



**RADIO SLOVENIA**

**Uredništvo igranega programa**

Goran Gluvić

# **SMRT MAJAKOVSKEGA**

Radijska igra

## **MAYAKOVSKY'S DEATH**

by Goran Gluvić

(Radioplay)

Translated by Henrik Ciglić

## ABOUT THE PLAY

MAYAKOVSKY'S DEATH, a radioplay written by Goran Gluvić, the Slovene author, is an original detective story dealing with political repression over art, artists and people in general. As a topic the author restores the circumstances that led, on April 14th, 1930, to the death of Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, the Soviet poet, although a greater attention should be given to Gluvić's formative procedure of the play which is clearly presented as an immanent communicological re-search of the Mayakovsky's case - how the information about the Mayakovsky's suicide in fact sprang up and how the variable elements of this information was given a completely new meaning. This author's intention is in the play presented in such a way that its course of events assumes a bipartite form. First of all he recapitulates the political conditions in the last few days of the poet's life as recorded by history and testified by his friends. To this the author added a fictional segment - tolerated by *licentia poetica* - and with it threw light upon the relationship between Mayakovsky and Yessenin who had committed suicide five years earlier. In accordance with his avantgarde poetics Mayakovsky rejected Yessenin's poetry and carried out a very sharp controversy with the verses from Yessenin's last poem, i.e. „in this life dying isn't something new, but on the other hand living isn't something newer either,„. This intense reaction was by giving the deceased Yessenin the role of a man who confronts Mayakovsky and brings him a message from the secret police saying that the state needs him as a silent hero. In the second part, however, the same events are reconstructed upon a supposition that the facts about the Mayakovsky's death were made up by the Soviet authorities in a way that most suited their political interests, what meant that they had to silence the poet's critical mind. Following this suspicion the author incorporated in his play some fictional and missing scenes from the last two days of the poet's life which in the end lead to a new statement, i.e. that Mayakovsky was a victim of the secret police. But in spite of this provocative discovery, Gluvić at the end of the play acknowledges the historically established statement by considering the following sentences from the Mayakovsky's farewell letter: „Do not blame anybody for my death and, I beg you, do not machinate..“



(The setting: Moscow, April 12th to 14th, 1930)

(Dripping water... then music...)

**Narrator:** On December 28th, 1925 Sergey Yessenin committed suicide in a Leningrad hotel. The entire Soviet population was shocked by the death of this popular poet. There were numerous writers who virtually competed among themselves in publishing the most original necrology or poem dedicated to the dead poet. One of them was Mayakovsky who, however, about five years later committed suicide as well. This happened on April 14th, 1930.

(Music...)

**Narrator:** On April 12th, 1930 Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky and Alexander Dovzhenko were having a discussion at the Hertzena Club, the seat of the Association of Soviet Writers. Their talking point: Dovzhenko's film „The Earth“.

**Mayakovsky:** I've heard that you had some trouble with your new film.

**Dovzhenko:** That's right. Have you seen it?

**Mayakovsky:** Yes, four days ago in the Club.

**Dovzhenko:** I'd like to hear your opinion about it.

**Mayakovsky:** Well, what can I say to you? To be honest I don't know what's going on lately... I don't understand anything any more... or I don't want to. Perhaps I should see the film again.

**Dovzhenko:** But in its original form you won't see it again, for the government's editors - or rather tailors - have already done the work.

**Mayakovsky:** Already?

**Dovzhenko:** I'm afraid so. This means the end of our art. That bloody Russian Proletarian Writers' Union has achieved its aim. There are new surrogates coming.

**Mayakovsky:** In fact it was all over ages ago - even before it started. We were dreaming a beautiful dream, so let's wake up, comrades, or let's have even a deeper sleep from which there will be no recovery.

**Dovzhenko:** What an unusual verse. For you, I mean. As if Yessenin spoke from within your soul.

**Mayakovsky:** Listen, I saw your film and I'm happy to have seen it.

**Narrator:** An official interrupted them, letting Mayakovsky know that he was wanted on the phone.

**Official:** Excuse me, comrade Mayakovsky, but there's somebody on the phone for you.

**Mayakovsky:** Did he introduce himself?

**Official:** I'm afraid not.

**Mayakovsky:** Thank you. Excuse me for a moment, my friend. (Musical accentuation... In a shower cubicle...) Mayakovsky here.

**Agent:** (through the shower nozzle) Listen, puppy!

**Mayakovsky:** Puppy? How dare you to speak like that to me! Who are you?

**Agent:** Don't worry, you'll find out. We are going to meet soon!

**Mayakovsky:** Why do you keep molesting me? Your impertinence really has no limits at all. If you are a man - although I doubt this very much - then come to me personally!

**Agent:** Don't go away yet. I wouldn't advise you to do that.

**Mayakovsky:** What do you want?

**Agent:** The regime is neither play nor hymn but simply orders. We have no need for the soul you leave on the clothes-rack like a coat. From now on we shall cooperate much more genuinely than before.

**Mayakovsky:** More genuinely?

**Agent:** Well, this is the expression by a policeman who wanted to become a poet, or the expression by a poet who wanted to become a policeman.

**Mayakovsky:** What are you blubbering about?

**Agent:** There are enemies all around us. But you don't seem interested in them at all. You merely write poems and nothing else. But soon we'll put an end to it. You've made a great mistake when you wrote the play entitled „The Shower... But we are giving you a chance to redeem yourself.

**Mayakovsky:** Listen to me... for once and for all... (The telephone line is cut off)

**Narrator:** Mayakovsky returned to Dovzhenko but did not talk to him anymore. Soon after Lev Nickulin joined them.

**Nickulin:** What's this, comrades? Why such terrible silence? With your film, Alexander, everything will be in order. It will no doubt remain a part of the film history, if the latter will be written at all. But I'm sure it will be.

**Dovzhenko:** Are you selling optimism or cynicism?

**Nickulin:** You are mistaken, my friend. Industry is our future, and film happens to be its product. We must make sure that industry is subdued, planted in man, from which new art will sprout. Socialist art, for example! Just look at our Vladimir Vladimirovich. Not long ago a little Renault, a wonder of French car industry, was sent to him from Paris. But everybody can't drive, unless he is a driving artist. But driving artists can be only those who love the wonder of engineering. There's no



doubt that our dear Vladimir is the right one. He loves the sound of engines as much as he loves verses. Sergey Yesenin loved the melody of birch-trees, while Vladimir loves the melody of engines; and this is the only difference between these two great poets. Unfortunately one of them is not alive any more. One of them loved, the other still does. Why are you so silent, Vladimir? Are you satisfied with your little Renault?

**Mayakovsky:**

Good-bye, friends.

**Nickulin:**

What's the matter with him? Whenever I mentioned engines and cars in the past to him, he then spoke for hours about them. But now he simply...

**Dovzhenko:**

This Muscovite air has done a lot of harm lately.

(Footsteps...)

**Narrator:**

Mayakovsky drove off with his Renault towards the building at the Lubyanka Passage where he lived. He parked his car and slammed its door with such a force that the noise could be heard in the entire neighbourhood. (Slamming of the door, footsteps up the stairs) His legs felt like lead as he walked up the steps on which he came across his lady housekeeper.

**Housekeeper:**

Vladimir Vladimirovich?

**Mayakovsky:**

Oh, it's you! I apologise for not noticing you. But I am rather tired. I see you are on your way home.

**Housekeeper:**

I tidied up your flat, as you told me to, but ... Please, don't be angry at me.

**Mayakovsky:**

I don't understand what are you trying to tell me.

**Housekeeper:**

I've been cleaning your place for quite some time and I never moved a single thing in your study.

**Mayakovsky:**

Speak up, please. I'm tired.

**Housekeeper:**

It seems that some of your things are not where they should be.

**Mayakovsky:**

What are you talking about? Do you think that those things should be always on the same spots? After all, I'm not a machine. Oh, what a day! Is it possible that I'm meeting some unknown people?

**Housekeeper:**

Don't be angry at me, please. I told you that only because I wouldn't like to be blamed for the mess in your flat. Yesterday when you phoned me up, you said nothing about those strewn note pads and books. But now I see that ... you are very tense...

**Mayakovsky:**

What on earth are you talking about?

**Housekeeper:**

Well, Vladimir Vladimirovich, I try to be a good housekeeper. And it hurts me if I leave a jumble behind me, although I'm ordered to do so. I'd hate to hear people saying that I... (Bursts out crying)

**Mayakovsky:**

Speak up, woman!

**Housekeeper:**

... that I'm negligent...

**Mayakovsky:**

Oh, calm down, please. Let me give you a little hug. Now, do you feel any better?

**Housekeeper:**

Yes, I do.

**Mayakovsky:**

Come again next week, will you?

**Housekeeper:**

God willing I will. Good-bye.

(Music...)

**Narrator:**

Mayakovsky then entered his flat and opened the door of his study. Immediately he could see that somebody had rummaged through his things.

**Mayakovsky:**

No, no, I won't let them play games with me any more. The Proletarian Writers' Union is nothing but a mob, their poetry merely a rotten stew.

**Narrator:**

He sat down and wrote: „To all concerned!„ Then he heard footsteps behind him. He turned around.

**Mayakovsky:**

You? Yessenin? But how?

**Yessenin:**

What's happening, my friend? Are you losing ground? I see you are writing a poem. I know that you are, Vladimir. And I know what kind of poem this would be if I didn't come to see you. You'll never write a poem about your persecutors. My arrival here has changed everything.

**Mayakovsky:**

Didn't you hang yourself some years ago?

**Yessenin:**

(laughingly) I did, so what? I was dead, but now I'm alive. And I'll remain alive, until I save you. I will not allow to renounce the idea that stands out in your poems.

**Mayakovsky:**

What are you talking about?

**Yessenin:**

The secret police is going to eliminate you. You are an impediment to them. You existed only as long as this state needed you. But once you began to doubt they decided not to accept your services any more. They need a silent hero, my friend.

**Mayakovsky:**

You're mad!



**Yessenin:** I heard that you wanted to help me a day before my suicide. You were the only one to realize that man's despair is no joking matter. I'm grateful to you and this is the reason why I'm now ready to help you.

**Mayakovsky:** Get out, before I throw you out myself!

**Yessenin:** I'm not going until my duty is accomplished.

**Mayakovsky:** You are not Yessenin at all! If I get hold of you... You are not Yessenin at all... If I get hold of you...

**Yessenin:** Hey, I'm behind your back!

**Mayakovsky:** You are obviously having a good time, Mr. Ghost!

**Yessenin:** The dead of course can't be caught. So let me tell you the following. I'd like to clear the matter straight away. First of all: you are going to commit suicide. Second: before you do that you'll write a farewell letter dictated by me.

**Mayakovsky:** That I, Mayakovsky, should commit suicide? I, the poet, who enraptures the crowds with optimism...

**Yessenin:** All right, all right. We both know who you are. The tender puppy, as you used to sign the letters send to Lylya Brick, the wife of your best friend Ossip. Start writing. The title you've already written is good. So - „To all concerned„. And now let's continue (dictates him also all the necessary punctuations). „Do not blame anybody for my death and, I beg you, do not machinate. The deceased wouldn't like that. Dear mother, sisters and comrades, forgive me - what I'm doing probably isn't wise (I do not recommend this to anybody) but there was simply no other way out for me. Lylya - love me. And you, the regime, my family is: Lylya Brick, my mother, two sisters, and Veronica Vitoldovna Polonskaya. If you ensure a normal life for them - thank you. The unfinished verses are to be given to the Brick family; they will take care of them..“ So, Vladimir, that's about all.

**Mayakovsky:** (keeps repeating) They... will ... take care of them...

**Yessenin:** Wait a moment. I see a poem here. Very interesting. Transcribe it.

**Mayakovsky:** I don't know, Yessenin, why I'm doing all this.

**Yessenin:** You'll find out very soon. The living people are incapable of such insights. I'm satisfied with you. Dear Vladimir, I've accomplished my duty. To live and to die is of course nothing new. Perhaps I agree with what you wrote in the poem about me: that it is not difficult to die but to build up one's life. This, however, isn't necessary a rule, of course. You, for example, who have been building up your life without any hesitation are getting to know that to build up something is much more

difficult than to destroy. To live and to die is nothing new ( walks away from him).

**Mayakovsky:** To hell with everything. Nobody's going to impose a violent death upon me. Not even you, Sergey. Where are you? Hey, where are you? (Pause) I must drive you out of my mind! Drive out!

(Ringing of the phone, somebody picks it up)

**Agent:** Listen, Mayakovsky, (rushing water...) we'll come to see you tomorrow evening, as we are convinced that your talk with Yesse nin has been useful and fruitful. We allow you to dedicate tomorrow's day, the last day of your life, to your personal affairs. Act according to the instructions! (Click of the phone, the line is cut off)

**Mayakovsky:** Mayakovsky will never commit suicide!

**Narrator:** In the morning of April 13th, 1930, when Mayakovsky fell asleep at his desk, the telephone rang again.

(Ringing of the phone)

**Mayakovsky:** To hell with them all! (Picks up the phone)

**Kattayev:** (over the phone) Vladimir Vladimirovich?

**Mayakovsky:** Oh, it's you, Kattayev. What is it?

**Kattayev:** Listen, I'm having a little party tonight and I'm asking you to come along. With Nora, of course.

**Mayakovsky:** Very well, Kattayev. We'll be there. See you.

**Kattayev:** Bye, bye.

**Mayakovsky:** (puts the phone down) Good thought.

**Narrator:** As soon as he said „Good thought,“ Mayakovsky began to devise a plan how he should never and nowhere be alone but at all times surrounded by people. That morning, however, he couldn't get anybody at all, wherever or whoever he called. So he began to drive up and down the Moscow streets. It was late in the afternoon when he pulled up in front of the Art Theatre building, where Veronica Polonskaya was waiting for him.

(Noise of idling car engine, slamming of the door)

**Polonskaya:** What have you been doing all day? Have you enjoyed yourself?

(They drive off)

**Mayakovsky:** I've been driving around.

**Polonskaya:** You seem rather pale.



**Mayakovsky:** I've caught cold. After visiting Kattayev we shall go to my place, all right? I want you to stay with me for a couple of days and not to go anywhere whatsoever without me.

**Polonskaya:** But I can't do that.

**Mayakovsky:** I beg you!

**Polonskaya:** Are you mad? We are having a rehearsal tomorrow morning. I don't want to waste this chance I've got. You don't get the leading role every day, you know.

**Mayakovsky:** To hell with roles!

**Polonskaya:** What's the matter with you! What are you getting so excited for!?

**Mayakovsky:** Everybody is saying no to me. Just everybody! No! No! No!

(Musical accentuation)

**Narrator:** Veronica Polonskaya and Vladimir Mayakovsky finally went to the party given by Kattayev. But the atmosphere there was rather boring. To Mayakovsky's flat they returned late at night.

**Polonskaya:** Vladimir, my dear, can you tell me what's happening to you?

**Mayakovsky:** I'm tired. Just tired and a bit down with this chill.

**Polonskaya:** I'm tired, too, but I think that I'll fall asleep even before I lie down. And there's that tiresome rehearsal waiting for me tomorrow.

**Mayakovsky:** So you insist?

**Polonskaya:** Try to understand me, please. And why were you pelting me with little pieces of paper all night? Tell me!

**Mayakovsky:** Go to bed. We'll talk about it tomorrow.

**Narrator:** And so Polonskaya and Mayakovsky finally retired. But at 2 o'clock in the morning on April 14th, when they were fast asleep, they were woken up by the secret police.

(Musical accentuation ...)

**Mayakovsky:** How dare you!

**Agent:** We were waiting for you yesterday. But you didn't stick to the agreement made between us.

**Mayakovsky:** You obviously still think that I shall cooperate, don't you?

**Agent:** No, no, it's too late now. You've turned us down. Doubters are of no use to us. You rejected us. Where is the gun you were given while making that film „Not Born For Money„? As soon as Polonskaya leaves this place it will happen what it must. Don't try to make her stay. Where's the gun?

**Mayakovsky:** In the drawer. (Pause) Where are you? Where are you? Oh, I must have been dreaming.

**Polonskaya:** (wakes up) Did you call me, Vladimir?

**Mayakovsky:** I had a nightmare. Go back to sleep.

(Musical accentuation ..)

**Narrator:** At ten past ten in the morning Mayakovsky was still asleep, while Polonskaya was getting ready to leave.

**Polonskaya:** I'm off, Vladimir. I'm just waking you up to say bye to you.

**Mayakovsky:** Don't go, Veronica! Don't leave the flat!

**Polonskaya:** Can't you understand that I'll never be given another chance like this again? If I don't go to the rehearsal ...

**Mayakovsky:** Wait, I'm coming with you.

**Polonskaya:** Don't be silly. I'm in a hurry. Come to pick me up in the evening. Bye!

(Footsteps across the room ...)

**Narrator:** Polonskaya left the flat at ten past ten in the morning. Although she noticed somebody standing at the door - for a moment she even thought that the person might be Yessenin himself - she did not look back but rushed down the stairs. (Steps) In the meanwhile Mayakovsky sat up in his bed.

**Mayakovsky:** Let it happen what it may and what it must. Come, I'm waiting for you all. But I won't kill myself. And how will you ... (suddenly panick-stricken) The letter! I must destroy that farewell letter I wrote!

(Musical accentuation ...)

**Narrator:** At ten fifteen Polonskaya heard a shot coming from Mayakovsky's flat.

(Gun shot ... steps ... musical accentuation. Polonskaya stops and starts running up the stairs. Steps of men coming down the staircase. Polonskaya stops for a moment)

**Narrator:** Polonskaya returned to the flat and uttered a cry when realizing that Mayakovsky was dead. (Hysterical scream ... Musical accentuation ...)

**Narrator:** April 14th, 1930 in the morning. There was a gun by his side, the one he had used twelve years ago as a requisite during the shooting of „Not Born For Money,. But let us begin from the start. Let us try to throw light upon some events occurring at the same time or little earlier. First of all: the phone call made by anonyne. The reason for it was apparently the very first staging of „The Shower,„



**Anonyme:**

(through the shower nozzle) Listen, Mayakovsky, I am a worker and a communist. I've seen your play. A load of crap! Incomprehensible for ordinary people. I'm certainly disappointed, comrade Mayakovsky. Why didn't you write how a bureaucrat loathes workers or members of the party? Who paid you for not doing that? The imperialists you've been meeting all over the world? Why didn't you show a bureaucrat being doused by workers and communists as it is in fact happening all the time, eh? You've insulted us and we shall not bear anything like it any more!

**Mayakovsky:**

Nobody's going to order me what to write! And apart from that you could introduce yourself, couldn't you?

**Anonyme:**

Listen, you. We've been making paper and printing the so-called works of art written by you. Nobody's going to insult us. Let this be a warning to you.

(The line is cut off ... transition to office acoustics ...)

**Narrator:**

In the Art Theatre a discussion between its manager and the police agent was taking place. (Closing of the door ...)

**Manager:**

What can I do for you, comrade?

**Agent:**

I'm interested in Veronica Vitoldovna.

**Manager:**

Polonskaya?

**Agent:**

Yes, that's the one.

**Manager:**

Is she of interest to you as an actress or a person?

**Agent:**

Primarily as an actress.

**Manager:**

She is quite talented but lacks acting experiences which, however, may be gained by some hard work only.

**Agent:**

Do you think that she is able to play the leading role in the play you are planning to stage in the near future?

**Manager:**

Well, not quite. I think this role would do her more harm than good. Well, we always try to ascertain that our actors develop properly.

**Agent:**

You said: not quite. Then I suggest you to sort out the problems and give her the leading role.

**Manager:**

Sorry, but I can't do that ...

**Agent:**

This is an order! Tomorrow our manager will call on you, and make sure that he gets the rehearsal schedule. Good bye, comrade.

(The door is shut; street acoustics)

**Narrator:**

When Mayakovsky's housekeeper came out of the building at the Lubyanka Passage, she was approached by the same agent that spoke to the theatre manager.

**Agent:** Come to the car with me, please, we'd like to talk to you.

**Housekeeper:** What do you want from me?

**Agent:** Don't worry, nothing will happen to you. Get into the car, please.

**Housekeeper:** I'm scared.

(Closing of car doors, engine noise, talk during the ride ...)

**Agent:** You are Mayakovsky's housekeeper, aren't you?

**Housekeeper:** Yes, I tidy up his flat once a week.

**Agent:** Would you like to work for our great Stalin?

**Housekeeper:** Oh, comrade, you are surely making fun of me.

**Agent:** Do we look like jokers to you?

**Housekeeper:** No.

**Agent:** So?

**Housekeeper:** The great Stalin ...

**Agent:** Yes, the great Stalin.

**Housekeeper:** The great Stalin ...

**Agent:** The great Stalin!

**Housekeeper:** The great Stalin ...

**Agent:** The great Stalin.

**Housekeeper:** The great Stalin probably wouldn't be satisfied with me.

**Agent:** That's your problem.

**Housekeeper:** But I'm honoured ...

**Agent:** So, will you work for him or not?

**Housekeeper:** I will.

**Agent:** We'll take you there. Straight away.

**Housekeeper:** Straight away? But ...

**Agent:** What?

**Housekeeper:** I must tell Vladimir Vladimirovich to look for another housekeeper.

**Agent:** Don't worry, we'll do that. But as it is, he won't need one any more.

(Fade down ...)

**Narrator:** And so the lady housekeeper disappeared without any trace. It may appear that this episode was not significant at all, but the fact is that she was the only one who saw that disorder in Mayakov sky's flat. Is it possible that she saw something else,



but didn't dare to tell Mayakovsky about it? Did she perhaps see Yessenin? If she did then she kept this to herself, for who in this world would call a crazy woman who is seeing ghosts while tidying up a flat? And there was something else ... (Inside the moving car) When Mayakovsky was driving up and down the Moscow streets on April 13th, he suddenly felt somebody's breath on his neck. He looked back.

**Mayakovsky:** What are you doing here?

**Yessenin:** A very unusual question indeed. This is your last day. I realized that you were lonely and I decided to keep company with you.

**Mayakovsky:** I don't need anybody's company. I'd like to be alone.

**Yessenin:** All right, I better tell you about some other reason for coming then. I came because I had never been driven by you before, and I'd like to see how you drive.. But do tell me what's bothering you. I'll try to help. That's why I'm here.

**Mayakovsky:** I don't understand you.

**Yessenin:** I know you'd like to find out what's it like over there.

**Mayakovsky:** Where's 'over there'?

**Yessenin:** In the other world.

**Mayakovsky:** (starts to roar with laughter) Oh, stop it, Sergey, do you really think that I believe in 'the other world'? But if you wish to tell me that, then do.

**Yessenin:** It's nice. (Pause)

**Mayakovsky:** Just nice? Nothing more specific?

**Yessenin:** No. No.

**Mayakovsky:** I don't believe that you are Yessenin, but ...

**Yessenin:** I must admit that you really do master this little machine. I feel safe while being driven by you.

**Mayakovsky:** Come on, tell me what't it like over there!

**Yessenin:** So you can't help yourself but asking after all. There's nothing but void there, my dear friend. Nothing but void.

**Mayakovski:** You're lying.

**Yessenin:** But not such void as you've known it lately or as I knew it at that time. Nothing that would burden you. On the contrary, be cause in this void you experience a very unusual relief. And the beauty,

**Mayakovsky:** No, no and no! I know why you are sitting behind me. You are trying to persuade me. But I won't follow your steps!

**Yessenin:** You can avoid revolution, but you can't avoid death!

**Mayakovsky:** Go away!

**Yessenin:** All right, I'm leaving. Polonskaya is already waiting for you.

(Fade down ...)

**Narrator:** As we already know, Mayakovsky and Polonskaya went to the party at Kattayev's place that evening at which Nickulin and Dovzhenko were present, engaged in a lively conversation. And what were they talking about? About Mayakovsky.

(Slamming of car doors. Fade to the flat where party is held)

**Nickulin:** Have you heard?

**Dovzhenko:** What?

**Nickulin:** It's Mayakovsky's turn now. If they eliminate him, the path to wards socio-realism will be cleared.

**Mayakovsky:** I've heard you mentioning my name.

**Nickulin:** We've been talking about the onslaughts aimed at your work. I'm worried about you.

**Mayakovsky:** I don't understand you.

**Nickulin:** Oh, but you do. We all pretend we don't understand anything. But with us they play as with dice. Well, it's time for me to go now, for I've probably said too much already. Walls have ears. But let's hope that this doesn't count for the ones here. See you - I hope.

**Dovzhenko:** What was he talking about?

**Mayakovsky:** I don't know.

**Kattayev:** Are you enjoying yourself, my friends?

**Mayakovsky:** Who cares about enjoyment, Kattayev?

**Kattayev:** Yes, who. This party was intended for you, because of all those poisonous arrows fired at you lately, but now I see that the poison is stronger than the blood in your veins.

**Dovzhenko:** I don't understand anything at all.

**Kattayev:** The less you know, the better for you.

**Mayakovsky:** That can't be true! We should know much more than we in fact do.

**Kattayev:** But as I know that this is not possible I'm convinced that it is better not to know anything at all.

**Dovzhenko:** Will somebody tell me what's going on?

**Kattayev:** You think through your film camera, not through words. But when they realize how powerful the film tape is, then ...



**Dovzhenko:** What? What will they realize?

**Kattayev:** Well, perhaps I'll be gone by then. (Pause) Are you leaving?

**Mayakovsky:** Yes, I don't feel too well. It's this bad cold.

**Kattayev:** I'm sorry the party wasn't so successful as it should have been.

**Mayakovsky:** You don't have to feel sorry for anything. Okay, let's go, Nora.

**Kattayev:** What would you say about it all, Dovzhenko?

**Dovzhenko:** This is certainly the end of the Soviet art. And this end must be recorded on the film tape. (Transition to new acoustics ...)

**Narrator:** When the agents left his flat, Mayakovsky fell asleep. About five in the morning he woke up and lit up a cigarette.

(Unearthly effects ...)

**Yessenin:** Good morning, Vladimir. This is your last morning - in the real world, of course. You'll die at ten fifteen, right?

**Mayakovsky:** Couldn't you stop with these visits to my flat, Sergey?

**Yessenin:** I only wish to tell you that you have nothing to fear, my friend.

**Mayakovsky:** You are encouraging me, but to no avail. I'm not going to take my own life.

**Yessenin:** That's not important now. More important is the fact that you'll be respected as one of the great Soviet poets, and less as a Russian one. But certainly as a great socialist poet. Congratulation.

**Mayakovsky:** Is cynicism allowed in the other world?

**Yessenin:** So you've been thinking about the other world after all?

**Mayakovsky:** Not quite. I'd like to fall asleep now. You can sit here and watch me, if you like.

**Yessenin:** So you have been thinking about the other world! You have ... been thinking... (Moves off)

**Narrator:** Yessenin did not stay in Mayakovsky's flat. The entire morning he was walking up and down the Lubyanka Passage. But when Polonskaya left the flat, he stood by its main door. In the meanwhile Mayakovsky jumped out of bed and started to look for the letter dictated to him by Yessenin.

**Mayakovsky:** The letter! I must destroy it! But where is it?

**Agent:** That farewell letter is in a safe place. And now let's get on with it. I advise you, however, you do it yourself. Just as Yessenin told you. Here's the gun.

**Mayakovsky:** Do you still think that I'm going to kill myself?

**Agent:** Come on, get on with it. Let's not waste any time any more.

**Mayakovsky:** I'll kill you all like animals! (He pulls the trigger a few times, but there are no bullets in the gun)

**Agent:** We expected this. Well, it is obvious that you don't want to cooperate even in the last moments of your life. Grab him! I'll help him myself. (A shot echoes in the room)

**Agent:** It's all over. Let's go, comrades.

**Narrator:** And that was the end of a highly skillful swindle. Before Polonskaya returned to his flat, Yessenin appeared in front of him.

(Musical accentuation...)

**Yessenin:** Now we are together again, Vladimir.

**Narrator:** (solemnly) On April 14th, 1930, at ten fifteen in the morning, Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky shot himself in his flat at the Lubyanka Passage, using the gun which he had been given for the film „Not Born For Money... He was thirty seven years old. On his desk a farewell letter which he had written two days earlier was found. (Musical accentuation) The official statement contains no other details about his death. Let's begin from the start.

(Dripping water... then music as in the beginning of the play...)