

Jasna Mesarić: “Munch and Munch – Diptych”

Actors: Livio Badurina, Tomislav Martić, Sreten Mokrović, Lela Margitić, Alen Šalinović, Antonija Stanišić Šperanda; voice: Berislav Vulin.

Director: Jasna Mesarić.

Music editor: Franka Meštrović.

Sound master: Marija Pečnik Kvesić.

Producer: Katja Šimunić.

Premiere: February 15, 2018

Duration: 27:02

Summary

The scream. He felt it was everywhere – in the throat, the tongue, the forehead, nails ... in the sky ... in the sand. As if it were all one image of the painting: “A man thinking about his failed life”. The radiophonic play by Jasna Mesarić, “Munch and Munch – Diptych”, has primarily been inspired by “The Scream” (1893 – 1910), four versions of the painting by Edward Munch, but also by his other paintings, diaries, letters as well as the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Radical sound image by the sound master Marija Pečnik Kvesić is deeply complementary to the anxious conciseness of the text and together they create an almost demonic radiophonic vortex of questions dealing with the uncompromising quality of art.

„Munch and Munch – Diptych“ was awarded from BBC as Best European Audio Drama 2019.

Persons:

MUNCH *(not a real one)*

FATHER *(not a real one)*

NIETZSCHE *(not a real one)*

MOTHER *(not a real one)*

DOCTOR *(not a real one)*

MAID *(not a real one)*

THE VOICE

Music

The Voice – making sounds

MUNCH: ... huh! (*sighs*) ... what I hear is the music ... as a memory ... of what? ... of what? ... I cannot grasp that moment ... it comes ... it goes away ... it is covered by a feeble voice ... is it my voice? ... am I still there? ... *the Voice* ... as a boy ... I am kneeling ... no! ... no! ...

Music

The Voice

MUNCH: ... the room is dark ... cold ... brown-grey ...

FATHER: ... Judgement Day is coming, Judgement Day is coming, Judgement Day is coming ...

MUNCH: ... he is punishing himself in his room ...

The Voice – the voice is multiplying itself

FATHER: ... you are the only one who can save us ... you are the only one who can save us ...

MUNCH: ... save, from what? ... what have we done? ...

FATHER: ... the original sin ... depravity ...

MUNCH: ... I don't understand a word you are saying ...

FATHER: ... you are guilty ... you are guilty ... you are guilty ...

MUNCH: ... the wallpaper is green ... he is reading before he falls asleep ... green ... like, like leaves in my orchard ... I am shivering ...

Music

MUNCH: ... I am terribly afraid ...

FATHER: ... all will be seen in the Hereafter ... all will be seen in the Hereafter ... all will be seen in the Hereafter ...

MUNCH: Mother is coughing ... she is lying in bed ... a ray of light passes through her black hair ...

FATHER: ... only by prayer can you earn eternal salvation ...

MUNCH: ... “how to become ... what you are” ... (*Nietzsche: “Ecce homo”*)

The Voice – making sounds

MUNCH: ... one should not speak loudly ... one should not think loudly ... HE – he doesn't like the conceited ones ... what kind of painter?!? ... Father is opposed to this idea ... he is nervous and obsessively religious ... it is him I've inherited seeds of madness from ...

Music

MUNCH: ... I often wake up in the night ... in terror ...

Music

MUNCH: ... I do not like people ... either living or dead ... especially not living people ... without a clear mind ... without sanity ... nervous people ... a thunderstorm of words ... a poisonous gas ... grenades that explode in the ear ... selfishness ... judging by myself ... I instinctively start talking in defense ... otherwise, I generally keep quiet ... not a word ... quiet! ...

Music

FATHER: ... impure thoughts! ... impure thoughts! ...

MUNCH: ... “No experiences : nothing from the outside, nothing new – these are my only desires for a while.” ... Nietzsche, who I have never met ...

NIETZSCHE: ... suffering, the true seductive bait for life ...

Music

FATHER: ... what kind of nonsense is this ...

The Voice

MUNCH: ... my father ...

The Voice

MUNCH: ... a good person ... but ... constantly frowning and depressed ...

Music

MUNCH: ... what is this? ...

NIETZSCHE: ... foul air ...

MUNCH: ... ugh! ... no more wine ... I am getting violent ... and drunk ... uncontrollably drunk ...

NIETZSCHE: ... I cannot stand it anymore ... enough! ... enough! ...

Music

MUNCH: ... who is it ... I see the face of my ghost ... or of a woman ...

Music

FATHER: ... obscene! ... it must be destroyed! ...

Music

A cat mews

MUNCH: ... I am jealous of the cat ... those hard eyes ... it watches me insightfully ... I won't paint it ...

Music

THE MOTHER: ... the other day the minister said on the radio: "God is in me. I am God. Father is in me. I am FATHER."

MUNCH: ... Mother is sitting in the armchair ... weak ... by the window ... she is looking at the first snow ... pale ... coughing ...

Music

MUNCH: ... can't anyone say it? "I am God. God is everything. I am in world. World is in me." ...

Music

FATHER: ... prepare yourselves ...

MUNCH: ... since I was born ... fear rages inside me ... illnesses too ... fear and illnesses ... I've read Nietzsche ...

NIETZSCHE: ...”nevertheless ... I often think that I have to have my life – and that I wouldn’t exist without it”...

MUNCH: ... as the curse that haunts me ...

NIETZSCHE: ... “and that the illness was necessary ... illness and anxiety” ...

FATHER: ... illness and anxiety ...

MUNCH: ... Father lived in fear of everything ...

THE MOTHER: ... he should’ve never become a doctor ...

MUNCH: ... I wanted to help him ... but it did not work ... no one could talk to him ...

THE MOTHER: ... a poet, that should have been better ...

Music

FATHER: ... it’s a sin ... at first I liked the apartment ... but, there are not enough rooms ... then ... again ... a deep melancholy ... depressive times – all this is a terrible sin ... ingratitude to God ...

Music

MUNCH: ... Father ... God ... and me ... as if I were three ...

Music

NIETZSCHE: ... “oh, the way misfortunes happen ... some people are like wandering wounds” ...

MUNCH: ... I’ve got some thinking to do ... I’ve got to think about my misfortune ... and thing about what I am reading ...

Music

MUNCH: ... Mother is sitting in the armchair ... weak ... by the window ... she is looking at the first snow ... pale ... coughing ...

MOTHER (crying): ... my dearest ones ... your beloved Father will show you ... and I will be waiting for you ... in the love of Jesus ... we will be, we will be ... we will be saved ...

MUNCH: ... Sophia is standing beside the bed covering her ears with her hands ...

FATHER: ... soon she will be standing before the Savior ...

MUNCH: ... where is she going? ... why? ... Sophie is five years old ... she is standing beside her mother's bed ... she is covering her ears with her hands ... her mouth wide open in a silent scream ...

FATHER: ... she will have a better life than us ...

MUNCH: ... grey-green shadows in the dead room ...

MOTHER: ... now ...

The Voice

MOTHER: ...I'll leave you now ...

MUNCH: ... a scream of fire in color as red as blood ...

MOTHER: ... I have to, I have to, I have to leave you ...

The Voice

MUNCH: ... and a scream of bright yellow light ... and green ... yellow scream against green one ...

FATHER: ... what more does it take? ... how should I pray? ...

MUNCH: ... it was Christmas ... so many candles ... some of them dripping ... thick, heavy air ... Father is sitting beside her ... his face close to hers ... they are whispering something ... she is smiling ... tears are running down her face ... they started singing Silent night ...

Music

MUNCH: ... the ceiling parted ... I saw the skies ... a shining light ... angels in white robes ...

The Voice

MUNCH: ... the next morning ... Father is kneeling and praying for hours ... I went to the kitchen ... I found a little lump of coal ... I am drawing on the wooden floor ... Father is praying ... my brothers and sisters are in the room ... and me ... I am distancing myself from the world ... for hours ...

Music

MUNCH: I decided that I would become a painter ...

The Voices

FATHER: ... being a painter means living in a brothel ...

Music

The Voice

MUNCH: ... I've finally found a model ... not in a brothel ... in hospital ... a 12-year-old malnourished girl ... of stunning beauty ... blue-white skin ... under blue shadows, the color becomes yellow ...

VOICE 1: ... I think it's pathetic, Munch! Bullshit! ...

Music

THE VOICE, *continuing*

MUNCH: ... my impotence ... betrayal of sister who is dying ...

VOICE 2: ... kill yourself! ... and then it is all over ... why live? ...

MUNCH: ... will I be able to ... or not ... "I'd like to sit down" ... she said ... will I be able to? ... painting of the soul ...

The Voice

VOICE 3: ... what is it? ... a travesty of art! ...

MUNCH: ... cast aside everything superfluous ... only the painting of pain remains ...

Music

VOICE 4: ... degenerate blood! ... these are morally questionable paintings ...

Music

MUNCH: ... one day ... I bought the largest canvas I could find ...

VOICE 1: ... vulgar! ...

VOICE 2: ... inappropriate for someone's home! ...

VOICE 3: ... scandalous! ...

MUNCH: ... the painting barely made it to the Autumn exhibition ... there it is! ... hanging on the wall opposite the entrance ... no one can miss it ...

VOICE 4: ... I think it's pathetic, Munch! ... bullshit! ... you'll go crazy if you carry on like that ... only you and those paintings of yours ... you don't care for anybody else! ... you don't care! ...

MUNCH: ... go to hell!!! ...

Music

MUNCH: ... every day is the same ... a violent glorification of life ... joy ... chit chat ... that makes me nervous ... everything hurts ... enough!!! ... enough ...

VOICE 2: ... how disgusting it is ... and you are pitiful ... a poor creature ...

MUNCH: ... huh! ... come by! ... come by! ... he no longer came ... neither did my mother's friend ... she used to come by ... she saw that I found the conversation annoying ... they think I am eccentric ... sudden departures ... visits ... then a maid came ... she offered me a lesson in French ... meaning ... we'll have to spend some time together? ...

MAID: ... all the time! ...

MUNCH: ... she is smiling ... pointing at the bed . huh? ... a joke? ...

MAID: ... you only have to go down the hall ... the door is open at night ... my place is warm ... will you? ...

MUNCH: ... what? ... then she got mad ... and I got mad, too ...

MAID: ... you just keep quiet ... just that you know, you drink too much ... and these paintings of yours ... yuck! ...

MUNCH: ... now she is cleaning the house ... in silence ... I no longer go to town ... every time I go ... I get a nervous breakdown ... and so the time goes by ... and every day is the same ...

Music

MUNCH: ... can I hypnotize you? ...

DOCTOR: ... what on Earth are you talking about! ...

MUNCH: ... come on, come on! ... I mixed mustard, pepper, cigarette ash and vinegar ... eat it up ...

DOCTOR: ... I don't want to ...

MUNCH: ... if you don't want to ... I'll shoot you ... here ... now ...

DOCTOR: ... listen to me, the seizures are getting more frequent ... in the end you'll suffer a stroke ...

MUNCH: ... I ran away ... the doctor looked too serious ...

DOCTOR: ... dementia paralytica ...

MUNCH: ... so off I went and got drunk ...

Voices as an echo

MUNCH: ... I spent Christmas in a brothel ...

Music

MUNCH: ... insomnia ... I am sitting in front of a mirror ... a Gothic light illuminates my face ... a pair of small eyes are staring at me ... I am squeezing out the painting color on the canvas ... how are you, um? ... my image in the mirror? ... ha-ha-ha!!! ... shall we ever meet? ...

Music

Voices all around

VOICES:

Look

We could arrange so

that we order several paintings from you per month

of course

you will need to adapt to requirements of the market

which is looking for paintings with brighter motifs

realistic, genuine portraits

portraits of children, of families, of distinguished people

or landscapes, sceneries, boats at sea, or boats on a river

mythological scenes

mythological portraits

group portraits

historical scenes

religious scenes

rural panoramas

cityscapes

night scenes

genre scenes

still life

flowers, fruit, dishes, fruits, dead game!

something

that can adorn homes

that is what people look for ... Choose!

You are a painter, aren't you?

Music

MUNCH: ... I ... I have been fighting all my life ... trying to paint so that my paintings do not resemble kitsch ...

Music stops

VOICE: ... well ...

Music

VOICES:

it has been arranged

you will deliver two or three paintings to us in a month

here is the contract, please, sign it

this is, in our opinion, a generous offer

today, when no one cares about art

come on, who cares about art!

however, we are investing in our future

in your future

and the future is bright!

because you are a good painter, an honorable man

only

no self-portraits

nudes

abstractions

surreal motifs – no!

Do you think that someone is interested in it?

Music, circus music

Your fears?

Your dreams?

Obsessions?

Inebriations?

Nudities?

Illnesses?

Music stops

MUNCH: ... once I was walking down the street and I thought of a particular person, and ten minutes later I met her ... some other time I thought of this particular person again, and met her again ... it happens to me a lot ... I wonder if it happens to you too? ...

Music

VOICE:

... hence, realism, or possibly impressionism.

Music

There are artists who are inspired by dreams
who dream
day and night
the so called sleep-walkers
walk barefoot on the roof
unaware of anything that surrounds them
and when somebody calls their names
even quietly
they fall off the roof
they fall from their dreams
they walk in dreams
that are their life
but, who cares about that?
There was Moon, big and yellow
two of them were in shady woods
his eyes in her eyes
the wind
behind her violet-blue sea

VOICES:

That could, for example, be a motif for a painting

Music

MUNCH: ... how to determine what is ... from what seems to us that is ...
how can one know, what is genuine, and what is fake? ... what is genuine in me,
and what is fake ... bullshit ... bullshit ...

Music

VOICES:

It would be good, for example, to gather these motifs
experiences
whether they were real experiences or fabrications
because,
real experiences are by all means much more convincing
but,
also imagination, fiction, fantasy, dreaming
have sometimes,
sometimes!
strength
power!
to convert hidden spheres into poetic material
and then,
only!
only then,
when that piled stack

that intangible energy
which pushes a human being like an iron ball inside the head
and howls and resounds in that very head
like a destructive force
and when it is reached
when that energy is processed
when it gets touched
and when it is endured
then what we call human life is resolved
the whole web of conflicting interests of one being
selfish demands of all organs
each and every one of them solitary in fight of hunger
hundreds of dots which fight against each other
and fight within themselves
the whole tangled web of waves
which collide
hit each other
and coasts of the human mind.

Music

VOICES:

But what about other people?

Music

MUNCH: ...

“A faint sound of prayer came flying into my dream
sank its claws into my heart
punctured my lungs with its beak
and clouded my mind with a jitter”.

VOICES:

What about them?

What about their secret passageways?

Disparate mixture of hatred, compassion

impotence,

which pulls down

into darkness

But again the effort

an attempt

To restore the accurate image of oneself

Something like that?

How to observe oneself?

How to understand oneself?

Is it so impossible?

VOICES: Pray do tell!

Voice

VOICES:

Hold on!

And you, when you walk? What do you do?

Do you contemplate about art?

Music

VOICES:

Do tell, do tell, do tell! Well, do tell! ... Tell!!! ... Well, do tell! ...

MUNCH:

I'll tell you ... listen to me ...

on the Baltic beach

I am looking at my feet in the sand

a paintbrush in my hand

my naked body in front of the easel

I am painting a man

a naked man

he is gently leaning

as if he would get going

then on the same canvas

this man, 2-3 seconds later
I am trying to paint
a naked body in motion
a body as lean as mine
with its feet in the sand
like my feet
I see myself in him
am I right?
I see a man lean
like me
quiet
grumpy
is that me?
brush strokes on canvas
quickly, impatiently
I am trying to capture that motion
as I see it
should I paint it when he faces me
what will I see in that gaze?
I am setting up the photographic camera
it will capture this moment
in the photo
in the painting
in my eye

as if it all were
one painting:
“A man thinking about his failed life”
I have to know for myself
and myself only

Music

VOICES:
was I sharply honest ...
ruthless
cruel
ultimate?
like someone lying on cold marble
like someone who is leaving
is there an answer?

Music

The end

(English translation: Saša Čohar Mančić.)