

John's story

The performance "John's Story" was made within the confines of European project of Comenius and was coordinated by Interkunst e.V. In this venture, called "Stay or get away" took part young people from the schools in Denmark – Odense, Germany -Halle, Wittenberg and Poland – Braniewo. The performance was created by the participants of the project using improvisations which were based on their experience and the interviews they made with victims of violence and aggressors. The final version of the play was showed during the tour in March and April 2003 in all places from where the pupils come from.

Stage directions:

In the performance take part about 20 young actors. All of them are staying on the stage during the whole performance. Those who are active at the moment are located in the front of the stage, the others are sitting behind them. The same characters are played often by different persons. The scenes are very short, the transitions between them are rapid, illustrated by music from off or live singing.

There is no decoration. Stage design is the natural appearance of the place where the performance is plaid. It does not have to be "nice", but it must be real. The props are symbolizing only the real objects and they are made from cardboard. The light is mostly strong and white without any special effect; it marks the improvised stage off.

The way of playing is very simple. The actors should speak very clear and loud. They should rather imitate than trying to be "real" to avoid unintentional artificiality.

Order of the scenes:

1. The entrance
2. In the unemployment office
3. At home
4. In the Kindergarten
5. At the stadium
6. Father comes home
7. At the teacher's home
8. At the school
9. Before the party
10. The party
11. At Johns
12. Christmas at Johns

Narrator: *(Alone on the stage)* This is a very, very special story and to help
 me
 I need some friends.
Song – “We will, we will rock you” All *together coming on the stage singing.*

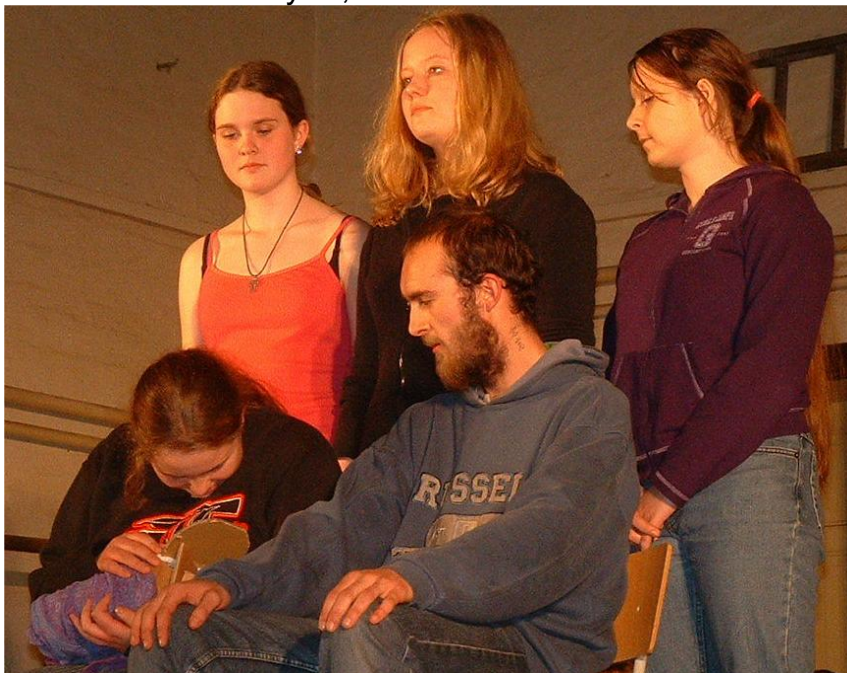


Narrator: It's a John's story
John's father and John's mother and this is John
And he doesn't know anything about violence and crime and
drugs and racism.

Mother: It's my baby

Father: I love you (*to the mother*)

Mother: I love you, too



John's Story - Version 2

2. In unemployment office

Narrator: John's mother works at home and his father is unemployed. Let's see what he is going to do.

Father: Hello

Clerk 1: Hello

Father: I'm looking for a job.

Clerk 1: Looking for a job? Go to the office over there.

Father: Hello

Clerk 2: Hello, sit down, please.

Father: My family is in a difficult situation. We have a baby now; his name is John.

John 2: John? Interesting... Ok, here are some questions. Do you have some knowledge of Spanish?

Father: No

Clerk 2: French?

Father: No

Clerk 2: Portuguese?

Father: *Shakes his head – no*

Clerk 2: Dutch?

Father: No

Clerk 2: Japanese?

Father: *Nmh Shakes his head*

Clerk2: Do you know how to work with computers?

Father: *Sits up straight, bends his head forward, but falls back again and shakes his head.*

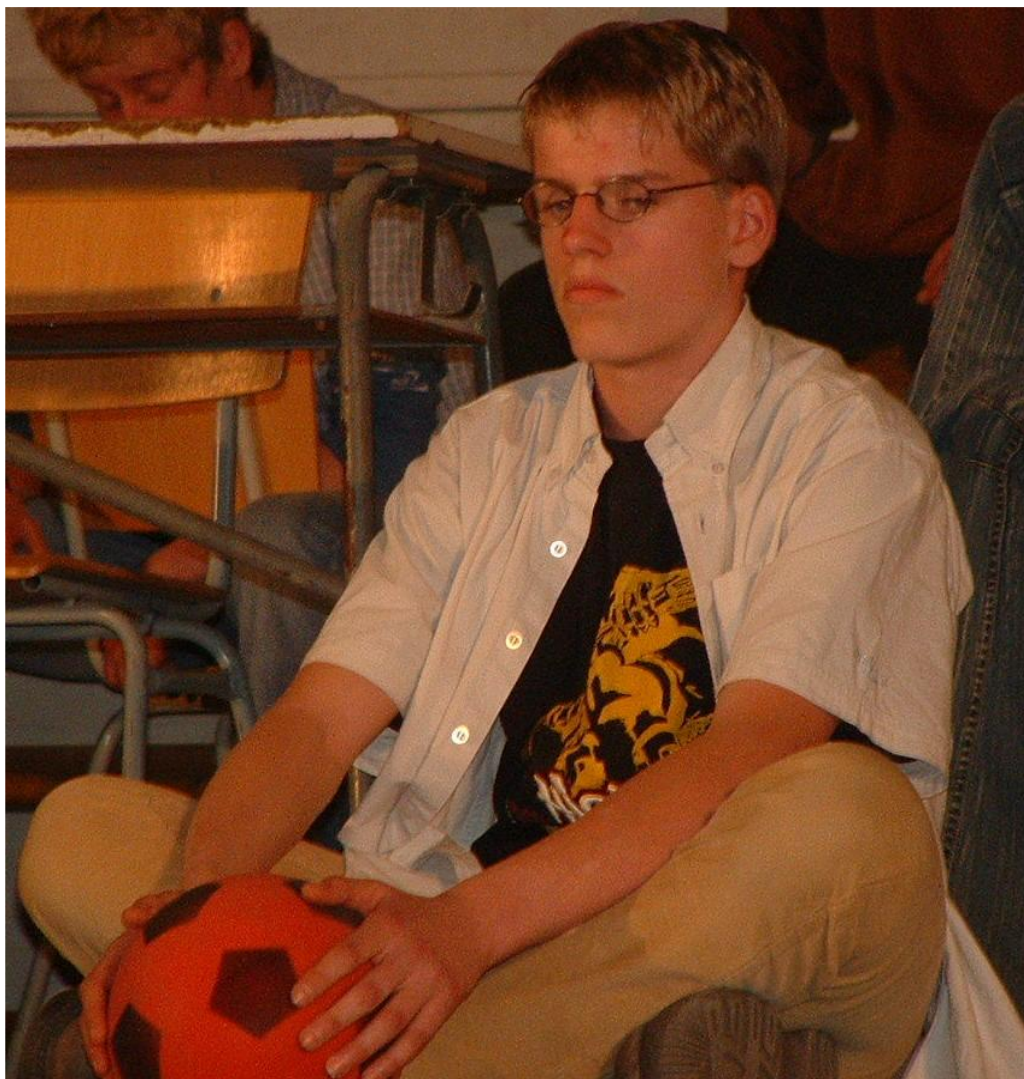


Clerk 2: Do you know how to handle the internet?
Father: No
Clerk 2: (*irritable*) Have you ever been to college?
Father: *Shakes his head*
Clerk 2: (*arrogantly*) Did you ever learn something like...cooking?
Father (*giving up*) No
Clerk 2: (*scorning*) I'm sorry, there is no job available for you! Goodbye.
Father: (*angrily*) Goodbye
Clerk 2: (*friendly*) Goodbye
Father: (*sneering*) BAAAHHHH !!!

Transition / Song – “Street of London”, John’s *father on his way home*.

3. At home

John: Da da
Father: (*angrily*) Da da
Mother: How was it, darling?
Father: Bring me a beer!
John: Da da, John Has a ball
Father: Shut up!
John: John must pee pee



Transition / Song – “And one, and two”

4. In the Kindergarten

Many children are sitting on the floor in small groups, they play
Narrator: Now John is 5 years old. He is in the kindergarten, playing with his car and already knows something about violence and he is going to learn something about being an outcast.
A little girl takes his car.
John: Give my car.
Girl: no
John: But it's my car.
Girl: no

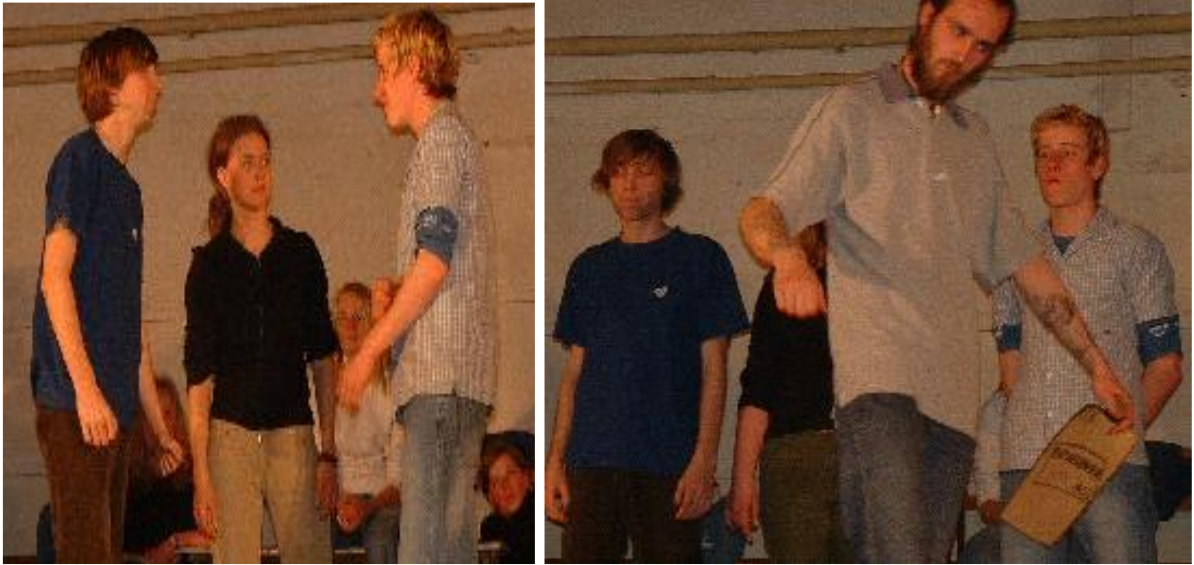


The girl starts to cry.
All children cry loudly.
Teacher: stop! What's the problem here?
Children: John! (*pointing*)

Transition

5. At the stadium

Narrator: John's father has a big passion. He loves football.



images of fans arriving, singing, shouting; the two teams arriving; They form two groups. Between them are two football player and the referee.



fighting, speedy music from off.



*Transition - the others build new setting on the stage, very fast and violently.
speedy hard music from off*

6. Father comes home.

Mother sets the table. John watches TV. The sister plays.
Narrator: Now John is 13 years old and he has small sister. She is two years old. He knows something about discrimination and he knows also a lot of things about violence. Now they are watching television, while their mother is preparing a dinner.
The TV is formed from girls who are singing a song.
Mother: *(shouting trying to interrupt the noise of the TV)* John, dinner is ready!
Song – *(“In the TV”)* Every night in my dream, I see you, I need You...



John changes the channel and starts head banging.



John's father enters
Narrator: John's father comes home from his sport activities.
Father: *(drunk)* Good evening
Mother: Dinner is ready; John's father. *(angrily)* You drunk again!
Father: *(hits her)* Very nice song, son
Sister: Mummy, Mummy! *(Crawls to her mother)*
Father: Shut up! *(Raises his hand to hit her)*
John: Don't touch her! *(stops his father who falls to the floor, drunk)*
The sister starts to cry
John: *(pats his sister)* Don't cry. I will protect you.

7. At the teacher's home

In the sitting room at the teacher's home. Her husband is glued to the TV



Teacher: Hello darling, I am home

Husband: Hello

Teacher: How are you?

Husband: I'm fine

Teacher: Are you watching TV?

Husband: Yes

Teacher: Are you hungry?

Husband: No

Teacher: Do you want to eat? Will You eat? How are you? *(caresses his hair)*

Husband: Fine, but I see you every day and this film comes today.
(withdraws from her)

Teacher: Just relax and say something to me. *(stands in front of him, blocking his view)*

Husband: Won't you move a little. *(beckons with his hand)*

Narrator: Do you know her? She is John's teacher and he meets her every day in the school.

Transition – Actors build the classroom and take their place.

8. At the school

Teacher: *calling the name*
Asian: I'm sorry I am late.
Teacher: Sit down!
Asian: Can I say something?
Teacher: Wait! Smith?! John Smith?!
John is trying to get to the seat unnoticed, but the teacher walks down to him.
Teacher: John I know that you have a lot of problems at home. Maybe we can talk about it after the lesson?
John: OK
Narrator: Of course this is just a dream. Let's see what really happens to John at school.
Time is turning back; the action goes backwards.
John is trying to get to the seat unnoticed, but he slams the door very hard.
Teacher: faster! You are always late! You have a lot of problems at home, but that is not my business. Go to the psychologist!
Asian: Can I say something?
Teacher: Wait! Jens get up. How much is 3 and 5? *(everybody whispers 8)*
Jens: 8



Teacher: Excellent. John, get up, please. John! How much is 22 times 151?
Everybody looks bewildered
John: 5?
Teacher: You are a stupid boy, sit down!
Asian: Teacher, I really need to say something!
Teacher: Shut up!
John: *(gets up)* Why don't you shut up, alien! Go back to your planet!
Everybody applauds
Asian: Fuck you, fuck you, and fuck you *(points at the teacher and leaves)*
Song – *(all students singing)* “We don't need no education
We don't need no full control
Dark sarcasm in the classroom
Hey, teacher leave the kids alone”

9. Before the party

Narrator: Now John is 18 years old and he knows something about racism and violence, and he knows a lot about drugs.
John's sister is playing her violin; John is getting ready to go to the party.



Sister: Where are you going?
John: I'm going to the party.
Sister: Can I go with you?
John: No, the party is not for you: You are too young. Why don't you play your violin? *(He leaves)*
Sister Makes her violin screech and stamps her foot in dismay.



10. The party

party, music, dancing



John: I love you, baby:
Girlfriend: I love you, too.
John: You are so beautiful. *(takes some cocaine)*
Girlfriend: What are you doing?!
John: None of your business!
Girlfriend: You promised me not to do it anymore.
John: Leave me alone!
Girlfriend leaves devastated. John smokes some hashies and dances alone. John's sister turns up at the party.
Sister: Hey, John!
John: Sister what are you doing here?
Sister: But I said, I would come.
Two friends of John are entering, rather drunk and in a good mood.
Friends: Hey, John my good friend!
John: My friends!
Friends: What a beautiful girl.
John: It is my sister.
Friends: It's OK, we will look after her. Let's dance. *(they leave with her)*
John sees a girl - music stops - everybody freezes while they meet - they dance close together.
Song – "Love me tender"
The girl's friend reappears, wants her back. They fight and John is very violent. The girl runs away. Now John's sister returns
Sister: John help me!
John: Sister!

11. At John's

Narrator: Now John is 35 years old and he has got a little daughter. Her name is Mary. And he drinks a lot and takes some drugs.



Crying

John: Make her quiet!

The baby still cries.

John: Make her sleep!

The baby still cries.

John: I can't stand it!

The baby cries even louder.

Song - The Danes sing lullaby - "Elefantens vuggevis"



John: Shut up!

Transition / Song – "Kalinka Kalinka" everybody run and jump around.

12. Christmas at John's

Narrator: Now Mary is fourteen years old. She has learned a lot from her father John. On a very special evening something sad happens.

Song – Christmas song “Silent night” in Danish, German and Polish, one after the other and finely together.



Mum: Mary, come sit at the table, it's Christmas.

Mary: Mum! I don't want to sit with him, I hate him.

Mum: Why do you hate your father so much?

Mary: I don't want to talk about it

John: Go to the kitchen, woman! Now!

John: Mary, come to me.

Mary: I don't want to...

John walks over to Mary and starts fondling her.

Mary: Leave me alone!

She runs to the table and picks up a knife. John walks towards her slowly and opens his belt and the trousers. Mary screams and stabs him. Mary throws herself beside her father.

Mary: Oh my god, what have I done?! Mom! Mom!

Mum: What 's happened?!

Mary: I don't know, the knife, and he kept walking and I killed – but I don't know – I just – just the knife – in my hand... I don' know...



Two people symbolising good and bad enter and talk to Mary.

- Bad: It's your fault. You killed him. All these sad people, friends, family.
 Good: But it is not your fault. He did it himself. He did it to you. You had no choice. He killed you more than the knife you put into his chest killed him.
 Bad: You killed him. And he loved you. You killed him.
 Good: No, he did. He ruined you. He destroyed you. He took something away from you that you will never get back. Maybe you did it on purpose.
 Mary: But he is my father!
 Narrator: This is the end of John's story, but it is just a story. Now it is up to you to change the reality.
 Song – "Don't worry, be happy „Everybody All together to the front o singing.
Black-out
 Song – "Stay or get away"



THE END