



TheAltre

**INNOVATIVE THEATRE PROJECT
- WORKSHOP**

www.theaitre.com (Prague, CZ)



CAN A ROBOT AND A THEATRE HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON?

100 years ago, the word “robot” was invented by the Czechoslovak brothers Karel and Josef Čapek. The word appeared for the first time in Karel’s theatre play titled R.U.R. premiered in 1921. The play is about humanoid robots who seem happy to work for humans at first, but later a robot rebellion leads to the extinction of the human race. The play achieved a fast international success when it was performed not only in Prague but also in London, New York or Chicago.

Karel Čapek was one of the first people who thought of a potential threat if machine-robot inventions happen too fast or without a regulation. Did he predict the threats of the 21st century? Or... aren’t robots a source of danger to us? So far, robots can perform many quite easy tasks, but we want to challenge them!

To celebrate the centenary of invention of the word “robot” we wanted to start a project to know if a robot can write a theatre play. Do you think artificial intelligence is able to create an enjoyable theatre script? **Can a robot become a playwright like its own father Karel Čapek 100 years ago? We found out the answer on 26 February 2021 during a premiere of the first play written by AI titled “AI: When a Robot Writes a Play”. The play was watched on 18 450 devices (possibly by up to 30 000 people).**

After the premiere, we allowed public to see this play online for a few days. Then – when COVID-19 allows it – we will bring the production to the stage of Svanda theatre in Prague. And perhaps elsewhere upon a discussion. The future of the project is still open but we will continue with the scientific research and then a premiere of a new play will be announced for 2022.

Why are we doing this? Most people do not know what today’s robots are capable of. Sometimes they fear robots’ abilities which are not real and sometimes they do not want to admit that we are surrounded by robots almost everywhere. We want to start a conversation about what robots of today can and cannot do and where they should and should not be used.

AI: WHEN ROBOT LEADS A WORKSHOP

I. 1 DAY WORKSHOP: THE WRITING TOOL OF THE FUTURE

THE WRITING TOOL OF THE FUTURE

Can robot write a play? How does its writing process look like? What is the input that can spark creativity of AI in order to write desired scene? How far has the modern technology evolved in terms of robotic writing. The creators of the first ever computer-written play will present you the TheAltre project which explores the possibilities of artificial intelligence in the playwriting field.

Rudolf Rosa will explain the origin of the project from a technical view and he will share his experience in training a computer in order to write theatre lines.

David Košťák will show students how to work with a program that will possibly become the writing tool of the future. He will demonstrate the limits and the potential of the used software. Under his supervision students will get chance to try working with a robot on a script for themselves.



II. 2 DAYS WORKSHOP:

THE WRITING TOOL OF THE FUTURE + TO BREATHE A SOUL IN

a) THE WRITING TOOL OF THE FUTURE

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b) TO BREATHE A SOUL IN

How else to verify theatre play then to allow it to be read out loud! Director Daniel Hrbek who directed the first ever robot-written play will explain to students of acting what is the biggest struggle when working with text completely developed by computer. He will lead them through the difficult process of finding their own truth in the text in order to portray believable characters on stage that weren't created by a living playwright but by a robot that has only partial knowledge of human logic and psychology. Daniel Hrbek will go through scenes generated in Writing Tool of the Future part of the workshop and together with students he will explore ways how to breathe soul into scenes that were written not by a human but by modern technology.

III. MULTIPLE DAYS WORKSHOP (3-5 DAYS): THE WRITING TOOL OF THE FUTURE + TO BREATHE A SOUL IN + LIVING CIRCUITS

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c) LIVING CIRCUITS

Daniel Hrbek will work with students of directing and acting in order to verify computer-written scenes through actor interpretation on a stage. After exploring of all the possibilities of the robot's text he will lead them through necessary process of specific interpretation in time and space in order to condense material of robotic writing into cohesive play. The workshop will end with a presentation in form of stage reading.



Josef Čapek's robot

AI: WHEN A ROBOT WRITES A PLAY

About the play: The story of the robot, which after the death of its master was left at the mercy of various individuals of human society, balances on a thin line between absurd black comedy with existential drama.

SVANDA THEATRE, Premiere Date: 26. 2. 2021, www.svandovodivadlo.cz

PRODUCTION TEAM

AUTHOR: AI

DIRECTOR: Daniel Hrbek

PROJECT AUTHOR: Tomáš Studeník

STAGE DESIGN: Martin Šimek

COSTUMES: Paulína Bočková

DRAMATURGY: Martina Kinská, David Košťák

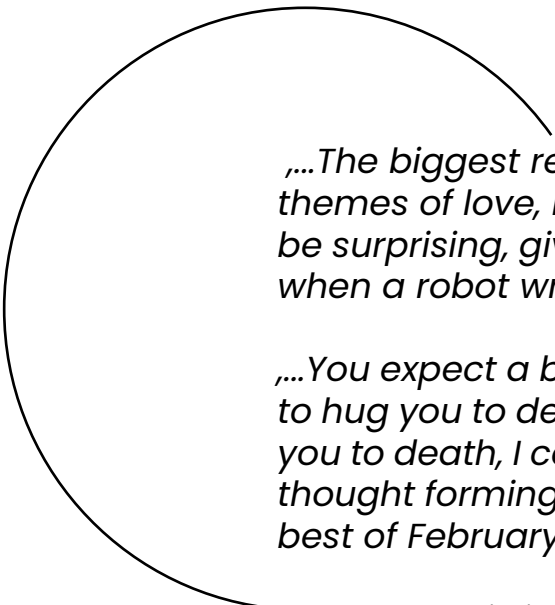
CHOREOGRAPHY: Martin Páček

ASSISTENT TO DIRECTOR: Vojtěch Nejedlý

STAGE MANAGER: Blanka Popková

PRODUCTION: Tereza Marková

CAST: Jacob Erftemeijer, Denisa Barešová, Andrea Buršová, Petr Buchta, Oskar Hes/Marek Frňka, Tomáš Petřík



„...The biggest revelation, though, is that while a computer’s imagination touches, somewhat randomly, on themes of love, loneliness, clowning and performance, it is most often obsessing about sex, which may not be surprising, given the prevalence of internet pornography...” (On the scene, like a sex-obsessed machine: when a robot writes a play, The Guardian, Arifa Akbar)

„...You expect a bit of mumbo-jumbo in a sci-fi story and this doesn’t disappoint. “I love you so much, I want to hug you to death,” intones the man-machine to a headband-wearing authority figure. Then: “If I can hug you to death, I can hug you to life too.” Parrot-like verbiage, perhaps, but isn’t there a little suggestion of real thought forming, along with the stirrings of will, need and desire?...” (AI: When a Robot Writes a Play, plus the best of February’s online theatre & comedy, The Telegraph, Dominic Cavendish)

„...The result is intriguing. Apparently, the computer program is fine producing dialogue but not very good at plot or group conversation so this is a sequence of duologues. It was given a situation and a first line and carried on from there but, without any human prompting, introduced references to pressure on hospitals and the US President. Where did they come from?...” (British Theatre Guide, Howard Loxton)



1. *Staphylococcus aureus* (Gram +)
 2. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (Gram +)
 3. *Escherichia coli* (Gram -)
 4. *Salmonella enteritidis* (Gram -)
 5. *Shigella flexneri* (Gram -)
 6. *Yersinia enterocolitica* (Gram -)
 7. *Campylobacter jejuni* (Gram -)
 8. *Legionella pneumophila* (Gram -)
 9. *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Gram -)
 10. *Coccidioides immitis* (Fungus)
 11. *Aspergillus fumigatus* (Fungus)
 12. *Histoplasma capsulatum* (Fungus)
 13. *Cryptosporidium parvum* (Protozoan)
 14. *Toxoplasma gondii* (Protozoan)
 15. *Naegleria fowleri* (Protozoan)

AI:TEACHERS

RUDOLF ROSA

MACHINE LEARNING EXPERT & PROJECT LEAD

Rosa Rudolf is a researcher at MFF UK (Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University), and is an expert in multilingual language processing & robopsychologist. Rudolf has participated in many national and international research projects and supervises several theses in language generation.

DANIEL HRBEK (www.broadwayworld.com/people/Daniel-Hrbek)

THEATRE DIRECTOR & MANAGING DIRECTOR

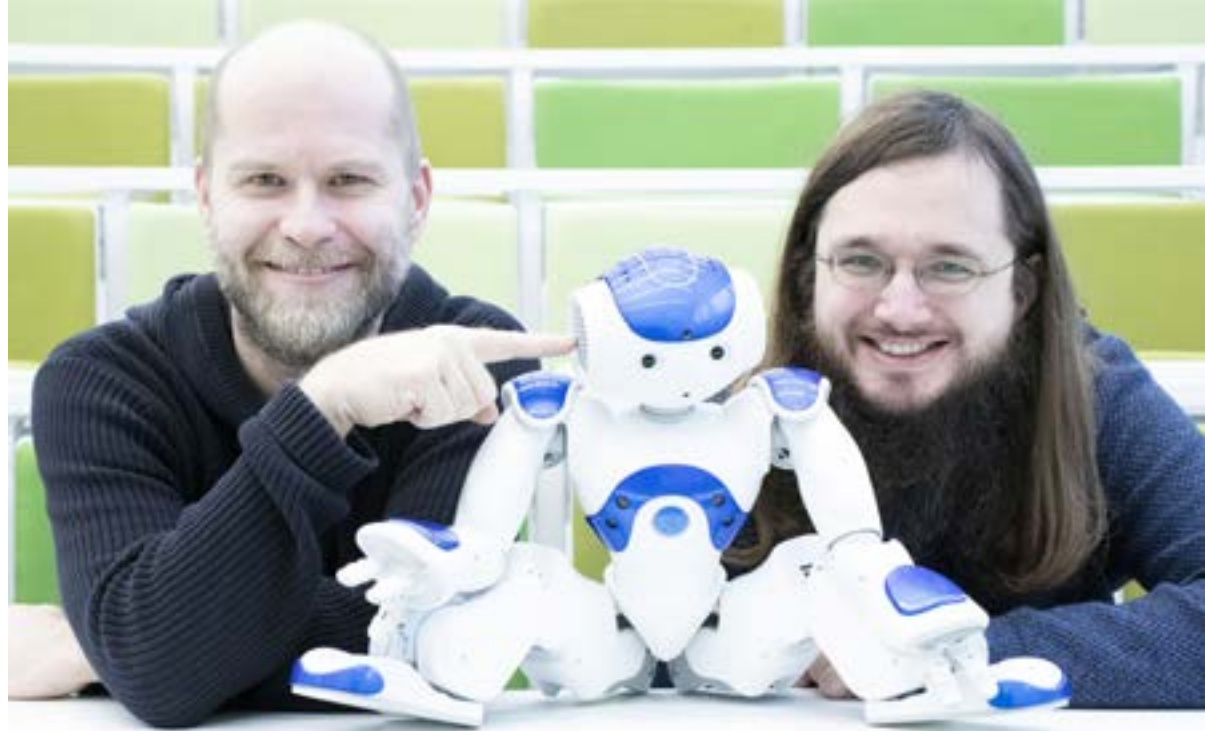
Hrbek Daniel has been managing director of Svanda Theatre ever since 1999 and a pedagogue of acting and directing at DAMU (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague). In Svanda Theatre, he has been a director of 18 performances. In 1994 he founded the highly regarded theatre company called CD 94 and he ran it for 8 years as an artistic director performing in various European countries. Before he became performance director and managing director of Svanda Theatre, he was an actor in various Czech prestigious theatres for many years. His show The Good and the True was successfully put on Broadway stage in New York, but also in Washington, in Great Britain and in Belgium. He has experience with international co-production workshops for students (DAMU & Georgetown University in Washington DC, USA; DAMU & The New School of Drama in New York, USA).

DAVID KOŠŤÁK

PLAYWRIGHT & DRAMATURGE

Košťák David is a playwright and a dramaturge of Svanda Theatre. He was born in 1991 in Prague. He graduated in Theory and criticism of theatre at Prague's DAMU (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague). His own plays were performed in multiple European theatres and were well accepted. David also writes poems and translates theatre plays. He has experience with international co-production workshops for students (DAMU & Georgetown University in Washington DC, USA; DAMU & The New School of Drama in New York, USA).

Daniel Hrbek, Robot, Rudolf Rosa



David Košťák
in front of the Svanda Theatre

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