 212. His interview to a major Serbian daily "Politika" is a resume of the skipped reading list to local artists who are not ready to deal with themselves and the society they live in, and even less so to express their opinion or to even have a critical tone. Like students, fashionably uninterested in political affairs, and many other waiting room figures, they should also be among the catalysts of the future upheavals and changes. Changes that will be more than a replacing one cartel pawn with another. Different actors should use whatever means at their disposal to reach a common goal: healing the society which forgot about tolerance, compassion, love, beauty and knowledge. Without a faith that these notions exist, that they must be part of our civic and personal identity, we go through our lives unaware of our potentials or any genuine effort to live up to them. Will you go back into the night of Glembajs or you know you're worth more? It's up to you...

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