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# I HOPE I WOULDN'T MEET MYSELF TODAY

*Saturday, May 11, 2019, 8 p.m.*

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“What matters is not whether a play is light-hearted or serious, but—be it comedic or otherwise—whether it speaks to people about their problems, how it speaks to them, what impact it has on them. . . We wish only to put on plays that meet certain standards of urgency, that are intellectually penetrating, complex, challenging, and powerful.”

-- Vaclav Havel, “The Kind of Theater We Want to Do”  
from a letter to Alfred Radok, August 4, 1963

**Václav Havel**  
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NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
**BEN KALLOS**

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The program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Rehearsal for Truth Spring Weekend showcases stage readings from emerging Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, and Slovak playwrights translated into English. The program includes a full length Romanian production. The plays, featuring local New York performers and directors, reflect on current social and political issues.

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## The Play

Based on the Nobel-laureate Herta Müller's grim novel with the same title about life in the oppressive years of communist Romania, ***'I Hope I Wouldn't Meet Myself Today'*** depicts the insidious terror, moral decay and personal redemption through the destiny of a young woman torn apart by the painful failure of an unhappy marriage, the humiliations of everyday life in a dictatorship and the harassments of which she is subjected by the feared Securitate. Unfolding as a long, tormented monologue by the heroine herself, the performance celebrates the inner strength and courage of an ordinary woman who refuses to surrender her dignity and hope in the most difficult circumstances.

## Writer

**Herta Müller** was born in Nițchidorf, Timiș County, Romania, the daughter of Swabian farmers. Her family was part of Romania's German minority and her mother was deported to a labor camp in the Soviet Union after World War II. Müller read German studies and Romanian literature at Timisoara University. In 1976, she began working as a translator for an engineering company, but in 1979 she was dismissed for her refusal to cooperate with the Securitate, the Communist regime's secret police. Her first book was published in Romania (in German) in 1982, and appeared only in a censored version. In 1987, Müller left for Germany with her husband, novelist Richard Wagner. In 1995 Müller was awarded membership to the German Academy for Writing and Poetry. In 1997 she withdrew from the PEN center of Germany in protest of its merge with the former German Democratic Republic branch. The Swedish Academy awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize in Literature to Müller, "who, with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed." She currently lives in Berlin, Germany.

The performance *I Hope I Wouldn't Meet Myself Today* is a dramatization of Müller's book which was translated into English under the title *The Appointment*. The story revolves around a Romanian worker who is terrorized by the Ceausescu's Securitate.

## **Translator / Director / Actress**

**Simona Maicanescu** is an actress who has performed in diverse rolls, including Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Solange in *The Maids*. She has worked in both Romania and France under directors Sanda Manu, Cătălina Buzoianu, Silviu Purcărete, Lucian Pintilie, Andrei Serban, Tompa Gabor, Sandu Dabija. She has recently branched out into new realms as both playwright and translator with her adaptation of Herta Müller's book *I Hope I Wouldn't Meet Myself Today*. She has a Masters degree from the Bucharest Academy of Arts.

From Simona's Workbook:

**New York, February 3, 2013** – La Mama Theater:

It's the last night performing *The Fever* by Wallace Shawn in the intimate space of La Mama Theatre. They are looking forward to having me back but this time with a European play. After years of reading and research I finally found the shell that held this precious pearl.

**New York, May 9, 2019** – Romanian Cultural Institute:

Even though *I Hope I Wouldn't Meet Myself Today* has its roots in a harsh history, it's a story about each of us, more or less trapped within our own selves. It's a sharp and unforgiving blade slaying throughout our insides. My inner abyss got shaken, flowing up towards the sky, empowering me to stand up on stage again. There, with each word I speak, I shall respect and salute any woman in this world who can say NO to humiliation, betrayal and nothingness. I shall honor their strength to either survive or die with dignity for they were never alone in the lion's den. There is hope that, thanks to a lover, a best friend or even a lark singing up in the sky, tomorrow will be a new day!