

*In 1997 The Colonel Bird is awarded by Harold Pinter with World winner in the International Competition for new Drama of British council. Since then the play has translated and published in 20 languages and has over 50 produces in Europe, America and Asia.*

## **THE COLONEL BIRD**

by HRISTO BOYTCHEV

*Synopsis*

The War in Yugoslavia...

A U.N. humanitarian aid package falls in a distant psychiatric hospital.

The package contains some canned food and K-FOR uniforms.

The patients put on the uniforms and embark on a peace-keeping mission.

It turns out they are the only normal people in the mindlessness of the war.

Here are some details:

The Beginning - A young doctor is sent to a small psychiatric hospital.

The patients all have minor mental disorders, except for a former Colonel, who is completely catatonic. Winter comes along and the snow blocks the mountain roads. Everyone is faced with a cold and hungry death, but one night a lost U.N. pilot drops a humanitarian aid package, which saves their lives...

The uniform awakens the Colonel's war instincts. His schizophrenia moves into an active phase, and he begins to command the patients. Frightened by his madness, they comply. The Colonel turns out to be a strict, but fair commander. He brings a military order to the asylum, which turns out to be quite functional...

The patients get carried away at playing war and begin to believe they are real soldiers. Their former symptoms of mental illness vanish. They are transformed into well ordered, disciplined commandos. The young doctor decides to observe the incident, and patent it as a new form of therapy.

After a public referendum, the patients declare the clinic as an independent country, and want to join with European Union...

They send letters by carrier-pigeons to the European parliament in Strasbourg. One day, a bird returns with a reply - an ornithological ring on its leg, engraved with the initials DII. The Colonel deciphers it as: "Depart on 01.01."

Dressed in UN uniforms, they journey through Serbia towards Strasbourg.

In Serbia they join up with the French K-FOR division and arrive in Strasbourg.

Their disappointment is immense when they find out that no one wants them.

Distraught, the Colonel falls back into a state of depression, oblivious

to the world around him. The doctor takes command of the troop,

and the daily military drills in front of the Strasbourg Cathedral continue...