

The Plum Yard



What is the Plum Yard?

- The Plum Yard is an independent theatre, cultural, community and educational center located in small village in southern Czech republic. Its building underwent a re-functionalizing reconstruction a few years ago.



Continuo Theatre and the beginning of The Plum Yard

- It started with Continuo Theatre, awarded Czech independent alternative theatre that deals with puppet theatre, physical and dance theatre, site-specific theatre projects.



Continuo Theatre and the beginning of The Plum Yard

- Continuo Theatre was established in 1993 by a couple Helena Štourač and Pavel Štourač, at that time students of set-design at DAMU in Prague as an independent theatre company willing to create a space and means for realization of their preferred theatre aesthetic (it was not possible to realize it in state-subsidized theatres).



The beginning of The Plum Yard (cca. 1995 - 2005)

- After renting some rehearsal spaces in Prague, Vodňany and Třeboň for some years, they earned some money and in 1995 they bought an old, abandoned, typical farm house in South Bohemian village Malovice (about 650 people). Because the house was surrounded by many plum trees, they called the place The Plum Yard.



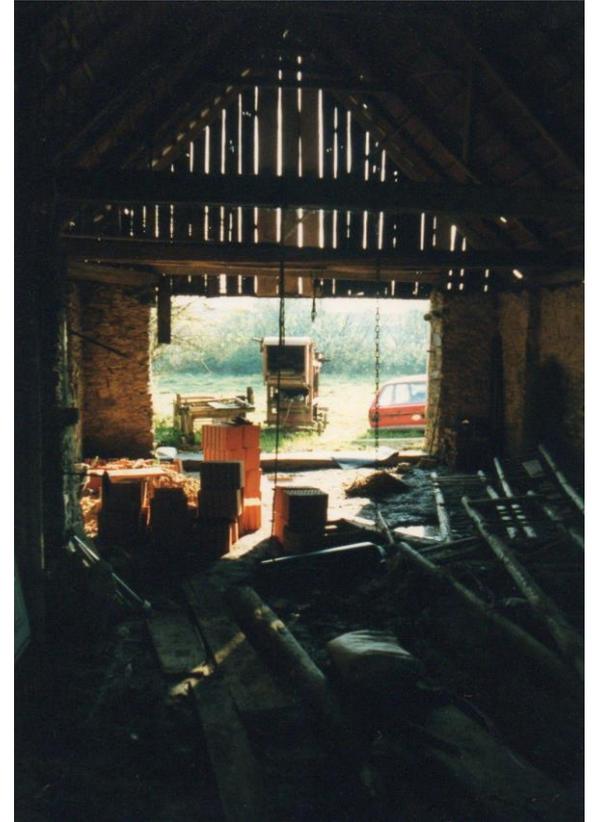
The beginning of The Plum Yard (cca. 1995 - 2005)

- The Plum Yard served only as a space for life and rehearsals of Continuo Theatre at that time.



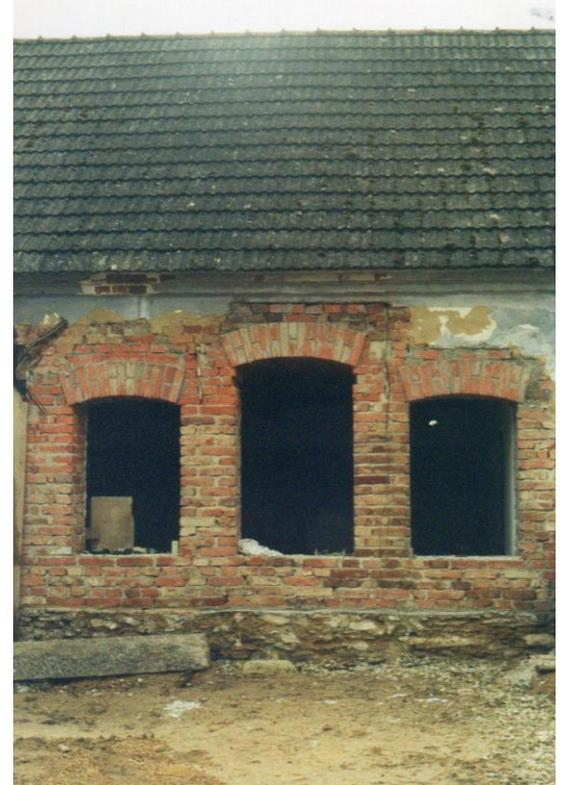
The beginning of The Plum Yard (cca. 1995 - 2005)

- They started small home-made, do-it yourself, partial reconstructions to adapt the place to the needs of theatre creation with their own finances – places rehearsing, organization, workshops, etc. but also kitchen, bathrooms and living quarters because Continuo is a community theatre what means its members are also living together. This was the first re-functionalization of the building and place.



The beginning of The Plum Yard (cca. 1995 - 2005)

- This phase of The Plum Yard's life lasted from about 1995 when they bought the farm until 2015 when they started with the big reconstruction



The Plum Yard before the big reconstruction (cca. 2005 - 2015)



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Reconstruction (2015)

- Always, there was an idea to create a modern cultural, community and education center out of The Plum Yard. Pavel Štourač, Continuo Theatre Company director and company's manager Vít Krajčovič learned about the possibilities of the EU funds. They applied for *Regional Operation Program* call with the project of The Plum Yard reconstruction. The decision and first proposal was made fast. They were awarded the grant of about 1 million Euro to do the reconstruction.



Reconstruction (2015)

- Architectural concept for the future center was made by Helena and Pavel Štourač. The concrete, detailed and proper plan was made by NOLIMAT architectural atelier from Czech Budějovice.



Reconstruction (2015)

- Reconstruction lasted from January to June 2015. It was organized by company's director Pavel Štourač and its manager Vít Krajčovic, mostly. It was done by professional construction companies but Continuo's actors worked on the construction site a lot, also. Basically any other activity of the theatre stopped for the time.



Reconstruction (2015)

- Some problems happened during the reconstruction: company members were leaving and the group actually ceased to exist and needed to be re-created. And in the end, the reconstruction was much more expensive than they expected. Theatre paid the rest of few hundreds thousands euros by itself.



Reconstruction (2015)

- The result – the building, its function, and technical equipment as professional lights and soundboards for example (they was also part of the grant) – was an object of the 5 years long thorough monitoring and controls.



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- The Plum Yard has many modern and functional spaces now:

- three rehearsing rooms – two bigger, one smaller - suitable for performing also (one of them was not part of the reconstruction, it was built by Continuo before) with all necessary technical equipment (sound, light, video)
- storage room for technical equipment, costumes and props
- carving and carpentry workshop
- set-design atelier for making costumes, parts of set-design, puppets, masks, etc.
- music atelier
- organization and administration office
- director's office
- technical rooms (e.g. heating system room)
- rooms residential accommodation for about 20 – 30 people
- social, meeting and living room for the company, students and residents, so called "bar"
- kitchen
- laundry and personal hygiene room for the company



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- The goal of the reconstruction was to sustain as much of the old building as it was possible. Therefore, the old genius loci is somehow still present there. The new parts and old parts of the building are interconnected.



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- Since 2015 until now, the Plum Yard became not only the living and work space of Continuo Theatre but also a stand-alone cultural, pedagogical and community center.



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- Therefore, a NGO The Plum Yard was established, to take care of the building, place and its activities. It is run by the same people as Continuo Theatre is but the two are not the same legal and organizational entities.



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- The running and maintenance of the center are not covered financially from any grants. Just its activities are financed from the grants from:
 - Czech Ministry of Culture
 - Czech State Fund of Culture
 - Region of South Bohemia
- Also, it has income from the residencies' fees.
- The budget of The Plum Yard is about 40 000 Euros per year.



The state of The Plum Yard after the reconstruction (after 2015)

- The Plum Yard has its director and a production team. Important decisions are made by the whole team.



The Plum Yard's Activities (after 2015)

- Because it was the dream of founders of The Plum Yard to create a building full of activities there, the range of what the center does, is wide.
- The Plum Yard is a Cultural, Pedagogical, Residency (and partially community) Center. The only of its kind in Czech republic - working in the village. It does the following:



The Plum Yard's Activities (after 2015)

1. Cultural activities:

- activities of the Continuo Theatre (rehearsing, performing)
- regular monthly program of non-Continuo shows for adults, including alternative, dance, physical and puppet theatre for adults (with attempt to bring in quality and artistic, non-commercial dramaturgy)
- once a month a show for children
- festival of selected shows for all age members from families from the neighborhood



The Plum Yard's Activities (after 2015)

2. Pedagogical activities:

- pedagogical programs of Continuo Theatre for students of theatre universities from Czech Republic, Great Britain, Switzerland and Italy (in co-production)
- theatre-pedagogical events by Continuo theatre for high school and university students – it performs a show and accompanies is by a lecture, discussion with an expert, etc.
- Festival of Freedom related to events of the velvet revolution, for high school and university students
- pedagogical programs with workshops for local (few kilometers radius around Malovice) children from the kindergartens
- summer camp with theatre and visual activities for children from the neighborhood



The Plum Yard's Activities (after 2015)

3. Artistic residencies:

- for artists from both the Czech republic and abroad
- work-in-progress presentations coming out from these residencies are presented to local audience (many times for people from the village)



The Plum Yard's Activities (after 2015)

4. Community-related activities:

- Christmas meetings for the people from the village
- The Children's day with a program
- etc.



!! HELP WANTED !!

- If you want to help The Plum Yard grow, you can propose a suggestion of how to cultivate the surrounding land, grounds around the building. They are still in the shape as the reconstruction left them and the team did not have time to deal with it so far. Any help with suggestions of how to cultivate it, use it, change it, develop its function would be appreciated. If you are interested, you can contact me at turosikmarek@gmail.com. Thank you!

Thank you for staying with this presentation!

