

# A CROATIAN CLASSIC WHO SPOKE HUNGARIAN

## MIROSLAV KRLEŽA

AN EXHIBITION IN THE NATIONAL RELIC SPACE  
23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH TO 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011

VIRTUAL CONTENT PROVISION



In the framework of the 2011 Budapest Spring Festival the National Széchényi Library held an exhibition to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981). The staff of the Content Provision Department contributed a virtual exhibition (<http://www.mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/krleza/>), launched on the Night of Museums. The exhibition and the content provided introduce in an enjoyable manner Krleža, formerly also referred to as an honorary Hungarian writer.

The exhibition did not follow the linear fashion of narration, but introduced the great Croatian classic through junctions and marked intersections of major themes: his decisive experience of meeting Hungarian culture early on, the process of reflections spanning the entire Hungarian-Croatian shared past, the short-lived Hungarian Krleža cult, the Hungarian aspects of Krleža the encyclopedist, the rich reception of his lifework, emphasizing the first performances of his plays in Hungary – with special regard to the so-called Glembay trilogy (Glembay Ltd., Agony and Léda).

Besides the acquisition of the Hungarian language, the cathartic acquaintance with Ady's and Petőfi's poetry, Krleža's reactions to various issues of Hungarian literature, history and culture, including the Original Settlement, King Saint Stephen, Matthias Hunyadi, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Trianon phenomenon or the 1950s, several precious items of the National Széchényi Library were on display, including a copy of the autograph manuscript of Vörösmarty's *The Old Gipsy*, a poem Krleža found decisive, as well as picture postcards evoking the atmosphere of the Monarchy's last years and posters and leaflets recalling turning points in Hungarian history. Hungarian writers' evaluations range from Oszkár Jászi's 1922 diary entries, through reflections



The exhibition poster

by László Németh, Gyula Illyés, György Spiró, Ferenc Juhász and others, to Márió Papp's analysis with images of a chess match between Tito and Krleža.

The original exhibition displayed manuscripts, posters, photos, costume designs, volumes dedicated by and to Krleža and other interesting items from NSZL and other Hungarian and Croatian public collections, as well as excerpts of theatre productions, old newsreels, documentaries and television films. In addition to these documents, the virtual content provision, launched when the exhibition closed, also includes extracts from Miroslav Krleža's novels, short stories, essays and supplementary information, draw-

ing attention to further links available on the World Wide Web.

members of the *Söndörgő* band, as well as musicians Milosevits Mirko and Balázs Vizeli, the opening was celebrated by the first performance of the *Sanobor song*,

one of the two ballads. Interestingly, the artist who sang it in Croatian was Máté Török, the image designer and graphic artist of content provision (and a founder of the *Misztrál* music group).

Through an agreement with the **Croatian National Library**, copies of manuscripts were supplied from the writer's heritage. Photos and books Hungarian



The “Meeting Hungary” page of content provision

writers dedicated to Krléza were on loan from the Zagreb **Miroslav Krléza Lexicography Institute**, while the **Croatian Television** archive gave us permission to play excerpts from an unknown Gyula Illyés interview and from a 1982 Croatian documentary about Krléza's memories of Hungary.

The NSZL exhibition material was provided by the **Collection of Theatre History**, the **Collection of Posters and Small Prints**, the **Manuscript Collection**, the **Core Collection** and the **Collection of Historical Interviews**. The documents made available by the **Hungarian Theatre Museum and Institute** supplemented the material about Hungarian productions of Krléza's plays. The **Hungarian National Film Archive** enabled the showing of excerpts from unduly forgotten television films based on the *Glembay Trilogy*, directed by János Dömölky and acted by spectacular casts in the 1970s.

Of the original documents displayed at the exhibition, special mention is to be made of the ones provided by Marietta Vujsics, widow to Sztoján Vujsics, the writer's friend and admirer. They now form a part of the Tihamér Vujsics bequest, which was transferred to our library that year. We also owe our gratitude to Márta Jánoskúti for her active involvement in staging and filming Krléza's pieces and providing her original costume designs. By permitting us to publish documents digitally, the **Comedy Theatre's archive**, the **Radnóti Theatre** and the **Petőfi Literary Museum** also contributed to the exhibition's success.

Documents concerning the writer's schooling in Hungary, including the years spent at the Pécs Cadet School and the Ludovika Academy were provided by the **Hungarian Museum and Archives of Military History**, while the so far unknown scores of Krléza's two ballads composed by the Hungarian Tihamér Vujsics were digitized and provided by the **Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**. Thanks to the Vujsics band and some

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