



STUDENT
MATINEE
PROGRAM

Discovery Guide

“Everyone’s
gonna die,
but the bein’
forgotten part
that is what’s
getting me.”

—Gavrilo

Welcome to Center Theatre Group’s production of the World premiere of *Archduke* by Rajiv Joseph, which follows a group of young men on their surprising journey from high school to terrorism, and to the event that started World War I: the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on June 28, 1914.

We meet three young men—**Gavrilo**, **Nedejiko**, and **Trifko**—in Belgrade, Serbia. Poor and alone, each is diagnosed with tuberculosis and told he only has a few months to live. They have nothing to lose, which makes them the perfect recruits for a secret, violent organization fighting for Serbian independence. **Apis**, the organization’s charismatic leader, explains to them that they have two options: die from a senseless illness and be forgotten, or take action and be remembered forever. All they have to do is pull the trigger.

Archduke



What can happen
when a person feels
like they have nothing
left to lose?

Why is the idea of being
forgotten frightening?
Is it important to you
to be remembered?
What do you hope to be
remembered for?



TIME AND PLACE

1914. The central European cities of Belgrade (the capital of Serbia) and Sarajevo (the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina). Both countries had recently been taken over by the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

For much of its 2,000-year history, the country of Serbia—which sits in the center of Southeastern Europe’s Balkan Peninsula—had been invaded, conquered, and ruled by outsiders, often with extreme violence. Many Serbs dreamed of an independent nation of their own—a country that would be united by a shared language, shared culture, and shared religion (Serbs were majority Christians; Austro-Hungarians were majority Catholic; and Ottomans were Muslim).

Many felt they could only break free of Austria-Hungary through rebellion. Several underground rebel groups were formed, most notoriously The Black Hand, a secret nationalist organization willing to combat violence with violence in order to establish an independent Serbian nation.

In June 1914, The Black Hand recruited a small group of young men to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne and soon to be king of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Exactly one month after the assassination, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Germany sided with Austria-Hungary, and Russia, Belgium, France, and Great Britain took Serbia’s side, beginning World War I.

The characters we meet in *Archduke* live in a country where outsiders make the decisions and have the power.

What does it feel like when someone has power over you?

What would you do if you found yourself ruled by someone who didn’t know your culture or values?

“We are not meant to be ruled by men who do not share our past.”

—Apis

“The byproduct of oppression... our young men and women, unable to breath,

begin to bleed from their very lungs.”

—Apis

REAL PEOPLE, REAL EVENTS—



Gavrilo Princip
The Assassin

Princip was born in a small town in present-day northwest Bosnia. In 1912, at age 19, he traveled to Belgrade after being expelled from his last year of high school and volunteered to join Serbian rebels fighting against Turkey. The rebels, however, would not take him because of his poor health.

The assassination took place just two weeks before his 20th birthday. Since Princip was a minor, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison instead of receiving a death sentence. He died of tuberculosis in a prison hospital in 1918.



The people we meet and the events we witness in *Archduke* are real, based on historical facts.



Dragutin “Apis” Dimitrijevic
The Mastermind

Apis founded The Black Hand to remove foreign rule permanently, liberating all Serbs and creating an independent Kingdom of Serbia.

He had a reputation for extreme violence, and even before organizing the plot to kill the Archduke, was already famous for his brutal involvement in other assassinations and his ability to recruit young people for the nationalist movement.

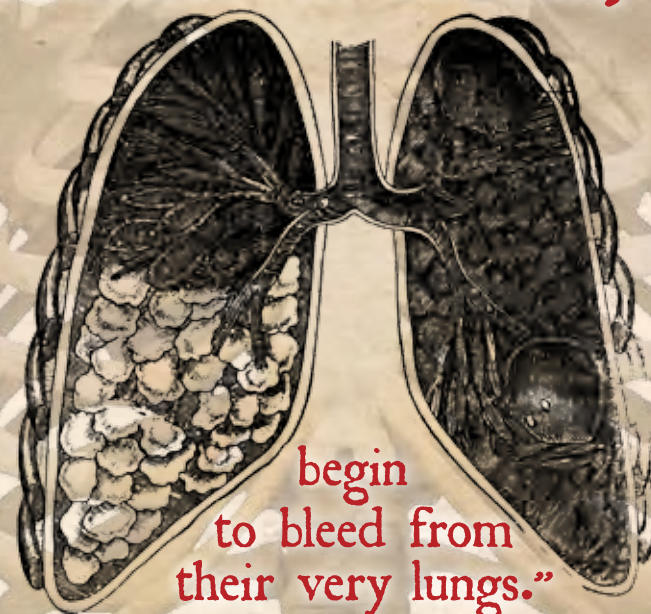
Following the assassination of Ferdinand, Apis was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by firing squad.

“He was real. This was a man here once.”

—Gavrilo

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease that most often affects the lungs. If left untreated, TB kills about half of those infected, by destroying the body’s ability to process oxygen and patients eventually suffocate. We now have vaccines and treatments, but still one-third of the world’s population is thought to be infected with TB.



WHAT THE HISTORY BOOKS DON'T TELL US

Playwright Rajiv Joseph was curious about the gaps in the historical record—what the facts (names, places, times, dates)—don’t tell us. He wanted to know who these men were as living, breathing, feeling people.

We don’t always remember that historical figures were people much like us.

What would it be like to be a teenager living in Serbia over 100 years ago? Does focusing on the people, change the way you think about the history?

Why tell a story about an event in the past?

Can learning history change our actions in the present? What can history tell us about our world today?

WELCOME TO THE THEATRE!

WHERE?

Archduke will be performed at Center Theatre Group's Mark Taper Forum in downtown Los Angeles.

Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group, a nonprofit organization, is one of the largest and most active theatre companies in the nation, programming shows year-round at the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum in Downtown Los Angeles and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Downtown Culver City.

WHO?

Theatre involves many people working together to tell a story: Playwright, director, actors, designers, musicians, stage manager, crew members, make-up artists, house manager, ushers, maintenance staff, producers, educators, administrative staff.

WHAT?

Theatre is LIVE, right there in front of you, in real time. The performers respond to the way you listen, laugh, gasp and applaud. Live theatre can't happen without you!



The real Trifko Grabež, Nedeljko Čabrinović and Gavrilo Princip.

WHY?

"When those two things collide,
the political forces of the world
and the primal nature of one's
own being, sparks fly...

that intersection of the
primal and the political
has been the guiding force
for me as the playwright."

—Rajiv Joseph

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