

## Slib – The Promise

autorka: Louise Tandrup Esbensen, česká adaptace – dramaturgie: Martina Pouchlá, režie: Radim Nejedlý

Jako mladá stopařka procestovala Evropu. Teď si americká důchodkyně usazená v Kodani dopisuje se svou sousedkou. Studentkou hudební vědy, kterou slýchá přes zed' cvičit na piano. Z psané konverzace se rozvine osobní přátelství a společná touha splnit jeden starý hudební slib. Poslechněte si o dobrodružství kamarádek, které odděluje šedesát let a spojuje láska k hudbě. (ČRo)

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### Přepis debaty

**I would like to ask you Louise to maybe tell the story behind the promise. How long have you been thinking about the heard topic and how long have you been recording it and how was the whole process of creating what we have just heard?**

Well, it was a very very long process because I think actually, I recorded material over a period of I think two years or something like that and because I actually worked on this story and before I entered in I have made like a shorter version of the story. Before it didn't go to my wife, but we had just started recording it Carol and then I thought like I could actually make this into a story about go to buy white and then I had like so much material because I didn't really know which story I wanted to make. I just had this amazing protagonist and I had her like free spirit that I thought was a very interesting thing to tap into for me her energy. I was like I kind of wanted to become Carol myself I think a little bit and yeah. This story about music that connected us and so it was kind of like OK I'm just gonna try to see where this leads me, and I will just record every step of the way. So, I had so much material and the whole thing about narrating the story was just like finding the story while I was making it. I think so it ended up being a story about promises but I didn't know that it was about promises when I started. It was in the end discovered that story I think yeah.

**When you say too much material can you quantify it? Just to have a vision. An idea what does It mean?**

So what do you maybe don't hear them coding. I had like when I started to meet Carol I went to visit her like for months where we were just talking a lot and some sometimes I just visited her just to visit her but sometimes I recorded it and I could sit there for two hours so they're

like she told my whole life story there were so many amazing things that uh I wanted to bring him but it was like not relevant for the story that I wanted to tell so I had to go I think I have like I mean over I don't even know many many many hours of recordings. Also, when I went to buy wide, I recorded so much more than I applied to the stories though it was really like about finding the story in the material yeah.

**And what helps you to find a story? did you have any process like going through the text or listening to it again and again and then trying to wait for the muse to kiss you and show you? How did you find it?**

Yeah, I think yeah um in the end by talking to a lot of different people about the story excellent. So of course, I had my own idea of the story that I was kind of I mean I wanted it to there was this like natural plot about me meeting Carol going to buy right to see if I could make this promise happen. There was the like the natural class you could see. But then there was this deeper story like what is this story about and for that I had to both talk to my mentor of course is Simon Elm and meat disgusted but he kind of also just helped me make the steps through there recordings. But in the end, I had to talk to different friends and actually I talked a lot with a guy who makes films about like how to narrate a story and he had another take on it so it kind of just like took all this critiques that I had like from various people and then kind of like OK I think this is this is the story. So it was not only myself you know also because I had to use myself as a character in the story and I didn't want to go there myself it wasn't intended but all the people around me say like you have to develop your own character and you actually have to think about how you develop your own and yeah carrying some clutch in the story and then I wouldn't have done if people didn't tell me to do that I think yeah.

**Students do you want to hop in with your questions? What was the first reaction of your neighbor when you told her that you wanna share her story? And if if she listened to it afterwards it was after it was released?**

Yeah, it is so as you can hear. I actually went to knock on her door, and I just had the microphone in front of me so I didn't ask her if I could record her. So, I just knocked on the door and it was kind of like I thought this is a little bit how can I say it like nerve wracking because it was my first meeting, and I was putting the recording to a face, so I didn't it hide it. But I was just in the beginning in this moment just saying hello and then I said the reason why I had this recorder is because I really want to record this meeting with you because I find our story already pretty interesting, and I just want to know more about and want to record your

life are you OK with that? And she was OK with that. So that was how it started and then I showed her the story and she liked it. I don't know if there was an answer.

**I also have a question that on on that note. I want to ask if you would ever come there to listen to Carol? Would you ever have gone there if it wasn't for the documentary?**

So yeah, that's a good question because I think that me making the documentary helped me having this excuse to ask a lot of questions you know. So, it was actually a tool for me to open that door to her and have a reason to tell her that I really wanted to know about her life. So, I think I would have knocked on her door anyway, but I think maybe it hadn't developed as a like a deep interest in that way that it did because I had the reasons to ask you like tell me all about life because she wanted to be a part of this. So yeah, but I mean I started reading the writing the letters with through and having this connection before I started this story yeah.

**How did the relation with Carol develop after publishing the documentary and finishing it?**

So, I mean we talked a lot and just had because what you don't hear is that I just hang out with her just like it talked about random stuff a lot. And but at some point, I moved away from the apartment. from that was pretty hard to stay in contact because I tried to call her on the phone, and I tried and when I called her she got like more and more disoriented. So, she thought that that I was her kids some of the girls when a called her. And do you like this story and so the whole staying in contact over phone was not possible and then I tried to visit her sometimes and I did that but then she got like super kind of I don't know what the English word is but when you it's taking away that you start to forget things. And then my former roommate told me that she suddenly started to throwing books out of the window and asking people to bring her cigarettes and like being like unclear. So, they took two and elderly home. And then in the period after I meet the story we tried to get into pilot and, but we couldn't get in it never happened. And at one point I thought that she was also too and mentally unstable that it may be safe to make the trip with her. And that is also the reason why I have I've had a hard time to publish story because I think, and I don't know what you think but it some broadcasters thinks that the ending is too open. So, because it had done don't have that ending in yeah.

**So, there is no happy ending? Did she go to the theater again?**

Yeah so, we tried to write. We did the formula and we tried to make it happen but suddenly I couldn't get in contact with him again. He just blocked me off. So, I've tried for some time

and then I kind of gave up at one point and then I actually heard when Martina made this story into because she was the one helping it to get translated is she discovered that he actually died. So, the guy that made the promise to me is dead. I think at that point I also realized that she was too unstable to for me to push this through. So, for me the end it kind of more became like this inner journey. I guess going there in like the spirit I guess somehow but yeah maybe it is kind of a a problem for the story that it has it's like super unfinished business in the end.

**When were you talking to Mr. Emrich he was speaking German and you were asking in english. Was this only added in the postproduction because of translation then or is this just the way you talk to him?**

I just I can't understand a bit German you know. But I'm not I'm lost you're talking to so I could understand what he was telling me in German, but I couldn't reply in German, so I just talked to him in English, and he talked to me in German. So, it was not an editorial. It was just as it was one question to it how what was.

**What was the solution then in the original version? Because obviously we heard a translation on top of it. Do people from Denmark understand German? Did you just leave it as it was the German?**

Yeah, OK I understand. So, what I did was I kind of in my speech retold what he was telling in a way. So, I let him have the end answer and then also I was kind of summing up what he was saying in the English. and so that was the way that I got around it so it didn't translate it but I kind of just sum it up yeah.

**In the documentary was really a lot of music. I would like to ask if you put it like you think of how much you put in it, or it will take it naturally like you fail there or there is a like I put the piano or I would like to put dairy or opera sound and so on? If you have to think about it or it's like naturally coming out?**

I think that people can often sometimes just use music as a dead pole you know just like OK let's go from this to this and it doesn't really have any function other than just being opposed but I think that especially in this piece music was kind of the hottest story somehow because we connected over music. So, I thought a lot about how yeah how I could somehow make like small comments with the music like just have small words connecting with their things here in there and of course sitting on bike. because I think one of them yeah one of the the thing about making radio results so that it some experience you know. I think that it's a very sensual medium, so you don't have only have to talk to people and say in selects but you also have to

make them experience the story somehow you know. So, I think that music really helped me I wanted it to like kind of you know I kind of did like my fantasy about how it was to go into by road to the Opera House through the music I was like OK maybe it sounded like this and then I just wanted to create that feeling even though it was my interpretation of Carols experience if that makes sense.

**Lucy, you said that you had hard time publishing it because of the ending that is to open. It doesn't mean that you were refused by someone because of the ending?**

I was an intern at the national broadcast station before the occupant's trump and back in the days I started the story with an editor there. And then then I took the story to the whole thing and made it there and he would he just didn't start that he didn't agree with the ending he thought it was too open and too and too disappointing that you didn't get the answer that we if we went there and not. And they I mean for me it was kind of a point that it wasn't the most important thing but for him it was and yeah. So, we didn't agree on that and then, so it just didn't so for me it's super nice that they that you got answer it because there's not so many people in Denmark that have heard it actually. So yeah, that's nice.

**It's too sad because to me personally it's perfect ending.**

Yeah, and I think other people I know other people it's also very difficult to have pieces like this broadcast, so they didn't like. We don't have so many platforms of doing it so he was kind of the gatekeeper of the platform that I thought it would suit on and he just didn't he wasn't into it so yeah.

**What were your thoughts when you realize that your this story is gonna is gonna be broadcasted in other countries for example here?**

so nice I was so happy you know so. I mean like there was it was also broadcasted in and there was this woman writing me telling me that she heard it and you know it's just been super interesting too. Also, because I was wondering how like how the translation work, I obviously can't tell because I don't understand it but but if you kind of how it was for you guys to listen to a translated piece and yeah. It worked natural way because there was also your voice and also the translation, so we were like on the place in the time you make it it was yeah really good yeah yeah I just heard it and I thought it sounded really good that you did a great job yeah whoever needs it yeah.

I will tell him who was the director of the translation yeah and the actors because if I may mention something about the translation and dubbing yes but it is not easy to find a good actress for it in the Czech Republic because of the actors that work for audio and radio plays I usually come used to because they usually are used to over act and over reply. I think it is this may be good for some play but not for documentary that where authenticity is one of the key qualities. So, uh it was the input of Radim who the director is works with a lot of actors and he chose two actors and were able to stay more normal that didn't have that need to really do the Shakespeare thing. And any work with them very very nicely so I think that so but why the translation is so good as has is his. I can find word, but you know what I mean. So, I will tell him and I'm really glad that it worked because I think that the whole piece is very beautiful in sound, and it was really key to have also great voices and czech to not ruin the magic of it.

Yeah, it's really nice and I think also not only music but one of the things that I was really trying to see if I could create with this scene. I think it was a bit difficult but like trying to have these recordings where we were not like we were just talking you know you can get the variables Carol or like having something that is not only me speaking. I just wanted it to have like sounds in it, so it was not only like voice yeah.

**But are you all making like documentary students or is it just an audio coffee thing is you also making audio?**

**Well maybe we can ask students to grab to raise their hands if they are making something already or if they want to make any piece in audio so is this someone who already made something?**

Two hands up.

**Is there someone who is thinking about the possibility of recording something?**

I'm just curious. They can decide later because they are in the first or second or maybe third year of their bachelor studies and each year the faculty has few audio documentaries as the bachelor theses. So probably they will create something either as the final work or within some of the other courses because this one is only listening and discussing their so different courses, but they're focused on production of short reportages or also audio documentaries.

**Louis you are from Denmark. There is different market then czech one? How easy it is for independent audio producer to get a job to work with someone who is the gatekeeper and to get through the gate and get your work to some podcast or radio?**

I think it's super difficult if you want to do make it feature like this. I did here for example because you wanna make a story like this which it's that kind of story that I prefer to make. It takes a long time in like I had to record over long time I had to use a lot of time to edit it and nobody will pay for this you know. It's not that kind of story making that is popular right now and they want to make you know back in the days we had like a very like long and strong tradition of feature making in Denmark and I think there were so many brilliant things make them, but they closed the feature department in 2007. I think and since then it's been much harder to make that kind of stories and the government closed another like the big systems to their national radio. They closed that recently and that was so super sad because there was the other choice you had. So right now, I'm just not working with the national broadcast, but I am working with independent radio stations where I had like super geeky people where we develop each other, and we have listening groups. I do like portraits of experimental music positions in Denmark that don't give like this mainstream and attention and receive money for these projects so there is like state funded money. You can seek to do that so that's how I make radio right now, but I can't even it's not my money source unfortunately.

**What kind of radio stories is popular right now? Because Danish podcasts especially those true crime podcasts are internationally recognized as one of the best podcasts in the world.**

I'm sure if she knows that they actually did a lot of like super interesting like documentaries and they were and its kind about like finding the good story and the like following this old lady who cheated a lot of people and stuff like that you know. I mean a story like this it's very slow it's very like romantic in a sense it's not like invite I think for the times.

**What is the Danish podcasting like? Is it is it like blooming or how do you feel it is because in the Czech Republic I think that we were a few years behind the world and let's say like last year the number of podcasts exploded and now it seems that everyone has its podcast so how is it in Denmark?**

I think like podcast in the sense of like people picking up a topic and having like super like interesting talks about that it's very popular in Denmark and so there are a lot of people who makes topics about being in for example. And good woman in Denmark or being like

minority group or like a lot of stuff yeah that is super popular. I think there's a lot of people doing that and there's a lot of awards for doing that and stuff like that so I really feel like the game is like radio seems blooming but I mean not many years ago before it all started blooming the whole like money to make radio like on the national radio station was kind of just cut off because they didn't think that was going to be a good thing a big thing and then they kind of just like fired all the good people with all the know-how. So, I think that was like super so it is blooming but it is has another conditions then.

**I would like to ask if it was your first documentary?**

No, it wasn't. I have been made yeah, I think 2 or 3 before that. But I felt like it was my first like big document like. I felt like it was the first somehow because it was so big because I had all that material and all that.

**It's this documentary like a different when you look at the others of your documentaries?**

I think like I have a theme about like meeting elderly people who I think have this tendency where like is you a bit crazy or is it true you know. That's always kind of a thing for me. Also in general meeting people where it's like kind of like trying to work on the line between like can we believe this or can we not and then I did a story about an old woman that I met at a bar where I worked and she told me that she had bought half a city in Denmark and she was now sheriff and cowboy and she owned the city and if I didn't trust her I could just come and see and I was like OK well I have to bring my microphone and check it out you know and then I met this like super lonely woman who actually has a city. It was a very small city so there wasn't a I think it was like 3 houses but nobody wanted to live there so they were super cheap and so it was kind of the story about the city where nobody wanted to live but she wanted to live there and she kind of felt like she could create something new, and she was I think 67 years old. She was like so I mean I don't have a man in my life I don't care I just either city or I'll just decide what happening here you know. She was kind of crazy but also super smart and super funny. So, you eventually met some interesting people and do the documentary team. I guess and I think also because I'm not a journalist right. I mean I never learned how to like just to pick up a topic in the world and just to let you know. I'm interested in meeting people and making stories about people you know and then, so my starting point has always been like my own like way. I try to also discover like OK how can I tell people stories that are not, so you know. But I mean when I went to the features conference as a part of the thing that we did

this international features conference there was a lot of like experienced documentary people trying to give like their golden advice all the time and I had like this long list of advice and there was this guy's telling me like you know the best services you can tell if the stories that you are good at telling you know because it and you have to figure out what kind of old people have different kind of you know some people are very extroverted some people are very introverted and I remember there was this girl saying like I'm super introverted I'm not even sure that I can make a radio story and then he was like you should use that as a way of you telling stories you can tell specific stories I think that you know and she was kind of like you know actually the greatest way to make people speak when you interview them is not speaking. And if you just like don't say anything they get like super like OK you have to explain more because you don't say anything if you just like stop speaking they were just like give it all to you know there's a lot of things but you know like sometimes it's all about just figuring out like what you like to tell and what you are good at telling and then just do that.

**Well thank you for that I think not everyone can say I'd say as this stuff this way so thank you.**

You're welcome thank you for listening peace. That was really nice.

**Well this is almost perfect ending but still uncle blomstrom which is to come to maybe inform students it is international award that is also available for you because you can apply from any country and if you are a young radio producer and you sell some stuff to the IBEW radio group you can be admitted and then it is also connected with some workshops on how to deal with stories for the radio and also you attempt international feature conference and pre Europe conference where you can get a lot of inspiration because these two events are dedicated to radio stories come to discussions about the radio story. So, if you are interested in radio and you see yourself as offers definitely go to find more about award but what**

**I wanted to ask is that your mentor will Simon Elms who used to lead the commentary department in BBC, but he is a totally different generation so how did this work?**

To be quite honest I applied with a totally other pitch. Actually, I applied with a picture file in people who have the experience of being abducted by aliens and how it is to live on earth with that experience you know, and they thought it was way out. He was like you cannot do that and I thought they picked me because of my idea so I was really like bummed because I could

see that they thought it was too crazy. So that was why I thought OK I have this all these recorded things with Carol and I thought OK this could also be my story and it was much easier to connect with him over that story because it is more like this very traditional like timeless story innocence. I mean it's a story that both you and I understood so in that sense we had a great collaboration because then we were on the same page and then he could really like to give me a lot of great advice. And, because I think that he was something else than anytime you know. Because he didn't have any interest in the story in any way, he just wanted it to help me making the steps. It was just someone I could call up and say that I'm super confused right now or whatever and he could like give me some practical advice like maybe you should remember to record a like people staying like on the train station where you're going and stuff like that. I maybe would have forgot myself to do, and he could also just like giving me like advice like he for example said like find out what the jewels in your material are you know. Like don't think so much about like how the big story is this but like is there a special moment in your recording that is like super touching or super pretty like that where you feel like they're special kind of energy and try to think about if you could create something around that you know. So, he kind of gave me like different angles to approach material and to approach how to narrate the story afterwards because I think I didn't realize there's like really like these two parts of making the story. There is you know you go out and you cry trying to find material and create material and then there's this whole like how I even make memory the story you know. And that is very different processes. I think I had a lot of help, but I mean in the beginning I thought he was a bit of a dinosaur you know and then when I had to like to unfold the story. I was like wow you really know a lot of stuff and I'm really really glad that I have you by my side you know yeah.

**But back to your original pitch. I would like to ask students if they would like to hear a story about people that have been adopted by aliens? if you want just to raise your hands to pick if it's interesting for people.**

Well, I think it wasn't that bad idea because I would like to hear it myself.

It wasn't a story about people or how it was to be abducted but more like how it is to live on earth with the experience of being alienated because of having that experience you know. There are some stories that we in our society just can't really contain you know, and I think that is really interesting.

**I guess did you ever go any further with this story from the idea would it go to realization?**

I talked to someone who did a whole thesis about this subject so that is why I thought about it because she went to England in the transfer.

**Louis do you still listen to Wagner's operas after finishing the piece?**

I am listening to. When I did the version of pacifism behind closed doors when they're listening to the door, I did the same thing where I took all the high pitches out of the piece so it said you could only hear it like it was through a door without the high pitch and I just I've listened to that version of it like 1000 times. For me it's kind of like mindfulness music is something and I thought about like trying to listen to a lot of music without the high pitches and I actually thought about doing that today like taking all his pieces and just take off the high pitch because sometimes it's super extreme to hear this physical music. I love it but I'm not always in the mood. I listen to it but in the alternate version.

**Do you have all these letters from Carol?**

I have some of them but some of them. I mean daily notes that we wrote so I didn't think of them as much. I didn't think that I should keep them in the beginning because there was sometimes also just like yeah hey what's up you know like do you like this music, I like this music only. Like the long letters.

**Louis you probably do not have any other work that is in czech or English that we could listen to, or do you?**

I am making Tim portraits of Finnish musicians that are not on the mainstream scene, but they have some sort of like international potential, and they are all made in English and I'm doing my first one right now about this Danish physician who was adopted and have a lot of like very personal experience around making this album that she recently made. So, I'm doing that and it's out pretty soon.

**Where can we find it?**

It's going to be on a platform called the lake radio.com and on the internet. I can also send a link if you are interested.